

FG: Nigeria, Others Losing \$95bn in Productivity Due to Unsafe Food In-take

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The federal government has said consumption of unsafe or contaminated food was causing the country and other low income economies estimated \$95 billion in productivity decline.

The Minister of Health, Dr. Osagie

Ehanire who spoke at this year's World Food Safety Day in Abuja, yesterday, said the public health burden due to food borne diseases was comparable to malaria and HIV-AIDS.

"Unsafe food hinders development especially on low and middle Income economies which lose

around \$95 billion in productivity associated with illness, disability and premature death suffered by workers," he said.

Speaking on the diseases resulting from in-take of contaminated food, Ehanire said over 200 diseases were caused by unsafe food consumption.

According to the minister, the

magnitude of the public health burden due to food borne diseases was comparable to malaria and HIV-AIDS, adding that under five-year children were higher at risk of malnutrition and mortality due to unsafe food consumption.

He also said the children share about 40 per cent of the food borne

disease burden.

"Unsafe food causes one in every six deaths from diarrhea, a major killer of children of the age group," he said.

He said the World Food Safety Day provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the dangers of unsafe food, government, producers,

handlers and consumers having a role to play in making food safe.

On her part, the Director General, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, (NAFDAC), Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, urged Nigerians to always ensure

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NBS: Despite Unstable Power, Discos Raked in N2.4tn in Six Years... Page 5

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UN to Nigeria: Bring Perpetrators of Owo Catholic Church Attack to Justice

●UK parliament debates massacre, decries rising insecurity in Nigeria ●Ondo confirms 22 dead, 18 injured, 88 casualties ●WHO, Ekiti Obas grieve, condole Akeredolu, victims' families

Michael Olugbode, Kuni Tyessi in Abuja, **Fidelis David** in Akure and **Victor Ogunje** in Ado Ekiti

Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, has condemned Sunday's terrorist attack on St. Francis Xavier Catholic

Church, Owo, in Ondo State, where 22 persons were reported killed. Guterres, who reacted to the massacre yesterday in a statement by

his spokesperson, Stéphane Dujarric, called on the Nigerian government to bring the culprits to justice.

The secretary-general's comments

came as the United Kingdom's House of Commons debated the gruesome killing. And a team from the World Health Organisa-

tion (WHO), led by the Country Representative and Head of Mission,

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At APC Convention, THISDAY Projects Tinubu Winner

●I've capacity to articulate a vision of progress, says ex-Lagos gov ●Buhari to Delegates: Vote candidate with best chances of victory ●Osinbajo: You can't wish Nigerian well and vote someone you don't believe in ●Adamu slams NWC members, declares they're irresponsible ●Akpabio, Amosun, Fayemi, Badaru, Bankole, Boroffice, Ohanenye, step down for Tinubu ●Felix steps down for vice-president

Deji Elumoye, Chuks Okocha, Kingsley Nwezeh and Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

With some last minute intrigues and horse-trading, THISDAY is projecting a former governor of Lagos State, often addressed as National Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to emerge the party's presidential candidate for the 2023 elections.

According to exit polls, Tinubu is likely to win most North-west, most South-west, some North-central and doing well in other places.

Indications that the odds might have favoured Tinubu began to manifest after some of the aspirants started to stand down their aspiration and declare support for him and urged their delegates to vote for

FRONT RUNNERS...



Continued on page 10 ■ Bola Ahmed Tinubu ■ Prof. Yemi Osinbajo ■ Rotimi Amaechi ■ Ahmed Lawan

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ADAMU DECLARING CONVENTION OPEN...

The Chairman of APC, Senator Adamu Abdullahi, giving his speech at the convention

NBS: Despite Unstable Power, Discos Raked in N2.4tn in Six Years

James Emejo in Abuja

The Electricity Distribution Companies (Discos) raked in a total of N2.4 trillion as revenue between 2015 and 2020, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has revealed. According to the NBS, revenue generated by the Discos in 2015 stood at N278.89 billion and rose to N303.03 billion in 2016, showing an 8.65 per cent growth rate. Also, in 2017, revenue generated by the Discos increased by 22.25 per cent to N370.46 billion and further rose by 19.48 per cent in

2018 to N442.63 billion. It further increased by 9.03 per cent in 2019, to N482.61 billion as well as a sustained positive growth of 9.15 per cent when N526.77 billion was collected in 2020. The statistical agency disclosed this in its June Electricity Report which presents statistics on electricity from 2015 to 2020. The report focuses on customer numbers, metered customers, estimated billing customers, and most importantly, electricity supply and revenue collected under the reviewed period.

In the 2020 revenue receipt, the highest collection was by Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IEDC) with N102.10 billion. It was closely followed by EKEDC with N81.39 billion while the least collection was recorded in YEDC with N10.64 billion. Nonetheless, electricity supplied to customers during the period of the review showed an unstable trajectory. The NBS stated that in 2015, 20,337.40 Gigawatt hours (GWh) were supplied across Nigeria. This fell by 6.36 per cent in 2016, when

19,044.30 GWh were supplied. Also, it rose in 2017 by 2.04 per cent with 19,432.39 GWh and further rose in 2018 by 10.55 per cent with 21,483.25 GWh. In total, electricity supplied in 2019 stood at 22,450.67 GWh but declined in 2020 by 1.82 per cent when 22,042.28 GWh were supplied. The NBS pointed out that customer numbers under the reviewed period increased successively on a year-on-year basis, with the highest numbers recorded in IBEDC. Generally, customers' numbers rose from 6.99 million in 2015 to

10.37 million in 2020. Similarly, the number of metered customers increased consecutively on a year-on-year basis from 3.15 million in 2015 to 3.80 million in 2019 but declined to 3.51 million in 2020. In 2015, Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) recorded the highest number, while IBEDC stood top between 2016 and 2019 while Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) recorded the highest in 2020. The NBS said the estimated billing customer records also showed

a year-on-year positive growth rate consecutively from 3.85 million in 2015 to 6.86 million in 2020. It added that in 2020, the customer numbers were highest in IBEDC with 1,282,136 and lowest in Eko Distribution Company (EKEDC) with 269,022. The Statistician-General of the Federation, Mr. Adeyemi Adeniran, said: "Today, with the overwhelming global demand for energy and the emphasis positioned by the Sustainable Development Goal (7) on access to energy for all places the need for statistics on electricity as a form of energy. Thus, electricity statistics remain a very useful tool for socio-economic planning and development, particularly for a developing economy like Nigeria. These numbers will provide an insight and shape policymaking on improving energy, specifically the electricity supply in Nigeria." The report further stated that the trajectory of metered customers had shown annual positive growth rates consecutively except in 2020. In 2015, metered customers were 3.15 million and rose slightly by 0.23 per cent in 2016. This also increased in 2017 and 2018 with 3.57 million and 3.58 million customers respectively. Metered customers in 2019 stood at 3.80 million, showing a 5.96 per cent growth rate, yet lower in 2020 when 3.51 million customers were metered.

APC Convention: Hotels, Eateries Record High Patronage

Ndubuisi Francis and King Akan in Abuja

Hotels, eateries and other businesses in Abuja are experiencing a boom as the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) holds its convention to pick a presidential candidate. Eagle Square, venue of the convention located at the Federal Secretariat witnessed increased activities in the last couple of days as 2,340 delegates of the ruling party converge on the nation's capital. A survey by THISDAY yesterday revealed that eateries inside the public car park at the Federal Secretariat, adjacent the venue of the convention were swarming with increased patronage. Before now, users of the car park were usually hailed by waiters in the eateries to come and patronise them, but his was not the case when THISDAY visited. The Calabar Kitchen and other brands of eateries were seen working frantically to attend to customers, some of whom were standing due to shortage of seats. Some grocery shops and those selling household items were seen doing brisk businesses. Popular restaurants in the capital city like Jevini, Secret Garden on Ahmadu Bello Way; Cantina Restaurant, 355 Steakhouse & Lounge, among others, were not left out of the increased patronage. A visit to some hotels, especially those around Maitama, Asokoro, and Garki, indicated that they were not only fully booked, but saw increased charges.

Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Summerseat, Lincon Luxury and Fraser Suites were some of the hotels in the Central Area visited by THISDAY. Although officials of the hotels said they were too busy to speak, some of their staff at the front desk who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said their patronage was at full capacity. Some of them, according to investigations, increased charges from N107,000 to N243,000 per room per night. Others that used to charge N70,000 for a room now ask for N120,000, while those with regular

room rates at N50,000 now go for N100,000. However, some hotels in the Jabi axis which were surveyed were not fully booked while others that were left with no more space turned back customers. Sandralia Hotel along Solomon Lar Way Jabi was fully booked and had to turn back some APC delegates who approached them for accommodation. The House Keeping Manager at the hotel, Prince Ugochukwu told THISDAY that some APC delegates had initially made reservations with the hotel before the party shifted its convention by one week.

Ugochukwu who said he was speaking on behalf of the Operations Manager of the hotel, Eddy Kome, said when the delegates came back, the rooms had been fully booked. He disclosed that the Sierra Leonean national team, the Leone Stars which had made reservations about two weeks ago were lodging in the hotel. The Leone Stars are billed to engage the Nigerian national team, the Super Eagles for the African Nations Cup qualifier at the Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja weekend. Some of the Sierra Leonean

players and officials were seen relaxing at the hotel lobby. A visit to Chida Hotel Jabi did not yield any positive result, but at 3/4s Hotel, Jabi, the General Manager, Ibrahim Abubakar said although the hotel still had some rooms to accommodate some APC delegates who indicated interest earlier, they did not show up. However, he said the occupancy rate was between 60 and 70 per cent. Abubakar stated that sometimes, the occupancy rate peaks at 100 per cent, adding that the hospitality industry had overcome the COVID-19 setback.

Enugu Trains 80 AUDA/NEPAD Agric Extension Workers

The administration of Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State recently organised a 5-day intensive training for over 80 indigenous agric extension workers in modern farming techniques under the African Union Development Agency (AUDA)/New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Small Holder Farmers Project. The training, according to the Coordinator of AUDA/NEPAD, Enugu State, Mrs. Mabel Agbo, would usher in the actual implementation of the smallholder farmer project in the state. A statement quoted Agbo to have said the programme would expose the participating farmers to international best practices in agricultural techniques for optimal results.

She said, "The farmers involved in the AUDA/NEPAD project actually need to be positioned to get the best out of the programme for them to acquire the requisite economic capacity to cushion the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic." Flagger off the training in Enugu, tagged, "Train the Trainers Workshop," the AUDA/NEPAD State Coordinator enjoined participants to show dedication and pay adequate attention, adding that the success of the AUDA/NEPAD farming project rests with them as, "we are relying on you to impart religiously the knowledge you receive here to the two thousand farmers who will be participating in the AUDA/NEPAD project." Commending Ugwuanyi's

administration for financing the training, the AUDA/NEPAD State Coordinator disclosed that, "These two thousand benefitting farmers are expected to engage in the following value chain: poultry, piggery, fishery, cassava, rice, maize, Nsukka pepper production, snail production, palm kernel oil processing etc." Ugwuanyi's administration recently trained over 260 young farmers on modern techniques in agriculture at CSS Global Farms, Keffi, Nasarawa State, to enable them rebrand and enhance their skills in the agricultural value chain. Speaking further Agbo, pointed out that Ugwuanyi's administration was passionate about the wellbeing of the masses and the need to ameliorate their sufferings owing to the devastating impact of

COVID-19 on the nation's economy. She stressed that the state government took interest in financing the training because of the core spirit behind the smallholder farmers' project, which is to stimulate the production of enough food in the society to cushion the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Agbo, who is also the Enugu State Commissioner for Special Duties, applauded the National Coordinator of AUDA/NEPAD, Princess Gloria Akobundu and members of her team for, "their commitment to helping Nigerians come out of the doldrums of lack and poverty." According to her, "The fact that AUDA/NEPAD Continental Office is financing a major aspect of the project is exciting and worthy of

commendation. I am convinced that together we can make Nigeria and invariably, Enugu economically stronger, if we try hard enough." Represented by the Chief Executive Officer AUDA/NEPAD Abuja, Mr. Onyekachi Okoroafor, Akobundu, commended Ugwuanyi's administration for financing the training of Agric extension officers, who would in return train about two thousand farmers that will participate in the AUDA/NEPAD project, aimed at strengthening Small Holder Farmers capabilities. Akobundu stated that the state government's gesture was a demonstration of its commitment to finding alternative sources of livelihood for its citizens especially following the devastating effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

NEWS



AT THE CONVENTION VENUE...

Senate President, Ahmad Lawan and one of the presidential aspirants, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo and one of the presidential aspirants of the APC welcoming President Muhammadu Buhari to the convention venue ...yesterday

Falae: Nigeria's Future Not Sustainable Without New Constitution, State Police

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

Former presidential candidate and former Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Chief Olu Falae, yesterday argued that unless Nigeria promulgates a new constitution and make provisions for state and local government policing, the situation in the country may continue to deteriorate.

The octogenarian maintained that until there's a wholesale rewriting of the current constitution, tinkering with it as the present administration was doing would not solve any major national challenges.

Falae who spoke when he appeared on Arise News Channel, THISDAY's broadcast arm, explained that the idea of state policing was not new, pointing out that for many years, there was the existence of the native authority while federating units had their own police forces.

Stating that it had existed side by side the federal police force, the elder statesman, stressed that the arrangement was abolished when the civil war started.

Nigeria has been dealing with serious security challenges for years, including the emergence of terrorists in various forms, some of whom attacked St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Owo, Ondo State last Sunday. The incident had left scores dead and many others injured. The insecurity situation in the country which has especially degenerated under the Muhammadu Buhari administration has now made

travelling by road, sea, rail or air difficult for Nigerians.

Owing to this, the Yoruba leader recalled that even in universities abroad, they have their own police. He expressed surprise that the issue of regional policing was still being debated in Nigeria.

According to him, the extant constitution was so fundamentally flawed, saying no amount of amendment would make it ideal for a heterogeneous and complex nation like Nigeria.

He stated that when the government agreed to set up a national conference in 2014, he had the privilege to have been a member, insisting that although there were arguments, at the end of the day, consensus was reached on virtually all of them, with over 600 resolutions passed unanimously.

Falae said the report was still available to Nigeria to be adopted as a working document, with a view to give the country a new constitution.

"After 62 years, we are not getting better whether in terms of fighting poverty, unemployment or insecurity. It has not worked and we need to have the courage and honesty and the nationalism to agree to that and let's have a new constitution. So, I am not interested in these amendments.

"We are not building a sustainable country. We're not even building any country. On the contrary, we have deteriorated, national unity is at the lowest ebb, therefore, the

question of building a sustainable nation does not arise and cannot arise in this situation," he said.

Falae stressed that until Nigeria returns to the "political covenant" reached before independence, which gave considerable autonomy to

regions, progress would continue to elude the country.

Describing the jostle for 2023 as, "politics of desperation," Falae appealed to politicians to be fair and reasonable, explaining that only the living could play politics.

However, he noted that in Nigeria, the struggle to grab power was because people don't believe that they can get justice unless and until their tribesman was in government, unlike what obtains in some other parts of the world.

"All we need is a government maybe like that of Yakubu Gowon's which treated all Nigerians the same way. That's all we need, and not this tribalistic sectionalism and when we have that, all these brickbats would be over," he argued.

Abuja Disco Kicks over EFCC's Invasion of Premises, Threatens Legal Action

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) has threatened to sue the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over the anti-graft agency's alleged invasion of its premises in Abuja.

It wasn't clear why the EFCC stormed the office, but the power distributor which has Abuja, Nasarawa, Niger and Kogi as its franchise areas, in a statement stated that several of its employees were manhandled and forcibly taken away by the officials of the agency.

The management of the company maintained that the EFCC officials visited the headquarters without any invitation or prior notice and had not intimidated the company of why the raid happened.

In addition, it said that the anti-corruption agency was not able to present a warrant when requested by the staff, describing the action

as unlawful.

"We write in response to the ugly incident that occurred at our corporate headquarters on the 6th of June, 2022. The incident was the unrestrained and brazen assault against members of our staff by a group of five staff of the EFCC."

"The team of EFCC staff visited the premises of AEDC without notice or any warrants and violated the rights of law-abiding citizens of this country. Several staff of the company were physically assaulted, unlawfully arrested and arbitrarily detained without cause or justification," the firm stated.

The AEDC insisted that the operatives acted unprofessionally and in absolute disregard of the laws and precepts of the country they were employed to serve.

"As a responsible corporate organisation, we wish to state that we unequivocally condemn this action in its entirety. The law is clear that any

law enforcement official who commits violations against law-abiding citizens must be brought to justice and redress must be provided to the victims," it added.

Consequently, AEDC vowed that it will explore all legal measures to ensure redress for what it termed the gross and regrettable violation of the rights of its employees.

"AEDC values every member

of staff and does not tolerate any intimidation, threat or assault by members of the public or any institution against any of its representative in the course of discharging their duties.

"In the meantime, we implore our staff to remain steadfast and law-abiding citizens as they perform their lawful duties," the statement concluded.

Obaseki Launches Telemedicine Hub in Edo

Adibe Emeyonu in Benin City

Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki yesterday launched a Telemedicine Hub at the Ugbor Primary Health Centre (PHC) Oredo Local Government Area of the State.

Telemedicine enables healthcare professionals, medical personnel to diagnose, plan, implement, evaluate patients centered care and treatment of patients in remote locations to access medical services at no cost through the use of telecommunication technology.

Obaseki, who was represented by Secretary to the State Government, Mr. Osarodion Ogie, highlighted the benefits of the programme to residents of the state and commended the volunteers, particularly the Association of Nigerian Physicians in America (ANPA) for their shared commitment in giving back to their homeland.

He stated that the government remained determined to decentralise the healthcare system and commit to the noble cause of saving lives.

Obaseki assured that, "Whatever it takes we (government) need to do to make this programme work, we will do it."

"If not for the volunteers, most of the beneficiaries would not have been able to pay for the free services."

He also said the government focused on three major areas when it assumed office in 2016, and thanked God that the vision had gradually been fulfilled.

According to him, the Edo State Government had recorded testimonies of good fortunes for vulnerable population by creating access to healthcare through telemedicine in the State.

In a remark, wife of the state governor Mrs. Betsy Obaseki, said her passion to reward the goodwill of voters in the state during the last governorship election, was her motivation to attract the project.

She commended the volunteers for their commitment, adding that a total of 10,000 patients got medical attention during the one-week outreach in the state.

Also in his remarks, ANPA Medical Outreach Champion, Dr. Philip Osehobo, listed the objectives of telemedicine as a compliment of the recent medical outreach to the state by the body.

He said the group and the government had delivered on its mandate through the partnership and cost effective medication with patients despite the initial hitches they encountered in the line of duty.

According to him, "We have shift every Saturday where doctors out of voluntarism, benevolence of hearts and wanting to give back, sacrificed their time."

UBEC to Spend N2bn as Teachers, Pupils' Enumeration Begin

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) has disclosed that it intends to expend the sum of N2 billion on the 2022 nationwide national personnel audit of all basic education institutions in the country.

The Executive Secretary of UBEC, Dr. Hamid Bobboyi, said the exercise commenced in the southern part of the country on June 6, 2022, to end June 25, 2022, while it would commence in all the northern states and the Federal Capital Territory on July 4, 2022, and end on July 23, 2022.

The UBEC boss who made this known at a media briefing in Abuja, yesterday, said, "during the exercise, our enumerators will visit all basic education institutions in the country: public, private, approved, unapproved, registered and unregistered."

"They are going there to collect basic information on schools and personnel. It is necessary to empha-

size that the exercise has no ulterior motive. The data being collected will assist the country to plan effectively towards expanding access to quality education and promoting gender parity at basic and other levels of education.

"This is a census; you have to send enumerators to every school in the federation. It is something we pegged at N2 billion. We are working under it. The bulk of it goes to personnel, because you have to maintain the people, those in difficult terrains, to access these places you have to hire boats and others."

He added: "There are so many challenges, but at the moment, N2 billion is the figure we are using."

While saying since the introduction of the UBE programme, a lot of ground had been covered, Bobboyi said lack of relevant and updated data which the exercise would address remained a major problem in the basic education sector.

"The absence of credible data

had remained a major challenge in basic education implementation for a long time. School data is supposed to flow up from the school level but our schools lack the facility and the personnel to generate and transmit data.

"As a result of this planning had relied on estimates and, sometimes, incomplete data. The Commission attempted to address this challenge by conducting personnel audit in schools."

"The 2006 and 2010 exercises were limited in scope as they dealt with only public schools. A more comprehensive exercise was conducted in 2018, extending to cover both public and private institutions."

"The data generated from the exercise was generally accepted as credible. However, this was only truly valid for the period when the data was collected. If it is to continue to be useful as a planning tool, it has to be regularly updated. The 2022 personnel audit

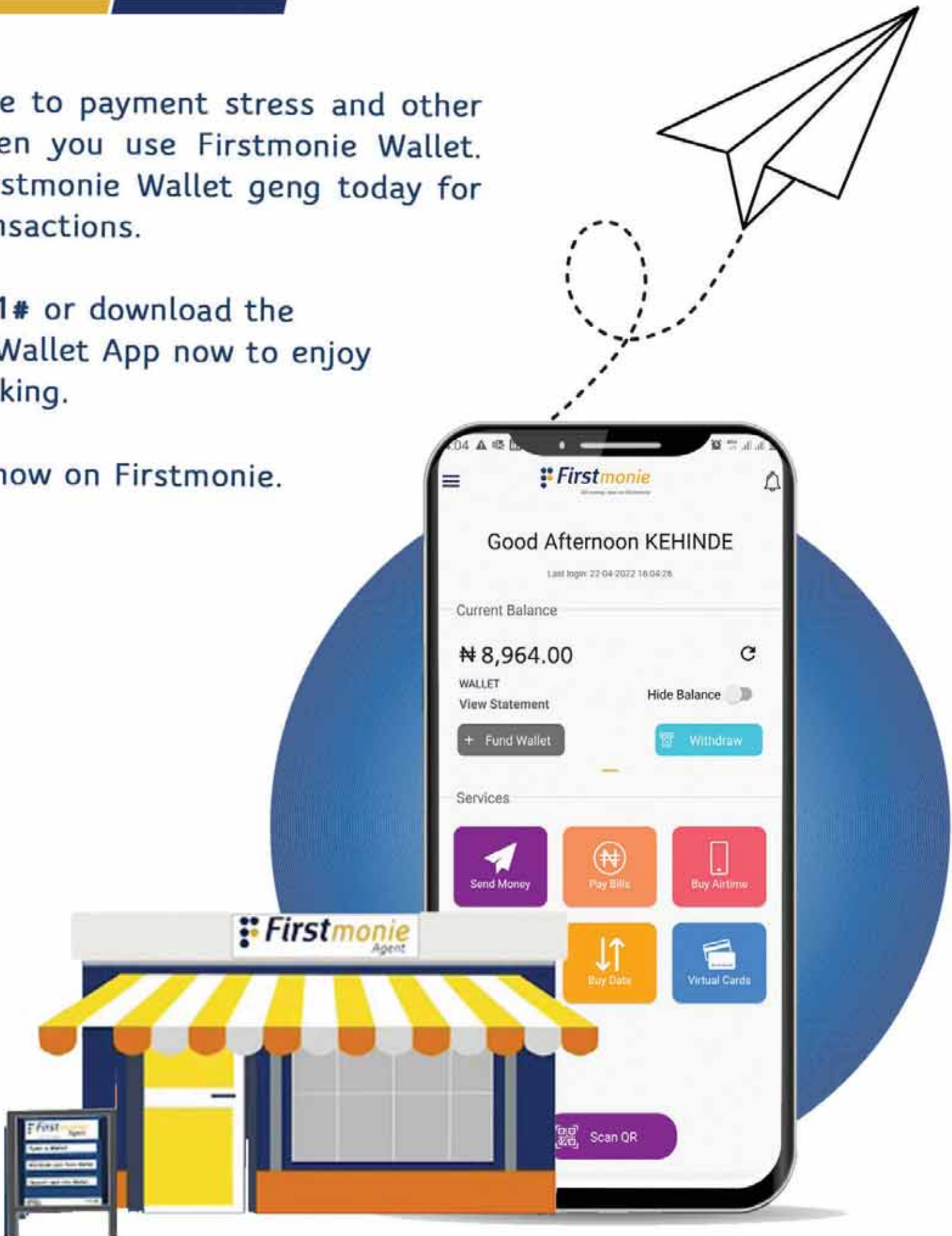


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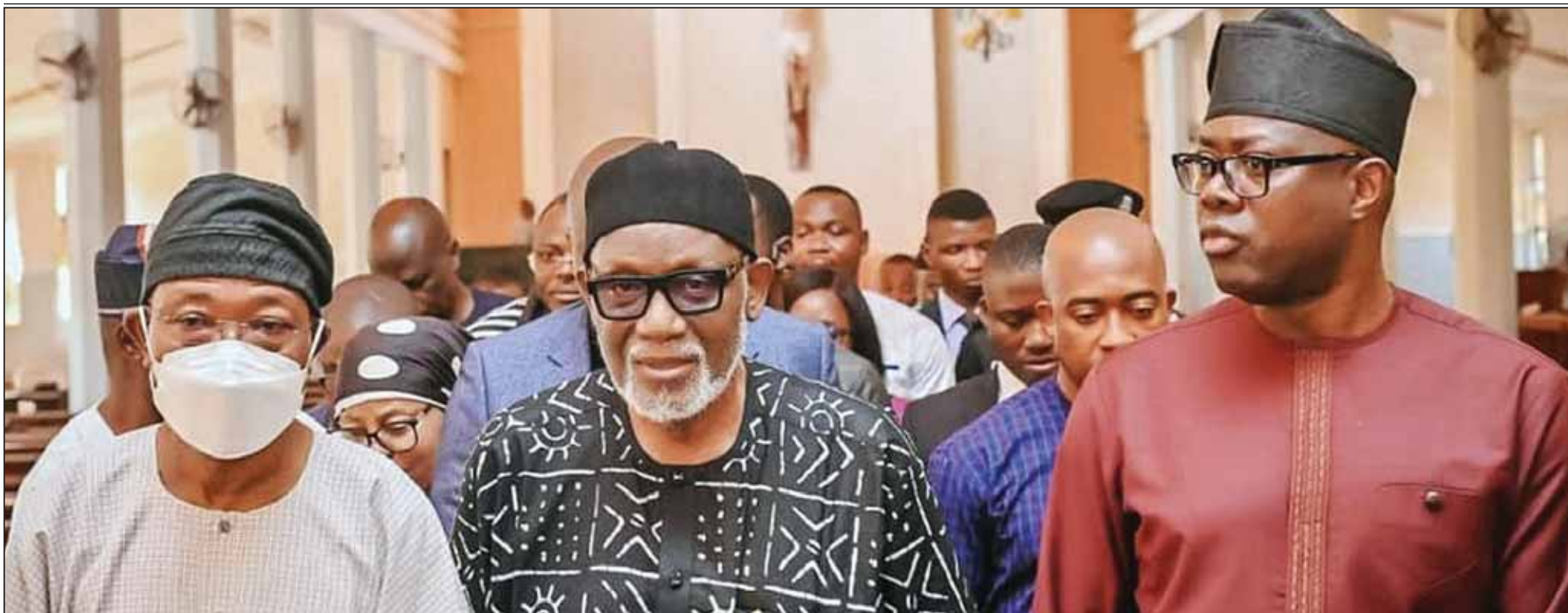


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NEWS



COMMISERATING WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ONDO...

R-L: Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde; his Ondo State counterpart, Rotimi Akeredolu and Minister of Interior, Rauf Aregbesola during a visit to St Francis Catholic Church, Owo over the terror attack on the church that claimed the lives of scores of worshippers on Sunday.

Gulf of Guinea: Piracy Discouraging Foreign Investment, Trade, Says Japanese Envoy

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

Japanese Ambassador to Nigeria, Kazuyoshi Matsunaga has decried that piracy in the Gulf of Guinea region has continued to discourage foreign investment, hamper international trade and businesses along the corridor.

He said this yesterday, in Abuja, at an occasion where the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre (MLAILPKC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) unveiled a Counter-Piracy and Response in the Gulf of Guinea, a

project was sponsored by the Government of Japan.

Matsunaga said due to the increase in piracy activities and its debilitating effect, the Gulf of Guinea had been described as the world's most challenging piracy zone.

He lamented that piracy in the region had also been a recurrent phenomenon with serious concern to the countries bordering the area and the international community.

The envoy, who was represented by the First Secretary, Tomoyoshi Maehira, said: "The activities of piracy does not only remain a

serious threat to trade and businesses of the coastal communities, but also retards the economies of the GoG countries, particularly Nigeria."

He disclosed that it was against this backdrop that the Government of Japan decided to fund the Regional and National Counter - Piracy Project to ensure peace and stability in the Gulf of Guinea and to boost regional and global trades.

He noted that: "The project is critical to ensuring the security and safety of trades and seafarers and aims to increase international trade, contributing to sustainable development in the region."

On his part, the Minister of State for Budget and National Planning, Mr. Clement Agba, said the Gulf of Guinea had remained the epicentre of sea criminalities of the years.

Agba, who was represented by the Director, International Cooperation, Dr Lanre Adekanye, said the growing number of criminal activities in the region underscored the need for the project.

He said sea piracy had continued to have adverse effects on economic growth and pose threats to the livelihood of the coastal communities in the Gulf of Guinea.

He commended the government

of Japan and the UNDP for funding the project, complementary partnerships and provision of technical support where necessary.

"Let me on behalf of the government of Nigeria, acknowledge and appreciate the longstanding bilateral ties between Nigeria and the government of Japan."

The Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, Mr. Lealem Dinku, said the region had continued to be a dangerous hotspot area for seafarers with 43 per cent of global reported piracy incidents.

Dinku, who was represented by the Team Lead, Governance, Peace and Security, Matthew Alao, added that all 40 kidnapped crew incidents occurred in the region in the first quarter of 2021.

He said concerted efforts of regional and international Navies, especially the Nigerian Navy, had led to reduction in piracy incidents

from 16 in quarter one of 2021 to seven over the same period in 2022.

"In spite of this, piracy and maritime crimes continue to pose serious threats to international trades, the safety of seafarers, and regional and global development."

"The realisation of the economic importance of this maritime route to regional and international trades and businesses prompted the intervention of the Government of Japan, in partnership with UNDP, to fund projects in this area."

"This project is a continuation of the maiden project - 'Capacity Building on Anti-piracy for MLAILPKC - implemented between March 2021 and March 2022 by MLAILPKC."

"The current project signposts the enduring strong partnership among the Government of Japan, MLAILPKC and UNDP which began in 2014," he said.

South Africa's Economy Reaches Pre-pandemic Size in Strong Q1

●S'African firm, Southern Sun to exit Nigerian market, to sell hotels for \$30.4m

South Africa's economy grew more than expected in the first quarter, recovering to the level it was before the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to a strong performance by sectors like manufacturing, data from the statistics agency showed.

According to Reuters, the growth trajectory would offer some comfort to South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, who has been under pressure to lift the growth rate.

Gross domestic product grew 1.9 per cent in the first quarter in quarter-on-quarter seasonally

adjusted terms and by three per cent year-on-year unadjusted in the first three months of the year.

Economists had predicted 1.2 per cent quarter-on-quarter growth and a 1.7 per cent year-on-year expansion.

Ramaphosa promised sweeping reforms after he took office in 2018, but COVID and persistent electricity cuts have constrained activity and unemployment hit a record high above 35 per cent last year.

Statistics South Africa said manufacturing grew 4.9 per cent

quarter-on-quarter, while the trade, catering and accommodation category expanded 3.1 per cent and agriculture, forestry and fishing 0.8 per cent. Mining and quarrying contracted 1.1 per cent.

GDP was 1.15 trillion rand (\$75 billion) in the first quarter of 2022, about the same as in the first quarter of 2020, a presentation showed.

The rand was slightly stronger after the figures were released, trading up 0.4 per cent on the day at 15.3800 versus the dollar.

Meanwhile, South African investment company, Southern Sun Africa, has concluded plans to leave Nigeria's hospitality business amid financial troubles.

The firm is expected to sell off one of its subsidiaries, Southern Sun Hotels in the Ikoyi area of Lagos to offset its debt.

The COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted Southern Sun Africa's revenue and in a bid to cut its losses, the company would sell its 75.55 percent stake in the hotels to Kasada Albatross Holding for \$30.4 million. The deal currently awaits the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCCPC) and the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC)'s approval.

Southern Sun Africa chose to save its Mozambique subsidiary with the sale of its business in Nigeria.

The deal would provide the firm with enough cash to offset its \$26.6 million debt owed foreign creditors in the Southern African nation.

It will also free Southern Sun Africa from the \$12.8 million debt owed by the Ikoyi Hotel, and allows the South African company to restructure its operations following the financial loss induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that the name - Southern Sun Ikoyi Hotels - would be changed to Novotel and would be owned by French-owned multinational hospitality conglomerate, Accor Group.

FG Urged to Develop Petrochemical Industries to Support Manufacturing Sector

Ugo Aliogo

The Group Managing Director, Daily-Need Group, Oluwatosin Jolayemi, has urged the federal government to focus on developing the petrochemical industry to generate raw materials for industrial development.

Jolayemi, who disclosed this yesterday in Lagos, during a media briefing to announce series of activities marking the company's 50years anniversary celebration, said for manufacturing to thrive, there should be a deliberate national government policy to help the government

decide how the nation wants to go.

He also stated that there was no country in the world that moved from a developing to developed nation without dependence on import.

He expressed confidence that until the petrochemical industry was developed, government would still depend on imports, adding that if the government was not absolutely clear on the direction they want the country to go, "then we would continue to be a dumping ground for other country's products."

Speaking on the activities marking the celebration, he noted

that the anniversary would feature implementation of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) scheme which involves: donation to schools and students, free health checks and donation of essential commodities to people of Mushin, a staff award and recognition party, and anniversary dinner.

According to him, "As we get set to commence this journey of the next 50 years, we look forward to a much more favourable environment and improved infrastructure in our country to ease the challenges being faced by committed manufacturers in this country."

Oyo PDP Chair Announces Lawal as Makinde's Running Mate for 2nd Term

●As Oke-Ogun leaders appreciate gov

Executive Chairman of Oyo State Housing Corporation and former Commissioner for Justice in the state, Barrister Bayo Lawal, has been announced as the running mate to Governor 'Seyi Makinde for the 2023 gubernatorial election.

Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Oyo State, Hon. Dayo Ogundimu, made the announcement in Ibadan, on Tuesday, shortly after the governor addressed party leaders, local government party chairmen and local government chairmen from the 10 local governments of Oke Ogun Area.

The governor, at the meeting held at the Presidential Lodge of the Government House, Agodi, Ibadan, said following consultations with party leaders, he has picked a running mate from Irepo/Olorunsogo/Oorelope Federal Constituency, where his incumbent deputy hails from, to ensure balance in the power configuration.

A statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Mr. Taiwo Adisa, indicated that the chairman of the Oyo State PDP, who spoke at the behest of the governor, stated that Lawal has been chosen to run with Makinde.

"You heard it that the deputy

governor of the state has left for another party and the exigency of the period made it important for the governor to consult with our leaders from Oke-Ogun, which he did.

"The outcome of that consultations is that Barrister Bayo Lawal from Irepo Local Government, will run with Governor Makinde as his Deputy Governor in the 2023 general election. That is the interpretation."

Also, speaking at the end of the meeting, the deputy governorship candidate of the PDP, Lawal appreciated Makinde and all the leaders from Oke Ogun for choosing him as the governor's running mate.

"This is a great privilege that I won't take lightly or simply but with all seriousness. Our leaders have spoken about the journey so far. A lot of consultations have gone into choosing me as the running mate of the governor come 2023."

"Obviously, His Excellency's considerations are many but he singled out a few of them - replacing his running mate from the same federal constituency where the current Deputy Governor came from. So, it is really a great honour for all of us in the Oke-Ogun region, which the Deputy Governor has been zoned to."

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TEN

UN TO NIGERIA: BRING PERPETRATORS OF OWO CATHOLIC CHURCH ATTACK TO JUSTICE

Nigeria, Dr. Walter Mulombo, visited Ondo State Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu yesterday in Akure to commiserate with him over the incident.

The Ekiti State Council of Traditional Rulers lamented the carnage, in a statement yesterday by its chairman, Oba Gabriel Ayodele Adejuwon. The Obas charged the security agencies to be more decisive in dealing with security issues.

A statement from the UN secretary-general quoted him as condemning attacks on places of worship as abhorrent, while urging the Nigerian authorities to spare no effort in bringing the perpetrators of the Owo attack to justice.

Gutenes extended his condolences to the families of the victims, wished speedy recovery to the injured, and expressed his sympathies and solidarity with the government and people of Nigeria.

UK Parliament Debates Massacre, Decries Rising Insecurity in Nigeria

The UK Parliament considered the bloody attack in Owo a matter of urgent international importance. Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office), Vicky Ford, said she was horrified by the attack.

Ford stated, "I publicly express the UK Government's condemnation of this heinous act and stress the importance of those responsible being brought to justice in accordance with the law. The High Commission in Nigeria has also expressed our condolences to the governor of Ondo State and offered our support. I know that the House will join me in sending our condolences to the families and communities of those killed."

The under-secretary decried rising insecurity in Nigeria and the devastating effect on affected communities.

She said, "I have raised this issue with the Nigerian authorities on several occasions, including in conversations with Nigeria's vice president and foreign minister during my visit in February. During that visit, I also met regional governors, religious leaders and non-governmental organisations to discuss inter-communal violence and freedom of religion or belief."

"It is clear that religious identity can be a factor in incidents of violence in Nigeria and that Christian communities have been victims, but the root causes are often complex and frequently also relate to competition over resources, historical grievances and criminality, so the UK Government is committed to working with Nigeria to respond to insecurity."

AT APC CONVENTION, THISDAY PROJECTS TINUBU WINNER

him at the convention.

As at 5am this morning voting was still far from half way to conclusion. Voting had to be halted due to fears over security of the process. There were issues of accreditation and crowd loitering too close to the designated point of voting. Hawkers of soft drinks, water and such other essentials practically took over the arena. It took the election and planning committee some valuable and security personnel some time to restore order before voting resumed.

Those who stepped down for Tinubu were former Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio; former governor of Ogun State, Senator Ibikunle Amosun; Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi; Governor of Jigawa State, Abubakar Badaru; former Speaker of House of Representatives, Hon. Dimeji Bankole; Senator Ajayi Borofofe and the only female aspirant, Uju Ohanenye.

Tinubu, who was the first to address the special convention, held at the Eagle Square, Abuja, however, boasted as having the capacity to articulate a vision of progress for the country if elected candidate of the party and ultimately, president of the country.

But President Muhammadu Buhari, who spoke before voting commenced, enjoined the delegates to vote the candidate with the best chance of emerging victorious at the general election.

Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo,

"At our security and defence dialogue with Nigeria in February, we committed to work together to respond to the conflict. We are supporting local and national peace-building efforts in Nigeria, including through the Nigeria Governors' Forum and National Peace Committee.

"We provide mentoring and capacity building to support Nigerian police force units, to improve their anti-kidnap capacity, and we support efforts to address the drivers and enablers of serious and organised crime in Nigeria. At our security and defence dialogue, we reiterated our shared understanding and commitment to protecting human rights for all."

Ondo Confirms 22 Dead, 18 Injured, 88 casualties

Ondo State Governor, Mr. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, disclosed that 80 persons were affected by the attack. Akeredolu said 22 people lost their lives, while 56 survivors were on admission at the Federal Medical Centre, Owo; St Louis Hospital, Owo; and Owo General Hospital, as well as some private hospitals.

The governor gave the details yesterday during a statewide broadcast on the terrorist attack.

Akeredolu said the attack was an attempt to test the will of the people of the state and, indeed, the South-west. He added that the dastardly act had the possible consequence of invitation to national anarchy, saying, "Yorubaland and Owo, in particular, have never been conquered before; and it will never happen."

The governor promised to commit every available resource to hunt down the assailants and make them pay dearly, stressing that the state would never bow to the machinations of heartless elements in its resolve to stamp out criminals.

Akeredolu stated, "The site, that is, St Francis Catholic Church, Ow-aluwa, Owo, presents a gory war-like scene. The Federal Medical Centre, Owo, the St. Louis Hospital, Owo, the General Hospital, Owo as well as some private hospitals in Owo were filled with the injured, most of who were in critical conditions."

"The most unfortunate part is the lives of innocent children cut down in their prime and some severely injured by the mindless attackers."

"At Owo, the anger was palpable. The tension was at an abrasive level, just as the urge for reprisals was high. Without doubt, too, the ripple impact of this heinous act as well as the understandably angry reaction across the state could not have been different."

"I urge our people to be calm but remain vigilant. Do not take the law into your own hands. Leave the rest for government to shoulder. I have spoken to the heads of the security agencies. I can assure you that security operatives have been deployed to monitor and restore normalcy to Owo kingdom."

The Commissioner for Health in Ondo State, Dr. Banji Ajaka, had revealed yesterday that a total of 22 worshippers were confirmed dead. Ajaka, who spoke in an interview with journalists in Akure, also confirmed the official casualty figure in the attack on the church, which occurred during Mass.

The official confirmation came less than 24 hours after the Nigeria Police issued a statement, saying it recovered unexploded Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and pellets of expended AK-47 ammunition from the scene of the attack.

At the time of filing this report, the motive of the assailants remained unspecified, even though the police said they had launched an investigation into the attack.

WHO Commiserates with Akeredolu

A team from the World Health Organisation (WHO), led by the Country Representative and Head of Mission, Nigeria, Dr. Walter Mulombo, visited the Ondo State governor, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, yesterday at his office in Akure.

According to the governor's Chief Press Secretary, Richard Olatunde, the team was in the state to commiserate with the government and the people over the sad incident.

Olatunde quoted the governor as saying that contrary to rumours doing the rounds, no one was kidnapped during the incident, stressing, "The terrorists came to maim and kill."

As part of measures being put in place to forestall future occurrence, Akeredolu urged public and religious centres to install Closed-circuit Television (CCTV) cameras at strategic places to enhance security. He called on the people to be more vigilant and report strange faces in their vicinities to the authorities.

The governor appreciated the WHO team for identifying with the state and the support given so far. He said he was surprised that such an act could be carried out even in God's sanctuary.

Akeredolu stressed, "Where else is safe if that sanctuary is not safe. In war situation, even soldiers could run into the church for safety. These are mad people, I'm not too sure they are human beings. They have lost their own humanity and there is no way you can regard them

as human beings. I think they are animals in human skin.

"Initially, it was rumoured that the parish priest was, probably, kidnapped, but when we got there, the parish priest showed up and said nobody was kidnapped. Nobody. They did not go for the Sunday collection and nothing was taken. Clearly, they were there to maim and kill."

The governor solicited more support from WHO in areas, such as social support.

Earlier, the leader of the team, Dr. Walter Mulombo, commiserated with the governor on the sad occurrence. Mulombo also applauded Akeredolu for the leadership he had demonstrated, particularly his prompt response to the situation, despite being outside the state when the attack happened.

He described the attack on worshippers as unspeakable, saying WHO would offer relevant support.

Mulombo said, "I have been engaged in many response emergencies and I can count on my fingers the number of time I saw a hovemor like that in the field going round, making sure things are right. I'm very encouraged and impressed."

"The World Health Organisation is committed to support your state to respond to all hazard and emergencies, including following up of such unfortunate incident. I have come with my colleagues and also those working in the emergency departments, some specialists who can help in dealing with the situation, and our colleagues who will give social support."

"We also came with some emergency trauma kits and some other support materials. This is just a contribution and solidarity. We will remain available for any additional support as Ondo State might require to deal with this difficult situation."

"We are also trying to engage our other UN agencies to come together and see how we can support Ondo to recover from this unfortunate incident."

Ekiti Obas Grieve, Condole with Akeredolu, Victims' Families

Saddened by the Owo killing, the Ekiti State Council of Traditional Rulers, yesterday, charged the security chiefs to be more decisive in dealing with security issues. The traditional rulers said the killing was not only senseless, but also confirmed how bestial some Nigerians had become in nefarious activities and shedding of human blood.

Expressing their condolences to the governor of Ondo State, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, and the

entire Obas and citizens of Ondo State, the council, in a statement yesterday by its chairman, Oba Gabriel Ayodele Adejuwon, regretted the unwarranted shedding of the blood of innocent worshippers.

Charging the country's security agencies to be more proactive in efforts to curtail carnages around the country, Oba Adejuwon, who is also the Onisan of Isan Ekiti, stated that no country could witness investment when security of lives and property had been grossly compromised.

He charged Nigerians to be security conscious and work in partnership with stakeholders to rid the country of vampires and marauding criminals.

The traditional rulers said in the statement, "We are saddened by this murderous act. The church of God is a sanctuary and safe haven for worshipers, but it saddens minds and rendered people spell-bound how such abode has suddenly become unsafe due to the activities of these criminals."

"We commiserate with the families of the victims, the Olowo of Owo, Ondo State government, and the entire Nigerians on the demise of these worshippers and citizens of our nation."

"We are charging the security outfits to be alive to their responsibilities and curtail the activities of these evil doers."

"The council is also tasking the security outfits to build the right networks, intelligence gathering, and work hard to arrest the perpetrators of this mindboggling and saddening event."

Women Groups Call for Restructuring of Security Architecture, Others

A total of 500 women groups, under the aegis of Womanifesto, denounced the attack on St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Owo. The women called on President Muhammadu Buhari to restructure the security architecture of the country and amend the 1999 Constitution, which they described as problematic.

The group also called on the government to, "Publish the identities of all the victims of the Owo tragedy, including those that died as well as the injured, and to demonstrate accountability and carry out a speedy investigation that is

conclusive with arrests, successful judicial prosecution and sentencing of the killers."

Commiserating with the people of Ondo State, co-convenor of the group, Dr. Abiola Akiyode-Afolabi, in a statement made available to THISDAY, said the failure of the government to properly investigate or take tangible actions to ensure justice or deter future occurrences had continued to exacerbate the security crisis.

The group said the cold-blooded massacre at the Catholic church was yet another evidence of the blatant disregard for human life and the incessant murder of defenceless citizens by criminal gangs who had been marauding unchecked across the country.

Womanifesto lamented that as a result of the lack of adequate prosecution of terrorists, thousands of innocent people are now widowed and children orphaned.

It quoted the Nigeria Security Tracker to have reported that over 3, 515 people had died as a result of violent attacks between January and June, 2022, with 1, 214 deaths in March, ranking higher than the 996 deaths recorded in January.

The statement said, "Womanifesto demands in the medium term, a comprehensive restructure of Nigeria's security architecture through a national conversation on a new constitution to replace the problematic 1999 Constitution."

"The Owo massacre in which citizens in their place of worship were killed, again raises the question of governance failure, considering that our 1999 Constitution asserts security and welfare of citizens as a primary responsibility of the government."

"Womanifesto finds the current fixation of Nigeria's public officials and other politicians with the 2023 elections in a country, which has many evident signs of being on the brink of collapse, an unconscionable, unkind, and cynical diversion of energy that should be focused on securing anxiety-numbed citizens."

"We are shocked that our political leaders are continuing to ignore and downplay the rising trend of daily killings of Nigerians in states across the country at a dangerous time like this and, instead, (they are) giving priority to their personal quest for power. This is utterly condemnable."

FG: NIGERIA, OTHERS LOSING \$95BN IN PRODUCTIVITY DUE TO UNSAFE FOOD IN-TAKE

that only safe, and wholesome food were consumed to boost immunity and improve the body's natural defenses in fighting diseases.

She said Nigerians do not need medicines if they eat right, stressing that eating right means making healthy food choices from safe, wholesome, and nutritious foods.

Adeyeye said this during NAFDAC's celebration of the fourth World Food Safety Day 2022 with the theme: "Safer Food, Better Health," where she opined that where food is unsafe, "our nutritional goals cannot be achieved."

In a statement signed by the Resident Media Consultant to NAFDAC, Sayo Akintola, Adeyeye was quoted as saying that safe food was an essential component of sustainable development and contributes towards improvement of public health, poverty reduction, and increased food security.

She noted that the theme for this year was very apt, as the world gradually returns to normal with the COVID-19 pandemic having lost its firm grip on the world.

"You all know my popular saying about not needing medicine if one eats right. Eating right means making healthy food choices from safe, wholesome, and nutritious foods," she added.

She stressed that the occasion of World Food Safety Day was an opportunity to create and generate awareness around food safety and situate it as a very significant issue of public health concern, especially in the light of safe, wholesome food being important for boosting immunity and improving the body's natural defenses in fighting diseases.

"The theme Safer Food, Better Health is very relevant to us here in Nigeria as a large proportion of

the foods we consume are produced by micro- and small-scale producers; these include our smallholder farmers, street food vendors, the traditional, open food markets," she added.

The NAFDAC boss however, noted with dismay that their activities were of concern regarding safe food practices or lack of it.

She added that the foods are frequently exposed to less than hygienic and sanitary conditions, resulting in contamination and leading to incidences and outbreaks of foodborne diseases, situations that are steadily becoming significant food safety concerns.

The NAFDAC boss disclosed that unsafe foods are the cause of many diseases and contribute to other poor health conditions, such as impaired growth and development.

"We know that food safety is a shared responsibility, and everyone has a role to play in ensuring we have safer food for better health: from growers to processors, to transporters, sellers, buyers, and those who prepare or serve food."

"Policy makers, educational institutions and workplaces, as well as consumers are not left out; food safety is the responsibility of all. We must all work together to help achieve safer food for better health," she added.

She urged policy makers and food regulators to design all public procurement of food, such as food aid, school feeding and other publicly owned food outlets, so that consumers can access safe and healthy foods.

She added that they should support policy measures and legal frameworks to strengthen the national food safety system and ensure it complies with food safety standards and regulations.



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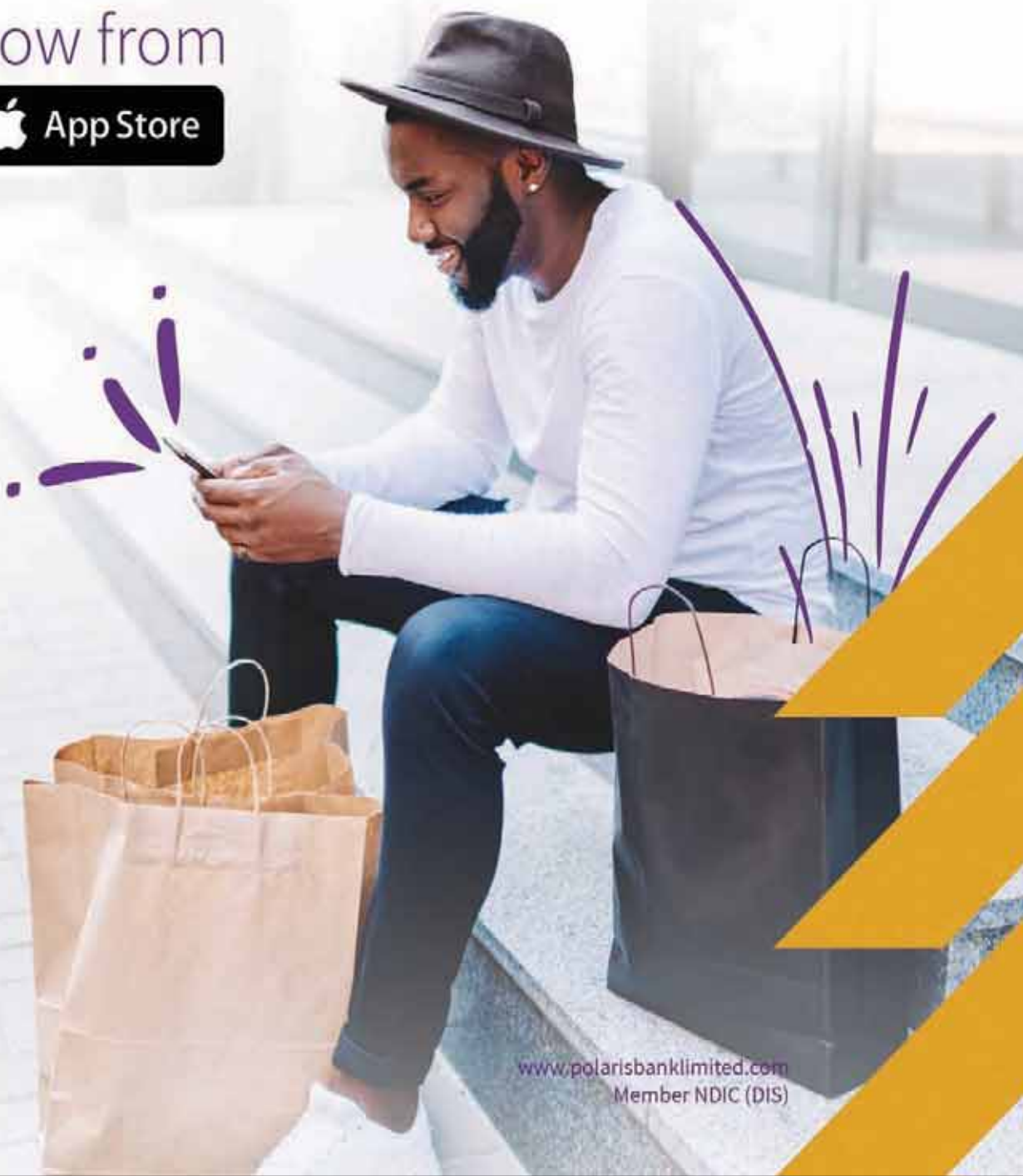
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RETROSPECT OF HOAX PDP PRIMARIES IN ADAMAWA

The recently concluded primary elections across all parties in the country have signaled the beginning of political activities towards the 2023 general elections. Political activities are on the hype with political manoeuvring that mostly relies on the politics of cash for votes is a clear indication of the dismal outlook of the primary exercise conducted by the various political parties. In some states, blatant rigging was perfected through the delegates who voted at the elections. Similarly, in some states. The list containing delegates' names, which can be described as a micro voters' register of elected ad hoc and statutory delegates that ought to be available to all stakeholders including the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), was hijacked and manipulated by some party chieftains. While in other states, the governors together with a few top shots in the parties ensured that only the names of those who will carry out their wish formed the majority. These undemocratic Practices vary with different colorations across different states and political parties.

The case in my state of Adamawa is of no difference in which the consequent inclusion of Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri in the contest for its gubernatorial primaries has only intensifies the political gimmicks that relies on the politics of intimidation, rigging and arbitrary application of sanctions against political opponents during the primary elections. The governorship election that he contested have witness an unprecedented manipulations in which all his opponents are either disqualified by the screening committee, rig out or pressurized to defect to another party which pave way for his sole candidacy under the PDP. The result declared for this governorship primary election has claimed that Fintiri has won the election with over 99% of the votes cast in a massive rigging in the history of any kind of election in Adamawa state. Therefore, the governor has proved that he is in absolute control in determining his own election result and any other PDP election result in the state.

While on other elections, the relentless governor has made some frantic efforts in his desperate attempt and imposed surreptitiously his unsalable candidates against the wishes of the party members in which he drew up preferred names of delegates that have direct inclination with him for the election of those unpopular candidates using some of the delegates who are not even card carrying members of the PDP. These delegates themselves, shorn of any modicum of reliability, basked in their status as the 'beautiful bride' and purchasable commodities mainly available to the highest bidder. Among many of these delegates are his political appointees, aides and active civil servants from the Adamawa state civil service whose names was not in the original list of delegates that participated in the ward congress elections and submitted to INEC prior to the primary elections but actively participated and voted during the PDP primary elections in the state. This led to number of total votes cast during the primary elections is by far more than the original number of registered delegates with INEC.

Similar fraudulent electoral malpractices that was perpetuated by the incumbent governor during the PDP primaries includes the provision of 3 ad hoc delegates by the electoral act was not complied with, name substitution and identity theft of the original delegates was so rampant during

the primary exercise. Worse of it all was the fraudulent selection of the election venue by the incumbent forces which was originally intended to frustrate the fairness and credibility of the election exercise in which a remote location was used as the venue of some of the primary elections instead of the usual Lamido Cinema or Mahmud Ribadu square and to my dismay, some PDP candidates that participated in the primary elections did not resign their appointments which is contrary to the electoral act that requires them to do so. The numerous violations of electoral act and the constitution of the party has clearly defined the election process as a complete charade that was orchestrated by the enemies of democracy in order to achieve their selfish goal.

The glaring scale of election irregularities that was masterminded by the incumbent governor recently was so alarming. So, it was with great shock and embarrassment that the dishonest Governor Fintiri lurking around shamelessly in collusion with some few party officials to commandeered the aforementioned undemocratic practices throughout the election process. For now, Fintiri is celebrating this fraudulent victory by misinterpreting it as an electoral victory but its gravity will definitely takes its toll during the general elections. Fintiri should realized that he has sown the seed of hatred against himself and the PDP into the minds of the aggrieved electorate who were his political victims during the last PDP primary elections in the state. And that should likely be the genesis of PDP's woeful performance in the state comes 2023.

Similarly, Governor Fintiri has so far exhibited actions that have compromised the unity of the PDP in Adamawa state during the recent primary exercise which have revealed his dubious politics of confrontation against political big wigs in the pursuit of his personal ambitions that has already took a startling reverse on the fortunes of the party in the state. So, it remains a paradox to me on how Fintiri will win Adamawa governorship election with this kind of arrogance and brigandage as we just witness in the just concluded PDP primary elections which has led to a mass exodus of PDP members to other parties. Fintiri should have garnered a lesson and practical experience from his predecessor whose similar actions has cost him the governorship of Adamawa state during the 2019 election. The same behavior and actions exhibited by Mr Fintiri during the last 3 years of his stewardship as the governor of Adamawa state have also pointed towards that direction in 2023.

In conclusion, I want to remind Mr Fintiri that it was this same kind of impunity and recklessness that landed him in prison during his last sojourn as an acting governor. His name tag as a 'prison inmate' during his remand in kuje prison last 6years as a result of alleged theft, breach of public trust and money laundering should have been a lesson to him. Thus, Fintiri's ignoble behaviors and recent actions show that he will never change. "The road of I don't care always lead to had I know"

Signed:
Eng Salihu Jubrin
No. 37k Ibadan Street
Kaduna, Kaduna State.

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While we are sad about your demise, we also celebrate the closure of a chapter scripted in humility, determination, compassion and love for humanity - values that you lived for in your interactions with others, young and old.

We continue to pray that may Almighty Allah have mercy on your soul and the rest of mankind and may we all become united in Jannah Firdaus, Ameen.

You are fondly missed and remembered by your family, numerous associates, friends, well-wishers and millions of Nigerians.



His Excellency
Gen. Sani Abacha, GCFR
Late Head of State
Federal Republic of Nigeria
Died June 8, 1998



SIGNED:

**Sani & Maryam Abacha
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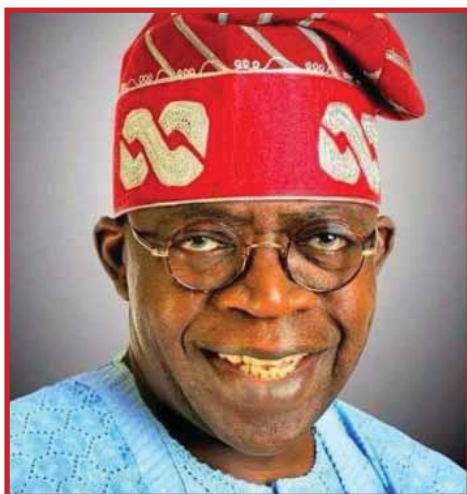
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As the APC Presidential Candidate Walks into a Difficult Conundrum

Nseobong Okon-Ekong and **Segun James** take a look at a possible agenda for the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress



Tinubu



Osinbajo



Adamu



Onu

By the time you read this, the presidential primary of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) would have been over and the candidate known. Many pundits, having weighed all the factors critically zeroed the race down to a straight fight between the National Leader of the party, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo.

A tested political tactician, Tinubu was the first aspirant to take the lid off the can when he formally told President Muhammadu Buhari he wants to succeed him. From then on, he has hugged the spotlight in the media. Osinbajo, on the other hand, tip-toed for a long and kept people guessing about his presidential ambition for a long while, until he finally found the courage to come out in the open. Tinubu went straight for the prize like the fabled Lion of Bourdillon that he is, while Osinbajo kept his intention alive through surrogates.

The race for the ticket has been steeped in multiple controversies and rancour; expectedly so for a contest where the stakes are high. With the party having zoned the presidential ticket to the South, it became clear that the South-west would clinch it as the party had little presence in the South-east and the South-south. And that's where the crisis began. Of the six South-west states, it is only in Oyo State that the APC flag is not flying in its Government House. In the South-south, Governor Ben Ayade will face his major test this election season, to see if he is a general without troops in the APC. The South-east has two states-Imo and Ebonyi, but it can be argued that APC is not firmly planted either in those two states or the rest of the three states of the South-east.

There an APC presidential aspirant from the South-west is likely to command a lot of goodwill. This attractive prospect naturally attracted a good number of aspirants from the South-west into the APC presidential race. Struggling for the APC presidential ticket also were Senator Ajayi Borofice, Governor Kayode Fayemi, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, Pastor Tunde Bakare and Mr. Dimeji Bankole. Party stalwarts and elders from the region tried to no avail to go the APC presidential contest with one aspirant. Different meetings convened for this purpose ended in a deadlock.

With such a hardliner stance, the APC presidential candidate must begin the process of reconciliation immediately from his region. Everyone of the failed aspirant must be given a sense of belonging and properly accommodated in the scheme of things. How well he succeeds in this task will inform how the rest of the country accepts to work with him.

After nearly eight years at the helm of affairs of Africa's biggest economy, President Muhammadu Buhari would be handing over a country which is rife in political turmoil and economic crisis. One of the major criticisms



Fayemi



Akpabio



Amaechi

of the Buhari-led administration is that he lacked a good economic team. And since this is not one of the president's strong point as an individual, the country's has barely remained afloat, buoyed by a rash experimental policies which were not sustainable. The APC presidential candidate must change this outlook. Tinubu has shown capacity by building the economy of Lagos State into the biggest metropolitan area in Africa and has made a name for itself as a tech hub rapidly advancing towards a 24-hour economy, generating 10% of Nigeria's total GDP of \$432.3 billion. No one can take this credit away from Tinubu.

The recent past has brought a steady infusion of grim news about the polity much of it caused by the actions and inactions of the president, the presidency or those close to it or from the leadership of the party itself. The overriding sentiment in the country is that the APC government at the centre has

failed. Therefore, Nigerians expect nothing short of magic from Tinubu, if he goes ahead to win in the general election.

The primaries today provides a welcome opportunity to take stock of where it stands in meeting the challenges facing country. And there can be no question that among them is insecurity, the economy, the polity and reconciliation among the people. A situation that has pitted the ethnic nationalities against each other.

Over the last seven years, the nation has been faced by two major challenges in relation to each other - ethnicity and religion. Within the APC, this issue has pitted the people against each other. The APC presidential candidate needs to see beyond his ethnic or tribal nationality and there's the need to see beyond religious sentiment too.

For both Osinbajo and Tinubu, they will need to tread carefully along these delicate line. In the last few years this has been the main issues that has caused problems among the peoples of the country.

Unfortunately, allowing himself to be led into a political war against the man who brought him into public reckoning may have a gulf too wide to jump over for Osinbajo.

What is left between both men now is public show of courtesy, other there is no longer any love lost between them.

The controversies that beset politics within the APC today extends even beyond the most basic activities, such as party programmes, speeches and condemnation of people on the opposite sides of the political divide. It is basically ethnic and religious, a situation which has given way to insurgencies.

What was once the preserve of the savvy and a handful of statesmen has given way to incessant and acrimonious face off.

For most of the 2000s and the 2010s, it seemed almost inevitable that the nation would become more integrated and borders between the people less bothersome. There was the dream that the coming of the 4th Republic will represent the yearnings of the people. That was the situation until the coming of President Buhari in 2015. Reality has never been more nuanced.

Nigeria's political problems has been difficult; and the problem? Bad policies, and it is not about to go away anytime soon. With leaders of the party and government yet to discuss what they would do about it as the race for the presidency becomes very rancorous, they do not seem to realize that now is the time to act, not talk.

For many years, Nigeria had been seen as a land of opportunity, economically and politically. Its teeming population a potential for growth. But this goodwill has been frittered away in the last few years. This is another agenda for the candidate of the party who has the chance to become the next president.

Many pundits have predicted that the race to become the next president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria will be especially nasty one, fraught with tribal and religious discord.

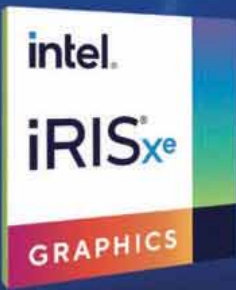
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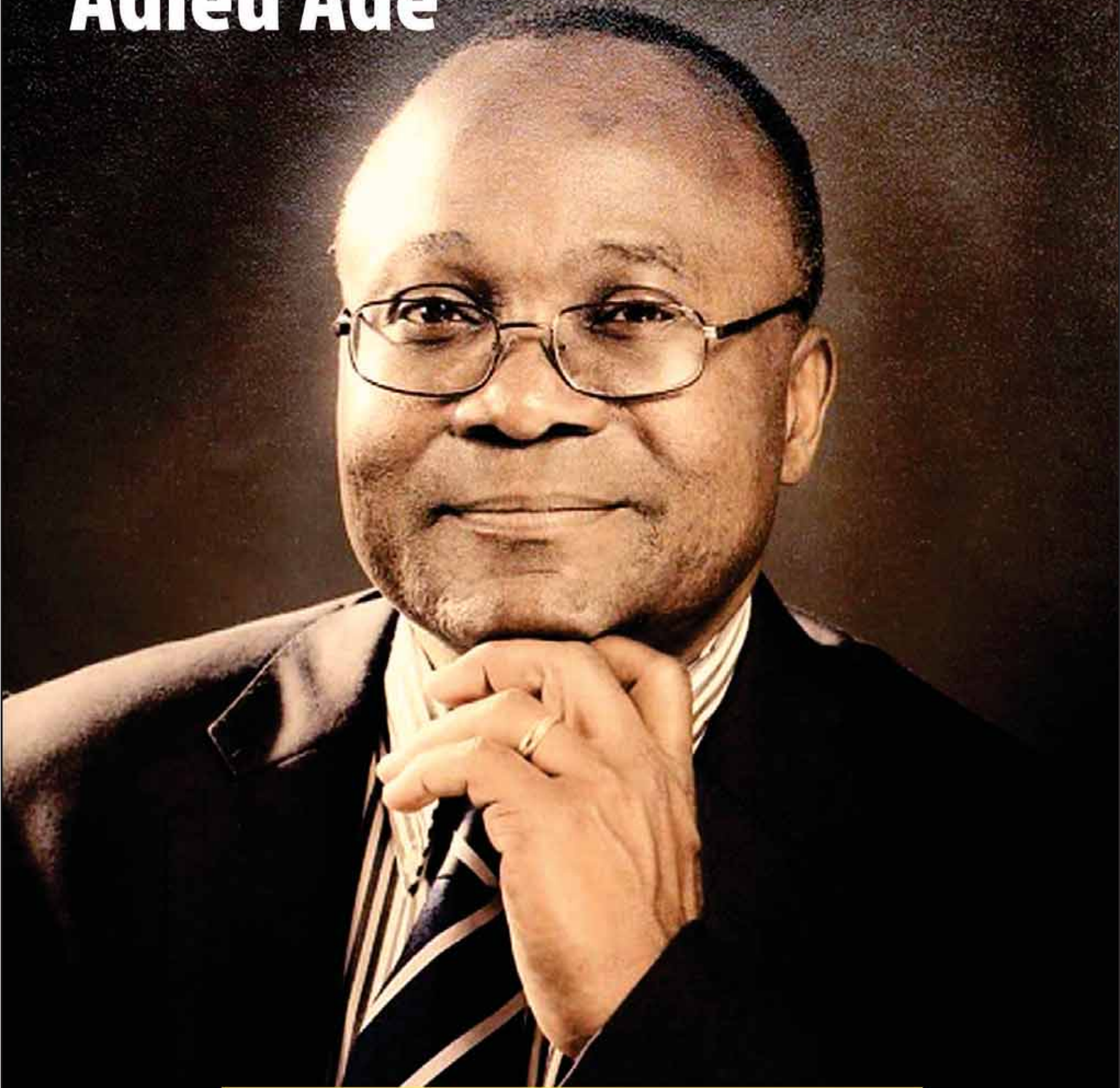
Dr. Adetokunbo Omodele Alakija.

Burial arrangement is as announced by the family.
May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace. Amen.

Signed

**The Board of Directors, Management & Staff
of Fengate Insurance Brokers Limited.**

Adieu Ade



Dr Adetokunbo Alakija

March 26 1957- May 25 2022

Gentle Giant, Dutiful Husband, Loyal friend, Trail-blazing Physician:
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Ndigbo must negotiate with Atiku and PDP and reposition for the future, writes GOZIE IROGBOLI



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ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA

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The internet is the pillar of modern information society, writes SONNY ARAGBA-AKPORE



PROSPECTS OF INTERNET FOR ALL

On May 17, 2022, when the World Telecom and Information Society Day (WTISD) held in Geneva, Switzerland, there was only one thought on the mind of Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres: how to connect the nearly three billion offline population to the internet by 2030.

With the global population put at about eight billion, only about five billion have access to the internet and the three billion offline especially in Africa and Asia, the global body is worried that this situation, if not addressed will become a potential danger as the unconnected people will see themselves as neglected.

But how bridging the digital divide will be done within the next eight years was the fulcrum of this year's World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

The UN Chief said apart from building digital technologies for older people and healthy ageing, "building smarter cities to combatting age-based discrimination at the workplace, ensuring financial inclusion, safeguarding independence, and supporting millions of caregivers across the world should be our concern".

In the last 30 years, the number of Internet users worldwide has surged from just a few million to almost five billion today. But with one third of humanity still offline, huge connectivity potential remains untapped.

The UN Secretary-General Guterres reaffirmed the urgent need to connect everyone, everywhere to the Internet by 2030. "Leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline," Guterres said. He reassured the world that since information technology has vast potential to improve the lives of older people and their families and communities, no effort should be spared to make the most of the opportunities presented by 5G, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, digital health, and other technologies, that will dramatically improve accessibility and inclusivity. "Nearly half of humanity still has no access to the internet. We must connect everyone, everywhere by 2030 — because leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline," Guterres lamented. "At the same time, we must take action to prevent and reduce the dangers of information technology, including the spread of misinformation and the exploitation of personal data."

As part of his road map and vision for Digital Co-operation — to embrace the promise of digital technology while protecting people from its perils, Guterres commended the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) for "its vital work narrowing the digital divide, setting standards, and connecting people wherever they are, whatever their means". He added that on World Telecommunication and

Information Society Day," let us commit to working together to ensure that technology is equitable, safe, and affordable for all people and all ages".

ITU Secretary General, Houlin Zhao, admitted that humanity and technology are at a turning point.

"During the pandemic, the world saw what digital technologies can do and how they can transform our future" and emerging digital technologies in fields from 5G and the Internet of Things to AI and cloud computing are pushing the boundaries of what's possible.

"Like other breakthrough technologies before them, they will have a profound impact on our future and that of our planet," Zhao explained. According to the ITU chief "great possibilities come with great responsibilities. Close to three billion people are still unconnected, with the majority of them living in developing countries—especially in rural areas. Gender, generational and affordability gaps also remain."

He told the gathering that access to digital technologies "isn't just a moral responsibility, it's essential for global prosperity and sustainability. This includes the more than one billion people aged 60 years or older at the centre of this year's celebrations of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day," because "this group of the population, which is growing larger and larger, has greatly contributed to the social and economic achievements of our time."

Observed on May 17, WTISD marks the founding of ITU. Zhao said the ITU this year focuses efforts on "Digital Technologies for Older Persons and Healthy Ageing" as part of ITU's ongoing efforts to support the Decade of Healthy Ageing launched by the World Health Organization and the United Nations. He called on the global community to share with "us what has worked and what else can be done to help older persons become active participants in, and valuable contributors to, the digital world."

With several ITU events taking place this year including the election, "2022 represents

an unprecedented opportunity to break cycles of exclusion and accelerate digital transformation for all", the ITU submitted.

The world's population stood at 7.91 billion in January 2022, with the yearly growth rate of 1.0 percent suggesting that this figure will reach eight billion sometime in mid-2023. Well over half (57.0 percent) of the world's population now lives in urban areas.

More than two-thirds (67.1 percent) of the global population now uses a mobile phone, with unique users reaching 5.31 billion by the start of 2022. The global total has grown by 1.8 percent over the past year, with 95 million new mobile users since this time last year.

Global internet users climbed to 4.95 billion at the start of 2022, with internet penetration now standing at 62.5 percent of the world's total population. Data show that internet users have grown by 192 million over the past year, but ongoing restrictions to research and reporting due to COVID-19 mean that actual growth trends may be considerably higher than these figures suggest.

DataReportal says "there are 4.62 billion social media users around the world as at January 2022. This figure is equal to 58.4 percent of the world's total population, although it's worth noting that social media "users" may not represent unique individuals. Global social media users have grown by more than 10 percent over the past 12 months, with 424 million new users starting their social media journey during 2021."

The concrete steps that governments, businesses, and society could be taking to achieve truly universal connectivity remain a major concern.

As of April 2022, there were five billion internet users worldwide, which underscores the race to making universal internet coverage possible by 2030.

By connecting billions of people worldwide, the internet is a core pillar of the modern information society. The global internet penetration rate is 62.5 percent, with Northern Europe ranking first with a 98 percent penetration rate among the population.

The countries with the highest internet penetration rate worldwide are the UAE, Denmark and Ireland. At the opposite end of the spectrum is North Korea with virtually no online usage penetration among the general population, ranking last worldwide. As of 2021, Asia was the region with largest number of online users - over 2.8 billion at the latest count. Europe was ranked second with almost 744 million internet users.

Aragba-Akpore is a member of THISDAY Editorial Board

In the last 30 years, the number of Internet users worldwide has surged from just a few million to almost five billion today. But with one third of humanity still offline, huge connectivity potential remains untapped

Ndigbo must negotiate with Atiku and PDP and reposition for the future, writes **GOZIE IROGBOLI**



NDIGBO AND THE DILEMMA OF 2023 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

I have monitored with interest the clamor for the Igbo man to be given the chance to be elected president of Nigeria in the forth-coming presidential election in 2023. That is a highly desirable thing that among other things would have brought genuine reconciliation, ended years of marginalization of Ndigbo, promoted national unity, accelerated national development, bring an end to separatist agitations and in real terms facilitate the re-integration of Ndigbo dislocated from Nigeria after the war back to scheme of things. But unfortunately, such clamor for Igbo Presidency as it has come to be known, has not been matched with any affirmative action as the result of the just concluded PDP primary has shown. There was clamor for PDP to field an Igbo man as its standard bearer without a corresponding pressure on APC to do the same, a move that was seen by many to mean that it was a ruse to get PDP to pick a candidate that would make the election contest easier for the ruling APC. It was also seen as a move externally instigated to distract and destabilize the opposition.

Taking power is a serious business that requires rigorous planning processes. Nobody surrenders power to you because you think you deserve it. It is not wishful thinking. It is delusional for one to sit down



and do nothing and wake up few months to election and shout that it is your turn to produce the President. It is like a student who refused to study when he should and then when exam draws nigh, he claims that he is supposed to make a first class because he is intelligent.

You don't get to the presidency by wishful thinking or noise-making. You have to plan and strategize, make rapprochement, build alliances, engage stakeholders for collaboration to allay fears of reprisal action. Ohaneze Ndigbo has not done the real situation analysis before now otherwise they would have defined the right route to the Presidency. What are the Igbo voting power? Igbo land is disadvantaged politically. Igbo land has the fewest number of state, local government, constituencies and representation at the national level. Fighting to get power will be an uphill task except there is collaborative effort. I have said in an earlier piece that the only way to get the Igbo man to the Presidency is if the two major political parties each field an Igbo candidate or the party in power uses its strength to promote and install an

Igbo man. I have also observed that under the regime of APC with winner-takes-all ideology it is impossible.

Moreover, I have also observed in different fora that by virtue of sentiments expressed about Ndigbo, that Nigerians are not yet ready for a president of Igbo extraction. My independent investigation shows that 19 out of every 20 Nigerian will vote against Igbo interest. The late Prof. Chinua Achebe put it aptly in his book, *There was a Country*, that Nigerians are united in their hatred for the Igbo man. There is high level of anti-Igbo sentiments in Nigeria expressed in the form of racism, xenophobia, discrimination, wrong attribution, stigmatization, displaced aggression inter alia for no reasons other than wrong perception and adherence to stereotypes promoted and sustained by the sectional and negative Nigerian Press. But behind all of that is envy and jealousy. The Igbo man's case is similar to that of the Jews who are hated because of their intelligence, industry and successes. The Igbo man is naturally intelligent, hardworking, resourceful, innovative and successful and therefore easily attracts envy. And because he is everywhere in the country, he is made vulnerable to attack.

Since after the civil war, there have been serious propaganda and debilitating campaign of calumny in the media against the Igbo man. Indeed, the Igbo man is in a dilemma situation in Nigeria. When he smiles, he is said to be mocking others. Hard work of the Igbo man is interpreted to mean love for money. He is said to hate his people because he is not clannish. When he insists on fairness and equity, it is said that he is proud. When he insists on what is right, he is lawless. When he talks about merit and level playing ground, he is arrogant. When he celebrates success, he is insensitive to the feelings of others. Worse still, the Igbo man seems to be in a helpless situation. The lack of federal presence in Igbo land leaves him with no choice but to migrate to other areas in search of opportunities thereby making him politically susceptible to intimidation and manipulation by his hosts. And this also tends to make him politically lethargic.

Without fear of contradiction I must say that Ndigbo have one of the most capable candidates for the office of the Presidency in this era and as always. And since the advent of this democratic dispensation, Igbo sons on federal appointments have distinguished themselves creditably well in office. By every standard, Dr. Peter Gregory Obi is the ideal candidate for every political party. He has the track record behind him. He has what it takes to lead—competence, ingenuity, capability, integrity and all of that. But the pertinent question is: is Nigeria ready for a personality like Obi? Remember that every society deserves the kind of leadership it has. Can Nigeria rise above petty differences? Can Nigeria put national interest above primordial sentiments? Can Nigerians rise above regional and religious politics? Is Nigeria ready for politics of ideology and national interest? ■

Irogboli
is an economist, a novelist and a public policy analyst

MICHAEL ODUGBEMI and MUSA ADEIZA canvass specialised courts to dispose of pre-election matters

ISSUES IN THE NEW ELECTORAL ACT

One of the significant developments in the Electoral (Amendment) Act, is the jurisdictional restriction of pre-election matters to only the Federal High Court under Section 84(14). Prior to the amendment of the Act, the jurisdiction to determine Federal and State pre-election matters was vested concurrently in the Federal High Court, State High Court and High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, pursuant to the Section 87 (9) of the Electoral Act, 2010 ('the Defunct Act').

Pre-election litigation essentially refers to intra-party disputes arising from issues of qualification, disqualification, nomination, substitution, wrongful omission, false declaration on oath, conduct of primaries and sponsorship of candidates for the general



election. The Constitution and avalanche of judicial decisions of the Supreme Court recognise pre-election matters as an integral part of the electoral process.

Under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), electoral disputes are classified into three different parts vis pre-election, election, and post-election disputes. Regarding pre-election matters specifically, section 285 (14) of the Constitution categorises pre-election matters as follows: one, complaint by an aspirant (targeted at his political party), where there has been failure to comply with the Electoral Act, party constitution or party guidelines in the conduct of the party's primary election in respect of selection and nomination of candidates for the said primary election.

Two, complaint by an aspirant, targeted at the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), that the actions, decisions or activities of INEC did not comply with the Electoral Act, or complaint that the provisions of the Electoral Act or any Act of the National Assembly, pertaining to selection or nomination of candidates and participation in an election have not been complied with by INEC. Examples are registration of voters, delineation of constituencies, formation of political parties, updating of voter's register, regulation of the conduct of political parties, etc.

Three, cases by a political party (targeted at INEC) for its administrative decisions or actions regarding a party's candidate's nomination or disqualification. It includes lawsuits by a political party in connection with an election timetable, registration of voters and other activities of INEC regarding preparation for an election.

Typically, preliminary issues or matters that occur before elections are matters that can only be adjudicated upon by courts of law as opposed to election and post-election dispute which is within the exclusive jurisdiction of the election tribunal.

The jurisdiction of the High Court of a State and FCT in pre-election matters was territorially circumscribed such that whilst the High Court had jurisdiction over pre-election matters arising from its State and the FCT, respectively, they did not have jurisdiction over matters arising from or more connected to other territories. This was the position of the law as enunciated by the Court of Appeal in *Soro v. Galadima* (2019) LPELR-49092(CA).

From the foregoing, it appears that the provision of Section 87 (9) of the defunct Electoral Act, 2010, which provided that an aspirant could approach the Federal High Court or the High Court of a State or the FCT for redress, was aimed at enabling aggrieved parties to approach the High Courts within the state.

Jurisdictional Issues arising from Section 84(14) of the Electoral (Amendment) Act, 2022: Nigeria's electoral dispute resolution process has been relatively slow in the past which is usually a result of several issues relating to the jurisdiction of the court. The need to speed up the hearing and conclusion of pre-election disputes hence necessitated the adjudication of pre-election matters by the Federal, State and FCT High Court. It should be noted that in the overall effectiveness of the electoral system under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, time is of essence. With the provision of Section 84 (14) of the 2022 Electoral Act which now confer exclusive jurisdiction on the Federal High Court, the court will likely face logistical challenges in the days ahead considering the current number of Judges and divisions of the court vis-à-vis the number of matters before the Court.

It is anticipated that the Federal High Court will be besieged by an avalanche of pre-election matters in all the 36 states of the Federation and FCT thereby compounding the already existing challenges of the court. The number of Federal High Courts Judges currently stands at 75 with over 128, 234 pending cases. The implication of this is that with the addition of pre-election matters, the Judges will likely be overstretched. Also, the effectiveness of the Federal High Court in delivery of justice stands at risk.

Furthermore, pre-election matters are time bound under the Constitution. Section 285(9) and (10) provides that pre-election matter must be filed within 180 days from the date of the occurrence of the event leading to the election disputes and be completed within 180 days from the date of the filing of the suit. This invariably implies that, pending civil and criminal suits at the Federal High Court may be put on hold to meet the mandatory time stipulated in the Constitution for the resolution of electoral disputes.

The Federal High Court is generally conceived to be an overburdened court owing to its numerous matters before the court. As evidenced above, the court suffers from limited manpower and administrative challenges that continues to threaten its overall effectiveness and legitimacy. Hence, conferring exclusive pre-election matter jurisdiction on the court will certainly exacerbate the situation. ■

Odugbemi and Adeiza
are lawyers at Kenna Partners in Lagos



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Giving your heart so freely and beautifully.*

*You brought laughter, learning, and joy
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Your heart was your true wealth
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Australian companies operating in Africa should pay reparations to impoverished and dehumanised Afro-Australiana, argues OKELLO OCULI



NIGERIA BETRAYED AFRO-AUSTRALIANS

In his first speech at the General Assembly of the United Nations, Nigeria’s Prime Minister, Alhaji Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, blew a war horn with the declaration that Nigeria shall not tolerate the humiliation, discrimination against and exploitation of Black people anywhere in the world.

It was a bold declaration being made in New York the commercial capital of a country which had fought a Civil War over the fate of imported descendants of African peoples. It was also in the neighbourhood of Harlem, the cultural and intellectual capital of urbanised African-Americans.

It also sent a blunt challenge to centres of oppression of African peoples, notably: apartheid South Africa and other European immigrants in the two Rhodesias (now Zambia and Zimbabwe); Mozambique; Namibia; Angola, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. The dictatorship in Portugal under Salazar had arrogantly proclaimed that Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde were “Provinces of Portugal Overseas”.

Australia, India, Brazil and most of South America all the way to PERU on the coast of the Pacific Ocean; the Caribbean islands, Papua New Guinea also felt tremors from Tafawa Balewa’s belligerence. Algerians fighting French immigrants proclaim ownership of their land and sovereignty.

DRUM (magazine, edited by a white South African critic of racism), reported that South Africa’s president Herrick Vervourde declared Balewa a “Communist” for asserting the freedom and dignity of African peoples; and rejected his request to pay a State Visit to South Africa. South African racists may well have collaborated with

Nigeria and the African Union failed to demand the expansion of the boundary of “Climate Change” to include a Cultural Climate of Protracted Racism which cripples the humanity of both its Afro-Australian victims and its European immigrants

those who sought to derail Nigeria’s surge into global politics by assassinating Tafawa Balewa and inciting a civil war.

Australia’s leaders pushed back Balewa’s threat by refusing to designate the Black inhabitants of that sub-continent as “Afro-Australians”. Scholars struggled to trace their genetics to a Polynesian race. The concept of “Aborigene” was a form of “Intellectual Genocide”, to complement the brutal physical destruction of the people. Photographs of British immigrants showing off with groups of Blacks with chains around their necks echoed practices in racist United States of America.

It was obvious that the end of colonialism and racism in Africa assumed priority. Winnie Mandela said in Abuja that

Balewa’s government gave the African National Congress as much as 20 Million Pounds Sterling for its armed struggle. The priority given to Southern Africa would in the 1970s designate Nigeria as a diplomatic “FRONTLINE STATE; sharing a combat status with TANZANIA and ZAMBIA’ which had geographical proximity to Southern Africa.

In 1976 Africa’s collective diplomacy shook Australia’s neighbourhood by demanding global rebuke of New Zealand for violating sanctions against apartheid South Africa. Africa boycotted Olympics Games hosted by Canada to protest the participation of New Zealand. Similar maltreatment of Black people by Australia remained in a zone of silence.

On 28th May, 2022 Australia’s national elections was won by a political party whose campaign plank was defeating the hold of producers and exporters of the country’s Coal. Despite horrendous bush fires which destroyed livestock, rare creatures and plants, the outgoing government remained hostage to interests which denied the reality of “Climate Change”.

Nigeria and the African Union failed to demand the expansion of the boundary of “Climate Change” to include a Cultural Climate of Protracted Racism which cripples the humanity of both its Afro-Australian victims and its European immigrants. The suffocating impact of the toxic fumes of anti-Black racism was shown in Government banning replication of “Black Lives Matter” protests which had spread from the United States to Europe and South America.

Local voices against Australian prisons disproportionately holding Afro-Australians; their low access to education and funds for investment towards earning higher incomes for households; the promotion of alcoholism and drug addiction among their youths, continue to receive less reporting by local and global media. Toxic fumes over New Delhi and Beijing or Shanghai raise more alarm and rage among Climate Change warriors than engineered impoverishment and dehumanisation of Afro-Australiana.

Australia enjoys a fantastic landscape, including rift valleys, dense forests, diverse animal and plant species. Focus on the Kangaroo hides this diversity. The promotion of tourists from Africa; journalists interested in ecological diversity, Human Rights agencies – including the United Nations organs - must expose a conspiracy of silence about this historic wound in Australia’s body politic.

Valuable pressures put on corrupt African leaders; murderous military rulers in Africa, Asia South and North America, is also owed to Australia for the sake of those fighting for social and economic development of Afro-Australian communities.

African writers and film makers in the Diaspora – in Europe and the Americas - bear special responsibility for combating the Climate Terror of historic bondage and destruction of Afro-Australians. They should collaborate with local reformers.

Australian companies operating in Africa should pay Reparations by funding education and industrial processing by Afro-Australian communities. Aluta Continua! ■

Prof oculi
writes from Abuja

AHAMEFULA NJOKU pays tribute to Madiebo, foremost military strategist and author of ‘The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War’

FAREWELL, ALEXANDER MADIEBO

Shortly after the book, “The Nigerian Revolution and the Biafran War,” written by Alexander Madiebo, who was a Lt Colonel in the Nigerian Army and later promoted to a Major General was published by Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu in 1980, I saw my father reading the book on a daily basis. At that time, I did not realise my full connection to the events and some personalities in that book or indeed that of the entire Igbo race for that matter. I later realised why he was



reading the book with great interest. My father, an entrepreneur at the young age of 34 years in 1967, was one of the richest men in Port Harcourt with ownership of four houses there, a lot of landed properties, two brand new cars, the best photo studio, Sams Photos, with 13 members of staff and a manager, often frequented by Nigerian President Nnamdi Azikiwe, opposition leader Obafemi Awolowo and even Europeans, including those working in the crude oil industry. All these were lost, including three of my siblings to the Biafran war.

Many years later when I read the book from cover to cover, it dawned on me that Madiebo who hails from Awka in Anambra State and recently died at the age of 90 years was not just a master story teller but a world class military strategist.

When you read his book, you learn many invaluable lessons of life. The most important lesson you would learn is that every action a human being takes carries consequences.

For example, it was Madiebo and one or two other persons who convinced Chukwuma Nzeogwu after the January 1966 coup failed in the South of Nigeria and General Aguiyi-Ironsi had become the Head of state of Nigeria to surrender himself to the authority of the new leader. Had Nzeogwu done otherwise and proceeded to “complete” the coup in Lagos and southern Nigeria, the history of Nigeria could have been different today and maybe the 1967 to 1970 civil war may have been averted.

In my work with some Nigerian politicians, businessmen and indeed many human beings, I have observed that many of them pay scant attention to strategy or often ignore good advice based on research, experience, feedback. A few of them who are patient and wise enough to adopt a strategy for what they want to achieve often do better than others who do not. The reason is obvious. To formulate a good strategy for whatever you want to do and execute same is very tasking. Many human beings do not have the patience, wisdom or resilience to execute same.

Madiebo in that classic book also told the story about how his course mate at the United Kingdom elite military academy, Sandhurst, General Yakubu Gowon had tried to get him out of harm’s way by penciling down his name for a course abroad at the height of the 1966 crisis. But Madiebo, a very wise man, turned down the offer because he felt he needed to be around to protect his wife and children as the uncertain events of 1966 unfolded. Had he accepted the offer, he would have been outside the country when the epochal events of 1966 to 1967 unfolded and perhaps he would not have played the central role of the General Officer Commanding of the Biafran Army and a war tactician of the highest order.

Madiebo also told a story of how he advised an Igbo officer to leave the Kaduna Army Officers Mess at the army barracks in 1966 after the counter-coup because of the mutiny by ‘northern’ soldiers against their southern colleagues. Madiebo left, but the Igbo officer who refused to heed his advice was later that night arrested at the same officers’ mess and was killed. This story often reminds me of the famous statement by one philosopher that, “He who cannot be advised cannot be helped.” In life taking a good advice from someone who is more experienced and more knowledgeable than you can make a big difference in your life. If you take the advice, you move to success, if you do not, sooner than later you would come face to face with failure to your utmost regret.

Another lesson one can learn from Madiebo’s book is the importance of planning and organisation in whatever anybody who wants to be successful in life does. In all the battles he plotted in Biafra, he did a lot of planning and succeeded in defeating the enemy with minimal resources. His story of how he escaped from Kaduna to the Eastern part of Nigeria in the water tank of a train after hiding in the bush is another interesting narrative full of wisdom and strategy.

Madiebo also has a great sense of humour. Although the events he narrated were very serious and grim, underneath them was a mischievous sense of humour. He told a story about a telephone conversation with Lt Colonel Emeka Ojukwu who was in charge in the army formation in Kano. When Ojukwu was being told of the events of the January 1966 coup, he kept saying, “good, good, good” to every statement made to him. One could not then decipher whether he was in support of the issues being discussed with him or against.

Ojukwu, the Oxford trained historian in one of his displays of a sound knowledge of the English language, once sent a signal to Madiebo. Ojukwu in a very short message was trying to give a background to a situation that required that Madiebo take over a particular war assignment from two officers who ought to have carried out the assignment. To paraphrase him, he told Madiebo that a certain Biafran officer “hopes” while another officer is “hopeless.” This was Ojukwu’s way of telling him that the two officers cannot be in charge of the impending battle. ■

Njoku,
a lawyer, author and political strategist,
writes from Abuja.

Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**
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EDITORIAL

ENDING CHILD MARRIAGE IN NIGERIA

Child marriage is a violation of human rights. It should be stopped forthwith

As part of activities to mark Children’s Day on 27th May, a report by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) on child marriage in Nigeria was launched by Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo. The report put Nigeria’s current number of child brides at 22 million, representing 40 per cent of such cases in West and Central Africa. Meanwhile, a recent projection by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) had also revealed that 30 per cent of Nigerian girls aged between 15 and 19, who should still be in school, are currently married.

Globally, more than 700 million women were married before their 18th birthday while more than one in three (about 250 million) were coerced into the union before the age of 15. Although boys are also married as children, the practice is more pronounced among girls, who are disproportionately affected. But the situation in Nigeria should concern policy makers. Citing the Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2013, the latest UNICEF report added that 58.2 per cent of Nigerian girls get married before they turn 18 years old.

Child marriage is a manifestation of gender inequality, reflecting social norms that perpetuate discrimination against girls. In most instances, girls forced into early marriage, do not know, and may have never met their groom. The act is a violation of human rights and young girls who marry as children are more likely to drop out of school and have limited independence. Sadly, in Nigeria, more than half of the underage children have husbands who are 10 or more years older than they are.

The implication of a child engaging in early marriage is that she is conferred with responsibilities of an adult which she is not prepared for. A bride child may experience complications from pregnancy and childbirth, attributed as the major causes of



A bride child has been denied her right to education which is the bedrock on which the greatness of every society is founded, restricting her from contributing to society building

death among adolescent girls below the age of 19 in Nigeria. Bride children are also susceptible to HIV infections, cervical cancer, and obstetric fistulas while their offspring are at increased risk for premature birth and death as neonates, infants, or children. They are also prone to domestic violence, sexual and physical abuse and are at risk of death due to early childbirth.

Many of the minors given out to early marriage are of poor background where the parents struggle to provide the basic needs of the family. Among other factors responsible for child marriage are ancient cultural traditions, bride price, religious and social pressures, and illiteracy. This arbitrary practice is the cause in elevated cases of brides, who resort to killing their supposed husbands mainly by poisoning as the marriage is not consensual and contractual as demanded

by law. While there is a public outcry against underage marriage with attempt to prohibit it by amending section 29, sub section 4 of the constitution, the practice, continues despite the risks it poses. Some states and influential political figures have doggedly insisted on the status quo. We therefore call on government at all levels to address this menace in view of its consequences on women and the social economic development of the country. A bride child has been denied her right to education which is the bedrock on which the greatness of every society is founded, restricting her from contributing to society building. It also places restriction on her labour market participation and compounds global efforts to eliminate poverty.

We are particularly concerned that early betrothal places child brides at risk of widowhood at early age as they are significantly younger than their husbands. That risk subjugates them to economic and social challenges for a greater portion of their lives, compared to women who get married as adults.

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Letters to the Editor

Letters in response to specific publications in THISDAY should be brief (150-300 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contact details to opinion@thisdaylive.com. We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should also not be longer than (750- 1000 words). They should be sent to opinion@thisdaylive.com along with photograph, email address and phone numbers of the writer.

LETTERS

NIGERIA: A LAND OF DEEP DARKNESS

As if to show that Nigeria’s democracy is yet to fully evolve to the place where it can fully give power to the people, a metaphor aptly presents itself in the Nigeria’s power sector, in the wheeling and dealing which have aggressively worked hand-in-hand for many years now to keep Nigeria enmeshed in darkness. The inability of Nigeria’s power sector to give Nigerians steady power supply has continued to defy successive administrations to the eternal frustrations of Nigerians. Nigeria’s political vultures have been known to feed voraciously on these frustrations. During elections, they know how to tell Nigerians that they will fix power in the country. However, for many years now, the experience of the sector mirrors the experience of Nigerians and it is one of anguished frustration. So why is it that more than six decades after independence, and more than two decades after the return to democracy, Nigeria has been embarrassingly unable to fix its power sector? Many factors go to answer this question. However, only very little doubt exists that chief among these factors is a lack of political will which embraces the question of strong lead-

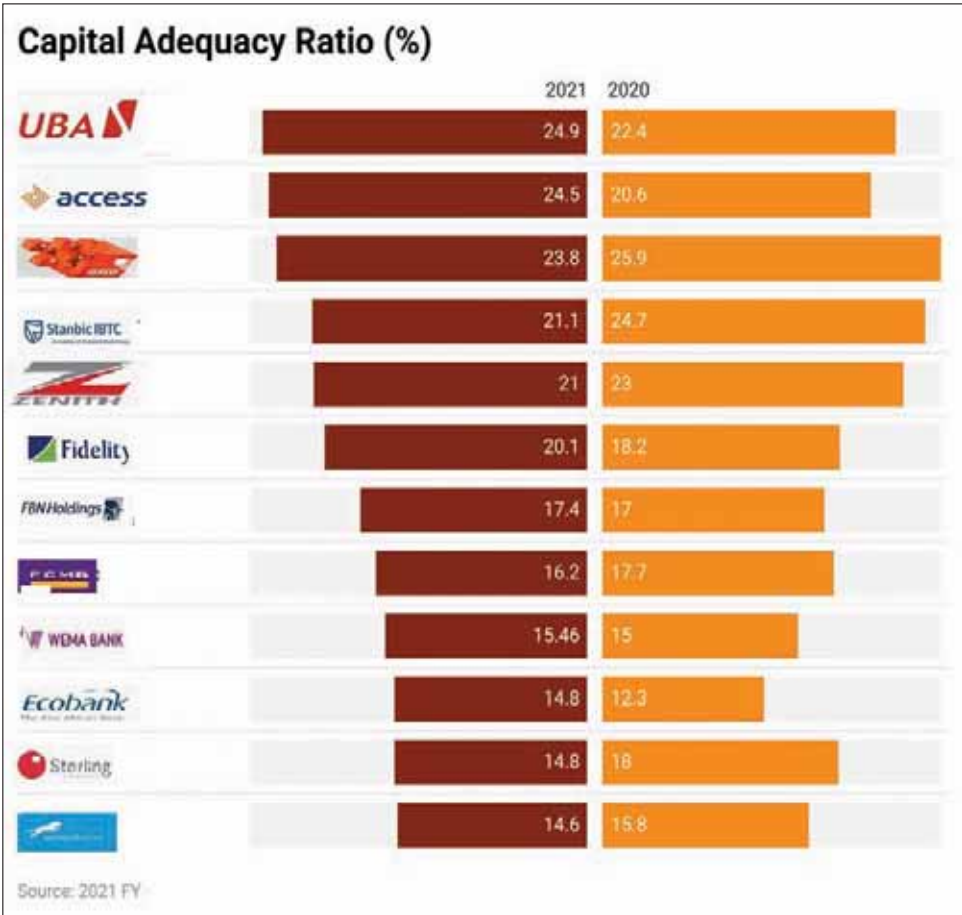
ership in resolving Nigeria’s power challenge, and also the unwillingness or inability to confront crippling corruption. Nigeria’s power sector has been a kind of bottomless pit into which so much resources have been plunged with puzzlingly little to show for. For example, between 1999 and 2007, about \$16 billion was said to have been sunk into the power sector. Nigerians know that it was the cankerworm of corruption that consumed most of the resources. Many of those who handled the resources within that period are still alive. Inexplicably, those who should ask questions have remained tongue-tied over the fortunes of the power sector. Then, the national grid is always collapsing to leave Nigerians in the claws of gripping darkness. Recently, when yet another collapse was recorded, the Federal Ministry of Power blamed saboteurs for the collapse. All things considered, Nigeria’s lack of steady power supply has continued to prove costly. The country’s desire to be on the path to economic development with content citizens who are driving its economic transformation has remained a pipe dream for many years. Small businesses, usually the

pine of every strong economy, have continued to suffocate in the darkness foisted by extremely poor power supply. When these businesses put the cost of sourcing for alternative sources of power alongside other costs that necessarily come into play in running a business, they find the Nigerian business environment to be unduly harsh. It is not usually long before many of them fold up, sending many dreams hurtling through the window, and making the slope of poverty and unemployment even more slippery. The fact that it is not just the economy of the country but practically every aspect of national life that is affected by poor power supply is also highlighted by the experience of patients in Nigerian hospitals. In many hospitals especially those owned and run by the government, it is not uncommon to see patients give up the ghost because critical care came too late, delayed by epileptic power supply. A lot is broken in Nigeria today. Fixing what’s is broken can begin from fixing an extremely brittle power sector.

Kene Obiezu,
keneobiezu@gmail.com

R A T E S A S A T J U N E 3 , 2 0 2 2							
MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX	
OPR	11.25%	CALL	10.25%	INDEX LEVEL	613.31%	1/4 TO DATE	-0.85%
OVERNIGHT	11.50%	1-MONTH	9.56%	1-DAY	0.16%	YEAR TO DATE	7.64%
		3-MONTH	10.52%	MONTH-TO-DATE	0.44%		
						EXCHANGE RATE	
						N416.86/1 US DOLLAR*	
						*AS AT LAST FRIDAY	

UBA, Zenith Bank, GTCO Others Maintain Strong Liquidity, Capital Adequacy Ratios in 2021



Kayode Tokede

On the backdrop of a sound and resilient financial system despite challenges, Zenith Bank Plc, Guaranty Trust Holding Plc (GTCO), and 10 other banks in Nigeria maintained stronger Liquidity and Capital Adequacy Ratios (CAR) in 2021.

Liquidity ratio is used to measure a company's capacity to pay off its short-term financial obligations with its current assets, while CAR is a measure of how much capital a bank has available, which is reported as a

percentage of a bank's risk-weighted credit exposures.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 2021 required all banks to maintained liquidity ratio of 30 per, while other banking groups with international authorisation and those that have been categorise as being Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) to maintain a minimum CAR of 15 per cent, while a minimum CAR of 10 per cent will be applicable to all other banks.

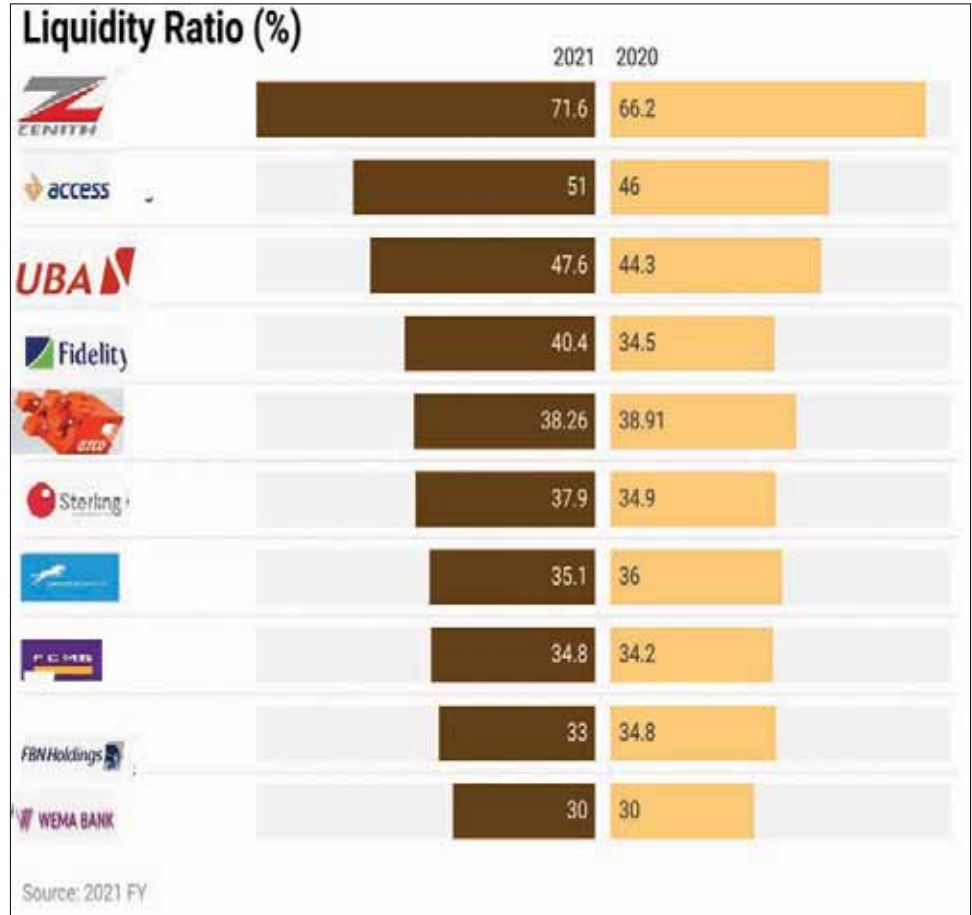
The apex bank in November 2021 set a deadline for banks to begin

implementing Basel III criteria.

The Basel III standard is a voluntary global regulatory framework that addresses bank capital adequacy, stress testing, and market liquidity risk.

According to the CBN, the goal of the guidelines was to specify the minimum Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) standards for reporting companies in the banking system.

The bank with stronger liquidity ratio and CAR comprises of; Zenith Bank Plc, United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA), Access Bank Plc, FBN



Holdings Plc, Guaranty Trust Holding Plc, and Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI).

Others are Stanbic IBTC Holdings Plc, Fidelity Bank Plc, Wema Bank Plc, Union Bank of Nigeria Plc, FCMB group Plc and Sterling bank Plc.

In the year under review, Zenith Bank leads other banks in liquidity ratio, while United Bank of Nigeria leads Tier-1 and Tier-2 banks in CAR.

Findings by THISDAY revealed that Zenith Bank closed 2021 with a liquidity ratio of 71.6 per cent from 66.2 per cent reported in 2020. The

group closed 2021 with CAR of 21 per cent, a decline of nine per cent from 23 per cent reported in 2020.

For UBA, it reported a liquidity ratio of 47.6 per cent in 2021 from 44.3 per cent in 2020, while CAR rose 24.9 per cent in 2021 from 22.4 per cent in 2020.

The members of the CBN Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) noted that the liquidity ratio remained well above its prudential limit at 41.3 per cent, though CAR declined marginally to 14.53 per cent in December 2021.

Speaking with THISDAY on Zenith Bank's CAR as one of the highest in the banking sector, the vice president, Highcap Securities, Mr. David Adnori stressed that the statutory required liquidity ratio for banks is 30 per cent, maintaining that for Zenith Bank to have a liquidity ratio above 71.6 per cent is an interesting development in the banking sector.

He said, "If a bank has investment opportunities in the economy, a major

Continued on page 30

Chinese, Nigerian Importers Flood Market With Substandard Tomato Past

● Manufacturers accuse NAFDAC, SON of collusion ● Local industries on the brink of collapse

Eromosele Abiodun and Nume Ekeghe

Despite the ban on the importation of tomato past in retail packs by the federal government since 2016, it has emerged that Chinese and Nigerian importers are massively importing contaminated tomato past into the country.

THISDAY investigation revealed that the Chinese and their Nigerian

cohorts are flooding the country with fake tomato past with the aid of officials of the National Agency for Food Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Nigeria Customs Service) and the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON).

It was learnt that a high percentage of tomato past imports from China in retail packs are substandard and do not meet the prescribed quality standards and specification.

Experts told THISDAY that food safety issues and attendant health implications need to be urgently addressed and challenges tackled to safe guard the health of the nation.

Aside the health concerns, Nigerian manufacturers complained bitterly that the importers of adulterated tomato past are running them out of business with many jobs at risk.

The producers who do not

want their name in print for fear of persecution by the government agencies they accuse of colluding with the Chinese, said efforts to get the agencies to go after the merchants of death did not yield any result.

According to one of the producers, "We have written several letters to inform NAFDAC of the overwhelming presence of fake products as well as to work with, in order to save innocent Nigerians

and indigenous, trusted tomato past manufacturers. Nothing is being done. We are at the forefront of promoting and encouraging the patronage of 'made in Nigeria' products and local manufacturing."

In a letter to the Minister of Health seen by THISDAY, they called on the federal government to urgently intervene to stem the tide of the influx of fake and substandard tomato past that the Chinese and

Nigerian importers are dumping in Nigeria for many years.

"Despite the fact that China and Vietnam where these tomato past products are imported from do not allow the same tomato past to be eaten in their various countries, they export it here to kill us gradually via cancer. It is a pity that Asians and their cohorts are leading the

Continued on page 31

MARKET DATA AS AT TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022																		
BONDS					BILLS					CPS					OTC FX FUTURES			
DESCRIPTION	Price	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Dis-count	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	CONTRACT TENOR (MONTH)	Contract	Current Rate (\$/N)	Updated Time
14.20 14-MAR-2024	110.82	7.57	-0.01	June 3, 2022	NTB 14-Jul-22	2.59	2.59	0.00	June 3, 2022	TRBHC PV 26-JUL-22	11.49	8.17	0.07	June 3, 2022	1	NGUS JUN 29 2022	427.24	June 3, 2022
13.53 23-MAR-2025	107.90	10.20	0.00	June 3, 2022	NTB 11-Aug-22	3.25	3.27	0.00	June 3, 2022	FSDH CP VI 1-AUG-22	8.05	8.16	0.09	June 3, 2022	2	NGUS JUL 27 2022	428.93	June 3, 2022
12.50 22-JAN-2026	106.34	10.35	-0.10	June 3, 2022	NTB 8-Sep-22	3.50	3.53	0.05	June 3, 2022	NENL CP I 24-OCT-22	14.66	15.55	0.07	June 3, 2022	3	NGUS AUG 31 2022	430.63	June 3, 2022
16.2884 17-MAR-2027	120.47	10.70	-0.10	June 3, 2022	NTB 13-Oct-22	3.52	3.56	0.00	June 3, 2022	FSDH CP VII 27-OCT-22	8.97	9.30	0.06	June 3, 2022	4	NGUS SEP 28 2022	432.32	June 3, 2022
13.98 23-FEB-2028	113.11	10.84	-0.21	June 3, 2022	NTB 10-Nov-22	3.97	4.04	0.00	June 3, 2022	SIBP CP III 27-OCT-22	8.17	8.44	0.06	June 3, 2022	5	NGUS OCT 26 2022	434.02	June 3, 2022



L-R: Executive Secretary, Mortgage Bankers Association of Nigeria (MBAN), Mr. Kayode Omotosho; National Treasurer, The Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Mrs. Mojisola-Asieru; President, MBAN, Mr. Ebilate Mac-Yoroki; President/Chairman of Council, CIBN, Dr. Ken Opara; Registrar/CEO, CIBN, Dr. Seye Awojobi; and Immediate President, MBAN, Mr. Adeniyi Adelusi, during the Courtesy visit paid to the Institute by MBAN in Lagos... recently

PHOTO: ETOP UKUTT

Capital Importation Dropped to \$1.57bn in Q1 as Only Six States Attracted Inflows

James Emejo in Abuja

The total value of capital importation into the country declined by 28.09 per cent to about \$1.57 billion in the first quarter of the year (Q1 2022) compared to \$2.87 billion in the preceding quarter, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2021, capital importation also decreased by 17.46 per cent from \$1.91 billion. The NBS, in its Capital Importation Report for Q1 2022, stated that portfolio investment, which accounted for 60.87 per cent or \$957.58 million, accounted for the largest amount of capital importation by type.

Other Investment accounted for 29.28 per cent or \$460.59 million while and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) accounted for 9.85 per cent or \$154.97 million of total capital imported in Q1.

According to the report which was posted on the NBS website, disaggregated by sectors, capital importation into banking had the highest inflow of \$818.84 million amounting to 52.05 per cent of total capital imported in the first quarter.

This was followed by capital imported into the production

sector, valued at \$223.67 million or 14.22 per cent and the financing sector which accounted for \$199.37 million or 12.67 per cent of total capital imports.

According to the statistical

agency, capital importation by country of origin further showed that the United Kingdom ranked top as the source of capital imported into the country in the first quarter, accounting for \$1.02 billion, representing 64.92

per cent of total transactions.

This was followed by the Republic of South Africa and the United States of America valued at \$117.50 million or 7.47 per cent and \$82.07 million or 5.22 per cent respectively.

However, THISDAY's analysis of the report further indicated that only six states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) were able to attract foreign investments to their respective jurisdictions.

These included Lagos (\$1.12 billion), FCT (\$446.81 million), Anambra (\$4.15 million), Oyo (\$2 million), Plateau (\$0.04 million), and Katsina (\$0.70 million) in the period under review.

CBN Bars Bank Neutral Cash Hubs from FX Transactions

James Emejo in Abuja

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has said Bank Neutral Cash Hubs (BNCHs), established to provide a platform for customers to make cash deposits and receive value irrespective of the bank with which their account is domiciled – are not permitted to receive, disburse, or engage in any transaction involving foreign currency.

The central bank also barred the

hubs from carrying out investing or lending activities; sub-contract another entity to carry out their operations as well as any other activities that may be prohibited by the apex bank.

The CBN disclosed this in the Guidelines for the Registration and Operation of Bank Neutral Cash Hubs (BNCH) in Nigeria, which was posted on its website.

The initiative, which was developed in collaboration with the Banker's Committee is in

furtherance of the central bank's mandate to promote a sound financial system in the country.

The BNCH is one of the initiatives from the Nigerian Cash Management System (NCMS) conceived by both parties to reduce cost and improve operational efficiency in the country's cash management value chain.

Essentially, the BNCHs are cash collection centers to be established by registered (licensed) processing companies or Deposit Money Banks

(DMBs) based on business needs.

According to the apex bank, the hubs are, however, authorised to receive Naira denominated deposits on behalf of financial institutions from individuals and businesses with high volumes of cash.

They are also allowed to disburse Naira denominated withdrawals on behalf of financial institutions to individuals and businesses with high volumes of cash as well as any other activities that may be permitted by the CBN.

Under the programme, only deposit money banks and Cash Processing Companies (CPCs) are permitted to apply for registration of a BNCH.

Also, the guidelines specified the financial requirements for approval to operate as BNCH, which may be amended by the CBN as it deems necessary.

These include the non-refundable application fee of N100,000; and a non-refundable approval fee of N500,000.

GTCO Surpasses Other Tier-1 Banks as Most Profitable Lender by ROE

Kayode Tokede

Despite decline in profitability, Guaranty Trust Holding Plc (GTCO) has surpassed other Tier-1 banks to maintain its position as the most profitable lender by Return on Equity (ROE).

ROE is a ratio that provides investors with insight into how efficiently a company (or more specifically, its management team) is handling the money that

shareholders have contributed to it.

In other words, the ratio measures the profitability of a corporation in relation to shareholder funds.

With 20.60 per cent ROE in 2021 from 26.83 per cent in 2020, GTCO performance has shown efficient management in generating income and growth from its shareholders amid a punitive regulatory environment.

The decline in ROE can be

attributable to the lender's 13 per cent drop in profit after tax to N174.84billion in 2021 from N201.44billion in 2020.

The Group Chief Executive Officer, GTCO, Mr. Segun Agbaje in a statement had said: "Our performance reflects the strength of our franchise and underscores our ability to deliver long-term value for our Stakeholders in spite of the challenges in the business environment and shifting economic

conditions.

"As a Group, we have continued to explore newer ways to connect with our customers and better our communities by offering greater and more rewarding experiences."

That compares with Zenith Bank' ROE that closed 2021 at 20.40per cent from 22.4 per cent reported in 2020; Access Holdings Plc with 17.8 per cent ROE in 2021 from 15.6 per cent in 2020; United Bank for Africa with 15.6

per cent ROE in 2021 from 17.2 per cent in 2020.

In addition, FBN Holdings reported ROE of 18.44 per cent in 2021 from 12.60per cent in 2020, while Ecobank Transnational Incorporated reported 18.99 per cent ROE in 2021 as against 13.3 per cent in 2020.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had maintained that ROE fell in December 2021 relative to December 2020.

UBA, ZENITH BANK, GTCO OTHERS MAINTAIN STRONG LIQUIDITY, CAPITAL ADEQUACY RATIOS IN 2021

portion of that fund that constitutes liquidity ratio is expected to be invested in such investments.

"That will yield income for the bank for increase shareholders' returns on investment and expand the branch network.

"The bank can invest in government bonds, treasury and extend credit to customers. There are other areas of investment. However, if a bank has not done all these, it means Zenith Bank is holding a lot of liquid assets in its coffers."

Meanwhile, Access Bank reported a 51 per cent liquidity ratio in 2021 from 46 per cent in 2020, while its CAR gained 3.9 per cent to close 2021 at 24.5 per cent from 20.6 per cent in 2020.

Access Bank was ahead of other banks in the implementation of Basel III with a successful issuance of \$1 billion Eurobond in 2021.

Access Bank's group managing director/CEO, Herbert Wigwe had maintained that the success of the

transaction, which he said was the first in the Nigerian banking industry and the first of its kind in Africa outside of South Africa, would significantly enhance the bank's tier-1 and total capital ratios in Nigeria.

While interacting with analysts on the bank's 2021 financial year, the Group Chief Financial Officer, Access Bank, Mr. Seyi Kumapayi in a statement said, "On the liquidity side we've seen a liquidity ratio north of 50per cent. Foreign exchange liquidity is actually a lot more robust."

"We have a liquidity crisis in USD, which is not our functional currency. So it's north of 50per cent at any point. Our loan to deposit ratio on our Dollar book is a maximum of 50per cent and we have always operated well below that."

In addition to the Tier-1 banks ratio, GTCO reported a liquidity ratio closed H1 2021 at 44.71 per

cent from 38.9 per cent, while FBN Holdings closed 2021 with a liquidity ratio of 17.4 per cent from 17 per cent reported in 2020.

GTCO in a presentation to investors/analysts said, "The Group continued to maintain strong capital positions with Full and Transitional IFRS 9 impact CAR of 23.8 per cent and 25.4 per cent respectively, 883 basis points above the regulatory minimum of 15per cent."

"Tier 1 capital remained a very significant component of the Group's CAR standing at 23per cent representing 97per cent of the Group's Full IFRS 9 impact CAR of 23.8per cent."

"The robust Capital position provides headroom for the Group to meet future expansion and capacity for additional risk taking. The Group's Capital has been sensitized for Basel III compliance and found robust enough to meet the requirements for additional capital

for conservation and Counter cyclical buffers."

A group of analysts at GTCO in a report titled, "Nigeria macro-economy outlook for 2022", said, "In view of the introduction of Basel III which provides for a more stringent capital regime where the strength and sufficiency of a bank's Tier 1 capital will determine how much risk it can take, most banks will look to shore up their Tier 1 capital position. For context, the new framework allows for banks to raise Tier 1 capital through the issuance of Perpetual Bonds."

"We expect to see more banks tap into this mode of capital raising just like some Tier 1 banks did in 2021."

"Of concern, however, is the view of some analysts that the new capital guideline could knock off as much as 200 basis points from the full impact CAR of some banks."

"This could erase the capital buffers of these banks. We expect the apex bank to encourage banks

with capital shortfalls to retain a sizeable position of their earnings. The apex bank could work out transitional arrangements that will assist banks whose capital position is below the regulatory minimum to gradually build capital over a 3 – 5-year period."

In its 2021 banking sector, Afrinwest West Africa said CAR of selected Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (19.2per cent) and Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) (17.2per cent) banks, recorded was above the eight per cent global regulatory minimum under the BASEL III, reflecting effective risk management during the pandemic.

However, African peers such as Egypt (21.7 per cent), Ghana (20.2 per cent) and South Africa (19.8 per cent) were better capitalised than the Nigerian banks (19.7per cent). In the BRICS region, the Nigerian banks fared better than their peers aside South Africa.

THE BUSINESS TEAM

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CBN Intervention Towards Sustainable Growth

A team from the Central Bank of Nigeria last week went around Lagos, for an on-site monitoring and evaluation of some projects that are being funded by the several interventions, which it had provided. **Nume Ekeghe** was on the tour and writes on the progress of some of the projects.

The Nigerian economy has over the years been in need of capital as businesses struggle for the needed funding to grow their businesses while the government could not meet up with infrastructure gaps that would speed up development and growth. For a company such as The Candel Company Limited, an agrochemical producing company within the Lekki Free Trade Zone, intervention fund from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had revived it after it nearly went under. The CBN has over the years pushed out N8.8 trillion in intervention funds for critical sectors of the economy. According to CBN Director of Development Finance, Yila Yusuf, the department responsible for interventions to the various stimulating sectors of the economy, funding the various projects through its intervention funds was a multi-targeted strategy aimed at not just boosting economic growth and development whilst creating jobs, but also a means of growing the country's export earnings. One of the infrastructural projects being funded by the CBN intervention is the Lagos Rail Project, which is expected to begin test run by the end of this year and commence full operations by the end of the first quarter of 2023.

THE RAIL PROJECT

Speaking during a tour of the Red and Blue lines of the rail project in Lagos, Yusuf noted that the apex bank had disbursed most of the fund for the project, which he described as a "quite impressive signature project"

While stating that the on-site monitoring and evaluation of projects is to ensure that funds collected under the intervention funds are well utilized, he said for the rail project, "it exceeds our expectation."

With a total of N68 billion to be disbursed for the rail project, he said between 750,000 and one million people will, on a daily basis, use this infrastructure, adding that it would contribute to national output.

"We were here sometime last year and construction is still ongoing, however there has been major progress. It gives me joy to also see a lot of Nigerians working on site, minders doing welding or some form of construction. We are happy with the progress.

"Most importantly, for us as central bankers want to see how this will contribute to output. It is going to be multimodal, so there's going to be water transport, there's also going to be the bus ride. Also, we look forward to other states emulating the kind of infrastructure that's been put in place. They can come learn from Legos and get the financing to be able to ensure that the state can get world-class infrastructure," he said. On her part, the Managing Director of the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Agency, Abimbola Akinajo, who is in charge of the project, explained that the red and blue lines is estimated to move between 750,000 and one million passengers on a daily basis as it would be operating at a tree minutes interval. To ensure that there is not disruption of movement within the system, she said, "We are building an IPP for it that will be dedicated to so we will have dedicated power for the electrification of the rail. We are also talking to Eko Disco to ensure that we have a dedicated line to ensure that there is never going to be a stop in power supply between Eko Disco and the IPP.

"We have a rotary UPS system that will ensure that there will never be a stop if the Eko Disco's main distribution goes down, the UPS picks up until the IPP picks up." Explaining the multi modal system of the rail she said, within the rail station "we have bus services which will also



function. The regular buses are also integrated with the rail part of the interchange. We will also have a jetty and that is on the Marina which now becomes a transport hub that it always was for Lagos that we hope will regenerate the area from a business district perspective."

INVESTMENTS IN ENERGY SECTOR

Speaking on the investments made in the energy sector, Yusuf noted, "We realised that Nigeria has in excess of seven million metering gap, and we are even now close to 10 million. Phase zero is just one million of which Ikeja Electric has already met and exceeded the target that has been sent. So for phase one, we are looking at three million metres across the entire disco. He noted that energy takes about 24 per cent of the portfolio that is out. For Ikeja Electric, he said, "They have showed us some of the projects the funds have been disbursed for; both on the national mass metering programme and then the OPEX and CAPEX. We are very impressed with what we have seen so far. Ikeja Disco has been very innovative.

"As we continue to tailor some of these interventions, we are also seeing the plans that they are going forward to be able to solve the perennial energy problems that we have."

Speaking, the Chief Executive of IKEDC, Folake Soetan said, "The national mass metering and phase zero which is focused on ensuring that customers are metered and another intervention was for us to expand our network to also ensure that we relieve transformers that are overloaded to ensure that customers have more energy and OPEX as well.

"The funds that we are getting from central bank is meant to help increase energy to help reduce losses and to improve power that we're giving our customers and we've gotten over N40 billion now, and we're still working with

CBN, to ensure that we get more."

FUNDING THE REAL SECTOR TO BOOST FX

While on the inspection of companies which had accessed the various CBN intervention funds within the Lekki Free Trade Zone areas, the Director of Banking Supervision Department of the CBN, Mr. Mustapha Haruna said companies who keyed into the various interventions such as anchors borrowers' program, Real Sector Support Facility Discretionary Cash Reserve Ratio (RSSF- DCRR), and others would be a plus to the foreign exchange earnings drive of the country.

The CBN team had inspected the facilities of The Candel Company Limited, an agrochemical manufacturing company which had accessed N2 billion under the CBN Commercial Agric Credit Scheme, Pinnacle Oil and Gas, which has a tank farm, Sana Building Systems (SBS), a steel construction company with capacity to export as well as the Tollerams Group which has invested billions of dollars in the LFZ.

Haruna had noted, "There is a clear validation of the strategic wisdom behind the various interventions of the Central Bank of Nigeria particularly to support the real sector. Candle stands at two critical junctures. One is the manufacturing outfit, as you recall recently, the central bank introduced the RTX 200 policy designed to boost the non-oil sector and what Candel is doing here is quite complementary to that policy.

"The support the central bank has given in terms of promoting the growth of the real sector is quite strategic. And given the potential benefits, both in terms of employment generation and the impact across the entire value chain is quite massive. We need more of these types of efforts on the part of the private sector.

"I supervise the banks and banks need bankable projects like this to be able to thrive. So, there's a sense in which all these

dots connect all for the benefit, ultimate benefits of promoting the growth and development of the Nigerian economy at large."

Also, the Director, Trade and Exchange Department, Ozoemena Nnaji alluded that some companies who had gotten intervention to grow their businesses are now enabling Nigeria increase its non-oil export earnings.

"SBS is actually exporting some of their products here to our neighboring countries, and that will earn us some foreign exchange. We hope also that can benefit from it RT200 export more, so that I can get the benefit of the rebate.

"Also, the multiplier effect of the company is huge, because we have people building this product to neighboring countries of Cameroon and Ghana where they have done business, and also have companies here that is utilising their materials and their product," he said.

On his part, the Head, Legal Services Department of CBN, Mr Kofo Salam-Alada, during a visit to Candel Company Limited., called on banks to support Nigerian companies to grow production in the country.

"With what the company is doing I believe that bankers should actually start coming for them; it's not just the Central Bank's Intervention Funds, Nigerian banks should actually seek them to see how they can partner with them to drive it forward.

"The key thing that Nigerians must also know is that we need to support our own, not just in terms of employment generation; for the CBN that is interested in increasing foreign exchange in this country, it is something that needs to be supported," he said.

President SBS, Mr. Ken Krieger praised the inventions of CBN in the real sector and his company.

He said: "This factory is the result of the funding that we've received and without that support, honestly, we could not have made it happen. So, we're very grateful that the CBN is diligent in building the economy. We are now exporting into Cameroon, currently; we have projects quoted for Ghana and the Ivory Coast also.

CHINESE, NIGERIAN IMPORTERS FLOOD MARKET WITH SUBSTANDARD TOMATO PAST

importation of banned tomato past and other food products into our country.

"Unfortunately, the products are made of starch and colour as contained in a speech delivered by a former Director General of NAFDAC, Dr Paul Orhil at a tomato stakeholders' forum held at NAFDAC auditorium in Lagos. A NAFDAC internal memo dated February 10, 2015 also indicates tat 91.1 per cent of imported tomato past are substandard, yet, no enforcement. We have never heard NAFDAC seizing any substandard and imported food items except during the time of Prof. Dora Akunyili," they stated.

They accused NAFDAC of closing their eyes while the Chinese dump

substandard tomato past on Nigeria.

"The current NAFDAC Dg replied one of our letters and pleased with us to give her time to act, but its over six months now and we believe that her letter to us was to buy time, as we suspect that some NAFDAC cabals might be the brains behind the importation, because we have more than ever before high quantities of imported tomato past in the markets as of today, than when we wrote NAFDAC," they added.

They called on the minister to use his good office to compel HAFDAC to do the right thing.

They also called on the minister to declare zero tolerance on fake and substandard tomato past and other food products, "This will enable Nigeria get rid of the menace and the

health and well-being of Nigerians will be assured. Be reminded sir that any harm or damage caused by the inefficiency of NAFDAC or any department under your ministry, you will surely share part of the blame.

"We suspect that some local and foreign importers in collaboration with some government agencies are bent on destroying the health of Nigerians by the dumping of these deadly products into our markets, just for the sake of their economy. Regrettably, NAFDAC silence or sleeping on duty has emboldened them to increase imports, an investigation in our markets will convince you. The effect of the consumption of these fake and substandard tomato past and other food products is deadlier than

the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic."

An official of another local manufacturer told THISDAY that NAFDAC, their enforcement of standards for local manufacturers is very effective, "hence most locally produced tomato past are of high quality. Unfortunately, they are not applying the same stringent enforcement measures on foreign and imported tomato past, as the quantity of imports is far bigger than what local manufacturers struggle to produce.

"We are yet to utilize up to 15 per cent of our installed capacity due to the regulatory agencies inaction. We are worried because we believe in made in Nigeria, hence we never imported or marketed any food products,

since inception we sell what we produce in our Nigerian factory. That is why we need the sector to be properly sanitized to truly safeguard the health of Nigerians, as we can never join them to kill Nigerians."

Meanwhile, in the letter to the minister, the tomato past producer stated, "sir, it is very unfortunate that departments under your ministry will allow the importation of items that can be produced better in Nigeria and for export. The beauty of supporting made in Nigeria is that, when they are locally produced, it will help create more jobs, earn foreign exchange and stimulate economic growth and stem the tide of kidnappings, armed robbery and all forms of

youth restiveness to make Nigeria a better place. Unfortunately, NAFDAC utterances of helping to diversify the economy in the media are mere eye service as their actions are helping in closing down more factories in the country.

"Despite the huge amount of money we pay as NAFDAC charges, port charges and custom duties for every import of our raw materials, which is quite discouraging and frustrating, whereas importers of fake and substandard products pay little or nothing to government coffers, yet, NAFDAC prefers Nigerian manufacturers with about 7,000 to 10,000 workers to close their factories for import cabals that employs less than 250 Nigerians"



PRODUCT LAUNCH...
L-R Sales Director, Jackie Luo; Marketing Manager, Jennifer Okorhi; Marketing Director, Iris Cao and Business Operation Director, Kevin Wang, all of OPPO Nigeria, at the launch of Reno7, its new flagship phone in Lagos... recently

Investors Shun 38% Listed Companies as Prices Traded Flat

Kayode Tokede

As the stock market added 6.23 per cent in All-Share Index in May 2022, investors dumped 38 per cent or 53 out of 152 listed stocks on the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) as they do not provide much opportunity for price appreciation and dividend payout.

The market indicator, NGX All-Share Index hits over 15-year high in May 2022, driven by low yield in fixed income securities, impressive corporate earnings by listed companies posit-covid-19, and steady increase in global oil prices that has improved liquidity in the system.

According to capital market stakeholders, these stocks in May lacked fundamentals to attract investors demand and supply, leaving their prices flat, stressing that most of them have remained unchanged over the years.

Findings by THISDAY from the NGX monthly statistics revealed that nine insurance stocks traded flat in May 2022.

Further findings revealed that investors shun listed stocks in the Growth Board and Alternative Securities Market (ASeM) on the backdrop of poor corporate

earnings, corporate governance and failure to disclose critical market information required by investors to thrive demand.

Despite the bourse implementing rules on par value and share price methodology to enhance market liquidity and transparency, a total of 15 stocks traded flat at N0.20 per share in May.

The Exchange had announced that from January 28, 2018, the minimum price at which stocks will trade, will be N0.10 kobo per share.

Prior to this, the minimum price floor was fixed at N0.50 kobo per share (which is also the par value).

The stocks that traded at N0.20 per share in May are; Smart Products Nigeria Plc, Capital Oil Plc, Universal Insurance Plc, Standard Alliance Insurance Plc, Tantalizers Plc, Resort Savings & Loans Plc, Secure Electronic Technology Plc and Omatek Ventures Plc.

Others are Goldlink Insurance Plc, Guinea Insurance Plc, Daar Communications Plc, Deap Capital Management & Trust Plc, DN Tyre & Rubber Plc, African Alliance Insurance Plc and Afromedia Plc.

They stakeholders that

compromises of shareholders, stockbroker and analyst attributed flat stocks to liquidity and weak corporate earnings.

The Managing Director, ARM Securities Ltd, Mr. Rotimi Olubi in a chat with THISDAY attributed the trend to liquidity of the securities, stating that these stocks lack information to drive local and foreign investors' demand.

According to him, "Most of these securities lack liquidity to attract investor patronage. Liquidity is also a function of investors confidence in the management of these businesses and confidence around continued return on investment.

"Besides, one of the things that triggered liquidity is corporate performance of these securities. "Another thing is timely market driven information.

When a certain company lacks information that shows the corporate direction of business, we are not likely to see investors stake their money into it. Timely information drives prices of securities once it is listed on any Exchanges."

He noted also that the number of deals and average volume traded per day is one

of the key components that drive liquidity.

He added further, "Some of these stocks on the bourse are good but there is no information to promote activities until the time comes when there is enough information that triggers generality of interest."

The Chief Operating Officer, InvestData Ltd, Mr. Ambrose Omordion noted that most mid-low capitalised stocks traded flat in May 2022, while highly capitalised stocks are driving the market performance.

He said, "When it comes to stocks investment, investors look at leaders in some sectors and consider if the company's dividend payout is encouraging or if its shareholding structure is small.

"Across the global market, all the stocks are not expected to appreciate at a time. While some are trading flat, others might appreciate. The key point is that something must trigger these stocks to appreciate or else, it will remain flat."

He maintained that Nigeria's economy and policy by regulating bodies played a major role in these companies' stock price appreciation.

Coca-Cola HBC Donates €1m to Support Local Communities

Coca-Cola HBC, the parent company of the Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) Ltd, has announced a €1 million donation to support community empowerment and social impact programmes in Nigeria.

The announcement was made by CEO Coca-Cola HBC, Zoran Bogdanovic, at a stakeholder reception during his visit to Lagos, Nigeria.

Speaking about the company's legacy of over 70 years in Nigeria, Zoran Bogdanovic said, "Our roots are in Nigeria and its spirit still

runs right through our business today – that's why we have been a proud contributor to the growth of the Nigerian Economy throughout our history. In the last 10 years we have invested well over a billion Euros in our Nigeria operations, which has supported the expansion of production capacity, building of modern warehouses, investment in eco-friendly logistics and above all, the creation of jobs for young Nigerians across the value chain.

Today, we, along with The Coca-Cola Company, support over 58,000 jobs annually in the value chain

in the country."

Remarking on the donation, Bogdanovic said: "This donation underlines our commitment to improving the lives of our communities. Through this support, among other ongoing sustainability initiatives, we hope to help drive growth for the Nigerian economy and enable better living conditions for local communities. The donation will be directed towards empowering youth and women and the provision of water and sanitary facilities."

The €1 million fund will

be deployed to support four key initiatives including the Federal Government of Nigeria's journey towards becoming Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2025; upskilling underserved youths and women in high demand skills; and community recycling initiatives. The partners for the fund have been selected based on a rigorous due diligence process and their track record, as well as their ability to deliver value and make impact in the communities. The remaining three partners will be announced soon.

ABCON Urges CBN to Engage BDCs to End Multiple Exchange Rates

Nume Ekeghe

President, the Association of Bureaux De Change Operators of Nigeria (ABCON), Aminu Gwadabe has urged the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to use Bureaux De Change (BDCs) towards putting an end to multiple rate practices, in a bid to enable stability in the forex market.

Gwadabe has therefore called for collaboration between the BDCs and the CBN in the implementation of market-friendly policies that will make the BDCs impact more positively in the market and promoting exchange rate stability in the economy.

The ABCON boss said the hasty generalisation that criminalizes the BDC sub-sector as responsible for all market crisis and infractions like selling dollars with higher premium above regulatory limit, promoting loss of confidence in the near, and multiplicity of the exchange rates is not in the best interest of the market and economy.

He said: "It is in view of this disturbing situation and the need to strengthen BDCs value chain as obtainable in organised climes that we urge the regulators and policymakers to consider BDCs as

the most potent tool in liberalising the foreign exchange market and stopping multiples exchange rates in the system."

He explained that the BDCs have since 2006, provided policymakers with a window in achieving their mandate of exchange rate stability and price equilibrium. He therefore called for the reintegration of the BDCs into the forex market ecosystem to sustain their roles in the economy.

Gwadabe said the BDCs have for years remained effective and creative in contributing to the forex market.

For instance, the introduction of the Investors & Exports (I&E) FX window in 2017 was as a result of agitations from stakeholders like ABCON, foreign investors, Nigerians in Diaspora who advocated for it to allow more dollar inflows to the economy boost foreign reserves, and raise confidence in the naira by addressing widening rate premiums.

He said: "In order to address the challenges facing the forex market, now is the time to integrate BDCs into the market activities as agent of stabilization and delivering the market to the promised land."

Asenuga: Identification of Retail Insurance Distinguishes Mutual from Others

The Managing Director Mutual Benefit Insurance Plc, Femi Asenuga, has said that initial identification of retail insurance market as against struggle for corporate and government business stood the company out among its contemporaries.

Asenuga stated this at a training programme organised by Mutual Benefit Insurance for members of National Association of Insurance and Pension Correspondents (NAIPCO) in Lagos and said that early discovery of retail insurance market served as a strategy for the company to differentiate itself from other players in the market.

"This was made possible because we had to do a widespread of research, looking at what was absent in the market at that time, and our focus was mainly on served and the unserved segment of the market, and this led us into coming up with a whole lots of products – interesting, relevance and the rightful products aimed at meeting the needs of the unserved segment of the market.

He said Mutual Benefits was the first insurance company in the market that introduced a product that was selling at a very low price of N50 and the product was called 'Green Shield.

Asenuga said the company has made its mark in the

market, adding that this could be seen from the kind of marketing team it prides itself in.

"Today we have the largest retail marketing team. Today Mutual Benefits is a preferred destination when you are looking for capable hands in retail insurance development and today our people are everywhere in the market being in charge of retail outlets of various insurance companies," he said.

Asenuga said the training programme was one of the ways of trying to show appreciation for the supports NAIPCO members gave to his company.

While soliciting for the continued cooperation from the Association and sustenance of the programme, he said the training was meant for knowledge sharing.

Also speaking, Executive Director, Operations, Biyi Ashiru-Mobolaji urged NAIPCO members to make conscious efforts in creating the needed awareness that will engender insurance growth in Nigeria.

"As journalists, we urge you to go out there and educate the people about the values and benefits of insurance for their individual lives and the development of the national economy. Tell people about us, what we do, and how they can benefit from our products and services," Biyi said.

UNFORGETTABLE

Unforgettable

Fide

It has been 2 years since you stepped up to be with the Lord.

A very long two years indeed.

Time they say, heals all wounds and one begins to forget with time, but how can I forget your love, your care and the attention you showered.

How can I forget the memories we shared, the laughter, your humor, the jokes and those little pranks.

You were an angel sent by the Lord to me.

You were simply different, exceptional and very charismatic.

You were a man of style, color and class.

Missing you has now become part of my daily activities.

Sometimes it seems so unreal and unbelievable that you are truly no more.

I thank GOD for giving me such a rare and priceless opportunity to have been part of your life.

As painful as it is, the children and I take solace in the fact that you are in the bosom of the Lord.

Your legacy is indestructible

We miss you soooooo much my sweetheart.
Continue to Rest In Peace.

Signed:

NONYE AYENI
OLUWATOBI AYENI
OLAMIDE AYENI



SUIT NO: LD/ADR/3233/2020 KEYSTONE BANK V ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS
BEFORE THE HONOURABLE JUSTICE J.O. PEDRO

BETWEEN
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT/APPLICANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

ENROLLED ORDER
MOTION EX-PARTE
BROUGHT PURSUANT TO ORDER 9 RULES OF THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE (CIVIL PROCEDURE) RULES 2019 AND UNDER THE INHERENT JURISDICTION OF THIS HONOURABLE COURT.

UPON THIS APPLICATION coming up before this Honourable Court,
AND UPON READING the affidavit in support of this application sworn to and filed at the High Court Registry, Lagos on the 15th day of July, 2021 by YADELOKIKI OLALERAN, Male, Adult, Nigerian and Court Sheriff of the High of Lagos State.

AND AFTER HEARING Mr Kenneth Eze Counsel for the Claimant/ Applicant moves in terms of the application.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AS FOLLOWS:

1. That AN ORDER be and is hereby granted to the Claimant/ Applicant to effect the service of the Originating Process dated 11th September, 2020 and other processes in this matter on the Defendant by publishing same in Thisday Newspaper
2. That such service shall be deemed as good and proper service on the Defendant.

UNDER THE HAND AND SEAL OF
THE COURT OF PRESIDING JUDGE
THIS 30th DAY OF MARCH, 2022.

COURT OF LAGOS STATE
J. O. PEDRO
JUDGE



FORM 6
Form of Memorandum for Renewed Originating Process
(O. 8, r. 4(3))

The Originating Process Renewed on the 30th day of March, 2022 Pursuant to Order of Court Made the 30th day of March, 2022 for 3(Three) Months.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

To: ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH 28, Falomo Close, off Macpherson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos.

In the Lagos Judicial Division of Lagos State.

You are hereby commanded that within forty-two (42) days after the service of this Writ on you, inclusive of the day of such service you do cause an appearance to be entered for you in an action of the suit of KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED and take notice that in default of your so doing the Claimant may proceed therein, and judgment may be given in your absence.

DATED the 11th day of September, 2020.

DUROSINMI
Commissioner for General
Fast Track
Lagos High Court
Registrar

N.B: This Writ is to be served within six (6) months from the date thereof, or, if renewed, within three (3) months from the date of the last renewal, including the day of such date, and not afterwards.

The Defendant may enter appearance personally or by Legal Practitioner either by handing in the appropriate form, duly completed, at the Registry of the High Court of the Judicial Division in which the action is brought or by sending them to the Registry by registered post.

INDORSEMENTS

The Claimant's claims against the Defendant are as follows:

- a. The sum of **N90,121,419.49 (Ninety Million, One Hundred and Twenty One Thousand, Four Hundred and Nineteen Naira, Forty Nine Kobo)** only being the debit balance outstanding on the Defendant's account as at 30th June, 2020 owing to the unliquidated utilization of **Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0** issued to the Defendant by the Claimant.
- b. Interest on the sum claimed in "a" above at the rate of 15% per annum being the prevailing bank rate from 1st July, 2020 until judgment and thereafter at the rate of 10% until final liquidation of the judgment sum.

NB: If the amount claimed in "a" is paid to the Claimant's Solicitors within 42 days of receipt of this process the suit will terminate.

This Writ was issued by Kenneth Eze Esq. of Fortbanc Solicitors whose address for service is No.166 Sirani Daranjo Street, Victoria Island, Lagos State, agent for Claimant of 1 Keystone Bank Crescent, Off Adeyemo Alakija Crescent, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Legal Practitioner for the said Claimant who resides at (mention the city, town or district and also the name of the street and number of the house of the Claimant's residence, if any).

This writ was served by me at on the Defendants accompanied by the following documents:

- i. a Statement of Claim;
- ii. a list of witnesses to be called at the trial;
- iii. written statements on oath of the witnesses;
- iv. copies of every document to be relied on at the trial;
- v. pre-action protocol Form 01

on the day of 20.....

Indorsed the Day of 20.....

Signed

Address

IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

STATEMENT OF CLAIM

1. The Claimant is a limited liability company carrying on banking business in Nigeria with its head office at No. 1, Keystone Bank Crescent, off Adeyemo Alakija Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. The Claimant has a branch at Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.
2. The Defendant is a business woman with her address at 28, Falomo Close, off Macpherson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos. The Defendant is a customer of the Claimant and maintains her accounts at the Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos branch of the Claimant.
3. Sometime in 2008, the Defendant requested for and was issued **Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0** by the Claimant. The Defendant activated the said credit Card and carried out several transactions with same. The credit card is pleaded and shall be relied on at the trial of this suit. Notice is hereby given to the Defendant to produce the said credit card at trial.
4. In line with banking policies and the credit card terms and conditions on its issuance and usage, the Defendant as primary cardholder was obligated to pay off the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on the transactions made on the credit cards before the monthly payment due date. The Credit card Statement is hereby pleaded and shall be relied on at the trial of this suit.
5. In accordance with the Credit Card banking policies and the terms and conditions, default in repayment of the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due by the Defendant, attracts charges/interests at the prevailing bank rate on the outstanding balance on the account.
6. Despite taking full advantage of and utilizing the Credit Card issued by the Claimant, the Defendant continually failed, refused and or neglected to fully pay the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on or before the monthly payment due date as obligated.

7. Following the incessant failure of the Defendant to honour her obligation on utilization of the credit card product, the Claimant wrote the Defendant demanding that the Defendant immediately pay up the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due but the Defendant continually failed, refused and or neglected to heed the Claimant's demand.

8. Rather than promptly pay up the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on her account, the Defendant continued to carry out foreign and local transactions on the said credit card way above the credit limit assigned to her as primary cardholder despite several warnings from the Claimant that it was going to suspend the credit card privileges extended to her.

9. When it became clear that the Defendant was unwilling to repay her outstanding debts to the Claimant, the Claimant instructed its solicitors Messrs Fortbanc Solicitors who, by a letter to the Defendant dated August 15, 2019, further demanded that the Defendant immediately liquidate the entire outstanding sum on her account but all to no avail. The said letter is hereby pleaded and shall be relied on at the trial of this suit. Notice is hereby given to the Defendant to produce the original copy of the said letter dated August 15, 2019 at the trial.

10. Upon refusal of the Defendant to heed the Claimant's Solicitors demand of August 15, 2019, the said Solicitor vide their letter dated September 18, 2019, issued a final demand notice on the Defendant. The said letter is hereby pleaded and shall be relied upon at the trial of this suit. Notice is hereby given to the Defendant to produce the original copy of the said letter dated September 18, 2019 at the trial.

11. Following the above the Defendant invited the Claimant to a settlement meeting where she, through her spouse Mr. Francis Atuche, engaged the Claimant in settlement talks/discussions and offered to pay the sum of **N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira)** only as full and final settlement of her indebtedness to the Claimant, which offer was unacceptable to the Claimant and accordingly rejected. The Claimant shall at the trial rely on its letter to the Defendant dated October 7, 2019. Notice is hereby given to the Defendant to produce the original copy of the said letter dated October 7, 2019 at the trial of this suit.

12. In line with the Pre-Action Protocol as set out in Order 5 Rule 1 (2) (e) of the High Court Rules, the Claimant sent its Letter of Claim dated March 11, 2020 to the Defendant setting out its Claims and the action for an amicable resolution of the matter through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods all to no avail.

13. The debit balance on the Defendant's account owing and due to the Claimant as at 30th June, 2020, is the sum of **N90,121,419.49 (Ninety Million, One Hundred and Twenty One Thousand, Four Hundred and Nineteen Naira, Forty Nine Kobo)** only inclusive of interest. The Claimant shall rely on the Defendant's statement of account at the trial of this suit.

14. The Claimant states that the Defendant is in a position to fully liquidate the outstanding indebtedness but has deliberately refused to do so and would not do so unless compelled by this honourable court.

15. The Claimant shall at the trial of this suit rely on all documents, letters e.t.c. related to, connected with or otherwise relevant to this suit. Notice is hereby given to the Defendant to produce at the trial of this suit the original copies of all such documents, letters e.t.c. which are in her possession.

16. WHEREOF the Claimant claims against the Defendant as follows:

- a. The sum of **N90,121,419.49 (Ninety Million, One Hundred and Twenty One Thousand, Four Hundred and Nineteen Naira, Forty Nine Kobo)** only being the debit balance outstanding on the Defendant's account as at 30th June, 2020 owing to the utilization of **Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0** issued to the Defendant by the Claimant.

- b. Interest on the sum claimed in "a" above at the rate of 15% per annum being the prevailing bank rate from 1st July, 2020 until judgment and thereafter at the rate of 10% until final liquidation of the judgment sum.

Dated the 11th day of September, 2020.



Kenneth Eze Esq., ACIAB (U.K.)
FORTBANC SOLICITORS
(Claimant's Solicitors)
160A Sirani Daranjo Street
Off Ugal Ayarinde Street
Victoria Island, Lagos.
08048506221
Email: info@fortbancsolicitors.com

FOR SERVICE ON:
The Defendant
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH
28, Falomo Close
Off Macpherson Avenue
Ikoyi, Lagos.

off the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on the transactions made on the credit card before the monthly payment due date.

8. In accordance with the Credit Card banking policies and the terms and conditions, default in repayment of the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due by the Defendant, attracts charges/interests at the prevailing bank rate on the outstanding balance on the account.

9. That despite taking full advantage of and utilizing the Credit Card product of the Claimant, the Defendant continually failed, refused and or neglected to fully pay the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on or before the monthly payment due date as obligated.

10. Following the incessant failure of the Defendant to honour her obligation on utilization of the credit card product, the Claimant wrote the Defendant demanding that the Defendant immediately pay up the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due but the Defendant continually failed, refused and or neglected to heed the Claimant's demand.

11. Rather than promptly pay up the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on her account, the Defendant continued to carry out foreign and local transactions on the said credit cards way above the credit limit assigned to her as primary cardholder despite several warnings from the Claimant that it was going to suspend the credit cards privileges extended to her.

12. That when it became clear that the Defendant was unwilling to repay her outstanding debts to the Claimant, the Claimant instructed its solicitors Messrs Fortbanc Solicitors who, by a letter to the Defendant dated August 15, 2019, further demanded that the Defendant immediately liquidate the entire outstanding sum on her account but all to no avail.

13. Upon refusal of the Defendant to heed the Claimant's Solicitors demand of August 15, 2019, the said Solicitor vide their letter dated September 18, 2019, issued a final demand notice on the Defendant.

14. That following the above the Defendant invited the Claimant to a settlement meeting where she, through her spouse Mr. Francis Atuche, engaged the Claimant in settlement talks/discussions and offered to pay the sum of **N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira)** only as full and final settlement of the Claimant's indebtedness to the Claimant, which offer was unacceptable to the Claimant and accordingly rejected.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

CLAIMANT'S LIST OF WITNESSES

1. SULAIMAN SADIKU of No. 1, Keystone Bank Crescent, off Adeyemo Alakija Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Dated this 11th day of Sept., 2020.



Kenneth Eze Esq., ACIAB (U.K.)
FORTBANC SOLICITORS
(Claimant's Solicitors)
160A Sirani Daranjo Street
Off Ugal Ayarinde Street
Victoria Island, Lagos.
08048506221
Email: info@fortbancsolicitors.com

FOR SERVICE ON:

The Defendant
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH
28, Falomo Close
Off Macpherson Avenue
Ikoyi, Lagos.

IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

STATEMENT ON OATH OF THE CLAIMANT'S FIRST WITNESS

I, SULAIMAN SADIKU, male, Muslim, Nigerian citizen of No. 1, Keystone Bank Crescent, off Adeyemo Alakija Street, Victoria Island, Lagos do hereby make oath and state as follows:

1. That I am an employee of the Claimant and by virtue of my position, I am conversant with the facts deposed to herein.

2. That I have the consent of my employers to depose to this Affidavit.

3. That all the facts deposed herein except those otherwise stated are within my personal knowledge.

4. That the Claimant is a limited liability company carrying on banking business in Nigeria with its head office at No. 1, Keystone Bank Crescent, off Adeyemo Alakija Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. The Claimant has a branch at Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

5. That the Defendant is a business woman with her address at 28, Falomo Close, off Macpherson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos. The Defendant is a customer of the Claimant and maintains her accounts at the Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos branch of the Claimant.

6. That sometime in 2008, the Defendant requested for and was issued **Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0** by the Claimant. The Defendant activated the said Credit Card and carried out several transactions with same.

7. In line with banking policies and the credit card terms and conditions on its issuance and usage, the Defendant as primary cardholder was obligated to pay

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

CLAIMANT'S LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Claimant's Solicitor's letter to the Defendant dated August 15, 2019;
2. Claimant's Solicitor's letter dated September 18, 2019;
3. The Defendant's Statements of Accounts;
4. Claimant's Solicitor's letter dated October 7, 2019;
5. Defendant's Credit card statement

Dated this 11th day of Sept, 2020

[Signature]
KENNETH EZE, Esq., ACIAB, (J.K)
FORBANK SOLICITORS
Claimant's Solicitor
160A Sinar Daranjo Street
Off Lagos Ayorinde Street
Victoria Island, Lagos
0808506221
Email: info@forbanksolicitors.com

FOR SERVICE ON:
The Defendant
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH
28, Falomo Close
Off Macpherson Avenue
Ikoyi, Lagos.

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF MOTION

1. SULAIMAN SADIKU, Msc. Amlin, Nigerian, Banker of No. 1 Keystone Bank Crescent, off Adeyemo Alakija, Victoria Island, Lagos do hereby make oath and state as follows:
1. That I am an employee of the Claimant/Applicant and by virtue of my position, I am conversant with the facts deposed to herein;
2. That I have the consent of my employer to depose to this Affidavit;
3. That all the facts deposed herein except those otherwise stated are within my personal knowledge;
4. That the Claimant is a limited liability company carrying on banking business in Nigeria with its head office at No. 1, Keystone Bank Crescent, off Adeyemo Alakija Street, Victoria Island, Lagos. The Claimant has a branch at Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos;
5. That the Defendant is a business woman with her address at 28, Falomo Close, off Macpherson Avenue, Ikoyi, Lagos. The Defendant is a customer of the Claimant and maintains her accounts at the Plot 707, Adeola Hopewell Street, Victoria Island, Lagos branch of the Claimant;
6. That sometime in 2006, the Defendant requested for and was issued Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0 by the Claimant. The Defendant activated the said credit Card and carried out several transactions with same. The Credit Card Statement is hereby exhibited and marked "Exhibit A1";
7. That in-line with banking policies and the credit card terms and conditions on its issuance and usage, the Defendant as primary cardholder was obligated to

pay off the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on the transactions made on the credit cards before the monthly payment due date.

8. In accordance with the Credit Card banking policies and the terms and conditions, default in repayment of the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due by the Defendant, attracts charges/interests at the prevailing bank rate on the outstanding balance on the account;
9. That despite taking full advantage of and utilizing the Credit Card issued by the Claimant, the Defendant continually failed, refused and or neglected to fully pay the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on or before the monthly payment due date as obligated;
10. Following the incessant failure of the Defendant to honour her obligation on utilization of the credit card product, the Claimant wrote the Defendant demanding that the Defendant immediately pay up the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due but the Defendant continually failed, refused and or neglected to heed the Claimant's demand;
11. That rather than promptly pay up the closing balance and/or the minimum amount due on her account, the Defendant continued to carry out foreign and local transactions on the said credit card way above the credit limit assigned to her as primary cardholder despite several warnings from the Claimant that it was going to suspend the credit card privileges extended to her;
12. That when it became clear that the Defendant was unwilling to repay her outstanding debt to the Claimant, the Claimant instructed its solicitors Messrs Forbank Solicitors who, by a letter to the Defendant dated August 15, 2019, further demanded that the Defendant immediately liquidate the entire outstanding sum on her account but all to no avail. The said letter is exhibited and marked "Exhibit A2";
13. Upon refusal of the Defendant to heed the Claimant's Solicitor's demand of August 15, 2019, the said Solicitor vide their letter dated September 18, 2019 issued a final demand notice on the Defendant. The said letter is exhibited and marked "Exhibit A3";
14. Following the above the Defendant invited the Claimant to a settlement meeting where she, through her spouse Mr. Francis Atuche, engaged the Claimant in settlement talks/discussions and offered to pay the sum of N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira) only as full and final settlement of her indebtedness to the Claimant, which offer was unacceptable to the Claimant

come to court to speak big grammar has led to the distress of many banks as to the detriment of innocent depositors. Courts must take a firm stand whenever such matters come before them so as to save the banking industry from total annihilation."

In the light of the above pronouncement of the Court of Appeal we urge your Lordship to find for the Claimant that a debtor must pay his debt.

- 5.4 The intention of a summary Judgment is for the expeditious disposal of claims which are virtually incontestable in the sense that the Defendants have no valid defence. In *ILOMUANYA V. LOBI BANK OF NIGERIA LIMITED* (1997) 12 NWLR (PART 531) PAGE 139 at 148, it was held that the procedure under Order 10 (now Order 13) of the Lagos High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules, 2019 is designed to enable Claimants obtain summary Judgment without trial where the case is patently clear, and unassailable and the Defence put forward by the Defendant does not in law avail the Defendant.
- 5.5 Similarly in *MACAULAY V. NAL MERCHANT BANK LTD* (1990) 4 NWLR (PART 144) PAGE 283 at 290, it was held that the purpose of Summary Judgment under Order 10 (now Order 11) is to prevent sham defences from defeating the right of parties by delay and at the same time causing great loss to the Claimant who is endeavouring to enforce his rights. See also *Karibi-Whyte JSC in NISHIZAWA LTD V. JETHWANI* (1984) 12 SC. 234, 324-325, PARAS G-E, where it was observed that the object of Order 10 (now Order 13) procedure is to enable a Claimant whose claim is unarguable in law and where the facts are undisputed, and it is inexpedient to allow a Defendant to defend so as to avoid undue delay, to obtain Judgment in respect of the amount claimed.
- 5.6 My Lord, in the instant case, the Claimant's case is very clear and unassailable. The fact that the credit card was issued to the Defendant is not in dispute and the fact that the credit card was voluntarily and fully utilized by the Defendant is also patently clear.
- 5.7 In *NATIONAL BANK OF NIGERIA LIMITED V. SAVOL W. A. LIMITED* (1994) 3 NWLR (PART 333) PAGE 435 at 452, the Court held that the purpose of the Summary Judgment Procedure under Order 10 High Court of Lagos State (Civil Procedure) Rules, 2019 (now Order 13, High Court of Lagos State (Civil Procedure) Rules 2019, is for expeditious disposal of claims which are virtually incontestable in the sense that the Defendant apparently has no

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
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HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

MOTION ON NOTICE

BROUGHT PURSUANT TO ORDER 13, RULE 1, & 5 (1) ORDER 43, RULE 1 OF THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS CIVIL PROCEDURE RULES, 2019 AND UNDER THE INHERENT POWERS OF THE HONOURABLE COURT.

TAKE NOTICE that this Honourable Court will be moved on the day of 2020 at the hour of 9:00 clock in the forenoon or so soon thereafter as Counsel on behalf of the Claimant/Applicant may be heard praying the Court for the following:

- a. The sum of N90,121,419.49 (Ninety Million, One Hundred and Twenty One Thousand, Four Hundred and Nineteen Naira, Forty Nine Kobo) only being the debit balance outstanding on the Defendant's account as at 30th June, 2020 owing to the utilization of Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0 issued to the Defendant by the Claimant;
- b. Interest on the sum claimed in 'a' above at the rate of 15% per annum being the prevailing bank rate from 1st July, 2020 until judgment and thereafter at the rate of 10% until final liquidation of the judgment sum;
- c. And for such further Order or other Orders as the Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.

Dated this 11th day of Sept, 2020

[Signature]
KENNETH EZE, Esq., ACIAB, (J.K)
FORBANK SOLICITORS
Applicant's Solicitor
160A Sinar Daranjo Street
Off Lagos Ayorinde Street
Victoria Island, Lagos
0808506221
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FOR SERVICE ON:
The Defendant
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH
28, Falomo Close
Off Macpherson Avenue
Ikoyi, Lagos.

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

WRITTEN ADDRESS IN SUPPORT OF MOTION

- 1.0 **INTRODUCTION:**
- 1.1 The Claimant has a Motion on notice brought pursuant to Order 13, Rule 1, & 5 (2), Order 43, Rule 1 of the High Court of Lagos Civil Procedure Rules, 2019 and under the inherent powers of the Honourable Court.
- 1.2 The Motion is praying the Court to enter Judgment for the Claimant/Applicant as follows:
 - a. The sum of N90,121,419.49 (Ninety Million, One Hundred and Twenty One Thousand, Four Hundred and Nineteen Naira, Forty Nine Kobo) only being the debit balance outstanding on the Defendant's account as at 30th June, 2020 owing to the utilization of Credit Card Number 428502000013181-0 issued to the Defendant by the Claimant;
 - b. Interest on the sum claimed in 'a' above at the rate of 15% per annum being the prevailing bank rate from 1st July, 2020 until judgment and thereafter at the rate of 10% until final liquidation of the judgment sum;
 - c. And for such further Order or other Orders as the Honourable Court may deem fit to make in the circumstances.
- 1.3 The Motion is supported by a 21 paragraphed Affidavit deposed to by Sulaiman Sadiku a staff of the Claimant/Applicant. Attached to the Affidavit are Exhibits A1 - A5. The Claimant shall rely on the Affidavit as well as the Exhibits in support of this Application.
- 2.0 **SUMMARY OF FACTS:**

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
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SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

AFFIDAVIT OF PARTICIPATION IN SETTLEMENT

I, KENNETH EZE, Female, Christian, Legal Practitioner of 160A, Sinar Daranjo Street, off Lagos Ayorinde Street, Victoria Island, Lagos do hereby make oath and state as follows:

1. That I am a legal Practitioner in the Law Firm of Forbank Solicitors, Solicitor of the Claimant herein and by virtue of my position I am conversant with the facts deposed herein;
2. That I have the consent of my employers to depose to this Affidavit;
3. That in compliance with the Lagos State High Court (Civil Procedure) Rules 2019, we made attempts to settle this matter amicably with the Defendant;
4. That both parties participated in the settlement talks;
5. That even though settlement meetings and correspondences were exchanged between the Claimant and the Defendant, parties have been unable to agree on extent of the Defendant's indebtedness to the Claimant;
6. That I make this deposition conscientiously and in good faith believing same to be true and in accordance with the Oaths Law.

Dated this 11th day of Sept, 2020

[Signature]
KENNETH EZE
FORBANK SOLICITORS
160A Sinar Daranjo Street
Off Lagos Ayorinde Street
Victoria Island
Lagos
0808506221
Email: info@forbanksolicitors.com

FOR SERVICE ON:
The Defendant
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH
28, Falomo Close
Off Macpherson Avenue
Ikoyi, Lagos.

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

STATEMENT OF INTENT & REASONS TO RESORT TO LITIGATION

I, KENNETH EZE, Legal Practitioner to the Claimant do hereby state as follows:

1. Despite the good faith attempts of the Claimant hereto and its counsel, we have been unable to reach a settlement with the Defendant;
2. Settlement meetings/discussions and correspondences were exchanged between the Claimant and the Defendant all to no avail;
3. The parties are unable to agree on extent of the Defendant's indebtedness to the Claimant hence the resort to litigation.

Dated this 11th day of Sept, 2020.

[Signature]
CLAIMANT/CLAIMANT'S COUNSEL

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH PRE-ACTION PROTOCOL

(Order 5, Rule 1(2)(e))

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE LAGOS JUDICIAL DIVISION
HOLDEN AT LAGOS**

SUIT NO. LD/.....

BETWEEN:
KEYSTONE BANK LIMITED CLAIMANT
AND
ATUCHE OGOMUEGBUWEM ELIZABETH DEFENDANT

I, KENNETH EZE of FORBANK SOLICITORS, Claimant's legal practitioners make oath and say as follows:

1. That I have complied with the directions of the Pre-Action Protocol as set out in Order 5 Rule 1 (2) (e) of the High Court Rules;
2. That I have made attempts to have this matter settled out of Court with the Defendant and such attempts were unsuccessful;
3. Our demand letters to the Defendant were received by the Defendant and subsequent settlement meetings/discussions were had all to no avail;
4. That I have by a Written Memorandum to the Defendant set out our claim and options for settlement as per the Letter of Claim to the Defendant and a Reminder dated March 11, 2020 and 19th March, 2020 respectively. The said letters are attached as exhibits "A" and "B";
5. I make this oath in good faith and in accordance with the Oath Law of Lagos State.

Dated at Lagos this 15th day of Sept, 2020

[Signature]
KENNETH EZE



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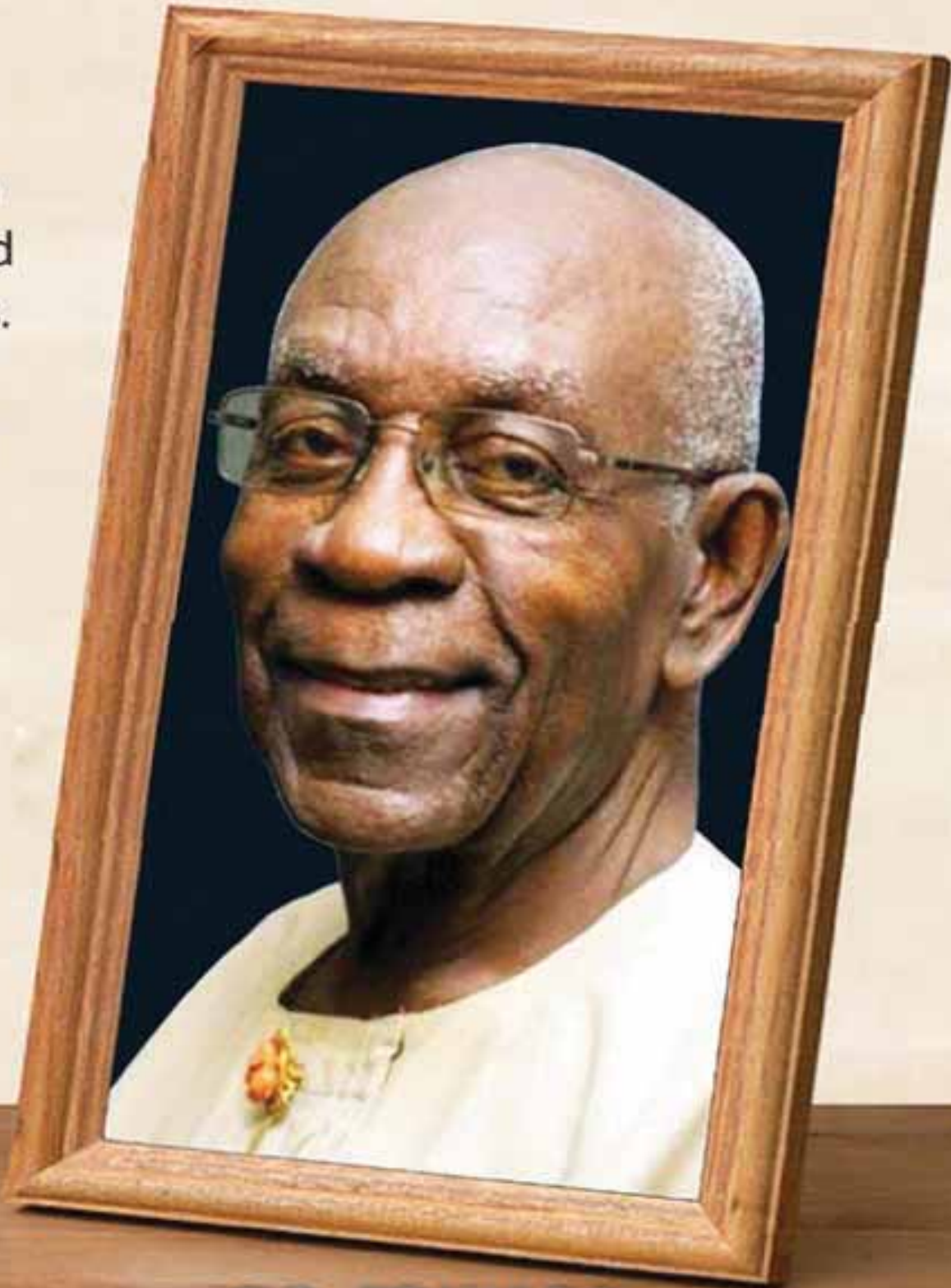
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Two Years *Gone*



We remember you today on the second year of your memorial. The pain passes, but the beautiful and incredible memories lingers. Not a single day goes by without us thinking about you. We have been comforted knowing that you are in a better place.

Continue to rest in the eternal bosom of our Lord till we meet again.



**DR. EDWARD
DANDESON SPIFF (OON)**
(APRIL 27TH, 1941 - JUNE 8TH, 2020)

Signed:
Erenate D. Spiff
For the family

FG Inaugurates MDA Focal Group on Implementation of New MSME Policy

James Emejo in Abuja

Following the recent approval by the federal government of the reviewed National Policy on MSMEs (2021-2025), the Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment, Mrs. Mariam Katagum, has inaugurated the MDA Focal Persons Group in the Implementation of the policy.

The federal government had okayed the new policy on MSMEs which among other things reclassified small businesses based on turnover rather than their assets.

The minister said the inauguration marked a significant turning point in the implementation process of the policy which was developed by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN).

She said with the approval of the 2nd revised policy by the Federal Executive Council (FEC) on March 17, 2021, SMEDAN had sought the assistance of the Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility to initiate a coordination

mechanism and also put in place a monitoring and evaluation system for effective tracking of the various MDA-specific actions.

Katagum, at the inauguration of the MDA Focal Persons Group, noted that the NMSME framework remained “very ambitious and requires multi-stakeholder partnership in implementing some of the recommendations”.

She said the mechanism seeks to ensure that the various activities of the ministries, departments and agencies of government (MDAs) that border on the sub-sector are properly coordinated and reported.

The minister said, “The involvement of strategic MDAs and BMOs in developing sector-specific action plans and nomination of focal persons will certainly increase the pace of activities that will drive the development of the NMSME sub-sector.”

She explained that the entire focus of the policy is to create a platform or framework to collaboratively attend to some of the

basic challenges of the NMSMEs adding that this was why the policy is focused on finance, skills development, marketing, and technology, research and development among others.

She also said towards ensuring that the policy is implemented to a reasonable level between now and 2025 when it will be due for another review, a high-level monitoring and evaluation team comprising of public, private and civil society interests would also be inaugurated, stressing that this will hopefully measure the level of implementation while the feedback will form a major point of discussion at both the Technical Implementation Committee and at the National Council.

Also speaking at the occasion, the acting Director-General of SMEDAN, Mr. Olawale Fasanya, said the contributions of the focal persons group would further reinforce their institutional commitments to working towards the realization of the policy objectives assembled represent.



L-R: Regional Sales Manager, Vitafoam Nigeria PLC, Chukwudi Ogbogu; Winner of Quality Sleep With Vitafoam, Nwokeoma Favour; Vitafoam Trade Partner, John Williams, at presentation of Vita Sizzler Mattress and Vitacool Memory Pillow winner of the Quality Sleep with Vitafoam, during Digital Gamification Campaign at John Willy International Company, Zik Avenue in Enugu recently

MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)	
	JANUARY 2021
Money Supply (M3)	38,779,455.43
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	1,039,129.55
Money Supply (M2)	37,740,325.88
-- Quasi Money	21,779,302.69
-- Narrow Money (M1)	15,961,023.19
---- Currency Outside Banks	2,364,871.13
---- Demand Deposits	13,596,152.06
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	7,414,275.50
Net Domestic Assets (NDA)	31,365,179.93
-- Net Domestic Credit (NDC)	42,916,586.63
---- Credit to Government (Net)	12,304,773.44
---- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	0.00
---- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	0.00
---- Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	30,611,813.19
-- Other Assets Net	3,892,112.74
Reserve Money (Base Money)	13,264,585.14
-- Currency in Circulation	2,831,167.19
-- Banks Reserves	10,433,417.96
-- Special Intervention Reserves	317,234.17

• Source - CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)	
Month	March 2018
Inter-Bank Call Rate	15.16
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	14.00
Treasury Bill Rate	11.84
Savings Deposit Rate	4.07
1 Month Deposit Rate	8.82
3 Months Deposit Rate	9.72
6 Months Deposit Rate	10.93
12 Months Deposit Rate	10.21
Prime Lending rate	17.35
Maximum Lending Rate	31.55

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

TAJBank to Launch maiden private sector N100bn Sukuk offering

Kayode Tokede

TAJBank Limited has announced that it is set to launch Nigeria's first private sector Sukuk offering under a N100 billion programme.

The bank's Sukuk offering, which is currently undergoing regulatory approvals, is expected to be launched soon, marking a historic shift from government-dominated Sukuk offerings to a fully private sector-oriented offering in the Nigerian debt markets.

TAJBank is launching the instrument under a Mudaraba structure that will afford the non-interest lender opportunity to grow its capital base and by so doing, position it on a strong pedestal to finance large and

long-term projects in Nigeria while unlocking investment opportunities in Africa's largest economy.

According to the bank's board, the Sukuk will be offered in tranches of N10 billion each as soon as regulatory approvals are secured.

Commenting on the corporate Sukuk offering during an interactive session with journalists in Abuja, the bank's Managing Director/CEO, Mr. Hamid Joda, explained: "TAJBank's Sukuk offer being the first private sector Sukuk offer in Nigeria would open the door for several Sukuk offers by other private sector entities thereby stimulating investments in critical sectors

of the economy leading to national development.

"Our aim is to raise the needed funds that would be invested in targeted high-impact sectors that spur job creation and enhance the standard of living of Nigerians."

In his remarks at the forum, the Executive Director, Mr. Sherif Idi, said: "There are many economic activities or projects that well-meaning Nigerians and companies are unable to fund.

"The Sukuk is a perfect way of aiding to finance these projects. He further stated that the use of the Sukuk to fund these projects means that investors are incentivized to help the economy develop by creating and producing rather than consuming only."

Citi Extends N4bn to Babban Gona for 41,000 Farmers

Nume Ekeghe

Citibank Nigeria Limited (Citi) have extended N4 billion or \$10 Million financing to Babban Gona Farmer Services Nigeria Limited (Babban Gona) to support input credit and harvest advance to smallholder farmers in northern Nigeria.

This transaction will enable 41,000 smallholder farmers to increase their farming income by 350 percent hectare, hence contributing to improved economic opportunity in fragile communities.

The loan is part of the Scaling Enterprise facility, a Citi partner-

ship with the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the Ford Foundation that enables earlier stage, innovative and inclusive businesses in emerging markets to access local currencies.

Managing Director and Co-Founder of Babban Gona, Kola Masha, said: "Babban Gona aims to be the highest impact organization on the agricultural landscape in Africa by supporting our members to generate enough income to improve their livelihoods, education, nutrition, and health. With the support of our partners, like Citibank, Babban Gona has consistently made

farming more profitable for tens of thousands of smallholders across Nigeria where we have improved their net income and agricultural productivity to 2X the national average."

CEO-Citibank Nigeria Limited, Ireti Samuel-Ogbu said: "We are pleased to partner with global development agencies and partners, such as DFC and the Ford Foundation, in the structuring of a pioneering social finance facility aimed at sustaining the Nigerian agricultural sector. Babban Gona's track record and unique business model renders it a partner of choice for scaling positive impact and enabling progress in Nigeria."

Vitafoam rewards Customer at Digital Gamification Forum

Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, Nigeria's leading manufacturer of flexible, reconstituted and rigid foam products has reiterated the importance of quality sleep in its digital transformation campaign, themed 'Quality Sleep with Vitafoam.'

Besides, the largest foam manufacturing and distribution network in West Africa, has rewarded its loyal customers with Vita Sizzler Mattress and Vitacool Memory Pillow in the just concluded Digital Gamification Campaign for their continuous patronage

of the Company's products.

The Campaign, aimed at encouraging Nigerians to embrace quality sleep, create excitement among Nigerian youths and champion healthy living, was opened to all Nigerians in which participants shared pictures of Vitafoam mattress and pillow on their social media pages and narrate what quality sleep means to them. They also encouraged their friends and family to do the same.

Mrs. Nwokenna Favour, from Ebonyi State, who currently

uses Vita Corona Mattress, emerged winner of the Digital Gamification Campaign.

In presenting the award, Mr. John Williams, Vitafoam Trade Partner in Enugu, congratulated the winner, Mrs. Favour and assured her of the luxury comfort she will get from using Vita Sizzler Mattress and Vitacool Memory Pillow.

According to Mr. Williams, "Vita Sizzler Mattress is a super soft, high density, high resilient mattress with a luxury feel and It supports weight of up to 120kg.

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT MONDAY MAY 30, 2022

The price of OPEC basket of thirteen crudes stood at \$118.84 a barrel on Friday, compared with \$116.50 the previous day, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations.

The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela).

MARKET NEWS

Stock Market Appreciates by N100bn to Sustain Positive Momentum

Kayode Tokede

The stock market segment of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) yesterday sustained the bullish momentum with N100 billion gain, following bargain hunting in MTN Nigeria Communications (MTNN) and 14 others.

The overall market capitalisation value gained N100 billion to close at N28,719 trillion, while

the NGX All-Share Index (ASI) grew by 184.42 basis points or 0.35 per cent to close at 53,270.88 basis points.

The market upturn was driven by price appreciation in large and medium capitalised stocks amongst which are; MTNN, UAC of Nigeria (UACN), GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Nigeria (Glaxosmith), Global Spectrum Energy Services and Nigerian Exchange Group

(NGXGroup).

As measured by market breadth, market sentiment was positive, as 16 stocks gained relative to 15 losers. Global Spectrum Energy Services recorded the highest price gain of 10 per cent to close at N2.75, per share. Jaiz Bank followed with a gain 7.95 per cent to close at 95 kobo, while Japaul Gold and Ventures went up by 6.67 per cent to close at 32

kobo, per share.

Glaxosmith rose by 5.11 per cent to close at N7.20, while UACN gained 4.55 per cent to close at N11.50, per share. On the other hand, Cutix led the losers' chart by 10 per cent to close at N2.61, per share. Cadbury Nigeria followed with a decline of 5.93 per cent to close at N16.65, while FTN Cocoa processors lost 5.56 per cent to close at 34 kobo, per share.

Wapic Insurance lost 4.76 per cent to close at N7.20, while Honeywell Flour Mill shed 4.55 per cent to close at N3.15, per share.

Meanwhile, the total volume of trades dipped by 68.95 per cent to 234,624 million units, valued at N2.745 billion, and exchanged in 4,232 deals. Transactions in the shares of Transnational Corporation of Nigeria (Transcorp) topped

the activity chart with 30,433 million shares valued at N37,213 million. United Bank for Africa (UBA) followed with 25,801 million shares worth N201.338 million, while Chams traded 20,525 million shares valued at N4,929 million.

NGXGroup traded 18,532 million shares valued at N459,962 million, while Fidelity Bank transacted 17,510 million shares worth N59,352 million.

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF 07/06/2022

MAIN BOARD		DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N BANKING		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
1	UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	266,755.49	7.80	0.65 ⬆	144 2,303,209
2	ZENITH BANK PLC	733,108.13	23.35	-0.43 ⬇	300 8,917,078
BANKING		4,773,133.31	277.00	-	251 11,220,287
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
3	ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	353,674.99	9.95	0.50 ⬆	139 5,455,045
4	FBN HOLDINGS PLC	403,822.04	11.25	2.27 ⬆	163 610,413,970
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					392 615,869,016
FINANCIAL SERVICES					746 627,089,302
ICT					
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
5	MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	4,773,133.31	234.50	1.96 ⬆	251 320,985
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES					251 320,985
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
6	DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	4,720,220.55	277.00	-	96 561,069
7	LAFARGE AFRICA PLC.	436,132.04	27.20	0.74 ⬆	97 946,632
BUILDING MATERIALS					183 1,597,701
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					183 1,597,701
OIL AND GAS					
S/N EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
8	SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	758,759.26	1,289.50	-	13 620
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION					13 620
OIL AND GAS					13 620
AGRICULTURE					
S/N CROP PRODUCTION		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
9	ELLAH LAKES PLC.	6,840.00	3.42	- ⬇	5 35,999
10	FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	792.00	0.36	5.88 ⬆	7 674,400
11	OKOMU OIL PALM PLC.	184,581.59	193.50	-	51 121,660
12	PRESCO PLC	162,000.00	162.00	- ⬇	47 310,676
CROP PRODUCTION					110 1,142,735
S/N LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
13	LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	4,860.00	1.62	1.25 ⬆	19 669,506
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES					19 669,506
AGRICULTURE					129 1,812,241
CONGLOMERATES					
S/N DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
14	JOHN HOLT PLC.	276.30	0.71	- ⬇	3 18,780
15	S O C A NIG. PLC.	1,260.66	1.94	- ⬇	4 1,811
16	TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	51,216.47	1.26	-0.79 ⬇	93 11,566,764
17	U A C N PLC.	31,694.26	11.00	-	36 130,161
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES					136 11,717,516
CONGLOMERATES					136 11,717,516
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N BUILDING CONSTRUCTION		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
18	ARBICO PLC.	152.96	1.03	- ⬇	0 0
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N BUILDING CONSTRUCTION		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION					0 0
S/N INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
19	JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC.	43,040.00	26.90	2.67 ⬆	58 1,144,655
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION					58 1,144,655
S/N REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
20	UPDC PLC	16,931.17	1.02	-	11 393,181
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT					11 393,181
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					69 1,447,836
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
21	DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	- ⬇	0 0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS					0 0
S/N BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
22	CHAMPION BREW. PLC.	30,456.74	3.89	- ⬇	29 123,347
23	GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC.	829.98	0.81	-	0 0
24	GUINNESS NIG PLC	198,229.65	90.50	-	59 68,320
25	INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	194,750.00	7.25	-	59 920,424
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
26	NIGERIAN BREW. PLC.	514,430.49	63.70	- ⬇	86 355,527
BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS					233 1,467,618
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
27	BUA FOODS PLC	1,074,600.00	59.70	- ⬇	5 20,056
28	DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	194,350.05	16.00	-	75 195,930
29	FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC.	143,513.29	35.00	-0.43 ⬇	121 22,965,937
30	HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	26,169.65	3.30	1.21 ⬆	42 1,321,798
31	MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.10	0.36	- ⬇	0 0
32	N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	1,888.92	10.60	-	6 2,444
33	NASCOS ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	34,045.28	12.85	-	19 82,222
34	UNION DICON SALT PLC.	2,446.38	8.95	- ⬇	0 0
FOOD PRODUCTS					268 24,586,297
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
35	CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	33,244.18	17.70	- ⬇	38 212,349
36	NESTLE NIGERIA PLC.	1,109,718.75	1,400.00	- ⬇	34 119,742
FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED					72 332,091
S/N HOUSEHOLD DURABLES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
37	NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC.	1,231.72	16.20	- ⬇	0 0
38	VITAFOAM NIG PLC.	28,143.99	22.50	-	21 86,688
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES					21 86,688
S/N PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
39	P Z CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC.	50,628.01	12.60	- ⬇	38 250,355
40	UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	83,302.58	14.50	-3.01 ⬇	39 563,922
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS					77 814,277
CONSUMER GOODS					
CONSUMER GOODS					671 27,290,971
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N BANKING		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
41	ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	214,689.75	11.70	-1.27 ⬇	59 683,915
42	FIDELITY BANK PLC	99,093.81	3.42	3.64 ⬆	90 2,099,382
43	GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	662,201.53	22.50	-0.22 ⬇	335 6,342,087
44	JAIZ BANK PLC	30,398.23	0.88	-2.22 ⬇	34 1,587,924
45	STERLING BANK PLC.	43,185.63	1.50	- ⬇	28 1,624,798
46	UNION BANK NIG PLC.	186,372.82	6.40	2.40 ⬆	47 1,355,304
47	UNITY BANK PLC	5,727.78	0.49	- ⬇	8 106,221
48	WEMA BANK PLC.	41,789.00	3.25	1.56 ⬆	100 3,595,185
BANKING					701 17,394,816
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
49	AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	- ⬇	3 988,048
50	AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	24,159.48	0.66	-2.94 ⬇	61 4,953,738
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
51	AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	18,630.00	2.07	1.47 ⬆	26 521,181
52	CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INSURANCE PLC	7,172.02	0.67	-1.47 ⬇	16 2,301,787
53	CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	11,263.16	0.62	-	8 225,000
54	CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	10,076.51	0.42	-4.76 ⬇	52 21,604,433
55	GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	-	0 0
56	GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	1,228.00	0.20	-	1 1,000
57	INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	487.95	0.38	-	0 0
58	LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	1,925.27	1.05	-	9 100,883
59	LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	7,560.00	0.54	-	14 44,535
60	MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC.	5,015.41	0.25	-	10 147,476
61	NEM INSURANCE PLC	21,069.21	4.20	-	17 111,839
62	NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,547.90	0.20	-	6 27,778
63	PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	5,301.02	0.40	-	2 19,906
64	REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	1,867.25	0.28	-	4 22,393
65	SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	3,068.41	0.27	-	10 417,730
66	STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,493.72	0.48	-	0 0
67	STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC.	2,582.21	0.20	-	0 0
68	SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC.	1,859.46	0.32	-	2 24,069
69	UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	3,200.00	0.20	-	0 0
70	VERITAS CAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	2,912.00	0.21	-	0 0
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					241 31,509,796
S/N MICRO-FINANCE BANKS		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
71	NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	10,787.28	1.80	- ⬇	8 35,075
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS					8 35,075



MUNA TARO INNOVATIVE EDUCATION EXHIBITION...

L-R: Senior Special Assistant to the President on Humanitarian Interventions and Executive Secretary, North East Children’s Trust (NECT), Dr. Mariam Masha; President/CEO, St. Lawrence College, Kingston-Canada, Mr. Glenn Vollebregt, and Vice Chairman of NECT, Prof. Hauwa Abdu Biu, during the MUNA TARO Innovative Education Showcase and Exhibition held at the TETT Centre for Creativity and Learning, Kingston, Canada... recently.

Soludo Calls Bluff of Catholic Priest’s Insecurity Prophecy, Describes it as 'Drama'

- Anambra police commend indigenes for giving information on criminals
- Governor order repeat of teachers’ online recruitment exam marred by network failure

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Anambra State Governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo has called the bluff of a catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Obimma over the cleric’s prophecy about the governor being attacked at the government house by Fulani Herdsmen.

Obimma, a popular catholic priest in the state had during his homily at his adoration service prophesied that he saw Soludo being attacked and shot at, while he ran with blood all over him.

But in a reply to the priest, which was seen by THISDAY, Soludo described the prophecy as more of drama and theatrics than reality.

The governor in his response while stating that he is a catholic and respects the doctrine of the church, accused the priest of fueling the insecurity in the state, rather than trying to proffer solution to it.

Soludo in a private reply to the priest said: "Good evening father! I just called your two numbers after listening to your so called 'prophetic' outbursts— prophesying about 'Fulani herdsmen' with tribal marks invading government house Awka and having me running out in pool of blood.

"I have been in the public arena for two decades and I appreciate comments and criticisms from the citizens including the men of God. I welcome your comments, advice and even criticisms. Such help us to do better— as we are certainly not perfect!

"You have my contact and assuming that anything was 'revealed' to you as a threat to my life, do you really believe that the best way to communicate it is on your pulpit? By the way, God didn't 'reveal' to you the attack by unknown gun men on me last year at a rally, killing three policemen; nor has he 'revealed' to you any of the dozens of the attacks on innocent people this year so that the people may take caution or pray?

"Funny enough these 'pulpit prophecies' are always about high

public officials. I have lived my life to this age without needing or relying on 'prophecies,' and it is too late now to change.

"My prayer is simply: 'Let your will be done.' So please, if you have further 'revelations' just pray about them or keep them to yourself—I don't want to know because the God in heaven that I serve is totally in charge of my life!"

Soludo further said: "Father, I expect you to be part of the solution and not part of the problem. We admire you and the thousands of your followers deserve leadership and direction. Matters of security should not be part of the drama!"

"We expect you to encourage your supporters to report criminals and to be part of the solution. Or, if you don't know the full ramifications of the security challenge, to call or request to be briefed."

In a related development, Anambra State Police command has commended indigenes of the state for coming out with information on criminals in their localities.

The state police command, stated this through its spokesperson, DSP Tochukwu Ikenga that information by indigenes helped the police to burst many criminal syndicates in the last one weeks and also taken out many criminal elements.

Ikenga during a chat with THISDAY said: "You know that last week when you people came for a press conference, the CP (Echeng Echeng) had complained about the reluctance of most communities to come out with information on criminals, who have been code named unknown gunmen."

"The CP had complained that there seemed to be a conspiracy of silence among most indigenes, but I can tell you that after those reports, many indigenes have now started volunteering information to us."

"Within one week, we have gotten information that we never knew existed. We have also heard a lot of stories from people, and we have used that information to burst many criminal syndicates."

Ikenga thanked the media for

the role it was playing, saying a lot of criminal suspects had been arrested, including native doctors who fortify the criminals.

He promised that soon, more stories of the arrest of criminals would be made available to the media as suspects were still being interrogated.

Speaking on the recent arrest of a native doctor, Ikenga said the suspect has made a lot of useful information, and would be paraded soon, with many others.

He expressed optimism that soon, the reign of criminality in the state would be over, while calling on more indigenes to come up with information, including of the camping of criminals in any

part of the state.

Meanwhile, Soludo has ordered the repeat of an online teachers' recruitment examination which was last week marred by network failure.

About 31,000 candidates had applied to sit for the online recruitment examination last week, but most had complained that the system broke down even before they could log in for the examination as a result of network failure.

But in statement yesterday, Soludo announced the cancellation of the examination and ordered a repeat of the exercise to accommodate all.

In the statement signed on his behalf by his Chief Press Secretary,

Christian Aburime, Soludo said: "In line with his objective of ensuring transparency and fairness to all, Anambra State Governor, Prof. Charles Chukwuma Soludo has directed a repeat of the online recruitment exam for Teachers in Anambra State.

"Governor Soludo has therefore, graciously directed the Hon. Commissioner for Education, Prof. Ngozi Chuma-Udeh to conduct a repeat of the exercise to make up for the shortfall in the Saturday 4th of June preliminary Teacher's Recruitment Examination.

"He has further directed that all expenses for the test be covered by the Government."

Aburime said against the

proposed 5,000 qualified applicants to be shortlisted for CBT exam, the governor had directed that all the over 31,000 listed applicants should be given equal chance to participate in a preliminary online exam, before shortlisting the successful applicants for 2nd CBT exam.

He said the mix-up arose from the online examinations website that crashed. He stated that it was not intended as many had insinuated.

"It is in a bid to make up and ensure that all eligible candidates are carried along, that the governor has approved a repeat of the exercise."

"He assures Ndi-Anambra that their interest will be protected at all time by his administration," the statement added.

World Environment Day: Diri Calls for Collective Efforts to Protect the Environment

Olusegun Samuel in Yenagoa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri has stressed the need for concerted efforts in implementing policies and programmes aimed at protecting the environment to promote healthy living in the country.

Speaking during the 2022 World Environment Day which was marked yesterday, with the theme: "Only One Earth" in Yenagoa, Diri noted that poverty reduction and environment protection were intertwined and therefore must be taken seriously.

The governor, who was represented by his deputy, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, decried practices abusing the environment such as tree cutting, indiscriminate burning of bushes, the unhealthy use of chemicals for edibles and illegal refining of petroleum products.

He called on all inhabitants of the earth to behave responsibly in their interactions with the environment, while assuring that

the government would continue to support all efforts targeted at protecting the environment.

The Bayelsa Chief Executive insisted that if the efforts of government towards the protection of the environment were sustained, significant progress would be made in the interest of the entire state.

The state helmsman directed the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Lands and Housing to allocate land for the commencement of the Bayelsa Central Nursery and the establishment of a world class eco-laboratory.

"The Commissioner for Environment had highlighted positive signals and trends that I am confident if sustained and strengthened over time, would offer Bayelsa State the opportunity to advance the narrative for a more sustainable future for us all."

"Within the limits of available resources, the government of prosperity continues to fully support the Bayelsa State Ministry of environment and sister agencies and is resolved to have them

equipped to adequately deliver on their mandate to monitor and protect the environment.

"We must be conscious of the need to protect the environment, we have only one earth. All of us must put environment issues on the front burner. I call on all and sundry to behave responsibly in their interactions with the environment. Government will continue to play its role to make the environment safe," he added.

In his welcome address, Commissioner for Environment, Chief Iselema Gbaranbiri, stated that government was conscious of the need to protect the environment, hence the deployment of a new legal regime and policy framework which shall be unveiled in no distant time.

He expressed appreciation to Diri for supporting the ministry to achieve set goals and assured that they would not rest on their oars but put in more efforts to ensure that the environment is reasonably safe.

While commending local

and international firms for their efforts to be socially responsible to their host areas, he called for increased collaboration among the companies, the communities and the state government.

Delivering a lecture at the event, the Dean, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, Niger Delta University, Prof. Meeting Andaowei, advocated the enforcement of laws protecting the environment and encouragement of environmental education in schools.

Andaowei also identified the formation of environmental action groups and disruption of the value chain of illegally refined products as some of the solutions to the environmental challenges facing the state.

The Chairman, State House of Assembly Committee on Environment, Hon. Ebi Ben Ololo, an environmentalist, Chief Okolo Ogobiriowei, among other speakers, stressed the need for conscious efforts such as tree planting to replenish the polluted environment.



LAUNCH OF GREENBOND FINANCE...

L-R: Managing Director/CEO, Greenbond Finance Company Limited, Niya Adeseun; Mrs. Ngozi Ohakim, of Paralex Bank; Managing Director/CEO, Page Finance Company Limited, Mr Segun Akintemi; and Mrs Foluwakemi Abodunrin, of Paralex Bank, at the launch of Greenbond Finance Company Limited in Lagos...on Friday.

Primaries: IG Raises Electoral Offences Desks Nationwide

●To probe, charge electoral offenders ●Orders arrest of senatorial aspirant, apprehends 24 political thugs

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Inspector-General of Police, Mr Usman Baba, yesterday, approved the establishment of electoral offences desk at the Force Criminal Investigations Department (FCID),

and the 36 police commands to investigate and charge offenders in cases emanating from pre-election matters, notably, primaries, conventions and screening of aspirants and candidates in line with the amended Electoral Act 2022.

The desks are to be headed by a Commissioner of Police (CP) and Assistant Commissioners of Police (ACPs) in the state commands. A statement by Force Headquarters said, "The mandate of the electoral offences desk officers

includes the collation and investigation of all electoral offences/complaints from members of the public or any quarters with a view to determining culpability in line with the amended Electoral Act 2022, and proffering charges before

courts of competent jurisdiction for necessary legal action."

The IG directed the officers in charge of the desks to "commence its activities immediately with some isolated cases recorded during the pre-election activities such as screening, conventions, primaries."

The police high command stated that in line with the mandate, operatives of the Nigeria Police Force attached to the Keffi Area Command of the Nasarawa State Command, acting on credible and actionable intelligence, arrested 24 suspected political thugs at Minki Suites, along Keffi-Akwanga Road.

The thugs suspected to be loyal to an aspirant at the Nasarawa West Senatorial primaries came into the hotel in a convoy of seven private vehicles.

Items recovered from the arrested suspects included eight pump action guns, two locally made revolver guns, 37 rounds

of live cartridges, four bulletproof vests, 27 mobile phones, two pairs of vigilante uniforms, five cutlasses, ten assorted knives, charms and other incriminating objects.

The statement said preliminary investigations revealed that the suspects, who were thugs for hire, carried out their heinous acts under the guise of being members of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN).

Consequently, the IG ordered the immediate transfer of the case to the Electoral Offences Desk at the Force Criminal Investigation Department (FCID) and the immediate arrest of the concerned aspirant for necessary investigative actions.

The IG reiterated the commitment of the force to stamping out threats to peaceful and credible elections at all levels even as he vowed to deal decisively with anyone caught engaging in political thuggery.

90 APC Delegates Ask Court to Nullify Akoko South-west/South-east House of Reps Primary

Fidelis David in Akure

Ninety ad-hoc delegates of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the party's House of Representatives primary in Akoko South-west/South-east federal constituency of Ondo State have dragged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the party and its candidate for the constituency, Mr. Adegboyega Adefarati to a Federal High Court sitting in Akure seeking the nullification of the primary election result.

Adegboyega is the son of late Adebayo Adefarati who was governor of Ondo state between 1999 and 2003.

The Chairman of the State Electoral panel, Dr. Kingsley Nwankwere, had on May 27, 2022, announced the results of the primary saying out of the 113 delegates, Adefarati polled 96 votes while his closest rival, the Vice-Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on National Security, Ade Adeogun and Victor Ategbale, got six votes each.

He added that Adeyeri Stephen scored three votes, John Adanike polled one vote while there were two invalid votes out of the 113 votes cast.

In a suit filed by the lawyer to the plaintiffs, A.S Subair of Femi Emmanuel Emodamori & Co., the delegates claimed that the APC did not conduct the primary that produced Adefarati as the candidate within the constituency, adding that the lawful delegates were disenfranchised as the venue of the primary was allegedly

moved to Akure. Continuing, the case file showed that APC was the first defendant, Adegboyega, the second defendant while INEC was sued as the third defendant.

However, the plaintiffs in the case are: Agbede Femi, Oripelaye Akeem, Anjorin Emmanuel, Olowo Michael, Ogedengbe Kayode Rufus, Ayoko Bola Olajumoke, Lawal Rasaki, Tunde Aruwajoye, Olorunda Seyi Emmanuel, Ilenusi Olamide, Oladipo Daniel, Mrs. M.B. Ojomo and 78 other local government delegates of the APC in the federal constituency excluded from the primary election held at Alagbaka, Akure on May 27, 2022.

In the suit, the delegates also sought, "An order of injunction restraining the third defendant from recognising and/or including the name of the second defendant as the first defendant's candidate for Akoko South-east/South-west federal constituency of the House of Representatives in the 2023 general election based on the result of the first defendant's Primary Election for the said Constituency held at the International Cultural Events Center (the Dome) in Alagbaka, Akure, on 27th May, 2022.

"An order compelling the 1st defendant to conduct a fresh primary election to elect her candidate for Akoko South-east/South-west federal constituency at a venue within the said Federal Constituency as envisaged by Section 84(5)(c)(i) of the Electoral Act, 2022 within 14 days from the judgment of this Honourable Court. "An order mandating the 1st

defendant to use only the list of her local government delegates in Akoko South-east/South-west federal constituency duly recognised/certified by the 3rd defendant, containing the names of the plaintiffs and other lawful delegates, to conduct the fresh primary election to elect her candidate for Akoko South-east/South-west federal constituency of the House of Representatives".

Judge Detains Six Judiciary Reporters for Covering Proceedings

●Directs orderly to delete pictures from journalists phone

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Justice Chizoba Orji of a High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), yesterday, detained six journalists for over two hours for covering court proceedings in her court without first getting her permission to do so.

Accordingly, she ordered her police orderly to seize and delete pictures and videos in a phone belonging to a Judiciary Correspondent attached to the Africa Independent Television (AIT), Ms. Wumi Obabori.

After the directive was carried out, Justice Orji subsequently ordered all journalists inside her court to leave, adding that they could only cover proceedings in her court after obtaining her permission.

The affected journalists which included Mr. Godwin Tsa of the Sun Newspaper, Ikechukwu Nnochiri of Vanguard Newspaper,

Austin Okezie of Raypower Fm, Kunle Olanmi of Leadership Newspaper and a veteran journalist, Mr. Charles Ozoemena, had been accredited to cover court proceedings in the FCT and were members of the Abuja chapter of the National Association of Judiciary Correspondent (NAJUC).

As tradition, court journalists takes pictures and videos of the courtroom when the judge is not sitting.

However, trouble started after the judge stood down a matter and entered her chambers to prepare a ruling.

Immediately the court proceeding was suspended, the reporter from AIT attempted to record videos for her story, when a female Registrar of the court pounced on her, insisting that journalists have no right to cover the court.

Frantic effort by the reporter to explain to the Registrar that

journalists could take "cut-aways" (visuals) and pictures once the court was not in session, yielded no result, as the court official immediately summoned a police officer attached to the judge to arrest the reporter.

The policeman, Mr. Gusar Dauda, who claimed that he had the authority of the judge, swiftly locked the main gate to the courtroom, pulled his gun and ordered all the journalists to surrender their phones.

Despite the intervention of lawyers and litigants, the police officer and court officials stood their ground that no journalist would leave the courtroom without complying with the order.

After a scuffle that lasted over one hour, Justice Orji re-entered the courtroom and summoned the AIT reporter to step forward.

"Why were you taking pictures and videos in my court? Who gave you the permission to do

that?", she fumed.

"My lord, I am an accredited judiciary reporter. It is a normal practice for us to take pictures and videos when the court is not sitting, even up to the Supreme Court," Wumi of AIT responded.

"You don't have such right! If there is such permission, it must be in writing. Who gave you the permission? Show me the authorisation?", Justice Orji added.

At that juncture, other journalists in the courtroom stood up and took turns to identify themselves.

"I don't want to hear from any of you. Now, where is the device you used to take the pictures and videos?", Justice Orji queried the AIT reporter.

She, thereafter, ordered her orderly to delete all the pictures and videos in the phone, after which she told the court official to unlock the gate and walk all the journalists out of the courtroom.

APC SPECIAL CONVENTION



AT THE CONVENTION GROUND...

L-R: President Muhammadu Buhari, First Lady, Ashia Buhari, and the National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Senator Abdullahi Adamu, at the APC Special Convention to elect the Party's Presidential Candidate, at the Eagle Square, Abuja...yesterday

AT APC CONVENTION, THISDAY PROJECTS TINUBU WINNER

ambitions for the larger interest of the party."

Adamu, however, noted that the healing process in the ruling party had commenced, adding that, "things are not falling apart; things are holding up and I am grateful to you all for standing by me and members of the National Working Committee in seeing that we carry out the first order of business in our party and that is the total reconciliation of all the state branches of the APC that were held hostage by avoidable grievances."

"We have nothing to gain in portraying our party in a bad light. We have everything to lose in undermining the integrity of our great party. I found it necessary to make these observations."

Adamu said it was a clear indication that the ruling party had emerged stronger from the grievances, noting that the party was united and speaking with one voice once.

According to him, "At the end of the current exercise, we shall begin a steady march towards the 2023 elections, going by our resolute, commitment to win and win big in all levels of elective offices up for contest."

In his speech, Tinubu, who THISDAY has projected to emerge the APC candidate, said the candidate of the party must be able to unite Nigerians from all parts of the country and must have the experience, leadership, knowledge, and extensive personal contacts to steer a diverse, complicated Nigeria through this challenging period in a dynamic world.

"The other candidates are all good men. But I sincerely believe I am the person this moment calls for."

"I cannot, on this day, talk of a bright and prosperous future without also declaring my determination to fight terrorism and insecurity to the very end. I mourn the lives already lost and vow to do everything possible to ensure justice and forever erase terror from our land."

"Today, you decide our presidential nominee. Let it be the man, who can best articulate a vision of progress and development then implement it. Let us always honour the promise the APC made to Nigeria," he said.

Osinbajo, in his speech, said the future of the country and the children should compel the delegates to vote right, adding that they could not wish the country well and vote for someone they do not believe in.

He said, "2322 delegates will decide the future of our children and their own children. The future of our children compels all our distinguished delegates to vote right tonight."

"You cannot wish this country well and vote for someone you do not believe in. To our dear delegates, when you vote tonight, know that your votes tonight carry the answer for the future of our children and for our country."

The vice president said the present

situation in the country did not need a leader that would learn on the job, adding that it was the main reason he was the best man to take over from the president in 2023.

"One thing is certain, the circumstances of the country will not allow the next leader to learn on the job. For the past seven years, I have learnt on the job. I will be prepared from day one," he added.

Immediate past Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, also called on the delegates to ask all the presidential aspirants the sources of their money, adding that, if elected, he would develop the country's economy.

Amaechi said: "Dear delegates, assess us by our contributions. Do not assess us by how much we bring here, because if you assess us by how much we bring here, ask all of us what is our source of revenue? How did we get all these funds?"

"The problem of the Nigerian state is all of us. Nigerian politicians will come and talk to you, bring out money and we accept them. Four years after, they will come back and still make the same promises. Do not vote for me if I lie to you. Do not vote for me if I have not performed but I have performed."

"There is need to move forward, to ask Nigerians to hire me and fire me if I fail. If you vote for me, the first thing is that we must develop our economy, bringing it back to industrialisation and production. We will rebuild our universities to be places of learning. There will be rule of law. People will be punished for their crimes."

Governor of Kogi state, Yahaya Bello, said he was in the race to win, adding, "I didn't come this far to chicken out," boasting that at the end of the contest, he would emerge victorious.

Pastor Tunde Bakare said his aspiration to be the president of Nigeria wasn't about him, but about the people of Nigeria.

He added: "It is about your people, it is about my people, the Nigerian people, who will once again have a reason to believe that they have a stake in their nation when our presidential commission for National Reconciliation, Reintegration and Rebirth restores lasting peace to Nigeria."

"The time is now and the hour has come. Tonight, I am not here to step down. By the grace of God, I am here to step up with the support of the delegates as the 16th president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Dear delegates, as we converge in our nation's capital to collectively take a historic step towards the realisation of a nation that works."

Meanwhile, the youngest presidential aspirant, Nicolas Felix, also a pastor, stepped down for Osinbajo.

But voting was still ongoing at the time of going to press, while only three states had voted, before the planning committee halted the process on account of some

challenges.

EFCC: Why We Stormed APC Convention

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), yesterday, explained why operatives of the commission stormed Eagle Square, venue of the presidential primaries of the All Progressives Congress (APC).

Allegations of financial inducement of delegates made the rounds at the primaries.

Some sources claimed that there was inducement of delegates to the tune of \$25,000, \$30,000 and \$40,000 in some cases, which exchanged hands at the venue of the election.

Spokesman of the EFCC, Mr Wilson Uwujaren, in a chat with THISDAY, said the operatives of the commission were at the Eagle Square to monitor the primaries.

"Is it not obvious? It is obvious. We are there to monitor proceedings," he said.

The agency had carried out a similar operation during the primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), which was won by former Vice President Atiku Abubakar.

But in spite of the hoopla over financial inducement at the PDP primaries, no arrest was made.

Bello: Playing By Rules Only Way to Win Presidency

Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State, has declared that the only way the ruling APC could win the presidency again in 2023 was if it played by the rules of the game.

He said any attempt to exclude some aspirants from participating in the electoral process or skew the process to favour some persons or groups against others would spell doom for the party.

Speaking Tuesday with newsmen after meeting behind closed-doors with President Muhammadu Buhari, at the State House, Abuja, Bello, a presidential aspirant of the APC, alleged that governors of the party from the North and some elite conspired against him to muscle him out of the contest.

Asked if he was sure that the ruling party would win the presidency in 2023, the governor said, "I'm very optimistic that APC will return to power, if we play by the rules of the game."

On what he meant by playing by the rules of the game, he said, "Follow all the laws, non-exclusion of anybody, who wants to participate and carrying everybody along and ensuring that there's fairness, equity and justice."

He reiterated his opposition to the rotational presidency, saying it doesn't give room for the emergence of a competent person to pilot the affairs of the country.

On what was the agenda of his meeting with the President, the governor said, "Of course, you know that today (yesterday)

is the special national convention of our party, where a presidential candidate from the All Progressives Congress will emerge. Leading up to today, there have been various controversies and issues before today."

"Yesterday (Monday), a certain video went viral, that I got angry and I left a particular meeting and then, of course, this is a period, when a lot of lies, a lot of misconceptions, will fill the air. Then, we have our father, the leader of our party, who should always know the reality or the truth, and then I came to brief him exactly what happened."

"Well, some of my colleagues, led by the self-proclaimed leader of them, ganged up to suppress the voice of the people, the voice of over 26 million Nigerians, the voice of the women, the voice of people living with special needs, the voice of the choice of the party. So, that's exactly what I revolted against. I decided to leave the meeting where such concoction were ongoing. That's exactly what took place."

Asked to mention the name of governor that he was talking about, he said, "I wouldn't mention a name because I am honorable enough. The office I occupy today is an office that should be dignified. Myself, I have respect for leaders, for elders, even if some elders do not respect themselves, I have high respect for those in positions of authority. So, I wouldn't mention names."

On why he was not on the same page with Northern APC governors after several attempts made by the governors as revealed by the Kaduna State Governor, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai, to make him consider his colleagues' position of conceding the presidency to south, he said he was not consulted by anyone.

"I am a unifier, I have demon-

strated that severally in my state. I have demonstrated that severally in the various tasks that were given me by the party. So, nobody consulted me. Nobody consulted me over the decision that they took and I will rather say that they were railroaded by certain interest who want to be VP at all costs."

"The issue of turn-by-turn presidency, I continue to oppose it because the insecurity that is facing us today does not respect turn-by-turn presidency, every part of this country is faced with insecurity. Every part of this country is wanting prosperity and the seeming or the disunity that we experiencing today in Nigeria, we want unity in this country and that is exactly what I stand for."

Only Tinubu Can Defeat Atiku, Says Group

A pro-Bola Tinubu group, The Consolidation Ambassadors (TCA), has said the former Lagos State governor, was the only one that could defeat the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) presidential candidate, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, in the 2023 presidential election.

The group, in a statement titled: "Our Stand" and signed by Dr. Adelanke Peter, said for Nigeria to consolidate on the achievements of President Muhammadu Buhari, a bold, frank, independent, transparent, intelligent, smart-thinker like Tinubu was needed.

Peter said, "Although the TCA is not biased towards any presidential aspirant contesting to be the presidential flag bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC). We, however, owe it to the party and party members to guide them in terms of direction ahead of the National Convention."

"The Consolidation Ambassadors (TCA) with its firm foundation within 36 States of the Federation and FCT, emerged as worthy Ambassadors of the APC who recognised and appreciated the progress made by the President Buhari led administration."

"Especially in the areas of infrastructure, human capital development, agriculture, anti-corruption, digital economic transformation and all inclusive governance. The group said it resolved to identify and unify all political structures and supporters of the aspirants that contested elective posts under the umbrella of the APC."

"Particularly the 23 presidential aspirants by providing the necessary support to the flag bearers after the primaries. 'It is for this reason, after due consultations and considerations, that we suggest that the party should field a candidate that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder, eye-ball-to-eye-ball, kobo-for-kobo, tactics-for-tactics.'"

Death at APC Convention

The All Progressives Congress delegate from Buji Local Government Area (LGA) of Jigawa State, Alhaji Isa Baba Buji, has died. He was aged 61. The delegate, who was present to participate in his party's presidential primaries died yesterday afternoon in Abuja. It wasn't, however, certain what actually killed Buji. Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo, has expressed sadness over the sudden death of the delegate, describing it as saddening.

Osinbajo, in a statement by his media Aide, Laolu Akande, condoled with the family, associates, government and people of Jigawa State and prayed for the repose of the soul of the delegate.



Tinubu acknowledging cheers from his supporters after delivering his speech at the convention

IMAGES AT THE APC CONVENTION



Former Zamfara State Governor, and APC presidential aspirant, Senator Ahmed Yerima (middle)



Borno State Governor Babagana Zulum and his Zamfara State counterpart Mohammed Matawale at the convention



Kogi State Governor, and APC presidential aspirant, Yahaya Bello



APC National Chairman and other NWC members at the convention



L-R: Vice President Yemi Osinbajo with Senate President Ahmad Lawan



APC frontline presidential aspirant Bola Ahmed Tinubu and former EFCC Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu



Lagos State Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu at the convention



Ebonyi State Governor and a presidential aspirant, Mr. Dave Umahi



Presidential aspirant and former Minister of Transport, Hon. Rotimi Amaechi and Kaduna State APC Chairman, Air Commodore Jekada Emmanuel (rtd)



L-R Former APC chairman, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole and APC presidential aspirant Pastor Tunde Bakare and wife

NEWS



COURTESY VISIT...

Executive Secretary, International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO), Michel Arrion (left) discussing with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Adeniyi Adebayo, during a visit to the office of the Minister in Abuja...yesterday

Labour Party Faction Holds Primaries, Picks Presidential Candidate Today

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

The crises rocking the Labour Party deepened yesterday as its factional Deputy National Chairman, Calistus Okafor, said his group had successfully concluded the National and Houses of Assembly primaries on Monday.

Okafor, who disclosed this while addressing journalists in Abuja, yesterday, also said necessary plans had been perfected by his faction to hold the presidential primary today, where the presidential candidate for the faction would be elected. He said the lists of the candidates that had emerged so far would

be submitted to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on or before Friday. Peter Obi recently emerged as the presidential candidate of the party. However, Okafor, said his position and actions were based on the need to ensure justice, fairness

and equity, stressing that he had nothing against the person of Obi, a former governor of Anambra State. Okafor, who insisted that he remained the acting National Chairman of the LP following the sack of its late chairman, Abdulkadir Abdulsalam, also clari-

fied that there was no agreement yet between him and a former presidential spokesperson, Dr. Doyin Olupe. He said no meaningful discussion had taken place between him and Olupe, who is now the campaign manager for Obi. Okafor said: "On Doyin Olupe, it is unfortunate that people take someone else for granted. I wonder why people want to use others for their selfish interest."

me for granted. The leadership of the other faction is going about that I'm looking for recognition. It is an insult to me as a person. "They should know that their leader is an acting National Secretary while, I Calistus Uju Okafor is the acting National Chairman. The court will soon remove them. I am very open to any discussion for the right thing to be done."

2023: PDP Issues Certificate of Returns to Adebutu, Mohammed, Uba, Lamido, Others

- Withholds Ebonyi, Kano certificates due to legal issues
- Ayu charges candidate to work hard, carry all along

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), yesterday, resolved the governorship crisis in Ogun State, when it gave the certificate of return of the governorship primary election to Oladipupo Adebutu. Former spokesperson of former vice president in the 2019 presidential election, Segun Sowunmi, had claimed victory at the end of the governorship primaries in state.

With the resolution of the crisis, Adebutu was among those handed over the certificate of return as the PDP gubernatorial candidate. In a brief remark after collecting the certificate of return, Adebutu said, "It is now a duty for all concerned to go forward and do reconciliation and I can assure you that we have already embarked on that duty. We will continue to reach out to those that feel that they have a grouse."

"I'm sure that with time, we shall have total reconciliation and we shall even extend hands of fellowship beyond the party and make it an intra party thing, because we can even see fellow brothers from other parties trying to join our party now and I am sure that after their convention, we shall be welcoming them," he stressed. Others that were issued certificate of return by the PDP include the former chairman of the PDP in Jigawa State, Col. Agbo Kefas, David Ombugabu from Nasarawa State, was issued certificate of return as the party candidates.

that contested against them. According to Ayu, "Everybody, who contested with you is also chosen, you must carry every member of the aspirants community along, because they contributed in mobilising and growing our party." Ayu said yesterday's exercise was "partly a recognition of your hard work. Many of you have contributed enormously to the growth and development of this party and I want to thank you for your loyalty to the party. I want to congratulate you for this achievement."

Appeal Court Quashes Madumere's N1.9b Garnishee Judgment

- Orders Zenith Bank to pay Imo workers

Justice Rita Pemu of the Court of Appeal in Owerri, Imo State, has quashed the N1.9billion garnishee judgement instituted by a former deputy governor of the state, Eze Madumere for which Zenith Bank suspended payment of salaries of workers. Consequently, the Court, yesterday, ordered Zenith Bank to immediately commence payment of salaries of the workers as well as other government financial obligations that the said garnishee judgement could have affected until the matter before it is dispensed with. The Court further granted the relief sought by the Imo State government to enable it file its appeal against a judgement of National Industrial Court in

Owerri, which ordered the state government to pay N1.9 billion to Madumere, an amount the former deputy governor claimed was his benefits while in office. After listening to the submissions by counsel to the Imo State government, I.I Nwachukwu and counsel to Madumere, L.M Njemanze, Justice Pemu granted the two reliefs sought by the Imo State government. The two reliefs were stay of execution, which ordered the unsealing of Zenith bank branches in Owerri and the right for the Imo State government to appeal the absolute garnishee order in favour of Madumere. Justice Pemu thereafter adjourned the case to June 30, 2022.

Also, yesterday, the party issued certificates to its returning governors as governorship standard bearers in the general election for next year general election. Those issued with the gubernatorial certificate of return included the Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde, Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State and Ahmed Fintiri of Adamawa State. The son of the former governor of Jigawa State, Mustapha Sule Lamido, was issued the governorship certificate for Jigawa State. But the party withheld the certificates of return for Kano State and Ebonyi States candidates, due to some unresolved legal issues as a result of factional crisis in the two states. Speaking after issuing the certificates to 26 governorship candidates, National Chairman of the PDP, Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, charged them to carry everyone

"But remember, many are called but few are chosen. A few of you have been chosen to be our flag bearer in the forth coming elections. I want to sincerely thank you for the work you put in. And we hope you will continue to hard work, because this is just the first step. "We believe that the PDP will go back to his winning ways. When we started in 1999, we were able to produce 21 governors, we grew that number in 2003 to 28 and sustained it at 28 up to 2007. "Unfortunately, we came through hard times and the number declined. Today, we have only 13 governors, for a political party of this nature. That is not good enough. "All of you must, therefore, work very hard to reconcile with whoever opposed you, work with everybody carry everybody along, so that at the end of the day by next year, we should be able to come back to at least 25 governors," he stated.

Democracy Day: Edo Organises Writing Contest for Students

The Edo State Government is organizing a creative writing contest for private and public schools across the state to mark this year's Democracy Day. The competition is organized by the Edo State Ministry of Communication and Orientation in collaboration with the Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (Edo-SUBEB). With the topic, 'Democracy and the Nigerian Child,' the essay competition is organized to harness the creative writing skills of students in the state. The contest is open to pupils in the senior primary (primary four to six) and junior secondary classes (JSS one to three) in all public and private schools in Edo. The essay competition is expected to take place across the 18 local government areas of the state, with the award ceremony scheduled for

Monday, June 13, 2022. A statement signed by the Director of Orientation and Chairman of the contest's organizing committee, Mrs. Rose Imonike, revealed that the grand finale/ awards ceremony will take place by 10:00 am prompt at the Sir Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, in Benin City. Imonike urged interested schools to fill out the form with the link <https://forms.gle/oDnpvtFju5R-j6TRV8> or scan the QR code to register the number of pupils and students attending the grand finale/ awards ceremony. She reassured that the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led government will sustain reforms in the education sector aimed at tackling learning poverty, ensuring that every Edo child is equipped with the right skills and knowledge to compete with their peers from across the globe.

NEWS

Agwai: Influx of Illicit Arms Encouraging Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea

Former Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Martin Luther Agwai(rtd), has said the influx of small arms and light weapons has heightened piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

“Piracy has become increasingly sophisticated with the influx of small arms and light weapons in the hands of pirates and criminals on waterways and high on seas,” he said yesterday in Abuja.

Agwai was speaking at the launch of a Counter Piracy and Response project in the Gulf of Guinea.

The launch was organised by the Martin Luther Agwai International Leadership and Peacekeeping Centre (MLAILPKC) in collaboration with the UNDP.

Agwai, who is the Chairman, Board of Trustee of MLAILPKC, noted that the maritime domain had remained a critical route for human interactions and trade and brought about human interconnectivity and relationships between nations.

According to him, in contemporary times, sea interactions have brought about

global economic prosperity and increased the relationship between nations and cultures.

“The maritime domain

accounts for the movement of most global goods and services through different sea passages like the China Sea, the Strait of

Singapore, the Gulf of Mexico, Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Guinea amongst others.

“Some of these sea passages

have, however, continued to experience hijacks, kidnappings, robbery and piracy,” he said.

Agwai said also that reported

cases of piracy and other maritime crimes in the Gulf of Guinea had continued to threaten the ease of moving goods and services.



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ACTION...

L-R: Chief Medical Director, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), Prof Henry Ugboma; Vice-Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt, Prof Owunari Georgewill; Director, Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Coca-Cola Nigeria, Nwamaka Onyemelukwe; Director, Biomedical and Engineering Services, Medshare International, Eben Armstrong, and Senior Social Impact Strategy Manager, Coca-Cola Africa, Uche Ogbonna, at the medical equipment donation ceremony by Coca-Cola to the UPTH in Port Harcourt, Rivers State ... yesterday

One Killed as Three-storey Building Collapses in Kano

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

One person died while another was injured when a three-storey building collapsed in the popular Kantin Kwari Textiles Market in Kano State.

The incident, according to eyewitnesses, occurred yesterday around 12:30p.m. at Unity Road, an ever-busy street in the market.

An eyewitness, Mr. Rabi'u Yahaya, said that the building, which was under construction, suddenly collapsed while traders and customers were busy trading.

“I was pushing my cart

with some loads in it when I heard a thunderous sound with thick dust renting the air. I was a bit far from the place, but I saw when the building was collapsing,” he said.

The eyewitnesses said they did not know the cause of the collapse, but the building was under construction.

They added that two floors in the building had been completed while the third floor was under construction.

The Spokesman of the Kano State Fire Service, Mr. Saminu Yusuf Abdullahi, has confirmed the incident.

Bamire Takes over as OAU Vice-Chancellor

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife (OAU), yesterday inaugurated the 12th Substantive Vice-Chancellor of the Institution Professor Adebayo Simeon Bamire.

Bamire in his acceptance speech, decried the inadequate funding of the universities in the country and pledged to build an all-round management team for the development of the university.

The new vice-chancellor commended his co-contestants for their spirit of sportsmanship

and enjoined them to work amicably with him in his five years tenure in an effort to bring development to the citadel of learning.

He also promised to improve the quality of education and research activities in order to bring in the needed development in the institution.

According to him, “I will sustain existing developmental efforts of the immediate past Vice-Chancellor, Professor Eytayo Ogunbodede, by partnering with relevant stakeholders for further infrastructural development in the institution.

Edo NSCDC Arrests 63-year-old for Allegedly Defiling Minor

The Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Edo has arrested a 63-year-old man for allegedly defiling a minor in Benin.

The state Commandant of the corps, Mr. Samuel Dan, said this yesterday while briefing newsmen in Benin.

Dan said the suspect was alleged to have defiled the minor, aged 12, through both vaginal and anal penetration on several occasions before he was eventually caught.

He also disclosed that the victim had been infected with an undisclosed Sexually Transmitted disease and presently receiving

treatment at a health facility in the area.

Dan said that investigation into the matter was ongoing.

According to him, the suspect will be arraigned at the end of the investigation.

In a similar vein, the commandant said that the command carried out a raid on Borehole area of Ekpoma, where two members of a three-member robbery gang were arrested.

He said that the gang specialised in dispossessing the residents of their motorcycles.

Court Nullifies Ebonyi PDP Primaries

Benjamin Nworie in Abakaliki

A Federal High Court in Abakaliki, the Ebonyi State capital, has nullified the rescheduled primaries of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) held in the state on June 4 and 5, 2022.

The court, presided by Justice Fatun Rimam, upheld the primary of May 28 and 29, 2022, which was cancelled by the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party.

The court also restrained the party from refusing to receive and transmit the name

of Mr. Ifeanyi Odii, who won the cancelled governorship primaries, to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) as the candidate of the party for state governorship election.

Senator Obinna Ogba won the rescheduled election, which the court declared null and void, and illegal.

The party had been enmeshed in leadership tussle since the state executive election last year, which Mr. Tochukwu Okorie was declared the winner.

Mr. Silas Onu, who lost to

Okorie, challenged the outcome in court, and in April 2022, the Federal High Court in Abuja sacked Okorie and ordered that Onu be sworn in.

But Tochukwu appealed the ruling in court and the appellate court ordered that the status quo existing before the high court ruling be maintained, which effectively ousted Onu.

But Onu continued to lay claim to the chairmanship of the party, and even went ahead to conduct the primaries of May 28 and 29.

The national leadership of

the party, midway into the governorship primary election on May 29, announced the cancellation of the primary elections for the state.

But the primaries went ahead, and Ifeanyi Odii emerged the winner even though most of the aspirants boycotted or withdrew from the election.

The party later fixed another primary for June 4 and 5, 2022, in which fresh candidates emerged, including Senator Ogba, who emerged winner of the reschedule governorship election.

Ex-Abia Chief of Staff Emerges APP Guber Candidate

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

Former Chief of Staff in the last administration in Abia State, Mr. Mascot Uzor Kalu, has emerged as the governorship candidate of the Action Peoples Party (APP) for the 2023 general election.

He was elected through voice affirmation votes at the party's primaries held yesterday at Umuahia, after his only challenger, Hon Ndem Chukwu stepped down.

Kalu, who is a younger brother of the Senate Chief Whip, Senator

Orji Uzor Kalu, served as CoS to Senator Theodore Orji for most part of the administration when he was Abia governor.

The party also nominated its candidates for the three senatorial districts, eight federal constituencies and the 24 state constituency seats, charging them to go and bring victory to the party and the people of Abia.

In his acceptance speech, the governorship candidate declared that the two-month old APP was poised to bring “a big change to Abia”, noting that Abians have been yearning for good

governance since 2015.

Mascot, who was the standard-bearer of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the Aba federal constituency by-election last year, said that APP is a party whose time has come. He vowed that the new party would crush the older parties and send the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) packing out of Abia government house.

According to him, the APP is looking forward to a good outing in Abia, adding that it has already demonstrated its strength by fielding candidates

in all elective positions that would be contested in the state next year.

The Abia APP gubernatorial standard-bearer lamented the deteriorating state of affairs in Abia, saying that workers have been subjected to untold sufferings due to non-payment of salaries while pensioners continue to gnash their teeth.

He assured Abia workers and retirees that salaries and pensions would be paid on the 26th day of every one if APP takes over the government in 2023.

Peter Obi 'll Bring the Change Nigerians Desire, Says Labour Party Chairman

Chairman, Labour Party (LP) in Cross River, Chief Baron Eyo, has said the party's presidential candidate, Peter Obi, remains the only candidate to bring about the “impossible” change Nigerians yearn.

Speaking with the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) in Calabar yesterday, Eyo dismissed the notion that the former Anambra governor stood no chance of winning the 2023 presidential election.

Eyo also the chairman of the

Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) in Cross River, noted that Obi's antecedent in office as governor and as a businessman was already working for him.

He said that Obi's acceptability by the majority of Nigerians had made him the candidate to beat at the 2023 presidential election.

He said that in addition to his pedigree, Obi also has the qualification and age on his side to make him bring about the necessary changes in Nigeria's

body polity.

According to him, Nigerians need a vibrant young person that can coordinate the country in areas of security and education, among other sectors.

“It is not about just being a president, the president should be someone who can be called upon at any time and he will take up the challenge,” he said.

Eyo also told NAN that “Obi has come to rekindle the winning spirit of the Labour Party. We have structures across

the country.

“Members of the LP are die-hard ones. They are here because of the ideals of the party and not what they can get to make ends meet politically; they are here because they want to bring about that change that we all desire.

“Obi's candidacy is already becoming a movement; you can see many Nigerians donating their resources, money, vehicles and buildings to be part of the movement.”

Police Arrest Man for Illegal Possession of Firearm in Lagos

Rebecca Ejifoma

Officers of Ikorodu Division of the Lagos State Police Command have arrested Kabiru Garba on Igbogbo, Ikorodu road for alleged possession of firearm.

It was learnt that the suspect

was arrested at 11pm last Friday after he took to his heels upon sighting policemen on routine patrol.

The State Police Spokesman, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, said: “After a thorough search of the suspect, a Beretta pistol

was found in his possession.”

Preliminary investigation, he added, has unraveled more details about the suspect, his activities and source of the firearm.

Hundeyin further confirmed that Garba would be arraigned

in court at the conclusion of investigation.

Meanwhile, the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Abiodun Alabi, has assured residents of Lagos State that efforts were being redoubled towards eradicating all forms of criminality in the state.

NEWSXTRA

Security Operatives Rescue Three Kidnapped Victims, Recover Motorcycles in Kaduna

The Joint Police/Military team of Operation Puff Adder and Operation Thunder Strike in Kaduna State, has repelled bandits attack and rescued three kidnapped victims in the state.

The team also recovered eight bandits operational motorcycles in Kaduna.

The Command Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), DSP Mohammed Jalige, made the disclosure in a statement issued yesterday in Kaduna.

Jalige said the reinvigorated synergy between the security forces in Kaduna State had recorded another success June 7, at about 0753hrs.

According to him, the bandits while on their odious mission at Sabon Sara village attempted to gain access to the Kaduna-Abuja Highway.

He explained that the operatives observed the

suspicious movement of bandits and courageously took the battle to them where severe exchange of fire ensued as the bandits scampered for safety.

“That resulted to rescue of a kidnapped Chinese expatriate and two others, abandoning eight of their operational motorcycles.

He added that the victims have been conveyed to a hospital for medical attention while recovered exhibits were being analyzed.

The police spokesperson said investigation was in progress, while efforts were on to arrest the injured bandits.

Jalige said, “The Commissioner of Police, Kaduna Command, Mr Yekini Ayoku, applauded the renewed commitment and synergy between the Police and other sister security

agencies,”.

The commissioner encouraged officers at all level to sustain same

for the interest of public safety.

“The Command is equally calling on the nearby

communities and beyond to report any person seen nursing a suspected gun injury to the

nearest security formation as quick action will be taken,” Jalige said.



COURTESY VISIT TO UNESCO...

L-R: Her Excellency, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate to The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Dr (Mrs.) Hajo Sani, and former Minister of Industry, Chief (Mrs.) Nike Akande, during Akande's courtesy visit to UNESCO in Paris... recently

Bridge Clinic Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Raheem Akingbolu

In commemoration of this year's World Fertility Day, Bridge Clinic has hosted IVF babies born via its clinics to a Children's Party celebration.

Bridge Clinic, Nigerian foremost fertility-focused centre, which was founded in 1999, also celebrated its over 20 years of 'bringing joy to the world' through its Assisted Reproductive Technology.

As of June 2022, Bridge Clinic had recorded over 3,000 live births across all their clinics.

It said the 3,000th birth is a testament to the over 20 years of hard work, ethical practice and diligent delivery of their services.

Speaking at the party which took place over the weekend in

Lagos, Counsellor at the Bridge Clinic Fertility Centre in Lagos, Efang Abang, gave glory to God for the successes recorded so far in the over 20 years of the clinic's practice of IVF.

She said: “The numbers of parents who attended the event is a testimony to the good work the clinic is doing.”

Abang urged the parents to spread the good work of Bridge Clinic to couples who are in need of such assistance.

Also speaking, General Manager, Bridge Clinic, Rose Ogbeche, said: “The clinic is excellent, and forward looking in service to humanity, and this can be seen in the number of children that have come to this world through the clinic.”

Anambra Assembly Adjourns over Death of Member

The Anambra House of Assembly yesterday adjourned sine die in honour of a member, Dr Okechukwu Okoye, who was abducted and killed by gunmen.

The Speaker, Mr Uche Okafor, announced the adjournment following a motion moved by the Majority Leader, Dr Nnamdi Okafor and seconded by Mr. Emma Nwafor, (Orumba South) Constituency.

Okafor officially announced the death of Okoye, who until his abduction was representing Aguata Constituency II in the House under the platform of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA).

According to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), he recalled that Okoye was abducted on May 15, while the Police Command in the state confirmed his death on May 21.

“With a heavy heart, we want to officially announce the death of one of us, Dr Okechukwu Okoye, who was abducted on May 15 and the police command announced his unfortunate death on May 21.

“We sympathise with his family, his community, Isuofia and the Aguata Constituency and pray that God console all of us and his soul rest in peace.

Seven Die, Others Injured in Edo Multiple Road Crash

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin

No fewer than seven persons have been confirmed dead in a road crash which occurred in Agbede, Etsako West Local Government Area, of Edo State.

The crash, which was said to have occurred on Sunday, June 5, 2022, at about 11:00a.m., involved 14 vehicles, comprising one Sierra bus and 13 trucks.

In a statement in Benin City by the Assistant Route Commander and Public Relations Officer of the Federal Road Safety Corps

(FRSC), Eso State Command, Ms. Omozie Inegbenebor, disclosed that 25 adults were involved in the crash, leaving seven persons dead and other victims with various degrees of injuries.

Inegbenebor attributed the crash to the dysfunctional breaking system of one of the trucks, which crashed into other vehicles.

According to her, “rescue teams of the FRSC Edo State Command have been on the ground carrying out rescue operations, clearing obstructions and controlling traffic along the area.

Human Trafficking: NAPTIP Secures 516 Convictions in 18 Years

The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) said it convicted 516 persons since its inception in 2004.

The Director of Public Enlightenment of NAPTIP, Mr. Josiah Emeriole, gave the figure at a capacity building for media professionals in Asaba yesterday.

The training was organised in partnership with Action

Against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants in Nigeria (A-TIPSOM NIGERIA), funded by European Union (EU) to fight human trafficking.

Emeriole said they were convicted for different offences of human trafficking within the 18 years of establishment of the agency.

He added that the agency has rescued and rehabilitated over 18, 000

victims of human trafficking during the the period under review.

“Out of these rescued victims, about 13 of them have graduated from universities, while three of them are currently employed by NAPTIP,” he said.

Emeriole said millions of victims are still trapped for various forms of trafficking across the globe.

He said NAPTIP would

not relent in its fight against human trafficking.

The director revealed that all states in the country are now vulnerable to human trafficking.

“This is contrary to the impression that only Edo State is vulnerable to human trafficking.

“It is a crime with a profit of more than 150 billion United States (U.S.) Dollars,” he said.

Lagos Community Approaches Court over Land Encroachment

Wale Igbinde

Aggrieved landlords at Ogudu Muslim Community Praying Ground, Oworonsoki area of Lagos have approached a Lagos High Court over alleged forceful encroachment on their praying ground by a suspected land grabber.

In two separate suits, marked ID/1722LMW/2022 and ID/1724LMW/2022 filed before Justice Gbadebo Oshoala and Justice A.M Lawal, at the Ikeja Division of the State High Court, the aggrieved landlords

are praying the court for a declaration that by virtue of their Certificate of Occupancy and Deed of Assignment they were the rightful owner of the land.

Claimants in the suit are Prince Wale Alaba Oyekoya, Mrs. Pauline Wandoo NSA, and Ms. Oreoluwa Edowaye Obasuyi

The claimants in their originating summons dated April 6, 2022, prayed the court for a declaration that Ajibola Bisiriyu and some thugs are in trespass on their parcel of

lands

They also want an order of the Court directing Ajibola Bisiriyu to reconstruct or re-erect the perimeter fence around the parcel of land, which was allegedly destroyed by some thugs.

The aggrieved landlords are asking for N200m as damages against Ajibola Bisiriyu being the cost of the tons of iron rods, sand and Granite carted away by his thugs as well as the cost of reconstructing the perimeter fence destroyed by the Defendants at their

invasion in April 2021 and in March 2022.

They are demanding for additional N100m for the psychological torture they were subjected to as well as the trauma the invasion cost them.

The claimants alleged that the defendant invaded the land sometime in April 2021, with Policemen assigned to the Lagos State Taskforce alongside thugs, claiming that the state government allocated the land to him for estate development.

Police Quell Attack by Banned Motorcyclists in Lagos

Rebecca Ejifoma

The Lagos State Police, yesterday quelled a planned attack by the banned commercial motorcyclists in the Idi-Araba area of Surulere.

According to reports, the motorcycle operators were said to have attempted to clash with officials of the Lagos Taskforce as seen in video clips in the social media.

Reports also have it that the motorcyclists resisted police

officers on duty to ensure they adhere to the state government ban on their operations.

Displeased by the presence of the officers, the disgruntled motorcyclists made bonfires to barricade the road, an action that elicited commotion and panic among residents.

As seen in the video clip, the officers shot teargas to disperse the crowd.

Meanwhile, the State Police Spokesman, SP Benjamin

Hundeyin, categorically debunked the claim of a clash via his Twitter handle, @BenHundeyin.

Hundeyin said: “They can't fight because the Taskforce went well prepared. They were just causing a scene after Taskforce left with some of their impounded motorcycles.”

The spokesman also assured the public that men from the Area Command have since been drafted there. “Absolutely

nothing to worry about,” he added.

Since the gruesome lynching of 38-year-old Sound Engineer, David Imoh in Lekki on May 12, the State Government had placed a ban on motorcycle operations in six local government areas, with effect from June 1.

However, some motorcyclists have remained adamant and continued to ply those roads they were cautioned against.

Foundation Plans Scholarship for Indigent Students

Funmi Ogundare

OISA Foundation yesterday appealed to institutions and corporate bodies to support the foundation in order to allow indigent but brilliant children to acquire education.

A trustee of the foundation, Prince Abimbola Oloshore, who made this known while briefing journalists on the 10th year memorial activities of HRM Oba Oladele Oloshore in Lagos, expressed concern that Nigeria has the largest number of out-

of-school children in the world, adding that the foundation is partnering other foundations this year to offer scholarships to indigent but brilliant children who can cope with a number of things.

“Some children needed to be taken out of their environment to thrive while some need to stay in their environment to thrive also. Our business now is to see which one is applicable. The more money we have, the more we can do,” the trustee said.

He recalled that the first beneficiary of its scholarship scheme, whose parents are indigents from Sapele in Delta State but lived in Iloko, Osun State, also got a scholarship at the Pan Atlantic University and currently on a CPGA of 5.0.

Oloshore noted that the foundation is looking out for such persons who have benefited from the system, and will in turn give back to the society.

He emphasised on its major areas of intervention, which

include education and health, adding that a lot of youths between the ages of 12 and 18 years have mental health issues which sometimes go unnoticed by parents and schools.

Oloshore said the Foundation is currently developing toolkits that will be distributed to schools so that they will know the areas of intervention for the students, adding that it is also training educators, school owners, teachers, guidance and counsellors, as well as parents in that regard.

We Are in Abuja to Beat Super Eagles, Bakayoko Boasts

Duro Ikhazuagbe

Barely 24 hours before Nigeria's Super Eagles play Sierra Leone in the first game of the Group A of the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers, Leone Stars' forward, Amadou Bakayoko, has warned the hosts country they are in Abuja to win.

Bakayoko is banking on the fact that the Coach John Keister's side will play Eagles tomorrow at the Moshood Abiola Stadium in Abuja without Nigerian fans.

He is further reinforced that the Leone Stars have not lost to Nigeria since coming back from



Amadou Bakayoko...warns Sierra Leone coming to shock Super Eagles in Abuja tomorrow

AFCON 2023 QUALIFIER

four goals down to force a 4-4 draw in November 2020 at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City. The reverse fixture in Freetown ended in draw also. Speaking with footballsierraleone.

net yesterday, Bakayoko reckoned Eagles will be a tough nut to crack, he however remains confident Leone Stars can claim a famous win in Abuja tomorrow. "Without doubt playing against

Nigeria will be my first proper match for Sierra Leone. Something I am looking forward to, but both Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau are no easy games," Bakayoko hinted yesterday. "God willing we can go out there and showcase ourselves against a tough Nigeria side. Helping Sierra Leone reach the Africa Cup of

Nations in Ivory Coast 2023 will be massive, personally for me, my country and all of us players working so hard to give our best. "Making the next African Cup of Nations is something as a player i want to be part of and will be unbelievable for me to play in the Ivory Coast for the first time.

"The last competition, I was not part of but I watched the team play well hence why it will be pivotal for us to be in the Ivory Coast tournament," he concluded with optimism. Nigeria is in Group A with Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé & Príncipe.



Super Eagles players and coaches holding strategic game-plan with Head Coach, Jose Peseiro, ahead of the AFCON 2023 qualifier against Sierra Leone...tomorrow

...Nigeria, Sierra Leone Clash to be Played behind Closed Door

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has reiterated that tomorrow's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying encounter between the Super Eagles and the Leone Stars of Sierra Leone at the MKO Abiola National Stadium, Abuja will be played without fans in the stands starting from 5pm.

NFF General Secretary, Dr Mohammed Sanusi said in Abuja on Tuesday that the situation is a consequence of the one-match ban placed on the country by world football -governing body, FIFA over the fracas that followed the end of 2022 FIFA World Cup playoff round against the Black Stars of Ghana in March.

"We want to appeal to our very passionate football fans to take heart for this one game. It is only a one-match ban, after which they

can again start trooping out to support the Super Eagles. The match against Sierra Leone will be without fans as a consequence of what happened after the match against the Ghanaians.

"Nonetheless, we want to urge all our football fans, and indeed all Nigerians, to support the team whichever way they can and pray for success against the Sierra Leoneans on Thursday."

Four days later, Super Eagles will tackle 'The Falcons and True Parrots' of São Tomé and Príncipe at the 45,000-capacity Grand Stade de Agadir in southern Morocco.

While CAF has appointed Ivorian officials to take charge of the encounter in Abuja, Liberian officials led by referee Hassen Corneh will oversee the match in Agadir on Monday.

22ND AFRICAN ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Team Nigeria Begins Chase for Medals, World Championship Entry Standards in Mauritius

A total of 500 athletes from 41 countries including Nigeria will be in action at the 22nd edition of the Championships, which begins today at Côte d'Or National Sports Complex in St Pierre, Mauritius.

This is the third time Mauritius is hosting the African athletics showpiece. The first was in 1992 at the Anjalay Stadium and in

2006 at the Germain Comarmond Stadium.

However, because the championships falls during a busy season which includes the World Championships and Commonwealth Games, many top African athletes will not be in Mauritius, including Nigeria's Favor Ofilu who is tied down with NCAA commitments in USA.

Heptathlete Kemi Francis will open Nigeria's chase for African Championship medals when she takes to the track this morning for the 100m hurdles in the women's Heptathlon.

Not ranked as the favourite for the event, the 29-year-old will be hoping to become the fifth Nigerian woman to mount the podium as African champion in the event after the quartet of Bella Bell-Gam (1979 as Pentathlon), Patience Itanyi (1998), Patience Okoro (2008) and Uhunoma Osazuwa who set a new 6,153 points championship record six years ago in Durban, South Africa.

In the blue ribband event, Nigeria will be seeking to re-establish a dominance that saw her athletes win nine of the 14 gold medals on offer between 1984 and 2008 in the 100m for men and 12 of the 19 in the women's version between 1979 and 2014.

Nigeria last won the gold medal in the men's 100m in 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where Olusoji Fasuba completed his hat-trick of wins to become the first and so far the only African man to win the blue ribband gold three consecutive times.

For the women, Blessing Okagbare ran a then 11.00s championship record to win Nigeria's 12th and final gold medal in the event in 2014.

For Raymond Ekevwu, the reigning African Games 100m champion who is spearheading Nigeria's chase for the ultimate title in the event, this is the perfect opportunity to return Nigeria as African champion 12 years after Fasuba last did.

Junior international, Praise Ofokwu and Tima Godless will have the very arduous task of winning Nigeria's 13th gold medal in the history of the championship.

In the sprint hurdles, Tobii Amusan is the overwhelming favourite to retain the title she first won four years ago at the 21st edition of the Championship in Asaba, Delta state.

The 25-year-old's major challenge will be her compatriot, Glory Alozie's 12.77s championship record set in Dakar, Senegal

in 1998.

Nigeria has dominated the women's sprint hurdles scene at the championship, winning 11 of the 21 gold medals offered so far.

Like in the 100m hurdles, Nigeria has also been the dominant nation in the jumps, especially the women's long jump where they have won 11 of the 21 competed for so far including the five from 2010.

Olympics, World and Commonwealth Games medallist, Ese Brume will stand as the favourite to win Nigeria's 12th gold and her fourth straight title in the event.

For the men, Nigeria has lost her superiority in the event and has not mounted the podium as African champion since Obinna Eregbu won the eighth and final gold medal for the country in 1993.

Nigeria dominated the event between 1979 and 1993, winning eight of the nine gold medals competed for including seven straight wins between 1984 and 1993.

Nigeria finished third on the medal table four years ago in Asaba with nine gold, five silver and six bronze medals behind Kenya (11,6,2) and South Africa (9,14,8).

ICC Names Nigeria Cricket Good Social Impact Initiative Winner

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the Nigeria Cricket Federation (NCF) winner of the Cricket 4 Good Social Impact Initiative of the year, in an official statement issued on Monday.

The NCF project in using the game as a tool for engaging and assisting in the development of internally displaced refugees as a result of the insurgency and terrorism perpetuated by the extremist Boko Haram group within the country had attracted the attention of the International body when the 2021 year was being reviewed.

The President of the Federation, Uyi Akpata, while speaking on

the award, stressed he is elated that his team's collective effort has attracted global recognition.

"With a couple of thousand introduced to the game, and a boys and girls' team involved in the secondary schools' tournament, we have seen cricket largely contributing to addressing the issues of integration and inclusion of disadvantaged children in the country. On behalf of the almost 2,000 students in the Benin IDP Camp and two million children in various camps, we accept this special recognition."

The award-winning project is an outreach run by Promoting Ethics Through Sports (PETS) Foundation for the Internally

Displaced Person's camp in Benin which has beyond handing the campers cricket skills, has also handed them life skills necessary to pick themselves up again.

"We are very proud of this award and the team of dedicated coaches and leaders that have taken up the challenge of reaching out to the camp. We are also grateful to the team running the camp for trusting us with the people there and most especially the Edo State Cricket Association who performs the oversight function on behalf of the NCF."

Some of the male and female players from the camp are to compete in forthcoming Edo State Cricket Leagues.

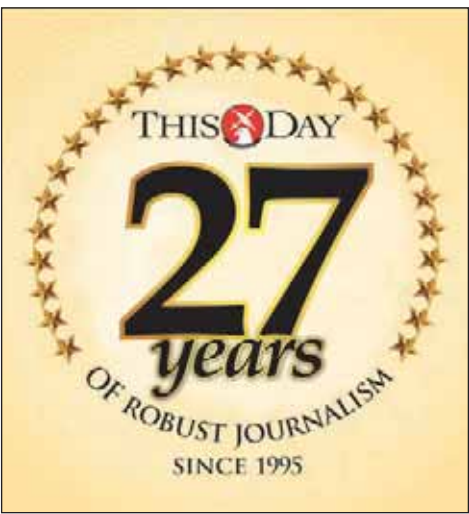


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MISSILE
Akeredolu to Adamu
Let it be known that the chairman or anyone who holds a contrary opinion (to the idea of a southern APC presidential candidate) does so at a personal level. He is at best embarking on a frolic which reasonable people will consider dangerous - Governor Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State rejecting the position of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Chairman Abdulahi Adamu on the consensus candidate for the party.



KAYODEKOMOLAFE

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The Hard Part Begins Now

The chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Mahmood Yakubu, reminded political parties again last Friday of the imperative of keeping strictly to the timetable for the 2023 elections.

Yakubu spoke at the venue of a training programme organised for officials of parties on the INEC Candidate Nomination Portal (ICNP). Nomination forms for presidential and National Assembly elections are expected to be loaded into the INEC portal between June 10 and June 17 while those of the governorship and state assembly elections should be submitted in the same electronic way between July 1 and July 15.

As an aside, INEC should be commended for the high level of digitalisation of its operations. This is a clear departure from the days when party secretariats and INEC offices were involved in the laborious process of sorting out volumes of documents in the process of nomination of candidates.

The immediate implication of the completion of the nomination process is that the public would soon be relieved of news of internecine political wars within political parties on the nomination of candidates for various categories of elections especially the presidential election. Now that the major political parties have concluded the nominations of their candidates, it is time to confront the hard part of the process.

Political parties and their candidates should begin in earnest to focus on selling their programmes and policies that would help in resolving the present multi-dimensional crisis of Nigeria. Hitherto, differences of ideas, policies and programmes have hardly featured in the intra-party battles fought to secure tickets for the elections. This is, unfortunately, a measure of the maturity of liberal democracy in Nigeria. This is because even for the purpose of the primary elections aspirants seeking party tickets candidates ought to be distinguished by the policies and ideas for which they have great passions on the economy, polity and society. For instance, an aspirant ought to be known not just as a northerner or southerner; the aspirant ought to also be identified by his views on the role of the state in the economy or the approach to confront terrorism.

Doubtless, all the intra-party competitions have been about the identity of who is most suitable to do the job. The suitability has been largely based on geo-political calculations and other identity considerations. The next stage in the timetable should be the focus on what job the candidate will do and how to do it.

Besides, it is a good thing that INEC has made the timetable elastic enough for candidates to have time to articulate their strategies and policies in solving the problems of insecurity, poverty and obstacles to nation-building. Candidates have a relatively longer period (between nomination and election) than before to articulate policies and popularise their programmes. So, contrary to the narrow view of some politicians that the relatively longer period would make the process



INEC Chairman Prof. Mahmood Yakubu

more expensive, the new timetable should also make the electoral activities to be issue-oriented. It may help in changing the political culture. Campaigns should be about selling programmes to the electorate to enable them make informed choices. Apart from the logistical costs of running the campaigns effectively, the candidates should not be paying for the votes. So the period is not only for more expenses to be made; it is also an opportunity for virile debates on options to confront the issues of underdevelopment.

Issue-based campaigns would be enhanced if the political parties have well defined strategies and programmes which distinguish one from the other. In fact, in the primary elections aspirants ought to be assessed on the basis of their comprehension of the programmes of their parties and their capacity and orientation to implement the programmes if they are elected into offices.

It would be a neater thing for delegates at the convention for a party's primary election to decide on who should be the party's candidate on the basis of policy instead of his religion and ethnicity. There is a vacuum in the political process because political parties are not playing their roles adequately as democratic institutions. The job of political parties is not only to compile and submit the names of candidates to INEC for elections. Articulation, popularisation and defence of policies are also duties of political parties. The political parties have their names on the ballot papers for the electorate to thumbprint. Therefore, the parties should not only own the votes, they should also own the programmes the candidate would implement if voted into office. The political culture of political parties abandoning their institutional responsibilities of promoting ideas and programmes is an ugly feature of this dispensation. It has not

always been like this in the nation's political history. In the Second Republic, the secretariat of the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) of President Shehu Shagari actively sold the party's programme on green revolution, mass housing and qualitative education. The NPN even mobilised Nigerians towards the party's programme of "ethical revolution." The Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) of Chief Obafemi Awolowo sold its four-cardinal programmes of free education, free healthcare, full employment and integrated rural development. Those programmes were defended by the party at all levels before the public. The pro-poor policies of the People's Redemption Party (PRP) were ideologically articulated by the party of the talakawa (the poor).

If parties don't do more than serving as mere platforms to contest elections, the once-in-four-year exercise would be reduced to a hollow ritual of liberal democracy. It would be easier to hold those in power accountable if it is possible to confront them from time to time with promises not only made by them but also their political parties.

The articulation of policies should not only be for the presidential election. A lot of attention should be paid to the elections in the states because of the consequences for development. Most of the areas which are critical for development especially in the social sector are on the concurrent lists. State governments can legislate on them and execute policies in those areas. These include education, healthcare, housing, agriculture, mass transit, water supply, sanitation etc. It is the states that could more effectively implement policies to improve the condition of public education at the basic as well as the universal healthcare coverage. The programmes that ensure food security and protect the environment are better implemented by state governments. It is, therefore, improper that political parties present candidates for elections at the state level without articulating and popularising policies in these areas. State governments have a greater role in implementing poverty-alleviation policies. Development should be a national process in which the federal government takes the lead and states synchronise their policies with the federal strategy regardless of partisan differences. No matter the policy articulation a president makes nationally on education, for instance, if the states do not focus on basic public education the expected results would not be achieved. This is more so because the state governments have taken advantage of constitutional ambiguity on the place of the local government in the distorted

federal structure to control the resources available at the lowest tier of government. If primary schools buildings are in a dilapidated condition and qualified teachers are not available to teach the pupils, the state and local governments should be held responsible. However, the federal government is often the target of criticisms for the scary phenomenon of 18 million children out of school. That would be a proper thing to do as a matter of national policy on universal primary education. But to solve the problem in real terms the state and local governments have to muster adequate capacity for policy execution.

Besides, the policy debates before the election in eight months from now could also help the process of forging an elite consensus on the concept of development. The lack of that necessary consensus is obvious in many respects. It manifests, in particular, in the ways governors define their priorities based on their concept of development. For instance, building an ultramodern conference centre and a governor's lodge is prioritised over massive water schemes in a state in which more than 50% of the population neither has access to potable water and more than 70% has no water closets in their homes. There should be a consensus on what really constitutes the priority of development between establishing one institution for medical tourism in the state capital and having scores of local hospitals to provide universal healthcare coverage in the villages. The debates are necessary on all areas of development.

That is why the agendas of the various presidential and governorship candidates should be thoroughly examined before the elections.

Unlike what happened in the previous elections, campaigns should not be reduced to demonisation or canonisation of candidates. None of the candidates who will take part in the various elections is a demon or a saint. They are all human beings with their respective strengths and weaknesses. So instead of the virulent attacks on personalities or panegyric publicity for politicians, candidates should be assessed in relation to the programmes of their respective parties which they hope to implement.

The campaign should be a contest of ideas and not a rain of curses and insults.

Fellow columnist Olusegun Adeniyi last Thursday made this point eloquently on this page. Yes, citizens should be armed with their voters' card. In addition, there should be sanity in the public sphere to discuss the programmes of the political parties and their candidates so that voters would know exactly the agenda for which they are voting during the election.

Every election is defined by the prevailing issues even as candidates make projections into the future of the country. This is more so when the country is bedevilled with the crises of insecurity, poverty and disunity. The 2023 elections will be a different in this respect. It is time the political parties and candidates put forward the ideas to confront these issues. And if you like, now is the hard part!

There is a vacuum in the political process because parties are not playing their roles adequately as democratic institutions.