



AfDB President Adesina faults FG's approval of duty-free food imports
 ·Says policy is depressing ·Reopening borders will stabilise food prices —Experts -Pg4,11



Naira remains subdued despite CBN's injection of \$122.67m, \$35.18bn in reserves accretion -Pg11

NIGERIAN



SINCE 1949

TRIBUNE

VOL 74, NO 0172

MONDAY, 15 JULY, 2024

NIGERIA'S MOST INFORMATIVE NEWSPAPER

N250

www.tribuneonlineng.com

f Nigerian Tribune

@nigeriantribune

Nigerian Tribune

tribuneonlineng



Anyim, Ogba dump PDP for APC in Ebonyi -Pg23



Oba, Enigie dispute: Edo govt deploys security men in court -Pg8



Most states not viable, we don't need more —Agbakoba -Pg23

FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

Panic in states as 437 LGs risk zero allocation this month

 -Pg3,5

·Fate of caretaker committees, LCDAs hangs in balance ·As nation awaits fightback by govs ·Question marks over federalism, restructuring

National Media Complaints Commission begins investigations into FG's allegation against Daily Trust on Samoa Agreement -Pg8

Tinubu, world leaders react as Trump survives assassination attack at campaign rally -Pg

Three trapped, two rescued as building collapses in Osun -Pg26

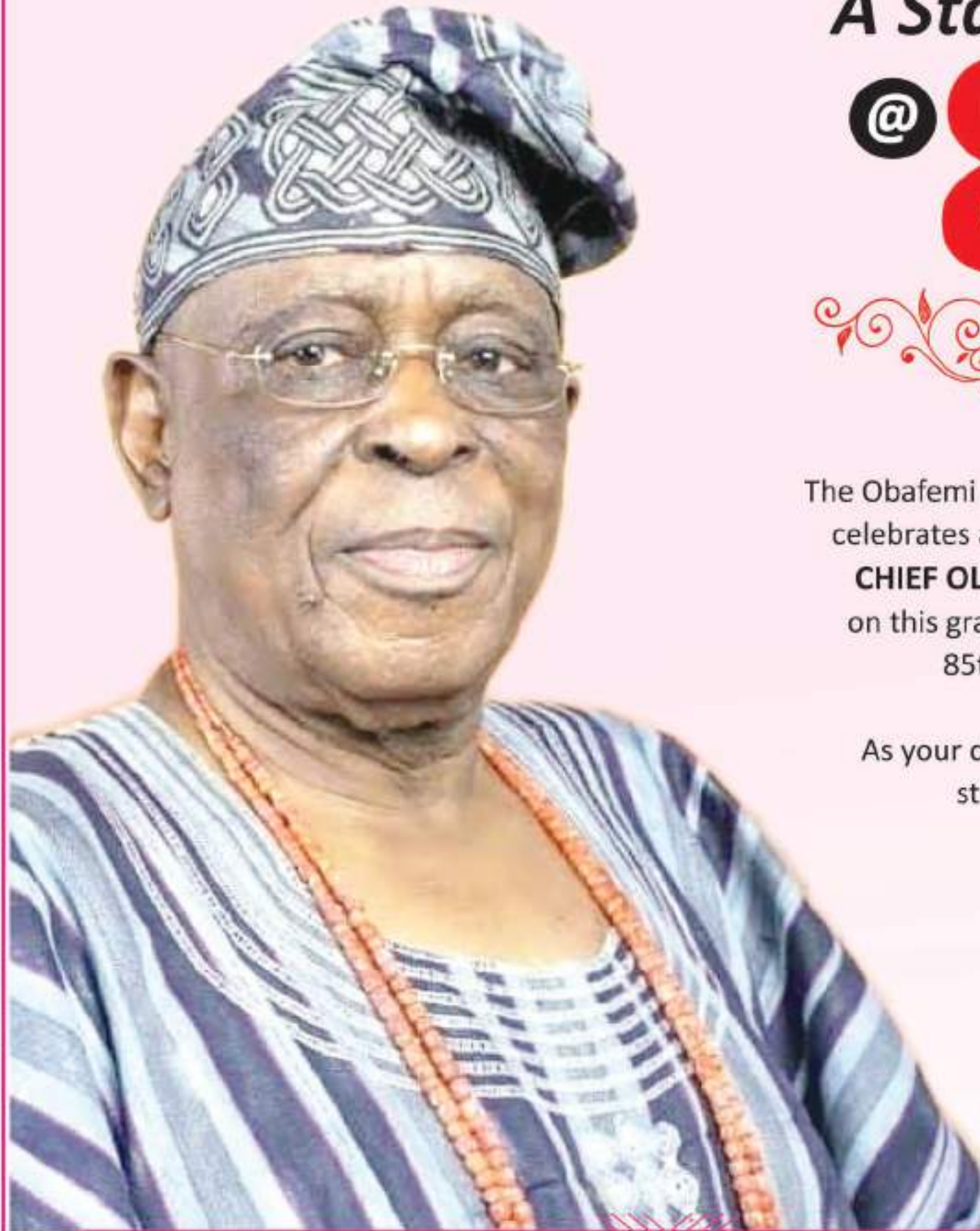


Republican presidential candidate former President Donald Trump surrounded by U.S. Secret Service agents after he was shot at campaign rally. Photo: AP

Importers lose N284bn to cargo sampling at Lagos Ports in five years

 -Pg6

·Accuse NAFDAC, SON of frequent sampling collection ·Why we don't return samples —SON, NAFDAC



*Congratulating
A Statesman*

@ **85**

The Obafemi Awolowo Foundation
celebrates an elder statesman,
CHIEF OLUSEGUN OSOBA
on this grand occasion of his
85th birthday.

As your days, so shall your
strength be.

SIGNED
Ambassador Dr. Olatokunbo Awolowo Dosumu
Executive Director



OBAFEMI AWOLOWO FOUNDATION

S'Court verdict: Panic in states as 437 LGs risk zero allocation this month

-Fate of Caretaker committees, LCDAs hangs in balance

-As nation awaits fight back by govs -Question marks over federalism, restructuring

By Taiwo Adisa and Kunle Oderemi, with reports from state correspondents

Apanic button about the funds for the running of local governments appeared to have been pressed in no fewer than 437 local governments areas spread across 19 states of the federation, following the imminent suspension of their federal allocations as a result of last Thursday's ruling of the Supreme Court.

The apex court, had in its ruling pursuant to the suit brought before it by the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, granted financial autonomy to the 774 local government areas (LGA) recognised by the 1999 Constitution and outlawed the penchant of state governors to institute caretaker committees or dissolve democratically elected structures in the councils.

Investigations by the *Nigerian Tribune* revealed that uncertainty now pervades the scenario in no fewer than 19 states of the federation which are currently running one caretaker system or the other, a development that meant that they have run foul of the ruling of the apex court, which has empowered the federal government to withhold allocations to councils without democratically elected administrations.

The Supreme Court had in a unanimous ruling of its seven-man panel, whose lead judgment was read by Justice Justice Emmanuel Agim, held that it was unconstitutional for state governments to tamper with the allocations due to the local governments, while also outlawing the operation of the caretaker system in the councils among other declarations.

The judgment ordered the federation account to henceforth pay all monies including shares from taxes and other sources meant to the councils directly to their accounts. The court barred governors from dissolving democratically elected officials of local governments, while also declaring that it is unconstitutional for governors to tamper with council funds. The court said the 774 local government councils should be allowed to manage their funds. Aside from that, the court also barred the opera-

tion of caretaker officials in the councils. The federation account was empowered to withhold funds meant for councils that operate the caretaker system.

Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, had while commenting on the judgment of the apex court declared that the ruling takes immediate effect, an indication that councils that failed to comply will start having their funds confiscated from the next meeting of the Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC), this month.

Investigations revealed that the 437 LGAs hammer is set to fall on are in the following states: Rivers(23); Jigawa (27); Anambra (21); Zamfara (14); Benue (23); Bauchi (20); Plateau(17); Abia(17); Katsina (34); Enugu(17); Cross Rivers(18); Sokoto (23); Kano(44); Yobe (17); Ondo(18); Osun (30); Akwa-Ibom (31); Imo (27) and Kwara (16). Delta State, which held elections for its 25 local governments on Saturday might be able to escape the hammer if the democratic structure is put in place before the next FAAC meeting.

Investigations further revealed that even as the governors prepare for a meeting to fully dissect the implications of the July 11 judgment of the apex court, some government houses are already contemplating likely ways out of the possible financial squeeze.

For instance, several states which have entered into what they termed "joint projects" which tied the funds accruing to the local governments to such projects were said to be panicky as such projects may be difficult to fund henceforth.

Though the Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum and the governor of Kwara State, Alhaji Abdurahman Abdurazaq, had in an initial response declared that the Supreme Court ruling had lifted a big burden off the shoulders of the state governors, whom he said had been bailing out the local governments financially, not a few Nigerians believe that the situation has been the other way round.

However, the Chairman, of the Senate Services Committee, who is the Senator representing Kogi West Senatorial District, Senator Sunday Karimi, has said that Nigerians should expect a fightback from some state governors

over the Supreme Court ruling.

Karimi stated that a key gray area in the management of the local governments is the need for the transfer of responsibility for the conduct of elections to the local councils from the various state electoral bodies to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

He said: "The battle is not yet over; some state governors will fight back. President Tinubu allowed the judiciary a free hand to operate in this particular instance, irrespective of the fact that he is but a first-term president who may desire a comeback in 2027.

"I thank Mr President for mustering the courage to do the right thing. Since 1999, the third tier of government, literally speaking, has been nonexistent. State governments treated them as appendages of the state governments.

"No president has been able to change that. But, within one year, however, President Tinubu has returned the local government to its owners—the masses. Local governments, if well-operated, will ensure a better existence for our people. President Tinubu took due cognizance of this and courageously took the bull by the horns."

Caretaker Committee members at crossroads in states

Members of the caretaker committees set up by some state governors to run the affairs of the local governments in their domain are now at a crossroads, following last Thursday's judgment of the Supreme Court which stopped federal allocations to local councils without democratically elected executives. The court also declared as an aberration to have a caretaker committee administer the local government, ordering the stoppage of federal allocations to states that failed to conform to the constitutional provision that elected chairmen and councilors must run the councils.

Reports from the states of the federation indicated mixed feelings in the affected states where local government executives have been dissolved, and replaced by caretaker committees or even civil servants.

The feeling of uncertainty is equally prevailing in states where governors conducted elections that produced chairmen and councillors in

Local Government Development Areas, created by states from the existing local governments listed in the 1999 Constitution.

We are at a crossroads —19 Ekiti LCDAs chairmen

The chairmen of the 19 Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) in Ekiti State at the weekend expressed worry and concern over the running of their affairs following the judgment of the Supreme Court on the recognition of the 774 LGAs listed in the 1999 Constitution in terms of financial autonomy.

In 2021, the administration of a former governor of the state, Dr Kayode Fayemi through the House of Assembly, created the LCDAs, in addition to the existing 16 LGAs contained in the 1999 Constitution.

A cross-section of the chairmen, who spoke with the *Nigerian Tribune* and pleaded anonymity, said there is a need for Governor Biodun Oyejobi, to call an extended meeting where the implications of the judgment would be discussed.

They argued that since the Supreme Court ordered that federal allocation should be sent directly to the 16 recognised LGAs in the state, without mentioning the LCDAs, the issue of accountability would make it extremely difficult for the LCDAs to function optimally under them.

One of the chairmen said, "Since last week's judgment, we, as chairmen, are at a crossroads because the Supreme Court did not capture us in its judgment. We were created by the state House of Assembly.

"Now that allocation will be given directly to the original 16 LGAs as in the case in Ekiti, the issue of accountability will be brought to bear, especially since it will be on record what they will get going forward.

"I think it is going to involve a lot of discussions and analysis and we are hoping the governor will call us and other stakeholders to talk about the way forward. We need to know what will happen in the interest of the people."

In his reaction, the Ekiti state chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) Olusegun Ojo, commended the judgment; adding that it would further help in bringing dividends of democracy to the people at the grassroots.

Ojo, who is the chairman of Ekiti East LGA, explained that the administration of

Oyejobi had, over the years, supported the financial autonomy of the council areas, which he said has resulted in the series of projects and programmes by the chairmen for the people.

He said: "The judgment is a welcome development, as a nation that is law-abiding. It is going to bring good development to the communities. It is something that every lover of the rule of law has to embrace. For us in Ekiti, we don't have a problem with the judgment.

"If you recall recently, Ekiti was described as one of the three states in which the Local government operation could be compared to a situation where we have autonomy.

"This judgment will only complement the efforts of Governor Biodun Oyejobi at ensuring fiscal independence for local governments."

Uncertainty surrounds LG/LCDAs in Ondo

Following the Supreme Court judgment, uncertainty appears to surround the fate of the caretaker committees in the 18 local government areas and the Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) in Ondo State.

Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa, had on Wednesday last week constituted Transition Committees for the 18 local government areas and 33 LCDAs in the state, saying the move became necessary because of the inability of the state Independent Electoral Commission (ODIEC), to conduct the local government elections after a series of postponement.

He said that the committees are to oversee the affairs of the local governments and the LCDAs in the state until the local government election is held by the state electoral body. The Supreme Court judgment has now left members of the caretaker committees, officials and workers of the local governments and the LCDAs are at a crossroads, especially as the judgment is to take immediate effect.

In its reaction, the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has described Aiyedatiwa's action as a flagrant disrespect to an earlier judgment by an Ondo State High Court.

"It is the height of lawlessness and impunity for Aiyedatiwa to appoint committees for LCDAs that are non-existent in the eyes of the law," the party said.

The Labour Party in the state has also kicked against

the appointment of the caretaker chairmen and transition committees for the 18 local governments, and the 33 LCDAs, saying that the action amounts to illegality.

LP chairman in the state, Honourable Abiodun Agbaje, said: "Ondo Labour Party vehemently rejects the action of the Ondo State government for appointing new caretaker chairmen and transition committee for the 18 local governments across the state as well as the newly created 33 LCDAs which were already scrapped by a court judgment."

However, the state's Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Mr Amidu Takuro, argued that the local government election cannot be held immediately and that the transition committees were constituted to run the affairs of the local government and LCDAs.

Sokoto LG caretaker members worried by S'Court ruling

Members of the local government caretaker committees in Sokoto State have expressed worries over the implementation of the ruling of the apex court.

A member of the caretaker committees who spoke on behalf of his colleagues under the condition of anonymity, however, said that the judgment, if implemented, will improve the living conditions of the people at the grassroots level.

"I just believe the Federal Government, having secured this landmark judgment, will have the political will to ensure the full implementation.

"When implemented, the judgment will definitely free local governments from the grip of state governors, who have turned us to cash out.

"It will aid development at the grassroots as well and we as members of ALGON nationwide, will intensify efforts to ensure the judgment is fully implemented," he added.

Also speaking, Akibu Abubakar, a civil society activist on good governance, commended the Federal Government for initiating the court case in the first instance but warned both the federal and state governments not to tamper with the judgment, while calling for its full implementation

Reopening borders will help stabilise food prices — Experts

EXPERTS have commended the Federal Government for the reopening of some land borders across the country, saying it will help stabilise the prices of food items.

They said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja on Sunday.

NAN reported that former President Muhammadu Buhari, had in August 2019, shut all land borders in the country as part of efforts to curtail smuggling and boost local production of rice.

However, on December 6, 2020, Buhari ordered the immediate reopening of four land borders, and on March 15, 2024, Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) reopened Kamba Border in Kebbi State in compliance with the directive of President Bola Tinubu to reopen land borders with Niger Republic.

Mr Benjamin Ekeyi, a public finance management and governance expert, said

the re-opening of the borders was a step in the right direction.

According to him, it is a long overdue decision, considering the negative effect the closure has had on Nigeria.

Ekeyi said reopening of the borders will lead to increased trade allowing for a greater flow of goods and services between Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

"This will in turn lead to a boost in economic growth through access to larger markets and the promotion of competition.

"With increased competition and a greater supply of goods, prices may decrease. This can benefit consumers by making goods more affordable," he said.

He said opening the borders could help stabilise prices by balancing supply and demand.

"Ensuring a steady supply of goods through open borders can help control inflation, especially for essential commodities," he added.

Ekeyi, however, said that re-opening the borders could pose security challenges as he called on the government to put in place adequate security measures at the borders.

He said adequate infrastructure would be required to handle increased trade volumes efficiently when the borders are opened.

"Government may need to make significant investments in infrastructure and technology required to maximise the benefits of the open borders," he said.

Mr Greg Maduakolam, an economist, said the reopening of some borders was a welcome development as it would help reduce inflation in the country.

Maduakolam, however, said as a sustainable measure, the Federal Government needs to engage in large-scale mechanised farming, adding that insecurity in the country must be addressed to be able to achieve this.

"It takes a long period for food production, so the borders should be open to

import food to address the food shortage.

"We need to produce. The government needs to ensure people go to the farm. But how can they go when their lives are being threatened?"

"The government has to do everything to tackle insecurity which will enable the farmers to go back to the farms.

"Government should move to full-scale production by engaging in mechanised farming," he said.

Mrs Zainab Ali, a distributor and wholesaler of non-

perishable food items said the reopening of borders would offer some relief, but not to a very large extent.

"It is a welcome development but the issue is that the prices of some items like pepper and tomatoes cannot be imported so it will not affect their prices

"We are also dealing with the issue of the exchange rate, insecurity and transportation costs, the government needs to address these issues before we can witness any significant reduction in food prices," she said.



From left, Chief Sustainability Officer, Lagos Free Zone, Vishal Shah; Onilekki of Lekki, His Royal Majesty, Olumuyiwa Ogunbekun; Team Captain, Iwerekun Community Senior High School, Idowu Olaitan; Chief Executive Officer, Lagos Free Zone, Adesuwa Ladoja; Group Finance Director, Tolaram, Dinesh Rathi and Senior Special Assistant to Governor on Commerce, Cooperatives, Trades and Investments, Hauwa Adeeyo, during the prize presentation to Iwerekun Community Senior High School, the winner of the eighth edition of Tolaram Science Challenge organised by Lagos Free Zone on Friday.

Stakeholders seek release of kidnapped 80-year-old professor in Ekiti

Yomi Ayeleso | Ado-Ekiti

RELATIVES and community leaders have called on the security agencies to ensure the timely and safe return of the kidnapped former Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) of Ekiti State University (EKSU) Ado-Ekiti, Professor Femi Olaofe.

Nigerian Tribune recalls that the retired university don was kidnapped in his residence at the Federal Housing Estate in Ado-Ekiti, the state capital last Tuesday.

The kidnapers, had last week, called the family and demanded N50 million as ransom to free the octogenarian, who is yet to be released as of Sunday evening.

The leaders of his community, Are-Ekiti, had met with the Commissioner of Police, Adeniran Akinwale, last week on the need for the security agencies to do everything possible in ensuring the safe return of the former DVC.

On Sunday, the Ekiti Council of Elders appealed to the state government to intervene to ensure the rescue of the victim, who is a member of the council.

The council's president, Professor Joseph Oluwasanmi and general secretary, Elder Niya Ajibulu, in a letter addressed to Governor Biodun Oyeibanji, expressed the council's confidence in the ability of government to act swiftly on the incident.

The Elders Council stated, "This council regrets to inform Your Excellency that records confirm that two of its members have been kidnapped right in their residences in Ado Ekiti.

"The first occurrence was in 2021, when the late Chief Biodun Ajayi, who was also the Chairman of Association of Retired Heads of Services and Permanent Secretaries, and a member of the All Progressives Congress (APC) was kidnapped.

"The recent occurrence took place on Tuesday, July 9, around 5:00 a.m. at Federal Housing Estate, Ado Ekiti, when Professor Olaofe was kidnapped. Up till now, no information from his abductors.

"Ekiti Council of Elders is aware of the spirited efforts of the governor towards improving the deteriorating security situation in the state.

"Such efforts, we note include, but are not limited to, providing human, material and financial resources to stem the growing crime waves in the State

"Your Excellency, we are using this medium to make official report of this incident. We also humbly request the intervention of government to rescue the retired professor from the kidnapers."

The council, which on Friday, visited the state's Commissioner of Police, Adeniran Akinwale, over the matter, said that although the police had assured Professor Olaofe would be rescued safely, all hands must be on the deck.

"We are equally calling on elders, we have met Afenifere, we have met APC elders, we are saying this is not a matter for only the police. We are saying that all should be involved in the effort to curtail these acts," the elders said.

Cholera: Lagos taskforce arrests eight over contaminated turkey in Epe

THE Lagos State Task force on Environment and Special Offences, Enforcement Unit, has arrested eight persons and confiscated dozens of cartons of contaminated turkey in Epe area of the state.

According to the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)*, the spokesperson for agency, Mr Gbadeyan Abdulraheem, who disclosed this on Sunday in a statement, said that the turkeys were seized by the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS).

He said they had also been set ablaze at a dump site, because they were contam-

inated and could cause cholera outbreak.

He noted that somehow, the contaminated turkeys found their way into the hands of unscrupulous elements trying to sell them to members of the public.

"Following tip off from a member of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Honourable Rasheed Shabi and the Oloja of Epe, Oba Kamorudeen Animashaun, the officials of the Lagos State Task Force swung into action.

"The task force raided the shanties close to the dumpsite where the contaminated

turkeys were said to have been destroyed and arrested eight suspects with some of the turkeys. Harmful weapons were recovered," he said.

The spokesperson, who quoted Oba Kamorudeen Animashaun, the traditional ruler of Epe in his reaction to the arrest, said that, the community was happy for the swift response by the task force to check the contaminated products.

"I am glad this menace has been nipped in the bud before it blows out of proportion. The state is currently battling to contain the chol-

era outbreak in some parts of the metropolis.

"We need not compound the issues rather, it's our responsibility to the citizenry to ensure sinister forces do not plunge the state into crisis for their own selfish gains.

"The NCS should always seek the support of sister agencies like the police, military, DSS and LAWMA when carrying out exhibit burning exercise.

"This is to avoid official compromise and ensure they are burnt beyond recovery by miscreants in the community," the Oba said.

Olatunji Dare at 80: Editors, media executives organise colloquium

THE Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), in collaboration with Vintage Press Limited, publishers of *Nation* newspapers, is organising one-day colloquium on Wednesday to celebrate Professor Olatunji Dare, who clocks 80 same day.

In a statement by NGE president, Mr Eze Anaba and the general secretary, Dr Iyobosa Uwugiaren, on Sunday, the professional body of editors and media executives, said that the event will start at 12:00 p.m. at Radisson Hotel, Isaac John Street, GRA, Ikeja, Lagos.

With "Dare at 80: Same craft, changing times — The Columnist as societal conscience", as theme, the col-

loquium will feature Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Diamond Publications, Mr Lanre Idowu, as lead speaker.

Other panelists include, President, Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), Mallam Kabiru Yusuf; former Managing Director of Guardian Newspapers Limited, Mr Emeka Izeze; NGE President, Mr Anaba; President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Chris Isiguzo, among others.

Professor Dare is the Editorial Adviser, *The Nation*, who is also renowned as a consummate teacher and seasoned columnist.

He is globally acknowledged as "master satirist,

stylist exemplar and master editorialist.

As journalist, scholar and public intellectual, Dare has also been praised as the "language connoisseur's delight", who deploys "a mixed menu of satire and mischievous parody" to exhaust a whole gamut of social, political, economic, cultural and international events relating to each with equal passion and dwelling on specifics with the ease and familiarity which only outstanding scholarship bestows.

Dare earned the first-ever First Class degree in Mass Communication from the University of Lagos, where he subsequently became senior lecturer in the Department of

Mass Communication.

He also holds a Master's degree in Journalism from Columbia University in New York, where he was the prizeman in editorial writing, and a Ph.D. from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

In 2014 when he clocked 70, the celebration by his constituency — journalism and media industry, produced a significant resource material entitled: "Public intellectuals, the public sphere & the public spirit — Essays in honour of Olatunji Dare."

The book was edited by Professor Wale Adebaniwa. It is hoped that the colloquium on Wednesday will lead to similar outcome.

S'Court verdict: Panic in states as 437 LGs risk zero allocation this month

Continued from Page 3

to boost development at the grassroots.

Sole administrators run affairs in Jigawa, NULGE welcomes S'Court ruling

Local government councils in Jigawa State are presently being led by the Directors of Administration and Strategy (DAS) as sole administrators, following the dissolution of the 27 local government executives by Governor Malam Umar Namadi.

The governor, through his Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, announced the dissolution on June 30, at the expiration of the three-year tenure of the elected chairmen and councilors.

Malam Umar Namadi has directed the director of administration to take over immediately with a plan to constitute local government councils caretakers committee pending the time the elections will be conducted, the commissioner had said.

However, the governor has neither set up the caretaker committee nor commenced any preparation for fresh council elections as of the time the Supreme Court gave its ruling on July 11.

While speaking on the judgment of the apex court, the chairman of the Jigawa State branch of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), Comrade Abubakar Garba Shitu said it would bring succour to the people, as "It is something that we were expecting a long time ago.

"Though this did not affect us in Jigawa state as local government councils are autonomous; all the councils are receiving all their federal allocations in full," he said.

Katsina to hold LG election in 2025

Though the tenure of the local government executives in Katsina state expired in April this year, the state government has only fixed the conduct of the local government election for February 2025. That development puts the state in the bracket of those that might receive zero allocation once the judgment of the Supreme Court comes into effect.

The decision by the state government has also drawn flak from opposition parties in the state, with Alhaji Lawal Dan-Ade, spokesperson of PDP in Katsina State saying that any decision to withhold local government allocations by the Federal government is welcome.

He said: "As far as we are concerned, the present local government chairmen

in Katsina State are not elected, they are simply caretaker chairmen. We suspect, shifting the date of the elections by one year, is just to find grace of manipulations during the elections.

"It's evident, how the ruling party, the APC allocated the slots to the people who are loyal to the governor; from that, you know he is preparing ground for the 2027 general elections.

"Now that the Federal government has decided to withhold the local governments' monthly allocation, let us see whether they are going to reverse the election date; we live to see how the local governments are going to be administered."

Caretaker chairmen in Kano raise concerns

Mixed reactions among stakeholders in Kano State are still trailing the Supreme Court decision granting financial autonomy to the local governments.

However, most of the interim caretaker chairmen, who preferred anonymity when contacted by the *Nigerian Tribune*, were split on the autonomy for the local governments in the country.

While a few of them said it was a welcome development, others said it could pave the way for elected chairmen to spend recklessly without proper checks and balances.

"We are not disturbed because our tenure was just six months since we were appointed by the state governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf," one of them said.

Others stated that the judgment will fast-track election process the moment the governor is aware that unelected caretaker chairmen will not be given federal allocation.

Osun to conduct LG poll in Feb 2025

In Osun, the state Independent Election Commission (OSSIEC) had earlier announced that the local government election will be held in February 2025 without giving a specific date.

Reacting to the Supreme Court judgment granting financial autonomy to local councils, the state chapter of the All Progressives Congress (APC) described it as a welcome development.

The chairman of the party in the state, Sooko Tajudeen Lawal, in a statement signed by the party's Director of Media and Information, Chief Kola Olabisi, explained that the situation would catalyse, fast track and percolate the development of the rural areas as there would not be any excuse for any of the local government council chairmen not to perform.

Also, the state chapter of

the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said it "welcomes the judgment as a law-abiding political party; the judgment came from the final and the highest court of law in Nigeria and it behooves every law-abiding citizen to respect the judgment."

PDP's spokesperson in the state, Mr. Oladele Bamiji, said in a statement: "The judgment to us, is a landmark development that we believe, will breed conversations capable of shaping our national life and necessary restructuring the nation requires for even development from top to the bottom of all tiers of governance in the country."

Zamfara: Stakeholders divided over LG autonomy

In Zamfara, members of the local government caretaker committees in the state described the financial autonomy granted LGs as a good omen that would bring more development to the grassroots.

According to the caretaker committee chairman of Gusau Local Area, Yahaya Garba, the development will bring more dividends of democracy to the people.

However, he explained that caretaker committee members were appointed based on their track records, stressing that they were screened by the state House of Assembly, and the final list assented by the governor.

"My fear is that I believe stopping allocation to caretaker committees will bring a setback in some local government councils, where developmental projects initiated by caretaker committees are ongoing," he said.

A former sole administrator of Gusau local government, Hon. Aliyu Umar Nasko, however, claimed that many of the caretaker committee members were appointed on the basis of political godfatherism.

He said: "The provision of appointing council caretaker chairman is that a civil servant of not less than GL 13, but now, the case is not as it should be. Governors mostly appoint politicians, not educationists.

"I'm of the opinion that due process should be followed in the local government; federal allocation should only be given to elected chairmen, not caretaker committees."

Imo plans LG poll for Sept 21

Meanwhile, the Imo State Independent Electoral Commission (ISIEC) announced September 21 for the conduct of local government election in the 27 local government areas of the state.

ISIEC chairman, Chief Charles Ejiogu equally announced the recruitment of ad-hoc

staff as part of their preparation for the election in the state.

The Social Democratic Party (SDP) has pegged its Nomination and Expression of Interest Forms at #150,000 and #50,000 for Chairmanship and Councillorship Positions respectively.

This was disclosed by the state chairman of the party, Ambassador Dr. Eluwa Ifeanyi Henry, in Owerri while speaking with the Nigerian Tribune.

Also, the ruling All Progressives (Congress APC) pegged its chairmanship and councillorship forms to N3 million and N1 million respectively.

The chairman of the party in the state, Honourable MacDonald Ebere, during a stakeholders' meeting at the weekend, also announced the commencement of the sale of Expression of Interest and Nomination forms for the upcoming Local Government Council Elections.

Anambra: APC demands immediate conduct of LG polls

The South-East Organising Secretary, of the APC, Mr. Dozie Ikedife (Jnr) has welcomed the ruling of the Supreme Court and charged Governor Charles Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State to immediately conduct local government election in the state.

In a chat with the *Nigerian Tribune* in Nnewi, at the weekend, Ikedife said that the financial autonomy of LG will boost development at the grassroots.

"I am delighted that finally the APC-led Federal Government of Senator Bola Tinubu through the recent Supreme Court judgment on the Autonomy of the third tier of government will finally force Governor Soludo of Anambra State to conduct local government area elections.

"Governor Soludo, will despite his lies, conduct LGA elections which he promised to do in six months from assumption of office but failed to do so.

"I wish to congratulate President Tinubu for this bold step in using the court to enforce the constitution of our country.

"Anambra voters are excited and we in the APC are happy with this new development as Anambra citizens will exercise their franchise to elect their council Chairmen and councilors," he said.

Scenario in Kebbi

In Kebbi State, the state Independent Electoral Commission had fixed a new election for the dissolved executives in the 21 local governments for August 31, 2024.

Recently, the Inter-Party

Advisory Council of Nigeria (IPAC), demanded a comprehensive electoral guideline from KESIEC towards the elections, advising that the election should be transparent and credible for all parties in the state.

The tenure of the executives elected in the last local government poll held on March 3, 2021, expired on April 3, 2024. Consequently, the councils were dissolved and caretaker committee members were sworn in

Rivers CTC chairmen busy dispensing perks of office, despite S' Court judgment.

The recently appointed chairmen and members of the caretaker committees in the 23 local government councils in Rivers State seem to be oblivious to the recent Supreme Court judgment affirming the illegality of the caretaker committee system in the administration of the local government areas.

The caretaker chairmen were preoccupied with dispensing the perks of their new offices with a seeming competition of who would appoint the most number of aides ranging from 300 to as many as 1,000 per chairman, even though their interim period is expected not to last more than three months.

The CTC members were appointed in June after the expiration of the three-year tenure of immediate past elected chairmen and councilors.

Days after the last Thursday's judgment of the Supreme Court which granted autonomy to the local governments the newly appointed Caretaker Committee Chairmen have not made any comments on the ruling. Many of them have however been busy announcing the appointment of hundreds of special and personal aides to work with them.

They are however equally concerned about the continued occupation of the local government secretariats by the police despite the ruling of a high court last week, which nullified the extension of the tenure of the former elected local government officials by a Port Harcourt High Court.

Question marks over federalism, restructuring

Though a number of Nigerians have hailed the ruling of the Supreme Court because of its possibility to free the 774 LGAs from financial control of the governors, the Pan-Yoruba Socio-political Organisation, Afenifere, and the Pan-Igbo socio-cultural organisation, Ohanaeze Ndigbo have rejected the ruling, describing it as a stab at the back for true federalism.

Afenifere, in a statement by the leader, Chief Ayo Ade-

banjo, and the National Public Secretary, Prince Justice Faloye, said that the ruling of the apex court amounts to "a mere judicial conspiracy."

"Rather than interpret the constitution to uphold its elementary but overriding federal principle which recognises only a two-tier federal structure of the central government and federating states, the Supreme Court played to the gallery and wittingly allowed itself a most retrogressive declaration that the power of the government is portioned into three arms of government, the federal, the state and the local government.

"While Afenifere frowns at corruption and misuse of public funds at levels of government, it condemns in most unmistakable terms the subjugation of the states and its constitutional roles, including the local government system to the whims and caprices of the federal government by any means, including obvious manipulation of the federation account as in the present case," Afenifere said.

Ohanaeze Ndigbo, is, however, of the view that for the judgment to enhance grassroots development, elections into the councils must be removed from the closets of the state independent electoral commissions.

The body's National Publicity Secretary of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo, Alex Ogbonna had said: "So we are very much interested in grassroots development. However, for the Supreme Court judgment to have full meaning, it must be independent and the state's independent electoral commission has to be reviewed. So long as the electoral body is managed by the state government, it will become very difficult for any other person to win an election in a state where the state government is in charge of the electoral body. In a nutshell, Ohanaeze is in support of the grassroots development."

"What the Federal Government is looking for is unachievable if the state electoral body conducts the local government election, what they are looking for will be unattainable. As long as the state government is in charge of the electoral body that conducts the election into local government councils."

*With reports from Ha-keem Gbadamosi, Biola Azeez, Kola Oyelere, Mohammed Abba, Yomi Ayeleso, Attahiru Ahmed, Olakunle Maruf, Adamu Amadu, Adeolu Adeyemo, John Kennedy Uzoma and Ayodele Ajoge, Michael Ovat and Amaechi Okonkwo.

Importers lose N248bn to cargo sampling at Lagos ports in five years

·Accuses NAFDAC, SON of frequent sampling collection

·We take insignificant quantity of samples —SON, NAFDAC

Tola Adenubi | Lagos

CLEARING agents at the nation's ports in Lagos have lamented that in the last five years, importers have lost N248 billion to multiple sampling of imported cargoes by different agencies of government at the nation's ports of Apapa and Tin-Can Island ports.

Speaking with the *Nigerian Tribune* exclusively in Lagos, Coordinator of the 100 percent Compliance Task Force of the National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Alhaji Ibrahim Tanko lamented that agencies like the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and Standards Organisation of

Nigeria (SON) all take cargo samples from imported containers for laboratory checks and never return the cargoes, culminating in huge losses for importers in the last five years.

According to Alhaji Tanko: "What importers are always told during sampling taking is that the samples will be returned to the owners after laboratory checks have been concluded and the cargoes certified fit for use in Nigeria.

"Most of our clients, the cargo owners are always baffled at the number of samples taken by SON and NAFDAC for laboratory checks. The two agencies will not take one sample. They take as many as five or ten each from an imported container and at the end of the day, won't return any of

the taken samples.

"in the last five years, the total amount of cargo samples that have been taken by SON and NAFDAC is more than N248bn. The samples include electronics, cables, food items, drugs and others.

"Is SON and NAFDAC telling us that it is all the taken samples that were used at the laboratories? Where are the unused samples? The cargo owners keep asking us these questions and it is beginning to look as if we are conniving with these agencies of government to rip importers off. That is why we are taking this issue to court. We need SON and NAFDAC to come and tell us what happened to the many samples that were taken in the last five years.

"If the container con-

tains imported televisions or cables, SON will take five to 10 pieces for laboratory test and won't return any. If it's food or drugs that is inside the container, NAFDAC will take the same amount and won't return any. Are these agencies of government telling us that all the samples taken were used at the laboratory? We need answers because importers are losing so much through these sampling process."

When contacted, the Deputy Director, Public Affairs at NAFDAC, Mrs. Christiana Obiazikwor explained that the amount of samples collected by NAFDAC is very insignificant in line with international best practice.

Mrs Obiazikwor said: "We usually just pick a little sample that we will need at the laboratory. We don't take

so much samples. Just a little quantity of the products that we want to use for the test.

"What do we need so much samples for? What we need is very little quantity of the product for our lab analysis. We work with international standards and they have the quantity of samples that must be taken. We won't take the amount of samples that will cause the cargo owners to incur losses."

Also speaking on the issue, a source close to SON revealed that why most of these samples are not returned to the importers is because they are shredded when they arrive at the laboratories and cannot be returned to the owners.

The source who wouldn't want his name in print as he has not been authorized to

speak on behalf of the agency stated that: "Yes, it's true that our officials take samples to the laboratories for standard verification, but most times, we shred these things to confirm their standards.

"For example, a television for instance. If we take one set of television to our laboratory, we break them down to test them. We strip these cargoes to pieces to test them at the laboratory and returning them back is not always something that is possible. You know it is always easier to break down an equipment than to fix.

"Most times, after these testing, we always send the results of these laboratory testing to the cargo owners, that's if the result is okay. If the result is not okay, we come after the container and clamp it down."

UBA @ 75: Customers set to win over N200m as UBA Legacy Promo kicks-off

IN line with its usual custom of rewarding loyalty, Africa's Global Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, is set to launch the "UBA Legacy Promo" as part of activities to mark its 75th anniversary.

This landmark campaign has been specially designed by the bank to celebrate UBA's rich legacy spanning over 75 years, as well as the bank's longstanding commitment towards rewarding its loyal customers in a grand style.

The UBA Legacy Promo which will run for a period of six months beginning from July 2024, will see the bank doling out of N200m in cash prizes as well as other consolidation prizes to its teeming customers from various categories.

This promo is open to several categories of Account holders including Bumper Account holders, Savings account, Kiddies & Teens Account holders as well as Nextgen account holders.:

Specifically, 75 customers will win the star prize of N1 million each during the promo, while 75 other customers will each win N500,000. 75 customers will win N250,000 each, while another 75 customers will each win N100,000.

In the promo, 75 Kiddies, Teens, and NextGen custom-

ers will receive N200,000 in scholarship rewards and N180,000 in pocket money rewards respectively, just as many more customers will win N10,000 monthly cash prizes. Other consolidation prizes including shopping vouchers, loaded prepaid cards, and additional exciting rewards.

To qualify for the promo, Bumper customers are expected to have a minimum of N 5,000 operating balance and multiples of N5,000 will give the customers a higher chance of winning. Customers under the savings category are expected to save a minimum of N 100,000 monthly, while multiples of N100,000 will give them more chances of winning.

Kiddies & Teens Account holders will however need to maintain a standing instruction of N10,000 monthly to qualify for the scholarship reward, while NextGen customers, are expected to maintain a minimum of N5,000 and get a debit card to qualify for the N180,000 pocket money reward.

UBA's Group Head, Retail & Digital Banking, Shamsideen Fashola, expressed his excitement about the promo and said the bank is always excited to reward loyalty while encouraging the savings culture amongst its customers.



Segment Executive, Children and Youth banking, United Bank for Africa (UBA)Plc, Ozioma Obi; Head, Retail Products and Sales, UBA, Prince Ayewoh; Head, Segment / Channel Marketing, UBA Plc, Femi Osobajo and Segment Executive, Retail, Chinyere Obi, UBA Plc, at the official Launch of UBA Legacy Promo, designed to reward customers in commemoration of the banks 75th anniversary, held in Lagos.

Lagos begins implementation of e-call-up for Lekki Port, others next month

Tola Adenubi | Lagos

IN a move to avert severe congestion by articulated trucks and improve the efficiency of logistics operations within the Lekki-Epe Free Trade Zone corridor, the Lagos State Government on Sunday announced the commencement of the e-call up system for managing truck movements within the axis from 1st August, 2024.

The State Commissioner for Transportation, Mr. Oluwaseun Osiyemi made this known on Sunday, stating that the move is driven by the urgent need to implement a sustainable, effective and technology-driven solu-

tion of truck movement in the Lekki-Epe Corridor.

He further disclosed that the application of e-call up system will help synchronize movement of trucks assessing the Lekki Deep Seaport and other industries within the corridor, starting from Eleko junction to Lekki Free Trade Zone, highlighting the State and Federal Government plans on road network expansion and inter-modal transport systems to streamline vehicular traffic and enhancing free movement in one of Lagos' most critical economic zones.

Also speaking on the development, the Special Ad-

viser to the Governor on Transportation, Hon. Sola Giwa, who is saddled with the enforcement of the e-call up system of the corridor mentioned that an interim arrangement is being put in place to decongest the roads through evacuation of all illegal tankers from the red zone by a joint taskforce of the State, LGAs/LACDAs, Security Agencies and Stakeholders, urging truck operators and logistics companies to comply with the new system to ensure its success.

The e-call up system, an advanced digital platform, is designed to regulate the entry and exit of trucks in the

Lekki-Epe area by scheduling and coordinating their movements. This system will help prevent the chaotic traffic situations often caused by the indiscriminate parking and movement of trucks within the corridor.

The Lekki-Epe corridor, a key economic hub in Lagos, is home to numerous industries, including the Lekki Free Trade Zone, the Dangote Refinery, and the Lekki Deep Sea Port.

The efficient movement of goods and services in this area is crucial for the state's economy, making the e-call up system an essential tool for sustainable development.

Cavista Holdings Limited appoints Wole Adedeji as Group Marketing Director

CAVISTA Holdings Limited has announced the appointment of Wole Adedeji as the new Group Marketing Director.

Adedeji brings over 20 years of extensive multi-industry and multinational experience to our team. His distinguished career cuts across

several blue-chip companies in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Technology, Telecommunications and Advertising sectors.

Adedeji's rich background in commercial leadership, customer acquisition, customer journey and lifetime

management, brand building, digital transformation, and revenue management makes him an invaluable addition to our leadership team.

His proven track record in developing winning portfolio marketing strategies, busi-

ness frameworks, commercial acumen, and thought leadership will significantly enhance our talented management team.

"Adedeji's wealth of experience and proven leadership make him a perfect fit for Cavista Holdings. We are con-

fident that his innovative approach and strategic vision will drive our marketing efforts to new heights," said Mr. Dele Odufuye, Managing Director of Cavista Holdings.

"We are delighted to welcome him to our team and look forward to the positive

impact he will make."

Adedeji is an alumnus of the University of Greenwich Business School in London, the Executive Business School of Imperial College London, the University of Lagos, and Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Anambra State.

gtcoplc.com


GTCO

TODAY WE BEGIN AGAIN



Thirty-four years ago, when we first opened our doors for business, we made a commitment to you to provide great experiences in financial services at every customer touchpoint. With more resources at our disposal and four strong lines of businesses in Banking, Payments, Funds and Pension Management to provide end-to-end financial services through every season of your life, our commitment remains the same!

**Today We Begin Again. It is the potential of possibilities,
not a single instance of newness.**

Edo govt alerts on plot to disrupt court proceedings

Suyi Ayodele | Benin

EDO State government, on Sunday, raised the alarm that some people in the state were planning to disrupt today's court proceedings on Monday as the suit filed by some Enigies (Dukes) against the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II, over their (Enigies) suspension, comes up at the Edo State high court sitting in Benin. The state government added

that information at its disposal was to the effect that some members of the opposition parties in the state were mobilising some suspicious people to besiege the Benin high court with a view to intimidate lawyers and the judges on official duties.

Briefing newsmen in Benin on Sunday, the commissioner for communication and orientation, Chris Nehikhare, flanked by the special adviser to Governor Godwin Obaseki on media projects, Crusoe

Osagie, warned against any move to thwart the peace of the state under any guise.

The two top government functionaries alleged moves by certain elements in the opposition parties and their supporters to besiege the Benin high court with a view to intimidate lawyers and the judges on official duties, warning that the Obaseki-led administration would not tolerate or allow any group of persons or politicians from the opposition parties to

cause chaos in the state.

Nehikhare called on parents and guardians to caution their wards and children against being used to ferment trouble or cause violence, adding that "Edo State government will not tolerate hoodlums in any guise to gather or match towards the court intimidating judges and lawyers.

According to the commissioner, the independence of the judiciary must be guaranteed at all times.

"The Edo State government will take all lawful actions against any individual or group found to be involved in activities that undermine the peace in the state.

"We urge all law-abiding citizens to reject and ignore any calls to disrupt the peace in the state and to refrain from engaging in any actions that could jeopardize public order.

"It is only through respect for the law and due process that we can ensure a just and

orderly society for all," Nehikhare reiterated.

On his part, the special adviser to Governor Godwin Obaseki on media projects, Crusoe Osagie, called on security agencies to be on the alert for any breakdown of law and order within the Benin high court.

He added that the state government would not spare any effort to ensure justice is served in dealing with anyone caught protesting against the judiciary.

Glo customers to enjoy AI learning services, win prizes

DIGITAL solutions provider, Globacom, has unveiled three innovative AI-focused services to give its customers delightful experience and provide a platform for them to monetize the benefits of AI and win prizes on the network.

In a press statement in Lagos, Globacom stated that "these services will not only provide invaluable insights into harnessing AI for everyday needs but also offer subscribers the chance to win exciting prizes through lottery draws".

The services include: 'Glo Awoof win EverWage', 'Glo Awoof win SMS-to-AI' and 'Glo Awoof win AI fortune.'

Glo Awoof win EverWage, a game service, provides a platform for subscribers to win a lifetime salary or participate in a monthly draw with a prize of N12 million. Subscribers are guaranteed regular payments, thus enabling them to enjoy a stable income stream without the constraints of traditional employment.

Globacom said, "Whether you seek supplementary income or financial stability, Glo EverWage promises peace of mind in today's dynamic economic environment."

The 'Glo Awoof Win SMS-to-AI' also known as 'Ask AI by Glo,' is an SMS-based service that delivers updates on news, sports scores, weather forecasts, traffic updates, educational tips, celebrity info, etc, to subscribers on any

type of phone". It leverages the power of AI to provide subscribers instant and accurate information on any topic at their fingertips by leveraging the power of AI without the need for internet.

The Glo SMS-to-AI also gives opportunity to subscribers to ask questions even when they have no internet by texting their questions to 20791 and will get immediate response from the AI platform. Subscribers who frequently ask questions stand the chance to win exciting prizes and will be notified through their Glo lines. On the other hand, the 'Glo Awoof Win AI Fortune' is an educational service which empowers users by teaching them how to leverage AI for generating income and improving business processes.

Globacom said, "From foundational AI concepts to advanced business strategies, our comprehensive curriculum equips you with the skills to harness AI for income generation and business enhancement. Subscribers can engage in interactive learning modules, earn certifications, and showcase their expertise in monthly competitions".

"Daily one-time or auto subscription to the services attracts N100; weekly one-time or auto subscription goes for N200, while a one-time or auto monthly subscription costs N500," Glo concluded



Son-in-law of the deceased, Professor Anthony Adegbulugbe; Chairman of Green Energy International Ltd, the first daughter of the deceased, Mrs Folake Adegbulugbe and the first son of the deceased, Mr Oyedapo Abiri, at the funeral service for Emeritus Professor Oba John Omoniyi Abiri, held at the weekend at Cathedral Church of Saint Philip, Aiyetoro, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

Osun College provost gets set for 150-hour's lecture marathon

Adeolu Adeyemo | Osogbo

THE provost, Foreign Links Campus, Moro, Osun State, Dr Nsikak Akpan, has announced plan to set a world record for the longest marathon lecture.

Akpan, in a statement on Sunday, said he has the permission of Guinness World Records to go on a 150-hours long marathon lecture starting from September 23, 2024.

He said he aimed to surpass the 139 hours record of the title holder, Arvind Mishra set in 2014.

The Public Health expert said most of the people who attempted Guinness World Records recently didn't touch on the areas of academics.

Akpan who will be lecturing on 'Relationship between environment and health,' at the college campus, said he decided to take up the challenge for the sake of academics.

He said, "Teaching for me is a hobby. So, that ignited my spirit to undertake the challenge of the marathon lecture.

"Recently, people have been attempting Guinness World Records in many areas but

very little has been done towards academics, no wonder Arvind Mishra has been able to hold on to the title for over a decade since March 16, 2014."

He added, "So, I felt it is only right for me to take up the challenge not just for the sake of the title but for the sake of academics which is my constituency.

"I'm aware that an Indian professor, Arvind Misra, lectured for 139 hours but to break the record, I need to go beyond that.

"So, the Guinness World Records has approved 150 hours for me as the period for

my lecture which is enough to break the record.

"The 150 hours will cover day and night. Guinness World Records in their arrangement gives a five-minute break for every hour.

"The lecture will take a normal classroom lecture format. It will be a student-teacher interaction. The students will be in the class for the period but it won't be a set of students that will be available for the 150 hours. A set of students according to Guinness World Records can only spend four hours," he said.

NMCC begins probe on FG's allegation against Daily Trust

THE National Media Complaints Commission (NMCC) is set to commence investigation on the Daily Trust newspaper news item entitled, 'LGBT: Nigeria signs \$150 billion Samora Deal'.

The NMCC had in a statement jointly signed by Eluem Emeka Izeze, Feyi Smith, Chairman and Interim Secretary respectively, disclosed that it had received a complaint from the Federal Ministry of Information calling for the verification of the news item as published in the July 4, 2024 edition of the newspaper.

The Federal Ministry of Information and Orientation in its complaint signed by Dr. Ngozi Onwudiwe on behalf of the Minister of Informa-

tion and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, described the news item as false and misleading information as well a severe threat to national security.

It was reported that the government had endorsed a European Union (EU) partnership agreement (referred to as the "Samoa Agreement") with member states of the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS), despite some conditional clauses that compel benefiting nations to support the agitations by the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) community for recognition.

The government described the report as "false and mis-

leading" and said that as a result of the alleged false report, "individuals and government officials have been subjected to hate speech, threats, intimidation, and cyberbullying across social media."

It, therefore, asked the NMCC to intervene in the matter and, among other things, carry out a thorough investigation of the alleged misleading publication.

It also demanded that the newspaper's management to publicly retract and correct the alleged false information, with equal prominence as the original article

In also asked that the newspaper's management be directed to issue an unequiv-

ocal apology for allegedly recklessly disseminating false information.

It also called on the NMCC to implement stricter editorial guidelines to prevent a repeat of such alleged unwholesome report by any newspaper in the future.

Meanwhile, the NMCC has sent a formal acknowledgment letter dated July 10, 2024 and signed by its Interim Secretary, Mr. Feyi Smith, to the Ministry, informing it that the complaint is receiving the attention of the Commission, and that the outcome would be duly communicated to the Government. The management of Daily Trust will be contacted shortly for its response.

Agric minister's promise

At a time when the Federal Government should be facilitating the steadying of increased and improved agricultural production and productivity, it is just embarking on stop-gap measures to address the prices of staple foods that have gone through the roof. This administration has been in the saddle for more than 12 months and that is more than enough for farmers in the country to have produced staple foods in sufficient quantities if the government had got down to brass tacks early enough, especially against the backdrop of its policy options which it should have realised would occasion the exacerbation of food inflation, among other consequences. However, it was just last week that the Federal Government, through the Minister of Agriculture, Senator Abubakar Kyari, unveiled the strategic measures aimed at addressing the high food prices nationwide. The minister, during the declaration of the strategies, added that the prices of items would crash in the next 180 days (January 2025). The minister also said the measures which include the suspension of duties, tariffs, and taxes for the importation of certain food commodities through land and sea borders, as well as the importation of 500,000 metric tonnes of wheat and maize, would tackle the rise in food prices. According to him, the commodities to be imported include maize, husked brown rice, wheat, and cowpeas and he stated that the imported food commodities would be subjected to a Recommended Retail Price (RRP).

It is good that the government will be ordering some of these food items in semi-processed form. At least, that will give local processors the opportunity to add value to the items using local labour. Other official measures designed to ease food inflation include engagement with relevant stakeholders to set a standard and purchase surplus food commodities to restock the National Strategic Food Reserve, "and a ramp-up of production for the 2024/2025 farming cycle." These measures are crucial judging by the excruciating impact of economic hardship in the land, which is largely fuelled by food inflation. It is nonetheless very disappointing that everything is still within the realm of verbal commitment. One year after, it is still a tale of promise by the minister and the current administration. The minister made lofty promises last year but there have been virtually no tangible outcomes to match the promises. Yet, another set of verbal commitments are being pushed out to the citizens at a time when official promises are hardly taken seriously again by many as a result of serial failures to deliver on previous promises. For instance, the same government promised that the Port Harcourt refinery would work by December 2023, and despite the rescheduling of the timeline to April this year, production has yet to commence in July.

A few questions on the details of the strategic measures to address rising prices food items are imperative in order to underscore the thoroughness or otherwise of the strategies. One, the minister gave a six-month timeline: what happens before then? Is the minister suggesting that the current scary trajectory of food inflation will have to be endured by the citizenry for the next six months, just like that? And in any case, what projections informed the choice of six months? Why not three months, for instance? Again, previ-

ously, the government said Nigerians must grow what they eat. Now, it is talking about importation. So, which is it? Worse still, is the emphasis on local food production being abandoned? And we may also ask, where are former President Muhammadu Buhari's rice pyramids that were celebrated with fanfare, even though the price of rice has been on the upward trajectory since then? What is the impact of the Anchor Borrowers Programme which reportedly constitutes a huge chunk of sticky debt in the Central Bank of Nigeria's books? Also recently, the government said it was opening up the grain reserves. So what happened? We ask these questions because we want the government to know that citizens are keeping tabs on its policies and promises and the delivery thereof, or lack of it.

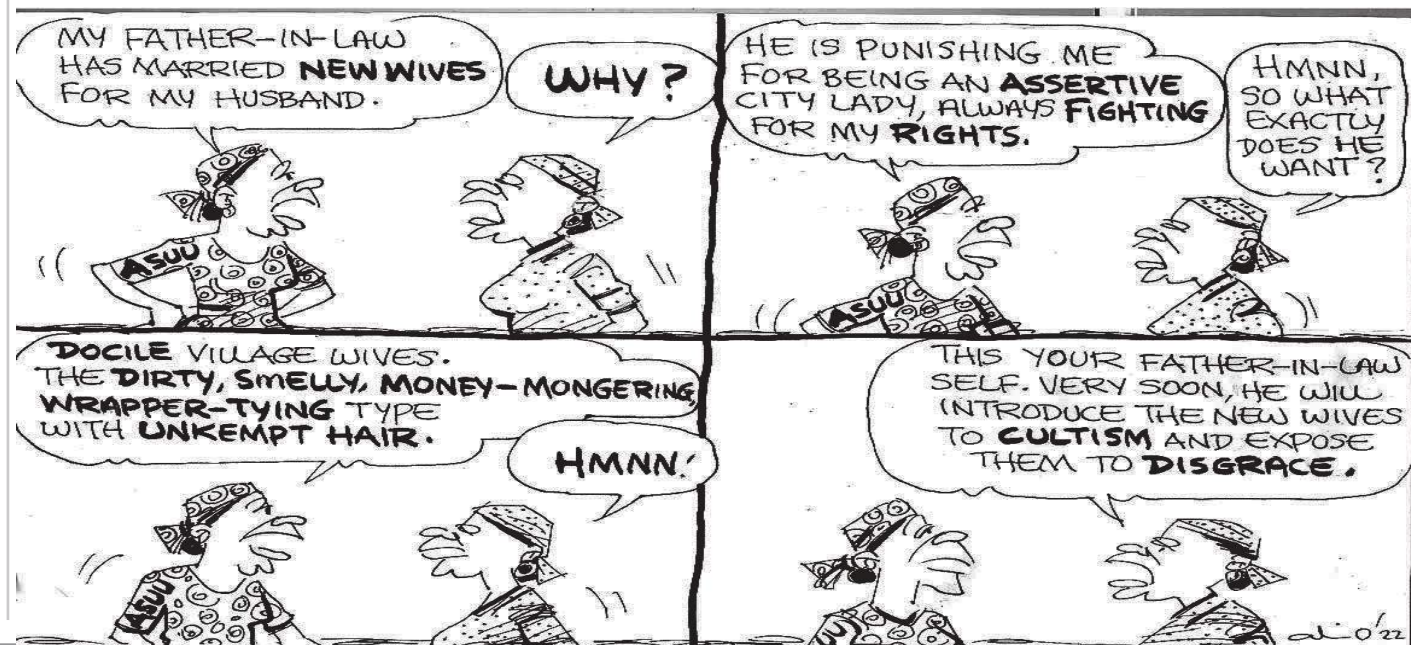
The government has a duty to ensure that all its policies and programmes are well thought out and brook no threshold of tolerance for failure. This is not the season to shoot in the dark. Every official decision or action must be taken with the goal of optimizing the outcome. This has not been the case lately, but the government can no longer, and should no longer, condone intolerable variance between the expected and actual results of official action. Against this backdrop, the government is urged to re-examine its proposed strategies to rein in food inflation and ensure that the probability of realising the expected outcomes is high. The citizenry is becoming increasingly unable to absorb shocks and disappointments.

The United Nations World Food Programme and the Action Aid Against Hunger recently ranked Nigeria among the world's hotspots, underscoring the country's dire food insecurity and crisis situation. Besides, the daily feedback from Nigerians across the social media platforms and during one-on-one interactions indicate that a lot of people are truly miserable and hungry. In other words, there is no gain-saying that the country is in extreme danger with regard to its food security situation, and so it needs all the solutions it can muster to change the potentially perilous course of events. Nonetheless, while we approve of any measure that will reduce the prices of food items, we will like to note that such measures should have been taken much earlier before the challenge assumed this dangerous dimension. Also, we believe that these measures, especially food importation, would not have been necessary at this point in time if the government had focused mainly on increasing food production and productivity from the outset. For instance, if the magnitude and ramifications of the expected spin-offs from some critical policy decisions of government had been properly dimensioned on an apriori basis, an immediate recourse to increase in acreage cultivation of food crops and enhancement of farmers' productivity in the production of these basic food crops ought to have been made. We welcome the official measures the government proposes to take to tackle escalating food prices with cautious optimism, even as we urge it to realise that it cannot afford to fail this time around.

It is imperative for the government to note that a more pragmatic and sustainable solution to the challenge of food inflation lies in increased local production of food crops and a deliberate introduction of measures aimed at bolstering local farmers' productivity.



It is imperative for the government to note that a more pragmatic and sustainable solution to the challenge of food inflation lies in increased local production of food crops and a deliberate introduction of measures aimed at bolstering local farmers' productivity.





MONDAY LINES

with Lasisi Olagunju

08111813053

lasgunju@yahoo.com

Ilorin and Dan Fodio's deadstock

JUSTICE Ibrahim Kolapo Sulu-Gambari, JCA became the Emir of Ilorin in August 1995 and decreed the 'Kolapo' in his name abolished. He said he should thenceforth be known and called Alhaji Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari; all former documents remain valid. He gave no reason for his decision but not a few of us thought it was his way of hiding the Yoruba content in the bloodstream of the House of Shehu Alimi, his Fulani roots. When Emir Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari took that unusual, surprising step, little did he know that the day would come when his aunt, Hajia Maryam, married to a king of Kano, and her sons would suffer discrimination and be tagged 'Yoruba'.

It is the way of toads to detour into any available crater whenever it discovers it can no longer find its way to the stream. The chairman of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) in Kano State, Hashim Dungurawa, a few days ago addressed journalists in Kano and alleged that President Bola Tinubu was working hard to impose the deposed 15th Emir of Kano, Aminu Ado Bayero, on the emirate because he shared same Yoruba background with the president. "If the President thinks he will use a few of his kinsmen in Kano and the alleged Bayero's Yoruba lineage to continue to keep the deposed Emir Aminu Ado Bayero in the state, let him wait for 2027, we will show him that those people will not help him," Dungurawa warned. When you heard his threats about 2027, you would think that Kano votes mattered in 2023. The votes were like rain water; they were surplus but they were wasted, unhelpful, unuseful to the person they were cast for. The same will happen in 2027.

The Kano NNPP man who spoke is not a lone wolf. He is a member of a preening pack that think themselves special and others of lesser breed. I understand what he voiced out has been in the whispering lips of the sands and boulders of Kano even before the emirship crisis unfolded. They call the deposed Emir "son of the Yoruba woman."

Around here, a child does not claim his father's compound and disclaim his mother's homestead. Aminu Ado Bayero is a grandson of the 8th Emir of Ilorin; Aminu's mother was a sister to the mother of the incumbent Ilorin Emir. Ordinarily, this long line of Fulani ancestry should be a plus for whoever has it in the Fulani north, but in the peculiar politics of our feudal Nigeria, the Ilorin ruling family would only be recognized as 'northern' if they knew their limits. I hope they know now that they are fringe elements and fringe elements can never be allowed to dip their hands into the main bowl of the house.

Hashim Dungurawa, the NNPP chief who said loudly what was being said in whispers, is even said not to be a Fulani himself. He is said to be Hausa - the original owners of Kano before the Dan Fodio Jihad threw them into the sea of the barren street. Did you notice the irony here?

There is no 'pure' blood anywhere. It is 201 years this year that Afonja lost his ancestral throne of Ilorin to the children of Sheikh Alimi, his spiritual adviser and friend. In those two centuries, the children of Alimi, from generation to generation, have remained Fulani only by name, history and ancestry. Mohammed Odolaye Aremu was a Dadakuada musical artiste of Ilorin ancestry. He died in 1997. He expended a great deal of his career years effusively singing the cultural and political histories of his city of birth for the careful to note and ponder on. Emir Mohammed Sulu-Gambari reigned in Ilorin from 1959 to 1992. He was the father of the present Emir Ibrahim Gambari. Odolaye waxed a record for the grand old man chanting his oriki. He serenaded him "Alabi Opó mo gbádùn oko mi ojo/ Súlú Oba gbogbo wa ní Ilorin...(Alabi Opo, I enjoy my lord / Sulu, our king in Ilorin). 'Alabi' is a personal Yoruba oriki; the 'Opo' that follows it is the lineage panegyric (oriki orilé). That lineage is Opómúléró, the nearest English translation is 'mainframe'. That is a lineage that feeds stubborn wine to stubborn child and proceeds to send that recalcitrant, drunk child to war. They proudly say they did it to Afonja who went to war never to come back:

Opó tí ò gboràn, e kojú è síná
Iná tí ò gboràn, e kojú è sómí
Omi tí ò gboràn, baba wa ní á fi pon'tí
Otí tí ò gboràn, e f'ómo líle mu
Omo líle tí ò gboràn, e rán an rojú Ogun
Sebí Ogun náà l'Àfónjá lo tí ò fi padà wálé mó
Omo kèké ta didùn, aso lèdidì èniyàn.

Emir Mohammed Sulu-Gambari was alive when Odolaye waxed his record and called him Alabi Opo. The Emir did not ask the bard to shut up and did not say he wasn't what he was called. He valued and enjoyed the Yoruba content of his existence so much that his children remained valued additions to the cultural assets of the land they inherited while maintaining their links to their paternal ancestors.

It is interesting that people who lost their 'critical' voices in the eight years of Muhammadu Buhari's ruinous reign are now raising their chords. And, Tinubu, because he is a Yoruba man, is the whipping boy for the years of the Buhari locust. What they do with the successor to their Bayajidda II is what

the Germans call "den Hund vor dem Löwen schlagen" - beat a dog before/for a lion. They think their throats should be the only expressway to heaven. Dungurawa's snide broadside to the Yoruba was vilely divisive, provocative and unfortunate but his Kano and Ilorin victims must thank him (and his masters) for waking them up. They (the victims), at least, should be aware now that the butterfly may be winged and fly like a bird, but it is not a bird and won't be allowed to enjoy bird privileges. It will be interesting to know how ex-emir Aminu, his brothers and sisters in Kano and their uncles in Ilorin took the statement from those they thought were their kinsmen - the authorities in Kano.

It is very interesting that for the Fulani North, because of the throne of Kano, Ilorin is no longer a Fulani town. God is great. But I commend them. It is always good to drop whatever is not yours no matter how long you've held on to it. Ilorin did not start as a settlement of the Fulani; the emirate there is a progeny of conquest. It is a victim of the characteristic Yoruba blind-fight for thrones. They fought and shredded their velvet, the Fulani picked it up and from it sewed an empire. The modern version of how 19th century Yoruba treated their heritage is what you see in Kano and Sokoto today. My friend in Kaduna told me that in Sokoto and Kano after the last elections, deposition of kings was the sole slogan: "Sabon Gwamna, Sabon Sarki" (new governor, new king). And they are working hard at it. That was the Yoruba misadventure that delivered Ilorin to Fulani forces in 1823/24.

There is an irony in some Kano people calling a prince or princess from Ilorin an outsider. The founder of Ilorin emirate, Sheikh Al-Salih (alias Shehu Alimi), was a Fulani who hailed from Tankara in present Niger Republic. It was from there he came to school in Bunza, present Kebbi State in today's Nigeria. Just like him, Uthman Dan Fodio, the founder of the Sokoto caliphate, and by extension the emirate of Kano, was born in Maratta in the Tahoua region of today's Niger Republic. An account said Alimi was a contemporary of Uthman Dan Fodio with Jibril bin Umar as their common teacher. But history did not say Alimi started out as a jihadist in the mould of Dan Fodio. He was a simple preacher and itinerant spiritualist who hawked his knowledge and power from one Yoruba town to the other. He was in Old Oyo, Iseyin, Ogbomoso and Kuwo before Afonja, a prince of Oyo, invited him to Ilorin in aid of his independence (rebellion) against his lord, the Alaafin. The rest is well recorded by history.

The more you read Ilorin's well-documented history, the more you understand the tapestry of its ethnic configuration. There are tomes of materials available to the patient who is also curious to know. There is Ahmad b. Abi's 'Talifakhbar al qurun min Umara balad Ilurin' (1912) with its critique by H. O. Danmole (1984). There is H.B. Hermon-Hodge's 'Gazetteer of Ilorin Province' (1929). There is H. O. Danmole and Toyin Falola's 'The Documentation of Ilorin by Samuel Ojo Bada'. There is J.A. Atanda's 'The Fulani Jihad and the Collapse of the Old Oyo Empire'. There is also Stefan Reichmuth's 'Imam Umaru's Account of the Origins of the Ilorin Emirate' (1993); and then, Ann O'Hear's 'Elite Slaves in Ilorin in the 19th and 20th Centuries' (2006). There are many more from local historians here and there.

Ilorin has the enviable luck of being a melting pot for all races, "tribes and tongues". You find there people who would proudly say their ancestors were Fulani or Hausa or Kanuri or Dendi, Nupe, Baruba, Wangara, even Arabs. Yet, they are all 'Yoruba' today and they are proud to speak the language. You want to ask why the conqueror speaks the language of the conquered? It is because the Yoruba gene is very resistant to assimilation; the conquerors only got the throne, the soul refused to stay in their pouch. The Yoruba culture does what dams do to their surrounding environment. Their backwaters fester and consume their catchment areas. It is arguably the only African culture that survived slavery outside Africa. Go to Brazil, to Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago, Saint Lucia, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, about 200 years after slavery, descendants of Yoruba slaves there proudly raise the banner of their fathers. That is the case with the essential Yoruba-Ilorin.

While politicians in Kano are busy making identity nooses to hang their opponents, their street is dead drunk with tears of hunger and want. But the people rarely matter in matters like this. They won't ever revolt; re-vote of their tormentors is what they will do. So, I have no dog in the bitter contest for the throne of Kano. The same should be our reaction to the machete attacks on the traditional powers and privileges of the Sultan of Sokoto by the state governor. At best, I watch events in those places the way I watched Sunday's epic final of Euro 2024 football match between England and Spain. The Game of Thrones in the Fulani north, from Kano to Sokoto, is therefore, to me, entertainment. We run commentaries such as this only because, as the Yoruba say, it is always good to show the goopy snail that its eyes are caked with mucus.

Krishna Udayasankar, Singapore-based Indian writer and author of '3' - a novel on the founding of Singapore, believes that "no empire lasts forever, no dynasty continues unbroken" How is the Kano kingship crisis going to end for the ruling class in northern Nigeria? When you combine what is happening in that

city with the simmering volcano in Sokoto, would you be wrong if you say the signs portend sundown for the elaborate empire built by Dan Fodio in the first decade of the 19th century? No intervention can save that empire from itself. Maybe that elaborate realm has to die for Nigeria to live and thrive.

While the battle for thrones rages on, the Dan Fodio clan got a whole ministry from Tinubu last week. The president called it the Ministry of Livestock Development. I heard their elites' happy footfalls. Who told the Fulbe that their problem would be over with a special ministry for their cows? Something tells me they know too that they are only interested in the billions that will be pumped into that loss centre. My dictionary says the opposite of livestock is deadstock. Something tells me that is the fruit from that luxuriant tree unless they change their ways. But they won't change. For them, it is already past midnight.

LGs and Tinubu's supreme cut

ON a bright, randy day in Lagos in the year 2015, a judge hurriedly used the law to dissolve a troubled marriage. Three months later, the woman was discovered impregnated by the tender-hearted judge. I pray that won't be the case with the benevolent presidency of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Nigeria's local governments.

Roman orator, Marcus Tullius Cicero, said "the closer the collapse of the Empire, the crazier its laws are." He is also credited with saying that "the more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws." These interventions from antiquity came to my mind as I read the Supreme Court's epochal decision on the relationship between our states and our local governments last week.

Local governments are now free to have their money the way they had it before the 1999 constitution tied them to the apron strings of the states. Governors cryptically reacted that the judgment had relieved them of the burden of feeding those who should starve among the councils. I am interested in how the Supreme Court's order is implemented. I am also interested in knowing the motive and the motivations of the initiators of the case. I hope the councils have not been discharged into the house of death from the bedroom of disease.

How will the states handle this situation? How did Tinubu handle his own 20 years ago? If you are bold and brave and you are in power and you have the Lagos-Ibadan press behind you, the Supreme Court and the law are nothing. On December 10, 2004, the Supreme Court, in the celebrated case on the seizure of Lagos State's local government funds by the government of President Olusegun Obasanjo, ruled that statutory allocations be released to only the 20 local governments recognized by the constitution. Specifically, the Supreme Court ordered that: "The 57 Local Government Areas established by Law No. 5 are inchoate until the National Assembly passes the Act necessary under Section 8(3) of the Constitution. Therefore, the new 57 Local Government Councils are not entitled to receive funds from the Federation Account. Accordingly, the declaration sought (by the Federal Government) is granted." That order of the apex court did not stop the then Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu from using the funds of 20 local government councils to fund his illegal 57 councils. He did it yesterday and got what is famously known as Conference 57 - a crowd of well-healed, monied foot soldiers of the Godfather at the grassroots of Lagos. He is doing it now, enlarging that coast to a potential Conference 774 of Halleluyah choristers. He will do it tomorrow - even if you jump into the Lagoon. Our state governors, if they want, can go learn from him.

In my column of June 3, 2024, I expressed some fears on what was eventually unveiled last week Thursday by the Supreme Court of Nigeria. I wrote that: "Those who allowed themselves to be distracted slept last night as free people; they woke up this morning in slavery. So, please refuse to be distracted. As you discuss the president's strange choice of anthem over people's hunger, pay due attention to everything his government is doing. Pay more than ordinary attention to the local government autonomy case at the Supreme Court. That is a case with a potential to determine (or undermine) your freedom, the health of our country and the safety of our democracy. Why is fox suing hawk in defence of chicken? Autocracy incubates itself in populist confusion. The case is about that. We need vibrant states to checkmate the behemoth in Abuja. We need the local governments to drive development at the grassroots. The rapacious Federal is the elephant unsettling the room. Think of an imperial president with very rich 774 'liaison officers' sitting as council chairmen across the country. Think of a federal government with limitless powers engaging a disparate set of 36 weakened, impotent states. Think of Nigeria as a unitary state. The court case has the potential to achieve that. The deft moves of today have replicas in history. Think of Napoleon Bonaparte and France of 1799. Think of Germany of 1933 and the rise of the strongman. Think of the aftermath. Think."

That was last month. I don't know if it is not too late to think now.

Naira remains subdued despite CBN's injection of \$122.67m, \$35.18bn in reserves accretion

Chima Nwokoji | Lagos

DESPITE an increase in foreign reserves to \$35.18 billion and the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) injection of \$122.67 million into the market, the naira has experienced a significant depreciation.

On Friday, July 12, the naira closed at N1,563.80 against the US dollar, marking a new low for July.

This depreciation follows a slight appreciation the previous day and comes despite the CBN's sale of \$122.67 million to authorised dealers over two days.

Throughout the week, foreign exchange (FX) turnover fluctuated, peaking at \$348.82 million on Thursday but sharply declining by 63.73 percent to \$126.50 million on Friday.

The market saw a range of N1,496.46 to N1,586 per dollar, edging closer to the N1,600 mark.

Analysts say these developments underscore ongoing challenges in stabilising the naira amidst economic uncertainties and fluctuating market conditions.

This comes after the CBN governor, Olayemi Cardoso, assured that the naira would experience more stability

due to the elimination of distortions and increased stakeholder confidence in the new forex market regime.

Similarly, data from the CBN revealed that Nigeria's gross reserves rose to \$35.18 billion as of July 10, representing a growth of 6.35 percent from the \$33.08 billion gross reserve balance as of June 10, 2024.

This is the first time the reserves have crossed the \$35 billion mark under the administration of President Bola Tinubu.

According to CBN data, as of May 30, 2023, the reserves were \$35.09 billion, about 14 days before the

introduction of the FX unification policy in June 2023.

However, when the CBN announced the FX unification policy, the external reserves dropped to \$34.66 billion.

From July to December 2023, the reserves fluctuated within the \$33 billion range.

Analysts suggest that the recent growth in reserves may be unsustainable since the accretion is largely associated with foreign debt accumulation, which is expected to minimise the impact on the exchange rate, projected to remain around N1,400 to N1,500.

Meanwhile, traders attribute the naira's weakness to increased demand for dollars by individuals ahead of the summer holiday and importers needing dollars to import raw materials.

The CBN has said it plans to double the diaspora remittance inflow this year through a steady flow of foreign exchange into the country.

However, Abiodun Keripe, Managing Director of Afrinvest Research and Consulting, cautioned that it is too early to conclude that the renewed pressure on the naira is due to the coming summer holiday, as it is just

one-day depreciation.

He noted that an expected \$2.5 billion inflow could bolster external reserves and strengthen the naira.

Keripe stated that Nigeria is operating a willing-buyer, willing-seller market and the exchange rate is determined by the level of liquidity in the market.

Analysts believe the scarcity of 'hard currencies,' particularly dollars, in the nation's foreign exchange market is a major concern for multinationals operating in the country and has been one of the reasons some international firms have left Nigeria in recent times.

SEC, AfDB host capacity building workshop on green finance

Joseph Inokotong | Abuja

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Nigeria, in partnership with African Development Bank (AfDB), is set to host a ground-breaking capacity building workshop for capital markets operators on green finance.

The initiative, funded by the Capital Markets Development Trust Fund (CMDTF), administered by the AfDB and facilitated by Climate Transition Limited, aims to fortify Nigeria's position as Africa's leading hub for green and sustainable finance.

The workshop, scheduled for next week in Lagos, is a vital step in consolidating these gains and ensuring the Nigerian capital market meets the goal of becoming Africa's deepest and most liquid capital market, contributing to the nation's socio-economic development.

Over the past decade, the Nigerian capital market has experienced substantial

growth, marked by increased activities in both equity and bond markets.

In alignment with global sustainability mandates, the SEC launched rules for green bonds issuance in December 2018, creating a conducive environment for green finance.

According to Director-General of the SEC, Dr Emomotimi Agama, "The SEC is committed to fostering a sustainable financial ecosystem in Nigeria. This workshop is part of our broader strategy to integrate green finance into our capital markets and attract more sustainable investments. By enhancing the capabilities of our market operators, we are not only promoting environmental stewardship but also driving long-term economic growth."

The primary objective of the workshop is to enhance the knowledge and understanding of capital market operators regarding green finance.

AAASME underscores relevance in economic growth of Africa, calls for policymakers' support

By Soji Ajibola

THE All Africa Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (AAASME) has underscored its relevance in the growing of the African economy.

President of the Association, Mr Ebiekure Jasper Eradiri, made this known in a paper presented at a symposium with the theme, 'Scaling up Interoperability: Using Mobile Money to Buy and Sell Across Africa.'

Eradiri disclosed that SMEs make up approximately 90 percent of businesses on the continent, providing about 80 percent of jobs opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa alone.

the true drivers of economic growth and development of our continent.

He, however, added that despite its critical role, the SMEs economic impact in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remains relatively modest, constituting only 35 percent in Africa.

"This is so because SMEs face significant challenges that hinder their ability to fully leverage the vast African market. Many SMEs struggle with inadequate infrastructure, limited access to finance and high operational costs, just to mention a few. These challenges prevent us from scaling our operations and reaching wider markets," he said.



From left, Doyen of the Capital Market, Alhaji Rasheed Yusuff; CEO, NGX Regulation Limited (NGX RegCo), Mr Femi Shobanjo; Head, Primary Market, Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), Mr Tony Ibeziako; GMD/CEO, NGX Group, Mr Temi Popoola; Chairman, NGX, Mr Ahonsi Unuigbo; Chairman, NGX Group, Alhaji (Dr) Umaru Kwairanga; Group CEO, Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc (GTCO), Mr Segun Agbaje and the Deputy Managing Director, Guaranty Trust Bank, Mr Jide Okuntola, during the Facts Behind the Offer presentation by GTCO Plc, recently, at the NGX, Lagos.

Adesina faults FG's approval of duty-free food imports, says policy is depressing

PRESIDENT of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr Akinwunmi Adesina, has raised concerns over the Federal Government's plan to import food, stating that the policy is depressing.

According to *Nairamet-rics*, he stated this during the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa retreat held in Abuja on Saturday where he spoke on the theme, 'Food Security and Financial Sustainability in Africa.'

Adesina noted that Nigeria cannot rely on food imports to stabilise prices and resort-

ing to it could destroy the country's agricultural policy.

He explained that the country should be producing food to keep prices stable and reduce pressure on the foreign exchange front whilst creating jobs.

He said: "Nigeria's recently announced policy to open its borders for massive food imports just to tackle short-term food price hikes is depressing."

"Nigeria cannot rely on the importation of food to stabilise prices. Nigeria should be producing more food to stabilise food prices while creat-

ing jobs and reducing foreign exchange spending, which will further help stabilise the naira.

"Nigeria cannot import its way out of food insecurity. Nigeria must not be turned into a food import-dependent nation."

Furthermore, Dr Adesina noted that Africa constitutes nearly a third of the over 780 million people worldwide who are hungry, emphasising the critical role of agriculture in diversifying economies and transforming rural areas, where more than 70 percent

of Africa's population resides.

"It is clear therefore that unless we transform agriculture, Africa cannot eliminate poverty," he insisted.

Adesina noted that Africa holds 65 percent of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land, which is crucial for feeding an estimated 9.5 billion people by 2050. Therefore, what Africa does with agriculture will determine the future of food in the world.

"Essentially, food is money. The size of the food and agriculture market in Africa will reach \$1 trillion by 2030," he stated.

Halogen Group dominates 2024 OSPAs, named Nigeria's Best Security Company

By Nurudeen Alimi

Halogen Group, Nigeria's security risk management and safety solution organisation, has been voted as Nigeria's Most Outstanding Security Company for 2024.

The announcement came from the UK head office of the Outstanding Security Performance Awards (OSPAs), a global body that annually celebrates excellence in security management.

The OSPAs, highly sought after for their affirmation of superior service delivery, recognise top security companies across Europe, Africa, America, Asia, Australia and Canada.

Halogen Group not only won the Outstanding Contract Security Company of the Year but also secured the highest number of OSPAs trophies for 2024.

This includes the Outstanding Security Training Initiative

award for the national impact of its training and capacity development hub, Academy Halogen.

Additionally, Halogen Group's CEO, Wale Olaoye, who is widely sought as a distinguished security risk management expert and thought leader, received the coveted OSPAs Lifetime Achievement Award, making him Africa's first inductee into the newly instituted Global Hall of Fame for security leaders.

This year's outstanding performance marks the fifth consecutive time Halogen has outshone its peers with multiple category wins in the fiercely contested OSPAs.

Reacting to the accolades, Halogen's founder and Chairman, Dr Biodun Shobanjo, expressed gratitude to the company's clients for their continued trust and praised the management and staff for driving the company's vision.

BUSINESS

Group Business Editor

Joseph Inokotong

m:08130286350 e:jnkokotong@yahoo.com

Ending the food insecurity conundrum

Government at all levels must tame the scourge of lingering insurgency, kidnapping, and banditry with the severe and far-reaching consequences for the economy, in addition to evolving robust cooperation between the fiscal and monetary authorities to succeed in any viable effort to tackle the prevailing food crises in the nation, writes JOSEPH INOKOTONG.

NIGERIANS are renowned for their resilience when faced with formidable odds but the current food insecurity and runaway inflation in the country seem to have conspired to overstretch their limits.

People no longer talk about prices of basic food stuffs like tomatoes and pepper again because of their high rate of fluctuation within a short space of time. In most cases, goods sold at a particular price in the morning often go up by noon or evening, depending on the sellers. What occupies the attention of many Nigerians is how to trudge on, and make do with the affordable while clutching on hope - that things will get better in the near future.

Experts have attributed the rise in prices of key food commodities in the Nigerian market mostly to the lingering insecurity, high cost of transportation of products, climate change and the instability of the exchange rate of naira.

In some aspects, things have started looking up, according to the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Olayemi Cardoso. Inflation, which reflects the change in the price of goods and services, has begun to moderate as month-on-month inflation has dropped by 50 percent. "Between February and now, the month-to-month inflation has decreased by 50 percent. I'm confident that in the not too distant future, things will begin to stabilize," Cardoso said.

Indeed, the headline of month-on-month inflation rate in Nigeria has slowed for a third time in a row in May 2024, perhaps, the clearest indicator yet that the CBN's monetary policy tightening measures enacted this year are having the intended effect.

Headline inflation decelerated in May to 2.14 percent from a month earlier, slowing from 2.29 percent in April and 3.02 percent in March, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). The monthly rate has declined from as high as 3.12 percent in February.

Reflecting a slowdown in price increases for essential goods, food inflation also fell for a third consecutive month to 2.28 percent in May, from 2.50 percent in April, and as much as 3.79 percent in February, the NBS data show.

The monthly inflation trend underscores conviction from members of the CBN's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) that a combination of tighter monetary policy and appropriate coordinated fiscal measures from the Federal Government will prove effective in arresting the sharp increase in the cost of living that has afflicted Nigerians since the aftermath of the COVID-19 epidemic.

While year-on-year inflation has continued to inch higher, the monthly numbers that the CBN believes are the all-important indicators isolating the impact since it began raising interest rates in February this year.

"Slowly but surely, the inflation tide is turning," said Muhammad Sani Abdullahi, Deputy Governor, Economic Policy Directorate at the CBN.

"While the numbers are not yet uniform for all measures, such as year-on-year across the entire country, we will continue to work diligently with coordinated policy measures to ensure that the worst of the inflationary cycle is behind us in the nearest future," he added.

Year-on-year inflation slowed in May for 13 Nigerian States, including Abuja, Akwalbom,



Food items in the market.

Borno, Cross River, Delta, Katsina, Ondo, Oyo, and Rivers.

The month-on-month inflation rate decline, which is nationwide, is reflected in a slowing pace of price rises for some food staples, the CBN contends. Cardoso has made tackling inflation his paramount mission as the essential path to achieving sustainable economic growth in the mid- to long-term and improving the standard of living for ordinary people.

Based on available data, inflation has actually fallen month-on-month but in reality, food prices remain high in the market due to a combination of factors.

Food inflation may have fallen for a third consecutive month in May to 2.28 percent, but the grocery bill probably has not, and people should not expect to save money by eating out.

"We have a collision of factors that are impacting food prices," says Nada Sanders, distinguished professor of supply chain management at Northeastern University. Think about it like waves on the beach, she says. "Some are coming really fast, and some are coming really slow," Sanders says, "Others are easing and others are still kind of hitting and are about to hit - but it's a whole host of factors that have an impact and they have cascading effects."

One of the factors, as highlighted by Cardoso, is the N27 trillion Ways and Means granted by the bank's former management to the Federal Government, along with N10 trillion in intervention programmes across various sectors. These have been absorbed, leading to hikes in the benchmark interest rate and recent increases in inflation.

"Sadly, we have a situation where a lot of money supply entered the system. We all saw Ways and Means soar to N27 trillion and interventions of N10.5 trillion. This has its con-

sequences. In large part, that is what we are paying for now," Cardoso said.

Also, on the Foreign Exchange (FX) volatility, which has been blamed for the rising costs of commodities, Cardoso explained that the bank had to correct some dysfunctions in the financial system, such as illicit flows and non-compliance with rules, to ensure market stability. "Sometimes, there is pushback from those who want to continue doing things a certain way. There's also a need to show people that there will be consistency in our ways before the market will settle.

"There is no more front-loading of FX requests. Even the portfolio investors who left have come back. They were comfortable that there was a plan, and that the plan was headed in a certain direction. These dysfunctions are beginning to smooth out due to the confidence and transparency seen in the markets," Cardoso said.

Reaffirming that the naira has seen the worst of sharp volatility and is now in calm waters, he added, "A lot of the wide swings were attributed to distortions in the system, but we are beginning to smoothen out as a result of a better understanding of the market, transparency, and doing things right."

In the same vein, insecurity is another contributor to Nigeria's food crisis. The security threats not only undermine national stability and the rule of law but also have adverse effects on the economy, affecting price, output, employment, trade balance, poverty, inequality, defense expenditure, government budget patterns, socio-political environment, and several others.

The high level of insecurity in the country, particularly in the northern region, has become a threat to business activities. The lack of se-

curity continues to deter prospective investors from engaging in business activities in these areas, leading to a stagnation of commercial operations with the attendant consequences.

The scourge of lingering insurgency and banditry has severe and far-reaching consequences for the economy of the affected areas, and the incessant activities of bandits have created a pervasive sense of fear and insecurity, directly impacting economic activities and development in the region.

Given the region's predominant reliance on agriculture as the cornerstone of its economy, the presence of bandits has disrupted agricultural activities, as farmers are often afraid to cultivate their fields due to the risk of attacks. This disruption has led to a decline in food production, threatening food security for millions of people. The displacement of people has also resulted in the abandonment of farmlands, exacerbating the food crisis, according to BugetIT.

Banditry has forced many people to flee their homes, abandoning businesses and livelihoods. The economic displacement of individuals and communities has created a ripple effect, affecting local markets, small businesses, and overall economic productivity.

While the north may be considered a hot-spot for insecurity, there is a troubling trend emerging in the south, where security crises are gradually encroaching, posing a new set of challenges for the region. This has already affected businesses and farming in the region.

Also, abduction for ransom has become the new money-making venture for kidnapers. This surge in abductions has instilled a pervasive sense of fear and uncertainty among the populace, with many feeling increasingly vulnerable to such threats.

The impact of insecurity on the economy is multifaceted and deeply concerning. Addressing the security situation is imperative, not only for the population's safety but also for the economic stability, food security, and development of the country.

Interestingly, the Federal Government has unveiled measures to tame the high food prices in the country. It outlined other measures as "strengthening and accelerating dry season farming nationwide, embarking on aggressive agricultural mechanisation to reduce drudgery, lower production costs, and boost productivity, collaborating with sub-national entities to identify irrigable lands and increase land under cultivation."

The series of strategic measures to address the high food prices currently affecting the country will be implemented over the next 180 days: "150-day duty-free import window for food commodities; suspension of duties, tariffs, and taxes for the importation of certain food commodities through land and sea borders. These commodities include maize, husked brown rice, wheat, and cowpeas."

The government explained that: "Imported food commodities will be subjected to a recommended retail price. We understand concerns about the quality of these imports, especially regarding their genetic composition. The government assures that all standards will be maintained to ensure the safety and quality of food items for consumption."



The measures taken by the government so far are laudable but cannot on their own tackle the prevailing high cost of food items in the country without addressing adequately the causative factors.

MONEY MARKET

with Chima Nwokoji m: 08032637535 e:chimatitus@yahoo.com

CBN weighted Average foreign exchange rates

Date	Currency	Buying(NGN)	Central(NGN)	Selling(NGN)
7/11/2024	US DOLLAR	1559.79	1560.29	1560.79
7/11/2024	POUNDS STERLING	2016.4965	2017.1429	2017.7893
7/11/2024	EURO	1697.0515	1697.5955	1698.1395
7/11/2024	SWISS FRANC	1746.6853	1747.2452	1747.8052
7/11/2024	YEN	9.8428	9.846	9.8491
7/11/2024	CFA	2.5369	2.5469	2.5569
7/11/2024	WAUA	2044.2998	2044.9551	2045.6104
7/11/2024	RIYAL	415.8553	415.9886	416.1219
7/11/2024	DANISH KRONA	227.2265	227.2994	227.5569
7/11/2024	SDR	2059.3907	2060.0509	2060.711

Money Market

	July 05, 2024	July 12, 2024	W-o-W % Change
OPR (%)	32.06	31.61	-1.40%
O/N (%)	32.53	32.45	-0.25%

Interbank Rates

Date	Rate Type	Rate Range	Weighted Average
7/11/2024	OBB Rate	30.50 - 35.00	32.14
7/10/2024	Call Rate	32.25 - 32.25	32.25
	OBB Rate	26.00 - 34.00	31.82
7/9/2024	Call Rate	32.25 - 32.25	32.25
	OBB Rate	26.00 - 34.00	31.94
7/8/2024	OBB Rate	26.00 - 37.00	31.90
7/4/2024	Call Rate	32.25 - 32.25	32.25
	OBB Rate	26.00 - 35.00	31.85
7/3/2024	Call Rate	32.25 - 32.25	32.25
	OBB Rate	26.00 - 35.00	31.72
7/2/2024	OBB Rate	25.50 - 33.00	31.34
7/1/2024	Call Rate	29.00 - 29.00	29.00
	OBB Rate	23.25 - 32.25	27.08
6/28/2024	Call Rate	26.00 - 26.00	26.00

Average Benchmark Yields of the FGN Bonds

	July 05, 2024	July 12, 2024	W-o-W % Change
Short Tenor	18.91	20.21	6.87%
Mid Tenor	19.15	19.35	1.04%
Long Tenor	18.00	18.07	0.39%

Average Benchmark Yields of the Treasury Bills Market

	July 05, 2024	July 12, 2024	W-o-W % Change
T. Bills (%)	22.69	23.61	4.05%
OMO bills (%)	23.73	23.63	-0.42%

Nigerian Treasury Bill Auction Result July 10, 2024

Tenor	Amount offered (N'bn)	Total Subscription (N'bn)	Amount Sold (N'bn)	Stop Rate (%)
91-day	27.11	29.71	28.47	16.30
182-day	1.49	9.64	9.16	17.44
364-day	137.50	269.31	169.64	21.24

Money Market Indicators (In Percentage)

Month	2024		
	February	March	April
Inter-Bank Call Rate	19.25	27.95	29.88
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)			
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	22.75	24.75	24.75
Treasury Bill Rate	17.03	16.53	16.24
Savings Deposit Rate	5.86	6.28	6.29
1 Month Deposit Rate	8.69	9.90	10.68
3 Months Deposit Rate	9.89	10.90	11.65
6 Months Deposit Rate	9.61	10.54	11.74
12 Months Deposit Rate	10.75	11.04	11.23
Prime Lending rate	15.06	15.70	15.54
Maximum Lending Rate	26.55	29.38	29.49

US-based expert exposes hidden dangers in Nigeria's latest \$2.5bn IMF loan

Stories by Chima Nwokoji | Lagos

AS Nigeria secures a \$2.5 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to meet its financial needs, there is discomfort in some quarters. Despite the naira's depreciation, the loan must be repaid in Western currencies, and since repayments do not start until 2034—long after the current politicians have left office—the loan's terms and conditions have the potential to lead to long-term insolvency for the country. Some analysts have referred to the phrase "The devil is in the details," indicating that while something may

seem simple, the details can be complicated and likely to cause problems. There are also concerns that the country might end up repaying the loan with as much as \$30 billion. Recently, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, announced that Nigeria had secured a \$2.5 billion World Bank loan with a 1 percent interest rate. This brings Nigeria's total debt obligations to over \$110 billion. Edun, speaking at the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank Group on April 20, revealed that the loan offers a 40-year term, a 10-year moratorium, and a 1 percent interest rate. This means the loan will be paid off over 40 years, with repayments starting from 2034.

The minister claimed that given the loan's conditions, it is almost like offering someone free money. "It is virtually a grant. It is about 40 years, 10 years moratorium, and about one percent interest. That also is part of the flow that you can count," Edun stated. Commenting on the economic implications of the loan, Bradley Rohrs, President of Rohrs Team, a US-based real estate consulting firm, highlighted the dangers to Nigeria's economy. In a video shared on social media, Rohrs said that while the \$2.5 billion loan at a 1 percent interest rate over 40 years seems fair on the surface, there are deeper economic problems that the country will face in ten years when repayment starts.

According to Rohrs, the loan's terms and conditions would "contribute to the long-term insolvency" of the country. One condition is that the loan must be repaid in dollars. With the persistent depreciation of Nigeria's currency, the naira, the country is bound to spend more on both interest and principal. "The loan needs to be paid back in Western currencies, and the naira is losing significant value every year, meaning this loan is going to end up costing tens of billions of dollars to Nigeria within a decade. From an economic sense, the effective interest rate would be 1 percent plus the depreciation of the naira relative to the US dollar," the US-based realtor stated.



From left, Head Legal Department NDIC, Mr Henry Fomah; Director Legal Department CBN, Mr Kofo S. Alada; Rep of Chairman EFCC and Ag.Zonal Commander, Mr Michael Wetkas; Rep of MD/CEO (NDIC) and Director Communications & Public Affairs Dept, Mr Bashir A. Nuhu; AIG. Force CID, Alagbon, Romokere God's Gift Ibani; Commissioner of Police SFU, Ayotunde G.Omedeinde; Rep of; Director of Public Prosecution of the Federation, Mr Emmanuel Kaswe; and Coordinator, FMIU, DCP Sirajo L. Salisu, during the NDIC's 2024 Capacity Building Workshop For Law Enforcement Agencies, with the theme: "Inter-Agency Collaboration in the Fight Against Financial Malpractices in Banks and Other Financial Institutions in Nigeria, held in Lagos.

Financial malpractices in banks: NDIC renews collaborative efforts with law enforcement agencies

THE Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) has reiterated its commitment to the success of collaborative efforts with Law Enforcement Agencies. This was displayed through the 2024 capacity building workshop for the agencies with whom the Corporation collaborates in the fight against financial malpractices in banks and other financial institutions in Nigeria. In his keynote address, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer NDIC, Hassan Bello disclosed that through the corporation's collaborative efforts with law enforcement agencies, fourteen (14) prosecution cases are on-going at various courts. He also said there is 18 ongoing investigation with the Police Financial Malpractices investigation Unit (FMIU) under the Failed Banks Act, eight (8) with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and nine (9) concluded investigations with Federal Ministry of Justice for advice and prosecution.

These, according to him, are indications that "we are on the right course." During the opening ceremony of the workshop for law enforcement agencies held in Lagos on Thursday, Bello said the banking system is rapidly evolving with innovations. According to him, there is no gainsaying that, this collaboration has yielded and is still yielding results particularly in the area of investigation and prosecution.

In line with similar initiatives by the Corporation, the workshop aims to complement the efforts of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Implementation of Failed Banks Act. It is clear he added, that a new phase of the financial technology driven economy is currently reshaping the global financial services space. "With this development, the criminally minded users of the banking system," he said.

The FGN Bonds market traded on a calm mode albeit bearish with most interest seen at the head to the belly of the curve. Hence, the average benchmark yield increased by 38 bps, closing the week at 18.98 percent. Dealers anticipate a continuation of this trend in the upcoming trading session.

WEEKLY REVIEW

Money Market

SYSTEM liquidity opened the last trading day of the week in a repo of ₦663.91 billion, albeit ₦777 billion higher than opening repo level of ₦1.44 trillion. Thus, on a week-over-week basis, the Open Buy Back (OBB) rate dipped by 45 basis points (bps) to 31.61 percent and the Overnight (O/N) rate fell by 8 bps to 32.45 percent. The Treasury bills market started the week cautiously, anticipating the Nigerian Treasury Bills (NTB) primary market auction (PMA) midweek. At the auction, the Debt Management Office (DMO) offered ₦166.10 billion, received ₦308.65 billion in subscriptions, and allotted ₦207.26 billion. Compared to the previous auction, stop rates remained unchanged at 16.30 percent for the 91-day and 17.44 percent for the 182-day tenors, while the 365-day tenor increased by 56 bps to 21.24 percent. Post-auction, mixed market activity, especially on the long end of the curve and the newly issued 1-year paper, led to a 91 bps rise in the average benchmark yield, which settled at 23.61 percent. Dealers anticipate a calm start to the next trading session.

Currency Market

The naira depreciated against the dollar at the foreign exchange market to end the week on a negative note. According to FMDQ data, the naira depreciated to N1,563.80 against the dollar on Friday from the N1,554.65 traded on Thursday. This represents N9.15 loss against the dollar at the foreign exchange market on Friday compared to N1,554.65 traded the previous day. Similarly, at the parallel foreign exchange market, the naira depreciated to N1,560 against the dollar on Friday from N1,550. The previous day.

The development comes as FX transaction turnover dropped to \$126.50 million on Friday from \$348.82 million on Thursday. The depreciation of the naira against the dollar comes despite the recent sale of \$122.67 million to 45 authorised dealers by the Central Bank of Nigeria»

FGN Bond Market

The FGN Eurobond Market experienced bullish sentiments. This was driven by expectations that the US Federal Reserve would increase its rate cuts from one to two by the end of the year, following a dovish report from Powell. Additionally, the lower-than-anticipated US Consumer Price Index (CPI) data, which came in at 3.00 percent compared to the expected 3.10 percent and the previous month's 3.30 percent, further supported this sentiment. As a result, the average benchmark yield dropped by 30 bps, ending the week at 9.57 percent.

FGN Eurobond Market

money market

Raising fresh capital, reason for exclusion of retained earnings from recapitalisation terms —Cardoso

Stories by Chima Nwokoji | Lagos

THE Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CNN), Olayemi Cardoso has explained that the exclusion of retained earnings from the recapitalization terms encourages banks to focus on raising fresh capital from external sources.

Speaking at the CEO Forum on the topic, 'Revitalising Nigeria's Economy: Strategic Monetary Policies for Economic Growth' hosted by BusinessDay Media, he stated that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is not obli-

gious to the fact that Nigeria needs growth.

He reiterated the need for policies that will positively impact the average Nigerian and foster a stable and prosperous economic environment for all citizens.

On the issue of Foreign Exchange (FX) volatility, Cardoso stated that the bank had to correct some dysfunctions in the financial system, such as illicit flows and non-compliance with rules, to ensure market stability.

"Sometimes, there is push-back from those who want to continue doing things a certain way. There's also a need to show people that there will

be consistency in our ways before the market will settle," he said.

Cardoso admitted that before he got into the saddle, during the Senate hearings, he actually made the commitment to settle for example backlog.

"And I was very clear on that. A good number of people came to me and said, Look, this doesn't make sense. Why would you prioritize so much money to pay back people and you know, businesses and all that where you can use that for actually growing and opening up the foreign exchange market? I got a lot of pressure on that.

"But I think what perhaps many failed to realize is that we are in a situation where Nigeria was in a state of crisis. Nigeria was in a state where there was a lot of loss of confidence. And to be honest with you, even without that, it is so important that you would hold high your integrity as a bank, your yes must be yes," he stated.

He noted that timely communication and market transparency have restored stakeholders' confidence.

"There is no more front-loading of FX requests. Even the portfolio investors who left have come back. They were comfortable that there

was a plan, and that the plan was headed in a certain direction. These dysfunctions are beginning to smooth out due to the confidence and transparency seen in the markets," the CBN governor said.

Cardoso reaffirmed that the naira has seen the worst of sharp volatility and is now in calm waters.

"A lot of the wide swings were attributed to distortions in the system, but we are beginning to smoothen out as a result of a better understanding of the market, transparency, and doing things right," he further stated.

The CBN governor revealed plans to double diaspora re-

mittance flow into Nigeria in one year, adding that the ambition is an effort to ease issues in Nigeria's financial sector.

"As a result of the challenges we have faced, one of the things we've done in the monetary side is to look at Diaspora remittances which is very key and we set up a committee last time I went to Washington for the World Bank meetings, and I invited the IMTOs," he said.

He further emphasized that addressing issues like illicit flows and non-compliance was crucial, although it initially met with resistance from market participants who front-loaded their requests.



From left, Victor Djemba, Chief Regional Bureau-Africa, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); Fatou Haidara, Deputy Director-General and Managing Director of the Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO); Olapeju Ibekwe, CEO, Sterling One Foundation and Abimbola Wycliffe, Head, UNIDO-ITPO Nigeria during a courtesy call and partnership discussions on the Africa Social Impact Summit (ASIS) 2024 between UNIDO officials and the CEO of Sterling One Foundation, in Lagos, recently.

PPP Investment: Alaro City Developers beckon financial Institutions, local and foreign Investors

WITH clear exemptions from withholding tax on dividends, Value Added Tax (VAT) on free zone purchases, tax exemptions on free zone income, Customs and excise duties, and foreign exchange controls, the Nigerian real estate firm Rendeavour Nigeria Development Company Limited has called on banks, other financial institutions, and local and foreign investors to explore vast opportunities in Alaro City.

The company has invested a substantial \$5 billion in a 2000-hectare planned development, creating a thriving business environment for over 150 businesses and generating more than 50,000 jobs in Nigeria. Alaro City, a joint venture between Rendeavour, Africa's largest new city and industrial park builder, and the Lagos State Government, is one of the fastest-growing real estate and urban development projects in Nigeria.

The project spans 2,000 hectares of land, featuring areas for offices, logistics and warehousing, homes, schools, healthcare facilities, hotels, entertainment, and 150 hectares of parks and open spaces.

Speaking to newsmen in Lagos last week, the Country Head and Managing Director of Rendeavour, Yomi Ademola, said Alaro City is a catalyst for foreign direct investment and a nurturing ground for local businesses

and SMEs.

According to him, the Lekki seaport is already generating more revenue for the Nigerian Ports Authority than Apapa, with ships coming into Lekki free zone having a capacity of 16,000 to 18,000 TEUs, two and a half to four times bigger than the largest ship in Apapa, which is roughly 4,000 TEUs.

"If you want to talk about efficiency, supply chain, seasonality in terms of availability of raw materials, taking advantage of pricing needs, and international standards close to your production facility, reducing transportation costs, then you come to the free zone," he assured.

Ademola emphasized that companies wanting to come to Nigeria are looking for opportunities beyond Lagos or the Southwest. They are interested in distribution networks and supply chains, with many companies realizing tens of billions in duty-free shipments, which can easily be used to settle wage bills.

This is beneficial for companies seeking efficiency and cost reduction without compromising jobs.

"Locating in a free zone transforms the prospects of companies because you are saving 20 to 30 percent; you are bringing in your input 60 to 80 percent from a sea port that is closer, quicker, and with lower transportation costs into the free zone," Ademola emphasized.

Nigeria, others show resilience despite global monetary tightening —IMF

UNLIKE past episodes, emerging market capital flows have remained largely resilient in the face of global monetary tightening, even as global capital flows have fallen, Cian Allen and Rudolfs Bems wrote in the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s blog obtained from its website.

The fund's latest External Sector Report shows that capital flows into emerging markets have recovered from a post-pandemic low.

According to the IMF, interest rates in the United States are at 20-year highs and the dollar has appreciated sharply against other world currencies.

Given the dollar's outsized

role in international finance and trade—and if history is any guide—emerging markets have good reason to be concerned.

"We know that rapid monetary tightening in the US and a strong dollar can lead to sudden capital flight and financial crises in the emerging world. The good news is that we have not seen an emerging market crisis.

"Net capital inflows into emerging markets—excluding China—rose to \$110 billion, or 0.6 percent of GDP, last year. That's the highest level since 2018," the report read in part.

As one would expect during a period of global monetary tightening, emerging markets

have seen a decline in more volatile net portfolio inflows, but net inflows of foreign direct investment have been more stable it stated.

The report further disclosed that China is an exception. It saw net capital outflows, including negative net FDI inflows over 2022-23. Some of this may reflect multinational firms repatriating earnings. But it may also reflect shifting expectations about Chinese growth and geo-economic fragmentation the Fund noted.

"The fact is most emerging markets have shown resilience amid global monetary tightening. This is partly because of stronger fundamentals. In-

deed, many countries are now benefiting from more robust fiscal, monetary, and financial policy frameworks, as well as more effective implementation of policies and tools.

"But this is only part of the story. These patterns in net inflows mask a retrenchment of global gross capital flows—declines in both gross inflows (foreigners buying fewer assets) and gross outflows (residents buying fewer assets abroad)," the authors submitted.

In 2022-23, global gross inflows declined from 5.8 to 4.4 percent of world GDP, or from \$4.5 trillion to \$4.2 trillion, relative to 2017-19, in line with global gross outflows.

Microcredit: FCMB supports Rotary Club of Lagos to empower 200 widows

FIRST City Monument Bank (FCMB) has announced its support for a service project by the Rotary Club of Lagos, District 9112, to empower over 200 widows through micro-credit and skills acquisition.

This initiative underscores FCMB's commitment to promoting wom-

en's empowerment and financial inclusion.

The announcement was made during the installation ceremony of Adetunji Lamidi as the 64th president of the Rotary Club of Lagos. The event, held recently in Lagos, highlighted the club's ongoing efforts to expand its community

impact.

"Our goals for the year are audacious, yet achievable," said Lamidi. "We plan to commission a secondary school in Iboku Aro village, support over 200 children, empower 200 widows, and donate five incubators to general hospitals in Lagos. We've already donated in-

fant incubators to Island Maternity as our first project for the year."

In her remarks, Oluyemisi Edun, MD of FCMB, emphasized the bank's support for the Rotary Club's initiatives.

"FCMB views the Rotary Club as a vital platform for driving inclusion, national cohesion, and sustainable

development," she said. "We are delighted to support the club in empowering over 200 widows through micro-credit and skills acquisition under the new leadership of Rotarian Adetunji Lamidi."

Lamidi also announced plans to increase the club's micro-credit fund to ₦20

million to support five markets across Lagos. "We currently support the markets in Gbagada and Oke-Arin, and we aim to expand to five other communities. Additionally, we will build five bore-hole projects and provide annual scholarships for 20 university students across



**NIGERIA POLICE FORCE
POLICE PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE
OYO STATE POLICE COMMAND
Police State Headquarters, Eleyele, Ibadan**

AUCTION SALES

The Oyo State Police Command wishes to inform the general public that there will be auction sales of abandoned and unclaimed vehicles, motorcycles and other items at **Mapo, Omi-Adio, Ago-Amodu, Monatan, Ayete and Ile-Ide Divisions**. Members of the public who may have lost the items listed below are enjoined to visit the divisions with proof of ownership before the expiration of 21 days of this publication.

- MAPO DIVISION**
1. One scrap white colour Cabster vehicle with Reg. No. XA 625 PED
 2. One white scrap Golf vehicle with Reg. No. XA 979 GMD
 3. One scrap Suzuki mid bus with Reg. No. XA 427 APM
 4. One scrap red colour Bajaj boxer motorcycle with Reg. No. RUW 530 CG
 5. One scrap Bajaj motorcycle with Reg. No. AKN 709 Q
 6. One scrap red colour unregistered Honda motorcycle
 7. One scrap black colour unregistered TVS motorcycle
 8. One black DSTV decoder
 9. One Kenwood amplifier
 10. One Ash colour DVB-T DVD
 11. One big yellow firm generator
 12. One scrap big red Elex generator
 13. One black LG DVD player
 14. One black BP 132 VDV player
 15. One blue Euro Desk watt power
 16. One crown colour Samsung sound system
 17. One red colour Amp RMS battery charger
 18. One Goodman sound system player
 19. One Akai sound system player
 20. One ceiling fan engine
 21. One blue small Tiger generator
 22. One 14 inches black Television
 23. One jumbo stereo radio
 24. One White-Westinghouse 14 inches brown Television
 25. One integrated Amplifier A.40
 26. Two scrap black DVD players
 27. One Yuka DVD player
 28. One Ash colour Samsung DVD player
 29. One black colour Sharp Video player
 30. One black colour Philips DVD player
 31. One Ash colour L.B.P DVD player
 32. One black colour Trident stereo radio
 33. One black colour Philips Panasonic stereo
 34. One ash colour 14 inches Bush Plasma Television
 35. One black NPA bag containing books
 36. One red SMVW TLB 2000 voltage stabiliser
 37. One small red radio tape
 38. One Androkin standing fan
 39. One scrap D.R.L standing fan
 40. One black 41 inches Panasonic Plasma Television
 41. One ash colour LG DVD player
 42. One red colour 3kg Gas cylinder
 43. One big yellow gas cylinder and brown 6kg gas cylinder
 44. One ash colour 21 inches Matsui television
 45. One 8 1/2 inches mattress
 46. One Sumo premium sewing machine
 47. One scrap Super Crown standing fan
 48. One ash colour L.G 14 inches plasma Television
 49. One black colour Sharp 42 inches plasma Television
 50. One brown small speaker

51. One black LG DVD player
52. One black speaker
53. One Inkal sound system tape
54. One Pioneer sound system player
55. One Lucky scrap standing fan
56. One black colour Pioneer sound system

- OMI-ADIO DIVISION**
1. Three red colour Bajaj motorcycles with Reg. Nos: WDE 082 QA, AAB 212 QC and LES 247 QK
 2. One red colour Honda motorcycle without registration number
 3. One red colour Honda motorcycle with Reg. No. WED 016 UV

- AYETE DIVISION**
1. One yellow Ford bus with Reg. No. 98D 43842
 2. Two Boxer Bajaj motorcycles with Reg. Nos: OGB 679 WS and TTD 121 VT
 3. One unregistered Boxer Bajaj motorcycle
 4. Three unregistered Jincheng motorcycles
 5. One Jincheng motorcycle with Reg. No. QU 491 AGI
 6. One Hucye motorcycle with Reg. No. APP 625 OH
 7. One Bajaj motorcycle with Reg. No. FT 483 WT

- ILE-IDO DIVISION**
1. Five scrap Bajaj motorcycles with Reg. Nos: AKN 333 QG, WDE 340 WH, GMD 537 UG and QF 730 PST and QC 730 RUW
 2. One unregistered scrap Bajaj motorcycle
 3. One unregistered scrap Jincheng motorcycle
 4. Two scrap Jincheng motorcycles with Reg. Nos: QC 010 TTN and AKN 261 QB
 5. One scrap small Inmax generator
 6. One scrap small Elex generator
 7. One scrap small Tiger generator
 8. One small fridge

- AGO-AMODU**
1. One unregistered Suzuki Sais motorcycle
 2. One Black Seg Television

- MONATAN DIVISION**
1. One TVS motorcycle with Reg. No. NIK 352 QK
 2. One TVS motorcycle with Reg. No. SEY 576 QK
 3. (a) One Apple laptop
(b) One Bluetooth Speaker
(c) One Apple wristwatch
 4. One Tecno handset without sim

Members of the public who are interested in the auction sales are advised to visit **Mapo, Omi-Adio, Ago-Amodu, Monatan, Ayete and Ile-Ide Divisions** after the expiration of 21 days of this publication, please.



NBM OF AFRICA

Ibadan Zone

Congratulations! **TO**



**HIS ROYAL MAJESTY
Oba. AKINLOYE OWOLABI
OLAKULEHIN
THE 43RD OLUBADAN OF IBADAN**

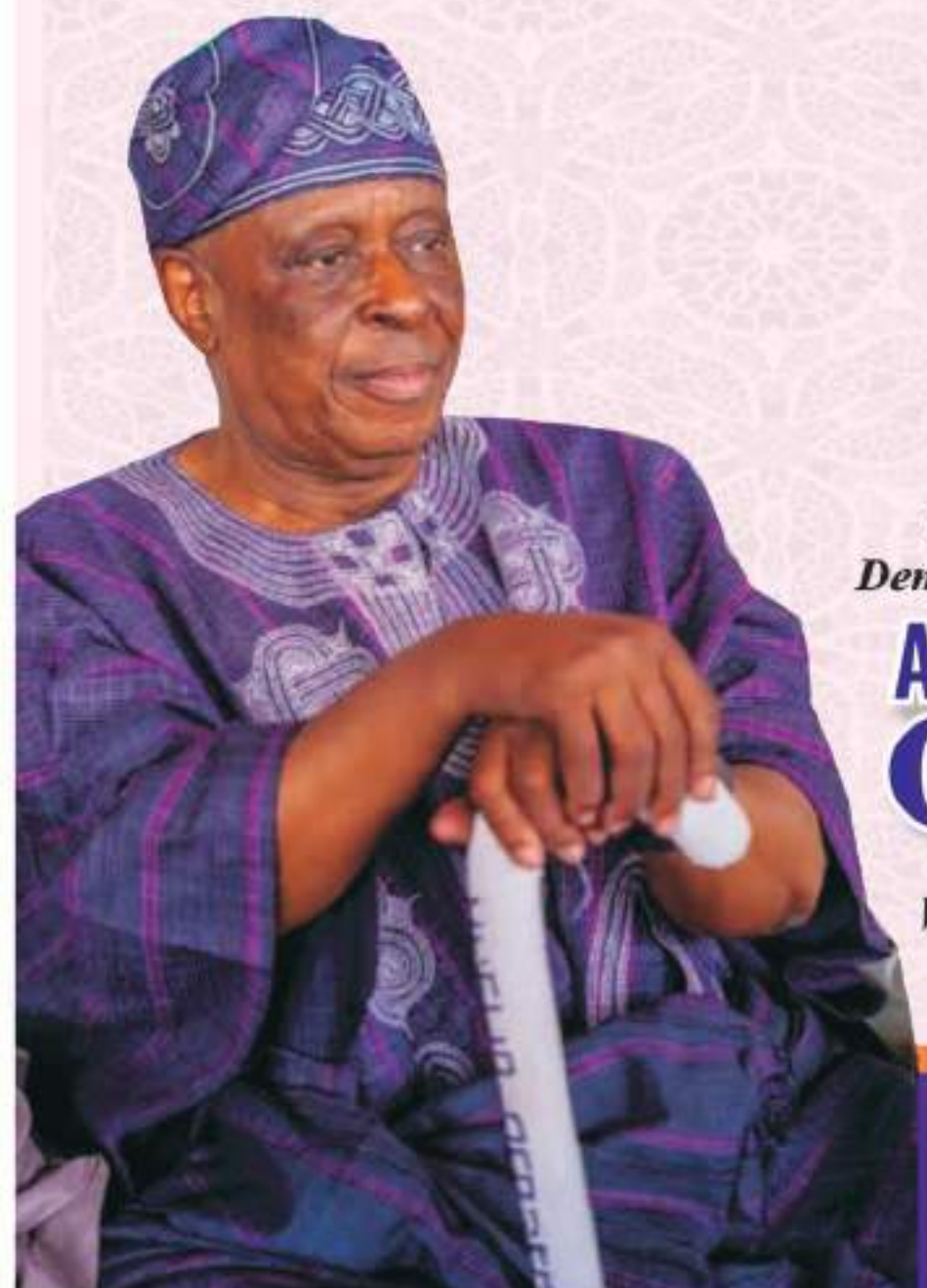
The entire Members of the NBM of Africa, Ibadan Zone, extends heartfelt congratulations to His Royal Majesty, Oba OWOLABI OLAKULEHIN, on his coronation as the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadan on July 12, 2024. This event is a significant milestone for our city, and we are honoured to celebrate with the people of Ibadan.

We are confident that Oba OLAKULEHIN's leadership will bring unprecedented growth and development to our region. We urge him to use his esteemed position to advance peace, security, and welfare for all Ibadan indigenes.

We commend the people of Ibadan for the peaceful succession process, reflecting our unity and respect for tradition. We pray for a reign filled with peace, beauty, and enduring fame, and pledge our support to work collaboratively for the city's prosperity.

We extend our best wishes for a successful and impactful reign, hoping that Ibadan will continue to thrive under his leadership.

Signed,
Ayodeji Falade
President, NBM of Africa, Ibadan Zone



to a Statesman, a Nationalist, an Icon of Democratic Values, and Awoist par Excellence,

**AREMO OLUSEGUN
OSOBA CFR**
(APC NATIONAL LEADER)



Wishing you many more years in good health.

Happy Birthday Sir.



ENGR. GBENGA AKINWANDE
PRESIDENT, GBENGA AKINWANDE FOUNDATION



Celebrating Aremo Segun Osoba on His 85th Birthday

It is with great delight and profound respect that I, on behalf of the government and people of Ogun State, extend our warmest congratulations to you on your 85th birthday.

Your life has been a remarkable journey of dedication, service, and leadership. As a former governor of Ogun State and an esteemed elder statesman, your contributions to the development and progress of our state and nation are truly exemplary. Your visionary leadership, unwavering commitment to public service, and enduring passion for journalism have left an indelible mark on our society.

You have been a beacon of wisdom and integrity, guiding and inspiring countless individuals through your exemplary conduct and tireless efforts for the common good. Your legacy is one of courage, compassion, and an unyielding commitment to the principles of democracy and justice.

As you celebrate this significant milestone, we honour your enduring contributions and your steadfast dedication to the betterment of our state and country. May this special day be filled with joy, surrounded by family and loved ones, and may the years ahead continue to bring you good health, happiness, and fulfilment.

Happy 85th birthday, Aremo Segun Osoba!

With warmest regards,



Signed:
PRINCE DAPO ABIODUN,
Governor, Ogun State and
Chairman, Southern Governors' Forum

85

Hearty Cheers
to an astute
ELDER STATEMAN

My Dear Akinrogun & Aremo,

From the depths of my heart, I extend my special congratulations and join in the celebration of your **85th birthday** today, my dear **Chief Olusegun Osoba**.

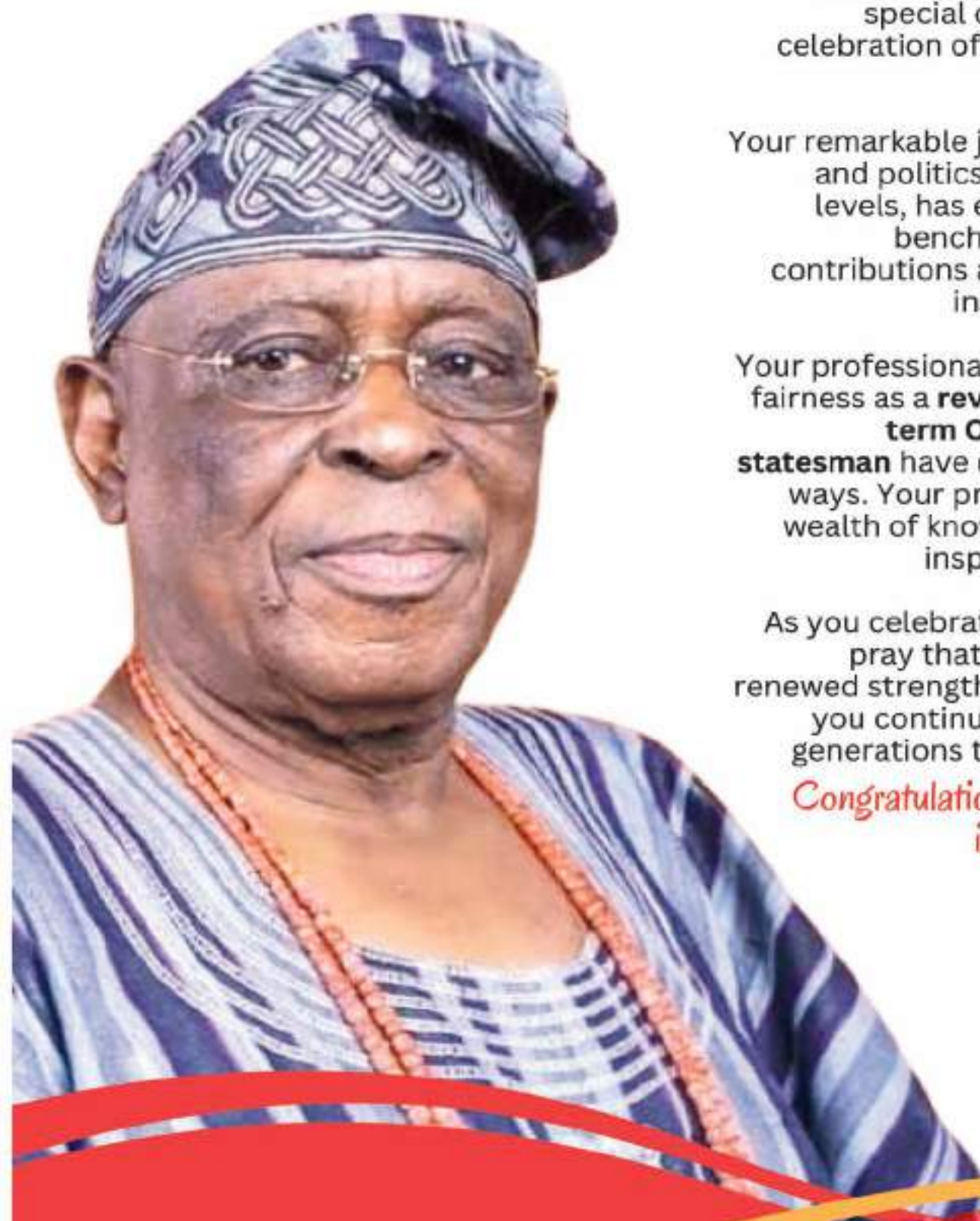
Your remarkable journey in the realms of media and politics, both at the state and federal levels, has established an unprecedented benchmark in Nigeria's history. Your contributions and achievements continue to inspire and resonate with many.

Your professionalism, objectivity, courage, and fairness as a **revered media guru, former two-term Ogun State governor and elder statesman** have distinguished you in countless ways. Your progressive ideals and immense wealth of knowledge have been a beacon of inspiration and guidance to many.

As you celebrate this remarkable milestone, I pray that God grants you special grace, renewed strength, and boundless wisdom. May you continue to shine brightly and inspire generations to come. Happy 85th birthday!

Congratulations once again my elegant and iconic statesman!

Yours sincerely,
Evang. (Prof.) Ebenezer Obey-Fabiyi (MFR)
(The Chief Commander)



NAICOM, NFIU commit to safeguarding integrity of Nigeria's financial system

Stories by Joseph Inokotong | Abuja

THE National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) and Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) have agreed to strengthen their partnerships to ensure robust financial regulations, and safeguard the integrity of Nigeria's financial system.

The shared commitment was made at a meeting between the Commissioner for Insurance/CEO

of the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM), Mr. Olusegun Ayo Omosehin, and his team members with the management of the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) led by its Chief Executive Officer, Hafsat Abubakar Bakari, during a courtesy visit to the Commission in Abuja.

The Commissioner for Insurance in his opening remark, expressed gratitude to the NFIU for the ongoing collaboration, highlighting the significant benefits that NAICOM

has reaped from the partnership.

He commended the NFIU for its coordination and the progress made by institutions in meeting the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) requirements and ensuring compliance with Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financial Terrorism (AML/CFT) standards.

Mr. Omosehin praised the joint inspections, training sessions, awareness creation initiatives, and the improved compliance levels demonstrated by insurance companies.

Also, the CFI emphasised the need for continued periodic training and examination of regulated entities to maintain and enhance the integrity of the financial sector.

The Chief Executive Officer, NFIU, Hafsat Abubakar Bakari reiterated the pivotal role of the NFIU as the central national agency in Nigeria, responsible for receiving, analysing, and disseminating financial intelligence to the necessary authorities.

She underscored the purpose of

the engagement, which she noted was to gather feedback on enhancing collaboration with various financial agencies, with the goal of removing Nigeria from the grey list and establishing a sustainable and effective AML/CFT framework.

The NAICOM said, "The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen the partnership between NAICOM and NFIU, ensuring robust financial regulations and safeguarding the integrity of Nigeria's financial system".



From left, Mr Ahmed Adamu Director, Innovation & Regulation NAICOM; Dr Usman Jankara Jimada Deputy Commissioner, Olusegun Ayo Omosehin, Commissioner for Insurance/CEO, Hafsat Abubakar Bakari, Chief Executive Officer, NFIU; Mr Ekerete Ola Gam-Ikon Deputy Commissioner, DrNuhammedJiya Chief Operating Officer Emerging Technologies & Innovation NFIU, MrsOluwatoyin Charles Director Supervision, NAICOM.

Unitrust Insurance half year revenue hits N8.206bn

UNITRUST Insurance Company Limited in its recently released half year 2024 financial report recorded 78 percent increase in year-on-year revenue, reaching a total of N 8,206,125,606.29 as against N 4,617,709,244.30 achieved for the same period in 2023.

The company recorded significant growth in various segments of its operations despite the harsh operating environment, also paid claims to its policyholders, underscoring its commitment to contractual obligations.

The Company in a statement said the success underscores Unitrust's commitment to providing unparalleled service and support to its valued policyholders.

According to the firm, "Unitrust Insurance reported a 78 percent increase in her year-on-year revenue, reaching a total of N 8,206,125,606.29 as against N 4,617,709,244.30 recorded for the same period in 2023.

"This growth reflects the company's successful execution of its strategic initiatives, excellent service delivery, robust underwriting practices, and a diversified portfolio".

Unitrust Insurance, in a demonstration of an unwavering commit-

ment to its various policyholders, paid N2,463,042,690.81 to customers for the first six months in 2024, as against N685,268,927.80 paid in the same period in 2023.

The explained that this milestone highlights unitrust dedication to providing timely and fair compensation to policyholders in their times of need.

According to the company, Unitrust, in its stakeholders engagement, co-hosted the 2024 NCRIB CEOs Retreat in Uyo, Akwalbom State, earlier in June 2024, where the NCRIB Chief Executive Officers converged in Uyo for their annual retreat between June 13 and 15, 2024 to review the state of their sub-sector and brainstorm on the way forward.

The firm said the sponsorship, focused on fostering professional development and service excellence within the insurance brokerage sector. The retreat had as its theme, "Building Institutions that Survive their Promoters."

The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Unitrust Insurance, Mr. Adedayo Arowojolu, while commenting on the half year report, expressed satisfaction on the Company's performance.

Insurers generate 3.2% premium income from direct sales

INSURANCE companies in Nigeria recorded N32 billion of the N1 trillion revenue available in the market to plug, representing a paltry 3.2 percent, despite the multi-billion naira spent on deployment of technology to drive policy sales.

This was disclosed by the Managing Director of Peerless Management & Solutions Limited and former Director at the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) Agboola Pius, in a paper titled, "Enhancing Insurance Penetration In Nigeria: The Pivotal Role of insurance Brokers", delivered at the Nigerian Council of Registered Insurance Brokers Lagos Area Committee (NCRIB-LAC) 2024 midyear workshop in Lagos.

Pius stated that the buck of insurance premium is generated by brokers as insurance brokers generate 68.32 percent of the insurance industry income, while agents contribute 21.65 percent and bancassurance six percent.

He stressed that without insurance brokers, the underwriting sector would be in perils, adding that brokers play very important role in insurance distribution.

Pius decried the absence of insurance brokers in 16 states if Nasarawa, Niger, Adamawa, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, Yobe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Zamfara, Ebonyi, Bayelsa, Cross River, and Ekiti.

He advocated collaborations, part-

nerships, operation cost reduction, harmonizing experiences, leveraging on artificial intelligence amongst others, in the journey to deepen insurance penetration.

Kunle Ahmed, Chairman of the Nigerian Insurers Association (NIA), while speaking at the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) stated that the Nigerian insurance industry in 2023 saw significant developments and faced various challenges, stressing that the insurance sector in Nigeria has many competitors, but the limited financial capacity of some has made it difficult to deepen market penetration.

He said, "The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the reduction in oil output prompted policymakers to consider steps towards fostering stronger insurance providers".

Ahmed pointed out that the gross written premium of the Nigerian insurance market was N736.2 billion in 2022, and the market achieved over 35 percent growth with over N1 trillion recorded in 2023.

He averred that the insurance market recorded total assets of N2.67 trillion, and capitalisation of N 851 billion in 2023, adding that the net claims posted by the industry were N669.4 billion, with the non-life segment contributing N329 billion, while the life segment recorded N340.4 billion.

AICO Insurance pays N200.9bn claims, benefits

AICO Insurance Plc has paid N200.9 billion in claims over the past five years to meet its obligations to the teeming policyholders.

In insurance, prompt payment of claims and benefits is very important, and this milestone has reflected the underwriter's unwavering commitment to providing financial security and peace of mind to its policyholders.

A look at AICO's claims and benefits settlements patterns from 2019 to 2023 shows N200.9 billion had been paid out in claims, showing that the firm had consistently prioritise the timely disbursement of claims to both retail customers and corporate clients.

Detail review of the breakdown of the claims paid over the period shows N30.6 billion in 2019, N31.6 billion in 2020, and N47.3 billion in 2021.

Also, N44.9 billion was paid in 2022 and N46.5 billion in 2023, indicating a robust claims management pro-

cess and customer-centric approach that has solidified AICO's position as a trusted partner in safeguarding the financial well-being of individuals and businesses alike.

Managing Director of AICO Insurance Plc, Babatunde Fajemirokun stressed the firm's dedication to customer satisfaction and service excellence noting that "At AICO Insurance, our customers are at the heart of everything we do. We exist to serve and protect them, ensuring that their genuine claims are settled swiftly and fairly."

According to him, the five-year profile is a testament to the company's commitment to deliver on promises and maintain customers' trust, adding that "We remain dedicated to continuously improving our processes and services to meet the evolving needs of our valued policyholders".

AICO understands that timely and fair claims payments are critical to customers' financial security, espe-

cially during challenging times, and its impressive track record in claims settlement underscores its core values of integrity, professionalism, and customer-centricity.

The Managing Director of AICO Insurance Plc, further said, "AICO Insurance Plc will continue to leverage advanced technology and innovative solutions to enhance its claims processing capabilities. Our goal is providing a more seamless and efficient experience for our customers, and ensuring that they receive the support they need when it matters most."

AICO Insurance Plc was founded in 1963, and has a 60-year record of delivering quality service to its clients.

The company offers a comprehensive range of products including life and general insurance, health insurance, and investment management services, aimed at creating and protecting wealth for individuals, families, and corporate customers.

Universal Insurance projects N20bn premium income in 2024

UNIVERSAL Insurance Plc is planning to achieve a premium income target of N20 billion by the end of the 2024 financial year, despite challenges in the operating environment.

Mr. Ben Ujoatuonu, Managing Director of Universal Insurance Plc stated this at the 2024 Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Association of Insurance and Pension Editors (NAIPE), which it hosted in Lagos.

The Managing Director of Universal Insurance Plc said, "All the company's indices are showing positive signs and we will continue to sustain the tempo", adding that the firm grew its asset from N11 billion in 2022 to 17 billion in 2023.

Mr. Ujoatuonu said, "I was here last year to brief NAIPE on what we have done; our projections and what we intended to do. I am here today to let you know that all that we set out to achieve for the end of the year 2023, by the grace of God, I will say we achieved 98 percent of them.

"The branches we intended to open, were opened and I told you that we expected to end the year with a premium income of about N10 billion. However, we ended the year with a premium income of N9.3 billion with profit of over N530 million.

"This year 2024, we started out with very high expectations. We are also looking forward to opening more branches in 2024.

In 2024, we are projecting to end the year with a premium income of about N20 billion.

"It may interest you to know that as at today, we are doing about N9.3 billion in premium income. We are very optimistic that we are going to achieve it before the end of 2024.

"Our asset will also increase from N11 billion to about N17.5 billion and our shareholders fund will increase from about N9 billion to N12 billion. So all the indices for us are showing positive signs and we will continue to sustain it."

According to him, Universal Insurance's partnership with NAIPE has added a lot of value to the company, which it values a great deal.

LEADERSHIP & STRATEGY



With DR AKIN OGUNBIYI

08035118078 (WhatsApp only)

Guide to phenomenal growth

Growth is pivotal to the development process and it is exemplified by holistic, progressive, qualitative and quantitative changes.

John Bezos, founder of Amazon said "Everything I have ever done started small but it progressively grew bigger and bigger."

A. G Lafley and Ram Charan in their book: "The Game Changer" explained that growth is achieved when the business is consistently altered to achieve sustainable, profitable organic growth as well as improved margins.

The key to growth, according to them, is innovation "in the hands of the game changer, a leader who is a visionary strategist, a catalyst who uses innovation to drive business from strategy to organisation, budgeting, resource allocation, selecting, rewarding and promoting people; an integrator who sees innovation as an integrated end-to-end process and the hard-headed humanist who uses people to create and achieve differentiation and value-added brands".

Growth is achieved when there is increase in value creation. The springboards are: cash flow from existing assets which is achieved through increase in efficiency and cutting costs that are not creating value; enhanced value from operating margins, growth from additional activities such as: new products or services, new markets as well as growth through revved-up operational excellence.

Also, to achieve growth, there must be discipline in managing performance. We must consistently hold our people accountable in order to raise expectations. Total accountability must be measured regularly. The leader must set a higher standard of accountability for himself and also lead by very clear examples.

Staff development must be a key activity for

improving individual and team performance as well as improving capacity to deliver. Self-development has three (3) components: knowledge acquisition, skills development and practical application. Employees must have clarity on expectations to enable them do more. They must also be adequately motivated.

Let us look at how some business leaders achieved growth so we can learn from them.

Guy Kawasaki, a Silicon Valley strategist documented some growth guides by Steve Jobs.

Steve Jobs noted that being an expert is good but it is passion to achieve great heights "that will make you take a giant leap from the status quo". Business leaders should be ahead of customers in order "to create more benefits." We must consistently make big changes to make it better for customers. Organisations should not just define themselves by what they do. They must aspire to make it better and always provide more benefits.

"Concentrate on benefits, not just the processes and not just being better, faster and cheaper". Not on the curve you are on but the next "challenging" curve. To achieve big accomplishments, we must face big challenges and set audacious goals.

Also, business people must ensure beauty and finesse in the services they deliver or the products they manufacture. A great guide to innovations according to Steve Jobs "is the readiness to change your mind anytime there is a need to do so. It is a mark of intelligence. It allows positive reversals and more functionality."

Always strive for the highest value and do not fight on price. "Greater value, not cheapest". Also, smart CEOs should lead the practical demonstration of the value in their services or products to customers and

potential customers.

To ensure sustainable growth, Steve Jobs said leaders should hire those who are "better than them". "You must hire A-players so that your activities can be on an upward spiral."

According to Steve Jobs, in order to achieve phenomenal growth, smart entrepreneurs must encourage experimentation. "Try and fail and try again, so that you can achieve revolutionary breakthroughs."

On marketing of services or products, the much-needed attention must be on value and uniqueness. "Create things of value but make them unique". You will not succeed if you compete on price. "Marketing can be distilled to one simple graph: value and uniqueness."

Elon Musk, another great business leader, has pointed out that "To achieve desirable growth, you must work super hard. "Input lots of hours and you will get desirable outputs. I always challenge the obstacles standing in the way of success. I do not ever give up. Nurture the business like a child. Attract great and hard-working people to work with you and inspire them to be heroes. If you are convinced something is valuable, do not hesitate to take the risk of failure."

"I do not spend money on advertisements. My preference is for signals, not noise. Awards do not propel growth. We invest on things that will make our products better. We put efforts on designs that will improve and enhance benefits to customers. All efforts must be on better products".

It is Elon Musk's advice that business leaders must "listen carefully to feed backs. My goal is to be less wrong. My obsession is for quality. If you are passionate about what you are doing, no matter the high number of mistakes and failures, you will succeed at the end of

the day". Effective communication of purpose, scope and scale is also highly desirable."

Another expert on growth methodology, Simon Cooper propounded the Quadrant Model. This model identifies four (4) key strategic areas into which business leaders can exert their energies in order to successfully achieve sustainable growth. They are: (a) recruiting the right people (b) developing them (c) building team synergy and (d) motivation.

He recommended key strategic points of energy. They are; people, processes, planning and performance. He said we must motivate with reward packages, job satisfaction, achieving great goals, recognition of performance, credit for new ideas and innovation, status, influence, power, organizational culture and work life balance.

An area we need to further elaborate on, is the constant monitoring of the growth of earnings. What are the net income earnings accomplishing relative to the amount of money being used to get the earnings? If we increase the rate of current liability obligations at any particular time, will it impact positively on the net earnings?

Are you satisfied with your current framework of value when it is compared with current liability obligations? Are you also paying the necessary attention to risk assessment in your financial management activities?

In conclusion, the Prioritization Model should also be properly factored into your growth efforts. The outlook of your performance metrics must always impact positively and progressively on your growth goals - You must maintain competitive advantage in your segmented competitive arenas. Your unique values will not only differentiate your products and your organisation, they will make you win always.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Rendezvous

08067557709

with Niyi Kolade

koladeadeniyi2@gmail.com



Steeze o'clock

Greatness, Usefulness, Youthfulness and Steeze (GUYS)

Hi GUYS, innovativeness is my own definition of steeze (the entrepreneurial mindset). Individuals and organizations that practice qualitative (innovative) entrepreneurship are the real definition of 'GUY' and steeze.

Steeze is youthfulness and youthfulness is steeze. Traditionally, the youth have been idolised as the pinnacle of vitality, innovation, and adaptability. However, it is important to note that these perceptions are not only limiting but also misleading.

Contrary to the age myth, innovation is not confined to youth. Many groundbreaking inventions and ideas have come from individuals well beyond their 30s. For instance, Colonel Harland Sanders founded KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) at the age of 62, and Ray Kroc began the McDonald's franchise at 52, (Olujide, 2008). These examples underscore that creativity and entrepreneurial spirit do not diminish with age.

Age is just a number. One can achieve anything at any age, whether old or young. Even if it is a startup or an established organization, the ability to apply creative solutions to problems and to opportunities to enhance and to enrich people's lives is not a function of age, rather a product of youthfulness.

Youthfulness is a mindset and a critical asset necessary for possibility thinking. It is the ability to see and seize an opportunity - that'ssteeze! What an entrepreneur sees (worldview) is his mindset and steeze. It'ssteeze O'clock, see it and seize it.

I know a lot of 'GUYS' whose possibility thinking ability has not only helped shape the world but also influenced many to be visionary innovators. I know 'Steeze Jobs', I have read about 'Steeze Branson', what about 'Steeze Gates'? Have you heard of 'Steeze Dangote'? Let me introduce to you 'Steeze Zuckerberg' as well as 'Steeze Page' - again, age is just a number and steeze is just a tip of the iceberg.

Steeze Soyinka Is My 'Guy' - Wole Soyinka (born July 13, 1934, Abeokuta, Nigeria) is a Nigerian playwright and political activist, who received the Nobel Prize

for Literature in 1986. Happy birthday to a great achiever.

'GUYS' steeze isn't gender biased - Do you know 'Steeze Winfrey'? I know 'Steeze Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. What about 'Steeze Susan Wojcicki'?

Susan Wojcicki

Susan Wojcicki is a famous female entrepreneur in the tech world, most recognized for her leadership as the former CEO of YouTube (2014-2023). Her journey to success is inter-woven with the rise of Google and YouTube itself. Wojcicki played a crucial role in Google's early days, renting out her garage to serve as the company's first office space in 1998, and later became Google's 16th employee. She played a key role in building Google's advertising business, including AdSense and Google Analytics, and her understanding of

user behaviour was instrumental in making these platforms what they are today.

Wojcicki also recognised the potential of YouTube and played a crucial role in Google's acquisition of the platform in 2006 for \$1.65 billion a deal that proved highly successful. As YouTube's CEO, Wojcicki oversaw a period of significant expansion, making it a dominant platform for online video content. Her leadership at YouTube transformed it into a global phenomenon, fostering a creative environment for content creators while establishing revenue streams. She implemented strategies to attract creators, monetise content, and navigate various content moderation challenges. Susan Wojcicki's influence on the tech industry is undeniable. Her contributions to Google and YouTube's success solidify her position as one of the most impactful women entrepreneurs in the history of tech.

GUYS, Steeze O'clock is Youth O'clock - removing the age barrier and raising the bar in the global village.

This write-up was inspired by a paper titled Youth O'clock and delivered by the former Minister of Sports and Youths Development, Chief Sunday Akinlabi DARE, at the 17th annual anniversary lecture of Splash FM and 85th Birthday Celebration of Oba Murtala Adebayo Akande, MFR.

CAPITAL MARKET

with Kehinde Akinseyinde-Jayeoba

m: 08057336640 e:kehinde_07@yahoo.com

NGX group's revolutionary e-offering platform goes live following SEC approval

Access, FCMB, Fidelity Now Utilising NGX Invest APIs

Stories by Kehinde Akinseyinde-Jayeoba | Lagos

NIGERIAN Exchange Group (NGX Group) has unveiled NGX Invest, a groundbreaking digital platform designed to streamline Public Offerings and Rights Issues in the Nigerian capital market.

The platform, which has received approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), is now live, promising an efficient, convenient, and seamless

experience for managing primary market transactions.

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

The launch of NGX Invest comes at a crucial time, coinciding with the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) banking recapitalisation directive, which has prompted numerous offers for subscription and rights announcements by Nigerian banks. Both the CBN and SEC have provided robust regulatory support for this initiative. Investors can now access the platform at <https://invest.ngxgroup.com>.

Access Holdings Plc, FCMB Group and Fidelity Bank Plc are already utilizing the NGX Invest APIs to distribute their offerings to retail investors. More banks are in the process of onboarding to leverage this platform.

Dr. Emomotimi Agama, Director-General of the Securities and Exchange Commission, commended the initiative, stating, "The e-Offering Platform aligns perfectly with our objective of futureproofing the Nigerian capital market. By digitalising and automating financial intermediation processes, we are fostering a more efficient, transparent, and inclusive capital market. At the Commission, our focus is on creating an enabling regulatory environment that promotes innovation without compromising compliance and investor protection. I commend NGX Group for its strategic investment in advancing our capital markets".

Alhaji (Dr) Umaru Kwairanga, Group Chairman of NGX Group, commended the regulators, stating, "The supportive regulatory environment has provided a solid foundation that enabled the swift delivery of the platform. This reflects our mutual commitment to market development and it will undoubtedly contribute to boosting the participation of retail investors in the capital market.

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

Temi Popoola, Group Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX Group), expressed enthusiasm for the new platform noting its significance in NGX Group's digital transformation journey and ability to enhance market access and foster economic growth.

FMDQ approves Zeenab Foods Limited's N20bn commercial paper issuance programme

ZEENAB Foods Limited, a leading food processing and agro-commodity trading company in Nigeria, has successfully signed a N20 billion Commercial Paper (CP) Issuance Programme on the FMDQ Securities Exchange Limited.

The Board Listings and Markets Committee of the Financial Market Dealers Quotation (FMDQ) Securities Exchange approved the CP Programme.

The signing ceremony occurred on July 2, 2024, at the company's corporate head office at Idu Industrial Area, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

The event was attended by key stakeholders, including Pathway Advisors Limited (Financial Adviser and Transaction Sponsor), Polaris Bank Limited (Collecting and Paying Agent), Greychapel Legal (Transaction Solicitor), and ATC Professional Services (Auditor to the Issuer).

According to Dr Victor O. Ayemere, MD/CEO of Zeenab Foods Limited, the Commercial Paper programme will position Zeenab Foods to navigate the financial landscape of the agro-commodities sector, ultimately leading to enhanced growth opportunities and sustainable success

in meeting the company's short-term capital and funding needs, ultimately allowing for a broader range of funding options and creating additional value for stakeholders. The proceeds from the CP issuance will be specifically used to purchase rice paddy and enhance value addition to other agro-commodities before export.

He expressed gratitude to Pathway Advisors Limited, the Financial Adviser and Transaction Sponsor, for their efforts in ensuring the successful approval of the CP Programme.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Mr. Adekunle Alade, CEO of Pathway Advisors Limited said "Pathway Advisors Limited is pleased to have advised Zeenab Foods Limited on the establishment of its inaugural N20 billion CP issuance programme, which will enable the Company to access competitively priced short-term funding from institutional investors. It will also provide a platform for the company to diversify sources of debt funding to include non-bank investors, thereby increasing resources available for strategic planning while also reducing the average cost of borrowing.



From left, Vice Chairman and Non-Executive Director, UAC of Nigeria Plc, Khalifa Biobaku; Group General Counsel and Company Secretary, Ayomipo Wey; Chairman of the Board of Directors, Daniel Agbor and Group Managing Director, Folasope Aiyesimoju during the Company's 2024 Annual General Meeting held in Lagos recently.

Access Bank targets top 20 position in UK, \$1bn profit by 2027

ACCESS Bank, sub-Saharan Africa's largest bank by customer base, has shared insights about ambitious plans to position its UK subsidiary, Access Bank UK, among the top 20 banks in the United Kingdom, targeting an annual profit of \$1 billion by 2027.

This was disclosed by Roosevelt Ogbonna, the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Access Bank, during the "Facts Behind the Rights Issue" presentation held at the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) office in Lagos.

Ogbonna emphasised that this projection underscores Access Bank's commitment

to becoming a global banking leader, focusing on expansive growth and robust financial performance.

"We are positioning ourselves to be one of the most respected banks globally. Our focus is on superior service across all the continents and countries we are operational in, and by 2027, we aim to be one of the top five African banks, powering trade across the continent and providing superior services to our customers," Ogbonna stated.

The CEO further highlighted that Access Bank's customer base is expected to grow to 125 million by 2027, further cementing its market leadership.

This ambitious growth plan is part of the broader strategy to drive organic growth through strategic acquisitions, partnerships with international banks, and substantial investments in infrastructure and technology.

The insights were shared as part of discussions around Access Holdings' ongoing Rights Issue, which aims to raise up to US\$1.5 billion to strengthen its financial position and support its growth ambitions. The rights issue offers 17,772,612,811 ordinary shares at N19.75 per share and will close on August 14, 2024.

The Fact Behind the Rights Issue was attended by the stockbrokers, shareholders, NGX management, Access Holdings' executive and management, the media, amongst others. The shareholders gave their vote of confidence in Access Holdings and Access Bank, and particularly, the Rights Issue.

Bisi Bakare, National Coordinator, Pragmatic Shareholders Association of Nigeria, noted, "Since Access Bank first started trading on the stock exchange at N0.65, we shareholders have witnessed its incredible growth and accrued immense value, with the stock now trading at N19.35 as of June 9."

CSR: FCMB, Tulsi Chanrai Foundation give free eye care to 400,000 Nigerians

FIRST City Monument Bank (FCMB) and its implementation partner, the Tulsi Chanrai Foundation (TCF), are marking a significant milestone: 15 years of the Priceless Gift of Sight programme, which has provided free eye care to over 400,000 Nigerians.

The programme, highlighted by a recent outreach event in Calabar, Cross River State,

provides testing, optical services, surgeries, and disease management to combat preventable blindness.

"The intervention by First City Monument Bank and the Tulsi Chanrai Foundation is laudable," said Reverend (Mrs.) Eyoanwan Bassey Otu, wife of the Cross River State Governor. "Both organizations have demonstrated a genuine

concern for humanity. We are pleased that thousands of people across Nigeria, including many from Cross River and the neighboring States, suffering from one form of eye defect or another, can now go back to their normal lives and pursue their aspirations."

"Our collaboration with the Tulsi Chanrai Foundation has been instrumental in delivering critical eye care services,"

said Mr Diran Olojo, FCMB's Group Head of Corporate Affairs. He emphasized the initiative's alignment with FCMB's broader commitment to social sustainability and equal opportunity for all.

"The Priceless Gift of Sight addresses a critical need, as 90% of blind people globally live in poverty-stricken areas.

"Blindness often leads to loss of income, social isolation, and limited access to information," Olojo stated. "This initiative is crucial in breaking the cycle of poverty and blindness."

Beneficiaries have also expressed their gratitude. "I haven't seen properly in six years," said Thomas Olekama, who travelled from Lagos for the free surgery. "I thank God,

FCMB, and the Foundation for allowing me to see again."

First City Monument Bank, a part of the FCMB Group, is committed to making life better and empowering communities where it operates. The Priceless Gift of Sight programme shows how serious the Bank is about helping people and positively impacting the lives of Nigerians.

BRANDS & MARKETING

with Akin Adewakun

m: 08054683584 e: akadewakun@yahoo.co.uk

Nigeria's consumer space awaits coming of new FCCPC's helmsman

THE long wait for a new helmsman at the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), after the abrupt exit of its former CEO, Mr. Babatunde Irukera, ended on June 24, this year, when the Federal Government announced the appointment of the erstwhile Lagos State Commissioner for Environment, Tunji Bello, as the new CEO of the agency.

However, as the nation awaits the confirmation of the appointment of the new FCCPC boss by the National Assembly, stakeholders on the nation's consumer space believe there are huge tasks awaiting the new LASAA boss.

For instance, investigations have revealed that the not-too-pleasant economic

weather, is making corner-cutting options attractive to manufacturers and brand custodians, of late, with the nation's consumers, unfortunately, being at the receiving end.

Not too long ago, FCCPC had to seal some supermarkets in Abuja for inconsistencies in their pricings, and also embark on a tour of the nation's open markets to determine the root causes of food inflation, despite series of intervention coming from the federal government.

Also, very recently, the Commission, acting on intelligence, paid unscheduled visits to some steel manufacturing companies in Ogun State. The aim was to ascertain these companies' compliance to standards, in the production of their materials, and also ensure the rights of the Nigerian consumers were

not compromised.

Interestingly, the Commission has its hands in every consumer pie, a situation that has made its task of ensuring the rights of Nigerian consumers are not violated, very herculean. Recently, it secured the conviction of a Lagos Surgeon, Dr. Aanuoluwapo Adepoju, at the Federal High Court, Lagos, over a failed plastic surgery; while in December 2023, it got the British American Tobacco (BAT) Nigeria fined for \$110m for violating control laws.

The power sector is not spared either. The commission's town hall meetings at different times, between stakeholders in the sector, have been one of its interventionist efforts in that area.

But, as huge as these feats may seem, not a few stakeholders believe they are a mere drop in an ocean filled

with assaults on consumer rights.

Besides, these stakeholders would, also, readily attribute those feats to the leadership of the commission, especially Irukera, who gave the job his best shot while there. The question therefore is whether Bello, the new helmsman is well-equipped to continue where Irukera stopped.

Interestingly, not a few will respond in the affirmative. They believe Bello, who had been a part of every government of Lagos State, since 1999, has what it takes to perform in this highly tasking office.

For instance, besides being an accomplished journalist, a lawyer and an environmentalist, the new helmsman at FCCPC is described as the most distinguished civil servant in the history of Lagos State, due to his per-

formances in the different offices he held in the state's civil service, from 1999, until few months ago.

Besides being cerebral and proactive, not a few industry watchers believed the experiences garnered, by Bello, as the Head, Lagos Signage and Advertisement Agency (LASAA), under the then Governor Bola Tinubu administration; Commissioner for Environment in both Babatunde Fashola, and Babajide Sanwoolu's regime; and Secretary to the State Government, under former Governor Akinwumi Ambode, put him in good stead to successfully steer the boat of FCCPC.

During his tenure as Environment Commissioner, the lawyer and environmentalist, they argued, was able to create and restore the people's confidence in the environ-

ment through some innovations he brought to that office, resulting in a much-friendlier environment, and the creation of over 30,000 direct job opportunities, in that space, in the first two years of Sanwoolu's administration.

Moreover, his tenure at LASAA made him one of the few chief executives of the state's regulatory agency that did minimum damage to the business interests of outdoor advertising operators in the state.

As stakeholders therefore awaits the coming of the new FCCPC boss, the optimism is high in the sky that the accomplished media executive should be able to replicate some of the feats recorded in Lagos, in the new office, thus making the consumer space safer for the nation's consuming public.

Alternative power supply, imperative for nation's economic growth —Sims Boss

THE Chairman of Sims Nigeria Ltd, Chief Simeon Eyisi, has stressed the need to avail individuals and businesses, in Nigeria, the opportunity of alternative power supply if the much-desired growth for the nation's economy is to be achieved.

Eyisi, made these remarks in Lagos at the launch of Sims Power, a sister company of Sims Nigeria which has its focus on delivering uninterrupted power solutions to Nigerians.

While expressing his delight at the debut of the company, Eyisi explained that the focus of Sims Power is to empower Nigerians, by providing alter-

native power to residential and commercial customers, through sustainable solar solutions.

According to him, the new company seeks to deliver better air, reduce health hazards and critically reduce pressures on the national grid across Nigeria.

"Sims Power is working assiduously in ensuring that it becomes a leading provider of digital power products and solutions. We are committed to integrating digital and power electronics technologies, developing clean power, and enabling energy digitalization to drive energy revolution for a better, greener future.



From left, Publisher, Brand Communicator and partner organisers, Markhack 3.0, Joshua Ajayi; Country Manager, Futuretech Media, Itohan Izugbokwe; Markhack 3.0 Convener & Curator, Victor Afolabi; Founder/CEO, SemiColon, Sam Immanuel and CEO, Pop Central, Yinka Obebe, all at the Markhack 3.0 Conference held in Lagos.

AAAN unfolds 51st AGM plans

THE Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN) has unveiled the schedule of this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM), scheduled for Abeokuta, in Ogun State.

The association's President, Steve Babaeko, in a statement, disclosed that the state Governor, Prince Adedapo Abiodun, will flag off the three-day event, where a new executive council that will oversee the affairs of the association for the next two years, is expected to emerge.

Also expected at the 51st AGM, scheduled to begin on July 18, is the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris Malagi.

According to Babaeko, the event, tagged: Breaking the Mold-Creativity and National Development, will be

flagged off with courtesy visits to the Alake of Egbaland, Oba Adedotun Gbadebo Aremu 111 and the Osile of Oke-Ona, Oba Adedapo Tejuosho.

The first half of the second day of the AGM/Congress will be devoted to the conference session, while candidates for various executive committee positions will have the opportunity to share the ideas with members at the Manifesto Night, later same date.

The third and final day of the event will have two segments: Business Session and Gala/Award Night. The highlights of the former include induction of new members, dissolution of the executive committee and elections, while the latter will see deserving advertising professionals recognized and rewarded.

First Bank ignites 'Giant' strides in new campaign

ONE of the nation's financial services providers, First Bank of Nigeria, has flagged off a new campaign, "Giants In You", aimed at inspiring, encouraging and soothing the nerves of individual and corporate customers at these trying economic times.

A brainchild of S.O & U and the First Bank Team, the essence of the campaign is to apprise the public of its efforts at enabling the giants in its customers, in the past 13 decades, by giving utmost priority to the safety and security of their transactions.

With this, the Bank added, it has maintained the trust of customers, garnered over the past 130 years, through its enduring legacy of safety and security.

"We believe one of the ways of building this giant in our customers is by providing them a safe, secure, trusted and enduring brand, boasting a heritage of 130 years of continuous business operations and impact," the bank's Head, Brand and Stakeholder Management, Yinka Ijbiyi said, at the launch of the campaign over the weekend in Lagos.

Ijbiyi, representing the Group Head, Marketing and Corporate Communications of the bank, Folake Ani-Mumuney, stated that the bank has succeeded in building such confidence by being a national icon, a regional leader and a globally recognized intercontinental player, through its operations in 10

countries across four continents, and over 43 million customer accounts, in 750 business locations.

He stated further that besides being used to celebrate its 130 years of providing excellent services to its customers, the 'Giants' campaign is also designed to reiterate the bank's resolve at supporting its individual and corporate customers at becoming the giants of their desire.

"The essence of this campaign is to tell our customers that in the past 130 years we have been creating and supporting giants, and that we are not about to stop doing that anytime soon. The campaign speaks to the art and essence of our business which is making giants of our

customers," he stated.

"We believe that there is a 'GIANT' in every customer, every employee and every stakeholder – a giant dream, a giant possibility, a giant idea, a giant life, a giant future waiting to be birthed.

"Our commitment is to provide all the necessary business support, financial knowhow, growth solutions, channels and platforms to bring out the giant in every customer," he stated.

Ijbiyi added that with the bank's rich array of tailored solution for every customer, employee and stakeholder; it is best equipped to provide what those stakeholders needed to turn their dreams and desires into giant successes.

LG autonomy: Nigerians can now demand for accountability from council chairmen —Tinubu's aides

ALGON applauds Supreme Court's decision, commends Tinubu

Taiwo Amodu, Bola Badmus, Christian Appolos and Agency report

SENIOR Special Assistant to the President on Citizenship and Leadership, Rinsola Abiola, has said the Supreme Court judgment granting financial autonomy to local government chairmen would promote grass-root development as the citizens can now demand for accountability from council chairmen.

Abiola made the remarks while speaking with journalists in Abuja at the weekend.

The apex court, while delivering judgement on the suit filed by the Attorney General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi (SAN) on behalf of the Federal Government, seeking autonomy for local government councils in the country, had declared that local government councils should receive and manage their allocations themselves.

The presidential aide called on citizens to take advantage of the ruling by

participating in local government elections and by holding their leaders to account.

"I hereby urge all citizens to seize the moment by actively participating in community development efforts and local government elections, and also hold their leaders accountable. Increased transparency and improved service delivery at the local level depend on active civic engagement. All hands must now be on deck to ensure that this ruling translates to improved local government administration in the 774 LGAs across the federation," Abiola said.

While commending President Tinubu for the initiative, Abiola said the judgement proved that Nigeria's democracy had come of age.

"For years, the effectiveness of local government administration has been a challenge and this has negatively impacted public service delivery at the grassroots. This judgment highlights the judiciary's dedication to preserving the best interests of citizens and the rule of law as enshrined in our Constitution. Local governments

are crucial to our democratic system and preserving their autonomy is essential to quickening the pace of development."

Go further, make journey to restructuring total, Olabode George tells Tinubu

A former deputy national chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Olabode George, has aligned with President Bola Tinubu on the Supreme Court's verdict stopping state governments from retaining and using funds meant for councils, urging the president to go further in restructuring the country.

George said in a statement at the weekend that the judgement by the apex court on the autonomy granted the local government (LG) administrations was not only victory for democracy but a big boost for Nigeria's political and economic development.

The PDP chieftain asserted that going further to ensure total restructuring "is the only way Nigeria can work," as, according to him, what Nigerians want is a complete

overhaul of the polity.

According to him, the verdict, which he described as courageous, will obviously, have far-reaching implications for the growth of democracy in Nigeria regarded as world's most populous black country and Africa's biggest democracy.

He added that the judgement would strengthen democratic principles at the local level and foster transparency.

"Thursday's Supreme Court judgement stopping State Governments from retaining and using funds meant for the third tier of government - councils - is not only victory for democracy but a big boost for Nigeria's political and economic development.

"The apex court was precise and unambiguous in its verdict: Allocations to Local Governments must be paid directly from the Federation Account to councils governed by democratically-elected officials.

"The judiciary has, once again, proved that it is the last hope of the common man.

"I want to advise the President that he must go further because what Nigerians want is a complete overhaul of the polity.

"That is the only way Nigeria can work," he said.

Chief George maintained that Nigerians wanted total restructuring, saying that this would lead to decentralisation of power, fortify the nation's democracy and ensure that dividends of democracy reach all Nigerians anywhere they might be in the country.

He declared that the Supreme Court with its recent verdict on the local government autonomy had started the revolution, asserting this was the right time to rejig the 1999 Constitution in full.

Apex court judgment on LGs precursor to other reforms — Lawyers

Mr Ademola Owolabi, a Lagos-based lawyer, on Sunday said that the recent Supreme Court judgment that granted financial autonomy to local governments was a precursor to other reforms.

He, however, advised Nigerians to not only celebrate the judgment, but to constitutionally awaken to the happenings at the local government levels.

The lawyer encouraged the citizenry to participate in the local government administration, "to ensure that certain anomalies are corrected."

"The issue is not whether elections at the local government levels are conducted by INEC or State Independent Electoral Commissions. "Citizens must be willing, ready and prepared to participate in governance at the local government level," he said.

On his part, Mr Chibuikem Opara, a partner at Justification Chamber, Ikeja, described the judgment "a precursor to other reforms."

He said that the judgment

had substantially removed the shackles holding down local government administration.

According to him, the strangleholds of the state governors was gradually being eroded.

ALGON applauds Supreme Court's decision, commends Tinubu

The Association of Local Government Organisation of Nigeria (ALGON) Board of Trustees has expressed its appreciation to President Bola Tinubu and Attorney General Lateef Fagbemi following the Supreme Court's landmark decision granting financial autonomy to Nigeria's 774 local governments.

In a statement issued in Abuja on Sunday, ALGON's BoT Chairman, Shaban Ohinoyi Shuaibu, hailed the judgment as a pivotal achievement, crediting President Tinubu's leadership and the Attorney General's efforts for this milestone.

Shuaibu underscored the ruling's significance in advancing decentralization and enhancing governance, while stressing the need for further constitutional reforms.

ALGON's BoT called for the abolition of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECOMs), advocating instead for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to oversee unified elections across the 774 local governments, aligning their tenure with that of state and federal offices.

Furthermore, the association urged the removal of Sections 7 and 8 from the Constitution to streamline governance, emphasizing ALGON BoT's commitment to ensuring the accountability of local governments to their constituents.

ALGON also said that the judgement means there will be speedy and massive development at the grassroots.



Tinubu



Alia

No one can stop Gov Alia's second term —Gemade

Johnson Babajide, Makurdi

FORMER senator representing North East district of Benue State, Senator Barnabas Gemade, on Saturday, warned politicians who bend on stopping the second term bid of the state governor, Reverend Father Hyacinth Alia to steer clear.

Gemade spoke at the reception organized by APC Youth Forum in the state in honour of board members appointed by President Bola Tinubu recently.

He stated that some politicians in the state have assumed the monopoly of

making governor and also working against serving governor having second term of office but always failed in their bid.

Gemade, however, declared that nobody will be able to stop governor Alia from getting his second term ticket.

According to him, "In fact, even this time except for the timely intervention of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, we would have gone with a very skewed appointments in the tertiary institution board.

"The first list that came out, may be an event like

this would not have held here in Benue. But the governor in his wisdom stood up to the occasion and made sure that his impact was felt by stepping into the gap immediately and ensuring that some Benue people that are the right people were appointed into this positions.

"You will agree with me that when the announcement was made the second time, there were 13 Benue indigenes in that list.

"You seven people standing here today, that shows clearly that this is not all that were appointed. The others are not here.

"The governor is not the kind of person who will do what people who are very inconsiderate do to our people.

"When he had this opportunity, he made sure that he had seven people going to that place to allow room for the remaining six or so, for other people who have made office to allow them appoint people.

"There are those who when they have opportunity, they must make sure that if you are the kind of person who does not worship them, they make sure you never get on that list."

LG polls: PDP sweeps all 21 chairmanship seats in Adamawa

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Adamawa has won all the 21 seats in the local government election conducted on Saturday.

Alhaji Mohammed Umar, the Chairman of the Adamawa State Independent Electoral Commission (ADSIEC), announced the results of the election on Sunday in Yola.

Umar said for councillorship positions, PDP also won 225 seats while the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) won one seat in Demsa ward in Demsa Local Government

Area of the state,

"For the chairmanship election, PDP won all the 21 seats as declared at the Local Government level.

"And for the councillorship, PDP won 225 seats while NNPP won one seat in Demsa ward," he said.

He further said that the commission would issue their certificates of return on Monday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that 12 political parties participated in the election.

Most states not viable, we don't need more —Agbakoba

Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Dr Olisa Agbakoba, has faulted the agitation for state creation in the South-East by some House of Representatives members, describing the proposal as a misplaced priority.

Agbakoba, a former President of Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), expressed the view in an interview with the *News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* on Sunday in Lagos.

The House of Representatives recently passed for second reading, a bill seeking the creation of Etiti State out of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo states from the

South-East geopolitical zone.

The bill was sponsored by Godwin Ogah, Miriam Onuoha, Kama Nkemkama, Princess Nnabuife and Anayo Onwuegbu.

Leading the debate on the general principles of the bill, Ogah said the establishment of Etiti State was not just a matter of administrative convenience, but a step towards ensuring balanced regional development and effective governance.

The lawmaker said the bill was a response to the aspirations of the people of a very important region to the country and aligned with the principles of equity and inclusiv-

ity enshrined in the country's democratic idea.

Similarly, some lawmakers and stakeholders have also called for the creation of Anioma State from states in the South-South and South-East regions.

One of those leading the call, Senator Ned Nwoko said the creation of Anioma State would correct what he described as the marginalisation of South East geo-political zone.

According to him, if Anioma State is created, it will increase the population of the South East, increase the land mass as well as the resource base of the region.

Reacting, Agbakoba said Nigeria does not presently need more states.

According to him, instead, lawmakers and other political stakeholders should be concerned about restructuring Nigeria to a regional government to reflect the real diversity of the country.

He added that he was not in support of additional state because most of the 36 states are economically unviable, insolvent and not capable of bringing about infrastructural development and even paying the proposed minimum wage.

"State creation at this present harsh economic will, no

doubt, lead to increase in the number of National Assembly members, ministers, local governments, and others, which would further increase the cost of governance in the country.

"This is coming at a time when most Nigerians are starving due to rise in the food prices. Insurgents, bandits and terrorists are abducting people for ransom in other states of the country.

"Therefore, the National Assembly should, instead, return the country to the regionalism by collapsing the 36 states into six to eight regions or geopolitical zones, each of which will have a leader.

"This means that the present Nigeria 1999 Constitution would be amended or a new one written to accommodate this proposal.

"This is because making a new constitution for Nigeria has become an overriding imperative based on the fact that new political realities and conundrums have cropped up in the country," Agbakoba said.

Agbakoba, a human right activist, said the only way to resolve the socio-economic and political problems was to amend the 1999 constitution to pave the way for a regional system of government.

He said regional governments were once successfully run with Chief Obafemi Awolowo in charge of the South West, Chief Michael Okpara in charge of South East and Ahmadu Bello in the North.

Agbakoba said since Nigeria

left the modernity of regionalism, the states had been unviable, apart from Lagos and Rivers.

Agbakoba said though the impulse to create a sixth state in the South-East was for the purpose of balance, but that the greater good of Nigeria would be felt if regionalism is given a chance.

Agbakoba said regional system of government would enable the unviable states to come together and become stronger.

He said an average person from the South East would support an additional state in the region, but that anyone who could see the big picture could tell that creation of additional states would not guarantee development.

"This agitation will arise because it is on the basis of the number of states that federal allocation flows.

"So the fact that the South-East has five states mean to them that they are losing revenue and that is a one point of view and also an emotional point of their agitation.

"However, a pragmatic developmental point of view, which I go for, is that even if you create a sixth state in the South-East to give them a sense of belonging, will this new state in addition to the 36 states take us towards the path of development?

"Will it reverse the hunger, insecurity, poverty and unemployment in the land? Absolutely not.

"We need to do away from state creation to regional system of government," he said.

PDP disowns Rivers Appeal Court case

Leon Usigbe | Abuja

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has dissociated itself from a purported Appeal filed at the Court of Appeal, Port Harcourt Division with respect to Suit No: PHC/2177/CS/2024 in which the main opposition party is listed as appellant.

A statement issued on Sunday by Debo Ologunagba, National Publicity Secretary, maintained that its national legal adviser never neither filed nor authorized any external solicitor to file same on his behalf.

The purported appeal is challenging the order of the Rivers State High Court restraining the Chief Judge of Rivers State and the Clerk of the Rivers State House of Assembly from receiving or acting on any resolutions from certain individuals pending the determination of a case before it.

"The PDP restates that only the National Legal Adviser of the Party has the exclusive responsibility of conducting the litigation, prosecution and defense of cases on behalf of the Party including its Organs, Chapters and Officials as expressly provided for in Section 42 of the PDP's Constitution (as amended in 2017).

wherein the PDP is reportedly listed as Appellant.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the PDP National Legal Adviser, Barr. Kamaldeen Ajibade SAN has ascertained that the Party did not file the said Appeal neither did it authorize any external solicitor to file same on its behalf. As such, the PDP cannot be listed as Appellant in the Appeal.

"The PDP states categorically that it did not file the said Appeal at the Court of Appeal, Port Harcourt Division challenging the Order of the Rivers State High Court restraining the Chief Judge of Rivers State and the Clerk of the Rivers State House of Assembly from receiving or acting on any resolutions from certain individuals pending the determination of a case before it.

"The PDP restates that only the National Legal Adviser of the Party has the exclusive responsibility of conducting the litigation, prosecution and defense of cases on behalf of the Party including its Organs, Chapters and Officials as expressly provided for in Section 42 of the PDP's Constitution (as amended in 2017).



Anyim



Agbakoba

Anyim, Ogba dump PDP for APC in Ebonyi

Grace Egbo with agency report

FORMER President of the Senate, Pius Anyim, alongside former gubernatorial candidates of opposition parties in Ebonyi, at the weekend, defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Anyim, formerly of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), defected to the APC with some of his supporters during the grand finale of the APC campaign for the Local Government Area (LGA) elections in Abakaliki.

Anyim, a former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), defected alongside a former senator and PDP gubernatorial candidate in the 2023 general elections, Senator Obinna Ogba and that of the Labour Party, Chief Edward Nkwegu.

Also some former members of the national and state Houses of Assembly as well as former Local Government Area Chairmen among others, all from the opposition also defected to the APC.

Anyim, in his remarks, said that Ebonyi had always been a one political family and the massive defection of opposition members to the party, attested to

such fact.

The former Senate President said his intention to join the APC had been hatched for long as remarked by former Governor David Umahi.

"The time I wanted this to happen, Umahi was not ready and the time he wanted it, it didn't turn out the way we wanted.

"We however, thank God that it has worked smoothly as we all are presently under the same roof," he said.

The former SGF said that the defection was not just about him but the Ebonyi people as consultations were widely made before a final resolution was taken.

"We wanted to appreciate Governor Francis Nwifuru's great works and reconciling various political divides of the state, making them stay under one roof.

"We are aware of the enormous economic and socio cultural challenges confronting the country and the need to patriotically support President Bola Tinubu to surmount the challenges.

"We intend to collaborate with all federal appointees from the state especially the Minister of Works, Umahi to support and step down President Tinubu's life uplift-

ing policies to Ebonyi people," he said.

The former Senate President urged Nigerians to rally behind President Bola Tinubu as he steers the ship of the nation to peace and prosperity.

Anyim added: "We have resolved to collapse the whole of Ebonyi state into one political family and that political family is All Progressives Congress (APC).

"We note the enormous social, political, and economic challenges facing Nigeria today. It is therefore not a time for political shadowboxing but rather a time for patriots to collaborate at all levels to support Mr President as he navigates our nation through these challenging times.

"Accordingly, we have resolved to collaborate with our governor and all the federal appointees from Ebonyi State to upscale our support for President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"We have resolved to use this opportunity to call on all well-meaning Nigerians to rally behind President Bola Tinubu as he steers the ship of our nation to peace and prosperity.

The APC national chairman, Dr Abdullahi Ganduje, commended Governor Nwifuru for sustaining his predecessor's ideals of en-

larging the APC in the state and the South-East.

"The APC is presently de-marginalising the south east zone by placing it in the mainstream of national politics.

"The ministerial among other appointments given by President Tinubu to indigenes of the zone, massive infrastructural development in the zone among others,, attests to this fact," he said.

Governor Nwifuru commended the decampers for their bold decision to join the APC and assured that they would be adequately accommodated in the party.

"I thank my predecessor and father, Senator David Umahi, for laying this strong foundation for the party's growth in Ebonyi and President Bola Tinubu for his fatherly support to us in all ramifications.

"Ebonyi will develop more rapidly when its leaders and people stay under one roof, to actualise the people's charter of needs mantra of the administration,".

The Minister of Works, Senator David Umahi thanked President Tinubu for ensuring the growth of the party in the state and urged Nigerians to support him in making the country great.

Kabiyesi O

With deep joy and immense gratitude
to God Almighty, we felicitate with

Our Royal Father,
His Imperial Majesty,
OBA AKINLOYE OWOLABI OLAKULEHIN
(Ige Olakulehin 1),
the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadan land

on his ascension to the throne and
reception of staff of office from

His Excellency,
Engineer Seyi Makinde,
The Governor of Oyo State

on July 12, 2024,
at the historic
Mapo Hall, Ibadan.

Ki ade pe l'ori
Ki bata pe l'ese
Ki irukere di abere...

May your reign usher in a
new era of progress, joy
and prosperity to
Ibadanland, Oyo State and
Nigeria!

With deep admiration and joy:
Oloye Oluwa-Kayode Ogunsola
[Mogaji Solekan Ogunsola]
Itabigbo, Oranyan, Ibadan



Oloye Olusegun Agboola
[Mogaji Abiolu]
Oke-Offa Atipe, Ibadan



OYO STATE JUDICIARY HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

M.K.O Abiola Way, Ring Road, Ibadan

Obituary

Hon. Justice
Adegboye Ayinla
Gbolagunte

10th December, 1959 - 24th June, 2024



The Chief Judge of Oyo State, Hon. Justice I.S. Yerima, on behalf of other brother Judges and the entire staff of Oyo State Judiciary, announces the home call of one of our eminent Judges, Hon. Justice Adegboye Ayinla Gbolagunte, who passed unto glory on the 24th of June 2024.

BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS

MONDAY 22 JULY, 2024
Special Valedictory Court Session
At The High Court of Justice
No 1, M.K.O Abiola Way, Ring Road
Time: 10am

TUESDAY 23 JULY, 2024
Commendation Service
At New Estate Baptist Church 57, Adisa Bashua
Street, Surulere, Lagos
Time: 5pm

THURSDAY 25 JULY, 2024
Service of Songs
At Felicia Hall, Jogor Center
Liberty Road, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Time: 5pm

FRIDAY 26 JULY 2024
Funeral Service
At New Reservation Area Baptist Church
Familusi Avenue, Iyaganku GRA, Ibadan
Time: 10am

Reception follows immediately
At Hall of Grace, Jogor Center
1, Harvesters Drive, Liberty Road, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

We pray that GOD Almighty will rest his gentle soul in HIS bosom.

Signed:
Chief Registrar
High Court of Justice, Ibadan, Oyo State

METRO

...CRIME, SECURITY, COURT

Police arrest ASP over alleged defilement of 17-year-old girl

Olalekan Olabulo | Lagos

THE police in Lagos State have arrested an Assistant Superintendent of Police simply identified as Lanre, who allegedly defiled a 17-year-old girl.

The teenager was reportedly trying to recover her lost phone by reporting to the police when the policeman reportedly took advantage of her in his office at the Area H Police Command, Ogudu, Ojota Lagos. The Nigerian Tribune

gathered that the arrest of the policeman followed a referral letter from the Lagos State Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency. The image maker in charge of the state police command, Benjamin Hundeyin, confirmed the arrest

of the policemen in a statement on Sunday.

He said: "The Lagos State Police Command has placed under arrest one of its personnel accused of defiling a 17-year-old girl.

"The Commissioner of Police, Adegoke Fayoadé, has,

meanwhile, directed a full-scale and thorough investigation into the allegation."

Hundeyin, a Superintendent of Police, also said: "The command assures the public that there is absolutely no attempt at a cover-up as such hideous acts are at variance

with the code of conduct and professional ethics of the Nigeria Police Force.

"To this end, CP Fayoadé once again assures Nigerians that the officer will be dealt with in accordance with police regulations and the law if found culpable."

NDLEA seizes US, UK, Europe-bound cocaine, opioids in Lagos

Intercepts tramadol pills in custard containers, busts laughing gas warehouse

Sunday Ejiike | Abuja

THE National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has intercepted various quantities of cocaine and opioids such as tramadol, pentazocine injection, morphine sulphate, ketamine injection, among others, concealed in soles of shoes, clothes and other items being shipped to the United States, United Kingdom and Cyprus.

gos was intercepted by operatives in one of the logistics companies.

In a similar development, operatives of the NDLEA in Edo State on Wednesday intercepted a vehicle marked Abuja GWA 273 DD at Ewu junction, Esan Central LGA, following credible intelligence.

The luggage of one of the occupants, Aminu Abdullahi, was searched and found to contain custard containers where 3,000 pills of tramadol 225mg were buried in the custard powder.

In his statement, the suspect claimed the drugs were bought in Onitsha, Anambra State, and he was taking them to Mararaba area of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, to sell.

Operatives also raided the Ohen forest, Abudu area of Edo State, on Thursday and destroyed 5,429.751kg of cannabis on 2.918 hectares of farmlands where four suspects, Godday Ariye, Friday Okafor, Obinna Nwosu and Yusuf Adamu were arrested.

While no less than 250 grams of cocaine going to Cyprus was hidden in soles of custom-made shoes, over five kilograms of opioids heading to the US and UK were discovered by NDLEA officers in clothes and other household items meant to be shipped through some courier firms in Lagos.

A statement by the Director, Media and Advocacy of the NDLEA, Mr. Femi Babafemi on Sunday, also indicated that a consignment of 440 grams of Loud, a synthetic strain of cannabis, coming from Canada to La-



Governor Caleb Mutwang of Plateau (middle), sympathizing with one of the victims of collapsed at the OLA Hospital in Jos on Sunday. Photo: NAN

Three trapped, two rescued as building collapses in Osun

Adeolu Adeyemo | Osogbo

AT least three persons reportedly got trapped in the rubble of an uncompleted storey building that collapsed at the Ayetoro area of Osogbo, the Osun State capital, while two others, Shehu Abubakar and Muktauru Mohammed, were rescued.

The building, Nigerian Tribune learnt, used to harbor hoodlums around the area.

Good Samaritans made frantic efforts to break the decking and extricate rods in order to save the lives of those that got trapped in the incident.

The state command of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in a statement by its spokes-

person, Kehinde Adeleke, said two people had been rescued so far while the remaining three were still trapped under the decking, and would require the use of a crane to free them.

"While we await the crane, people are doing all they can within the physical human capacity to break the decking and connected rods," he said.

As at the time of filing in this report, officials of the NSCDC, the Commissioner of Police in the state and his team, as well as officials of the Osun State Environmental Management Agency (OSEMA) were on ground to ensure the safety of the victims.

A delegation of the government led by the Commissioner for Environment,

Hon Mayowa Adejorin, was also at the scene to assess the damage.

"We inspected the collapsed building and we discovered it has no building plan. We are reaching out to other related MDAs to give effect to the governor's directive," Adejorin stated.

The NSCDC had earlier reported that that building was an eyesore and recommended that it should be raided by a task force and the environmental body.

Governor Ademola Adeleke has warned developers and residents against building houses without approved building plans, threatening to bulldoze badly built houses posing threat to human safety.

In a statement by his spokesperson, Mallam

Olawale Rasheed, in Osogbo, the governor emphasized the importance of securing approvals for building plans to ensure standard of construction and avoid needless deaths and injuries.

"Building plan is not an optional step in building construction process as it stops substandard houses that frequently collapse and pose safety risk to occupants and environment.

"I am using this medium to direct the Ministry of Lands to step up enforcement of approved building plans by developers and residents. Our officials must go to the estates and development areas to ensure houses are constructed according to approved plans," he said.

NAF kills scores of terrorists in airstrikes in Kaduna

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) says the Air Component of Operation Whirl Stroke has eliminated scores of terrorists in recent airstrikes in their enclaves at Giwa and Igabi Local Government Areas of Kaduna State.

logistics tucked under thick foliage were also destroyed.

According to him, similar air strikes conducted on Saturday over terrorists' camps inside Malum Forest in Igabi Local Government Area also recorded positive outcomes.

He said: "From the Battle Damage Assessment footage, the terrorists were observed freely loitering around the forest at a compound with zinc-roofed structures.

"Subsequently, a precision strike was authorized, which eliminated most of the terrorists.

"These air strikes were initiated following thorough credible human intelligence, along with intelligence surveillance, and reconnaissance operations, which identified the targeted locations as enclaves of terrorists responsible for the ambush on troops at Manini on July 10.

This is contained in a statement by the Director, Public Relations and Information, NAF, AVM Edward Gabkwet, on Sunday in Abuja.

Gabkwet said the air operations had continued unabated with remarkable levels of success being recorded in spite of the weather challenges hampering ongoing efforts to diminish the capabilities of criminal elements in the North-West.

He said that one of the strikes was carried out on Friday at Alhaji Layi's enclave, situated in Kufan Shantu Village in Giwa Local Government Area.

Gabkwet said that their

Fire razes 15 shops in Ogun market, one injured

Olayinka Olukoya | Abeokuta

NO fewer than 15 shops were razed on Saturday night as fire engulfed the Lipede International Market, in Kuto area of Abeokuta.

It was learnt that the fire started after 10.pm from one of the makeshift shops and later spread to some of the shops in the main market building.

The power surge was said to have been the cause by fire which was traced to a palm kernel shop in one of the makeshift shops.

Nigerian Tribune gathered that goods worth several millions of naira, including rice, plantains, daily needs were destroyed in the inferno.

A couple identified as Basiru and Tolani Moses said to have lost N500,000 cash, while other goods worth N1.5 million were burnt.

The victims said their intention was to deposit the cash sum on Monday morning in the bank.

The scene was visited by the Commissioner for Special Duties, Mrs Funmi Efuwape;

the Director of the State Emergency Management Agency (OGSEMA), Wale Sonde; the Director of State Fire Service, Fatai Adefala, the chairman of Abeokuta South Local Government, Omolaja Majekodunmi, for an on-the-spot assessment, on Sunday morning.

"The fire outbreak was just because of these shanties erected outside the main market building. Now that they (traders) have seen it for themselves, I am sure when the government comes in and tells them that all these

shanties must go, definitely they will agree with us that they have to go.

"About ten shops were affected outside and five inside. The five would not have been affected if the ones outside were not there. The fire started from the illegal structures outside and erupted to the main building," he said.

She said that the building of the main market would undergo an integrity test to ascertain its safety, while the government would roll out measures to renovate the market.

WORLD NEWS

Tinubu, world leaders react as Trump survives assassination attack at campaign

By Leon Usigbe, Bioluwatife Akinyemi and Agency Reports

Leaders around the world have condemned Saturday's assassination attempt on former US president, Donald Trump. The Republican presidential candidate, according to *Cable News Network (CNN)*, was at a rally in Pennsylvania when shots were fired at him 148 yards. He was injured in the right ear.

One person was killed and two others injured. All three victims are adult males, according to law enforcement.

According to the *British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)*, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) named 20-year-old Thomas Matthew Crooks as the man suspected of carrying out the gun attack. He has been killed by the Secret Service.

US President Joe Biden - Trump's political opponent - called the attack "sick", saying "there's no place for this kind of violence in America".

No place in America for this — Biden

After the shooting, President Joe Biden released a statement, expressing concern about the "sick" assassination attempt and saying he was "grateful" to hear that Donald Trump was safe.

"I have been briefed on the shooting at Donald Trump's rally in Pennsylvania. I'm grateful to hear that he's safe and doing well," he said.

"I'm praying for him and his family and for all those who were at the rally, as we await further information. Jill and I are grateful to the Secret Service for getting him to safety.

"There's no place for this kind of violence in America. We must unite as one nation to condemn it. It's sick, it's sick".

Vice-President Kamala Harris also released a statement, underlining that she is "relieved" Trump was not seriously injured.

"We are praying for him, his family, and all those who have been injured and impacted by this senseless shooting."

It has since been confirmed that President Biden has spoken with Trump.

However, reaction and condemnation poured in from further afield too.

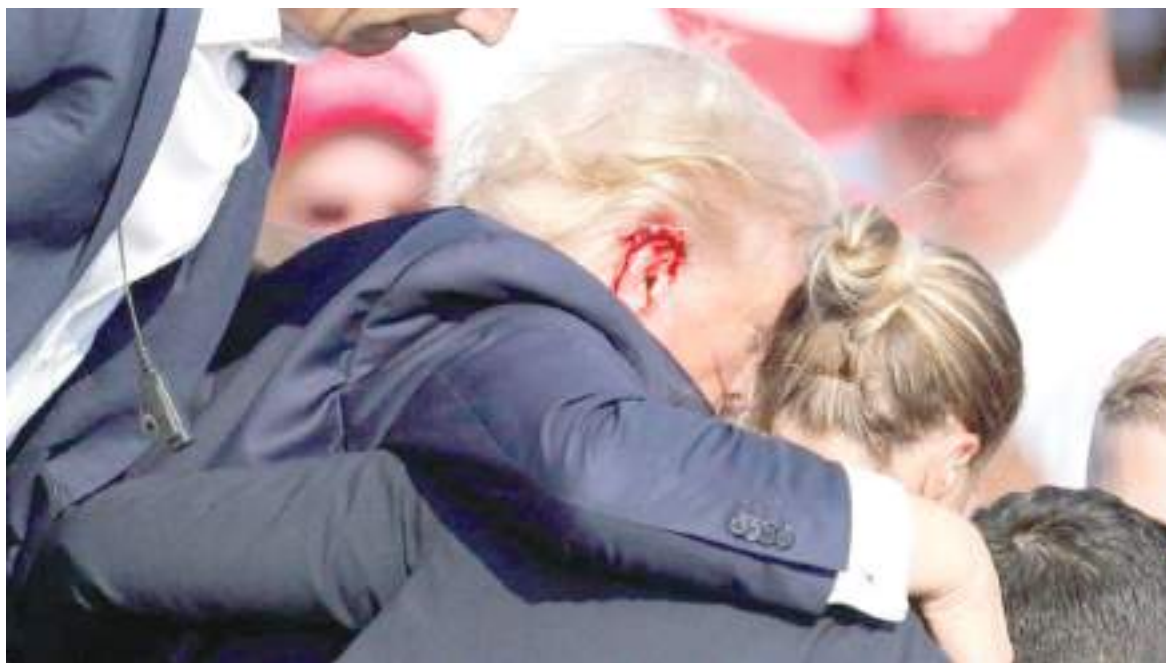
House will conduct investigation —Speaker

US House Speaker, Mike Johnson vowed that the House will conduct a full investigation.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, the speaker said: "The American people deserve to know the truth.

"We will have Secret Service Director Kimberly Cheatle and other appropriate officials from DHS and the FBI appear for a hearing before our committees ASAP."

The Secret Service has agreed to



brief the House Oversight Committee about the attack, a spokesperson confirmed to *The Hill*.

"He (Trump) does get a very robust former protection detail that is with him all the time. But he doesn't necessarily get all of the different assets that are available. So, I think that there are some aspects of this incident that are going to be investigated," retired Secret Service Supervisor Bobby McDonald told *Reuters*.

"The Secret Service will now look at what happened and how that they can again develop and continue to enhance their protective methodologies to make sure that things like this do not happen in the future."

Attack on Trump distasteful —Tinubu

In a post on his X handle on Sunday President Tinubu said that the attack is distasteful.

He posted: "The attack on former President Donald Trump is distasteful and goes beyond the pale of democratic norms. Violence has no place in democracy.

"I extend my sympathies to the former President and wish him relief. I also condole with the family of the deceased and those wounded and wish them a quick recovery.

"Nigeria stands in solidarity with the United States of America at these times."

"It is a tragedy for our democracies," French President Emmanuel

Macron said.

"France shares the shock and indignation of the American people."

He also wished the former president a "speedy recovery", a sentiment shared by a number of leaders, including those from Spain, Ireland, Italy, Australia, Turkey, Honduras and Israel.

Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, said his thoughts were with Trump and all those at the event, adding: "Political violence is never acceptable."

As well as the suspected gunman, one spectator has also died and two others are critically injured.

The UK's newly elected Prime Minister Keir Starmer sent the former president his best wishes and said his thoughts were with all the victims of the attack.

Similarly, Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz said his thoughts were with all those affected, and called the attack "despicable".

"Such acts of violence threaten democracy," he added.

Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum reiterated the condemnation expressed by her various counterparts, adding: "Peace and democracy must always be the option."

In a social media post, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban wrote: "My thoughts and prayers are with President @realDonaldTrump in these dark hours."

The right-wing premier has recently been on a whirlwind two-week tour that concluded with a

visit to Trump, whom he strongly backs to win again in November.

Nations across the Asian continent also sent messages, including Japan, the Philippines, Pakistan and Taiwan.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "deeply concerned" by the attack on his friend and condemned it.

Meanwhile, China's President Xi Jinping "expressed his condolences" in a statement from an official spokesperson, which added China was "concerned" about the shooting.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said: "Russia always denounced and categorically denounces any displays of force in a political battle.

"We express condolences to the family of the deceased and wish a speedy recovery to the injured."

Mr Peskov added that the US had a repeated history of similar violence during "political battles".

To date, the US has lost four presidents to assassinations, while others have been targets of attempted attacks.

Who is Thomas Crook?

Crooks was from Bethel Park in Pennsylvania, around an hour from where the rally took place. He was a registered Republican, according to state voter records.

However, according to *Reuters*, when he was 17, he made a \$15 donation to ActBlue, a political action committee that raises money for left-leaning and Democratic politicians

He graduated in 2022 from Bethel Park High School, according to the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*. He received a \$500 "star award" from the National Math and Science Initiative, the paper adds.

His father, Matthew Crooks, 53, told CNN he was trying to figure out what happened and would wait until he spoke to law enforcement agents.

Explosive devices found in gun-

man's car —Reports

Explosive devices were reportedly found inside Thomas Crooks' car, according to people briefed on the investigation speaking to the *Wall Street Journal*.

The outlet reports the car was found near the rally in Butler, Pennsylvania.

Weapon allegedly used by gunman was his father's, AP reports

Law enforcement officials believe the weapon used to shoot at Donald Trump was purchased by Thomas Crook's father, the Associated Press news agency reports.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, two officers told the AP that Crooks' father purchased a weapon at least six months ago.

Federal agents have not disclosed a motive for the attack, but authorities are treating the shooting as an "assassination attempt".

Melania Trump describes gunman as a 'monster'

Melania Trump, while reacting to the assassination attempt on her husband Donald Trump, said the gunman was a "monster" who saw her husband as "an inhuman political machine".

In a statement posted on X, she says her and their son Barron's lives "were on the brink of devastating change" when she saw "that violent bullet strike my husband".

She says she is thinking of her "fellow Americans", and thanks people across the "political divide" for their support.

Secret Service: 'Untrue' that Trump's team asked for extra resources

Anthony Guglielmi, a spokesman for the agency, says there is an "untrue assertion" circulating that a member on Donald Trump's security team had requested extra security "resources" and that request was "rebuffed".

"This is absolutely false. In fact, we added protective resources & technology & capabilities as part of the increased campaign travel tempo," Guglielmi says.

Trump 'doing well' and grateful to security officers

Donald Trump is "doing well" and is grateful to law enforcement officers, according to a statement published on the Republican National Committee (RNC) website.

It says he "looks forward to joining you all in Milwaukee as we proceed with our convention to nominate him to serve as the 47th president of the United States. As our party's nominee... [he] will continue to share his vision to Make America Great Again," the statement from the Trump campaign and RNC reads.

Earlier, Trump posted a statement on *Truth Social*, a platform he founded.

He thanked law enforcement officers and the Secret Service for their "rapid response".



Kwara gov donates N32.6m to indigenes among victims of Lagos market inferno

By Oluwatoyin Malik

TRADERS who are Kwara State indigenes among those affected by the recent inferno which occurred in Dosumu market, Lagos State, have been given N32.6 million by the Kwara State governor, Mallam Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, as a

financial support. Receiving the cheque in tune of the amount at the office of the General Manager, Kwara State Social Investment Programme (KWASSIP), Dr Tejdini Abdulwasiu Olayinka, at the weekend, the Chairman of the Committee set up to receive the fund, Mallam Abdulganiyu Sebutu, expressed delight over the fi-

nancial support. Speaking on behalf of the affected members, Mallam Sebutu described it as an "unprecedented magnanimity." Accompanied by the Public Relations Officer of the Committee, Mallam Adelodun Babatunde Iponrin, Sebutu said that the governor demonstrated being

the father of not only the Kwarans at home, but also those outside the state. According to him, "we are short of words, as this came as a huge surprise to us all, at the time when we all thought it was over. "This indeed, is a testament to the governor's people-oriented approach to govern-ance.

"On behalf of all the beneficiaries, we are grateful, and we pray that almighty Allah will reward him abundantly." In his remarks, the KWASSIP General Manager reiterated the governor's continued support to all Kwarans at all time. He said: "Today, we present a cheque of N32.6 million to the Kwara indigenes living in Lagos State, over the recent

Dosumu market inferno that affected their businesses. "This is a testament to Mallam Abdulrazaq's priority for the welfare of all Kwarans across board, regardless of their locations. "The governor will continue to do everything within his capacity to ensure that every Kwaran is adequately carried along in his administration."

Autonomy: LGs should commit between 10 and 15% of budgets towards disability inclusion —Group

By Ifedayo Ogunyemi

A disability rights inclusion group, the Inclusive Development Consults, says that the Supreme Court judgement that granted financial autonomy to local government

councils will serve as great opportunity to strengthen disability inclusion across the country. The group, according to a statement issued by its Chairman and Chief Consultant of the group, Dr Adebukola

Adebayo, stated that all the LGs, in the 2025 budgets, must commit between 10 and 15% of their budgets towards accelerating disability inclusion in their basic services. Adebayo stated this on

Sunday in a statement made available to *Nigerian Tribune*. He lamented that persons with disabilities in the country usually go through very tortuous pains of traveling very long distances to look

for, and access basic services like education, health, rehabilitation, etc. Adebayo added that the low sensitivity of local government councils to persons with disabilities and their issues is compounded by the lack of legal or policy framework on disability at any of the local government level. He, however, noted that the local government autonomy

portends an end to the poor access of PWDs to basic social services, especially within their immediate localities. He listed the services that must be boosted by local councils to include the "Adoption of the Local Government Disability Framework which we developed in collaboration with Hope Inspired Foundation for Women and Youth with Disabilities (HIFWYD) and Disability Rights Fund (DRF) in 2023, and which was submitted

Oyo LG election petition: Tribunal dismisses APC, SDP petitions for incompetence

THE Oyo State local government council election petition tribunal sitting in the high court of justice, Ring Road, Ibadan, has dismissed the petition filed by AbdulWasiu Ajao and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Omotosho Olayode and All Progressive Congress (APC) on the elections conducted on the April 27, 2024.

In the judgment delivered on the July 3, 2024 by the election petition tribunal, headed by Justice A L Akin-tola, ruled that the petitions were incompetent and statute barred. The respondents to the case with petition number: LGET/OY/01/2024 were Rafiu Omotosho, Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and Oyo State Independent Electoral Commission and Segun On-

ifade. Also, Ayobami Akinleye, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Oyo State Independent Electoral Commission (OYSIEC) were respondents to the suit with petition number: LGET/OY/02/2024. Part of the contentions by the petitioners was that the election did not hold in Akinware Akindele constituency, ward three and no result of parties declared. However, the tribunal said the contention was misleading and unfounded, stressing that the Oyo State Independent Electoral Commission (third respondent) conducted election throughout all the local government areas within Oyo State on April 27, 2024 and declared the results of the election on the April 28, 2024 where the first respondent was de-

clared winner. The judgement read: "The tribunal holds that this election petition was filed after the prescribed period of 14 days, the preliminary objection of the third respondent is therefore meritorious." "On ground of the petition (ground one) is valid and competent, while the other ground (ground two) is invalid and incompetent for failure to state the scores of the candidates in the election as mandated by paragraph five (one) (c) of schedule three to the State Independent Electoral Commission law 2,000. "The tribunal holds that the ground one of the petition

cannot sustain the petition in view of the putrid nature of the ground two." The tribunal states further: "The first issue has been resolved in favour of the first and second respondents, the petition held to be statute barred and some dismissed. "It will amount to a mere academic exercise if the tribunal embarks on the consideration of the issue of non-joinder of a party. Therefore, the tribunal considers such an exercise otiose and amount to a sheer waste of valuable judicial time. In conclusion, this application succeeds, and the petition is accordingly hereby dismissed."

to the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON). "Setting-up a dedicated Office for Disability Affairs; Setting-up the process of collection and management of disability database; Provision of assistive technologies and materials to PWDs; Allocation of 5% employment quota to qualified PWDs. "Allocation of 10-15% quota of social and economic empowerment benefits to PWDs; and Commencement of Disability Audits of essential services including primary health care, basic education and public buildings and infrastructure."

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH

I, BABATUNDE KUDIRAT TOYIN wish to correct my date of birth which was mistakenly written as 12/01/1970 instead of 12/01/1967. All former documents remain valid. Nigeria Immigration Service and general public should take note.

ADEBAYO

That on my NIN details, my name was correctly written as Adebayo Bashir Oriyomi and my date of birth was written correctly as 12th March, 1986 and on my BVN my name was written as Lanre Basiru Adebayo and my date of birth was written as 12th March, 1985. That now I wish to be known, called and addressed as ADEBAYO BASHIR ORIYOMI and my date of birth as 12th March, 1986. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

Monarch commends Otuaro for steps taken to reposition PAP

THE King of Okochiri Kingdom in Okirika Local Government Area of Rivers State, King Ateke Tom, has hailed the administrator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), Dr Dennis Otuaro, for the achievements of his administration since he mounted the saddle. He observed that Otuaro had quietly carried out well-thought-out reforms to reposition the PAP for better and quality service delivery. The first-class monarch, who stated this when the PAP boss visited him at his palace in Okochiri at the weekend stressed that Otuaro had demonstrated that he has capacity to pilot the affairs of the programme. The monarch added that Otuaro's commitment and passion for efficient service to the people of the Niger Delta were not in doubt. These were contained in a statement issued on Sunday by the Special Assistant on Media to the PAP Administrator, Mr Igoniko Oduma, on Sunday. King Tom cautioned those he

described as the detractors of Otuaro to stop their distractive activities, and allow him to concentrate on his job. According to him, the ill-advised attempts by some characters to pull down Otuaro were condemnable and not in the best interest of the region, delegates and beneficiaries of the PAP. He described Otuaro as a serious-minded Niger Deltan and a product of the struggle and collaboration with stakeholders for the success of the programme. The former frontline freedom fighter thanked President Bola Tinubu for appointing Otuaro, stressing that the president made the right choice in his decision. He said, "Mr (PAP) Administrator, I want to commend you for all that you are doing to better the programme for our people and our region. Since your appointment, I have watched keenly how you have made progress and recorded laudable achievements."

PUBLIC NOTICE

ECCLESIA WORLD OUTREACH

The Board of Trustees of Ecclesia World Outreach hereby notify the public of the need to request for Certified True Copy of the Certificate of Incorporation of ECCLESIA WORLD OUTREACH.

The need arises as a result of Correction of errors made in the names of the Trustees during initial registration.

THE CORRECTIONS MADE ARE:

- The secretary's proper name arrangement on her NIN is: OGUNKOYA JOYCE OLUFUNKE. But they wrote OGUNKOYA OLUFUNKE JOYCE. This has been corrected to OGUNKOYA JOYCE OLUFUNKE.
- The 4th trustee changed his surname from ALALADE IBUKUNOLUWA AYOWALE to JOHN IBUKUNOLUWA AYOWALE. This has been corrected to JOHN IBUKUNOLUWA AYOWALE.
- The presidents (Senior pastor) name is OYENEYE TOPE on all his documents. They made a mistake and put (G.O) in the centre of his name, "PASTOR G.O OYENEYE TOPE". His name has been corrected to OYENEYE TOPE.

ALL THESE CORRECTIONS HAVE BEEN EFFECTED AND WE ARE REQUESTING THEY APPEAR ON THE CAC CERTIFICATE.

Anyone who wants to object should contact Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) with reasons for the objection within the stipulated 28 days from the date of publication or pasting this notice.

Signed: TRUSTEES

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE ONDO STATE OF NIGERIA

PROBATE DIVISION

WHEREAS the persons whose names are set out in the First Column of Schedule hereto died intestate on the date and place mentioned therein.

WHEREAS the persons whose names and addresses are set out in the Second Column of the Schedule with particulars of their relationship hereto applied to the High Court of Justice, Akure, Ondo State for Letters of Administration.

NOTICES ARE HEREBY GIVEN that the Letters of Administration will be granted unless notices to prohibit are filed within 21 days from the date thereof.

DECEASED	APPLICANTS
1. GLADYS FUNBI SARIMAKIN (late) OF NO. 29, OLUSEJI LANE, ONDO TOWN, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 28 TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2020. AT HOSPITAL.	SARIMAKIN AKINLOLU JOSEPH AND KEHINDE SARIMAKIN OF NO. 29, OLUSEJI LANE, ONDO TOWN, ONDO STATE. HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER OF THE DECEASED.
2. RICHARD OGUNMAKIN JOHN (late) 1, PALM AVENUE, UJAPU EXTENSION, AKURE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 27 TH DAY OF JUNE, 2022. AT HOSPITAL.	STELLA-MARIS FOLAJOLE USIFOH AND SUSAN OLUWASEUN KUBEYINJE OF NO. 38, COLLEGE ROAD, ONDO, ONDO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
3. OGUNTOBA CECILIA BOLA (late) OF OGUNTOBA DRIVE, OGANGAN QUARTERS, SUPARE- AKOKO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 18 TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2023. AT HOME.	OGUNTOBA OLUSOLA ADEBAYO AND OYEWUSI OMOLOLA ABIOLA (late) OF OGUNTOBA DRIVE, OGANGAN QUARTERS, SUPARE- AKOKO, ONDO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
4. GIWA IDOWU DANIEL (late) OF NO. 4, ISINIBO OFF ADO ROAD, AKURE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 2 ND DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2023. AT HOSPITAL.	GIWA OREOLUWA MOJISOLA AND GIWA OLUWASEUN ESTHER OF NO. 4, ISINIBO OFF ADO ROAD, AKURE, ONDO STATE. WIFE AND DAUGHTER OF THE DECEASED.
5. FADENI SABAINAH OLUYEMISI (late) OF OREMEJI QUARTERS, BARRACKS ROAD, G.R.A. ONDO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 9 TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2021. AT HOSPITAL.	AKINWANDE TITOLA OLUJUNMI AND ADEBOYEKU HELLEN OMOWUMI OF OREMEJI QUARTERS, BARRACKS ROAD, G.R.A. ONDO, ONDO STATE. DAUGHTER AND SISTER OF THE DECEASED.

DATED THIS 15TH DAY OF JULY 2024 (DR. DICKSON OGUNFUYI) PROBATE REGISTRAR

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE ONDO STATE OF NIGERIA

PROBATE DIVISION

WHEREAS the persons whose names are set out in the First Column of Schedule hereto died intestate on the date and place mentioned therein.

WHEREAS the persons whose names and addresses are set out in the Second Column of the Schedule with particulars of their relationship hereto applied to the High Court of Justice, Akure, Ondo State for Letters of Administration.

NOTICES ARE HEREBY GIVEN that the Letters of Administration will be granted unless notices to prohibit are filed within 21 days from the date thereof.

DECEASED	APPLICANTS
1. OGUNDIPE OLUBUNMI REMI (late) OF NO. 10, OSOORE STREET, ORE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 12 TH DAY OF MAY, 2023. AT HOME.	OGUNDIPE DAVID AYOMIKUN AND OGUNDIPE PELUMI OF NO. 10, OSOORE STREET, ORE, ONDO STATE. HUSBAND AND CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
2. IBUKUN AGNES (late) OF NO. 7, FADEYI STREET, ISARUN, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 6 TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2022. AT HOSPITAL.	AJIFE OMOPEMIPO STEPHEN AND AJIFE OLUWAKAYODE TOPE OF NO. 7, FADEYI STREET, ISARUN, ONDO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
3. ADERINOLA BOLATITO MARY (late) OF BLOCK 11, PLOT 85, OKE ALA OBA-ILE HOUSING ESTATE, AKURE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 28 TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2009. AT AKURE.	ALONGE OLUWAFUNKE ADEOLA AND ADERINOLA KEHINDE AYOMIKUN OF BLOCK 11, PLOT 85, OKE ALA OBA-ILE HOUSING ESTATE, AKURE, ONDO STATE. SISTER AND BROTHER OF THE DECEASED.
4. ILEGBUSI AJAYI OSENI (late) OF OGODO IBAKA OKA-AKOKO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 29 TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2019. AT HOME.	ILEGBUSI JIMOH ADELAKE AND ILEGBUSI OLUWATOVIN JUSTINAH OF OGODO IBAKA OKA-AKOKO, ONDO STATE. BROTHER AND SISTER OF THE DECEASED.
5. ENIOLA OLADELE AMOS (late) OF NO. 14, OFF SURAJUDEEN ILORO, IGBARA-OKE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 20 TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2014. AT HOSPITAL.	ENIOLA TOPE EUNICE AND ENIOLA PRECIOUS ADEOLA OF NO. 14, OFF SURAJUDEEN ILORO, IGBARA-OKE, ONDO STATE. HUSBAND AND DAUGHTER OF THE DECEASED.
6. AKINRUJOMU BOSEDE JOSEPHINE (late) OF NO. 5, OLORUNSOA STREET, NEW TOWN ODIGBO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 23 RD DAY OF MARCH, 2022. AT HOSPITAL.	AKINRUJOMU OLUGBENGA AND AKINLOLA RACHAEL OSEYEMI OF NO. 5, OLORUNSOA STREET, NEW TOWN ODIGBO, ONDO STATE. BROTHER AND SISTER OF THE DECEASED.
7. AFOLABI OLAJIDE OLADEJI (late) OF NO. 32, OGDIGBO STREET, IGBODIGBO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 23 RD DAY OF JUNE, 2023. HOSPITAL.	BABATIMEHIN JOEL OLUWASHOLA AND AFOLABI FUMILOLA LOVETH NO. 24, ALARERE LAYOUT, OFF NEW IFE ROAD IBADAN, OYO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
8. EJELONU BENJAMIN CHIBUZO (late) OF NO. 31 ^A , ARAROMI QUARTERS CORNERSTONE AVENUE, ARIGIDI AKOKO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 17 TH DAY OF JULY, 2023. AT HOME.	OLUWAMODUPE CECILIA AND BEN-EJELONU DEMILO TOLLUWASE OF NO. 31 ^A , ARAROMI QUARTERS CORNERSTONE AVENUE, ARIGIDI AKOKO, ONDO STATE. WIFE AND DAUGHTER OF THE DECEASED.
9. OGUNJEHINSIN AYOOLA FELIX (late) OF NO. 9, IGBALAYE STREET, OKE-ARO, AKURE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 25 TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2023. AT AKURE.	OGUNJEHINSIN IFEOLUWA TOSIN AND OGUNJEHINSIN OLADUNI BAMIDELE OF NO. 9, IGBALAYE STREET, OKE-ARO, AKURE, ONDO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
10. BOLANLE MARGARET ALADETOHUN (late) OF NO. 14, EHIN-OGBE, OWO, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 10 TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2023. AT HOME.	OLADUNJOYE MODUPE YETUNDE AND ADELEGAN OLUWASEYI OF NO. 1, AJIFA CLOSE, OSHINLE QUARTERS, AKURE, ONDO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.
11. LABAKE RABIAT JIMO (late) OF NO. 12, OKE MAPO ALADE, IDANRE, ONDO STATE. WHO DIED ON 4 TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2012. AT HOSPITAL.	ADUBI SAHEED ADEWALE AND SAHEED MADINAT YEMISI (late) OF NO. 12, OKE MAPO ALADE, IDANRE, ONDO STATE. CHILDREN OF THE DECEASED.

DATED THIS 15TH DAY OF JULY 2024 (DR. DICKSON OGUNFUYI) PROBATE REGISTRAR

Ooni bans market groups for orchestrating high food prices in Ile-Ife

Adeolu Adeyemo | Osogbo

DISTURBED by the high cost of food items in his domain, the Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Adeyeye Ogunwusi, at the weekend banned all market groups for their alleged involvement in hiking prices of commodities and dictating to market women

uniform prices that their products must be sold to the consumers. "We don't want that in this community. We want traders to be free to sell at cheap rates to their customers. "It is unfortunate that groups of traders dealing in various food items have been involving in fixing cost of goods, even when

they have bought the items cheaply from farms," the royal father said. The leader of market heads in the town, Akinwande Olajire, who made the announcement while addressing market traders, quoted the royal father to have given out the instruction. He said Oba Ogunwusi had suspended market groups, as their activities had been

fingered as the cause of high cost of food items. Olajire said: "We also received several complaints from these traders about how motorists and others are extorting (money from) them. We will act on their complaint but they can't sell at prices we consider too high in our markets. "Ooni of Ife, Oba Adey-

eye Ogunwusi, sent me to the markets across Ife. You must have seen one of the videos that we recorded during the visits. I am the Babaloja of Ejigbomekun market also known as Oja tuntun. I am the leader of Babalojas in Ife. "Baba Ooni and his chiefs have been told of unjustifiable amount traders are selling food items in markets in the town and one of the measures to check this is the ban he placed on market groups. These groups are fix-

ing prices for their members and we don't want that. "Traders should be free to sell at cheap rate, if they are able to buy at cheap rate from farms. The groups have been banned." He said all the identified places the market groups are using for their meetings have been shut, and that authorities would be monitoring them, warning that anyone caught intimidating traders for selling at cheap prices would face sanctions.



From left, Iya Suna of Lagos, Alhaja Mujinat Alake Shopeyin; Engineer (Mrs) Olayinka Abdul Rafiu Ebiti newly installed Baba Adinni of the Islamic Prayer Group of Nigeria, Challenge Central Mosque/Musweh Deputy President 1 and Prof-Chancellor/Chairman of Council Summit University, Off Kwara State, Alhaji Rafiu A. Ebiti; Murshud and Chief Imam, IPG Challenge Central Mosque, Sheikh Musa K. Nojmudeeh and Sheikh Muideen Bello, during the Hijrah 1446AH Forums and Awards, held at IPG Central Mosque, Challenge, Ibadan, on Saturday. Photo: Yemi Funso-Oke.

Financial autonomy for LGs: NASS will ensure compliance —Senator Karimi

Jacob Segun Olatunji | Abuja

THE senator representing Kogi West senatorial district in the National Assembly, Sunday Karimi, has assured that the National Assembly will ensure full compliance by the various state governments the judgment on the financial autonomy granted the 774 local government areas by the Supreme Court in the country.

This came just as the senator declared that President Bola Tinubu deserved commendation on the judgment which had remained unresolved by previous administrations in the country over the years

"President Tinubu deserves to be honoured in the nation's Hall of Fame for enabling the judiciary free hand to function, which culminated in such historic adjudication.

Senator Karimi, who is the Chairman, Senate Services Committee, gave the assurance at the weekend in Abuja, while speaking to newsmen on the Supreme Court judgment, also promised that the National Assembly would take up the responsibility of amending the constitution to address the inherent contentious issues in the mat. "These inherent contentious issues include: grey areas like the transfer of the responsibility of the conduct of elections to the local councils from the various state electoral bodies to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"I thank the president for mustering the courage to do the right thing. Since 1999, the third tier of government has been nonexistent. State governments treated them as appendages of the state governments. No president has been able to change that

"But, within one year, however, President Tinubu has returned local government to the owners—the masses, Local governments, if well operated, will ensure a better existence for our people. President Tinubu took due cognisance of this and took the bull by the horn."

Late Oba Balogun's family congratulates new Olubadan

By Saheed Salawu

THE Aliiwo Royal Family of the immediate past Olubadan of Ibadanland, Oba Mohood Olalekan Balogun, has congratulated Oba Owolabi Olakulehin on his coronation as the 43rd Olubadan of Ibadanland.

saying that the family with a rich history of producing two Olubadans would always be ready to contribute to the progress of Ibadan.

The statement commended the new Olubadan's "historic visit" to the Aliiwo family following the passage of Oba Balogun, calling it a positive omen for the development of Ibadanland.

In a statement in Ibadan by a United Kingdom-based solicitor, Prince Kamal Giwa, the family rejoiced with Oba Olakulehin and wished him a long and peaceful reign.

The royal family expressed optimism that the new Olubadan would continue the growth and development initiatives begun by his predecessor, Oba Balogun.

The family also congratulated the people of Ibadan, home and abroad, on witnessing another significant milestone in the city's history with the coronation of the 43rd Olubadan which it said again confirmed the uniqueness of the ascendancy to the Olubadan throne.

The statement assured Oba Olakulehin of the Aliiwo family's support,

Soyinka@90: Be advocates of good governance, Ojudu tells youths

'Yomi Ayeleso | Ado-Ekiti

IMMEDIATE past Special Adviser to the president on Political Matters, Senator Babafemi Ojudu, has called on Nigerian youths to emulate the zeal and commitment of celebrated Nobel laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, in the fight for good governance at a younger age.

enthusiasts in the state and beyond. The event was held in collaboration with Ekiti Book Club, Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), Ekiti chapter; Ekiti State Tourism Agency, and the Ekiti State Association of Tourism Practitioners of Nigeria.

He described Soyinka as a hero who deserves to be celebrated daily for his contributions not only to the literary space but his efforts at entrenching democracy and its values in Nigeria and beyond.

I asked them if you have a grandfather who is 90, will you want him in the streets carrying placards?

"I tell them to go and fight for a better Nigeria. Soyinka started about the age of 20. You don't need to call an old man to fight your battle for you. He has done his own for us as a country. Let our young ones take over towards achieving a greater country."

Ojudu commended President Bola Tinubu for honoring the literary giant by renaming the National Theater in Lagos after him, saying, "those are the people we should be honouring. The people who have given so much to this country, the people who are good examples and role models to our children, not people who are rich and their money will just be for a while."

Ojudu said: "He (Soyinka) never gave up even at the face of persecution and arrest. He continued to fight for a better Nigeria. He fought for the democracy we are enjoying today and I don't think there is any other Nigerian like him in terms of the tasks he has given himself to birth a better country.

In their separate remarks, president of Ekiti Book Club, Adesina Adetola; chairman, Tourism Practitioners, Dr Abigail Olagbaye; chairman of ANA, Dr Olugbenga Dar-amola and the director-general of the state's Bureau of Tourism Development, Wale Ojo-Lanre, commended Ojudu for hosting the event.

Gov Abiodun to declare open 51st AAAN AGM/Congress

Governor of Ogun State, Prince Adedapo Abiodun, will declare open the 51st Annual General Meeting (AGM)/Congress of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), scheduled to hold at the June 12 Cultural Centre, Abeokuta and Park-Inn by Radisson, Abeokuta, from July 18 to July 20.

a new executive committee that will direct the affairs of the association for the next two years.

Nwoko, CEO and founder, WHAT Media; Mr. Olu-mide Balogun, Director, Google West Africa; and Mr. Olatunbosun Alake, Lagos State Commissioner for Innovation, Science and Technology, as discussants.

itable platform for a real assessment of the advertising sector, how it currently impacts the socio-economic well-being of the country as well as how it can achieve a bigger impact, as evidenced by its theme.

According to the President of the Association, Mr. Steve Babaeko, the event will begin on 18 July with courtesy visits to the Alake of Egbaland, HRH Oba Adedotun Gbadebo Aremu III, and the Osile Oke-Ona, HRH Oba Adedapo Tejuosho.

The third and final day of the event will have two segments: Business Session and Gala/Award Night. The highlights of the former include induction of new members, dissolution of the executive committee and elections. The latter will see deserving advertising professionals recognized and rewarded.

"The Nigerian advertising industry is a major contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product. "A recent report by PwC underscores the contributions of the advertising industry. Commissioned by the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) and funded by various industry associations, the report put the value of the industry at N605.2billion."

Also expected to be in attendance is the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris Malagi. The AGM/Congress, which has as its theme, 'Breaking the Mold-Creativity and National Development', will also witness the election of

The first half of the second day of the AGM/Congress will be devoted to the conference session, with Mr. Obi Asika, Director-General, National Council for Arts and Culture; Mr. Femi Odugbemi, founder/CEO, Zuri35 Media; Ms. Chichi

Babaekon said, "The 51st AGM/Congress offers a ver-

In Loving Memory of



OLUWATOPE OLUWAFEMI APELEGAN

DECEMBER 12, 1968 - JULY 15, 2023

FOREVER LOVED, FOREVER MISSED!

*Fondly remembered by Bolaji, husband;
Ibukun and Timilehin, daughters*

SIDELINES

The National Bureau of Statistics, (NBS), says 70 percent of Nigerians refused to pay bribes in 2023 on at least one occasion. Bribery, meanwhile, has a man Friday. Mr Corruption. If 30 percent Nigerians reject corruption, the notorious B & C combo will wane. Then beloved Nigeria will be next to the fabulous El Dorado.

Awoniyi in fresh injury scare



NOTTINGHAM Forest forward Taiwo Awoniyi has been dealt another injury blow, forcing him to miss the team's friendly game against Chesterfield on Saturday. The Nigeria international reportedly picked up a slight knock during the Reds' first week back at the Nigel Doughty Academy after their summer break. The 26-year-old joined Nottingham Forest in June 2022 from German side Union Berlin, but the Nige-

rian's tenure at Forest has been plagued by recurrent injuries, blighting his career and hindering his personal growth and development. Groin surgery and a thigh problem sidelined him for significant spells last season. In the aftermath of Forest's 3-0 victory over the Spireites, manager Nuno Espírito Santo expressed concern over Awoniyi's latest setback. "He had a problem in the first training session of the week. Let's see how long it

takes. It was something in his calf. Unfortunately, not (for today). Hopefully he doesn't miss too much of pre-season. For all of them, it (pre-season) is important, and more so for Taiwo," said the Portuguese trainer as per the club's official website. However, Awoniyi is expected to join the team for their training camp in Spain this week. During their stay, Forest has three friendlies lined up at the Pinatar Arena, where they will face Sunderland, Millwall, and Elche.

The **Reds'** pre-season schedule will also include a match against Villarreal at the City Ground and a game against Olympiacos in Greece. Nottingham Forest will kick off their new campaign with an opening fixture against Bournemouth on August 17. Awoniyi was previously linked with a potential move to West Ham in May, but no concrete developments have materialised since then. Awoniyi since his arrival at City Ground, has scored 17 goals in 50 games.

Peseiro set for Kuwaiti Job

JOSE Peseiro is in talks to become the next coach of the Kuwaiti national team, dumping reports of a potential return as Super Eagles head coach in the trash can, Soccernet.ng understands. Until the end of February, Peseiro was the head coach of the Nigerian national team, the Super Eagles, leading the former African champions for 22 months. The high point of his spell with Nigeria was guiding the Super Eagles to the final of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations in Cote d'Ivoire. However, despite receiving a national award from President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Peseiro left his position after failing to agree to extend his contract with the Nigeria Football Federation.

The NFF moved on shortly after, appointing Finidi George, one of Peseiro's assistants, as the new Super Eagles coach. Unfortunately, Finidi's tenure lasted only 40 days as he resigned when plans to demote him surfaced following the Super Eagles' poor outings against South Africa and the Benin Republic in June. The Super Eagles are yet to name a new Technical Adviser or head coach even with the team set to regroup for the 2025 AFCON qualifiers.

Recent reports suggest that NFF has contacted Peseiro intending to convince him to return to take charge of the Super Eagles. However, the Portuguese tactician is on the verge of becoming the head coach of Kuwait, according to the **Arab Times**. Kuwait want Peseiro to lead their national team in the decisive round of qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Kuwait are in Group 2, along with South Korea, Oman, Iraq, Palestine, and Jordan.



Paris 2024: Falcons complete in camp

SUPER Falcons coach, Randy Waldrum is a happy man as he now has a full squad of the invited players in camp as they prepare for the 2024 Olympics. The Super Falcons have been in Seville, Spain for residential camping ahead of their group games in the Women's football event at the Olympics. It has not been smooth sailing for the coach, as players arrived in batches, which affected his training camp plans. However, with the arrival of the last batch of players on Friday night, the team now has a full squad in training for the first time, much to Waldrum's relief.

All 22 players, including the alternate players, are now in camp in Spain. This will enable Waldrum to fine-tune his tactics and formations. The team is expected to depart for Paris on June 18, a day after their friendly match against Canada, to finalise preparations for the Olympics.

The Super Falcons will face the Canadian Women's team, the reigning Olympic champions, in a test game on June 17. This will be their only friendly game before the Olympics. The last time these two teams meet, at the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand last year, the match ended in a goalless draw.



Alcaraz crushes Djokovic to retain Wimbledon title

CARLOS Alcaraz powered to victory over an out-of-sorts Novak Djokovic to retain his men's singles title at Wimbledon. Although the players on show made this a repeat of last year's final, it failed to live up to the five-set thriller of 12 months ago as Djokovic appeared mostly helpless against the dominant Spaniard. Despite squandering three championship points when trying to serve out a rapid victory, Alcaraz found focus again and held his arms aloft after battling through the third-set tie-break for a 6-2 6-2 7-6 (7-4) win. "Honestly, it is a dream for me winning this trophy," said Alcaraz, who was presented with the trophy by the Princess of Wales. "I did an interview when I was 11 and I said my dream is to win Wimbledon," he said. Gracious in defeat, Djokovic shared a smile and warm em-

brace with Alcaraz at the net after his comprehensive loss. For a second straight year, Djokovic was attempting to equal Roger Federer's record of eight Wimbledon men's titles. The 24-time major winner was also trying to move ahead of Margaret Court to take sole ownership of the

all-time record for the most Grand Slam singles titles. As tradition now dictates, Alcaraz climbed up to the players' box and was leapt upon by his team and family, celebrating a 14th consecutive match win at Wimbledon. The result continues the four-time major winner's

100% record in Grand Slam finals, while he becomes the youngest man to win at Wimbledon and the French Open in the same year. Alcaraz was hoping it would be a day of double Spanish celebrations, too, with the national football team taking on England in the Euro 2024 final in the evening.

