Fitch: Nigeria's Rocketing Inflation Dampening Economic Growth, Eroding Purchasing Power

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

A Fitch Ratings report yesterday stated that Nigeria's rising inflation was dampening the country's economic growth and eroding consumer purchasing power.

According to the ratings agency, persistently high inflation remains a key macroeconomic weakness, contributing to Nigeria's relatively modest growth rates and weighing on external liquidity by discouraging financial account inflows.

Consequently, Fitch projected Nigeria's growth at 3.1 per cent in 2022 with high oil prices expected to lift oil receipts, which together with a post-pandemic recovery in activity should support the non-oil sector growth.

"Still, high inflation this year will dampen growth by eroding consumer and business purchasing power. The oil sector's inability to raise production will

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OPEC Faces Critical Oil Production Decision as Nigeria Gets 1.826m bpd August Quota... page 8

THISDAY

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Stock Market Sustains Bullish Trend, Gains N5.64trn in First Half 2022... Page 43

Buhari: We Have Zero Tolerance for Interference with Elections Conducted By INEC

●Reiterates commitment to peaceful, credible polls in 2023 ●Urges Nigerians to use social media responsibly

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari, yesterday, reiterated his administration's resolve never to interfere with elections conducted in any part of the country by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Speaking in Lisbon, Portugal, at a meeting with representatives of Nigerians living in that country, Buhari cited the recent governorship elections in Anambra and Ekiti states, insisting his government has proven consistently its zero tolerance for interference with elections. He said Nigerians should be allowed to vote for the parties and candidates of their choice.

Buhari also gave assurances of

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Tinubu, Wike Meet in France as Atiku Seeks Rapprochement

●PDP candidate says party already addressing grievances

●Okowa boasts PDP will win July 16 governorship poll in Osun

● Opposes Zamfara governor's position for citizens to carry arms

Chuks Okocha, Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja, **John Shiklam in Kaduna** and **Onuminya Innocent** in Sokoto

Presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, and Rivers State Governor Nyesom Wike were yesterday scheduled to meet any moment in France, where the APC candidate was holding strategic meetings in furtherance of his presidential aspiration. Although the duo were initially slated to meet in Spain, according to THISDAY sources, current realities with respect to Tinubu's itinerary could not make that possible, hence, the resort to France.

However, as at 3am this morning, THISDAY could not confirm whether the meeting had indeed taken place.

But the presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, assured party members and supporters that

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Again UK Court Denies Ekweremadu, Wife Bail... Page 46



TÊTE-À-TÊTE MOMENT AT G7...

United States President, Joe Biden (left) and the Director General, World Trade Organisation, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the G7 summit held in Germany...recently



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REFUTAL OF PUBLICATION IN A NATIONAL DAILY ABOUT THE BANK OF INDUSTRY

The attention of the Bank of Industry (BOI) has been drawn to a publication in a national daily that misrepresents the Bank to the general public.

The Bank would like to reassure all our esteemed customers, stakeholders and the general public and clarify as follows:

- BOI is a limited liability company incorporated under Company and Allied Matters Act (CAMA, 1990) (as amended). The bank has two major shareholders which are the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

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The Bank of Industry maintains a transparent reporting process which is published in our Annual Reports and Accounts audited by KPMG Professional Services in line with international best practices, regulatory requirements and reporting standards.

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CBN Guarantees N130.90bn to Farmers under Agricultural Credit Scheme

Rewards loan utilisation, repayment

James Emejo in Abuja

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) yesterday said a total of 1,232,326 loans valued at N130.90 billion had been guaranteed to farmers under its Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme Fund (ACGSF) from its inception in 1977 to May 2022.

The bank added that 973,646 beneficiaries had also repaid a total of N98.91 billion out of the total disbursements.

The central bank also said it guaranteed the sum of N22.58 million to 82 loan beneficiaries under the scheme in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) between January and May 2022, bringing the total guaranteed loans in the FCT to N1.748 billion from 14,258 loans.

CBN Director, Development Finance Department, Mr. Yila Yusuf, gave the figures at the National Ceremony for the 2021 Best Farmer of the Year Award which took place during the 40th ACGSF Board Meeting in Abuja.

He said in terms of loan recovery, 11,726 loans valued N801.05 million were repaid under the scheme in the FCT from the inception of the programme.

Yila, who was represented by the Chairman, Board of ACGSF, Mr. Stephen Okon, further noted that the scheme had proved to be relatively successful in de-risking the agricultural sector, as evidenced in the number of loans guaranteed from inception to date.

Nonetheless, he said the award was introduced in the 1980s to recognise selected farmers that borrowed under the scheme and repaid within a specified period while adopting best agronomic practices to achieve good yields.

The CBN director said the gesture was expected to serve as an incentive for participating in the scheme and inculcating good repayment behaviour with a view to encouraging more participants.

He said the event could not have come at a better time than now when economies the world over are experiencing challenges resulting from the Russian - Ukrainian War.

He stressed that the impact of the hostilities – including global oil and food crises affecting the agricultural sector, had contributed to disruptions in domestic food supply chains and other shocks affecting food production.

This, he said, had led to the loss of incomes, food security risks, inflationary trends, and creating serious tensions in many countries, pointing out that achieving food security not only carries significant benefits for human health but also serves as the basis to achieve sustained economic growth.

He said awakened by a potential rise in food insecurity, many countries and organisations are mounting special efforts to keep agriculture safely running as an essential business.

Also speaking at the occasion, Branch Controller, CBN, Abuja, Mr. Ogbu Michael, explained that the ACGSF was not only an important programme of the apex bank but the first development finance intervention scheme to be established by the bank, adding that the scheme heralded the birth of the Development Finance Department (DFD) of the bank.

He said it was evident that the successes achieved under the ACGSF had led to significant improvement in Deposit Money Banks' (DMB) lending to the agricultural sector and had led to remarkable growth in the agri-business value chain in the country.

According to him, the annual award ceremony provides an opportunity to recognise the tremendous strides made by participating farmers under the scheme, add visibility to the programme among prospective participants and ultimately signal the CBN's resolve at ensuring the achievement of food self-sufficiency in the country.

At the award ceremony, IFGREEN Industries and Investment Limited won the Best Farmer of the Year Award at the national level with AlMustapha Maigwandu Farms Limited and Wuntin Dada Agro Farms Limited emerging first and second runners up respectively.

Sterling Bank Plc emerged the 2021 Best Participating Financial Institution of the Year award in the national category among other awardees.

BUHARI: WE'VE ZERO TOLERANCE FOR INTERFERENCE WITH ELECTIONS CONDUCTED BY INEC

a free hand to INEC, reiterating the commitment of his administration to peaceful, transparent, free, fair and credible elections next year.

He further stressed that with the conclusion of the primaries of the political parties, all eyes were now on the 2023 general election.

The president said, "We also look forward to a smooth transition to the next government. As I have said before, our administration will not compromise on doing the right things and the welfare of Nigerians, home and abroad."

The president used the occasion to caution against the use of social media to insult and incite crisis, and urged the Diaspora to always promote Nigeria's unity.

"The world is a global village and technology has shrunk the world even more. Although you reside beyond Nigeria's boundaries, you can engage easily with the country. In fact, we see the impact of that engagement clearly on social media.

"This platform has empowered Nigerians in the diaspora and given you great influence. As we have seen, however, social media can be a force for good as well as a force for evil. Many countries, including our own, have had to take strong measures against some social media platforms to curb their excesses and prevent them from destabilising our societies.

"I, therefore, call upon you to use social media responsibly. We all want the best for our country and people, so let us strive to build, unite and prosper our nation and people and not to insult and incite from a safe and anonymous distance."

Buhari expressed delight in the successful involvement of the Diaspora in various fields, such as agriculture, healthcare, education, ICT, and the food industry in Nigeria. He said many countries, including Nigeria, had shown that their diaspora could be a veritable engine for growth and development.

Acknowledging the huge contribution the Diaspora had made to Nigeria's economy, the president said, "In every field of human endeavour, be it the creative industries, sports, health, academia, Nigerians in the diaspora have thrived and leveraged on their skills to raise our country's profile higher, economically, socially, technologically and culturally.

"It is for these reasons that this government established the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) to facilitate and support your engagement with our country for a win-win outcome in our effort to keep Nigerians united at home and abroad."

Buhari also told them, "You must continue to be our ambassadors-at-large in your comportment, actions and character. You must excel and be the best in all your endeavours. While here, you must also not forget home, as you are the example we want to project to the rest of the world."

Buhari assured the meeting coordinated by Chairman, Nigerians In Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Hon Abike Dabiri-Erewa, that the federal government would continue to do everything possible to catalyse development in various fields of the economy.

He, therefore, encouraged them to key into the programmes of NIDCOM, so as to contribute to initiatives such as the Nigerian Diaspora Investment Trust Fund.

Earlier, the Nigerian Ambassador to Portugal, Alex Enan Kefas, told Buhari that records indicated that there were some 3,000 Nigerians living in the country, who were generally well-behaved and living peacefully among themselves and the host authorities.

The envoy equally informed the president of the recent arrest and detention of about 13 Nigerians for alleged offences of money laundering and cybercrime.

He said the embassy conducted a consular visit to the prison, which revealed that the arrests were "disproportionate and unjust" as many of them were innocent of the allegations. It stressed, however, that the mission was trying its best to ensure the release of the innocent to enable them reunite with their families.

TINUBU, WIKE MEET IN FRANCE AS ATIKU SEEKS RAPPROCHEMENT

PDP's unity remained paramount to him as the party looked forward to taking power from the ruling APC in 2023.

Atiku, who spoke on his verified Twitter handle, noted that he remained a listening leader and would ensure that all grouses were addressed going forward.

A chieftain of APC in Lagos, Joe Igbokwe, had hinted at the Tinubu, Wike meeting on his social media account.

Igbokwe wrote, "While they are on social media abusing everybody, Gov Wike goes to France to meet Asiwaju. Abuse, calling names, hate and bigotry are no strategies. They hated and abused PMB since 2015 and now they have transferred the aggression to Asiwaju. We wait and see."

The Tinubu/Wike meeting came in the wake of the Rivers State governor's disinclination to go along with his party after losing both the presidential nomination exercise in Abuja and the politics that marked the nomination of a presidential running mate. He had not hidden the fact that he was hurting following the outcome of the exercises.

The current situation might have been accentuated by accusations by Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State and former governor of Ekiti State, Ayo Fayose, that Atiku was not doing enough to reconcile aggrieved persons within PDP after the pre sidential primaries.

Ortom had, in a scathing criticism of Atiku's disposition after emerging candidate of PDP, hinted that he was not sure whom to support in the 2023 presidential poll. The governor hinged his indecision on what he called the ill-treatment of his Rivers State counterpart, Wike, by the party's leadership after the primaries.

Ortom maintained that choosing Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State as running mate to Atiku in place of Wike, whom he said got the majority of votes from the committee set up to advise on the most suitable candidate, was unfair to the Rvers State governor.

Fayose also alleged that Atiku "promised" to make Wike his running mate after he was declared winner of the PDP presidential primary election, but failed to fulfil his pledge after he got the party's ticket.

In comments that clearly showed cracks in the opposition party, the former governor said, "If the party is now a one-man show, we will show them that we can resist it. We are with Wike 100 per cent. When they need Wike's money and Wike's support, they will say, 'Wike is good enough'.

"Wike has been injured, but we will remain with him. Whatever he does is what we would do; wherever he asks us to go is where we will go."

Recall also that on Wednesday, 11 PDP governors were absent at the inauguration of the Osun State national campaign council ahead of the state's governorship election, sparking insinuations that the party may be in crisis.

Reacting on his verified Twitter handle, Atiku noted, "The @ OfficialPDPNig will remain united. Focus on our actions. We are taking action to address the feelings of all party members. The unity in our community is my priority. Our resolve to unify Nigeria starts in our party and moves to the community, then onto society."

The PDP presidential hopeful explained that he would continue to listen to all party stalwarts.

He said, "Every governor, legislator and other elected officials produced by our party, and party members and loyalists, are much loved and respected by me. When they speak, I listen. I do not only listen, appropriate actions have been taken, are being taken, and will continue to be advanced."

Wike's current posture is in sharp contrast to his repeated vow never to leave or work against PDP. Since losing the vice presidential nomination to Okowa, he has been openly frolicking with presidential candidates of other parties. His anti-party activities climaxed days ago, when his associates started to openly grant interviews about how badly he was treated, declaring that Wike will never support Atiku's presidential bid.

An observer, who pleaded not to be named, expressed dismay at Wike's behaviour, describing it as "reprehensible, self-destructive and thoroughly shameful". The source stated regarding Wike, "He wants to pull down the party because of his selfish ambition. He wants to ruin and is ruining PDP's best chance of returning to power. It is really a shame that these men are merely driven by self-interest and not collective interest.

"Fayose, Ortom are aiding and abetting the shocking campaign to destroy their party. In actual fact, Wike's current anti-party behaviour is reinforcing the reason he was not selected as vice presidential candidate, that he would have been a risky pick."

The source alleged that contrary to the claims that Wike meant well for the party, it only went as far as he had his way controlling the party for his own self-interest. "

Continuing, the source alleged that even if Wike were to remain in PDP, he has already done incalculable damage to his stature and credibility in the party."

While Wike continues to fume, in contrast when Atiku lost the APC presidential primary for the 2015 general election, placing third, behind Rabiu Kwankwanso, the two men rallied with other members to deliver victory to Buhari. None resorted to anti-party activity or embarked on meetings with opposition party members or swore not to support Buhari, the party's presidential candidate, who eventually went on to win the presidential election in 2015.

PDP: We'll Come Out of this Stronger

National Publicity Secretary of PDP, Debo Ologunagba, said the party, as an organic body, would take practical steps to address and reconcile all aggrieved members.

Ologunagba explained that as expected, "after every contest, there must be those aggrieved, but the PDP as an organic party will negotiate and reconcile all members. We will come out stronger.

"We are not perfect, but PDP will come out perfect. We have the necessary organs that will unite the members and come out stronger. There will be negotiations and reconciliations of all members for the general good of rescuing Nigeria."

Makarfi: Don't Blame Wike for Feeling Bad

A former governor of Kaduna State, Senator Ahmed Makarfi, said Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State should not be blamed for feeling bad about the outcome of the selection of a presidential running mate, as he had been a strong pillar of the PDP.

Makarfi, who spoke in an interview with some journalists in Kaduna, called on Atiku to meet with Wike and resolve any problem that might have arisen from the choice of his running mate.

The former governor said, "I won't blame Wike for feeling bad, because he has been one of the pillars of the party. Let the presidential candidate, Atiku, sit down with Wike to discuss issues, because he is the only one that knows why he picked his running mate, the matter is resolvable."

Makarfi, a former National Caretaker Committee of the PDP, however, said he was optimistic the party would win the 2023 elections and bring back true democracy. He said, "We have learnt our lessons and we will do more than we did when we are in power."

Makarfi stressed, "As long as elections will hold in 2023, PDP will win, but we need to work hard for us to win in 2023. PDP is set to bring back true democracy to Nigeria and we have learnt our lessons."

Reacting to rumours of his planned defection to APC, Markarfi

Continued on page 47

FITCH: NIGERIA'S ROCKETING INFLATION DAMPENING ECONOMIC GROWTH, ERODING PURCHASING POWER

provide a further obstacle to higher growth," it added.

It noted that the decision by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to raise the main policy interest rate sharply in May does not signal a fundamental shift in the country's unorthodox monetary policy, which it noted will continue to impede efforts to rein in inflation.

"We believe Nigeria's complex policy approach will be maintained at least until the next presidential election in February 2023. A significant strengthening of macroeconomic performance appears unlikely in the near term, despite the supportive effects of higher global oil prices for the economy.

"The Russia-Ukraine war's impact on global prices, notably for food and energy, has seen inflation accelerate in 2022. Consumer prices rose 17.7 per cent yoy in May, up from last year's low of 15.4 per cent in November," it said.

Fitch stressed that it now forecasts Nigeria's inflation to average 17 per cent in 2022, unchanged from the 2021 average. "In March 2022, we had predicted inflation this year would average 14.6 per cent," it added.

The report stated that the authorities had planned to phase out fuel subsidies in 2022, but they are now unlikely to be removed before 2023. This, it pointed out helps to contain 2022 inflation, but noted that the cost of the subsidy - borne by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) - has reduced NNPC transfers to government.

" As a result, we forecast the general government deficit to narrow only moderately to 3.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) this year, from 4.2 per cent in 2021," it posited.

Fitch said it had expected at least one interest-rate hike in 2022, but the 150bp increase in the main policy rate, to 13 per cent, on 24 May was larger than it had anticipated.

"Further increases are possible, as officials with the CBN have indicated a preference for real interest rates to be less steeply negative. Moreover, we believe the CBN will use the Cash Reserve Ratio and the issuance of CBN special bills to tighten liquidity.

"The CBN is using these discretionary measures to inject or withdraw liquidity from the financial system, as well as influencing borrowing costs for specific sectors through various loan guarantees and direct support facilities," the ratings agency added.

It explained that this has made monetary policy difficult to gauge and created a segmented interest-rate environment, impeding the transmission of monetary policy.

"The CBN adopted the Investor and Exporter (IEFX) window as the official exchange rate in May 2021. However, it continues to use administrative controls to manage the demand for foreign exchange, which has caused economically damaging shortages.

"The central bank's inflation-fighting efforts have been complicated further by its lending to the federal government. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) figures show that the CBN's net claims on the central government rose by roughly 23 per cent yoy in January 2022," it said.

According to Fitch, while CBN officials have suggested that raising policy interest rates could moderate government domestic borrowing, however, the interbank treasury bills true yield remains low.

Fitch out true yield at 3.9 per cent for three-month bills at end-May, albeit up from 3.3 per cent at the end of April.

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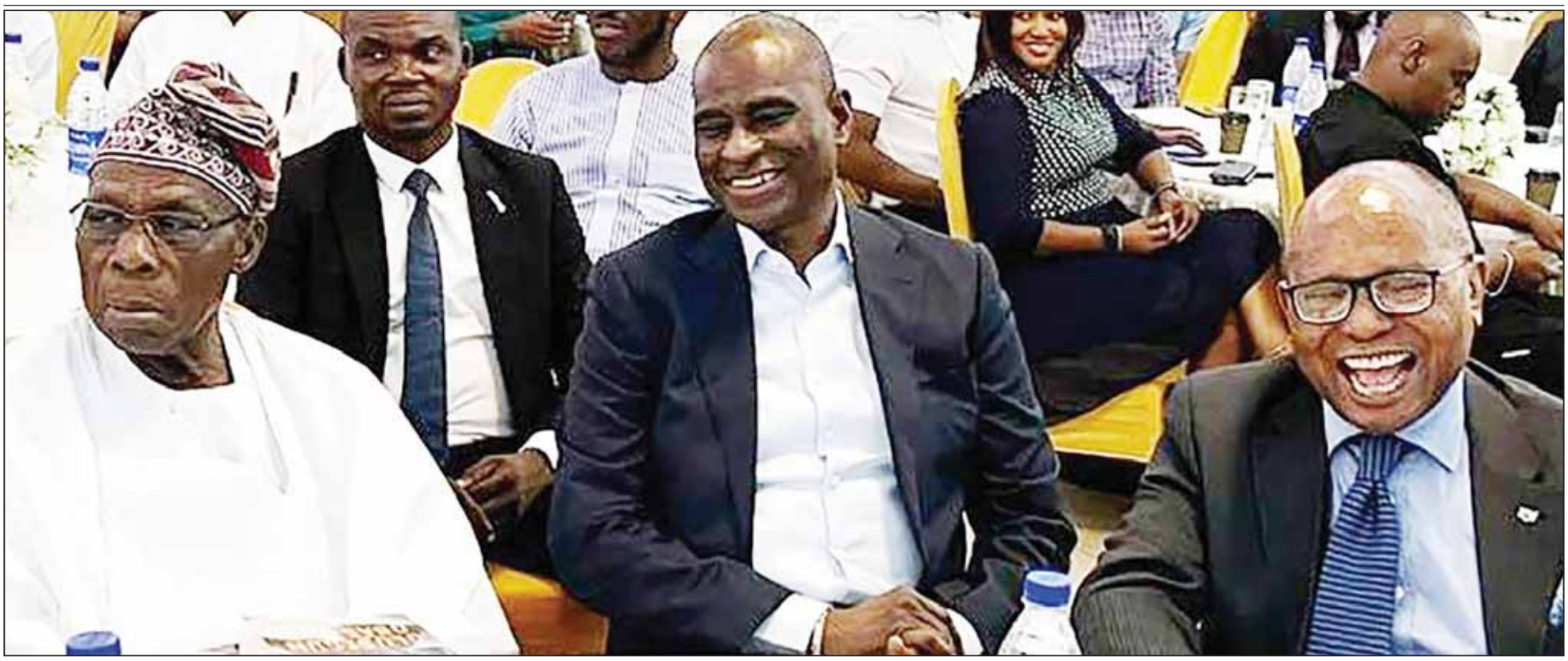
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NEWS

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85TH BIRTHDAY AND BOOK LAUNCH IN HONOUR OF NWAGWU...

L-R: Former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo; Group Chief Executive Officer, Airtel Africa, Dr. Segun Ogunsanya, and Emeritus Professor Anya O. Anya, at the 85th birthday and book launch by Prof. Mark Nwagwu, retired Professor of Cell and Molecular Biology, in Lagos...yesterday

OPEC Faces Critical Oil Production Decision as Nigeria Gets 1.826m bpd August Quota

●Production deficit may hit 800,000bpd ●LCCI: Oil theft has led to spike in IOCs' production costs to $32per barrel ●NUPRC laments impact of oil losses on economy ●DHQ: Troops intercept 8m barrels of stolen crude, 7m litres of diesel, others ● 47 oil bunkerers arrested

Emmanuel Addeh, Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja, and **Peter Uzoho** in Lagos

The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will in August decide whether to continue its current measured oil supply to the global market or set a new quota for its members as the ration agreed upon last year expires.

This was just as the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) yesterday decried that crude oil theft in the country had taken a worrisome dimension in the Niger Delta and has led to a spike in international oil companies' (IOCs) production costs to $32 per barrel, adding that losses from pipeline vandalism and theft were overwhelming IOCs operating in Nigeria.

The international oil cartel, in the same vein, yesterday allocated Nigeria a fresh oil quota of 1.826 million barrels per day for August, although the country's May production, obtained by primary communication channel, was a paltry 1.024 million bpd.

If things remain the way they were last month, Nigeria could post a record 802,000 bpd production deficit by August, given that it barely managed to drill 1 million bpd in May.

In addition, OPEC and its non-OPEC partners known as OPEC+ after the conclusion of its 30th ministerial meeting, decided to stay the course with its production policy for the month.

The Sanusi Barkindo-led led organisation agreed to increase its monthly overall production for the month of August to 648,000 barrels per day, slowly returning the nearly 10 million barrels per day it agreed to pull from the market in April 2020.

Aside Nigeria, which got about 26,000 bpd hike for August, Angola was allocated 1.525 million barrels per day while Algeria was allocated 1.055 million bpd.

Outside Africa, OPEC leader Saudi Arabia got a production ration of 11.004 million bpd, same as Russia, with an expected 26.689 million bpd by the OPEC 10, while non-members will produce 17.165 million bpd to hit 43.854 million bpd for the month.

This emerged just as the international benchmark Brent crude futures traded 0.5 per cent lower at $115.74 a barrel, while the United States West Texas Intermediate futures traded 0.8 per cent lower at $108.93 on Thursday.

Although it argued that the expected decision to drill more oil would free up some of its members that have spare capacity to boost production in September if they choose, however, OPEC's spare capacity remained in doubt.

OPEC further announced that it was set to hold its next meeting on August 3, which will determine September production plans.

A statement after the meeting stated that in view of current oil market fundamentals and the consensus on its outlook, the OPEC and participating non-OPEC oil producing countries agreed to stick with the plan it agreed upon in April 2020 and which was reaffirmed in July 2021.

"(We) reconfirm the production adjustment plan and the monthly production adjustment mechanism approved at the 19th and 29th OPEC and non-OPEC Ministerial Meetings and the decision to adjust upward the monthly overall production for the month of August 2022 by 0.648 mb/d.

"(And) reiterate the critical importance of adhering to full conformity and to the compensation mechanism. Compensation plans should be submitted in accordance with the statement of the 15th OPEC and non-OPEC ministerial meeting," it said.

Nigeria has continued to struggle with meeting its oil production quota, with the country's underperformance coming to as high as 700,000 barrels per day for last month, although the cartel's total allocation to Nigeria exceeded 1.75 million bpd for the month.

The 1.024 million bpd production (through primary communication) was about 195,000 bpd less production when compared with the April's total of 1.219 million bpd, OPEC said.

Despite assurances by the various government agencies, what the OPEC figures imply is that rather than improve, the country's oil production has actually deteriorated in the past months.

On the issue of theft, the federal government had also months ago, deployed heavy military presence in the Niger Delta to curb the menace.

But the OPEC data confirmed that the action has not made any difference, as nothing appears to have changed since the rejigging of the security arrangement in the region.

Added to that, despite a barrel now selling for over $120, Nigerians are not feeling the impact since it cannot meet its production allocation and the meagre revenue from the little it is producing goes into petrol subsidy payment.

LCCI: Oil Theft Has Spiked IOCs' Production Costs to $32 Per Barrel

Meanwhile, the LCCI has decried that crude oil theft had taken a worrisome dimension in the Niger Delta and has spiked IOCs' production costs to $32 per barrel, adding that losses from pipeline vandalism and theft were overwhelming IOCs operating in Nigeria.

Similarly, the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) has for the umpteenth time, lamented the huge oil losses being witnessed in the country and its attendant negative impact on the nation's economy, describing it as unprecedented and worrisome.

The duo of the President of LCCI, Dr. Michael Olawale-Cole and the Chief Executive Officer of NUPRC, Mr. Gbenga Komolafe made the assertions yesterday in Lagos at the LCCI's Public-Private Dialogue on Oil Theft and Artisanal Modular Refineries, with the theme, "Creating an Enabling Environment for Local Refining: Artisanal Modular Refineries and Private Refineries."

Presenting his welcome address at the session, Olawale-Cole stated that Nigeria had in recent years had to battle with dwindling revenue, security challenges, weak infrastructure, rising inflation, high cost of production, and a burdening and unsustainable fuel subsidy.

He said the chamber was concerned about the myriads of problems that all have a revenue connection.

N800 Billion Judgement: Shell to Halt Divestment Plan Until Appeal is Decided

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) Ltd., said yesterday that it will not go ahead with its divestment plan until the case brought against it by one Isaac Torchi and 87 members of the Ejalawa community, Rivers state is decided by the courts.

The Supreme Court had on June 16 urged all parties to the dispute to maintain status quo over a high court decision to award N800 billion in compensation to the community as well as the plea that assets' sale should be suspended until the matters were decided.

The community had claimed damage to the environment as well as source of livelihood, insisting that there had been a continuous injury of hydrocarbon oil spillage, rain acid pollution, and non-maintenance of ruptured pipes causing deaths of plaintiffs' children.

Also impacted by the spill, according to Ejalawa farmers, were trees, and drinking water, causing irreparable damage to the plaintiffs and relations farm products, fish ponds, fish nets, and machines worth several billions of naira.

They had also sought another order directing shell to depollute and rehabilitate the destroyed farmland, ponds and agricultural products, as well as a 10 per cent post-judgement interest from the date of the judgement and litigation cost of N1 billion.

The lower court had held that there was evidence of rupture at the defendants Akuka/Ebubu flow line named Aka-Ebu-Onu-Ban 55 situated on the plaintiffs' land.

"I am convinced that there were oil spills in the Eken-Ogun farmland swamp of the plaintiffs since September 18, 2019 and still continue without remediation as could be gleaned from the uncontroverted facts," Justice Tijani Ringim had held.

However, the initial contention appeared to have been the implicit meaning of "status quo".

"What the status quo means here is that there should be no bids, no sales until the hearing of the applications which has been fixed for November 3, 2022," Mohammed Ndarani, the lawyer representing the Delta communities, told Reuters at the time.

Shell intends to sell its 55 per cent stake in SPDC, which it also operates, as the joint venture struggles with hundreds of spills that it says are caused mostly by theft, but which has been disputed by locals.

However, Okunbor said yesterday that the joint venture "will continue to comply with the Supreme Court's order to maintain the status quo," saying media reports to the contrary were untrue.

"The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd. (SPDC) complies with the law, including any court orders, and respects the judiciary and its role in upholding the rule of law.

"Recent media reporting regarding the 16 June Supreme Court proceedings does not accurately reflect SPDC's response to the order.

"SPDC will continue to comply with the Supreme Court's order to maintain the status quo. We have a strong belief in the merits of our case, which we are vigorously defending.

"The Shell Group has confirmed separately that it will not progress the divestment of its interest in SPDC until the outcome of SPDC's appeal," the brief statement said.

Recently, Shell was expected to to receive two final offers for the onshore oil and gas fields in Nigeria, with Nigerian companies, Heirs Oil and Gas Ltd., and ND Western Ltd., competing to buy Shell's 30 per cent interest in the joint venture, which operates assets in the Niger Delta and nearby offshore areas, according to Bloomberg.

Energy consultant Wood Mackenzie Ltd. last year valued Shell's stake at $2.3 billion, assuming a long-term oil price of $50 a barrel. But with Brent now trading at about $120, the stake likely is worth significantly more.

Shell announced its intention last year to sell the stake, saying its long-term energy transition strategy was incompatible with Nigerian operations prone to spills and theft.


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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF BUA FOODS PLC

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 1st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of BUA Foods Plc will hold on Thursday, 4 August 2022, at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, No. 1, Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja, at 11:00 a.m., to transact the following business:

A. ORDINARY BUSINESS

A. ORDINARY BUSINESS

1. To lay before the meeting, the Report of the Directors, Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2021 together with the Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 31 December 2021 and the Report of the Auditors.
2. To declare a Dividend.
3. To re-elect the following Directors retiring by rotation and being eligible, offer themselves for re-election:
   a. AbdulSamad Rabiu, CON b. Kabiru Rabiu c. Chimaobi Madukwe
4. To authorise the Directors to determine the remuneration of the Auditors for the 2022 financial year.
5. To elect members of the Statutory Audit Committee.
6. To disclose the remuneration of the Managers of the Company.

B. SPECIAL BUSINESS

7. To consider and if thought fit, to pass the following resolutions as Ordinary Resolution:

"Approve the remuneration of the Directors for the 2022 financial year".

8. To consider and if thought fit to pass the following resolution as Special Resolution:

"That the Articles of Association of the Company be and are hereby amended by inserting the following underlined provisions in to the Articles, inserting new Article 95, deleting provisions as highlighted for cancellation in the Articles and renumbering the Articles accordingly:

8.1 Article 10.1. Every person whose name is entered as a member in the register of members shall be entitled without payment to receive within 3 months of allotment or lodgement of transfer or within such other period as the conditions of issue shall provide one certificate for all his shares or several certificates each for one or more of his shares ~~upon payment of N1,000,000 or such lesser sum as the Directors shall from time to time determine~~ provided that in respect of a share or shares held jointly by several persons, the Company shall not be bound to issue more than one certificate, and delivery of a certificate for the share(s) to one of the several joint holders shall be sufficient delivery to all or evidence of its shareholding in dematerialised form.

8.2 Article 11. Every certificate for shares or debentures or representing any other form of security (other than letters of allotment or script certificates) shall be under the common seal and shall bear the autographic signatures of one or more Directors and the Secretary, except where the transfer or issuance was effected electronically through the Central Securities Clearing System. Every certificate for shares shall specify the number and class of shares to which it relates, and amount paid thereon.

8.3 Article12. If a share certificate is defaced, lost, destroyed or displaced, it may be replaced without charge and on such terms if any, as to evidence and indemnity as the Directors think fit.

8.4 Article 23. Subject to such restriction of these Articles as may be applicable and the regulations governing the trading of the shares of a public company as stated in the Nigerian Exchange Limited Rulebook 2015, any member may transfer all or any of his shares by instrument in writing, in the usual common form of transfer, including electronic transfer, or any other form, which the Directors may approve, signed by or on behalf of the transferor or transferee.

8.5 Article 25.2 The Directors may decline to recognise any instrument of transfer unless:

~~a. A fee not exceeding N500 is paid to the Company in respect thereof.~~

8.6 Article 29.2 ~~The Company shall be entitled to charge a fee not exceeding N500.00 on the registration in the register of member of every probate, letter of administration, certificate of death or marriage, power of attorney, notice in lieu of distringas, or other instrument.~~

8.7 Article 77. The Directors may exercise all the powers of the Company to borrow money, and to mortgage or charge its undertaking, property and uncalled capital, or any part thereof and to issue debentures, debenture stock, and other securities, whether outright or as security for any debt, liability or obligation of the Company or any third party. In exercising their borrowing powers however, the directors shall ensure that the aggregate amount at any time owing in respect of moneys borrowed or secured by the Company and its subsidiary companies (excluding inter-company borrowings, interest and apart from temporary loans obtained from bankers and moneys received on current, savings and deposit accounts and otherwise in the ordinary course of business) shall not exceed a reasonable amount except with the consent of the company in general meeting.

8.8 Article 95 (new) Where a casual vacancy arises in the Board, the directors may fill such casual vacancy and the person appointed to fill such casual vacancy shall hold office only until the next annual general meeting of the Company and shall then be eligible for election.

8.9 Article (Old 108) 109. No dividend shall be paid otherwise than out of profits except with the prior written approval of the relevant regulator.

8.10 Article (Old 120) 121. A notice may be given by the Company to any member either personally to him or by sending it by post or by electronic means to his registered address or electronic mail address. A member not having a registered address in Nigeria may supply to the Company an address ~~or electronic mail address~~ anywhere in Nigeria or electronic mail address for the service of notice, and the ~~an~~ address within Nigeria or electronic mail address so supplied by any member shall for the purpose of serving notice upon him be considered the registered address of such member. Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effected by properly addressing, prepaying and posting a letter containing the notice, and unless the contrary is proved, is presumed to have been effected at the time at which the letter would be delivered in the ordinary course of post. Where a notice is sent by electronic mail, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effected by properly addressing and sending to the electronic mail address of the member and unless the contrary is proved is presumed to have been effected at the time at which the electronic mail would be delivered in the ordinary course of delivery of such electronic messages.

8.11 Article (Old 123) 124 If a member has no registered address in Nigeria and has not supplied to the Company an address within Nigeria or email address for the giving of notice to him, a notice inserted in the Gazette or advertised in two leading national daily newspapers circulating in the neighbourhood of the office on the day on which the notice or advertisement appears shall suffice.

In addition, where power is reserved to give notice by advertisement, such advertisement inserted in at least, one leading national daily newspaper shall suffice.

C. NOTES

COMPLIANCE WITH COVID -19 RELATED DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

Shareholders should kindly note that following the Government directive restricting public gathering due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Corporate Affairs Commission's approval was sought for the Annual General Meeting to hold by proxy to minimise physical contact and ensure public health and safety. Quorum for the meeting can therefore be formed either by physical attendance or by proxy.

A member entitled to attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting is therefore entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his/her stead. The names of suggested proxies are:

a. Mr. Mukhtar Mukhtar b. Mrs. Adebisi Bakare
c. Mr. Alex Adio d. Mr. Tunji Bamidele
e. Mr. Kabiru Tambari f. Mr. Musa Bichi
g. Mrs. Funke Augustine

PROXY:
A member of the company entitled to attend and vote at the meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote instead of him/her. A copy of the Proxy form is attached to the Annual Report and can be downloaded from the company's or Registrar's website. Executed form of proxy should be deposited at the Company's Registrars' Office, Africa Prudential Plc, 220B, Ikorodu Road, Palmgrove, Lagos or via email at cxc@africaprudential.com not less than 48 hours before the time of holding the meeting.

STAMPING OF PROXY
The Company has made arrangements at its cost, for the stamping of the duly completed and signed proxy forms submitted to the Company's Registrars within the stipulated time or sent by e-mail to cxc@africaprudential.com.

LIVE STREAMING OF THE AGM
The AGM will be streamed live online. This will enable Shareholders and other Stakeholders who will not be attending physically to follow and/or contribute to the proceedings. The link for the AGM live streaming will be made available on the Company's website at www.buafoodsplc.com

CLOSURE OF REGISTER AND TRANSFER BOOKS
The Register of Members and transfer books will be closed from 14 July 2022 to 20 July 2022 (both dates inclusive) for updating the Register.

DIVIDEND
If the dividend of ₦3:50k recommended by the Directors is approved by members at the Annual General Meeting, the dividend will be paid less withholding tax on 4 August 2022, to shareholders whose names appear in the Company's Register of Members at the close of business on 13 July 2022. Shareholders who have completed the e-dividend Mandate forms will receive a direct credit of the dividend into their bank accounts.

RIGHT OF SECURITIES' HOLDERS TO ASK QUESTIONS
Securities Holders have the right to ask questions not only at the meeting, but also in writing prior to the meeting and such questions may be submitted to the Company at 3rd Floor, PC 32 Churchgate Street, Victoria Island, Lagos on/or before Tuesday, 2 August 2022.

E-ANNUAL REPORT
The electronic version of this Annual Report (e-annual report) can be downloaded from the Company's website at www.buafoodsplc.com. The e-annual report will be emailed to all Shareholders who have provided their email addresses to the Company's Registrars. Shareholders who wish to receive the e-annual report are kindly requested to send an email to info@buafoodsplc.com or ir@buafoodsplc.com or cxc@africaprudential.com

WEBSITE
A copy of this Notice, the Proxy Form and other information relating to the meeting can be found at www.buafoodsplc.com

STATUTORY AUDIT COMMITTEE
In accordance with Section 404(6) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020, any shareholder may nominate another shareholder for appointment to the Statutory Audit Committee. All nominations of members for election to the Audit Committee should reach the Company Secretary at least 21 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting

Kindly note that the provision of the Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance, 2018 issued by the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria requires members of the Committee to be financially literate and be able to read and understand financial statements.

In view of the above, nominations to the Statutory Audit Committee should be supported by a Curriculum Vitae of the nominees.

RE-ELECTION OF DIRECTORS
In accordance with the Company's Articles of Association, **AbdulSamad Rabiu, CON, Kabiru Rabiu and Chimaobi Madukwe** retire by rotation and being eligible, offer themselves for re-election. Please note that the biographical details of Directors seeking re-election are provided in the Annual Report.

Dated this 24th day of June, 2022
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

Oluseye Alayande
Company Secretary
FRC/2014/NBA/00000007513

BUAFoods #NourishingLIVES

Congratulations!



YOUR EXCELLENCY,
ALH. ATIKU ABUBAKAR, GCON
(WAZIRIN ADAMAWA), PDP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

HIS EXCELLENCY,
SENATOR IFEANYI OKOWA,
PDP VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE.

Your Excellencies,

LETER OF CONGRATULATIONS!

The NATIONAL STATE SECRETARIES FORUM of the Peoples DemocraticParty (PDP), congratulate Your Excellencies on your resounding victory in the Peoples Democraat Party (PDP) PresidentialPrimary Election2022.

The forum also congratulates HE Sen. Ifeanyi Okowa on his well deserved emergence as the Vice Presidentialcandidate of our great party. It was a well considered choice.

We are convinced that your victory at the Primary is a divine mandate to salvage our country Nigeria, from the numerous and monumental challenges confrontingher occasioned by the catastrophic performance of the present Administration.

The forum wishes to assure you and our great party that it will leave no stone unturned in mobilizing support from the grassroot ensure your landslide victory of the 2023 presidential election.
Once again CONGRATULATIONS!

SIGNED

1. DAVID IRO - ABIA STATE SECRETARY
2. IDRIS YAHAYA - ADAMAWA STATE SECRETARY
3. HON. HARRISON EKPO - AKWA /IBOM STATE SECRETARY
4. BARR. C.J. OKOLI AKIRIKA - ANAMBRA STATE SECRETARY
5. MOHAMMED SANI CHINADE - BAUCHI STATE SECRETARY
6. ISOWO GESIYE- BAYELSA STATE SECRETARY
7. DR. JOSEPH IANNA NYAM --BENUE STATE SECRETARY
8. ALIYU ABUBAKAR- BORNO STATE SECRETARY
9. ENGR. DAN OSSAI- DELTA STATE SECRETARY
10. BARR. LUKE OGBAGA .NKWEGU EBONYI STATE SECRETARY
11. ALH. ADAMU HARUNA ABUBAKAR- GOMBE STATE SECRETARY
12. IBRAHIM ALIYU - WUSONO KADUNA STATE SECRETARY
13. JAMILU ABUBAKAR DANBATTA - KANO STATE SECRETARY
14. A. SANUSI ALI WALI- KATSINA STATE SECRETARY
15. ABUBAKAR BAWA KALGO - KEBBI STATE SECRETARY
16. HON. FARUK YAHAYA IDRIS- KOGI STATE SECRETARY
17. ABDULRAZAK LAWAL- KWARA STATE SECRETARY
18. SOJI ORIOYE -"LAGOS STATE SECRETARY
19. ALH. ADAMU BAKO NINJA- NASARAWA STATE SECRETARY
20. BARR. SULEIMAN .Z. MOHAMMED - NIGER STATE SECRETARY
21. OMOOBA SUNDAY SOLARIN - OGUN STATE SECRETARY
22. BARR. OLUSEYE JUDES OLUJIMI - ONDO STATE SECRETARY
23. HON. BOLA AJAO- OSUN STATE SECRETARY
24. HON. WASIU ADELEKE - OYO STATE SECRETARY
25. EMMA TUANG- PLATEAU STATE SECRETARY
26. ALH. ABUBAKAR ZAKI BASHIRE- SOKOTO STATE SECRETARY
27. TAFARKI KURIYA AUTA - TARABA STATE SECRETARY
28. SANI MOHAMMED BILAL YOBE STATE SECRETARY
29. FARUK AHMAD GUSAU ZAMFARA STATE SECRETARY

HON. BAKO ANGULU
Forum Chairman /Secretary FCT

HON. (NZE) RAY EMEAÑA
Forum Secretary/IMO State secretary

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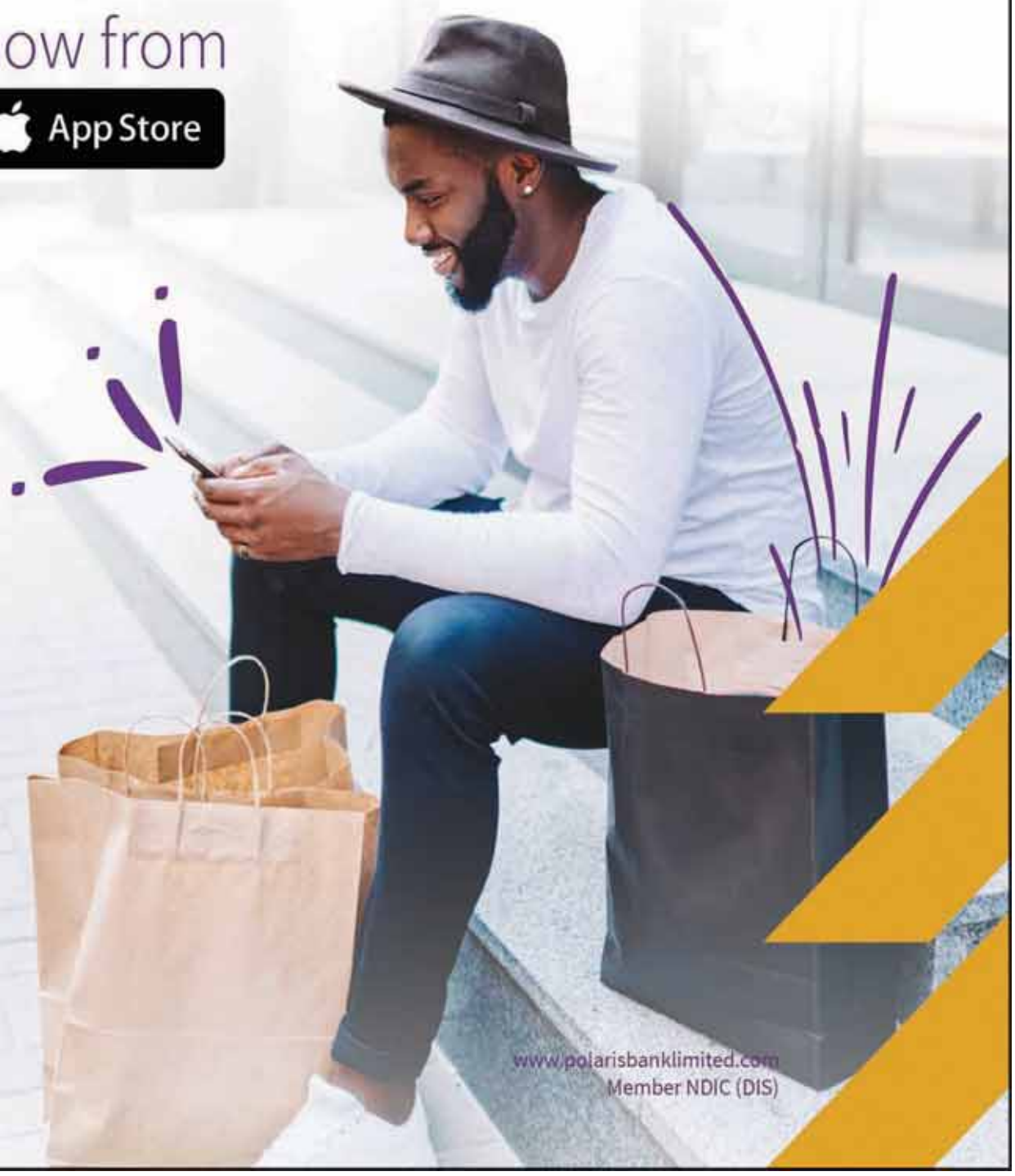
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Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**
Email peter.ishaka@thisdaylive.com

EDITORIAL

DEALING WITH THE LASSA FEVER SCOURGE

The authorities must contain the Lassa fever scourge



Monday's report by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) that Lassa fever has claimed no fewer than 158 lives in 24 states since the beginning of this year should worry health authorities in Nigeria, even though not many people seem to be paying serious attention. Just Three months ago, Oyo State Commissioner for health, Taiwo Oladipo confirmed the death of the two doctors from Lassa fever. The doctors, who had recently opened their private hospital outside Ibadan, died on 28th February and the other 2nd March at University College Hospital after (UCH) after coming in contact with a Lassa fever index case.

It is unfortunate that Lassa fever has been a serious health challenge in Nigeria since it was first diagnosed in Lassa in Borno State in 1969. It is obvious that many Nigerians are not paying attention to the growing fatality rate of this deadly disease that took its name from one of our communities. Even though there have been efforts in the past to contain the scourge, our country has been witnessing frequent outbreaks in recent years. This, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) "could be attributed to reduced response capacity in surveillance and laboratory testing." The symptoms, which include fever, sore throat, vomiting, back pain, cough, abdominal pain, restlessness, and general body weakness usually appear six to 21 days after contact with the virus.

Lassa fever is an acute febrile illness which is caused by a virus with an incubation period of between six to 21 days. The onset of the disease is usually gradual, starting with fever, general weakness, before being followed by headache, sore throat, muscle pain, chest pain, nausea, vomiting, cough, and bleeding from mouth, nose, etc. However, because the symptoms of Lassa fever are so varied and non-specific, clinical diagnosis is often difficult, especially early in the course of the disease. For that reason, steps should be taken by the government, at all levels, to emphasise routine infection prevention and control measures. Healthcare workers should also be advised to always be careful to avoid contact with blood and body fluids in the process of caring for sick persons.

Experts have advised that people should ensure their food (cooked or uncooked) is properly covered while regular handwashing should be adhered to always. The bush around the home should also be cleared regularly while windows and doors of the house should be closed especially when it is nighttime. The public should also be adequately enlightened on the dangers posed by rats in their homes. This should be the responsibility of both the federal ministry of environment and that of information that can deploy the National Orientation Agency (NOA) for a public awareness campaign on the issue.

Against the background of repeated commitments by various stakeholders to prevent a recurrence of this disease, what the current outbreak has shown very clearly is that if indeed there have been any preventive strategies, they were not implemented. We therefore believe that the authorities need to do more if we are ever to rid the nation of the disease that claims the lives of dozens of our citizens on an annual basis.

With effective coordination, the disease can be contained quickly before it becomes another national epidemic. But the real challenge is to work towards its total eradication from Nigeria as it has been done in many other countries. We hope the authorities will take both preventive and long-term measures this time around so that we do not continue to lose our citizens to the virus that has for decades been an emblem of shame for Nigeria.

It is obvious that many Nigerians are not paying attention to the growing fatality rate of Lassa fever, a deadly disease that took its name from one of our communities

THISDAY
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DEPUTY EDITORS WALE OLALEYE, OBINNA CHIMA
MANAGING DIRECTOR ENIOLA BELLO
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR ISRAEL IWEGBU
CHAIRMAN EDITORIAL BOARD OLUSEGUN ADENIYI
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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

VOTE SELLING: WHY BLAME THE POOR?

Vote commercialization is the result of a strategic programme by politicians to inject poverty in the electorate at every point in time leaving them with no other option than to sell their votes to the highest bidder on the day of election. Why do you think that most government programmes don't always alleviate, but always elevate the problems of the poor? When politicians openly say "Dibo ko sebe", you should capture the pun in the fun. Don't let us deceive ourselves by thinking that any censure of the hawkers can achieve any constructive dissuasion-- at least, not for now. Vote buying and vote hawking have formed a synergic partnership in our political culture because the buyers know that there will always be sellers on election day since the sellers are creations of their "penurious programmes".

On the other hand, the sellers know that there will always be buyers on election day because that is the only day and avenue they can profiteer the desperation of the vote buyers. It is good to sermonize to both the buyer and the seller on the destructive tendency of such heinous practice on our political system but will they change? When a voter sells his / her vote for as low as N3000, does that not show irredeemable poverty? After engaging a vote seller in a two-hour homily on the implication of his action to the future of his children, and, at the end of the preachment, you couldn't console him with just N2000 for "wasting" his time, when he gets to the polling booth and finds a vote buyer who is ready to solve his immediate need with N3000, he will not only sell the vote, he will even complement the sale with elaborate display of gratitude to the buyer. Let's be realistic, as much as we desire idealism, it will be elusive for as long as we all indulge in sophism that discountenances realism.

As elite, our self-righteousness is responsible for our incessant pontifications and the unjustified contempt we have for the poor. Yes, we can laugh at a man selling his vote. Yes, we can condemn him for even selling it for as low as N3000. We can mock his poverty. We can deride his condition. But who are the people responsible for his sorry state?

The rulers. Who are these rulers? The politicians. Who are the politicians? The elite. Who are the elite? You and I. When you mock a man who sells his vote so that he can "sebe"(cook), you should know that we, the so-called elite, have failed the crowd thronging in the paradise of hell. Why are we lambasting the weak for selling their votes when most of us are friends to those buying the votes? Who should we talk to? Let us even concede without admitting, that we should talk to both. Where should we start from? Is it not pharisaical to start from the poor with intemperate desires and exploitable vulnerability? We meet and see our friends regularly. They are the ones tempting the poor. They are the ones buying the votes. So, why can't we start from there? Simple: we do not want to offend our friends or put our relationship with them in jeopardy because there is every possibility that we are going to be beneficiaries of the "purchased electoral victory". We will gallivant the streets as "friends to the governor". We will submit CVs for political appointments. We will lobby for contracts. This is the truth. But what do we want from the poor? Nothing. The poor have nothing to offer us. Therefore, we can lambast them. We can chastise them.

Dapo Thomas,
Lagos

The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them...Wisdom 3:1-2

Remembering Ekene Dili Chukwu



15th year MEMORIAL

LATE CHIEF (DR)
AUGUSTINE EJIKEME
ILODIBE
F.INST. T.A. (UK), MFR

Ogbuefi Nnanyelugo, Ezeonwanetiliora,Founding Chairman
Ekene Dili Chukwu (1932 - 2007)

15 years after your departure, we remember our Patriarch. We remember you for your legacy of hard work and diligence. We remember you for your enduring warmth and love for humanity. In this 15 years, we have strived to emulate you, to fill the big shoes you left behind. In-spite of the challenges, we look up to God to help us with the grace to stay focused in the struggle to further engrave your name in the sands of time. We miss you dearly.

AKU ILODIBE
for: AUSTIN EJIKEME ILODIBE PROPERTIES LIMITED

EYES ON THE FUTURE. MIND ON THE PRESENT.

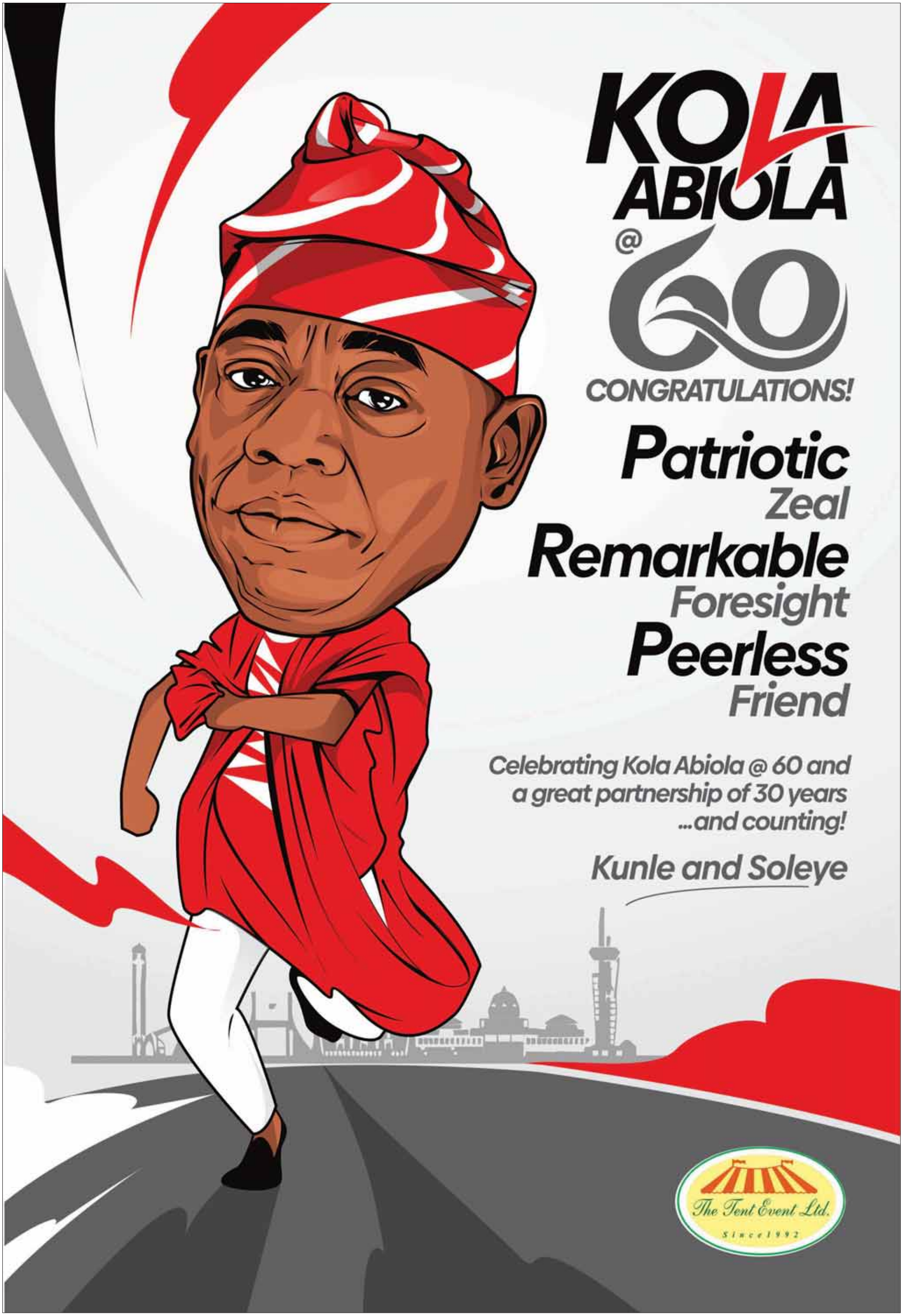
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With best wishes from all of us:

Chief 'Bosun Kuku
Prince Adekunle Dosumu
Rev. Dr. Gabriel Oyediji
Mr. Kunle Akinkugbe
Mr. Tajudeen Jinadu
Mr. Lanre Adisa
Chief Akintunde Giwa
Mr. Soleye Hughes
Mr. Kola Shonibare
Mr. Isaac Olaogun
Mr. Fela Mosuro
Mr. Olu Adewunmi
Mr. Adewunmi Adeyemo
Mr. Dayo Adeola
Mr. Akin George-Taylor
Mr. Kola Oke

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a great partnership of 30 years
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The Federal Ministry of Transportation

in collaboration with

The National Judicial Institute

Presents

THE 16TH International Maritime Seminar for Judges

Date: Tuesday 5th - Thursday 7th July, 2022
Time: 9:00am - 5pm Daily
Venue: Ladi Kwali Centre, Sheraton Abuja Hotel

Registration Fee: N10,000

FOR WHO?

Members of the Judiciary, Attorneys General, Legal Advisers of MDAs & Private Entities, Maritime and Legal Practitioners, Providers and Users of Shipping Services, as well as Industry Stakeholders

AIM:

To discuss contemporary issues and developments in international maritime law and practice

HIGHLIGHTS

- Current Issues in Port Operations: Legal issues and matters arising,
- Current Issues in Maritime Adjudication and Practice
- Security of the Maritime Domain: Matters Arising; among other topics of interest

Special Guest of Honour: Hon. Justice Olukayode Ariwoola
The Acting Chief Justice of Nigeria

Chairman of the Occasion:
Hon. Justice Bode Rhodes-Vivour, JSC (Rtd.)

Chief Host:
Honorable Minister of Transportation

Chairman Organising Committee:
Hon. Justice John Terhemba Tsoho,
Chief Judge, Federal High Court

Host:
Rt. Hon. Emmanuel Jime,
Executive Secretary/CEO, NSC

SPECIAL GUESTS:

Chief Justices and Members of the Judiciaries of:
Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Sierra Lone, South Africa, and The Gambia

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COVERAGE
BROADBAND

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER CODE OF PRACTICE (ICCP) FOR VALUE ADDED SERVICES IN COMPLIANCE WITH NCC CONSUMER CODE OF PRACTICE REGULATION OF 2007

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED
CONSUMER CODE OF PRACTICE

0. INTRODUCTION:

In this Code we attempt to provide answers to a range of questions which you may have about our services and to provide you with information on how and where you can obtain advice and help. In addition to this Code we aim to comply with the principles outlined in various legislation including the Nigerian Communication Act 2003, Schedule I of the Consumer Code of Practice Regulation, 2007. We make available full and accurate information in plain language about how services are run, how they should perform and who is in charge. This code helps to explain what to do if things go wrong. It gives information on how to get a full explanation, together with a remedy. It sets out the complaints procedure and explains how to use it should the need arise. It also describes what to do if you have a complaint, how we will resolve it, and what you can do if you are not satisfied with our response. Nothing in this Code affects your statutory or common law rights, nor is anything contained in this Code intended to form part of a contract or collateral contract between Coverage Broadband Limited and any of its subscribers. Copies of this Code may be obtained on our website www.coveragebroadbandlimited.com or by contacting our Corporate Head Office at 3, Gurara Street, Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria.

1. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED (CBL), Consumer Code of Practice ('the code') is made pursuance to section 106(2) of the Nigerian Communication Act 2003 ('the Act') and Regulation 4(1) of the Consumer Code of Practice Regulation 2007 ('the Regulations')

2. DEFINITIONS:

Terms used in this code are given their ordinary meaning within the framework of the business or **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED' s** document. Clause headings are inserted for convenience of reference only and shall not affect the interpretation of this code. Words importing the plural shall, except where the contest otherwise requires, include the singular and vice versa; reference to the masculine gender shall include the feminine or neuter gender and vice versa; and reference to persons shall be construed as reference to an individual firm, company, body corporate, statutory board, government body, incorporated body of persons, association or trust as the context may require.

3. APPLICATION OF CODE:

The Code shall govern the provision of services to consumer by **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED.** In the event of a conflict between the Code and the General Code, to the extent that the terms of the code are not less favorable to the consumer than the General Code, this Code shall apply

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall provide consumers with information on our services that is complete, accurate and up-to-date and in simple, clear language. This would be made available to both the customer service department of the company, web portal and also in the welcome message after opting in for a service.

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall endeavor to respond in a timely manner to consumer requests for information on their services and such information shall be Provided free of charge and shall include at least the following:

(a) Current service, arrangements, including information about the service and tariff for all services offered to the public, shall be readily available via appropriate media including electronic format on **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED's** website

(b) Any request in tariff change would be done under the auspice of **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** in consultation with the service provider. Approval shall be gotten for any tariff change and also adequate information with an option to opt out shall be given to the user/subscriber

(c) We shall also endeavor to ensure that subscribers have good Service Level Agreement.

4. DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED offers USSD and Bulk SMS Services. This service caters to customer's need for SMS broadcast in area such as marketing campaigns, promotion activities, and customer notification.

5. SERVICE CONTRACT AND DURATION:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall supply, or make available on request, a copy of the contract or agreement for the provision of services, and such contracts shall be written in plain and clear language.

6. SERVICES SUBSCRIPTION:
Customers may subscribe to the service via a convenient electronic or web channel. COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED, upon receipt of subscription will issue email or Short Message Service confirmation.

7. CONTRACT TERMS AND CONDITION:

All term and conditions of a contract regarding the provision of any of our services shall be clearly stated in the contract or agreement. Furthermore, contracts entered by **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** with its customers shall have specific duration which shall commence on a definite date to be stated in the contract and shall terminate on a certain date albeit in accordance with the termination provision in such contract.

8. AVAILABILITY OF SERVICE:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED services are available on all mobile networks, however our services are network dependent, services will be restricted to certain areas within Nigeria where mobile network service is available as contained in promotion materials.

9. ADVERTISING OF PACKAGED SERVICES:

(a) Where **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** represents in advertising materials that service is provided as part of a package, **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** shall ensure it is liable to supply all components of the service package. In the event that **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** are or may be unable to supply any component of the package, appropriate information about this limitation shall be included in the advertising materials.

(b) Where advertising materials indicate the price of a component of a service package, **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** shall include in the advertising materials a statement of the minimum total charge for the package, and indicate any condition that may apply to obtain the component at the stated price.

10. COMPLIANT PROCESSES:
COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED operates a customer services desk which is reachable during working hours from 8: 30am to 5:30pm and outside working hours via e-mail. All consumers can contact the help desk via telephone; +2349 460 3130 email: info@coverage broadband.com. Before you contact our support desk please make sure that you have details of the transaction initiated, your mobile number, and summary of the compliant. This will enable us process and resolve your complaints quickly.

11. FURTHER RECOURSE:
In the event that the complaining customer remains dissatisfied with the outcome/resolution of the compliant, the customer has the right to refer the compliant to Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC)

12. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS AND OUTCOME:

An appropriate recording system for complaints and their outcome/resolution shall be set up and such system shall have all complaints and resolution stored in a discernible manner for easy identification.

13. RETENTION OF RECORDS:

Any information collected and recorded as part of compliant handling processes shall be retained for at least twelve (12) months following the resolution of complaints or as directed by NCC from time to time

14. OPT-IN AND OPT-OUT:

Upon request for any service, we shall provide the consumer with Opt-in and Opt-out options in clear, simple and understandable terms we shall provide the consumer with access to a HELP function to obtain information on services they are at the time of request, subscribed to and how to opt-out in clear plain English.

15. BILLING INFORMATION

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall ensure that at a minimum, the following information is included in any billing or charging notifications issued by it or on its behalf:
(a) The name of the service for which the consumer has been billed
(b) The type of the service for which the consumer has been billed and the service delivery medium
(c) The period over which the service associated with the charge will be provided
(d) The total amount billed or charged to the consumer's prepaid account

16. ITEMIZATION OF CHARGE:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall ensure that each consumer has access to itemized details to all charges pertaining to subscribers on that mobile network and **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** shall ensure that such itemized details are available for 12 months after the billing/charges effect has occurred.

17. TIMING FOR ISSUANCE OF BILL:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall bill Consumers at the point of activation and shall equally ensure that in instances where a service for which a consumer has been billed cannot be delivered, the consumer will be subsequently offered the service at no extra cost for a period of time equal to the period over which the service should have been delivered but was not. Where the circumstances will not permit the service to be delivered (due to circumstances reasonably beyond our control, such as of force majeure or a technical system failure at the mobile network resulting in service interruption), **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** shall liaise with the mobile network operator to establish a suitable resolution path that will ensure that consumers do not lose any value and are appropriately refunded and compensated.

18. PAYMENT CONFIRMATION:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall ensure that consumer are able to verify their bill payment by acknowledgment of payment on the next bill issued, with such appropriate and accessible methods as may be made available by **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED.**

19. BILLING FREQUENCY:

COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED shall provide consumer with advance written notification of any proposed changes in billing before any such changes are implemented via any channel over which **COVERAGE BROADBAND LIMITED** services are offered. Consumers shall be informed in all such notifications of how to opt out of The service to avoid experiencing the proposed changes in billings.

POLITICS

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The Other Side of Ekweremadus' Visit to the UK

Anayo Royce writes that there is more to the Ekweremadus' troubled visit to the United Kingdom

There are always two sides to every story and it is generally wise, safe and charitable to listen to both before committing to one.

There are two players on each side. The first is light, whereas the second is dark. One must beware of the half-truth. You may have gotten hold of the wrong half.

After taking time to read both sides of the story and also with the new development about the real age of the supposed donor, Ukpo Nwamini David, the whole thing is becoming more glaring.

The former Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu was arrested alongside his wife by the Metropolitan police in the United Kingdom for alleged child organ harvesting offence.

And since the news broke out, most Nigerians have condemned the alleged action of Ekweremadu following the confession of the supposed donor that he was not aware that he was brought to UK for kidney transplant.

The boy whose organ was going to stand as a kidney donor said he is only a 15-year-old which contradicted the 21 years which Ekweremadu had claimed while processing the visa, adding that he was not aware of the intention of the Senator which spiked a lot of reactions among Nigerians.

There is, however, a new twist in the alleged child organ harvesting case.

According to information on the passport data page of Ukpo, he was born on October 12, 2000. Also, a check on the Bank Verification Number (BVN) portal also showed Ukpo's date of birth as October 12, 2000.

Reports also disclosed that Ukpo Nwamini David's kidney did not match that of Ms. Sonia Ekweremadu and instead of returning to Nigeria, he wanted to seek sympathy from the UK government in order to get asylum not minding the damage it could cause the former Deputy Senate President.

Ekweremadu notified the UK government of a request to facilitate a visa for a boy who was coming as a kidney donor for his daughter.

Part of the visa medical application reads: "I am writing in support of the visa application made by Mr. Ukpo Nwamini David who is currently having medical investigations for a kidney donation to Ms. Sonia Ekweremadu."

"David and Sonia will be at the Royal Free Hospital London and I will be providing the necessary funding. I have enclosed a statement of the bank account."

Without any iota of doubt, David Ukpo Nwamini, is above 20. And shortly after the news of Ekweremadu's arrest, he immediately went to share new pictures on Facebook page with caption "Grace sweet, Let's keep hustling".

David Ukpo Nwamini decided to play a fast one not minding the trauma he would subject the family of Ekweremadu to just because of greener pasture.

Unfortunately, the story has turned around; Nigerians and the world have been fed with the wrong angle of the story.

Findings however, revealed that the said Ekweremadu's daughter recently passed out from her NYSC where she served in Abuja early this year and has been in the UK since February this year. She travelled with the young man in question.

His Bank Verification Number popularly known as BVN has proven beyond reasonable doubt that the stories by supposed donor were fabricated just to gain a better living in the UK.

The young man is 21 years of age, not a 15-year-old child and is related to the Ekweremadus through Ekweremadu's wife.

He is not a vagrant picked from the streets of Lagos. The young man's kidney did not match Ekweremadu daughter's own and could not be a donor and had been in the UK on Ekweremadu's account since February this year.

All the dramas did not come up since February that he has been in the UK until he



was notified by the Ekweremadus that he will have to travel back to Nigeria since the transplant cannot go ahead.

The young man obviously did not want to return to Nigeria believing the circumstances could support his application for asylum in the UK. He went to the police to make the claim that he was 15 years (a child/minor) and was misled into accepting to be a donor.

Definitely his claim is being given the benefit of doubt by the UK authorities but the Ekweremadus have been scandalized, humiliated and reduced to felons by the young man's quest to achieve a stay in the UK.

The investigations will definitely cover the Nigerian angle of events and the facts will be clear for all to see as time goes on.

Some prominent Nigerians who have followed up with the event including the presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Mr. Peter Obi, have been praying for the Ekweremadus at their trying times and definitely, they will come out of it because the truth is not hidden.

The Nigerian government is yet to release any official statement on the scandal probably, because Ekweremadu is not a member of the ruling party APC.

It was also in the news that the alleged victim of organ trafficking involving Senator Ike Ekweremadu and his wife in the UK is 25 years old as against 15 claimed by the British Police.

The younger brother of David Ukpo Nwanmini, Jonathan Ukpo Nwanmini who was unhappy with the lies fabricated against his fellow Igbo man said the victim, David Ukpo Nwanmini is his elder brother.

According to him, "David is my elder brother because we are both of the same father with different mothers and we hail from Ebonyi State. I will be 22 years old by next month and David is 25 years old. I am aware that he travelled because he told me. He did not disclose the country he was travelling to. He simply told me he was going to school abroad."

"After some months of not hearing from him, I got his number from his girlfriend and called him. I asked about his studies and work."

The act by the supposed donor David is however, just a selfish means to secure a better life but with the investigation still on, the truth is not far from coming out.

Despite Ekweremadu's diplomatic passport, he has been denied bail. Diplomatic immunity is a principle of international law that provides foreign diplomats with a degree of protection from criminal or civil prosecution under the laws of the countries hosting them.

.-Royce writes from Lagos.

Governor Diri's Development Stride in Bayelsa

Jerry Cliff writes about the move by Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa state to ensure safety and unity of the people since he assumed duties over two years ago

When Senator Douye Diri took over the mantle of leadership in February 14, 2020 as governor of Bayelsa State, he made it loud and clear to those who care to listen that security and unity of the State would be top on his development agenda.

Believing in the school of thought, that there is a strong nexus between security and development on one hand and uniting the people for the task of purposeful development on the other hand.

The first step he took towards that direction was the inauguration of a committee to bring security to the state capital as well as the grassroots in line with the much talked about community policing, with a robust all-inclusive security arrangment.

This was followed by reinvigorating the security architecture by collapsing the two existing security outfits codenamed, Operation Doo-Akpo and the Bayelsa Volunteers into one operation through the recent signing into law in what is known as the Community Safety Corps Bill.

He used the occasion to commission 50 state-of-the-art brand new operational vehicles, 40 motorbikes and security gadgets. While warning criminals to steer clear of the state, the governor emphasized the fact that his administration's priority is to ensure the prosperity of all, which cannot be achieved without security of lives and properties, noting that crime fighting is a collective effort and enjoined all hands to be on deck.

Towards achieving this noble objective, army of youth were recruited and



trained to work with the Bayelsa Safety Corps basically to complement the conventional Police Force in nipping the security concerns of the state in the bud with good sense of synergy. The recruitment of more youth to that effect is still on going.

In addition to that, the State government embarked on demolition of illegal and makeshift structures, which had become criminal hideouts and social nuisance. The demolition of these structures have not only improved on the security profile of the State but have also added aesthetic value to the urban renewal policy of the State government, thereby giving the State capital, Yenagoa, a befitting status.

Today, the popular Tombia-Edepie round about which was a haven of men of the underworld is wearing a new look, as it is fast transforming the State to a tourism delight and indeed one of the most peaceful States in the country.

This is a clear indication of governor Diri's insightful understanding of the fact that there is an inseparable link between security and sustainable development.

On the other hand, promoting oneness and unity of purpose among Bayelsans, is one of the positive sides governor Diri has brought to bear in the governance of the state. Senator Diri, who is widely known as prosperity governor regards every part of Bayelsa as his primary constituency, regardless of political affiliations, an attribute which has endeared him to all and sundry in the state.

This is why it is no surprising, members of other political parties are embracing the ruling PDP in the State, because of this singular virtue of waving his sincere olive branch to all Bayelsans and others in the running of an all-inclusive administration in the State. He believes and has spoken in different fora that he has no enemies anywhere to contend with in the development of Bayelsa State, which is a virtue, according to governor Diri, was impacted in him by his late mother, Mrs Rose Diri.

He stated this at a memorial ceremony in honour of his late mother at Ayamasaa Community in Ekeremor Local Government Area.

-Cliff, a Public affairs analyst, Writes from Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

NOTE: Interested readers should continue in the online edition on www.thisdaylive.com

THE VIEW FROM AMERICA
CHIDO NWANGWU



Bombshell Testimony of a 25-Year-Old White House Staff

Chido Nwangwu chronicles the testimony of ex-White House staff, Cassidy Hutchinson, before the US House committee, about the January 6, 2021 invasion of the Capitol in Washington DC



Cassidy Hutchinson, former aide to former President Donald Trump's White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, is the talk-of-the-town in Washington DC and all of political America!

On a scale of 1-to-10, the pretty but obviously stressed young, politically conservative woman who was testifying at the House select committee investigating the January 6 attack on the Capitol, was struggling between 9-to-9.5. She moved into what Americans ordinarily refer to as real, juicy stuff.

Many would have dismissed it as made up stuff against Trump. She had no axe to grind with the giddy, intemperate, indiscrete, aggressive and injudicious former President Trump; except may be she felt strongly about the basic elements of presidential behavior, On that score, her small corner table was only a sneezing distance from the Oval Office, the sanctum santorum of American presidential work central.

Her revelations of the boorish, banal, reckless and unseemly misconducts by Trump had the most believable exposition by a credible witness and testimony bearer.

Take this, for example., although, there had been variations and interpretations about Trump's intent after he finished his incendiary speech to the insurrectionists movement on January 6, as to whether he wanted to simply go back into the White House, quickly take down a triple layer McDonald's sandwich, chill out and or grab his phone and unload his angst via twitter about this bizzare, quixotic scream about "the stolen ballots."

The "good fellas", Trump's "good people", specifically the "Proud Boys" and their confederacy of racialists and antiSemites, anti-Black bigots and anti-immigration gangs were in the area to create confusion, conflicts and get some folks beat up!

According to Cassidy' revelation that after his speech, Trump entered the presidential limo. Apparently, he thought they were driving him to the prime legislative real estate of the world, an area that became, a few minutes afterwards, the ground-zero of mayhem and arson and brutal breaches of the law.

She revealed that then deputy White House chief of staff for operations, Tony Ornato, said to Trump's security detail to be aware that the Capitol zone was no longer safe.

When they basically protected the President from himself, Trump was enraged and reportedly said something like: "I'm the fxxxing president, take me up the Capitol now." Thus, began the jarring revealation that Trump tried to hold the steering wheel. According to the former aide at the White House, Robert Engel, the head of Trump's security detail, politely but firmly replied, "Sir, you need to take your hand off the steering wheel. We're going back to the West Wing. We're not going to the Capitol." It was shortly after that Trump "lunged" at Engel….

It is such vivid recalls, historical contexts and the nunaced front-row witness to history, fueled by emerging, latest facts of Mr. Trump's failed quest to hijack the destination of this republic that millions of Americans feel differently about the man!

Cassidy's riveting testimony about how Trump and some of his minions sought to redirect to his underserving benefit the outcome of the November 2020 presidential election caused the January 6 select committee Chairman Bennie Thompson to make the point, that:

After hearing your testimony in all its candor in detail, I want to speak directly to the handful of witnesses who have been outliers in our investigation, a small number who have defied us outright., those whose memories have failed them again and again, on the most important details and to those who fear Donald Trump and his enablers because of this courageous woman, and others like her: Your attempt to hide the truth from the American people will fail."

In another moment, Miss Cassidy testified that former President Trump threw his lunch against the wall when he read his Attorney General Bill Barr's AP interview, where he stated without equivocation that there was no election fraud, and that Joe Biden won! The young woman testified that: "There was ketchup dripping down the wall, and there was a shattered porcelain plate on the floor."

Without any doubt, like I have argued on this platform, some time ago, January 6, 2021 has become the Donald Trump mob day of infamy. It is the day that the United States and the world witnessed the explosion of the megalomanaical and selfish impulses of the 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump.

On that day, Trump and his supporters diminished the collective dignity of America as a beacon of democracy. The mob invasion and thrashing of the U.S Capitol building, location of the Senate and House of Representatives, left millions wondering: is this really happening in America?

Why is an American President so consumed by his surrealities and fictional focus on falsehoods that he will place at risk, willfully and deliberately, his Vice President Mike Pence and most of the Congressional contingent of this country?

The world is understandably disappointed by the crudities and vile excesses of the evidently tempestuous and corrosive Trump. A man of ungovernable attitude and outrageous fixations. He promised to make America great again (MAGA); but sadly, the man has dragged to the mud the well-earned, centuries old reputation of America as the land of peaceful transfer of power!

-Dr. Nwangwu, is Founder & Publisher of the first African-owned, U.S-based newspaper on the internet, USAfricaonline.com, and established USAfrica in 1992 in Houston.

Federal Legislators Push for Improved Educational System

Olubunmi Ogun writes that every tier of government needs to focus on education in order to address the many challenges students are facing in learning institutions across the country.



There's no gainsaying that every government in Nigeria needs to focus on education in order to address the many challenges students are facing in tertiary institutions across the country.

Over the last three years, some National Assembly representives have gone beyond the call of duty to transform the education sector in their Districts into greatness and turning their constituents into respectable individuals among their peers from other regions.

Education plays a major role in shaping the future of the youth, thereby making them to became better citizens who would be useful to themselves and the society

At a recent scholarship awards in Ilaro, Ogun State sponsored by the Senator representing Ogun West Senatorial District, Tolu Odebiyi, Moses Paul Anuoluwa, could not hide his joy. In his right hand is a cheque of One Hundred Thousand Naira (N100.000), while he held on to a brand new HP Laptop worth over Two Hundred Thousand Naira (N200,000) in Nigerian currency with his left hand beaming with smile.

Moses is a tertiary institution student and an indigene of Ogun West Senatorial District, who, like his colleagues is now at home due to the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) imposed strike. Moses is one of the beneficiaries of the Tolu Odebiyi Scholarship awards.

The Senator representing Ogun West, Tolu Odebiyi, for three years, has given out scholarship awards including laptops to over 600 indigent but academically brilliant students from his district.

The beneficiaries will enjoy these scholarship opportunities till they graduate from their various institutions of learning.

While expanding the frontiers of building the youths of Ogun West to become great technology entrepreneurs, the founder of the Scholarship Foundation, Senator Tolu Odebiyi has also facilitated enormous job opportunities for the beneficiaries of his scholarship awards at Africa's leading fintech company, Flutterwave and Africa's leading card manufacturing and tech company, SecureID, among many others.

Senator Odebiyi's records and performance in terms of wealth creation, provision of social amenities, construction of public schools and elimination of poverty in his communities has shown that Nigeria can regain its lost glory if the right policies are put in place and adequate budgetary provisions are made to cater for all the sectors, most especially education and ICT.

In the Nigerian Senate, he remains one of the most colourful Senators from the SouthWest whose kind gestures spread across his Senatorial District.

Also exploring angles that provide solutions to the education challenges in their districts are Senators Olubunmi Adetunmbi, Tokunbo Abiru (Lagos East); and from the House of representatives are Hon. Ade Adeogun (Akoko South-East/Akoko South-West Federal constituency) and Hon. Kolade Akinjo.

The vibrant lawmaker from Ekiti North Senatorial District, Senator Olubunmi Adetunmbi, in the area of human empowerment has distributed bursaries to over 500 students in Ekiti North Senatorial District, where each student got Fifty Thousand Naira (N50,000.00).

One could argue that more needs to be done in lifting more indigent students up, given the high inflation rate and economic malaise in the country.

A former Banker and former Commissioner of Finance in Lagos State, Senator Tokunbo Abiru had in October 2021, given out bursaries to 600 brilliant but indigent students in his Lagos East senatorial district through an endowment instituted by his foundation to assist youth.

The need to plug gaps in the education system is one reason that the House member representing Akoko South-East/Akoko South-West Federal constituency, Hon. Ade Adeogun has facilitated three years tuition free scholarship for five hundred students at Upland College of Education, Ipesi Akoko, Ondo State to give hope to the indigent youths.

Demonstrating his legislative interventions in the area of education, Hon. Kolade Akinjo distributed educational materials to primary schools, built schools and gave scholarships to public secondary school students as well as graduates of the Nigerian Law School from Ilaje/Ese Odo Federal constituency.

With great politicians like these, Nigeria will continue to build a mass of educated youths with morals, knowledge, expertise and mentality to move this country forward.

-Ogun writes from Abuja

Senator Odebiyi's record and performance in terms of wealth creation, provision of social amenities, construction of public schools and elimination of poverty in his communities has shown that Nigeria can regain its lost glory if the right policies are put in place and adequate budgetary provisions are made to cater for all the sectors, most especially education and ICT

AP3N
Africa Public Private Partnerships Network

ICRC
THE PRESIDENCY

The AP3N is a network of Public Private Partnership (PPP) units and practitioners across the African Continent, established out of a greater realization and consensus of the need for collaboration between African PPP units for the achievement of Africa's infrastructure development.

The network is designed to serve as a knowledge and experience sharing forum to upscale the learning curve of PPP Public Officers at the continental level of government.

The ICRC is pleased to invite you to

Africa Private Partnership Network (AP3N)

INVESTMENT SUMMIT 2022

4th -5th July 2022

9.00am prompt

Congress Hall,Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, Nigeria



Mr. Boss Mustapha
Secretary to the Government of the Federation
SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR



Mr. J. A. Michael Ohiani
Ag. Director General/CEO, ICRC



Beatrice Ikilai
Co-President, AP3N

theme:
Financing Africa's Infrastructure through Public Private Partnership

ABOUT ICRC

The ICRC was established to regulate PPP endeavours of the Federal government aimed at addressing Nigeria's infrastructure deficit which hampers economic development.
The Commission's functions include:

- Regulating PPP procurement by-
  - Guiding MDAs in structuring PPP transactions for both green field and brown field infrastructure Pre-Contract regulation.
  - Taking custody of all executed agreements and ensuring compliance-Post Contract Regulation.
- Issuance of PPP regulations and guidelines.
- Collaborating with state governments to develop a sustainable national PPP framework.

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T: +234 9 4604900, email: info@icrc.gov.ng.

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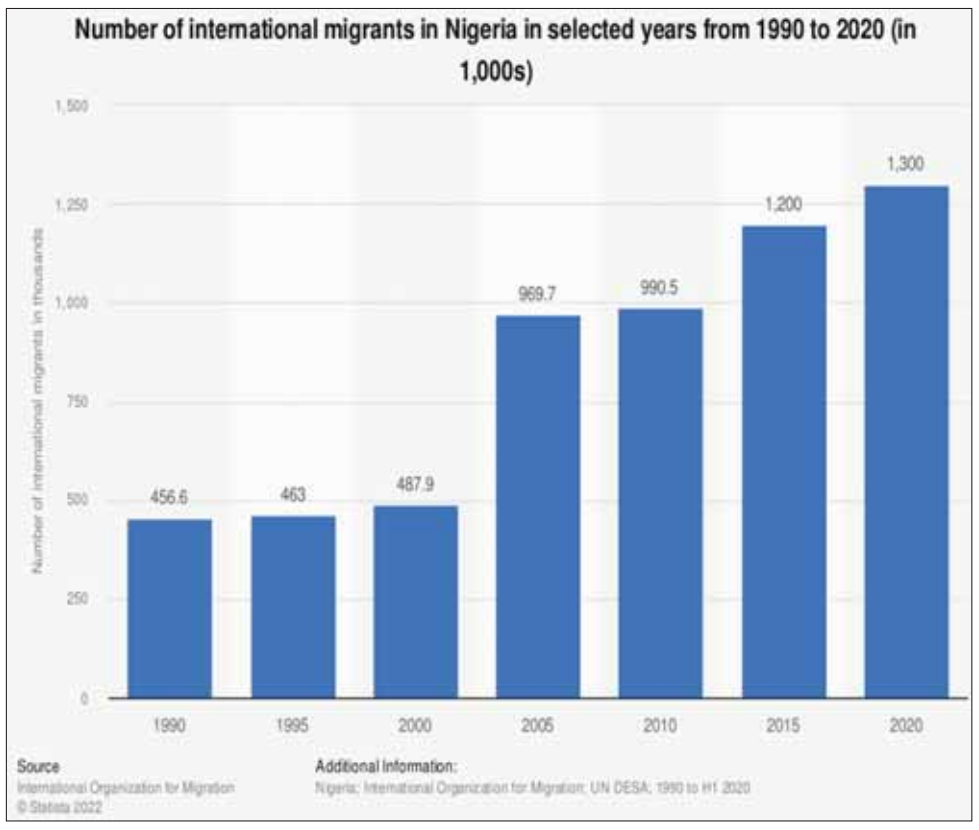
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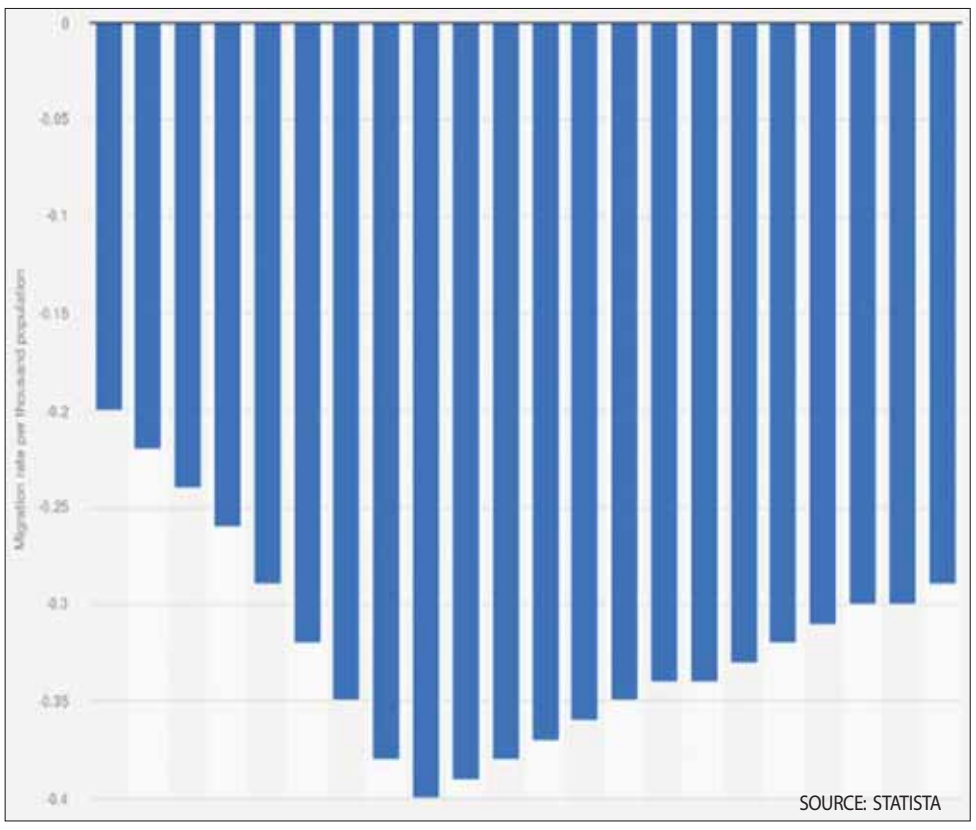
Group Business Editor Eromosele Abiodun
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RATES AS AT JUNE 30, 2022

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

Passport Racket Ruffles NIS as Applicants Protest against Outrageous Extortion





Chinedu Eze

When the new passport processing regime kicked off on June 1, 2021 by the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), it was supposed to be transparent and a more expedited system that would make it easy for applicants to obtain their passports, but THISDAY can confirm that it has become a cesspool of corruption.

The new system takes three months for an applicant to obtain his passport, so applicants bribe Passport Control Officers (PCOs) in order to obtain their passports within a shorter period of time.

To obtain a new passport, an applicant is expected to go online at the Nigerian Immigration Service portal and apply, make payment, select the particular passport office and date, but THISDAY learnt that after the application, some applicants could be asked to come for capture within average of three months.

Many applicants who wished to acquire new passport or renew existing ones find it extremely difficult to wait for that period, so they go to passport offices to see whether they could obtain their passports within few days.

The long period an applicant would have to wait seemed to be the weakness of the new system introduced last year by NIS, which is purely cashless and could have aborted possibilities of bribery.

THISDAY investigation revealed that the consequence of the long interlude has opened lucrative business for Passport Control Officers who now collect money to process passports for applicants within few days.

THISDAY conducted investigation at the passport offices in Edo and the five states of Enugu, Ebonyi, Abia, Anambra and Imo states and discovered that applicants literally troop out of Lagos to these states where they pay extra N70, 000 to N100, 000 in addition to the official cost of the passport to circumvent the long interval they officially have to wait to obtain the passports in few days.

THISDAY monitored some applicants who went to these states and in Umuahia and Benin. They confided that they were told that the unofficial cost was N70, 000.

An applicant who went to Benin told THISDAY that he begged that the cost be reduced for him.

According to him, the NIS official eventually accepted N65, 000 in which he paid N45, 000 in advance.

NIS source who confirmed the illicit transactions told THISDAY that over the years the busy passport offices in Lagos and Abuja were being closely monitored, while fraudulent activities were going on in other states.

"There is high level of corruption outside Lagos and Abuja. In the South South and South East 32-page passport with five years validity costs about N70, 000 extra to obtain and as much as N130, 000 for the 64 page 10 years validity passports. This, it was learnt, is obtained in Akwa Ibom, Abia and Imo states. Behind the scene, activities in Lagos reflect the same thing but not at the same level of exploitation as obtained in other states.

"Truth is that the online process is not working. The PCOs use emergency date to collect money from applicants. When they asked you to appear at the passport offices in three months after online application, the applicants fly to these other states to obtain the passports. There is always the urgent need to have the passports in shorter time than the date online application gives the applicants, "the NIS source told THISDAY.

It was also learnt that the desire to leave Nigeria has mounted extra pressure on the Nigeria Immigration Service, which has been unable to make passports available to meet the surging demand. However, there are indications that available passport booklets are kept away by the PCOs who only bring them out when they are allegedly paid extra beyond the

Continued on page 24

FCT to Benefit from €350m EU Grant on Kugbo Market, Eco Villa Projects

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory is a major beneficiary of some of key projects which the European Union (EU) is financing in Nigeria in collaboration with the federal government via a €350 million grant provided by the EU to African countries under the Cotonou Agreement.

Some of the projects include the Kugbo International Market, Kafe District Market and Ecoville Apartment in Daki Biu.

Abuja Investment Company Limited (AICL) is coordinating the projects.

Officers of AICL and Italian partners from DGM have assessed progress of work at of some of the projects, including Kugbo International Market, built on 13 hectares of land by Mesotho Group Limited (MSG) along the Abuja- Keffi Road.

The developer of Kugbo International Market, Jerry Joseph Damara described the project due to be completed next year as the biggest market in West Africa.

The Country Representative of DGM, Mr Patrick Coker, said the market will be transformed into a green project that will use renewable energy, solar, wind and water. He said all the wastes in the market will be recycled and turned into re-useable energy.

The Chairman of AICL Board Committee on Investments, Hon Osita Opara, said they opted to visit with the Italian partners led by President of DGM, Cladio Dell Ghanda and a Director of the company, Marco Costa to have first-hand assessment of the projects in some of Abuja metropolis.

He said the projects will have several advantages, including job creation for the people.

He described the investment by the foreign partners as enormous, saying government alone cannot use the budget model alone to fund projects in the Federal Capital Territory.

"They are on a two-prong visit. One, they are bringing a grant of Euro 350 million to build a modern Green City where everything works to world class standard. It is a EU grant meant for African nations developing infrastructure for them. They are also investors, coming to invest, not only in market alone but in projects like highways, railways, roads, hospital and anything that will develop Abuja. They are liaising with the Abuja Investment Company Limited which is the commercial investment arm of the FCT," Opara said.

Ghanda, who has also visited other African countries, expressed delight visiting Nigeria. He described Nigeria as a big door in front of big development for the people and the best future for the job for the company.

MARKET DATA AS AT THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 2022

BONDS

DESCRIPTION	Price	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time
14.20 14-MAR-2024	109.76	8.00	-0.01	June 24, 2022 ▼
13.53 23-MAR-2025	108.04	10.09	0.02	June 24, 2022 ▲
12.50 22-JAN-2026	106.57	10.25	0.10	June 24, 2022 ▲
16.2884 17-MAR-2027	120.20	10.72	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
13.98 23-FEB-2028	113.30	10.77	-0.09	June 24, 2022 ▼

BILLS

MATURITY	Dis-count	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time
NTB 14-Jul-22	300,00	300,00	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
NTB 11-Aug-22	415,00	417,00	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
NTB 8-Sep-22	345,00	347,00	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
NTB 13-Oct-22	465,00	472,00	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
NTB 10-Nov-22	390,00	396,00	0.00	June 24, 2022 —

CPS

MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time
TRBH CP V 26-JUL-22	11.46	11.58	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
FSDH CP VI 1-AUG-22	8.03	8.10	0.00	June 24, 2022 —
NENL CP I 24-OCT-22	15.42	16.26	0.01	June 24, 2022 ▲
FSDH CP VII 27-OCT-22	9.71	10.04	0.01	June 24, 2022 ▲
SIBP CP III 27-OCT-22	8.90	9.18	0.01	June 24, 2022 ▲

OTC FX FUTURES

CONTRACT TENOR (MONTH)	Contract	Current Rate ($/₦)	Updated Time
1	NGUS JUN 29 2022	427.24	June 24, 2022
2	NGUS JUL 27 2022	428.93	June 24, 2022
3	NGUS AUG 31 2022	430.63	June 24, 2022
4	NGUS SEP 28 2022	432.32	June 24, 2022
5	NGUS OCT 26 2022	434.02	June 24, 2022

NANTA Calls for Release of Trapped Funds of Airlines

Chinedu Eze

The President and council members of National Association of Nigeria Travel Agencies (NANTA), is deeply concerned about the impression the trapped funds of foreign Airlines operating in the country portrays Nigeria.

NANTA as a strategic concerned partner in the downstream aviation sector, has over the years appealed to the government through the central Bank of Nigeria and also through the ministry of Aviation to see to the possibility of reducing the humongous trapped funds which at the month of May, 2022, is estimated at well over $450 million US dollars.

The current situation presents a real threat to the industry and the continuity of our business as Travel professionals, bearing in mind the potential jobs losses and the attendant national economic losses as we are just gradually coming out of the pandemic era.

The foreign Airlines may resort to taking out lower inventory in the system resulting in high cost of tickets from the Nigerian market. For instance, a six hour trip to London may attract a fare rate of about two thousand dollars or more and also encourage tickets sold outside the country to flood Nigeria, thus affecting the survival of Nigerian travel agents and consequent loss of taxes and levies from such transactions.

As Nigerians, we are patriotic and have presented our country well in the global travel industry and rightly felt disturbed that Nigeria is on the brinks of a wrong narrative at the just concluded 78th Annual General meeting of International Air Transport Association (IATA) in Doha, Qatar on the account of Airlines trapped funds to which Nigeria is Africa's leading boggy boy.

Olowo Launches Aviation Book at 70th Birthday

Veteran aviation professional, Dr. Gabriel Olowo, turned 70 recently and he celebrated his new age with a launch of the aviation book: 'Cutting Costs Without Cutting Corners.'

The platinum jubilee, which was held in Lagos, was attended by dignitaries from the aviation industry, Osun State Government, business world and His Imperial Majesty Ooni of Ife Oba Adéyeyè Enitan Ògúnwùsì, Òjájá II who played a very key role in the entire programme.

While Capt. Musa Nuhu, the Director-General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and his counterpart, Akin Olateru, the Commissioner, Accident Investigation Bureau – Nigeria (AIB-N), led the aviation players.

Nuhu, the book chief launcher, said Olowo is a thoroughbred professional who has played a massive role in the sustenance of safety in Nigeria with his unbiased critique of activities in the sector.

He said: "We are here today to celebrate our brother and the launching of his book: 'Cutting Costs without Cutting Corners' and with the experience and the contribution of Chief Olowo to the industry over the years, over the decades are well-known and legendary."

Nuhu launched the book with the sum of N1 million, while several other attendees also contributed to its launch.

Ooni of Ife Oba Adéyeyè Enitan Ògúnwùsì, Òjájá II challenged Olowo'schildren to take a cue from their father by being good citizens of the country.

Also, Mrs. Stella Olowo, the wife of the celebrant thanked God for keeping the entire family alive till date despite the challenges, especially during the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the entire globe.

Dana Air Introduces more Flights on Lagos, Abuja Routes

One of Nigeria's leading carriers, Dana Air, has introduced additional flights on its Lagos and Abuja route network.

The airline in a statement explained that the introduction of the additional flights was strictly based on popular demand, the desire to meet the growing demand and the need to follow through with its strategic route expansion.

''The additional Abuja to Lagos flights will operate at 12:40pm, 7pm, and 8.10pm, while the Lagos to Abuja will be at 2.30pm, 5pm, and 6.30pmand with these additional flights, our customers can rest assured that we will always have convenient, optional flight times on the Lagos and Abuja routes.

"We are consolidating our network, providing competitive fares, seamless travel experience, and reliable schedule for our guests and this expansion will be across the network, as we take delivery of more of our B737 aircraft very soon.

"We want to be available to our guests at suitable times across the network and our growth has been consistent, meticulous and commendable and we want to keep it that way for our loyal customers who have kept us going," the airline said.

PASSPORT RACKET RUFFLES NIS AS APPLICANTS PROTEST AGAINST OUTRAGEOUS EXTORTION

official cost of the passports.

Two years ago, Ikoyi, which is the busiest passport office in Nigeria, was processing average of 15,000-20,000 passports monthly, while Festac and Alausa offices produced about 50 per cent of that figure of about 7,500 to 10, 000 passports monthly. But today the demand has quadrupled and other states are recording huge increase in demand because many Nigerians wish to leave the country.

"Due to economic depression, Nigerians are leaving the county in their thousands to flee from economic hardship and low standard of living. Even Nigerians in their 50s are applying for further studies overseas in order to leave the country and escape the current hardship. The request to study abroad is quickly granted by many countries because that is the visa that attracts high forex due to school fees. So many Nigerians are leaving and that pushes the increased demand for passports," a senior Immigration official told THISDAY.

In a chat with THISDAY investigative team, the PCO of the Umuahia passport office, Mrs. P. C Nwodo denied that applicants pay money in order to have their passports processed in quick time, stating that the new passport booklets are printed in Enugu and therefore she cannot manipulate the process.

Besides, she said that as the PCO, she efficiently oversee activities in the passport office but not accountable to any applicant that gives money to anybody.

"We have received report of extortion and when we do, the officer involved is punished and the money refunded back to the applicant. So we are working with a programmed system, which follows a process and gives no access to manipulation," she said.

The spokesman of the Nigeria Immigration Service, Mr. Amos Okpu in his reaction told THISDAY that the passport application process do not involve any kind of transaction.

"Applicants are expected to go online, fill the form and make payment. This is a strong measure to avert any kind of cash transaction. It is wrong procedure to go to passport office with cash because you are supposed to go to the passport office with evidence of your payment online. While filling the form online you choose the office you wish to go, the date that is convenient to you. So what we want you to do is to educate Nigerians about this process, which you can use to obtain your passport without payment of money to anybody," Okpu said.

He added that the only applicants who are extorted are those who refused to follow the process, "because the Immigration process is cashless"

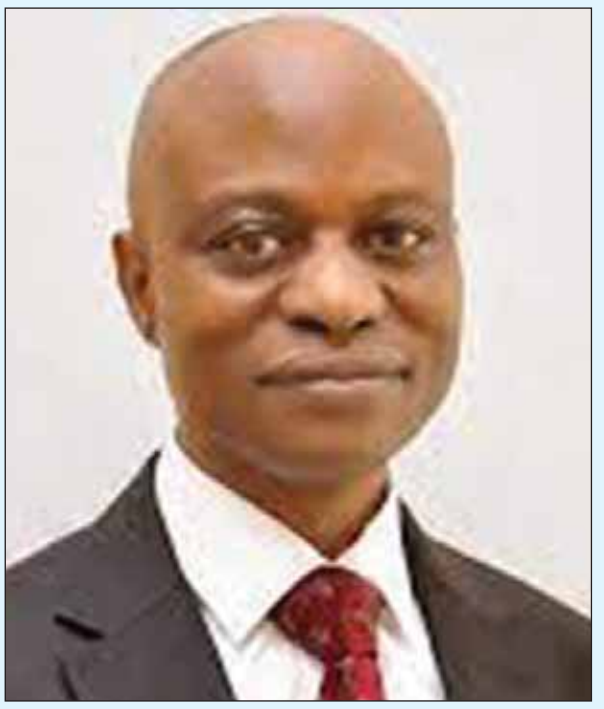
He urged that, "if anyone requests money from an applicant the applicant should report him or her to Immigration authorities."

AIR WATCH

Air Watch – in partnership with – AIR PEACE ...your peace, our goal www.flyairpeace.com

NAMA Boss Calls for Investment to Create Jobs, Boost Economy

Chinedu Eze



Pwajok

The Acting Managing Director of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA), Matthew Pwajok, has called on government to create incentives to encourage Nigerians and others to investment in manufacturing in order to create more jobs for the teeming Nigerian youths.

Pwajok said that economic diversification would promote resilient economy and less dependence on oil and gas export, which is the mainstay of the country's access to forex.

This was contained the presentation delivered by the NAMA boss recently at the 11th Nigeria International Trade Fair/ Expo, 2022 in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

As the key speaker at the event, Pwajok who was represented by NAMA's Director of Administration and Human Resources, Dr Musa Mai Sallau, spoke on the theme: "Diversification as Catalyst to Our National Development" and said that Nigeria's economic growth was retarded by over dependence on oil and insisted that the country could make economic leap if every economic sector were fully exploited.

As catalyst to economic development of any nation, Pwajok said that the aviation industry has recorded tremendous strides under the Buhariadministration and this could be confirmed by the good safety record in the country, the establishment of new infrastructure, acquisition and installation of airspace equipment an the renewal of airport facilities, including four new airport terminals and installation of weather equipment for accurate weather prediction.

"Since the discovery of oil in 1956, there was nearly a total neglect of other sectors the economy. Prior to 1956, agriculture was the main stay of Nigerian economy. The country produces cocoa, palm oil, groundnut oil and timber as cash crop or for consumption and export. But in 1960's and early 1970's about 60 per cent of Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) was cocoa and palm oil. However, up to a few years ago, Nigeria depends on oil, as it's major source of income," he said.

Quoting Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS), NAMA boss said that theeconomy of Nigeria advanced by 3.11 per cent from a year ago in the first quarter of 2022, following a 3.98 per cent rise in the prior period. He said the non-oil sector expanded by 6.08 per cent, faster than 4.73 per cent in Q4, driven by good performance in information and communication (12.07 per cent vs 5.03 per cent in Q4), primarily telecommunications (14.50 per cent); trade (6.54 per cent vs 5.34 per cent), financial and insurance (23.24 per cent vs 24.14 per cent); agriculture (3.16 per cent vs3.58 per cent) and manufacturing (5.89 per cent vs 2.28 per cent).

However, the oil sector plunged 26.04 per cent, after an 8.06 per cent slump in the previous quarter, reflecting lower oil output as the average daily crude oil production stood at 1.49 million barrels per day, down from 1.50 mbps in Q4 and 1.72 mbps a year ago, adding that Nigeria has struggled to meet its production targets due to operational challenges and insecurity amid growing crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism. On a quarterly basis, the GDP shrank 14.66 per cent.

"Economic policies of government are to actualise the economic growth and development. Diversification in this context is economic in nature.

To reduce the country's export, it requires expanding the country's value added products that are exported to foreign markets. Aviation provides the only rapid worldwide transportation methods, which makes it essential. It generates economic growth, create jobs and facilitatesinternational aviation sector to provide support and an enabling environment for a developing country like Nigeria," he said.

Pwajok said that this administration has done so much in the aviation sector and these include ensuring safety, security of all passengers in line with international standards, development of infrastructural facilities and effective regulation, noting that the government of President Mohammadu Buhari has taken full advantage of Nigeria's population size and the growing GDP in the aviation sector.

"In the aviation sector, the following products are required for the sector to increase its contribution to the GDP. Arrangements and systematic efforts are already in place for the realization of the projects contained in the aviation roadmap programme of the federal government. Those projects are the establishment of the national carrier, establishment of a leasing company, establishment of maintenance, repairs and overhauling facility and the concession of the major airports. There is also the development of cargos and agric allied export terminals and the new regulations or initiatives includes the establishment of free trade zone at major airports in the country," Pwajok said in his representation.

At the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency, Pwajok said the agency has achieved so much. In the area of communication, he said NAMA had a few challenges, noting that over time the airspace is increasing because of growth in traffic and the air routes are many and they cut across the nation because there are more connections between various airports, as new airports are coming up.

"In response to this, what we are doing is that we are deploying very high frequency system to enhance our extended coverage communication, from bandwidth to bandwidth to enhance safety of air navigation. That is the project that will enhance communication between pilots and air traffic controllers, which is voice communication and air to ground. We also have projects that are ongoing to provide capability for ground to groundcollections or communication between air traffic control units.

"For exchange of flight, an aircraft departs you need to inform the airport where the aircraft is going for them to also prepare and expect the aircraft. All the necessary information needed to be passed. There are more digital means of sending this information, we call them data link, that is what we are also working on to get funding to be able to provide not just voice communication but also data links that can provide accurate and more express exchange of sensitive information and flight movements," he said.

BUSINESSWORLD INTERVIEW

Adeyipo: CWG is Completely Out of the Wood

The Group Managing Director/CEO, CWG, Mr. Adewale Adeyipo in this interview said the Pan-African systems solutions company is completely out of the woods, he highlighted the company's expansion to some Sub-Saharan African countries, challenges and prospect of paying dividend in 2022. **Kayode Tokede** present the excerpts



Adeyipo

On the backdrop of improved earnings in 2021 financial year, when is CWG management considering dividend payout to shareholders?

What we did was to take a holistic approach by getting to solve some of the very fundamental challenges the company had suffered in the last few years and I can say we are completely out of the woods right now.

We could tell from the performance of the company and I am certain by next time we gather again, we would probably be discussing precisely on the dividend being paid out to shareholders and that I can assure you.

Take us through the steps you took that get CWG out of the woods?

It's not necessarily about CWG 2021 performance. If you're also familiar with the company's 2017 to 2019 books, you will realize that the company had some challenges.

From 2019 and till date, we have been changing the main drivers of the business. There are major changes in the technology trend. What we have done is moving away from traditional and conventional sales of technology.

And getting into the real application of technology, owing some of our own intellectual properties based on various variables and what we consider to be feasible in this market.

We have taken this by extensions to other regions precisely in Ghana and Uganda from there we are serving other Sub-Saharan African countries.

The prospects are very high. The ups are extremely very good. We are confident about what we have done and I also think we have the right people to drive the change we are looking towards. We are also excited about the future we have created. It's not a quick fix and the permanent fix is what will propel us to a kind of prosperity and kind of organization that the shareholders have invested in.

I must also say a very big thank you to the shareholders as they have been quite supportive and they believed in what we shared with them some few years back and I'm glad we are reporting a good result and also a very good future.

How is the company sourcing FX and how the federal government supported the sector?

It's challenging. It will be an understatement if I say there is a formula to deal with it because there's no formula.

We take it on a case-by-case basis and every transaction we treat on what is good. There are businesses that we have to walk away from owing to the foreign exchange volatility that that is involved. We do not have one formula that fixes every situation.

And as for help from the Federal government, they have been doing what they could, given the circumstances and troubles. We are not there yet but we will continue to try until we get to that comfortable position.

The company signed a partnership with Ibadan Disco in terms of providing a hundred thousand meters. How will this impact the revenue growth of the company?

It will impact on our revenue drive as the metering business is a very large business going by the metering gaps in Nigeria today. The current Disco that we work with it's just one out of many that we have.

But more importantly, smart metering solutions are credible and usable in other regions. We are expanding conversation and engagements with other Discos also. Hopefully before the end of the year, we will have 2-3 or more other discos on board.

In terms of revenue, it's very large revenue judging by the volume of the contract value. And these are some of the drivers like I said. You don't come about building a smart metering solution in 2-month and these are some of the pillars have been created in the last three years. Of which you will start to see the results from the end of this year.

Take us try some of the rundown of the products?

We have five major verticals and as I mentioned during the 8year. Our own definition of innovation is not anything out of this world. What we are looking at is what are those challenges today in sub-Saharan Africa and how we can use technology to close some of these gaps.

The smart metering that was created and ERP platform precisely made for SME's in order for them to understand their business better and for them to present their business to prospective investors. We have also played in the payment platforms that are serving like a vending platform. Today we vend airtime for like five financial institutions and we also using the same platform in other areas that are relevant.

We also have something that fit into the category of exco account. It's a new product that we will be rolling out before the end of the year. If we go by the engagement that we have had so far, the new product might be one of our major flagship products in 2023. A lot will be coming out of this space that you will really have to look out for.

tci THE CHALLENGE INITIATIVE NIGERIA

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST (Local NGO – Firms Selection)

Recruitment of a local non-governmental organization (NGO) or agency to support and manage a national family planning program in Nigeria.

Date of Announcement: June 29, 2022

Closing Date: July 13, 2022

Background

The Challenge Initiative is an urban reproductive health (RH) project designed to provide coaching and technical assistance (TA) to state governments to implement innovative family planning (FP) and adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) models for improved reproductive and maternal health in Nigeria. TCI does not directly implement FP/RH programming but works with and through state governments to do so. The project is currently implemented in 12 countries across 6 regional hubs globally including Nigeria, India, East Africa, Francophone West Africa, Philippines and Pakistan. TCI is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Comic Relief and Bayer, and globally led by the Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health. The project is being implemented in Nigeria by Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP).

The goal of the TCI program is to achieve state government self-reliance in the scale up of FP and AYSRH high-impact interventions (HIIs) leading to sustained improvements in urban health systems and increased access to modern contraception, especially for the urban poor. The first phase of the project was implemented in Nigeria from September 2016 to February 2022 with a demonstration of successful scale up of FP and AYSRH programs across 14 states. The new and current phase of the TCI project (October 2021 – December 2025) will build on the gains and achievements recorded in its previous phase to scale up FP and AYSRH HIIs to more geographies in Nigeria, extending coverage to the private sector.

Overview of Project

The 4 stages of the TCI program include Expression of Interest (EOI) by states, FP/AYSRH Program Design, Program Implementation and Graduation of states from TCI after achieving self-reliance. The project is guided by the following 6 principles:

- Demand-driven: States self-select to participate in the program and commit to contribute their financial and human resources
- Local ownership and readiness: States must be ready, willing and able to address their own challenges to implementation
- Right-fitting best practice interventions: TCI simplifies HIIs, so it is easier and faster to implement, reaching more people, more places and have the same (or greater) impact
- Leveraging existing platforms: TCI works with existing government-led systems to harmonize strategies, funding and TA, leading to cost-efficiencies with scale
- Coaching and TCI University: TCI uses a Lead, Assist, Observe and Monitor coaching model to transfer capacity using TCI University, an online learning platform
- Near-time, real-time data for decision-making: TCI strengthens government capacity to use data for problem solving and better decision making

Purpose of RFP

In the spirit of self-reliance and local ownership, CCP seeks to partner with an experienced, reputable health/development local Nigerian organization to whom ultimately the TCI program and platform in Nigeria will be transitioned. The selected organization would be expected to implement/manage activities relate to advocacy and program coordination, demand generation (i.e. social and behavior change and capacity strengthening), service delivery, and research, monitoring and evaluation.

This request for application is for an initial estimated performance period of 17 months (August 2022 – Dec 2023) after which CCP will evaluate and extend the contract contingent upon satisfactory performance and continued funding.

Who should apply:

CCP invites eligible local NGOs to indicate their interest in providing their services for this project. The selected organization will be responsible for managing and implementing the TCI model in select states. Applicants should be able to demonstrate robust experience and technical capacity in the implementation of FP/RH and other primary health care programs. The organization should also demonstrate its financial capacity to manage the program including staff recruitment, supervision and implementation.
The organization is expected to start in August 2022. The chosen agency will need to be ready to assume these responsibilities at this time and/or soon after the contract is fully executed.

How to apply:

Expression of interests should be in written in English and provide the following information:

1. Company profile (including capacity to implement and manage family planning programs as well as geographic scope)
2. CVs of key personnel
3. List of institutional collaborations
4. Description of past work similar to TCI project, engagement with state ministries of health, state primary health care development agencies, Christian and Muslim communities, and other groups within the public health sector
5. Proof of local registration

Please indicate whether your agency would be able to carry out this type of work in the time frame given and whether you would be willing to submit a formal bid for this work with 7-10 days' notice.

Please note the purpose of this inquiry is only to determine if your firm would be interested in this work and consider meeting the scheduled timeline. Formal requests for bids will be sent out at a later date.

Responses must be received by email to ***TCI-Procurement@jhuccp.ng*** **no later than Thursday 13th of July 2022.**

Ashiru: We Will Rebrand Odua Group, Focus on Training

The new Chairman, Odua Investment Company Limited, Bimbo Ashiru, in this interview with **Gilbert Ekugbe**, emphasised the need to build human capacities to take the Odua Group to its desired level. He also has his sight on writing all its board members' name on platinum. Excerpts

Give us an overview of the economy and how you are going to navigate through current challenges, turn them into opportunities to give shareholders better returns?

Thank you for having me. I always believe in one thing, which is making the best out of a bad situation. Economic challenge is all over the world, but people will still navigate and get things done properly. I will give you a good example, which is COVID-19. The COVID-19 epidemic, look at what happened and look at how people become billionaires. I did not say became millionaires because people are still making billions. I know what people are making in America and I know how many people made money in Nigeria.

Some people sat down, thought out of the box on how to make the best out of it. What did they do, they started logistics and they become billionaires overnight. I remember growing up Odua was a conglomerate that was actually competing with the likes of the UAC of this world, but what happened? Odua had a property in England at number 51 Kensington Gardens and many more. What I am saying is that the founders of Odua had vision, they had mission and they were probably in their 30s and their 40s. The likes of the Chief Obafemi Awolowo and others built the Cocoa house which was the tallest building in Africa, the first television station and the university of Ife was built through the funds raised from cocoa and that was why they named the house cocoa house because they were saying that it was the funding they go from cocoa that they used to build up the cocoa house.

Some people came to Nigeria to take our palm oil and palm kernel in the 80s to Kuala Lumpur, they went as far as using those palm kernel to make chewing gum. So you think out of the box. Economic challenges will not make us die. If there is fire here today, we must look for a way of getting out of this place. So that is my own vision and my own point is that I do not think anything is difficult. It is just making the best out of it. So the parameter of challenges of economy and what we have done so far, we made about 150 per cent progress and do not forget that all of us came in on the 7th of in May 2020. I was part of it and I commend the governors for picking the right caliber of people, people with pedigree, unblemished track record. We have people that have worked in different industries as board members. I was in banking for almost 30 years before I went to serve as a commissioner in Ogun State for eight years and the records are there. My records are there in the banking industry. Dr Aina, outgoing chairman was a banker and he left as a Managing Director while I left as a director in the bank. So we have things we are doing.

We have a consultant, Accenture, who is doing its own thing. We have a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), we have a medical doctor who became a politician but still a professional and we have an accountant who became a commissioner. My own point is that how do we make the best out of it? First of all, you have to have commitment then secondly, issue of integrity. Integrity is when you are doing the right thing when nobody is watching. We come to Odua with a good mind, we want to serve people, we want to make a name for ourselves, we will do it and that is the only way forward. You cannot sit down and say there is a problem with the economy and say there is no way. So I do not want to sit with GDP figures, parameters and so on. Lets look at what our forefathers were unable to do that we have done.

We have been able to get our oil license and the marginal fields and we paid for it fully. We have 42.86 per cent and it is called Beta Marginal Field. We have our license and we have started seeing people who are willing to partner with technical partners and from what we have seen Chevron is on that plate. We should be able to do a minimum of between 4000 and 5000 barrels per day and there is gas there too. It is in Ondo and I mentioned it to the governor that we would need his help so that when we start working there,



Ashiru

people do not come there to disturb us. Our hospitality business will witness a major turnaround soon. I have good news for you, Premier Hotel, Ibadan is as good as sorted out. We are doing a joint venture with a company, which I don't want to name now.

They are spending over N10 billion to turn Premier hotel to another five star hotel and that is what we are looking out for. We have started talking to other investors because we know sitting on a gold mine. I used to tell people that Nigeria has no business being an import dependent economy. We are blessed with lots of natural resources. Why should we take food out of this country raw and bring it back processed? Normally, when you go to the market, it is the seller that we determine the price of goods, but now the buyers are the ones dictating the price. Odua is a gold mine. Gold mine in the sense that we have the resources and with the caliber of people we have here we can do so many things.

Are you going to run with the old gamut of the process you met on ground?

Let me tell you, the old gamut that we met on ground, you will be surprised that they are useful and it is a system and let me tell you that an average Nigerian, when he goes to London, he follows the rules or regulations there. I have traveled with so many Nigerians and we all follow the queue, but once we land in Murtale airport, you will be wondering if this is not the same person that was obedient in London. One of the things I am going to focus on is training. We will spend a lot of money on training our people and those people you call old gamut, we can blend them.

In the banking industry I started with Chartered Bank in those days in 1989 and after some years in the banking industry, I left to another bank with the old people we were saying that we had to downsize, but I said no, we cannot sack them, but train them. If you give people right education, right training, they will understand and we cannot do things the same way and expect results. The only change in life is change. So what I am saying is that I personally will not encourage that old people should be sent packing.

When you give the people the right kind of training like for example, I believe that our group as a whole including our subsidiaries, they must have a training programmes and the Managing Director of each of the organization, I will encourage them to ensure that they identify their successes and I am not going to be an arm chair Chairman, I am going to visit all our subsidiaries. I want to see what they have on ground and like I was telling someone, if I am a governor or the President of the country, I am not going to announce when I am coming to your State.

I will arrive and I will say let us pass through this route and you are not going to take me through the best route and when I was a commissioner I blended with my people, because I have an open door policy, there was no appointment, when you come in if you ask me for something and I cannot do it, I will tell you I am sorry I can't. I pick my calls, if anybody calls me. So the point is that we have this orientation in this country where you take up a new position and you sack everybody, the people you are sacking maybe one of the best brains there.

Let me tell you this before I continue, Odua had over 40 per cent of Lafarge? We had permanent sit for two directors and the present Chairman of Lafarge today is a director and representative of Odua, but what happened, they sold those shares and where are they today. We also had Odua Telecoms and we spent N10 billion on that venture. I was the chairman of the committee set up to look into it. We have told them to behave because and I spoke to the Lebanese and said we would deal with them; they are dealing with governments of six states of the South West. They have started coming back now, once you do not compromise yourself, you can talk to them in a nice way and they know that we mean business. By God's grace our next four years, we are going to change so many things and we will go to individual subsidiaries giving one day notice.

Do you have any specific plan for investments in agriculture over the duration of your tenure?

My focus even as a commissioner was agriculture that would lead to Industrialisatio. I will tell you this, the first ethanol factory in Nigeria, I happen to be one of the people that commissioned it and there is a farm in Ososa and the farm was producing over 250 tonnes per day and they were rotting away and immediately they started that those guys about 500 tonnes per day and the farm started smiling to the bank and it created jobs for 15,000 farmers. So I told SwagCo to take advantage of the opportunities. Our focus is that we want Swagco to go back to what Chief Awolowo and co did to get results. We have given them seed money and we do not need to have 100 per cent of Swagco.

They can bring in investors and there are so many private equity firms that are ready to invest and they are working on that. Now to what the governor said, we will go to each state and look at areas where they have comparative and competitive advantage when it comes to agricultural products. So dairy farming he was talking about at the Odua AGM, be rest assured that soon it will be done. So Swagco is doing very well in Ogun State in terms of cassava, I think they are also doing well in Oyo state and in Osun State, they mine gold there and we are going to partner with them towards mining.

So we are going to take advantage of the commission and ensure that we do the agriculture we are talking about and focus on that, but you cannot achieve a lot in agriculture if you do not have access to infrastructure. So now that we have those tips, we will encourage them to do the rural roads where those rural dwellers will be able to bring in those goods and we are trying to see if they can get some funds from the CBN anchor borrowers programme, which is cheap funds and I know that they are talking with some banks to get some funds. So in that area of agriculture, you need to invest more, we need to get proper infrastructure in place.

Those are the things we are going to focus on and I am happy that our State governors are now supporting. We are also looking at Information Technology (IT), it is the way to go in this world and we are looking at all strategic places and Odua has invested so much in IT infrastructure. However, despite the fact that we want to encourage the youths in technology, we do not want to encourage them to be doing online fraudsters. Those guys are brilliant, what we are trying to do is to use their brilliancy instead of using it to defraud, but use it to create opportunities for youths. I will be honest with you because integrity matters a lot to me even when I was in the bank and government, I will tell you what I can do and make sure that we achieve a lot. It is a continuum.

You are planning to create new businesses, are you also thinking of revamping the existing ones?

You see people get it wrong because some of these companies do not belong to Odua's anymore. Don't forget that they have gone to the bank to borrow money and banks have acquired them. However, those that were sold fraudulently we will recover them, an example the Epe plywood.

We are looking for people that are going to invest and I have spoken to about two different people and for us to revamp anything now and like someone was asking about government and businesses. You see government has no business in business, what they need to do is create the necessary environment. That is why they have given us that power to be able to do so many things. The marginal field thing is an example of what we can do. We were the only ones that actually bided for it, we were asked to pay $6 million, we did it. Going back to your question, we are going to revamp them if it is worthwhile and if it is not, we sell them off. We are very active in stock exchange and everything. You see it is a focus and like the question you asked about what we are doing in building our people, those are the things we need to do so that by the time I am leaving in four years time, Odua should be a roller coaster thing where things would have changed and we would have created a better orientation. Probably I am sure that the people here now, we have increased their salaries and our focus is to become a world class organisation.

What will you like to be remembered for after your time as chairman of Odua Group?

I want all the board members' names to be written in platinum and not in gold. To say when Bimbo Ashiru was the Chairman, we started producing crude oil and Odua has created that environment whereby agriculture has now led to industrialization, Odua has created a high tech hub for our youths and all the States in the South-west. We also want people to say that while we were there, this is the amount of jobs we created and these are the things we have left and by the time I leave, I pray that the Airport Hotel would have started a joint venture and Premier Hotel by God's grace in the next few months we would have signed off and we will see the notice that we are closing down the place to revamp the place.

When Baba Awolowo and co were the ones that did Western house, the cocoa house and all the Odua assets, so somebody had the vision and they did it. General Gowon when he was Head of State, he built the national theatre, so people can do it, it is just for you to have the focus, be committed and have the vision and we will achieve and you can be rest assured that when I am leaving, I want my name to be written in platinum and for people to say when I was Chairman, Odua's profits improved drastically and the shareholders were getting billions of naira and not millions. I want people to say I distributed billions, which all the six states benefitted from. Those are the things I want to be remembered for.

Walsh: International Carriers May Withdraw Services over Blocked Fund

The Director General of the International Air Transport Association, Wllie Walsh, spoke with African journalists at the just concluded 78th IATA Annual General Meeting and World Air Transport Summit, held recently in Doha, Qatar. **Chinedu Eze** was there and brings the excerpts:

Blocked fund remains a big issue in Africa as about $1 billion is blocked by 12 African countries. What effort is IATA making to get the funds released?

Well, I think we are all the time looking to get these funds out. It does have impact on the recovery of the market. Because airlines will be reluctant to put capacity into markets where they can't repatriate their money. And these are factors I can speak from my past experience when we are looking at network growth or additional capacity.

If you can't get your money out I am sorry, but you know, it's a simple business decision. You are not going to put additional capacity in there. And given that airlines are looking to recover their networks, they are going to put their focus into markets where they have more confidence. So I think it is a significant factor and it plays against the recovery in the continent. But it also, I think, it's unfair to consumers (passengers) because they are not going to get the choice. They are not going to get the competition. They are not going to get the availability of flights that they would have if money were being repatriated properly. So it is a big issue.



Walsh

What level of engagement is IATA having with some of these governments to address the issues?

It is a great, great comment; all we can do is make it clear to people that it does have consequences. The idea that an industry that was effectively heading towards bankruptcy because of closures and is still losing a huge amount of money can operate to a country and not get paid for. It is madness. It is not going to happen. If governments believe that they will continue to maintain all of these international links by carriers that can't get their money for the work that they are doing, it is not going to happen. So you are right, not every country has responded in the same way but airlines are not rich. We don't have a lot of cash; we are not profitable atan industry level. And anything that people do to undermine the recovery in the industry is just going to have a direct impact on the services that they are contributing.

How is government addressing the issue of exchange rates?

I will be honest, it is impossible to solve because these differences have existed forever. And they are not going to be easily aligned. So the way in which the rates are calculated is on a different basis. So I don't honestly see a simple solution to that. It would be great if we could be aligned or more closely aligned. But you are right in some cases; the difference is significant and does have a major impact. But I don't see a simple solution to it.

Do you think IATA can probably give a margin of error plus or minus to the central banks' way?

I don't think so. No. No, I don't think so. I am actually concerned about the skyrocketing Jet A1, which is taking a toll on the airlines, not only African airline, but global airlines.

Could you tell us how the skyrocketing Jet A1 is impacting on African airline and how to mitigate it?

It is a great question. There are two impacts. First is the price of the basic commodity oil Brent, the benchmark that we use, and that is being very much influenced by what is happening in Ukraine and the sanctions against Russian oil.

Continued on page 28

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WALSH: INTERNATIONAL CARRIERS MAY WITHDRAW SERVICES OVER BLOCKED FUND

So, that has driven the price of oil up significantly. The second aspect is what we call the crack spreads, a barrel of Brent and a barrel of jet. And that reflects the margins that the refiners make. There has been a lack of capacity in refining. Some of that is because there was very little demand for jet during the pandemic, obviously because the volume of activity had reduced. So refiners switched their attention away from jet into other products. And it is not easy for them to switch back. So you can't just do it overnight. So we need to see a return to refining capacity, which will then narrow that margin, the crack spread again.

So in 10 years between 2010 and 2019, Brent averaged, $80 a barrel and the crack spread was 17 per cent on average. So, that would mean that Jet was about $93, $94 a barrel. We are now looking at the crack spread averaging about 25 per cent on the basic price of a hundred dollars on average.

So, jet is $125. So we have seen Brent go from $80 per barrel to a $100 and we have seen the crack spread going from $13.6, $13, $14 to $25. So, both of these have increased, both of those have had an impact. Now, in the same period, fuel represented 27 per cent of the industry's cost space. So if the oil price goes up the percentage of cost represents by fuel increases. It's a simple math. And airlines in that 10-year period, best 10-year period in the history of the industry, the average operating margin was five and a half percent. So you can see, we don't have big margins that can absorb this additional cost.

So ultimately it ends up being passed through to consumers in the form of higher ticket prices. I see no way of avoiding that. If your cost, particularly your single biggest cost escalates in the way it has, it leads to a higher ticket prices. I don't see any way that the industry can alleviate that because it is not making any profit at the moment at an industry level. So it cannot absorb this. That is why you are seeing ticket prices increase. I think there is another factor with ticket prices; it is clearly and heavily influenced by supply and demand. And in some cases, the pace at which demand has recovered has been faster than the pace at which supply has been returned to the market. And that clearly leads to greater demand for a scarcer product, which will push prices up.

On block funds in Africa, only a few countries were mentioned. But overly you were talking about 70 countries. What is your choice between innovation and state bailout?

Innovation. I think airlines that innovate through any crisis are more sustainable in the long term. Bailouts are welcome, but the problem often that I have seen with bailouts is that they delay the restructuring or the innovation that is necessary because you get a temporary reprieve. But if you don't take advantage of that temporary reprieve, you are just back in crisis. So the only way you can get a sustainable future is look to drive innovation and efficiency within your airline and to make it sustainable through economic cycles. And on block funds, it is not just the African continent. There are other parts of the world where we have block funds. But the African countries contribute the most significant element to the industry's block funds.

Still on the block fund, do you think that the issue has to do with priority, that is government not prioritising aviation. What is your view about concessioning airports. Do you think it benefits the airlines?

On block funds, all we can do is try and convince governments to base up to the responsibility that they have. We can't advise airlines as to what they should do. That's a decision for the airline. We have seen countries blocking funds where airlines have completely withdrawn from the country. Venezuela is probably the best example of that, where airlines just stopped flying there. And the ones that didn't stop flying significantly reduced their capacity into the country and also restricted the amount of sales that were going on.

But that was not an IATA decision; that was a decision that each individual airline would have to take. On concessions, airports, if they are privatized fine, but guaranteeing a return, you can't do that because then you are just going to drive costs. You are preventing innovation; you are preventing airports from being driven to become more efficient because there's a guaranteed return. So it doesn't matter what they do, they are guaranteed to get a return on it so they can be inefficient. They can waste money; they get a return and that's just one.

What specifically, is IATA doing for Africans in the aviation commission in realizing the goal? Again Ghana is planning on setting up a national carrier. What is your take that?

Well, airlines can be created by anybody at any time. And we have seen some very successful new airlines and we have seen some very unsuccessful new airlines. So I would never say to somebody don't do it. I think if you are going to create an airline, make sure you understand what the challenges are.

A single African market has to be an opportunity. All you have to do is look at what deregulation has done to benefit consumers in other markets that have been deregulated. Europe is a great example of that here. So what have you seen? You have seen massive increase in connectivity, increasing the number of flights, increasing the number of option for customers, much greater competition as a result lower fares. So the consumer wins.

So if people want to benefit the African consumer, and facilitate connectivity, which has then huge benefits for other industries and the economies, it is the only way to go. A fragmented market will never be as efficient as a single open competitive market. We have seen that in the US domestic market, when it was deregulated, we have seen it best, I think in Europe, where you had new entrants who took advantage of the new opportunities and have been fantastic for consumers in developing choices at fares that are much more affordable. So I think African economies, African consumers would hugely benefit from a single market.

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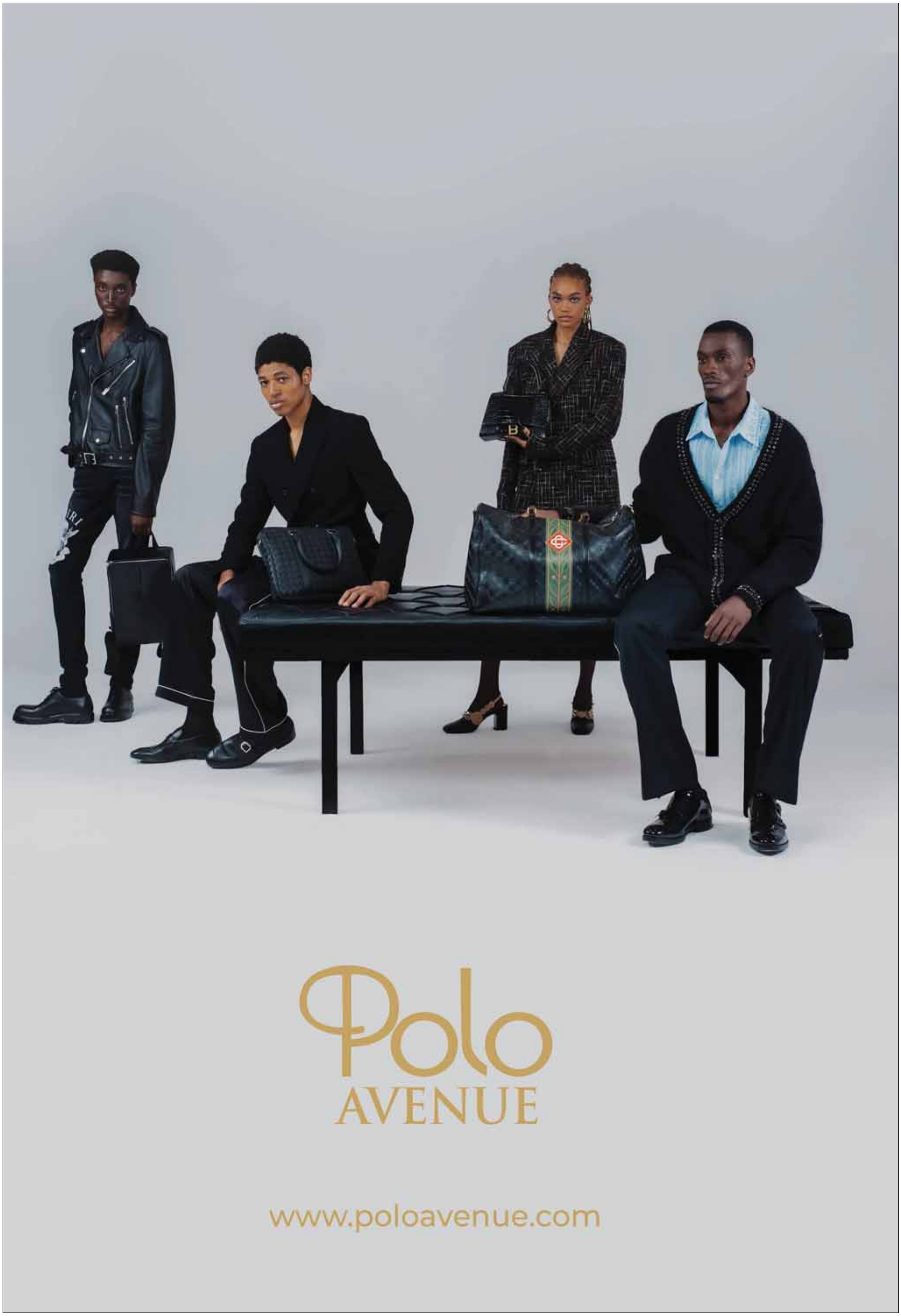
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SUMMER Tunes

27 JUNE TO 3 JULY 2022: SUMMER TUNES

Music is the world's most popular language. Music has the power to unify across geographies, languages and cultures. When it comes to movies, music is the glue that connects the individual to the story. It helps the movie to express emotions and pulls-in the audience with its gyrations and pulse. This week's selection of trending movies has a musical theme from the stories of people who make music to the stories of the music that made the movies pop! It is a discovery of artists' collaborations, new soundtracks, as well as old school songs that have shaped history. Stream and tune in to this week's music-movie selection now, exclusively on ARISEPlay.

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE
One of the most universally acclaimed superhero films of all time is "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse." In addition to the breath-taking animation and art design of the film, there is no denying that one of the major components of the film's aesthetic is its musical composition. "Spider-Verse" is a collection of original songs from pop and hip-hop artists around the world; it has tracks from Nicki Minaj, Lil Wayne, and Post Malone. Several of these songs, such as "Sunflower," broke into mainstream music culture beyond superfans of the movie. Swae Lee, Jaden Smith, Juice WRLD, Ty Dolla $ign, XXXTENTACION, Ski Mask the Slump God, and Thutmose are also among the artists on the soundtrack. The music fits Miles Morales (Shameik Moore) as well as the visual style of the movie.

MILES AHEAD
Miles Ahead is a 2015 American biographical drama directed by Don Cheadle. It is about jazz musician Miles Davis's life and compositions. Cheadle was drawn to the project because of his respect for Miles Davis's approach to composition. The movie features music from Miles Davis' recording career, with the film opening with "Prelude (Part 2)" from Davis' 1975 album Agharta. He then moved on to other phases of his career, including recordings for Porgy and Bess and Kind of Blue in 1959, Nefertiti and Filles de Kilimanjaro in 1968, Bitches Brew and the Jack Johnson sessions from 1969 to 1970, the 1974 Dark Magus performance, and We Want Miles (1981). The film depicts Davis' attempts to regain his career after a period of inactivity and drug abuse in the 1970s, a fictional adventure with a journalist (McGregor) who wants to profile him, and his troubled marriage to a former dancer (Corinealdi).

NILES RODGERS: HOW TO MAKE IT IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS
Grammy-winning producer, songwriter, composer and guitarist Nile Rodgers has sold more than 300 million records. A three-part series from 1212 Productions features Nile sharing the secrets of a lifetime in music, revealing how he created some of the most iconic songs of the last 40 years for artists like Diana Ross, David Bowie, Duran Duran, Sister Sledge, Madonna, Chic and Daft Punk. In the first episode, Nile explains how he got into guitar as a teenager and why he hasn't looked back. On episode 2, Nile reveals how he created sounds for music icons of the 80s. The final part of the series is set in the music world today, a world that looks nothing like the one Nile grew up in. Technologies have changed how we listen to music and how artists collaborate.

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SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE



MILES AHEAD



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This Weekend

THISDAY WEEKLY MAGAZINE

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Sri George: Mobilising Youths to Make Nigeria Great

COVER

This Weekend

Sri George: Mobilising Youths to Make Nigeria Great

Sri George originally known as Babatunde George Ojo-Olubiyo, is an inspirational writer, a transformational speaker and also a businessman. Over the years he has sponsored, supported and organised motivational, inspirational and transformational programmes on the majority of the radio and TV stations in Nigeria. Most of his intellectual contributions and charitable works have positively affected millions of young Nigerians and Africans worldwide. In this interview with **MARY NNAH,** he shared his view on how Nigerians, especially the youth can bring about emancipation in the nation

What have you been up to lately?

The thing is that very soon I will be participating in politics full time. I am not running for office and that brings to mind the topic – Youth and politics. It has to be now because like never before, I have been in the business world for a while. In this course of this, I have come to realise that because of the kind of structure we built in our society, a lot of people don't want to engage in politics.

They see politics as a do-or-die thing, they don't see the essence and importance of engaging in politics. Over the years I have realised that this plays a major role in our lives – that we can do all the best we can personally but until we engage in politics, we are not going to get anywhere, we are not going to get to where we want to get to. And as one very popular philosopher has said, the danger of not participating in politics is that you are going to be ruled and governed by people who are of inferior values, people you are superior to.

Is that why you are starting a movement that is out merely for electioneering purposes?

My team and I have always been in this process. I don't have to wait for the election time to come for me to mobilise. I have always been passionate about people's personal growth because it is only individual' emancipation that can lead to Nigeria's emancipation. We all know right now that things are not well and it is not well for all of us individually and collectively.



We need something to happen and that thing does not have to happen whenever the election is coming. It has to be a process and that is why we have been doing our school programmes, radio programmes and social media campaigns. All these things are to gradually prepare people's consciousness to be able to evolve. The kind of job I do is different from every other people's kind of job because ours require individual efforts; it is personal development. So, personal development doesn't work with seasons; it is part of your day-to-day life.

How can entertainment influence the minds of the youths to engage in politics?

The entertainers themselves are most of the time not aware of the kind of power and influence that they have. If you notice, entertainment has changed over time, especially in the last half a decade. They have now become so independent financially that they don't have to campaign for any politician to become rich. They have digital platforms like Apple, Boomplay, Spotify, and so on. There are more shows and endorsements, so as an entertainer now, you don't need a politician's money to run your life or feel belong. And a lot of entertainers are very careful getting involved in certain things.

They don't want to support just any candidate; just a few are doing that. But then entertainers can help encourage people to engage in politics because entertainment plays a major role and the only thing that works in Nigeria right now is our entertainment industry.

That is what has put us on the world map. That is the reason why people can still talk about Nigeria because almost every other thing that we are supposed to be proud of as Nigerians, one way or the other, our leadership has failed. So, I believe that entertainers can encourage individuals to think about the direction that which politics plays a major role in national development.

Do you think that youths should join the conventional political parties or come together to form a political party to mobilise and get young people into strategic offices?

I believe that the youths can unite themselves to create a political party. But politics as far as I know is different from activism and this is something that I have gotten to understand that in as much as we have our different professions, we must always understand that we are either playing politics for ourselves or against ourselves.

So, politics is part of our daily lives and Aristotle put it in a very wonderful way. He said that man is a political animal. So, even in your home, you must play politics but there is something about cultural values and religious beliefs that make people not understand that politics is something that they must engage in. So, I believe that the youths should engage in politics but then there are things they need to learn from the elders.

Nigeria is different from America, France and other countries. Those other countries have been around for over a hundred years of democracy like the US, we are just a few years compared to theirs. So, as a youth, if we want to start a political party, do we have the resources? The political system in Nigeria is different from that of America. In America, if you want to run for office, people contribute money for you, especially when they see that you are very efficient and capable of communicating to the public what they want. You can raise as much as a billion dollars and then contest against whichever opponent you want to.

But in Nigeria, who is ready to contribute money for you, except a few friends who believe in you or when you have a godfather. So, the godfather politics in Nigeria will be tough to crack.

However, I believe that the youths are capable of leadership but before they can be able to take over this position, they need some experience from these elderly ones.

So, I feel that it is too expensive to start a political party for the youths. I feel that they have the number to influence the currently existing political parties. What I have got to realise is that in politics you have to mobilise yourselves, come together in one voice and you would achieve your goal. For example, when we look at the End SARS event, it was just people coming together and saying they don't want SARS anymore.

Fine, the government and politicians might not have been 100 per cent honest in terms of how they handled the End SARS thing, but do we have officers wearing any uniform claiming to be SARS again? Not at all. That is how politics work. You must come together. It is something that you must demand. It is not something you stay home and it comes to you. If one million youth mobilise themselves now, choose their candidate and tell their candidate that this is what they want, it will happen.

Politicians know the implications and that is why they always create divides. They create divides because they know that if people come together and demand something, they would get it. And then, our system now is more volatile because people can switch their minds easily in the era of the social media thing – people can just change their minds easily.

So, I believe that if the youths want Nigeria to be all great, we must engage and participate in politics and we must participate in large numbers. If one million youths stand up in Lagos and say this is what we want in Lagos, politicians will have no other choice than to just do what the youths demand. We saw it with the End SARS movement. The movement did not fail at all. It was a social experiment and Nigerians I know for one, is that if they test something and it works, until that thing expires, that is when they would stop.

Just like entertainment is working now and most people are rushing into the entertainment industry. I always used to joke that we now have more entertainers than the fans.

So, in anything we must engage, you must show up. It is not something you just sit down and think that things will work out. You must engage in politics, you must vote, you must mobilise yourselves and if you want something, go get it. Let's say a road is not good in our area, we can mobilise and go and pressurise whoever is in charge. We would give him sleepless nights and not that some will be because they are benefiting from him, will now decide to say no.

If we realise that these things are for all of us, forgetting whichever party we belong to, when we mobilise ourselves and demand those things, they will come to play. But it is getting to an era whereby money is not enough to buy people. Nigerians, especially the youths are beginning to see beyond money politics. Do you want to give me N5, 000 to come and vote for you? For what? I can only listen to you if you have proper ideas you want to share with me. And we have to bring the consciousness of business into politics. In as much as we want to do service to humanity and do good roads, we must bring in the business consciousness. What am I getting? I often have this saying that nobody pays money to buy less. You don't spend money to buy something that is below the value of the money.

That is one thing that the opposition parties must work on. They must realise that times have changed. There is this popular writer, Eric Hoffer, wrote, "In times of change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." That is why when you listen to the way some of our leaders, you will know that they are not living in current Nigeria.

In what ways are you using your platform to enlighten the youths as regards your concern for them to get involved in politics?

We are going to be going to secondary schools to talk to them about vision boards and organising the mind. We are going to help some people get their school fees paid. We are going to also enlighten them about legal ways of making money, which is something that I have always done. But this time we are going to be doing it in a grand style in Ibadan, Oyo State and then Lagos and Edo States.

I do the programmes to help young people believe that we live in a world of opportunities. They can become comedians, skit makers and many other things and make money through such avenues. There is this idea in Nigeria as a whole that somebody cannot legally make money. That is not true because every one of us knows that there are people who make money legally. There is this orientation that as long as you make money in Nigeria, you have put your hands in bad things. But that narrative must change and that is the narrative we are selling to the young ones.

What would you say is your overriding motivation for all you do?

I want to make sure that people are in the right state of mind in a better state of environment than they are right now and that they know more about themselves than they were before. It is all about upgrading human consciousness and awareness.

We have so many poor people in Nigeria. So, good people should win and when good people win, the world becomes a better place. We have too many people who have no values and decent character leading us and determining so many things for us. So my goal is that we should have sensible people, intellectuals and creative people be part of the decision-making sector so that it does not be as if it is always riffraff that is constantly making decisions for us.

You are also a writer; do you have plans to make books available in this regard?

I am working on one but because the reading culture is very poor in Nigeria, we are trying to work with what works best. You need to see the level at which the youths are enthusiastic to go into entertainment. That is the direction that is selling now. So, anything that is visual is what you would use to get their attention. So the book will be out at the due time because writing a book for me is not about just publishing a book. I don't do things because I want to make money. I do things because I want to share value. Even in business, my consciousness of doing business is different from the usual business people. Yes, I want to make a profit from the business, but I also want people who patronise me to feel good.

NEWS

This Weekend

Mines and Steel Minister Unveils Gender & Disability in Mining Communities Report

•Premieres social documentary, 'The Other Women'

Nume Ekeghe

The Minister of Mines and Steel Development, represented by Hasana Jummai Sha'aba has launched the two-parts report on Intersectionality, Gender and Disability produced by Pan African Creative agency, Arden and Newton BMC.

The minister, who applauded the efforts, of the agency noted that the ministry has contributed significantly to the course of women, and pledged support for women with disabilities.

The agency, through its social responsibility arm, The Good Partner with the funding support of one of the world's largest donor organisations, Ford Foundation had embarked on an 18-month study on 'Discrimination Against Women With Disabilities in Resouce-Producing Communities in Nigeria' and 'A critical discourse and narrative analysis of female disability representation in Nollywood and other cinemas'.

The report which was launched during the movie premiere of the social documentary, 'The Other Women' featured dignitaries such as the Programme Officer, Gender, Racial and Ethnic Justice, Olufunke Baruwa; Representative of the Chairman of the Joint National Association of Persons With Disabilities, Mr Ernest Igbuzor; Senior Program Officer, West Africa, Ford Foundation, Dabesaki Mac-Ikemenjima; Government Relations Professional & Research Consultant, Chuks Ofulue and the Project Lead and Creative Director, Arden & Newton, BMC., Perez Tigidam.

The Other Women is a social documentary that catalogues the firsthand experience of women living with disabilities in resource-producing communities in Nigeria. It captures the stories of their struggles, resilience, aspirations and achievements living in communities where they have to go beyond the ordinary to fit into social and commercial life.

According to the Project Lead and Creative Director of Arden & Newton, Perez Tigidam said, "As the world strives to create innovative socio-economic solutions that help make life and living a pleasant experience, society must provide equitable conditions for every member to have access to such experience.

"We believe that this film would put into visual perspective the reality of female disability in Nigeria and move policymakers and various stakeholders to drive legislative reforms that protect the rights of the disabled, enable social inclusion and ultimately create a better society for all," he added.

L-R: Perez Tigidam, Project Lead & Creative Director, Arden & Newton BMC; Hasana Jummai Sha'aba, representative of the Minister of Mines and Steel Development; Chuks Ofulue, Government Relations Professional & Research Consultant; and Debasaki Mac-Ikemenjima, Senior Program Officer, West Africa, Ford Foundation launching the reports at The Other Women movie premiere in Silverbird cinema, Yar'dua centre, Abuja

MMCC to Complete Escravos Seaport Industrial Project by 2025

Chiemelie Ezeobi

The $50 billion Escravos Seaport Industrial Project would be completed between 2024 and 2025, Chairman, Mercury Maritime Concession Company (MMCC), Rear Admiral Andrew Okoja (rtd.) has said.

Okoja, who disclosed this during a side interview with reporters at the recently held World Hydrography Day (WHD) symposium at the Naval Dockyard Limited (NDL), Victoria Island, Lagos, added that the project sited at Gbaramatu in Delta State, encompasses the construction of a deep seaport, gas plant, nature park, and an airport on 31,000 hectares of land.

According to Okoja, his firm famed for constructing quality maritime infrastructure was undertaking the project on a Build, Operate, Own, and Transfer (BOOT) Model.

He said: "We are a privately-driven enterprise, and the multi-billion dollar deep seaport project we are working on is similar to the Lagos Deep Seaport Project.

"Our Escravos Seaport Industrial Project consists of a deep seaport as well as a number of other large-scale initiatives, including a refinery, a gas plant, a free trade zone, a nature park, and an airport.

"The deep seaport and connectivity have only recently begun, and the contract is for roughly $50 billion.

"Like the Lagos Deep Seaport, this port is built, owned, operated, and transferred (BOOT), and delivery is anticipated to occur between 2024 and 2025.

"About 25 foreign and local consultants and partners are working on this project, which is being directed by the MMCC.

"The Port of Antwerp International, the second-largest port in Europe after Rotterdam Port, is organising it."

He added that the port's value at each stage would be defined by the amount of cargo flow, adding that its strong connectivity provided a solid operational base.

"We have taken care of marine connectivity, rail connectivity, and road connectivity. This means that the worth of the Port itself is defined by the volume of cargo movement.

"As a result of its size, it will cover almost 70 per cent of the country's geographical spread.

"For instance, from the port, the River Niger and Onitsha are connected by water via the Escravos port. The second phase ascends to Lokoja from Onitsha.

"The first phase will cover roughly 350km, with 200km from Onitsha to Lokoja and 200km from the port," he explained.

He said the port would also be connected by rail to Warri, Itakpe and Ajaokute, adding that the about 47km rail from Escravos Port to Warri would be an electric train and would be powered by about 2,000mw electricity.

While noting that a concession agreement for 50 to 75 years was being discussed with the Federal Ministry of Transportation, Okoja said the project would be inaugurated by the Suez Canal Authority of Egypt, with whom the business had signed a Memorandum of Understanding.

He said the third connectivity was a direct route along the Koko intersection from the Escravos sea port to the Warri-Sapele Road.

"We are also concessioning for another 50 years and we will be tolling. With this, we have the inflow and outflow of goods, and we predict that we can cover 70 per cent of the earth's surface.

"As a result, both air and landborne cargo would enter, and the flow of a port determines its worth.



Escravos Seaport Industrial Project Completion by 2025

UNAN SET FOR FUNDRAISING EVENT



UNAN's President, Mrs Joan Agha.

Stories by Mary Nnah

In a bid to fulfill the five key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the United Nations Association of Nigeria (UNAN), the civil society arm of the United Nations in Nigeria, is set to hold a fundraising event to mark the UNAN Day 2022.

Scheduled for July 20, 2022 at the Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos by 11 am, the event which has the theme, "United Nations SDGs and the Imperatives of Targeted Social Responsibility Action in Nigeria", will also witness the Executive Committee Inauguration.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are anchored on transforming lives through 5 powerful drivers: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership in a bid to combat humanity's greatest challenges of poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. It is therefore UNAN's quest to aid this blueprint to achieve a better and sustainable future for all and to enjoin all and sundry to take action with social responsibility for one another starting with disadvantaged areas and people in Lagos State.

According to UNAN's President, Mrs. Joan Agha, "We are already in the 7th year of this Masterplan since UN declared the 17 SDGs in 2015. Our role, therefore, is to solicit support from partners, collaborators, and benefactors in improving lives through SDGs 1, 2, 6, and 8 which state thus: No Poverty - No Hunger - Clean Water and Sanitation - Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Agha who called on Nigerians and people all over the world to be major participants in ushering in a new era of cooperation and prosperity with the inauguration of the key drivers of this project which event will benefit Lagos State citizens as inaugural beneficiaries added that the plan is to endow others on a state by state basis thereafter.

UNAN was established in 1959 by Professor Babatunde Fafunwa, one of Nigeria's foremost educationists.

Mrs. Ifeoma Nwuke expressed the feeling of the planning committee that she chairs thus: "A burden of expectations resides in us all to implement the ideals of the SDGs for the betterment of sustainability and growth envisioned by the UN in 2015. " It is up to us all to raise our standards of living for ourselves and our fellow human beings."

JUMIA DONATES MOTORCYCLE HELMETS TO DELIVERY ASSOCIATES

Leading pan-African e-commerce platform, Jumia has announced the donation of more than 2,000 motorcycle helmets to its Delivery Associates (riders) in Nigeria as part of its Safe and Affordable Helmet Programme with FIA.

This initiative aims to provide high-quality helmets meeting United Nations Regulation ECE 22.05 in territories where accessibility and affordability can be difficult.

The helmets have been designed to meet the UN safety standards, as certified by independent experts while also ensuring they are best priced in the market.

The helmets, which are suitable for hot and humid climates, will be distributed to riders free of charge in support of Jumia's mission to enhance the well-being of its workers and partners and to continually seek innovative ways to improve the workplace ecosystem.

CEO, Jumia Nigeria, Massimiliano Spalazzi, who said the safety of the Delivery Associates is the firm's priority, expressed the hope that the donation will increase peace of mind both for the riders and their families.

"Wearing UN Certified safe helmets is essential in protecting our heroes from the hazards that are associated with their jobs.

"We are delighted, therefore, to provide compliant, high-quality, and safe helmets to our riders and hope that this initiative will prevent unnecessary road crash injuries and fatalities", he added.

Speaking further on the donation, Country Manager, Jumia Services, Adetunji Lanase, said "Our Delivery Associates are important brand ambassadors as they deliver products to consumers across the country. Beyond delivering Jumia items to our consumers, we want our riders to be well-assured that they are protected."

Delivery Associate, Jumia Nigeria, Obaji Ismail Halid, expressed joy over the donation and Jumia's concern about the safety of their Delivery Associates, adding, "We know the nature of our job so these helmets can provide adequate protection as we go about delivering to consumers in Nigeria. The helmets are of good quality and suitable for the Nigerian climate."

Jumia's safe helmet programme is part of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 and is intended to help reduce the number of global motorcycle-related fatalities. Indeed, research shows that safe helmet wearing is one of the most effective road safety interventions, reducing the number of head injuries among moped riders and motorcyclists by around 44 per cent.

E-TRENDS

...Your weekly entertainment delight

MUSIC
SHOWBIZ
NOLLYWOOD

'GLAMOUR GIRLS' REVIEW: MORE GLAMOUR, LESS DRAMA

Stories by Vanessa Obioha

'Glamour Girls' is sprinkled with all the blings, exotic locations and fashion statements expected from a film about glamour. But that's where it ends. The storyline is loosely plot, missing a chance to tell a gripping narrative that could have outlasted the classic Nollywood movie of the same title.

Produced by Play Network Studios, owned by Charles Okpaleke, who has gotten rights to most Nollywood classics, the film stars Nse Ikpe-Etim who plays Donna, a commandeering escort whose pride lies in providing escorts for her high-net income clients. These men are rich with an insatiable hunger for sexual pleasures.

Donna's girls are a curious hybrid. They are young, mature, married, single, rich, and spoiled.

While the story is tied to Donna, the character is not given much room to develop. For instance, the relationship between her and Jemma (Joselyn Dumas) is not fully explored to explain her loyalty. More so, the 'bitch' persona attached to her character is limited to her posture more than her actions.

The other characters Emma (Sharon Ooja), Lulu (Toke Makinwa), and Hell (Segilola Ogidan) have their own stories but the problem lies in glueing them together to give a holistic climax.

Emma is the ideal poor girl, looking for a better life through prostitution. Once she gets an elevated status, it becomes difficult to look back despite the humiliating situations presented to her. Lulu loves the good life but wants to remain married. Leaving a double life is the catch for her character and proves to be the only suspense in the two-hour film.

LATE CHRISTY ESSIEN-IGBOKWE'S GRAND-DAUGHTER TOES HER MUSICAL PATH



Christiana Igbokwe Jr

In memory of her grandmother, the late music icon Christy Essien-Igbokwe, nine-year-old Christiana Igbokwe, released a remake of her popular song 'Seun Rere' on June 30. The day also marked the 11th death anniversary of the singer fondly known as the Lady of Songs.

The song 'Séun Réré' sheds more light on the African conversation between mother and child; a mother who advises her child to listen to her words, so that all will be well with him/her.

'Seun Rere' is also the official theme song to the Disney+ Movies 'Rise', an American biographical sports-drama film directed by Akin Omotoso, from a script written by Arash Amel. It is based on the true story of three young Nigerian-Greek brothers, Giannis, Thanasis and Kostas Antetokounmpo, who emigrate to the United States and rose to fame and success within the National Basketball Association.

'Rise' was produced by Walt Disney Pictures and released as a Disney+ original film on June 24, 2022.

Afrobeats Enters the Building

The campaign for Nigerian creatives to own their narrative is beginning to gain traction with the release of two documentaries on Nigerian music, writes **Vanessa Obioha**

In 2017, the i-Represent International Documentary Film Festival (iREP) tackled the theme 'Archiving Africa.' The conversations swirled around the importance of documenting our creative works as it will be the compass to navigate our past and project the future. It was agreed that archiving is key in telling stories about Africa.

That message rings true today as creatives are taking charge of the narratives emanating from Africa. A good pointer is the recent release of documentaries focusing on the evolution of Nigerian music which today is described as a culmination of sounds under the label 'Afrobeats.' Paradoxically, this coinage was made popular by non-Africans.

The origin of Afrobeats can be traced to different sources but the term is derived from Afrobeat, the hybrid of highlife, jazz and soul music created by the late popular musician and activist, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti.

With many flavourful sounds springing up in the 90s, Nigerian artists found a way to incorporate cultural identity into their songs. Thus, genres such as Afro-pop were adopted as the identity of Nigerian music. All of that changed in the last few years when the successes of Nigerian music acts like Burna Boy, Wizkid, and Davido began to gain international recognition. Moreso, these artists started sampling Fela's Afrobeat sounds. For instance, Wizkid's 'Ojuelegba' gained popularity and rave reviews for his sampling of Fela's sounds. A need to find a suitable name for Nigerian music became unavoidable, fetching it the holistic term Afrobeats, albeit christened so by Westerners.



Clockwise - Tems, Burna Boy, Wizkid and David

Two new music documentaries release howmax. The documentary, a production of the creative entrepreneur Obi Asika traces the origin of Nigerian music from pre-independence to the Afrobeats rave. Featuring musicians, historians, art custodians, and journalists, the 10-episode series released weekly aims to document the rise of Afrobeats. Told in a narrative format, it captures the trends and beats of the era, juxtapositioning it with interviews with key players of that era.

The second, 'Afrobeats' was released on Netflix two days ago. It also features the artists of the Afrobeats movement, from the 2Babas to the Wizkids.

The explosion of these music documentaries signals a conscious effort to own the narrative of Afrobeats. Also, choosing to debut it on streaming platforms with a wider reach can be considered a strategic move to push the stories beyond borders.

To be sure, Nigerian music has enjoyed a certain degree of documentation. From Afrobeat to Highlife to Fuji and Juju music, these indigenous sounds have been researched by filmmakers and artists over the years. Last year, the musician Ade Bantu and his friend Siji Awoyinka premiered 'Elder's Corner' at iREP. The documentary is a historical celebration of the country's legendary musicians.

With the recent documentary on Afrobeats, Nigerians are owning the narrative without filters. Just like Jazz music originated from the African-American communities of New Orleans, Louisiana, future generations will find invaluable pointers in trying to understand the origin of Afrobeats through these works and finding a way to project its future.

How Showmax is Investing in Local Talents

A look at Ghana Jollof and The Real Housewives of Lagos has brought to the fore how Showmax is investing in local talents, **Chiamaka Ozulumba** reports

It is only inevitable that the Nigerian movie industry will follow the route of the music industry. Over the years, Nigeria's movie industry has grown in terms of output ultimately becoming the second largest in the world. The industry contributed 2.3 percent to the country's GDP in 2021 which is about N730 billion ($1.8 billion).

This direction is similar to the growth of the music industry which has become a global force. From Nigerian music artistes celebrating their songs being played on Channel O and western radio in the early 2000s to now commanding global interest, topping music charts in Europe and America, headlining shows, winning international awards and competing with their foreign counterparts for airplay.

The movie industry has already shown signs of leading the continental pack. Evidence is seen in the just-concluded Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards where Nigerian movies won the highest awards.

At the heart of this renaissance is the work Showmax is doing with significant investment in local talents as seen in two great works: Ghana Jollof and The Real Housewives of Lagos.

Ghana Jollof is Showmax's first original Nigerian comedy series that tells the hilarious story of four friends, three Nigerians and a Ghanaian. It chronicles their lives in Nigeria where they met in university to their move to Ghana where their lives dramatically intertwine in intriguing love, relationship, and of course, expected Nigeria vs Ghana humorous conflict.

Ghana Jollof made it to the top of the most-watched shows on the platform in 2021 but that's not the only success story to be told from the series. It was a testament to the investment Showmax is putting into the local market to recognise talents, give them an opportunity and raise their status to meet global standards. The director of the series, Diji Aderogba, a young director and film producer who was Tunde Kelani's protegee, recently told Netng that his selection to direct Ghana Jollof was based solely on merit as he was not even aware of the project until he was contacted. Although Aderogba was an AMVCA nominee, Ghana Jollof is his biggest project yet and has raised his status in the industry.



Aderogba is just one of several people involved in the Ghana Jollof project whose meritorious selection has boosted their profile. Auditions were made public to interested Nigerian and Ghanaian actors thereby opening up opportunities for talents to be recognised and rewarded. When The Real Housewives of Lagos premiered on Showmax in April, it broke streaming records with the highest first-day viewership on the streaming platform. The reality television series is a spinoff from the Real Housewives franchise. It focuses on the lives of six socialites in the city spotlighting their drama, conflict, shopping, and partying within their social circle.

Nigerian SInger and creative entrepreneur, Darey, whose company, Livespot360 produced the reality TV show for Showmax explained that beyond the drama, it was also "an opportunity to showcase some locally grown brands within the show."

His experience in the production of the show provided a glimpse of the depth of investment Showmax has been willing to go in investing in local talent.

He said: "Showmax is an innovative brand that understands what the consumers in this market yearn for and is willing to take calculated risks with their content properties."

The acceptance of this reality show has been massive as seen from its first-week record. Each installment released every Friday has superseded the previous one. The Head of Content at Showmax Africa, Candice Fangueiro, said: "The reception of the first episode of RHOLagos across Africa and the UK was beyond amazing. We knew we had a trend-setter on our hands and we are not surprised that RHOLagos is breaking records."

The result being seen on screen is the massive investment carried out by Showmax to tell Nigerian stories by Nigerians. From the onscreen participants to the crew, it has been a largely local investment with both the Nigerian television industry and the economy being the biggest winners.

With interest in reality TV surging, Showmax has already blazed the trail with its streaming services by investing in original content exclusive to its platform making the viewing experience flexible and digital.

By focusing on local talents in the movie industry, Showmax is providing a pipeline to showcase the hundreds of thousands of talents and creatives looking for opportunities in the country and inadvertently helping to address the unemployment problem.

E-TRENDS BUZZWORD: REMAKE OR SEQUEL?



E-Trends Buzzword

The latest 'Glamour Girls' film from Play Network Studios sparked discussions on the difference between a remake and a sequel. The producer of the film Charles Okpaleke is known for buying the rights to some Nollywood classics. His first, 'Living in Bondage: Breaking Free' was described as a sequel. Although 'Glamour Girls' is described as a remake, not many are in agreement with that description.

So what is the difference?

A remake is a film or TV series that is reconstructed closely to the original in terms of plot and characterisation. It may have a different setting and theme. It is to make an existing story anew.

A sequel is a continuity of some earlier work. It is usually set in the same story universe as the previous film or TV series.

However, a remake can be a sequel when it repeats the same story as the original one and uses the same title. In this case, it may contain a notable plot and storyline that shows that the two films are set in the same story universe.

So is 'Glamour Girls' a remake, a sequel or a remake sequel?

THISDAY

ART WEEKEND ...For pure art enthusiasts

At O'DA ART, Isaac Emokpae Unfurls a Show on Nigeria's Socio-Political Climate

A new body of works by the artist, Isaac Emokpae inspires in every viewer a critical stance at the Nigerian state, writes **Yinka Olatunbosun**

Are You ashamed of Yourself? That's the theme for the latest solo exhibition by Isaac Emokpae, a multi-faceted visual artist at O'DA ART, a gallery domiciled at Victoria Island, Lagos. Walking past some of the guarded pieces on the white walls, wrapped in caution tapes, it was a show of warning, almost screaming the word "Fragile."

Emokpae, like many concerned Nigerians, has his eyes on Nigeria's future. Starting with a simple flag, he created layers of conversations around the economic and political instability that has characterised and plagued the nation.

Broken cracks in the piece titled "A Fragile Peace" feature the universally recognised face of the resistance and how those who dare to stand up to the status quo are penalised. In the piece, "Be careful with our dreams 2022," the artist explores yet another view of our flag as a green forest of Nigeria being bubble wrapped.

"At our very core, Nigerians are very charitable people," said Emokpae, who was sporting the green-coloured Nigerian football jersey at a press preview in Lagos. "If you remove the urge to 'grab for myself', you will see the good in us. If you are stranded and need transport fares, someone will be willing to help. You don't easily get that kindness anywhere in the world. This is why people market citizenship to Nigerians. We hardly take our aged parents to old people's homes."

Beyond that charitable spirit of Nigerians, he described Nigeria itself as 'fragile' due to failing infrastructure, self-centeredness in governance, insecurity and lack of stability. His stained plexiglass series titled 'My Nigerian Stars 2019-20' speaks to the diversity of the Nigerian state and the prevalent lack of patriotism.

According to the curator, Obida Obioha, the Nigerian flag ought to be seen as a symbol of the dignity of its people.



One of the works at Emokpae's solo show in Lagos

"With over 500 languages, a wide range of ethnicities and several traditions, Nigeria is arguably one of the most culturally eclectic African nations. So why do we not see ourselves in a more positive and iconic light?

"In Chinua Achebe's 'An Image of Africa,' he argues that Nigerians are the most unpatriotic people. Written over 50years ago, this still rings true today. One could argue that lack of owning one's identity as a Nigeria has created such a divide in today's political, social and economic climate. For if you do not take care of what is yours, it will spoil," Obioha said.

Other pieces at the exhibition include 'Be Careful with our Dreams 2022" wherein the artist explores yet another view of the flag as a green forest, thus evoking the conversations around terrorist activities in Nigeria.

As bleak as the underlying message in this show could have been, Emokpae consciously infused optimism in his Nigeria-themed pieces. A case in point is "For Peace and Prosperity 2022" which draws attention to those amongst us who in spite of the insecurity and instability have provided stellar examples in humanity. The artist pays homage to Dr. Stella Ameyo Adadevoh, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Dora Akunyili, The Feminist Coalition and all the EndSARS activists.

Gallery at The Landmark Presents New Solo Show "Ominira"

Yinka Olatunbosun

Gbenga Olawole, a self-taught artist has a curious mind for art forms. Since his days at the university, he had shown more affinity for drawing and painting than the criminology he was meant to study. Eventually, he turned his attention to the canvas and began to create works about internal human struggles especially on how it affects the mental health. With colours and strokes, he would create pieces that cut across styles and movements.

"It might look a bit abstract or expressionism, impressionism and symbolism," he began. "My art takes a little from everything and I try to combine several styles. I'm just learning from every great artist that I have already known."

Although he didn't show any of the finished paintings during the media chat, he spoke about the idea behind the show and some of the paintings that would be seen at the show which begins on July 2nd and runs for three weeks.

"I don't try to control the way I work." he explained further. "I let it flow organically. But then it depends also on what I am trying to achieve with each work. It is therapeutic for me and also the viewer."

His debut solo show has a Yoruba title namely 'Ominira.' He explained the variety of meanings that the word alludes to.

"Ominira, that is the Yoruba word for freedom." He said. Meanwhile, it could also be pronounced to mean 'the stream of anguish.' He continued: "As we are trying to find freedom, it takes fighting and dedication. There is a price to pay for the freedom. I am trying to attain freedom through my painting, through life and we all go through this pain and stress."

Sometimes, Olawole chooses to be a non-conformist painter. As a full time studio artist, he probes every piece and attempts to interprete his thoughts using forms and content. The show which parades 30 works, including titles such as 'Moremi,' 'Ironic Dove,' as well as 'Are We Dying?' will be held inside Gallery at the Landmark, Victoria Island, Lagos. He recounted the story behind the existential work, 'Are we Dying?"



Olawole

"In the work, I used mosquito as a metaphor for a blood sucking insect that keeps feeding on us. Mosquitoes can be a lot of things. It can be politics, the government or anything that is taking our energy away. The only person that is safe a bit is a newborn child. So, I raise the question that is this environment where we are really killing us inside. I don't think I have the answers. Sometimes it depends on what kicks in.

He recalled the day he was working on the painting with a large canvas outside his own home and mosquitoes kept disturbing him.

"I was so mad. I wrote mosquito on the big canvas and entered the house. When a friend of mine came and asked me, why do you write this, he began to give me a different perspective to it. Mosquitoes are offensive and parasitic. In the larger picture, humans-most of us are mosquitoes to each other. Like I said, I can't explain my work. I expect my work to raise questions. Even though I am self-taught, I studied well. I did research on every abstract expressionist that I know."

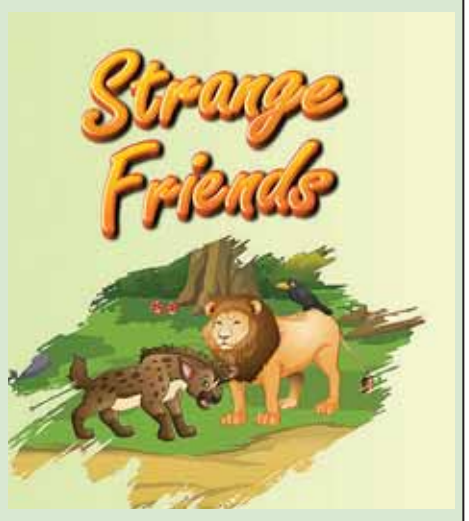
Consistency and passion helps to improve on one's skills. He admitted that he was weaned on the art history of Nigeria in secondary school and was taught about Bruce Onobrakpeya, Sam Ovraiti especially for his use of water colour; Demas Nwoko and Yusuf Grillo.

"But I can also learn from a younger artist because I pick from everywhere. I always learn. I don't overlook anything. My father was not one to limit his children, I remember there was a time when I was a c child, I wanted to play football so bad. My father was honest with me. he told me that I didn't have good legs to play football. He told me the truth. But when I started drawing there was no objection except to remind me to read my books," he said.

The artist who is a native of Owo town in Ondo State which was recently struck by terrorist attack said the incident may inspire an artistic response in the near future.

"My mother called me when it happened. For me as an artist, it was just not enough to paint about it. Ever since that time, I have several ideas and I want to interrogate it before I can document it. I just don't want to talk about it if it is not going to make an impact," he said.

Selfless Love, Communal Living as Themes in the Children's Book, 'Strange Friends'



Yinka Olatunbosun

An unlikely friendship evolves in a fictitious animal kingdom. First, a lion is discovered by one hungry hyena. Later, they meet a dove. Together, they form a pack with a set of core values to guide their peaceful co-existence. The animal characters in the children's book titled "Strange Friends" have societal archetypes when read with the Nigerian lens.

In this beautifully illustrated 25-paged book, the author Prince Chinweze Isaac tells a simple story of a food chain to teach young readers some valuable lessons in love, team spirit, selflessness and trust. Our world is characterised by selfishness. It's not out of place for a socially relevant author to use his work to advance moral virtues such as love.

As a writer who promotes African heritage through his literature, the theme of communal living ignites the memory of traditional African setting. The plot of 'Strange Friends' thus teaches how an individual's choices can be guided by internalised communal values which are the basis of African philosophy.

One may also classify the children's book as a literary celebration of diversity. Situating a raven as a friend to a lion and a hyena draws attention to the nature of love- a charitable feeling towards another not necessarily of one's kind. Through this animal story, the writer tears the wall of tribalism. Nigerian political space wears various tribal marks; hence the polity is often divided along ethnic lines.If only selfless love can be the guiding principle in governance, then the quality of life of every Nigerian living in Nigeria would be markedly better than it is now. Nigerians only realise the trauma of being Nigerian when they travel outside the country and access public facilities maintained by the governments of these countries. Like the hyena in 'Strange Friends' did to the lion before he changed for good, corrupt politicians steal the wealth of the people and starve them of 'basic amenities.' But as the animals displayed in the book, peaceful coexistence is possible where selflessness exists.

Aside from the story, the book has colouring sections where children can engage with the visual images of the animal characters in the story. They can trace, paint or use crayons to colour the animals. Puzzles are also added for cognitive development.

The author is a graduate of public administration from the Imo State University, Nigeria. Born and bred in Lagos, his inspiration for children's books came from his early childhood experience of reading and listening to African folk tales.

As a socially conscious writer, he observed the major challenge in his native country as well as humans in general - deep rooted on tribalism, ethnicity and race. These ills breed lack of trust and cooperation, which adversely affect collective growth. Being a father of two, he is determined to help nurture the next generation who are governed by selflessness.

METRO

...Your city life in print

This Weekend

Tech-Savvy Educational Tour Set to Hold in Dubai

Mary Nnah

To enhance and ensure that more educators are digital compliant to meet up with the changing times, the Tech-Savvy Teacher International (TSTI) is holding its Educational Technology Retreat in Dubai from November 13th- 22nd, 2022.

In its 12th edition, the educational tour will leverage the GESS Dubai Education and Exhibition Conference to offer educators the right exposure and awareness to the latest technologies in education.

With its theme: 'Owning a global vision as a school leader', the 8-day educational fair will give school owners practical knowledge and skill to maximize classroom experience and increase students' success rate significantly.

According to the convener and founder of Tech-Savvy Teacher International, Ify Obidi-Essien, the event will give participants practical experience on how schools run internationally. Also, the quality of speakers at the Masterclass is top-notch as they are internationally recognized and well experienced in their areas of expertise.

She also noted that the 3-day Educational fair in GESS Dubai offers greater exposure than ever before to educational technology, especially in the Post-Covid-19 era, where the use of technology in teaching and learning is not an option but compulsory.

"Attendees should look out for networking opportunities, new technologies to introduce in their schools, ways to expand their reach on a global stage, and new technology skills to acquire."

Ify Obidi-Essien added that the tour will help improve Nigeria's educational system saying it will develop tremendously. "The ETRDubai2022 will bring about educators who are well exposed and knowledgeable about global standards which will be relevant in our educational system. Exposure is everything. Educators will be able to attract international opportunities that will advance the Nigerian ecosystem to a great extent."

Speakers at the masterclass include Founder and CEO T4 Education, Vikas Pota; Online publisher and Entrepreneurs Network (OPEN) Edirin Edewor; and CEO Teammasters Ltd, Rotimi Eyitayo.

Helping Hands Legal Foundation: Committed to Giving Indigents Access to Justice



Hon. Justice Cecilia, M.A Olatoregun

The Helping Hands Legal Foundation has warmed its way into numerous hearts.

In a country where the idea of justice seems far-fetched and the people have no one to fight for their rights, the Helping Hands Legal Foundation has been committed to helping indigent people access justice for over 20 years now.

This non profit/non political legal aid initiative also referred to as "Help @ law" is being hosted by Cecil Law consulting and was launched with a desire to contribute to and impact humanity.

Since inception, it has been doing just that through their pro-bono services, in collaboration with top-notch legal firms.

For those experiencing legal troubles; such as problems with a rental property, indiscriminate arrest by the police, breach of employment contract, domestic violence, divorce, child custody and any other issue that would require the expertise of a lawyer, the helping hands legal foundation is committed to helping you find Justice at no cost.

Speaking with Hon. Justice Cecilia, M.A Olatoregun, founder, Cecil law on the aspirations of the legal initiative, she said "Help at law initiative is just the beginning and a minuscule step towards solving the eminent problem of justice in Nigeria.

"We have decided at Cecil law consulting, through the help at law initiative, to help curb these legal challenges by providing a solution to ensure easy accessibility, excellent quality and sustainability of legal services".

The Helping Hands Legal Foundation is not only bringing justice to your doorsteps by simplifying the access to lawyers and bringing them closer to the masses, they are also ensuring that young lawyers receive adequate training, and aim to organise mentorship programs by conducting workshops and conferences whilst motivating these young lawyers to pursue public interest career paths.

Fashola Hosts GABFEST, Charges Youth to be Involved in Nation Building



Mrs Abimbola Fashola cutting the birthday cake on behalf of her husband and surrounded by well-wishes

Precious Ugwuzor

The Minister for Works and Housing, Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN in celebration of his 59th birthday recently gathered well meaning Nigerian youths for a Gabfest,Themed what are we voting for?

He urged the youths to note that people do not vote leaders out of anger but with reason as "Democracy is not Divine but it is Man-made, hence we must all come out and participate in party politics starting from the local level as this is primary to every form of change".

The minister suggested that as a strategy for local government politics participation National Assembly members who do not live in their constituencies should lose their seats".

Talking about creating employments, he said everywhere in the world small or medium enterprises or businesses drive employment and productivity so this sector should be given the environment and finances to thrive . Contributing to the Gabfest, Tope Atiba one of the panelist says "I am voting a competent team. A team that has shown proof over the years with track records. A team that has Nigerians at heart because a vote is an investment and our negotiating power as a people."

Amina Usman, another panelist, encouraged women to participate in party politics, especially contesting for positions, and not just be used as tools to gather votes during elections.

She also noted that "Voter Apathy is an issue," reminding Nigerians that "voting is a right,we should vote for our future and the future of other Nigerians".

The minister urged the Nigerian youths to get involved in nation building and study the Nigerian constitution so as to be better informed.

In conclusion he urged Nigerians to go out and get their PVCs not in anger but for reason in exercising their civic responsibility.

The sixth Babatunde Raji Fashola, BRF Gabfest focused at creating a platform for the active involvement of the youth in Nigeria's future and was targeted at those who are sincerely concerned about the future of Nigeria, and the role young people have to play in that future.

WIEN's Bille Supernova Girl Scholarship Programme, Launch for July 9th

Mary Nnah

Women in Energy Network (WIEN), the platform providing convergence for professional women playing in the energy industry, will on July 9, 2022, launch its flagship Supernova Girl Scholarship Programme and Science Fair.

The programme scheduled for the Bille community in Rivers State is the sequel to the virtual launch of the Supernova Girl initiative which targets the early grooming of girls in senior primary schools, and junior and senior secondary schools into taking careers in science, and technology-related disciplines.

The fair promises to be a grand inspiration programme for girl children with keen interests in studying mathematics and science subjects, and WIEN comes with strong motivational incentives that include scholarships, dressings, books, and other instructional materials.

According to the President of WIEN, Mrs. Funmi Ogbue, "Scholarships will be awarded to fifteen students selected through written exams and science experiments across the three cadres. School uniforms, school sandals, bags, and textbooks will be distributed to about 467 students in the Bille community.

"WIEN is confident that early contact with the target group will indeed spark off a desire and an ambition of the girl child to study the sciences and ultimately pursue engineering as a profession and get them ready for a career in the Energy sector."

Ogbue added that "the overreaching objective of the program is to ignite a passion for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) in young girls and to showcase the socio-economic value and application of STEM in our everyday life."

"Inspired by the successful launch of the Supernova Girl flagship program and overwhelming positive energy generated by the virtual launch which was attended by key players in the energy value chain, we use this medium to appreciate all our partners," she noted.

The physical launch of the Supernova Girl and Science Fair will be graced with the esteemed presence of Bille community leaders and top officials of the Rivers State government.

The father of the day is Agbaniye-jike XVIII, HRM King Igbikingeri Ngwowari Cornelius Herbert, the Amayanabo of Bille Kingdom; and the mother of the day is the wife of the Executive Governor of Rivers State, H.E. Hon Justice Eberechu Nyesom Wike.

Illustrious son of Bille Kingdom, Engr. Adokiye Tombomieye (FNSE) is the keynote speaker; and other speakers include the former Permanent Secretary at Rivers State Ministry of Health, Dr. Justina Junmbo; the former Caretaker Committee Chairman of Degema LGA, and a United Nations POLAC Ambassador for Peace, Mrs. OkoriteAdiele.

The spokesman of WIEN, Charlotte Essiet, explained that members of WIEN will during the event also host an interactive sensitization session with parents, guardians, and teachers to inspire a positive attitude and support for females in the pursuit of STEM.

She added that the Association of Professional Women Engineers of Nigeria (APWEN) also supports the event as its members will guide the pupils through science laboratory experiments.

"WIEN holds the strong belief that with the right guidance, the sky will be the limit for girls who begin early to imagine great careers in the energy sector and diligently demonstrate a passion to pursue it. "WIEN's role is to mentor, point the way forward and partner with the future champions to midwife their careers by way of providing learning aids, seminars, scholarships at some points and, above all, inspiration," she pointed out.

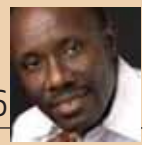
WIEN was established in 2020 to provide a platform for Women that work across the Energy Industry value chain. The primary goal is to for members to network, build confidence, and create links that facilitate progress in their careers and businesses.

Our core values are Excellence, Integrity, Collaboration, and Empowerment.

Our vision is to be the leading Network that promotes the participation and advancement of women in leadership across the energy value chain in support of National Development.

POLSCOPE

with Eddy Odivwri
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Peter Obi and His Traducers

Perhaps, there would have been very low interest in the build -up to the 2023 politics if Nigerians were left with just the traditional political parties: the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). The two political parties have failed to impress Nigerians. They have both been tested, and they have proved the fact that they are not the messiahs Nigerians are expecting. While the one has seemingly blown all the goodwill that propelled it to power, almost eight years ago, the other, for sixteen solid years, was merely nibbling with the ordinance of governance. Both parties have literally behaved like the prodigal son: wasting prized resources, running after inanities, and soon returning to nothingness, from the plateau of plenty.

And then suddenly, a third force emerges in the person of Mr Peter Obi, on the platform of the little known Labour Party (LP).

It's barely a month since Obi suddenly announced his resignation form the PDP, whereupon, he finally pitched his tent with the LP, but the ululation and mass embrace of the Obi campaign train has been, for the lack of a better expression, massively massive.

Perhaps, for the sake of Obi-dient crew of the Obi followers, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has been under tremendous pressure coping with the huge outpouring of Nigeria youths who want to register and get their Permanent Voter's Card (PVC). The swathe of youths swarming the INEC registration centres every day in many parts of the country is simply astounding.

Suddenly, they are seeing in the Obi candidature, a new hope, a new lease of life on the Nigerian federation.

Needless to say the Peter Obi videos, all featuring speeches at various places and occasions, have gone more than viral on many platforms and internet portals. It has been described, rightly, as a movement. The followership is as electrifying as it is enchanting, especially among the youth and the unemployed Nigerians. It is almost like the cultic followership of devotees. The Obi narrative is resonating loud and clear across board. The swell of the ranks is high. The Obi-evangelism is catching up like a harmattan wildfire, cutting across tribe and tongue, region or religion. It is almost becoming as infectious as the #EndSARS campaign of year 2020.

Nobody listens to any of those Obi's speeches and does not get convinced that indeed, he holds the rod that can part the inhibitive Red Sea in the Nigerian political scene. You cannot but bear witness to his sincerity, sense of purpose, and determination to be different from the rest of the political actors.

But as expected in politics, some people do not believe in the Obi option as many have tried to pick holes with his kind of person, style and even his political influence and weight.

Ironically, his strongest critics are his Igbo folksmen, many of whom have disparaged Obi with scathing and unedifying remarks and commentaries. Many of the critics have been said to be suffering from the crab-mentality: "If I can't go, then you too can't go".

But Obi does not look fazed by them all. He has continued in his effeminate tone, to push on his campaign for change and recovery of Nigeria, urging the youth to take back their country.

Yes, many of his critics have said election is not social media. They are correct. But those who are a little more discerning should take notice of the enrolment figures as confirmed by the INEC. As at the end of the third week of June, 10.4 million new persons had registered. That is not so much the issue. It is more with the enthusiasm with which the people are registering. Already, huge jokes and mimes are being used to drum home the need for the PVC. Housewives are refusing to submit in "the other room" unless their spouses produce their PVCs. Similarly, men are refusing to give "food allowance" to their wives, unless they show their PVCs. Already, young boys are now wearing a particular haircut after the image and letters of Peter Obi. The import of these jokes is not lost on Nigerians. The PVC has become a core instrument for the national transformation Nigerians are baying for.

However, it is one thing to have the PVC and it is another to turn out to vote on election day.

Question is will the social media frenzy translate to huge voters' turn out on election day? That is the core issue.

The momentum gathered by the Obi factor is huge. Sustaining it will be a major project.

Already, many Workers' Unions in Nigeria, led by the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) have not only adopted Peter Obi as the man to be voted for, they are at the forefront of mobilizing the Nigerian workforce for the LP presidential candidate.

For the Obi traducers, they say he is over-rated and that the cultic followership on social media has not been tested on the field. That may be true. What cannot be disputed is the mass appeal the Obi candidature represents. Many believe with the recent electoral reform, if votes would count, as it promises, then the Obi candidature will shock many old-stock politicians. Nigerians are simply tired of the old ways which the two leading political parties and personages represent. We surely cannot continue like this and not become like another Afghanistan or Ethiopia or Sudan.

The new orientation is determined to try to do something different from the old ways. And all eyes are on Peter Obi.

We cannot and should not rely on the truth-plaited lies of the orthodox politicians, who are extremely selfish as they reason in italics. Nigerians seem poised to resist the running deceit of old politicians. Gov Godwin Obaseki of Edo State, recently acknowledged it, that the Obi-dient movement is real, adding that the younger folks,…"they don't want us, not the PDP nor the APC people", Obaseki declared.

But is it mere fortuition that all the people who have criticized Obi have had a slice of speedy sanction? When Gov Nyesom Wike attacked and dismissed Obi, after the latter resigned from the PDP, it was not up to ten days after that not only did Wike lose the presidential primary, he also lost the chance of being picked as Atiku's running mate.

Next was Rev Fr Ejike Mbaka of the Adoration Ground fame, in Enugu. He accused Peter Obi of being stingy and swore that he will not be Nigeria's President on account of that. Mbaka has been severally criticized for being garrulous and a nay-sayer. The Catholic authority soon sent him on suspension and banned any church activity on the adoration grounds. Mbaka has been told loud and clear that it is better to have a stingy leader, than a rougish leader. The testimony from Mrs Bianca Ojukwu of Obi's "stinginess" was a clear clincher that killed that label of stinginess.

Some have drawn inference from the Bible story of how Peter refused to give "silver or gold" to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate. Yet, the healing pronounced by Peter on the lame man transformed the life of the lame man forever; which is way more precious and by far worthier than all the gifts of cash he's been receiving.

It soon became the turn of former Deputy Senate President, Dr Ike Ekweremadu who had declared that Obi would not be President because "he needs to be dynamic"--- whatever that means, and that Igbo cannot afford to throw away their votes by voting for Peter Obi. He spoke with so much certitude. Few days after, he got into trouble in faraway United Kingdom, over the organ harvesting saga, with one so-called homeless boy. Ekweremadu and his wife, Beatrice, are right now cooling off in a British detention facility. Many have said Peter is a covenant child to whom God promised, "those who curse you, I will curse, and those who Bless you, I will Bless".

It is remarkable to note that despite the huge and rousing reception the Obi candidature has attracted, not a single scandal has come forth around him. Nobody has faulted his many claims on how he governed Anambra State. His integrity remains unblemished and his character remains bright and strong.

It is not to say Peter Obi is a saint. No, he is not. In fact, saints don't play politics, they dwell in heaven, where they endlessly sing Halleluyah.

Even his vilest traducers acknowledge that he is a threat and a prospective president. All they say is that "we cannot afford to give it to him now". They speak as if they see what the rest of us don't see. They say, let the older and more experienced politicians come on board, stabilise the economy and after that, the youth, represented by Peter Obi can come on board.

They speak about having no structure. But many people are determined to go structureless, asking "who has structure helped all these years?

Some have also accused Obi of having an omniscient mentality, as he claims to know everything and how he believes only in his strategy in doing things. They cite the example of how many of his commissioners were either rendered redundant because he (Obi) did almost everything himself, or some were forced to resign for not being free.

But those who believe in Obi are quick to say it is the end product that matters. If Obi, at the end of the day, succeeded in growing Anambra, then whatever means he used to achieve it is commendable.

All said, even if Obi loses the election at the end of the 2023 polls, he only would have lost the battle, not the war.



Peter Obi

Fraud Promo: Where is the Auditor General of the Federation?

I had thought one of the essences of having an auditor in any going concern is to periodically ensure that checks are carried out on the finances of the organisation to ensure that monies are being expended according to laid down rules, as well as ensuring that monies are judiciously spent. That is why in many organisations, the fear of an auditor's query usually compels financial operators to ensure that the financial rules are kept and obeyed. In fact, to underline its importance, many organisations have both internal and external auditors, all in a bid to ensure that financial propriety is adhered to.

If that is a necessary check-and-balance procedure in an organisation, it is thus even more imperative in a federation like Nigeria, what with all the huge sums that get budgeted for and expended every year.

Auditors, perhaps by their training, are hardly meant to be heard. Their work ought to speak for them.

But in Nigeria, there are neither heard, nor their works seen.

Given the huge and frequent cases of fraud and embezzlement of public funds in the public service, it would seem as if Nigeria is running a promo on fraud. Every day, public servants are robbing the public till blind, and one wonders what the auditor general of the federation is doing.

A recent case is that of the Accountant General of the Federation, Mr Ahmed Idris, who was said to have embezzled the sum of N80 Billion, as well as being involved in other cases of fraud. With an efficient and effective auditor general, how is it so easy for one fellow to embezzle that huge sum? It was not a one-day job. Only two excuses can explain this: it is either the auditor general is inefficient, doesn't know or do his job or he is in cahoots with the accountant general to have that huge sum stolen from the system.

Former Zamfara state Governor, Abdullaziz Yari and the Chairman and Managing Director of Finex Professional, Anthony Yaro were implicated in the fraud involving the suspended Accountant General of the federation. All the accused persons have long been granted bail. As it happens often in Nigeria, that may be the last time we would hear of the matter. Recently too, the story broke about how the former Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Tukur Buratai (rtd), had stored up huge sums of money meant for the purchase of arms in his private house.

Although the story has been debunked by officials of the ICPC, the point must be made that such sordid stories are common with public officers. The amount of fraud in the Ministry of Petroleum (wherein huge sums are every year budgeted for Turn Around Maintenance of our refineries, yet the refineries ever hardly work), for instance, is just one example of how public officials have devised ways of circumventing the process to steal public funds.

Where the auditor general of the federation is alive to his duties, these huge financial infractions would not be as rampant as we see every day.



Auditor General of the Federation

NASD, Blockstation, TK Tech Africa to Launch New Digital Securities Platform

Oluchi Chibuzor

NASD OTC Securities Exchange has announced that it will soon launch a new Digital Securities Platform (N-DSP) through its new master agreement with Blockstation and regional partner TK Tech Africa.

This is following the recent publication of the Securities & Exchange Commission's (SEC) Digital Asset Rulebook.

Disclosing this in a joint statement issued by NASD, TK Tech Africa and Blockstation, they said, "This agreement also follows a successful collaboration between both organizations and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to develop the rulebook that was released recently."

According to the statement, NASD will be the first exchange in Africa to embrace blockchain-based security tokens, an incredible achievement for Blockstation and NASD, paving the way for further adoption throughout the continent.

Stressing the importance of the agreement, NASD Managing Director and CEO, Bola Ajomale, said, "This agreement is a key part of our strategy to be the most innovative exchange for capital formation in West Africa.

"By building the N-DSP on the Blockstation platform, we stand to create a secure, efficient and dynamic solution for issuers to tokenize, as well as connect with both brokers and investors more easily than ever before. More broadly, this cutting-edge technology furthers NASD's mission to enable economic development in Africa through consistent innovation, fulfilling our commitment to our stakeholders and the Nigerian economy at large."

Speaking on the collaboration between Blockstation, TK Tech Africa and NASD, TK Tech Managing Director Damola Akindolire expressed delight regarding the achievement of this critical milestone and highlighted how the new SEC guidelines will enhance investor confidence and market transformation.

While the Head of Business Strategy for Blockstation, Matt Singh, said that, "We are honoured to be directly involved with this process in Nigeria through NASD, and our strategic regional partner TK Tech Africa to advocate for the new digital asset rules. Considering Nigerians made over 274 billion dollars' worth of transactions in e-payments in the first four months of 2022, Nigeria is in a perfect position to leverage blockchain-based investments for its citizens."



L-R: Executive Secretary Risk Management Association of Nigeria (RIMAN) Mr. Victor Olannye; Publicity Secretary RIMAN, Mrs. Eneni Odewole; President RIMAN, Mr. Ezekiel Oseni; Chairman Access Bank, Mrs. Ajoritsedere Awosika; Chairman Board of Trustees RIMAN, Ms. Folakemi Fatogbe; General Secretary RIMAN, Ms. Laurine Ubanozie and 2nd Vice President RIMAN, Mr. Adesoji Olasoko, during the RIMAN's 21st Annual International Conference held in Lagos...recently

Stockbrokers ' Institute, LBS Sign Capacity Development Pact

The Chartered Institute of Stockbrokers (CIS) and Lagos Business School (LBS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for training of professionals in the financial market to upscale their professional competence and enhance global competitiveness.

A statement from CIS indicates that the recently inaugurated subsidiary of the Institute, CIS Academy shall drive the training processes with LBS.

The MoU is expected to bring about comprehensive and practical trainings that cover technical and ethical needs of finance professionals. It will entail case studies and emerging trends in the global financial market and cement the relationship between CIS and LBS.

Commenting on the landmark MoU, the Institute's President, Mr Wole Adeosun said: " The MoU is quite significant in the sense that this is the first time we are having a collaboration between the capital market and a private -sector- focused University like Lagos Business School (LBS). This collaboration will provide a link between the executive education and the capital market. It will afford members the opportunity to come for more quality programme. The training will be much more affordable for them. It shall be well-packaged to enable participants derive value. The capital market is expanding and we want as many people as possible to benefit from such collaboration."

The Dean, LBS, Professor Chris Ogbechie said by this MOU, " two strong brands are coming together with similar values to improve executive capacity in the capital market. It will make the players in the market to be more professional and to operate in more ethical way in order to grow our economy."

The colourful ceremony was attended by the Institute's 1st Vice President, Mr Oluropo Dada, 2nd Vice President, Mrs Fiona Ahimie, Registrar and Chief Executive, Mr Josiah Akerewusi and some staff of LBS.

Corps Members in 10 States to Benefit from Unity Bank N10m Business Grant

Kayode Tokede

Unity Bank's flagship Entrepreneurial Development Initiative, Corpreneurship Challenge, is set to return for the 8th edition across 10 locations in Nigeria, including a debut in Delta and Rivers States. The bank in a statement yesterday said the Corpreneurship Challenge scheme kick-started in 2019, with a launch in Lagos and in three other states, which included Edo, Ogun, and Abuja, but with the increasing traction of the initiative among corps entrepreneurs, maintaining that it is has now expanded the programme to 10 states across the federation.

According to the statement, the first expanded edition covered Lagos, Ogun, Abuja, Edo, Katsina, Enugu, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom, Sokoto, Kano and Kaduna.

The statement explained further that, "This edition will hold for the first time in Rivers and Delta as well as making a return to Sokoto, Edo, Abuja, Akwa-Ibom, Osun, Kano, Bayelsa and Enugu.

The Corpreneurship Challenge, which has earned the Bank a national recognition for its impact on youth empowerment and job creation, has continued to elicit growing interest among the corps members, attracting over 2000 applicants and participation in every edition.

"In partnership with the NYSC Skill Acquisition and Entrepreneurship Development, SAED, the initiative prominently features a business pitch presentation that provides the participants with the opportunity to present their business plans and stand a chance to win up to N500, 000 cash in the business grant.

"Previous editions saw participants pitching business plans from several sectors including software solutions, fashion, fish production, poultry farming, bee farming, retail chains, and piggery to beverages which were assessed based on originality, marketability, and future employability potential of the product and knowledge of the business."

Sterling One Foundation Set to Empower Social Entrepreneurs at ASIS

Nume Ekeghe

Young Africans running impact-driven businesses targeted at solving key African challenges have received a boost following the announcement of a scale-up funding opportunity at the Africa Social Impact Summit (ASIS) slated to be held in Abuja, Nigeria.

The platform, which will give ten finalists a chance to pitch their solutions to a selected group of Africa-focused investors, is in line with the Summit's goal of harnessing ideas and solutions capable of accelerating growth in Africa.

The Africa Social Impact Summit is a two-day event that brings together players from Africa's civil society, private sector, and government to share ideas, learnings, plans, and practical solutions to ensure that the Sustainable Development Goals are met holistically.

With a focus on climate action, education, health, agriculture, circular economy, and women empowerment, the summit aims to provide opportunities for impact investors to scale market-led solutions which have the potential for long-term impact.

To achieve this, the Summit plans to host a deal room where shortlisted entrepreneurs will pitch their businesses to investors, answer questions about their operating models, and get constructive feedback from the investors that can help them better execute their ideas.

Breaking down the Deal Room sessions, Etemore Glover, Projects Lead for Impact Investors Foundation, the Deal Room's implementing partners, explained that the opportunity is targeted at businesses that are currently operational and have demonstrated the ability to effectively address some of the continent's challenges in a way that benefits everyone.

Speaking on behalf of the host organization, Sterling One Foundation, CEO of the Foundation, Olapeju Ibekwe, highlighted that a better framework for sustainable financing is one of the key anticipated outcomes from the Summit, and the Deal Room is a snapshot into how the framework will function.

"The Deal Room session will show the different players exactly how homegrown solutions can be backed with impact investment and the right partnerships to help our continent recover from the negative effects of COVID-19 and continue to grow", she said.

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%

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

NGX, Others Collaborate to Boost Awareness on ESG Data Metrics

Kayode Tokede

Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Africa and Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) have agreed to work together to boost awareness on ESG Data Metrics for sustainable investing.

They stated this during a webinar tagged, "Empowering Responsible Investing through Data Metrics and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Integration."

Speaking, Chief Executive Officer, NGX, Mr. Temi Popoola, stated, "As the sustainable Exchange championing Africa's growth, Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) understands the pivotal role that ESG performance plays in ensuring a company's long-term sustainability.

"Fuelled by our commitment to foster the growth of long-term sustainable finance and promote the adoption of sustainable business practices among our listed companies, we unveiled the NGX Sustainability Disclosure Guidelines in 2019, working with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI). We have continued our engagement with GRI to promote the adoption of ESG reporting through The NGX Sustainability Disclosure Guidelines."

Sharing insights on the value of incorporating ESG data metrics for responsible investing, Head of Africa, Signatory Relations, Darron Scorgie, noted that, "African investors are recognizing that their journey to a sustainable financial system is going to be a little different from developing markets, and are increasingly inching forward by considering investments in sustainable outcomes alongside their objectives for long-term financial returns."

Director, Capital Markets, Dave Reubzaet, shared insights on the value of ESG integration for investors and regulators, stating, "for investors, ESG metrics is key to look at financial materiality and impact, and to put sustainability expectations and data in in the context of emerging markets. In addition, for regulators it is important to align as much as possible with existing sustainability standards, to create a global common language and metrics and to reduce the compliance burden, time and cost."

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF 30/06/2022

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	254,785.69	7.45	-	132	17,504,619
2 ZENITH BANK PLC	681,303.92	21.70	-0.23	356	14,073,222
BANKING				488	31,577,841
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
3 ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	328,793.34	9.25	-0.54	156	8,629,576
4 FBN HOLDINGS PLC	416,385.40	11.60	1.75	411	36,633,772
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				567	45,263,348
FINANCIAL SERVICES				1,055	76,841,189
ICT					
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
5 MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	4,681,538.00	230.00	2.00	249	5,947,106
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				249	5,947,106
ICT				249	5,947,106
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
6 DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	4,686,139.54	275.00	-	74	36,486
7 LAFARGE AFRICA PLC.	425,245.80	26.40	-2.04	74	1,069,030
BUILDING MATERIALS				148	1,105,516
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				148	1,105,516
OIL AND GAS					
S/N EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
8 SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	764,977.93	1,300.00	0.78	15	108,257
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION				15	108,257
OIL AND GAS				15	108,257
AGRICULTURE					
S/N CROP PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
9 ELLAH LAKES PLC.	7,920.00	3.96	-	3	3,615
10 FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	726.00	0.33	-	5	57,600
11 OKOMU OIL PALM PLC.	206,903.08	216.90	-	27	35,506
12 PRESCO PLC	165,000.00	165.00	-	26	40,552
CROP PRODUCTION				61	137,273
S/N LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
13 LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	3,900.00	1.30	-3.70	32	1,061,952
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES				32	1,061,952
AGRICULTURE				93	1,199,225
CONGLOMERATES					
S/N DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
14 JOHN HOLT PLC.	291.86	0.75	8.70	1	100,000
15 S C O A NIG. PLC.	1,260.66	1.94	-	5	15,430
16 TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	49,997.03	1.23	-0.81	68	26,471,291
17 U A C N PLC.	31,982.39	11.10	-	21	562,642
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES				95	27,149,363
CONGLOMERATES				95	27,149,363
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.	42,400.00	26.50	-1.49	38	1,317,101
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION				38	1,317,101
S/N REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
20 UPDC PLC	19,859.17	1.07	7.00	20	3,191,406
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT				20	3,191,406
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				58	4,508,507
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.	29,282.32	3.74	-9.09	37	2,207,450
23 GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC.	829.98	0.81	-	0	0
24 GUINNESS NIG PLC	198,229.65	90.50	-	35	170,513
25 INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	169,231.03	6.30	-	88	2,454,962
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
26 NIGERIAN BREW. PLC.	474,858.92	58.80	-0.34	90	5,823,023
BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS				250	10,655,948
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
27 BUA FOODS PLC	990,000.00	55.00	-	19	22,538
28 DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	197,994.12	16.30	-	51	349,965
29 FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC.	133,262.34	32.50	1.56	44	285,950
30 HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	21,887.35	2.76	-7.07	37	966,787
31 MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.10	0.36	-	0	0
32 N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC.	1,701.81	9.55	-	0	0
33 NASCON ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	31,130.90	11.75	-	4	6,305
34 UNION DICON SALT PLC.	2,446.38	8.95	-	0	0
FOOD PRODUCTS				155	1,631,545
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS--DIVERSIFIED	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
35 CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	32,398.99	17.25	-	21	47,705
36 NESTLE NIGERIA PLC.	1,109,718.75	1,400.00	-	19	3,075
FOOD PRODUCTS--DIVERSIFIED				40	50,780
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	-	28	399,786
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES				28	399,786
S/N PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
39 P Z CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC.	38,116.58	9.60	-9.86	62	1,074,842
40 UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	85,026.08	14.80	-	20	193,515
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS				82	1,268,357
CONSUMER GOODS				555	14,006,416
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
41 ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	194,505.24	10.60	-0.93	50	648,219
42 FIDELITY BANK PLC	99,093.81	3.42	-0.58	69	5,051,374
43 GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	603,339.17	20.50	-0.49	423	15,162,075
44 JAIZ BANK PLC	31,432.47	0.91	1.11	15	538,657
45 STERLING BANK PLC.	43,761.44	1.52	-1.30	89	11,222,276
46 UNION BANK NIG.PLC.	179,092.63	6.15	4.24	70	2,403,216
47 UNITY BANK PLC	5,260.20	0.45	-	6	9,601
48 WEMA BANK PLC.	41,017.52	3.19	1.27	119	6,918,631
BANKING				841	41,954,049
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
49 AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	-	1	5,000
50 AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	23,427.38	0.64	-3.03	30	403,523
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
51 AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	18,000.00	2.00	-	18	297,031
52 CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INSURANCE PLC	7,814.29	0.73	8.96	20	5,292,842
53 CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	13,079.80	0.72	9.09	16	1,963,039
54 CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	9,836.59	0.41	-	16	33,337
55 GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	-	0	0
56 GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	1,228.00	0.20	-	0	0
57 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	487.95	0.38	-	0	0
58 LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	1,888.59	1.03	-	10	106,781
59 LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	7,280.00	0.52	-3.70	10	704,146
60 MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC.	5,015.41	0.25	4.17	7	286,462
61 NEM INSURANCE PLC	19,062.62	3.80	-	6	44,332
62 NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,547.90	0.20	-	0	0
63 PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	4,903.45	0.37	-7.50	7	966,754
64 REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	1,800.56	0.27	-	0	0
65 SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	3,068.41	0.27	-	3	3,000,300
66 STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,483.72	0.48	-	0	0
67 STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC.	2,582.21	0.20	-	0	0
68 SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC.	2,033.78	0.35	-	0	0
69 UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	3,200.00	0.20	-	1	5,000
70 VERITAS KAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	2,773.33	0.20	-	0	0
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				145	13,108,547
S/N MICRO-FINANCE BANKS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
71 NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	10,187.98	1.70	-3.95	5	275,000
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS				5	275,000

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
72 ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	17,261.54	1.70	-	1	60,000
73 ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	-	0	0
74 INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	5,296.48	1.27	-	0	0
75 RESORT SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	2,265.95	0.20	-	0	0
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
76 UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC.	2,949.22	3.02	-	0	0
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				0	0
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
77 AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	11,100.00	5.55	-	27	173,636
78 CUSTODIAN INVESTMENT PLC	41,173.05	7.00	-	8	92,922
79 DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	300.00	0.20	-	0	0
80 FCMB GROUP PLC.	65,348.95	3.30	-	50	2,085,174
81 NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP	45,076.46	22.95	-6.71	28	545,619
82 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC.	4,939.56	0.96	-3.03	40	4,312,858
83 STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	434,707.25	33.55	-	34	208,857
84 UNITED CAPITAL PLC	76,800.00	12.80	-0.78	85	1,661,345
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				272	9,080,411
FINANCIAL SERVICES				1,331	68,828,676
HEALTHCARE					
S/N HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
85 EKOCORP PLC.	2,886.90	5.79	-	0	0
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS				0	0
S/N MEDICAL SUPPLIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
86 MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	2,166.26	2.19	-	3	1,291
MEDICAL SUPPLIES				3	1,291
S/N PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
87 FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	23,367.23	11.20	-	28	339,380
88 GLAXO SMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC.	7,414.43	6.20	-	20	75,659
89 MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	6,849.18	3.97	-	26	208,022
HEALTHCARE					
S/N PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
90 NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	2,943.69	1.55	-	9	195,394
91 PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	379.44	1.75	-	2	1,830
PHARMACEUTICALS				85	820,285
HEALTHCARE				88	821,576
ICT					
S/N COMPUTER BASED SYSTEMS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
92 COURTEVILLE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS PLC	1,669.44	0.47	-	9	104,083
COMPUTER BASED SYSTEMS				9	104,083
S/N COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
93 OMATEK VENTURES PLC	588.36	0.20	-	0	0
COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS				0	0
S/N IT SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
94 CWG PLC	2,019.86	0.80	-	0	0
95 NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	388.80	3.60	-	1	1,000
IT SERVICES				1	1,000
S/N PROCESSING SYSTEMS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
96 CHAMS HOLDING COMPANY PLC	1,174.02	0.25	4.17	16	5,593,171
97 E-TRANZACT INTERNATIONAL PLC	14,596.05	2.20	-	0	0
PROCESSING SYSTEMS				16	5,593,171
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
98 AIRTEL AFRICA PLC	6,510,621.67	1,732.40	-	55	37,301
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				55	37,301
ICT				81	5,735,555
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
99 BERGER PAINTS PLC	1,985.29	6.85	-	14	30,404
100 BUA CEMENT PLC	2,434,847.06	71.90	-	19	26,269
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
101 CAP PLC	14,306.91	18.15	-	13	112,865
102 MEYER PLC.	1,338.72	2.52	-	3	23,650
103 PREMIER PAINTS PLC.	1,230.00	10.00	-	0	0
BUILDING MATERIALS				49	193,188
S/N ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
104 AUSTIN LAZ & COMPANY PLC	2,192.12	2.03	-	0	0
105 CUTIX PLC.	8,454.35	2.40	-	18	300,206
ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS				18	300,206
S/N PACKAGING/CONTAINERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
106 BETA GLASS PLC.	30,718.28	51.20	-	18	9,731
107 GREIF NIGERIA PLC	232.39	5.45	-	0	0
108 TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	470.21	0.95	-	3	97,732
PACKAGING/CONTAINERS				21	107,463
S/N AGRO-ALLIED & CHEMICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
109 NOTORE CHEMICAL IND PLC	100,754.14	62.50	-	0	0
AGRO-ALLIED & CHEMICALS				0	0
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				88	600,857
NATURAL RESOURCES					
S/N CHEMICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
110 INDUSTRIAL & MEDICAL GASES NIGERIA PLC	4,570.37	9.15	-	8	108,433
CHEMICALS				8	108,433
S/N METALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
111 ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION IND. PLC.	1,583.68	7.20	-	0	0
METALS				0	0
NATURAL RESOURCES					
S/N MINING SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
112 MULTIVERSE MINING AND EXPLORATION PLC	852.39	0.20	-	0	0
MINING SERVICES				0	0
S/N PAPER/FOREST PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
113 THOMAS WYATT NIG. PLC.	77.00	0.35	-	0	0
PAPER/FOREST PRODUCTS				0	0
NATURAL RESOURCES				8	108,433
OIL AND GAS					
S/N ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
114 JAPAUL GOLD & VENTURES PLC	1,816.18	0.29	-3.45	18	3,409,748
ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES				18	3,409,748
S/N INTEGRATED OIL AND GAS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
115 OANDO PLC	70,859.05	5.70	-3.39	153	5,994,370
INTEGRATED OIL AND GAS SERVICES				153	5,994,370
S/N PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
116 ARDOVA PLC	16,997.38	13.05	-	18	67,093
117 CONOIL PLC	19,985.82	28.80	-	16	22,315
118 ETERNA PLC.	8,868.18	6.80	-	20	280,213
119 MRS OIL NIGERIA PLC.	4,952.78	16.25	-	11	9,320
120 TOTALENERGIES MARKETING NIGERIA PLC	79,617.87	234.50	-	49	20,588
PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS				114	399,526
OIL AND GAS				285	9,803,647

Friday, July 1, 2022

Thisday Afrinvest 40 Index Gains 2bps

The Thisday Afrinvest 40 index gained 2bps to 2,436.88 index points due to price appreciation in **FBNH** (+1.8%), **SEPLAT** (+0.8%), and **FLOURMIL** (+1.6%). Cumulatively, these stocks account for 6.3% of the index.

Domestic Bourse Records Marginal Gains... ASI up 3bps

Yesterday, the benchmark index closed at 51,817.59 points (up 3bps), aided by gains in **UBN** (+4.2%), **FBNH** (+1.8%), and **SEPLAT** (+0.8%). As such, YTD return printed at 21.3% while market capitalisation advanced ₦8.1bn to ₦27.9tn. Trading activity was mixed as volume traded declined 46.4% to 223.1m units while value traded increased 12.0% to ₦3.9bn.

Mixed Sector Performance

Performance was mixed across our coverage sectors as 3 sectors gained while 3 lost. Leading gainers, the **Insurance** and **Oil & Gas** indices advanced 0.4% apiece due to price uptick in CORNERSTONE (+9.1%), CHIPLC (+9.0%), and SEPLAT (+0.8%). Similarly, buy interest in UBN (+4.2%) and FBNH (+1.8%) pushed the **Banking** index north, up 0.3%. On the flip side, sell pressure on PZ (-9.9%), HONYFLOUR (-7.1%), and WAPCO (-2.0%) dragged the **Consumer Goods** and **Industrial Goods** indices down 0.2% and 0.1% respectively. Also, the **AFR-ICT** index moderated 1bp on account of price decline in AIRTELAF (-1bp).

Outlook

Investor sentiment, as measured by market breadth, was unchanged at 0.04x as 20 indices gained, 17 lost while 69 closed flat. Tomorrow, we expect bargain hunting activities to spur a positive performance.

THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 INDEX

Fundamental Performance Metrics for THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 Index

	Ticker	Current Price	Previous Price Change	Current Weighting	Price Change YTD	Price Change Index to Date	ROE	ROA	P/E	P/BV	Divindend Yield	Earnings Yield
	THISDAY AFRINVEST 40	**2436.88**	**0.02%**		**31.4%**	**143.7%**	**21.9%**	**4.9%**	**5.4x**	**0.8x**	**6.4%**	**11.6%**
1	Airtel Africa PLC	1,732.20	0.0%	45.7%	81.4%	81.4%	18.2%	6.2%		ot Applicable	1.2%	
2	MTN Nigeria Communications PLC	230.00	0.0%	7.9%	16.8%	16.8%	105.6%	13.9%	14.5x	17.9x	5.7%	6.9%
3	BUA Cement Plc	71.90	0.0%	6.0%	7.2%	7.2%	23.3%	12.1%	27.0x	6.1x	4.0%	3.7%
4	Guaranty Trust Holding Co PLC	20.50	0.0%	4.2%	-21.2%	-21.2%	19.8%	3.2%	3.4x	0.7x	14.6%	29.6%
5	Zenith Bank PLC	21.70	0.0%	4.2%	-13.7%	-13.7%	20.6%	2.6%	2.7x	0.5x	14.3%	36.6%
6	Dangote Cement PLC	275.00	0.0%	3.9%	7.0%	7.0%	37.7%	16.4%	12.4x	4.5x	7.7%	8.0%
7	Nestle Nigeria PLC	1,400.00	0.0%	2.6%	-10.1%	-10.1%	112.8%	16.1%	24.3x	28.3x	3.6%	4.1%
8	FBN Holdings Plc	11.60	1.8%	2.8%	1.8%	1.8%	20.1%	1.9%	2.5x	0.5x	3.1%	39.9%
9	Lafarge Africa PLC	26.40	-2.0%	3.0%	10.2%	10.2%	15.5%	11.1%	7.2x	1.1x	7.6%	14.0%
10	Access Holdings PLC	9.25	0.0%	2.2%	-0.5%	-0.5%	17.9%	1.6%	2.0x	0.3x	7.6%	49.5%
11	United Bank for Africa PLC	7.45	0.0%	1.7%	-7.5%	-7.5%	15.6%	1.4%	2.1x	0.3x	13.4%	46.8%
12	Stanbic IBTC Holdings PLC	33.55	0.0%	1.3%	-6.8%	-6.8%	15.6%	2.1%	7.1x	1.1x	8.9%	14.1%
13	Nigerian Brew eries PLC	58.80	-0.3%	1.5%	17.6%	17.6%	10.5%	3.9%	25.3x	2.5x	2.7%	3.9%
14	SEPLAT Energy PLC	1,300.00	0.8%	2.6%	100.0%	100.0%	7.5%	3.6%	13.2x	1.0x	3.2%	7.6%
15	Ecobank Transnational Inc	10.60	-0.9%	1.4%	21.8%	21.8%	18.4%	1.0%	2.2x	0.4x	6.3%	44.6%
16	International Brew eries PLC	6.30	0.0%	1.2%	27.3%	27.3%	-9.9%	-3.4%		1.2x		-8.5%
17	Okomu Oil Palm PLC	216.90	0.0%	1.4%	52.7%	52.7%	43.6%	25.5%	11.3x	4.8x	4.1%	8.8%
18	Flour Mills of Nigeria PLC	32.50	1.6%	0.9%	14.6%	14.6%	15.9%	4.5%	5.0x	0.7x	6.6%	20.1%
19	Fidelity Bank PLC	3.42	-0.6%	0.7%	34.1%	34.1%	13.3%	1.2%	2.6x	0.3x	10.2%	38.5%
20	AXA Mansard Insurance PLC	2.00	0.0%	0.4%	-13.8%	-13.8%	2.9%	0.9%	19.1x	0.6x	12.5%	5.2%
21	Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC	16.30	0.0%	0.4%	-6.3%	-6.3%	16.7%	6.6%	8.8x	1.4x	6.2%	11.4%
22	FCMB Group Plc	3.46	4.8%	0.4%	15.7%	15.7%	10.7%	1.1%		0.3x	5.8%	
23	United Capital PLC	12.75	1.2%	0.4%	28.8%	28.8%				3.2x	11.8%	
24	Guinness Nigeria PLC	90.50	0.0%	0.7%	132.1%	132.1%	17.8%	8.1%	13.5x	2.2x	0.5%	7.4%
25	Transnational Corp of Nigeria	1.23	0.0%	0.3%	28.1%	28.1%				0.5x	1.6%	
26	Presco PLC	165.00	0.0%	0.5%	87.9%	87.9%			7.7x	4.6x	4.1%	12.9%
27	NASCON Allied Industries PLC	11.75	0.0%	0.2%	-11.0%	-11.0%	18.5%	5.7%	11.8x	2.1x	3.4%	8.5%
28	AIICO Insurance PLC	0.64	-3.0%	0.2%	-8.6%	-8.6%	21.1%	3.6%	26.0x	0.5x	3.1%	3.8%
29	TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeri	234.50	0.0%	0.2%	5.7%	5.7%				1.7x	8.0%	
30	Custodian and Allied Insurance	7.00	0.0%	0.2%	-11.4%	-11.4%	19.5%	5.5%	4.1x	0.8x	7.1%	24.3%
31	Vitafoam Nigeria PLC	22.50	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	50.3%	19.0%	4.2x	2.1x	7.2%	23.9%
32	Unilever Nigeria PLC	14.80	0.0%	0.1%	2.1%	2.1%	8.8%	5.4%	28.9x	1.3x	3.4%	3.5%
33	Julius Berger Nigeria PLC	26.50	-1.5%	0.2%	18.6%	18.6%	18.1%	2.3%	5.9x	0.8x	9.4%	17.0%
34	Union Bank of Nigeria PLC	6.15	4.2%	0.1%	4.2%	4.2%	6.1%	0.7%	9.7x	0.7x		10.3%
35	Oando PLC	5.67	-0.5%	0.1%	28.3%	28.3%		-21.5%				-158.6%
36	Wema Bank PLC	3.19	1.3%	0.0%	343.1%	343.1%	15.7%	0.9%	11.7x	1.7x	7.7%	8.5%
37	NEM Insurance PLC	3.80	0.0%	0.1%	-15.6%	-15.6%	22.3%	12.9%	3.9x	0.8x	5.8%	25.5%
38	Sterling Bank PLC	1.52	-1.3%	0.1%	0.7%	0.7%	10.3%	1.0%	3.0x	0.3x	6.6%	33.3%
39	Notore Chemical Industries Ltd	62.50	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-17.7%	-4.1%		1.8x		-9.5%
40	Transcorp Hotels Plc	6.25	0.0%	0.0%	16.2%	16.2%				1.0x	1.1%	

Top 10 Gainers

Ticker	Price	Price Chg %
IKEJAHOTEL	1.21	10.0%
ROYALEX	1.03	7.3%
NPFMCRFBK	1.77	7.3%
FIDELITYBK	3.44	4.9%
GLAXOSMITH	6.50	4.8%
AIICO	0.66	4.8%
RTBRISCOE	0.47	4.4%
ETERNA	7.10	4.4%
JAPAULGOLD	0.30	3.4%
WAPIC	0.41	2.5%

Top 10 Losers

Ticker	Price	Price Chg %
UPL	2.35	-9.6%
CHAMS	0.23	-8.0%
LINKASSURE	0.54	-6.9%
CUTIX	2.25	-6.2%
FTNCOCOA	0.33	-5.7%
MBENEFIT	0.24	-4.0%
PZ	10.65	-3.2%
ETI	10.70	-2.7%
TRANSCORP	1.23	-1.6%
UCAP	12.60	-1.6%

Top 10 Trades by Volume

Ticker	Volume	Price Chg %
MBENEFIT	212.5	-4.0%
GTCO	42.2	-1.0%
UBA	24.0	-0.7%
FBNH	23.2	1.8%
ACCESSCORP	22.5	0.0%
ZENITHBANK	12.7	0.2%
WAPCO	7.1	0.2%
FIDELITYBK	6.3	4.9%
OANDO	6.3	0.0%
TRANSCORP	4.6	-1.6%

Top 10 Trades by Value

Ticker	Value	Price Chg %
GTCO	867.5	-1.0%
NESTLE	424.3	0.0%
ZENITHBANK	275.1	0.2%
SEPLAT	266.2	0.0%
FBNH	262.2	1.8%
MTNN	236.0	-0.1%
ACCESSCORP	208.5	0.0%
WAPCO	189.9	0.2%
UBA	179.0	-0.7%
MBENEFIT	53.1	-4.0%

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MARKET NEWS

FUND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

A Mutual fund (Unit Trust) is an investment vehicle managed by a SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) registered Fund Manager. Investors with similar objectives buy units of the Fund so that the Fund Manager can buy securities that willl generate their desired return.

An ETF (Exchange Traded Fund) is a type of fund which owns the assets (shares of stock, bonds, oil futures, gold bars, foreign currency, etc.) and divides ownership of those assets into shares. Investors can buy these 'shares' on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

A REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) is an investment vehicle that allows both small and large investors to part-own real estate ventures (eg. Offices, Houses, Hospitals) in proportion to their investments. The assets are divided into shares that are traded on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

GUIDE TO DATA:
Date: All fund prices are quoted in Naira as at 29-June-2022, unless otherwise stated.

Offer price: The price at which units of a trust or ETF are bought by investors.
Bid Price: The price at which Investors redeem (sell) units of a trust or ETF.

Yield/Total Return: Denotes the total return an investor would have earned on his investment. Money Market Funds report Yield while others report Year- to-date Total Return.
NAV: Is value per share of the real estate assets held by a REIT on a specific date.

DAILY PRICE LIST FOR MUTUAL FUNDS, REITS and ETFS

MUTUAL FUNDS / UNIT TRUSTS

AFRINVEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			aaml@afrinvest.com
Web: www.afrinvest.com; Tel: +234 818 885 6757			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Afrinvest Equity Fund	196.33	197.48	17.60%
Afrinvest Plutus Fund	100.00	100.00	5.32%
Nigeria International Debt Fund	320.37	320.37	5.23%
Afrinvest Dollar Fund	106.05	107.20	7.48%
AIICO CAPITAL LTD			ammf@aiicocapital.com
Web: www.aiicocapital.com, Tel: +234-1-2792974			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
AIICO Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AIICO Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
ANCHORIA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			info@anchoriaam.com
Web:www.anchoriaam.com, Tel: 08166830267; 08036814510; 08028419180			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Anchoria Money Market	N/A	N/A	N/A
Anchoria Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Anchoria Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
ARM INVESTMENT MANAGERS LTD			enquiries@arminvestmentcenter.com
Web: www.arm.com.ng; Tel: 0700 CALLARM (0700 225 5276)			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
ARM Aggressive Growth Fund	22.19	22.86	9.38%
ARM Discovery Balanced Fund	513.67	529.15	13.85%
ARM Ethical Fund	43.75	45.07	12.30%
ARM Eurobond Fund ($)	1.06	1.07	-1.50%
ARM Fixed Income Fund	1.04	1.05	3.02%
ARM Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	6.54%
AVA GLOBAL ASSET MANAGERS LIMITED			info@avacapitalgroup.com
Web: www.avacapitalgroup.com; Tel 08069294653			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
AVA GAM Fixed Income Dollar Fund	105.97	105.97	8.83%
AVA GAM Fixed Income Dollar Naira	1,119.11	1,119.11	11.91%
AXA MANSARD INVESTMENTS LIMITED			investmentcare@axamansard.com
Web: www.axamansard.com; Tel: +2341-4488482			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
AXA Mansard Equity Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AXA Mansard Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CAPITAL EXPRESS ASSET AND TRUST LIMITED			info@capitalexpressassetandtrust.com
Web: www.capitalexpressassetandtrust.com; Tel: +234 803 307 5048			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
CEAT Fixed Income Fund	2.09	2.09	4.07%
Capital Express Balanced Fund(Formerly: Union Trustees Mixed Fund)	2.40	2.45	21.00%
CAPITALTRUST INVESTMENTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			halalfif@capitaltrustnigeria.com
Web: www.capitaltrustnigeria.com; Tel: 08061458806			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Capitaltrust Halal Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CARDINALSTONE ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			mutualfunds@cardinalstone.com
Web: www.cardinalstoneassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 (1) 710 0433 4			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
CardinalStone Fixed Income Alpha Fund	1.05	1.05	4.24%
CHAPELHILL DENHAM MANAGEMENT LTD			investmentmanagement@chapelhilldenham.com
Web: www.chapelhilldenham.com, Tel: +234 461 0691			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Chapelhill Denham Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	7.09%
Paramount Equity Fund	19.88	20.24	13.98%
Women's Investment Fund	150.44	152.32	5.95%
CORDROS ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			assetmgtteam@cordros.com
Web: www.cordros.com, Tel: 019036947			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Cordros Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	6.35%
Cordros Milestone Fund	135.84	136.75	8.94%
Cordros Dollar Fund ($)	110.05	110.05	5.11%
CORONATION ASSETS MANAGEMENT			investment@coronationam.com
Web:www.coronationam.com, Tel: 012366215			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Coronation Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC FUNDS MANAGEMENT LIMITED			mutualfundng@ecobank.com
Web: www.ecobank.com Tel: 012265281			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class A	100.00	100.00	4.80%
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class B	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	6.06%
EDC Nigeria Fixed Income Fund	1,163.62	1,177.84	-0.04%
EMERGING AFRICA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			assetmanagement@emergingafricafroup.com
Web:www.emergingafricagroup.com/emerging-africa-asset-management-limited/, Tel: 08039492594			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Emerging Africa Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	8.04%
Emerging Africa Bond Fund	1.05	1.05	8.69%
Emerging Africa Balanced Diversity Fund	1.06	1.06	16.36%
Emerging Africa Eurobond Fund	102.68	102.68	4.61%
FBNQUEST ASSETS MANAGEMENT LIMITED			invest@fbnquest.com
Web: www.fbnquest.com/asset-management; Tel: +234-81 0082 0082			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
FBN Bond Fund	1469.44	1469.44	10.71%
FBN Balanced Fund	195.14	196.51	11.35%
FBN Halal Fund	120.86	120.86	10.17%
FBN Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	6.97%
FBN Dollar Fund (Retail)	124.40	124.40	5.85%
FBN Nigeria Smart Beta Equity Fund	165.38	167.61	8.90%
FCMB ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			fcmbamhelpdesk@fcmb.com
Web: www.fcmbassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 462 2596			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Legacy Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	4.76%
Legacy Debt Fund	3.87	3.87	-3.23%
Legacy Equity Fund	1.95	1.98	11.88%
Legacy USD Bond Fund	1.23	1.23	1.97%
FSDH ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			coralfunds@fsdhgroup.com
Web: www.fsdhaml.com; Tel: 01-270 4884-5; 01-280 9740-1			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Coral Balanced Fund	4,168.27	4,228.44	14.33%
Coral Income Fund	3,575.65	3,575.65	6.27%
Coral Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	7.70%
FSDH Dollar Fund	1.11	1.11	3.93%
INVESTMENT ONE FUNDS MANAGEMENT LTD			enquiries@investment-one.com
Web: www.investment-one.com; Tel: +234 812 992 1045,+234 1 448 8888			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Abacus Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Guaranteed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Kedari Investment Fund (KIF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Equity Income Fund (VEIF) - June Year End	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Dollar Fund (VDF) - June Year End	N/A	N/A	N/A
LOTUS CAPITAL LTD			fincon@lotuscapitallimited.com
Web: www.lotuscapitallimited.com; Tel: +234 1-291 4626 / +234 1-291 4624			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Lotus Halal Investment Fund	1.60	1.62	12.44%
Lotus Halal Fixed Income Fund	1,175.14	1,175.14	4.81%
MERISTEM WEALTH MANAGEMENT LTD			info@meristemwealth.com
Web: http://www.meristemwealth.com/funds/ ; Tel: +234 1-4488260			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Meristem Equity Market Fund	12.52	12.59	14.57%
Meristem Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	8.41%
NORRENBERGER INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT LIMITED			enquiries@norrenberger.com
Web: www.norrenberger.com, Tel: +234 (0) 908 781 2026			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Norrenberger Islamic Fund (NIF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Norrenberger Money Market Fund (NMMF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
PAC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			info@pacassetmanagement.com
Web: www.pacassetmanagement.com/mutualfunds; Tel: +234 1 271 8632			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
PACAM Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
PACAM Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
PACAM Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
PACAM Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
PACAM EuroBond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
SCM CAPITAL LIMITED			info@scmcapitalng.com
Web: www.scmcapitalng.com; Tel: +234 1-280 2226,+234 1- 280 2227			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
SCM Capital Frontier Fund	127.86	130.69	6.26%
SFS CAPITAL NIGERIA LTD			investments@sfsnigeria.com
Web: www.sfsnigeria.com, Tel: +234 (01) 2801400			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
SFS Fixed Income Fund	1.05	1.05	8.54%
STANBIC IBTC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			assetmanagement@stanbicibtc.com
Web: www.stanbicibtcassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 280 1266; 0700 MUTUALFUNDS			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Stanbic IBTC Balanced Fund	3,692.02	3,734.18	-2.14%
Stanbic IBTC Bond Fund	239.50	239.50	0.27%
Stanbic IBTC Ethical Fund	1.47	1.49	-1.99%
Stanbic IBTC Guaranteed Investment Fund	321.59	321.60	0.40%
Stanbic IBTC Iman Fund	275.64	279.65	-0.29%
Stanbic IBTC Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	3.67%
Stanbic IBTC Nigerian Equity Fund	12,404.14	12,575.74	-1.96%
Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund (USD)	1.32	1.32	0.41%
Stanbic IBTC Shariah Fixed Income Fund	118.78	118.78	0.25%
Stanbic IBTC Enhanced Short-Term Fixed Income Fund	110.19	110.19	0.66%
UNITED CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			unitedcapitalplcgroup.com
Web: www.unitedcapitalplcgroup.com; Tel: +234 01-6317876			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
United Capital Equity Fund	1.01	1.03	13.30%
United Capital Balanced Fund	1.36	1.39	4.34%
United Capital Wealth for Women Fund	1.16	1.18	12.33%
United Capital Sukuk Fund	1.06	1.06	3.57%
United Capital Fixed Income Fund	1.89	1.89	3.21%
United Capital Eurobond Fund	121.66	121.66	2.72%
United Capital Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	7.17%
QUANTUM ZENITH ASSET MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENTS LTD			service@quantumzenithasset.com.ng
Web: www.quantumzenith.com.ng; Tel: +234 1-2784219			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Zenith Balanced Strategy Fund	13.99	14.12	6.06%
Zenith ESG Impact Fund	16.24	16.42	11.15%
Zenith Income Fund	22.79	22.79	3.82%
Zenith Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	5.82%
VETIVA FUND MANAGERS LTD			funds@vetiva.com
Web: www.vetiva.com; Tel: +234 1 453 0697			
Fund Name	**Bid Price**	**Offer Price**	**Yield / T-Rtn**
Vetiva Banking Exchange Traded Fund	3.92	4.02	-2.31%
Vetiva Consumer Goods Exchange Traded Fund	6.20	6.30	6.12%
Vetiva Griffin 30 Exchange Traded Fund	19.10	19.30	7.98%
Vetiva Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	0.00%
Vetiva Industrial Goods Exchange Traded Fund	21.45	21.65	7.33%
Vetiva S&P Nigeria Sovereign Bond Exchange Traded Fund	154.29	156.29	-2.19%

REITS

Fund Name	NAV Per Share	Yield / T-Rtn
SFS REIT	117.13	3.47%
Union Homes REIT	51.68	1.63%

EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS

Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Equity Exchange Traded Fund	15.18	15.28	8.51%
SIAML Pension ETF 40	144.42	147.92	-4.39%
Stanbic IBTC ETF 30 Fund	114.52	116.98	-3.67%
MERGROWTH ETF	17.10	17.20	21.89%
MERVALUE ETF	16.40	16.50	4.90%

INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Fund Name	NAV Per Share	Yield / T-Rtn
Chapel Hill Denham Nigeria Infrastructure Debt Fund	107.55	12.10%

The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise. Past performance is a guide and not an indication of future returns. Fund prices published in this edition are also available on each fund manager's website and FMAN's website at *www.fman.com.ng*. Fund prices are supplied by the operator of the relevant fund and are published for information purposes only.

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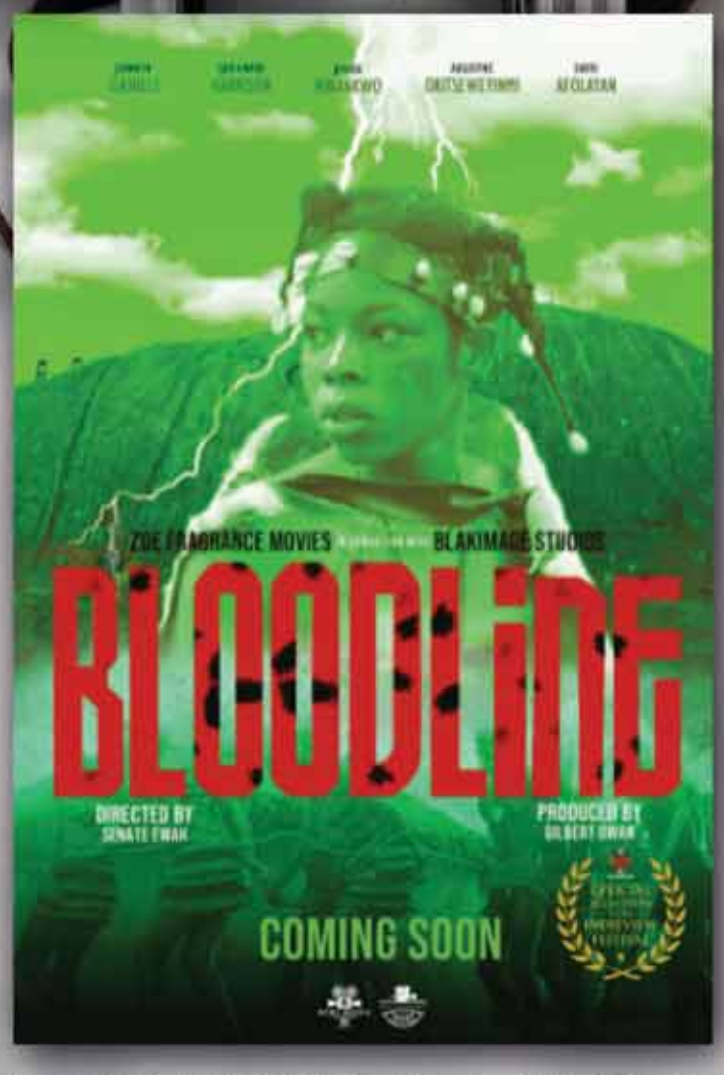
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DISCUSSING ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTERESTS...

President Muhammadu Buhari and his delegation at a meeting with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and his delegation in Lisbon...yesterday

Stock Market Sustains Bullish Trend, Gains N5.64trn in First Half 2022

Reaches record high in 14 years

Kayode Tokede

Following improved corporate earnings by companies, low yield in fixed income market, among other factors, the stock market segment of the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) added N5.64 trillion in the first half (H1) of 2022.

Precisely, the market capitalisation in H1 2022 appreciated by N5.64 trillion or 25.3 per cent to close at the end of the first half of 2022 at N27.935trillion, from the N22.297 trillion it opened for trading activities on January 4, 2021.

Consequently, the overall market performance, the NGX All-Share Index (ASI), which tracks the general market movement of all listed companies on the Exchange, rose by 21.31 per cent or 9,101.15 basis points to close at 51,817.59 basis points in H1 2022, the highest performance in 14 years, from 42,716.44 basis points it opened for trading.

The stock market in H1 2022 maintained positive momentum with domestic investors raising their stake amid rising inflationary pressure and the challenging business environment.

Data gathered by THISDAY revealed that, sectors performance on the NGX was mixed on the backdrop of investors' sentiment.

For instance, with the rise in global oil prices, the NGX Oil & Gas Index outperformed other indices on the bourse, gaining 58.06 per cent to 545.34 basis points in H1 from 345.01 basis points it opened trading. It was closely followed by Industrial Index that rose by 7.7 per cent to 2,152.24 basis points from 2,008.30 basis points it closed in 2021.

On the flipside, the NGX Banking Index suffered a decline of 2.04 per cent in H1 to 397.79 basis points as of June 30, 2022 from the 406.07 per cent it opened for trading, just as the NGX Insurance Index depreciated by 9.98 per cent to 178.33 basis points in H1 2022 from 198.11 basis points it opened for trading this year.

Stocks that contributed to growth in the market performance included Seplat Energy Plc that appreciated by N650 per share from December 31, 2021 to N1,300 per share as of June 30, 2022, while Airtel Africa gained 81.4 per cent to N1,732.20 per share from N955 per share it opened for trading.

Airtel Africa in the first H1 2022 appreciated by N2.9 trillion in terms of market capitalisation to contribute about 23.3 per cent or N6.91trillion to overall market capitalisation of listed stocks on the NGX.

Others were: MTN Nigeria with a 17 per cent increase in stock price to N230 per share from the N197 per share it closed in 2021, while Dangote Cement gained seven per cent in stock price to close at N275 per share from N257 per share.

The stock market in the first quarter of 2022 had gained N3.02 trillion on the backdrop of impressive corporate earnings by major listed companies that led to robust dividend pay-out to shareholders.

Also, the overall market performance, the NGX ASI had risen by 9.95 per cent to close at 46,965.48 basis points in the first Q1 2022.

Capital market analysts said H1 2022 was positive for the domestic market and urged investors to trade the stock market with caution over political uncertainty.

Analysts at Cordros Securities, in a report titled, "Heightened uncertainties amid great policy unwind," noted that while emerging (EM) and Frontier (FM) markets had been rattled by the impact of policy normalisation and inflationary pressures occasioned by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the performance of the Nigerian financial market was relatively strong, stressing that the volatility in the Fixed Income (FI) market has also been uncharacteristically muted.

The report stated the fixed income market return settled at +eight per cent, which was below the return in the prior year (H1-21: 10.1per cent), but was a stark difference from the market performances in peer countries, where investors significantly reduced exposure to risk assets as central banks across the globe raised benchmark interest rates in response to spiralling inflation.

They attributed the growth in stock market performance to resilience rooted in the exodus from the market due to Foreign Exchange (FX) liquidity issues.

According to the report, "This situation also limited inflows from investors and resulted in: the market being dominated by domestic investors and foreign investors' inability to repatriate funds, leading to the re-investment of dividends in the market.

"To buttress these points, domestic investors accounted for an average of 86.6per cent of all transactions in five months of 2022, while the market performance in Q2-22 was 10.1per cent (Q1-22: 10per cent; H1 2022: 21.per cent."

Analyst at PAC Holdings, Mr. Wole Adeyeye attributed the stock market performance to impressive financial reports for full year 2021 and dividend pay out to shareholders in the first half of 2022 by listed companies.

He added that, "Thus, investors positioned themselves for dividend payment during the period. In addition, investors patronised the equities market as yields in the fixed income market were not encouraging, especially in the first quarter of 2022."

Buhari Reappoints Oniha as DMO DG for Another Five-year Term

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has approved the re-appointment of the Director-General of the Debt Management Office (DMO), Patience Oniha, for a second term of five years in accordance with Section IV (9-i) of the Debt Management Office (Establishment ETC) Act, 2003.

Presidential spokesman, Mallam Garba Shehu, in a statement yesterday, said the renewal of the appointment, takes effect from July 1, 2022.

According to the statement, Oniha's appointment for a second term was based on the significant achievements recorded by the DMO in the last five years, under her leadership.

Among the achievements were the introduction of Sukuk and Green Bonds to finance the development of infrastructure where there is a huge gap.

Under her watch, as part of the initiatives to improve the sustainability of the public debt and opening up avenues for raising long term funds for corporates, the DMO introduced long term Bonds with tenors of 30 years in the domestic and international markets.

This was aside from attracting diverse investors including retail investors to the FGN Bond Market.

Internally, Oniha was said to have introduced reforms to strengthen the DMO, as a critical agency in the public finance ecosystem of the country.

House Passes Bill to Exempt National Assembly from Contributory Pension Scheme

Urges NNPC to establish, equip more depots across Nigeria

Udora Orizu and **Juliet Akoje** in Abuja

The House of Representatives yesterday passed through second reading a bill to amend the Pension Reform Act, 2014 to exempt personnel of National Assembly Service from the contributory pension scheme and to establish the National Assembly Service Pensions Board.

The Bill titled, "Bill for an Act to Amend the Pension Reform Act, 2014 to Exclude/Exempt the National Assembly Service from the Contributory Pension Scheme and Establish the National Assembly Service Pension Board; and for Related Matters (HB. 2025)," was sponsored by the Chairman Committee on National Planning and Economy Development, Hon. Olododo Cook.

Leading the debate, Cook said the bill intended to exit the National Assembly Service from the application of the contributory pension's scheme under the Pensions Reform Act, 2014, and the board when established would be charged with the responsibility of administering the pension's scheme for personnel of the Service.

According to him, "The proposed amendments provide that there is established a Pension Board (in this bill referred to as 'the Board') which shall be charged with the responsibility of managing payment of pensions and gratuities to all personnel of the Service.

"The bill shall apply to all personnel of the National Assembly Service including those who had retired before the commencement of this bill. The retirement benefits of personnel referred to in sub-section (2) shall be adjusted to be commensurate with the provisions of this bill.

"They shall be charged on and paid out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation, all such sums of money as may, from time to time, be granted by the federal government by way of pension and gratuity in accordance with this bill.

"The proposed legislation states that no pension or gratuity shall be granted to any personnel except on his retirement from the Service in any of the following circumstances. (a) after serving for forty (40) years or attained the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier; (b) upon voluntary retirement after serving for not less than ten years; (c) upon compulsory retirement under the provisions of Section 5 (1) of this bill; (d) upon compulsory retirement for the purpose of facilitating improvements in the Service, so that greater efficiency or economy may be effected."

In his brief comment, the Speaker Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila said the bill was important as it seeks autonomy of the National Assembly so that the parliament would not be attached to the effrontery of the Executive.

In a related development, the House during the consideration of reports at its Committee of the Whole, okayed a bill to make provisions for retirement age of staff of legislative houses in Nigeria.

House Urges NNPC to Establish, Equip More Depots across Nigeria

Meanwhile, the House of representatives has urged the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) to establish and equip more depots across the country and strictly regulate the operations of private depot owners.

The resolution followed the adoption of a motion on the, "Need to Establish More Petrol Depots in Nigeria," moved by Hon. Uju Kingsley yesterday at the plenary session.

Kingsley noted that there are insufficient depots to store petroleum products in Nigeria, adding that an estimated 100 million litres of bad petrol imported into the country had resulted to fuel scarcity in Nigeria with the consequent effect of adulteration of the product by roadside black market vendors.

He expressed concern that the proliferation of adulterated petrol had caused severe damage to vehicle engines and inflicted more pains on the people and despite seeming efforts to address the fuel scarcity, long queues and shortage of the product still persist at fueling stations across the country.

Furthermore, he added that according to media reports, in a rare admission of responsibility, the NNPC accepted that there had been a lapse in its supply chain.

"According to information available on the official website of the NNPC, Nigeria has 5,000 kilometres of pipeline network, 21 storage depots and nine LPG depots which are grossly inadequate to effectively serve the 36 states of the country as well as the Federal Capital Territory, hence the recurrent fuel scarcity.

NEWS



NDLEA DRUG CALL CENTRE...

L-R: International Aid/Cooperation Officer, Migration and Drugs, European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Eleni Zerzelidou; Chairman, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Gen. Buba Marwa (rtd); Former member, Board of Trustees, TETFUND, Uche Ufearoh; Director, Public Affairs, NAFDAC, Dr. Abubakar Jimoh and Country Director, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC), Oliver Stolpe, during the inauguration of NDLEA Drug Call Centre in Abuja...yesterday ENOCK REUBEN

World Bank to Provide Scholarship to 152,000 Girls in Katsina State

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The World Bank through its Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) project has concluded plans to give scholarships to 152,000 school girls in Katsina State to enhance enrolment, retention and transition of girls in school.

The State Coordinator of AGILE, Mustapha Shehu, disclosed this yesterday, during the ceremonial flag off of the disbursement of $5,092,000 school improvement grants to junior and senior secondary schools in the state.

He explained that the project would train 19,000 girls on digital literacy and market relevant skills, targeting poor senior secondary school girls who are less likely to continue schooling after graduation.

He added that 17,000 boys had been identified within the same focus classrooms to give them market-relevant skills, while teachers would also be trained to deliver the digital literacy skills.

Shehu said: "In this regard, the project is going to support 129 girls' secondary schools. All the JSS1 and SS1 girls are going to benefit from this. The same beneficiaries about 152,000 are targeted for disbursement of scholarship within the next four weeks.

"We are going to provide scholarships to JSS1 and SS1 students for the current academic session that will end in August. In the next academic session in the same school, the new entrants of JSS1 and current JSS2 and the new entrants of SS1 and the current SS2 will benefit.

"In the second year within the same school, the new entrants of JSS1, JSS3 and of course the new entrants of SS1 and the current SS2 and SS3 will benefit from this gesture and the amount will be between N15,000 to N20,000 per girl per term."

Under the project, he said, the World Bank in collaboration with the state government, would also construct 90 junior and 50 senior secondary schools across the 34 local government areas of the state.

He reiterated that the location of the schools would be based on conduct of mapping to identify communities that have a large number of children who reach primary six and junior secondary school but don't have closer schools for transition.

Earlier, Governor Aminu Bello Masari, directed the state Ministry of Education to monitor the utilisation of the project's funds and punish anyone or school found defaulting the agreed indemnity.

He urged members of the School-based Management Committees (SBMCs) saddled with the responsibility of executing the projects, to use the School Improvement Plan (SIP) as a guide.

AFBA Condemns Massacre of African Migrants in Morocco

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

The African Bar Association (AfBA) has condemned in strong terms the gruesome killing of dozens of African migrants trying to cross from Morocco to Spain, through Melilla, a Spanish island.

The body noted that Melilla and Ceuta are the European Union's only land borders with Africa and are protected by fences fortified with barbed wire and surveillance cameras.

In a statement issued yesterday in Benin City, AFBA President, Hannibal Uwaifo, through his Director of Strategic Communications, Douglas Ogbankwa, described the way and manner the migrants were killed as gruesome and inhuman.

"The AfBA condemns the grisly and unprovoked killing of dozens of African migrants who were hacked to death by Moroccan Security Officials while trying to make their way to Spain, through the Morocco-Spain land border and we term this action a crime against humanity.

"AfBA restates that migrants even if they were irregular migrants, are entitled to be protected by international humanitarian law, which Morocco has subscribed to. The Moroccan Authorities acted as a rogue state and against International Law in brutally annihilating the unarmed African migrants.

The African Bar Association (AfBA) also deprecated the silence of the European Union (EU), over this matter, which smacks of selective hypocrisy.

"We calls for the immediate suspension of Morocco from the African Union and all African Multilateral Organisations, including the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Confederation of African Football (CAF), and other Continental Sports Bodies," the body declared.

It also called on all Africans to sever any kind of connection or business with Morocco, including avoiding any flight to Morocco, or patronising Moroccan Airlines and Consular Services, to protest the massacre and call out the European Union for their palpable silence on this issue, aimed at covering the bloody killings that took place at their border.

Usifo further disclosed that AfBA shall submit a formal petition against the Prime Minister of Morocco and other state actors, who authorised and participated in these killings to the International Criminal Court (ICC), the United Nations High Commission.

UK Partners FG, Civil Society to Sensitise against Illicit Finance

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The United Kingdom has extended its partnership and support to the Nigerian Government, civil society and media with the launch of the #ProtectWhatsYours campaign, which aims to raise awareness against illicit finance.

According a statement yesterday, by the Senior Communications & Public Diplomacy Officer, the British High Commission, Abuja, Atinuke Akande-Alegbe, illicit finance includes illegal financial activities such as cyber-crime, money laundering, terrorist financing, corruption and bribery, among others.

She noted that the campaign, which would be on television and online platforms, would highlight the detrimental and long-lasting effects that illegal financial activity was having on communities as well as on Nigeria's economy.

According to her, it had been estimated that illicit financial crimes costs every Nigerian N35,000 for each year of their life, and robs the population of $18 billion annually.

Financial crime directly impacts upon the development and economic growth of Nigeria, with monies lost each year being diverted away from key areas for sector growth; including infrastructure, technology, and the health and education sector, she added.

Therefore, she pointed out that the #ProtectWhatsYours campaign seeks to encourage Nigerians to recognise and report financial crimes in their immediate environment, and calls on Nigerians in the diaspora to report from around the world, where assets could be located.

Illicit finance and associated crimes do not recognise borders, which is why the campaign was necessary to empower citizens to report suspected financial criminals to the relevant authorities both at home, and to go one step further to encourage reporting from around the world.

She quoted the British High Commissioner, H.E. Catorina Laing, to have said: "It is important we understand the direct harms that illicit finance causes, this is a crime that affects every citizen of Nigeria. The #ProtectWhatsYours campaign aims to demonstrate these harms and encourage reporting to the relevant agencies.

"This will help to continue the excellent work in investigating the individuals who are involved in illicit finance, whether this be the professional enablers who facilitate money laundering or those directly involved in corruption, tax avoidance, bribery and other crimes.

Varsity Strike: Labour to Embark on One-day National Protest

Says lingering fuel scarcity unacceptable

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The organised labour under the auspices of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has declared its intention to organise a one-day nationwide protest within the next two weeks to compel the federal government to resolve issues with the university workers.

The Labour movement also condemned the persisting fuel supply crisis across the country, saying the ugly situation was having serious impact on the economy and lives of Nigerians.

While addressing a meeting of the National Executive Council at Abuja, yesterday, NLC President, Ayuba Wabba expressed sadness over the continued closure of the country's tertiary institutions due to unresolved labour dispute between the federal government and workers' union.

He said that the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the NLC met on Wednesday and recommended that, "there will be a one-day national protest to call the attention of government to resolve the issue immediately."

Rising from its NEC meeting yesterday, the NLC, resolved to embark on industrial action over the alleged reluctance of the government to resolve its face-off with the university unions.

THISDAY gathered from a source at the NEC meeting that the Congress had resolved that after the protest, if the government fails to resolve the crisis, it would embark on a three-day warning strike that would also culminate in a total strike.

Wabba said after the expiration of the earlier 21-day deadline issued to the government to take steps to resolve the dispute with the university teachers, nothing concrete had been achieved.

THISDAY also gathered that the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) was yet to submit its report on the outcome of the integrity tests conducted on the University Transparency Accountability Solution (UTAS), which is the payment platform proposed by ASUU and the University Peculiar Personnel and Payroll System, U3PS, proposed by SSANU and NASU. As a result, the high-powered inter-ministerial committee set up by the federal government to fast-track resolution of the dispute could not submit its report to the president as expected.

Wabba said: "I think there is reluctance in addressing this issue and therefore CWC has decided that there will be a one-day national protest to call the attention of government to resolve the issue immediately after that the next decision of the CWC will take place.

"We have also asked all our affiliates in the next one week to issue statements," he said.

On the lingering scarcity of fuel and the long queues across the country, NLC said it was pathetic that Nigeria has not availed itself of the rich endowment of oil resource by continuing to depend on imported petroleum products for local consumption.



EQUIRY TO REVIEW LAND ALLOCATIONS AND ILLEGAL DEALINGS...

L-R: Commission Member and a retired Commissioner of Police, Edward Awolowo Ajogun; Chairman of the Commission, Hon. Justice Solomon Olugbemi; Ogun State Governor; Dapo Abiodun; his Deputy, Noimot Salako-Oyedele; Legal Practitioner and member, Mr. Adetunji Onabawo and another Commission Member, Mr. Oyebanjo Akinhanmi, shortly after the inauguration of the Judicial Commission of Enquiry to review land allocations, documentations as well as various illegal land dealings in Ogun State at Abeokuta…recently

Soldiers Move into Shiroro LG to Dislodge Bloodthirsty Terrorists, 22 Persons Killed

● Four Chinese kidnapped ● Dogo Gide said to be behind attack

Laleye Dipo in Minna

Soldiers in about 10 trucks have moved into Shiroro local government area of Niger state purposely to dislodge terrorists who wreaked havoc in Ajata Aboki village on Wednesday during which not less than 22 people including mobile policemen and soldiers were killed.

There was however conflicting figures on the number of people killed by the marauding terrorists believed to be over 250 and from the dreaded terrorist gang leader, Dogo Gide.

THISDAY was told by reliable sources that not less than four corpses of mobile policemen were deposited at the Minna General hospital mortuary on Wednesday night.

However, sources at the IBB specialist hospital informed THISDAY that more corpses were brought to the hospital thereafter.

A doctor at the emergency unit of the hospital confirmed to THISDAY that 20 corpses were deposited in the morgue while about five others injured were on admission.

Relatives of some of those affected who witnessed the scene said the number of those brought in were more than 30. A source also said a senior military officer was among those injured who were admitted.

The doctor when confronted with this figure retorted that "in this type of case there are always conflicting figures."

The mortuary attendant carrying out the embalmment declined to give the number of people in the morgue and instead asked THISDAY to go and verify at the army barracks.

One local vigilante who was initially was admitted at the IBB specialist hospital it was gathered was referred to the Federal Medical Centre Bida because of the seriousness of his case. He was said to have been shot in the upper trunk which the Minna based facility cannot handle

THISDAY observed that the corpses were being embalmed under the watchful eyes of soldiers who also cordoned off part of the facility.

It was gathered that the heavily armed terrorist numbering over 250, that carried out the attack arrived the village at about 3pm armed with sniffer guns and AK 47 rifles on Wednesday.

The first casualty recorded was that of a male villager who was asked to direct them to the mining site but refused, "he was shot dead at close range," the source said.

The incident reportedly instilled fears in other villagers who agreed to lead the gunmen to the mining site after which they (terrorists) encircled the place started shooting sporadically and in the process kidnapped four Chinese and other locals.

The gunmen ransacked the entire offices and residences of the miners before leaving the place.

Niger State government through the Commissioner for Internal Security and Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Emmanuel Umar confirmed the development in a statement yesterday.

The statement read: "Niger State Government wishes to confirm that on 29/6/2022 at about 1600hrs, based on a distress call received that armed bandits/terrorists invaded a mining surey to located at Ajata Aboki village via Erena Ward of Shiroro LGA and a joint security team were mobilised to the scene in response to the distress call.

"Consequently, the joint security team engaged the terrorists and there were yet to be determined number of casualties from both sides.

"However, a yet to be ascertained number of workers in the mining site including four Chinese nationals were reported to have been abducted.

"Security forces mobilised reinforcement for the manhunt of the remaining terrorists as some of them were neutralised and rescue of the injured victims including security personnel that sustained various degrees of injuries have been taken to a government medical facility in the state for treatment.

"While the Niger State Government commiserates with the heads of security agencies in the state and the families of the slain personnel, the state government assures that their sacrifices will not go in vain.

"The state government acknowledged all the efforts of the joint security operatives and that of the communities in the state towards taming the spate of insecurity in some parts of the state, hence, security personnel are enjoined not to be discouraged in discharging their sacred duties of protecting citizens against all forms of threats as government will continue to be steadfast in providing them with the needed support in all ramifications."

One Chibok Girl Rescued in Borno as Air Strikes Vanquish 82 Terrorists in Zamfara

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

Military authorities said yesterday that it rescued one more Chibok girl during a clearance operation of Boko Haram enclaves in Bama, Borno State even as air strikes routed 82 terrorists in Zamfara State.

This came as 4,770 members of terror group, Boko Haram, surrendered to troops at different locations in the North-east under operation Hadin Kai from June 1 – 15, 2022.

Theatre Commander Joint Task Force Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK), Maj Gen Christopher Musa, confirmed the rescue operation in a media chat.

He said one of the missing Chibok girls was rescued from Boko Haram enclaves around Bama axis of Borno State.

Musa said profiling of the Chibok girl was ongoing as at press time.

Two Chibok girls and their children were rescued by troops last week while over 100 others remain in the captivity terrorists.

Speaking in Abuja, Director, Defence Media Operations (DDMO), Maj Gen Bernard Onyeuko, said the airstrikes were conducted after sighting over 150 terrorists converged under a thick vegetation planning to attack Kofar Danya Village in Bukkuyum Local Government Area of Zamfara State.

He said the air interdiction killed 82 terrorists while six kidnapped civilians were rescued while another four bandits were killed in the process.

Meanwhile, 4,770 members of terror group, Boko Haram, surrendered to troops in different locations in the North-east.

Giving further details, Onyeuko said the number of surrendered Boko Haram members comprised 864 adult males, 1,415 women and 2,490 children, adding that all surrendered fighters of Boko Haram and the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and their families were profiled and documented while all arrested and recovered items were handed over to the appropriate authority for further action.

Report: Over 284m People Used Drugs Globally in 2020

● Survey puts figure in Nigeria at 14.3m people ● Mkpuru mmiri seizures now in 117 countries ● Morocco world's largest producer of Cannabis

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

No fewer than 284 million people aged between 15 and 64 used drugs worldwide in 2020, which was a 26 per cent increase over the previous decade, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has revealed in a new report.

The Drug Use survey by UNODC Nigeria also showed that over 14.3 million people in the country used drugs and one in four of them is a woman or girl in the review period.

The report showed that in many countries, young people use more drugs today than their elders.

The majority of people treated for drug use disorders in Africa and Latin America were under 35 years old, the report added.

It affirmed that there were approximately 11.2 million people who inject drugs worldwide, and that nearly half of these individuals suffered from hepatitis C, 1.4 million suffered from HIV and 1.2 million suffered from both conditions.

According to the UNODC report, the issue of Cannabis legalisation in North America appeared to have increased daily cannabis use, stressing that especially potent cannabis products were being used among young adults.

It further stated that there had also been reported increases in people with psychiatric disorders, suicides, and hospitalisations, while legalisation increased tax revenues and reduced marijuana arrest rates.

According to the report, another important issue was the continued growth in drug production and trafficking.

Cocaine manufacturing was at a record high in 2020, growing 11 per cent from 2019 to 1,982 tons, the report noted.

Cocaine seizures also increased to a record 1,424 tons in 2020, despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to UNODC, around 90 per cent of the cocaine seized globally during 2021 was shipped in containers.

In addition to the main markets of North America and Europe, it revealed that cocaine trafficking had spread to other regions, including Africa and Asia.

The latest UNODC report also listed Morocco as the world's leading country in the origin and departure of cannabis resin.

Morocco, it stated, was mentioned 100 times as a country of origin and departure of cannabis resin by nations that had seized the drug between 2016 and 2020.

Afghanistan, a major player in the cannabis resin market, was reportedly the second-largest producer of the drug, ahead of Pakistan and Lebanon.

Globally, methamphetamine (Mkpuru Mmiri in Nigeria) trafficking has continued to grow, with 117 countries reporting seizures of methamphetamine in 2016-2020 versus 84 in 2006-2010.

Besides, between 2020 and 2021, opium production worldwide increased seven percent to 7,930 tons, primarily due to an increase in production in Afghanistan.

The report emphasised the importance of galvanising the international community, governments, civil society and all stakeholders to take urgent action to protect people, including by strengthening drug use prevention and treatment and by tackling illicit drug supply.

Reacting to these findings, UNODC Executive Director, Ghada Waly stated: "Numbers for the manufacturing and seizures of many illicit drugs are hitting record highs, even as global emergencies are deepening vulnerabilities.

"At the same time, misperceptions regarding the magnitude of the problem and the associated harms are depriving people of care and treatment and driving young people towards harmful behaviours.

"We need to devote the necessary resources and attention to addressing every aspect of the world drug problem, including the provision of evidence-based care to all who need it, and we need to improve the knowledge base on how illicit drugs relate to other urgent challenges, such as conflicts and environmental degradation."

Meanwhile, Nigeria has officially launched its first ever comprehensive national survey on drug use and health – Drug Use in Nigeria 2018.



LAGOS BUSINESS FORUM...

L-R: Chairman, African Leadership Organisation (ALO), Dr. Ken Giami; CEO, RED|For Africa, Adebola Williams, and President, National Bar Association, USA, Judge Carlos Moore, at the Lagos Business Forum and Networking Dinner held in Lagos…recently

Again UK Court Denies Ekweremadu, Wife Bail

● Decides on country for trial July 7 ● Federal High Court takes application on alleged victim's bio-data today ● Enugu state govt expresses concern over Senator's ordeal in UK

Alex Enumah in Abuja

For the second time a United Kingdom Magistrate Court yesterday denied Senator Ike Ekweremadu and his wife, Beatrice bail.

Although, the court had last week adjourned trial till July 7, following interventions the case was listed for hearing yesterday.

The Uxbridge Magistrate Court declined to admit the Senator and his wife to bail on the grounds that there was no such application before it.

The court had last week ordered the remand of Ekweremadu and his wife in custody shortly after they were both arraigned before the court on charges bothering on alleged modern day slavery and organ harvesting.

They were arrested by the Metropolitan Police for allegedly taking a child to the UK for organ harvesting, although the actual age of the said victim has been enmeshed in controversy.

Meanwhile, the Abuja Division of the Federal High Court fixed today for hearing of an application by Ekweremadu and his wife seeking some agencies and bank to release the bio-data of the victim which has been unveiled as one David Ukpo.

The matter which was assigned to Justice Inyang Ekwo it was learnt has been scheduled for Friday for hearing.

Ekweremadu and wife are seeking an order of court directing the Nigerian Immigration Service, National Identity Management Commission, United Bank of Africa (UBA), and Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System Plc to release the Certified True Copy (CTC) of the biodata information of David Nwamini Ukpo.

In the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/984/2022, and filed June 27 by their counsel, Adegboyega Awomolo, the couple said the information were for the purposes of facilitating the criminal investigation and tendering same to establish their innocence with respect to Ukpo's age in the charges against them.

The Metropolitan Police in a statement had said, "A woman and a man were charged today with conspiring to arrange the travel of a child into the UK in order to harvest organs"

However, upon their arraignment last week, the London Court had denied them bail on grounds that they are high profile persons and therefore flight risk.

The judge subsequently ordered their remand pending the commencement of trial on July 7.

However, following interventions for the case to be given accelerated hearing, they were yesterday brought to court where the judge denied them bail on the grounds that no bail application was before the court.

The judge also revealed that the case on the next adjourned date would be heard by a Westminster Magistrate Court because the UK Attorney General, Suella Braverman, would have to take a decision on whether to continue the trial in the UK or transfer to Nigeria, where the alleged crime originated.

Prosecutors had claim that David Ukpo, who alleged that he was coerced to the UK to donate his kidney to the Senator's daughter, is 15 years.

The National Assembly has continued to see what they could do in the circumference.

President of the Nigerian Senate, Ahmad Lawan, had on Wednesday, disclosed that he has been in touch with the Nigerian High Commissioner to Britain, Alhaji Isola Sarafa, who provided some consular services that include the engagement of some lawyers who will defend Ekweremadu and wife.

A delegation has also been drafted by the Senate to visit London to see Ekweremadu and his wife.

Sarafa, two adults male children of Ekweremadu were reported to have witnessed Thursday's proceedings.

In a related development, Governor Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi of Enugu State has expressed deep concern over the ordeal of the Senator representing Enugu West Senatorial District in the National Assembly and his wife.

A statement by the Enugu State Government described Senator Ekweremadu as an illustrious son of the state and a foremost Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The statement disclosed that the government and the good people of Enugu State were saddened by the unpleasant news of arrest, arraignment and subsequent remand in custody of Senator Ekweremadu in the United Kingdom.

380,582 Voters Registered in Kano, Says INEC

● Low PVCs' collection rate worrisome, says Lagos lawmaker

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano and **Ugo Aliogo** in Lagos

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Kano has announced that a total of 380,582 voters had completed their registration so far in the state as of June 27, 2022.

However, the member representing Apapa 1 Local Government in the Lagos State House of Assembly, Hon. Meranda Lasbat, has said that it was worrisome that over 20 million PVCs still remained uncollected across the country according to a recent report by INEC. According to her, out of this amount, one million was from Lagos State, a situation she frowned at.

In Kano, the information was released to reporters at a media briefing by the Resident Electoral Commissioner, Prof. Riskuwa Arabu Shehu who also warned against multiple registration by the public.

"As of Monday 27th June 2022, there were 369,651 online applicants in Kano state. We encourage those who are yet to complete their registration to do so as soon as possible. Also, a total of 380,582 have completed their registration so far," the Resident Commissioner stated.

On the collection of PVCs, he said that the commission would continue to encourage all those who registered to collect their PVCs in good time at the commission's respective local government offices.

Meanwhile, there were 77,117 new PVCs of those who registered in the first and second quarters as well as up to December 2021, of the Continued Voters Registration

The Commission disclosed that this has moved the figure from 128,628 at the end of January 2022, to its current level and still continuing.

According to him, the influx of people seeking to be registered by the INEC made the elections umpire to create an additional registration centre at the Sani Abacha Indoor Stadium located at Kofar Mata in the metropolis. The centre would be operating from Tuesdays to Thursdays, from 9:00am to 3:00pm until the upsurge is drastically reduced.

Shehu explained that the state had witnessed an upsurge in the ongoing registration exercise for PVCs, making it second in the country as more people continue to register.

"In order to provide easy access to registration centres the commission commenced rotation at the 484 Registration Areas (electoral wards) across the state on the 14th March 2022 and a timetable to that effect was publicised.

Africa No Filter Launches Tony Elumelu Storytellers Fund to Empower Emerging Creative Talent

Africa No Filter, a donor collaborative working to transform stereotypical narratives of Africa has launched the Tony Elumelu Storytellers Fund.

Named after African business leader and philanthropist, Elumelu, the Fund would award grants to emerging artists and storytellers, whose work shines a light on entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship in Africa.

A statement yesterday explained that the $30,000 fund was sponsored by Heirs Insurance and Heirs Life Assurance, the insurance subsidiaries of the pan-African investment group, Heirs Holdings.

Elumelu who is the Chairman of Heirs Holdings and Founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation has led the championing of entrepreneurship in Africa and has empowered over 15,000 young African entrepreneurs across the continent through a $100 million commitment made by his Foundation.

"The Tony Elumelu Storytellers Fund is a standalone initiative and an extension of his commitment to catalysing a redefined African success story, powered by Africa's youth and their creative ideas.

"The Fund calls on journalists, filmmakers, content producers, and visual and performing artists to submit multimedia creative ideas, that tell the stories of inspiring entrepreneurs and showcase the true and positive spirit of entrepreneurship in Africa.

"Applicants must be aged between 18 and 35 years, living on the continent or in the Diaspora. They must have a platform or portfolio of work that shines the light on entrepreneurship in Africa," the statement added.

Speaking on the Fund, Elumelu said: "I have always believed in the potential of young African entrepreneurs to transform Africa. This initiative aligns with our belief and extends the work that we do at the Tony Elumelu Foundation. Empowering young creative entrepreneurs and the creative sector provides a channel for us to project Africa's positives globally.

"We need their voices to tell our often less-told stories of triumph, resilience, hard work and innovation."

Also, Executive Director at Africa No Filter, Moky Makura said: "Our partnership is significant because this is the first African funding we have received towards the fight for narrative change.

"We are also excited to be partnering with one of Africa's leading entrepreneurs to celebrate entrepreneurship on the continent through storytelling. We need more success stories, more awareness and more celebrations around entrepreneurial ideas and the dynamic young people driving change here"

Chief Marketing Officer, Heirs Insurance and Heirs Life, Ifesinachi Okpagu said: "We are pleased to support this initiative that directly impacts the lives of young African creatives. As frontrunners of digital innovation in the insurance space, Heirs Insurance and Heirs Life both recognise the important role the creative sector plays in transforming Africa's narrative.

"We are on the same transformative path, and this initiative clearly demonstrates that the ideas that we need to boost Africa are right here on the continent."

The Fund is open for applications on the Africa No Filter website with a closing date of July 29 2022.



INAUGURATION OF 960 CAPACITY MINI STADIUM IN EPE...

L-R: Chairman, All Progressives Congress in Lagos State, Hon. Cornelius Ojelabi; Captain, Tokunbo Abiru Football Club; Senator Tokunbo Abiru; lawmaker representing Epe Constituency 1 in Lagos House of Assembly, Hon. Abiodun Tobun; Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; his deputy, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat and Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, Princess Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, during a presentation at the inauguration of newly constructed 960 Capacity Mini Stadium, Epe, facilitated by Senator Abiru in Lagos East Senatorial District... yesterday

Falana: Courts are Usurping INEC's Powers, Electorate's Mandate

●Says they have abandoned their primary role ●Electoral body extends voter registration indefinitely ●Submission of governorship, state assembly nominations starts July 1 to 15

Chuks Okocha in Abuja and **Wale Igbintade** in Lagos

Human rights activist and lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana, SAN, says Nigerian courts have abandoned their primary responsibility of ensuring compliance with the Electoral Act and other relevant legislations pertaining to general elections. Falana said the courts were now usurping the powers of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). He said the courts had also taken over the mandate of the electorate.

The accusation came as INEC resolved to extend the on-going voters registration exercise indefinitely, till all those wishing to register had done so.

The commission also said the nominations and submission of personal documents of governorship and Houses of Assembly candidates had been slated to start today, July 1, and was expected to end by July 15.

Falana's views were contained in a paper titled, "The Role of the Courts in the Electoral Process and the Time Bomb of Section 84(12) of the Electoral Act 2022," delivered yesterday at the Law Week, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Ondo Branch. He urged the courts to "stop imposing politicians on Nigerians," stressing, "The involvement of the courts in the electoral process has not been favourable to the country's democracy.

"This involvement has been forced by the neglect of its duties by the INEC, the arbitrariness and impunity of some of the members of the executive, and the corrupt activities of political parties.

"In order to respect the democratic wishes of the electorate, there has to be a new electoral jurisprudence. Since the people are the greatest defenders of democracy, INEC must be made to ensure the votes of the electorate count.

"The courts have abandoned their primary role of ensuring compliance with the Electoral Act and the relevant legislations of the constitution pertaining to general election. Apart from usurping the powers of INEC in organising and supervising elections, the courts have taken over the mandate of the electorate.

"The courts have been involved in the appointment of party officers and endorsement of candidates sponsored by political parties to contest elections. Even the meetings of the organs and national conventions of political parties are fixed by the courts. Cases arising from the management of political parties are filed in the high court of the Federal Capital Territory or at the federal high court, outside the venue of the dispute.

"The winners of primaries and general elections are no longer determined by the electorate but by the election petition tribunals and courts. The increasing involvement of the judiciary in the internal affairs of political parties and elections has exposed the judiciary to ridicule.

"In the instance of the APC leadership crisis in 2019, contradictory orders were obtained from the various factions from the Federal Capital Territory high court, Federal High Court, Kano Judicial Division, High Court, Sokoto.

"At some point, members of the public were wondering why high courts continued to hear matters in respect of a case that was already pending before the Court of Appeal. The phenomenon of conflicting court orders calls for an urgent review on the part of the Nigerian Bar Association and the National Judicial Council.

"It is pertinent to point out that conflicting orders are not limited to the high courts alone, as some of the judgements of the appellate courts have put INEC officials in total confusion.

"The most dangerous aspect of the intervention of the courts in the electoral process is the judicial election of governors and other representatives. Aside the resort to technicalities to uphold rigged elections, the Supreme Court has on different occasions installed governors, who were not elected by the people."

Speaking on the continuous voter registration exercise, INEC said the nomination portal will be shot down on July 15 at 6pm.

In a statement by the National Commissioner in charge of Information and Publicity and Chairman Voter Education, Festus Okoye, said, "The Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) will continue nationwide, and all the Resident Electoral Commissioners and Electoral Officers have been directed to continue with the exercise pending further directives from the Commission.

"The commission has consistently reiterated its resolve to continue to provide electoral services to the Nigerian people and register all eligible Nigerians that are interested in registering. The commission has yet again deployed additional machines to areas of pressure and will continue to serve the people of Nigeria," Okoye stated.

TINUBU, WIKE MEET IN FRANCE AS ATIKU SEEKS RAPPROCHEMENT

'Defectors to PDP Have Dug Their Own Political Graves'

Chairman of APC in Sokoto State, Alhaji Isa Acida, said those leaders of the ruling party who defected to PDP last Sunday had already dug their political graves.

At a press conference, yesterday, at the party secretariat, Acida noted that the defectors were PDP moles in the party and the party had nothing to lose from their defection.

According to him, it has "become clear to all people of good conscience in Sokoto State and beyond that the reception organised to receive the so-called APC decampees into the PDP on Sunday 26th of June 2022, has passed as a non-event and a laughable affair."

He further disclosed that it was now obvious that "a battle line has been drawn between the APC and the masses of Sokoto State on the one hand, and the selfish political mercenaries and their pay masters, on the other.

Acida stated that the defectors were political wanderers, whose reception only ended in inflicting incurable political injury on themselves and nailing their political coffins. He maintained that they were happy to see the formal departure of PDP moles, whose assignment had failed and who in the end, shamefully went home with their tails between their legs.

He said, "We know all the defectors. They are people, who have been rejected by their communities. They have no political value at state, local government or even at ward levels.

"Politics is like sports, where there are always winners and losers. Unfortunately, these are selfish individuals, who are only interested in their personal comfort, rather than the welfare of the people they claim to represent.

"It is instructive to note that none of the so-called decampees gave any acceptable reason, that attracted them to the unfortunate PDP bandwagon. None among them cited any tangible state government projects or achievements in any sector of human endeavour, because there is none. Rather, they only engaged in political irrelevancies."

Okowa Boasts PDP Will Win July 16 Governorship Poll In Osun

Governor Ifeanyi Okowa of Delta State expressed optimism that the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will win the July 16 governorship poll in Osun State.

The vice presidential candidate of PDP also faulted the position of his Zamfara State counterpart, Bello Matawalle, that residents of the state should bear fire arms to defend themselves against rampaging terrorists.

Okowa spoke to newsmen yesterday evening shortly after a closed-door meeting with Vice President Yemi Osinbajo at the State House, Abuja

On his party's preparation for the forthcoming Osun elections, the two-term Delta governor said, "A lot is being done. We look forward to the elections. I'm sure the APC would expect a stiff competition. We agree that they are the government in power in that state but they will be definitely expecting a very stiff competition from us. We are poised to take back that state."

Commenting on Zamfara Governor's directive for state citizens to take up arms, he faulted the idea saying though birthed out of frustration, it would have telling consequences for the overall security of the region.

According to him, "I think they need critical thinking because you have to also be in a position to examine the recommendations being made. When recommendations are made and you have not thought through it in full about the consequences of such, then it is also a problem.

"It is out of frustration that such recommendations are being made, not doubt. But when you ask for everybody to carry guns you must ask yourself, are Nigerians in the mindset where every single individual can carry his own gun? You will be surprised that with every little argument people will just snuff themselves out.

"It's a cause for concern when we hear that kind of recommendation. But the real thing is people are frustrated and he (Matawalle) is also frustrated to the extent that he thinks that is the way to go. I don't think that is the best recommendation at the moment."

expressed shock and said he was just hearing about the rumours.

He, however, described the rumours as the figment of the imagination of jobless people, pointing out that he has invested so much time and energy in the PDP and would never leave.

Makarfi said the rumours might have arisen following the attendance of his son's wedding (in London) by the opposition party.

He stated, "Honestly, I am hearing this (rumour) for the first time that I am defecting from PDP to APC and I don't know what can be the basis (of the rumour). Why should I make investment in terms of time and whatever you can mention in PDP and now decide to leave?

"Why should I go through the stress and just when we are getting it right, then I now leave the PDP for APC or any other party? What will be the attraction for me to leave the PDP? Well, people don't approach me with such a rumour, because they know the type of person that I am.

"If they want to come, they come to me with substance. What could be the basis? Because in every rumour there must be a basis! Is it because members of the opposition party attended my son's wedding and that is the basis of that rumour?

"Even people of my own political party were all there. Is this the kind of country that we want to build? That because people from all shades of life attend wedding ceremony or burial that, they will now start flying rumour of defection?

"The rumour is the figment of the imagination of people who are jobless. I am a PDP member through and through. If I leave PDP, I should be retiring from politics. And because you hold a different political opinion, then, you now caught off all relationship with people and you want Nigeria to move forward?

"I will continue to stand by my opinion in PDP. I have stood by it long time ago and I will continue. People that have been gallivanting between PDP and APC are known. I am in politics in PDP on principle.

"If people are moving across parties because they want to capture power or they want to enhance their financial economic position or whatever, I am still in PDP and I will continue to be in PDP and this time around, I believe we are going to be in power, God willing, in Kaduna and we shall be successful even at the national level."

Makarfi also frowned on the recent comments by former President Olusegun Obasanjo that he regretted nominating Abubakar as his running mate in 1999.

He, however, added that it was equally unnecessary for Chairman of the PDP Board of Trustee (BoT), Senator Walid Jibrin, to respond to Obasanjo, the way he did.

"What OBJ and Walid Jibril said were unnecessary and they shouldn't have spoken in that manner. All we need now is how to move our party forward for the task of forming government in 2023."

FOREIGN DESK

COMPILED BY BAYO AKINLOYE

Jackson Sworn in, Becomes First Black Woman on US Supreme Court

Ketanji Brown Jackson has been sworn in to the Supreme Court, shattering a glass ceiling as the first Black woman on the nation's highest court.

The 51-year-old Jackson is the court's 116th justice, and she took the place Thursday of the justice she once worked for. Justice Stephen Breyer's retirement took effect at noon.

Moments later, joined by her family, Jackson recited the two oaths required of Supreme Court justices, one administered by Breyer and the other by Chief Justice John Roberts.

"With a full heart, I accept the solemn responsibility of supporting and defending the Constitution of the United States and administering justice without fear or favour, so help me God," Jackson said in a statement issued by the court. "I am truly grateful to be part of the promise of our great nation. I extend my sincerest thanks to all of my new colleagues for their warm and gracious welcome."

Roberts welcomed Jackson "to the court and our common calling." The ceremony was streamed live on the court's website.

Jackson, a federal judge since 2013, is joining three other women, Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Amy Coney Barrett — the first time four women will serve together on the nine-member court.

Biden nominated Jackson in February, a month after Breyer, 83, announced he would retire at the end of the court's term, assuming his successor had been confirmed.



Prisoner Swap: 144 Ukraine Fighters Freed from Russian Captivity

On Wednesday, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry announced that 144 of the country's fighters were freed from Russian captivity via "an exchange mechanism" and that nearly 100 of the freed fighters had participated in the defence of the Ukrainian coastal city of Mariupol.

Earlier, a leading Ukrainian parliamentarian told VOA that Kyiv and Moscow were undergoing a prisoner exchange process and that Roman Abramovich, a Russian businessman with ties to Putin, was playing "an active role" in the talks.

Hours later, in his nightly address to the nation, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the development "optimistic and very important." Zelensky said 59 of the soldiers that returned to Ukraine were members of the National Guard, followed by 30 servicemen with the Navy, 28 who had served in the Army, 17 with Border Guards, nine who fought as territorial defence soldiers and one had been a policeman

Russia Retreats from Ukraine's Snake Island

Russia's defence ministry said Thursday it had retreated from Ukraine's Snake Island, which had become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance since Moscow's invasion four months ago.

Russia had used the Black Sea island near the port city of Odesa as a staging ground after seizing it in the early stages of the war, launching attacks on Ukraine from it and monitoring shipments from Ukrainian ports.

But Ukraine confirmed Russian forces had pulled out and said it came after Ukrainian forces hit the island with missile and artillery strikes overnight, leaving the remaining Russian forces to escape in two speedboats.

The head of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office, Andriy Yermak, confirmed the withdrawal of Russian forces from the island. "No Russian troops on the Snake Island anymore. Our Armed Forces did a great job," Yermak said in a Twitter post."

US Visa 'Too Expensive' for Afghan Students

For Breshna Salaam, the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan last year meant a return to the same extreme poverty she and her mother had experienced under the Taliban's first time in control of the country.

In 1996, the Taliban fired Salaam's mother from a public service job, denying the widow and her daughter their only source of income. In August 2021, with her mother retired, the Taliban fired Salaam from a job at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Deprived of work and education in her own country, she applied for graduate programs abroad and was offered a scholarship at New York University.

"I cried out of happiness when I received news of the scholarship," Salaam told VOA.

But her happiness did not last long.

First, she had to pay more than $2,000 in bribes to get a new passport and a short-term visa to Pakistan, where she needed to submit a student visa application at the US embassy. The embassy in Afghanistan has remained closed since the Taliban entered Kabul last year.

Officials: Iran Making New Demands in Nuclear Talks

A day after indirect talks between the United States and Iran on returning to the 2015 nuclear deal ended unsuccessfully, diplomats said Thursday that Tehran had brought new demands to the table.

"We understand that not only has Iran not taken up the offer on the table, but that it also added yet more issues which fall outside the JCPOA, with maximalist and unrealistic demands," France's UN envoy, Nicolas de Riviere, told a meeting of the UN Security Council on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

He, and other diplomats, did not detail what those new demands were.

The Security Council meets twice each year to review the nuclear deal's implementation, which it endorsed in a resolution. The 2015 landmark agreement provided Iran with sanctions relief in exchange for limits on its nuclear program. Tehran denies seeking nuclear weapons.

Under the Trump administration, the United States pulled out of the JCPOA in 2018 and reimposed sanctions. In 2019, Tehran resumed advancing its nuclear program, enriching uranium beyond permitted thresholds, among other steps.

In addition to Iran, the remaining parties to the deal are Britain, China, France and Russia, plus Germany..

Ferdinand Marcos Jr. Becomes Philippine President

Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., son of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos, became the 17th president of the Philippines Thursday, successfully fulfilling his family's mission to return to power 36 years after a people's uprising toppled his father.

With more than 31 million votes, Bongbong – as he is popularly known – snatched the presidency in the country's most consequential election in May.

Marcos, 64, ran on a national unity campaign, which was an invitation to forget the atrocities of his father's dictatorial regime while propagating a collective nostalgia for the country's supposed "golden era".

Critics say his victory can be attributed to decades-long historical revisionism efforts by the family and massive disinformation on social media platforms.

President Rodrigo Duterte skipped the inauguration, held at the steps of the National Museum, where past presidents were also sworn in, but the two met inside the palace before the noon swearing-in.

In what his camp touted as a simple and solemn inaugural rite, Marcos promised the Philippine people he would deliver.

"You picked me to be your servant to enable changes to benefit all. I fully understand the gravity of the responsibility that you've put on my shoulders," he said in his first speech as president.

New Zealand Designates US Proud Boys Terrorist Group

New Zealand has designated the US right-wing groups the Proud Boys and The Base as terrorist organizations, making it illegal for New Zealand residents to fund or support either organization.

New Zealand Police Minister Chris Hipkins formally announced the designation at a news conference Thursday in Wellington as the government published a 29-page explanation.

Hipkins said the group's involvement in the violent attack on the US Capitol building on January 6, 2021, amounted to an act of terrorism. He said the "violent protests attempting to overthrow the (US) government," clearly provide enough evidence of the threat the group poses.

The statement said that while several militia groups were involved in the January 6 insurrection, it was the Proud Boys that incited crowds, coordinated attacks on law enforcement officers and led other rioters to where they could break into the building.

Hipkins said, "These are white supremacist terrorist groups, and we don't believe, and I don't think New Zealanders believe that any New Zealander should be enabling and supporting them."

Canada has designated the Proud Boys and The Base terrorist groups, while Britain and Australia have labelled The Base an extremist organisation.

A top New Zealand police official approved the designation on June 20, but the government did not publish the declaration until Monday.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's office said New Zealand actively reviews and regularly updates its terrorist blacklist, including groups such as Islamic State and the Africa-based al-Shabab.

It isn't clear whether either far-right group has a significant presence in New Zealand, but authorities said The Base had attempted to expand into neighbouring Australia.

Apprehension Grows over Using Afghanistan for Training, Financing Terror

By Michael Olugbode

Last week, the eight-nation Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan held in New Delhi emphasised that Afghanistan's territory should not be used for "sheltering, training, planning or financing any terrorist act."

Indian National Security Adviser Ajit Doval chaired the dialogue, which was attended by his counterparts from Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

India hosted the dialogue to firm up a common approach for practical cooperation in confronting increasing threats of terrorism, radicalisation and drug trafficking following the Taliban's takeover of Kabul.

Afghan representatives were not invited, while Pakistan and China declined to attend the meeting, with Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf last week calling India a "spoiler" and not a "peacemaker" in Afghanistan.

"The recent developments in Afghanistan have important implications not only for the people of that country but also for its neighbours and the region," NSA Ajit Dibal said at the eight-nation dialogue..

Multilateral meetings help talk about challenges, threat, says Russian NSA

Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council of Russia, at the meeting on Wednesday, said: "Multilateral meetings help in discussing issues linked to development situation in Afghanistan, counter challenges, threats emanating from the country, and establish long-lasting peace."

Joint effort can restore peace: Uzbekistan

"To restore peace in Afghanistan and in the region altogether, we have to find a collective solution. It is possible only through joint efforts," Victor Makhmudov, Secretary of the Security Council of Uzbekistan, said at the dialogue hosted by India.

Turkmenistan speaks on establishment of peace

"This meeting gives us the opportunity to find out a solution to resolve current issues in Afghanistan and establish peace in the region," Charymyrat Amanov, Secretary, Security Council of Turkmenistan, said at the NSA-level meet on Afghanistan.

Kazakhstan says it's time to take concrete actions

The stability issue of Afghanistan demands efforts of the whole international community, Karim Massimov, Chairman, Kazakhstan National Security Committee, said, adding that it is highly important to begin taking concrete actions.

Speaking at a regional security dialogue on Afghanistan hosted by India, Massimov said there is a need to increase humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. "We are concerned about the prevailing situation in Afghanistan. The social and economic situation of Afghans is deteriorating, and the country is facing a humanitarian crisis; necessary to increase humanitarian assistance," he said.

"With the Taliban movement coming into power, the situation inside the country remains complicated. There are many obstacles to forming an effective government. The terrorist organisations are intensifying activities," he noted.

PM Modi meets NSAs

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the officials who attended the NSA-level meet in Delhi.

The meeting participants have thanked India for holding the Third Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan in New Delhi and agreed to hold the next round in 2022.

TRIBUTE

Obaseki and the Verdict of Posterity

Crusoe Osagie

The verdict of posterity cannot be rigged.

Usually, it delivers the final judgment after all jealousy, political bickering, ill-will and media hype are no longer in play.

I have reserved a copious amount of sympathy for whoever the next Governor of Edo State is going to be after His Excellency, Mr. Godwin Obaseki disembarks on November 12, 2024.

The grim political and economic outlook of our country, coupled with the sheer colossal amount of development Obaseki has managed to churn out with such limited resources would certainly create a towering legacy which his successor will grapple with.

Many states in Nigeria, in the past six years, have been essentially rudderless. This is the result of a complete change in the paradigm of governance. It used to be that governors would head to Abuja monthly to collect reasonable amounts of money, go back home to pay salaries and use what is left for pockets of capital projects across their states. Not so straightforward anymore. In the last six years, the fundamental change in revenue patterns has left states comatose.

Governor Obaseki has however shone brightly amid the gloom, leveraging private capital.

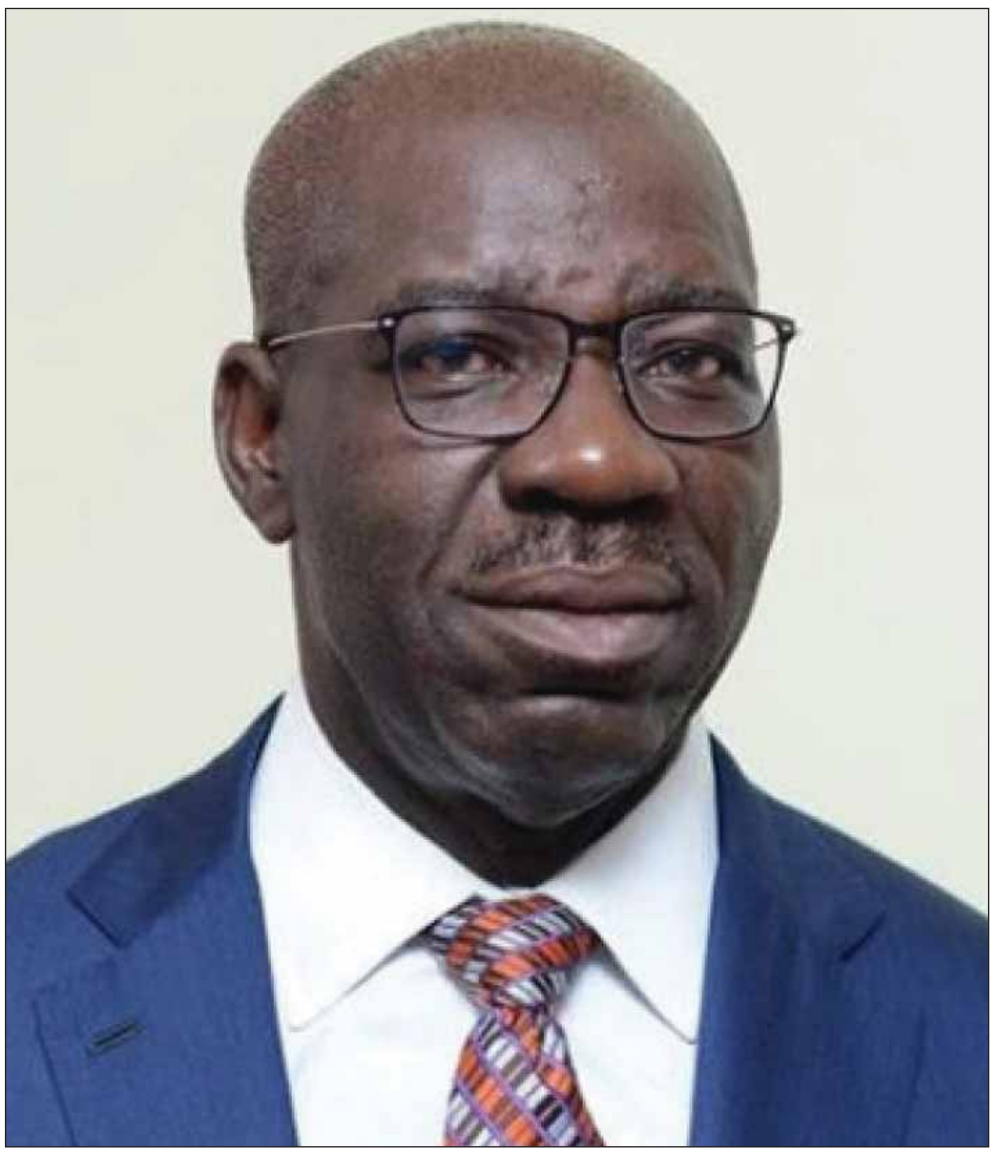
Three weeks ago, we visited two communities in Orhionmwon and Ikpoba Okha Local Government Areas of Edo State where a $250 million agribusiness investment is unravelling.

This multi-million-dollar investment comprises of two integrated farm projects one of which is a 10,000-hectare oil palm estate and the other a cassava project accompanied by a ethanol production plant which will get its feedstock from the vast cassava farm.

At the last count, the state has over 62,000 hectares of oil palm plantations undergoing development with private companies leading the charge, resulting in the largest ever oil palm development project in the history of the country.

When these projects come on stream, Edo State would further establish its dominance as the major source of raw materials for secondary industries in the food and beverages sector of the country even as it is poised to earn massive tax revenues from all the ensuing businesses.

The state's electricity sector is also experiencing an unprecedented revolution as an off-grid power solution birthed with the Ossiomo Power Project – a project midwifed with a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) signed between Governor Obaseki and private investors – has set the state on the path of becoming self-sufficient in electricity supply. The off-grid power solution has created a new market. A new distribution architecture is supplanting the existing, wobbling option, as the space is expanding to accommodate more players in the state. Industrialists looking to expand their businesses now see Edo as the best place to locate their plants as they are assured of constant electricity.



Obaseki

The impact of the project is being felt across the spectrum. With the ever-expanding power distribution network, major roads and streets in the Benin metropolis are being lit up with streetlights powered from the 95MW Ossiomo Power Plant, which also supplies electricity to industrial layouts, estates and public buildings such as hospitals, government offices, the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium, among others.

Under the governor's watch, there is a revolution in the education sector which has seen to the training of not less than 15,000 teachers on tech-driven teaching methods and delivering globally-rated education to over 200,000 pupils across the state. The project tagged EdoBEST 2.0 has been expanded to secondary and tertiary institutions in the state, creating a knowledge pipeline to drive sustainability, impact and prosperity.

Obaseki's digitization drive has led to transformational partnerships with technology companies such as Facebook, MainOne and Global Independent Connect Limited (GICL), which has resulted in the laying of over 400km of fibre optic cables, which serve as a superstructure for the state's technology ecosystem, creating a new lease of life for business and technology hubs, expanding internet access for entrepreneurs, tech workers, government agencies and schools.

The ecosystem has birthed a knowledge economy through which not less than 150,000 youths have received Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training and are gainfully employed. Conscious of the need to create high-net worth startups and a globally sought-after talent base, the governor entered into an agreement with a talent training firm, Decagon to train not less than 15,000 elite software engineers at the Edo Tech Park, a campus-style institution for training a new corps of young technology trend-setters.

There are quite a few individuals across the political class in Nigeria who hate Obaseki's guts; and one would understand why this is the case because he appears to be making headway where others see roadblocks and an insurmountable financial hurdle. Where a lot of states have cut salaries due to dwindling revenue from the centre, the governor announced a new peg for minimum wage in the state – N40,000. This is above the national average, which puts Edo far above other states as the highest paying public employer in Nigeria.

The governor's astute ability to manage resources and capacity to leverage private capital to finance projects have no doubt set him apart from the pack. He sees opportunity in chaos. This can be said to be one of the game-changing skillsets that has ensured the Edo success story.

It is this attitude to adversity that has earned him enemies. His frankness has also not particularly won him friends. He speaks his mind on serious issues when others won't for fear of political backlash. Be it the abysmal management of the nation's economy or the new rave of Nigeria's youth dispassion towards the two major parties, he is in his element when speaking truth to power – especially the political class.

Although his numerous jaw-dropping projects sprawl across the state, a few who have chosen to be willfully blind still take up the uphill task of criticizing Obaseki unjustly.

However, because posterity is the final judge, the Edo State Governor who is 65 years today has no reason to worry.

This impartial judge has since vindicated former Governor of Bendel State, Professor Ambrose Alli who was initially sent to prison for his fidelity to his people.

Also, former Governor of Mid-West State (later Bendel State) Dr. Samuel Ogbemudia, has had his name etched in gold by the same impartial judge who does not have political affiliations.

In much the same way, posterity will rise in the defence of Obaseki's legacies for decades to come even though many due to their personal biases would wish it to do otherwise.

•Osagie is the Special Adviser to Governor Godwin Obaseki on Media Projects

NEWS

UK Deports 30 Nigerians, Seeks New Agreement with FG

Chinedu Eze

The United Kingdom is initiating a new agreement on migration collaboration just as about 30 Nigerians and eight Ghanaians yesterday landed at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, in Lagos.

The UK government is requesting for "major new agreement" with Nigeria to collaborate on migration issues, following similar arrangements with Ghana and Rwanda, as the UK Home Office, responsible for migration issues in Nigeria stated that the flight carried also eight Ghanaians.

The flight that brought back the deported Nigerians was operated by Portuguese charter carrier Hi Fly, but it was not clear why the Nigerians and Ghanaians in the flight were deported.

Last Monday, the UK government had also deported some Nigerians and records had indicated that over 10,000 people had been deported from the UK between January 2019 and May 2022.

On 14 April 2022, the UK and Rwanda signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the provision of an "asylum partnership arrangement."

The agreement allows the UK government to send asylum seekers to Rwanda to have their applications processed. The agreement is part of the government's New Plan for Immigration and was signed two weeks before the Nationality and Borders Bill was given Royal Assent.

Reports indicate that under the Asylum Partnership Agreement (APA) signed in asylum seekers arriving in the UK illegally may be transferred to Rwanda, which would process the claims. If the asylum is granted, under the UK-Rwanda deal migrants will be encouraged to stay in the African country for at least five years.

UK data disclosed that there were about 35,000 "irregular" entries into the UK in 2021, the vast majority (28,526) by boat. (Others arrived by air on false documents and stowed away in lorries and containers.

African Leadership Organisation Honours Williams

Media entrepreneur and Group CEO, RED | For Africa, Adebola Williams has been recognised for his outstanding leadership excellence at the 12th edition of the prestigious African Business Leadership awards.

Powered by the publication arm of the African Leadership Organisation, the African Leadership Magazine, the Award aims to celebrate exceptional leadership in the African business ecosystem as well as phenomenal contributions to the continent's socio-economic growth and development.

According to a statement, Williams received the award for his unique and inspirational contributions to business growth, job creation, youth empowerment, and wealth creation in the media and political space through the RED Group.

"It is always humbling to have the work my team and I do and our accomplishments over the years recognised," Williams added.

He added: "And to receive the Outstanding Leadership Excellence Award on a platform such as the African Business Leadership Awards alongside industry leaders that I have looked up to is even more humbling.

"I set out many years ago to transform the African landscape through media. This desire has morphed into many forms and led to the birth of the many parts of RED over the years.

"I have, by no means, accomplished all I have set out to, but I am proud of all we have achieved. This Award is a reminder to me that no act of service, no sacrifice and no good deed ever goes unnoticed."

Past winners of various categories of the African Business Leadership Awards included President of the African Development Bank, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina; Former Liberian President and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (2011); Sudanese businessman, Mo Ibrahim (2012),Former President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete (2014); Former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Jonathan (2015); Tanzanian businessman and philanthropist, Mo Dewji (2016); President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame (2017); Prime Minister of Ethiopia and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Abiy Ahmed (2018).

NEWS

NSCDC Parades Two Suspected Bandits in Kwara

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

The Kwara State Command of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), has paraded two suspects for allegedly bearing illegal arms.

The suspects are Mr. Abdullahi, (19) and Mr. John Inyeka, both residents of Agbede village in Moro Local Government Area of Kwara State.

One other suspect identified as Ifeanyi Chukwu (26), was also paraded for alleged theft of a water pumping machine owned by Doctor's Hospital, Niger Road Area of Ilorin metropolis.

The Spokesman of NSCDC, Mr. Olasunkanmi Ayeni, who paraded the suspects before journalists at the defence corps headquarters in Ilorin, stated that Abdullahi and John were arrested at Agbede village on Wednesday.

Ayeni said that Abdullahi, a Fulani boy, was allegedly found with a locally made pistol and further investigation led to the arrest of John Inyeka, who hails from Benue State.

"Inyeka, was also caught with another locally pistol during a search of his house in the same Agbede village," Ayeni revealed.

He said that another name mentioned was yet to be apprehended by the operatives of the civil defence corps.

He said that Abdullahi was in search of cartridges for his locally made pistol when he was arrested.

"Abdullahi contacted a wrong person which later leaked to our men on surveillance of the area. When interrogated, he claimed that he was using the locally made pistol for self-defence, which is contrary to the provisions of the law in the country."

Ayeni, said: "The arrest of the two suspects is giving us more concerns as there are reports that suspected bandits are trying to infiltrate Kwara State from Niger State.

"We are at high alert to wade off dangerous elements and keep the state safe for the citizens.

"Hence, at any given flash, we are ready to go after them."



JUMIA MARKS 10TH ANNIVERSARY …

L-R: Co-Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Jumia, Mr. Jeremy Hodara; Representative of Director General of National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), Mrs.Chioma Okee-Agugno, and Chief Executive Officer, Jumia Nigeria, Mr. Massimiliano Spalazzi, at the 10th anniversary luncheon of Jumia Nigeria in Lagos...yesterday ETOPUKUTT

Gombe Flags Off Mass Vaccination against Trans-boundary Animal Diseases

Gombe State Governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya has restated his administration's commitment to ensuring self-sufficiency and sustainable food security through agriculture and livestock production for the overall improvement in the socio-economic status of the citizenry, especially rural dwellers that are predominantly farmers.

He stated this at the flag-off of the 2022 mass vaccination campaign against trans-boundary animal diseases for the North-East Zone at Dadinkowa, Gombe State yesterday.

The targeted diseases include contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, (CBPPV), foot and mouth disease (FMDV), Pest Des Petits Ruminants (PPRV) and Newcastle disease (ND) among others.

Governor Inuwa noted that the diseases have high mortality rate and are easily contagious with the potential to spread rapidly, thereby causing socio-economic and public health consequences in the states and the nation in general.

Ortom Installs New Ochi'Idoma in Benue

George Okoh in Makurdi

The Governor of Benue State, Mr. Samuel Ortom, yesterday performed the coronation of the new Ochi'Idoma, His Royal Majesty, Agaba-Idu, Elaigwu Odogbo Obagaji John.

Ortom also presented the staff of office to the new paramount ruler of the Idoma nation at the Och'Idoma square in Otukpo, Otukpo Local Government Area (LGA) of Benue State, adding that the traditional institution has made tremendous progress under his watch.

Ortom said: "Under my watch the traditional institution has made tremendous progress. The welfare of traditional rulers has been given top priority.

"Your Royal Majesty, your selection by the selection committee as the 5th Ochi'Idoma has undoubtedly brought joy to the people of Idoma nation.

"I have no doubt that your reign will be peaceful. It is my further conviction that the support you are enjoying from your subjects will be sustained and together you can make Idoma nation better than you have met it.

"It is therefore a great joy to be here to perform the coronation of the Ochi'Idoma and also present a staff of office to him.

Oyetola Deserves Second Term, Osun Monarch Declares

The re-election campaign team of Osun State Governor, Gboyega Oyetola, yesterday visited Apomu, the headquarters of Isokan Local Government Area.

While hosting the governor in his palace, the Alapomu of Apomu, Oba Kayode Adenekan Afolabi, attested to performance of Oyetola in this first term and declared him fit and more competent to serve another four years to drive Osun people to a more stabilised state.

"Oyetola deserves second term. He has done creditably well by paying attention to workers salary and welfare, revamping health care sector, building infrastructures across the state despite dwindling resources and same time sustaining peace and security in the state," the monarch said.

In his response, Oyetola governor made assurance to Apomu people to do more in spreading dividend of democracy throughout the state if he is relected.

Olori Janet Afolabi was among dignitaries that witnessed Oyetola's historic visit to the Alapomu's Palace. Others included wife of the governor, Alhaja Kafayat Oyetola, the Deputy Governor and his wife, National Secretary of the governing All Progressives Congress (APC) Senator Iyiola Omisore, SSG, DG oyetola campaign organisation, State party chairman and an appreciable number of the party's and government.

Catholic Laity Seeks End to Murder of Priests, Others

The Catholic Laity Council of Nigeria (CLCN) has called on the federal government and security agencies to end the continuous murder of priests and other Nigerians.

The National President of the council,

Sir Henry Yunkwap, made the call in a statement on yesterday in Jos, describing the killings as "barbaric and senseless."

According to him, priests have become soft targets of the criminals and they sacrificed their lives for the service of God and humanity.

"We the members of the CLCN are completely saddened and find it very painful to once again address the soaring issue of insecurity in our nation.

"Less than one month ago we issued a press statement over the June 5, unprovoked, brutal attack and massacre of Catholic worshippers in

Owo, where 40 unarmed Nigerians including women and children lost their lives, and many more were badly wounded.

"We condemned the barbaric act and called on the government to, as a matter of urgency, arrest the perpetrators and address the issue of insecurity in the nation.

"While waiting for the government response, the situation keeps deteriorating as our church and priests are now the soft target of these dare devils.

Delta Guber: Omo-Agege Picks Ex-Deputy Speaker, Osanebi as Running Mate

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

Delta State governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, has chosen former deputy speaker of the state House of assembly, Friday Osanebi, as the deputy governorship candidate of the party.

Although, since last last year, tongues have been wagging about whether the 41-year old planned defection from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), yesterday's announcement should lay to rest speculation regarding Osanebi's conspicuous absence from numerous activities of the state PDP in recent times.

In the statement, Omo-Agege simply said that Osanebi would run with him on the platform of the APC in the 2023 election.

"Consistent with section 187(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and in furtherance of the firm resolve of our great party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Delta State to provide responsible and balanced leadership to realise our strategic vision to take Delta from extreme bad governance and Build A New Delta ('BAND') on the four pillars of Employment and Empowerment, Development, Good Governance and Enduring Peace and Security ('EDGE'), and after broad consultations with the leadership of our party, stakeholders within and outside the party and diverse interests across our State in a painstaking vetting process, it is my pleasure to announce to our people that The Rt. Honourable Friday Ossai Osanebi is my nominated running mate and the deputy governorship candidate of APC for the 2023 Delta State Governorship election.

FG Inaugurates Fish Market, Mini-Stadium in Lagos

Sunday Ehigiator

The federal government (FG), through the office of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yesterday inaugurated a 339-shops capacity modern fish market, alongside a 960-capacity mini-stadium in the Epe area of Lagos State.

The projects which were facilitated by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Industries, Representing Lagos East Senatorial District, Senator Adetokunbo Abiru, equally had financial grants and manual planters distributed to over 200 rural farmers.

Speaking at the inauguration, which had the Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, his Deputy, Dr Kadiri Hamzat, and several distinguished senators in attendance, the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs, Mrs Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, stated the project speaks to some goals of the SDGs, especially as related to the zero poverty, no hunger, good health and wellbeing, gender equality and economic growth.

"It is a very important project for us in the sense that we have to empower our women financially, spiritually, psychologically and emotionally.

"Market development is necessary for our women to have the opportunity of taking good care of themselves, and families, and contribute to the development of their immediate community, the local government and the state in general," she said.

NDLEA Opens Call Centre to Assist People with Drug Issues

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The Chairman/Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa (Retd), has commissioned a modern 24/7 call centre that would attend to Nigerians with needs on drug related issues from all parts of the country.

Marwa said that the NDLEA's call centre with toll free helpline would be manned by professionals and experts in counseling, psychotherapy, psychology and psychiatry among others.

According to him, "the provision of this toll-free helpline is a milestone in our resolve to broaden access to quality health care for drug users in the country. This has become a necessity and a strategic intervention in our determined effort to bring under control the increasing cases of drug use disorder and related health concerns."

He stated that the 26 treatment facilities across its commands are grossly inadequate in the face of statistics of drug users and those suffering from drug use disorder.

Mammoth Crowd Receives ADC Presidential Candidate, Kachikwu in Sokoto

Thousands of supporters yesterday trooped out to welcome the Presidential Candidate of the African Democratic Congress (ADC), Dumebi Kachikwu, to Sokoto.

Kachikwu and top leaders of the ADC were in Sokoto to commission the party's new State Secretariat and equally receive hundreds of defectors from the All Progressives Congress (APC) to the ADC.

At the event, over 120 members who defected from the APC were received into the ADC by the National leadership of the party.

In his brief remarks, Kachikwu told the new members that ADC was a party that believed in one indivisible Nigeria, shared prosperity for all Nigerians, rule of law and above all love as the foundation that ties all Nigerians together.

He said the new secretariat would be a beacon of hope to the people of Sokoto and promised that ADC would not fail them.

Kachikwu told the supporters to embrace ADC as a party for all Nigerians even as he promised that all members would be given a sense of belonging.

He said:"This is your party and our party, embrace it. This is the party for the new Nigeria we all desire.

Police Confirm Attack by Gunmen in Enugu

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

The Enugu State Police Command has confirmed an attack by yet-to-be identified gunmen in the Garki area of the state, during which two police officers were killed yesterday morning.

The state Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Daniel Ndukwe, in a statement said the operatives were on stop-and-search operation when they were attacked.

He said: "There was an attack on policemen, who were on a stop-and-search duty this (yesterday) morning on Agbani Road close to the Enugu/Port-Harcourt expressway by yet-to-be identified hoodlums.

The PPRO, however, said the details of the incident were still sketchy, adding that the Police Command's Tactical/Operational operatives have since been mobilised and are currently trailing the miscreants.

Ndukwe said further development on the attack would be communicated.

However, sources close to the area said they had to scamper for safety when the gunmen attacked and engaged the operatives in a shootout.



ROYAL ENDORSEMENT FOR OYETOLA...

Governor Gboyega Oyetola of Osun State(left), and the Traditional Ruler of Apomu, the headquarters of Isokan Local Government, Oba Kayode Adenekan Afolabi, during the visit by the governor's campaign team to the monarch...yesterday

Anambra Commissioner Denies Involvement in Community Crisis

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

Anambra State Commissioner for Homeland Affairs, Chief Chikodi Anarah, has denied involvement in the crisis in Isuaniocha community of Awka North Local Government Area of the state.

The commissioner, who had previously served in Governor Willie Obiano administration for eight years, said he is neither from Isuaniocha nor has he any interest in the community to warrant causing any crisis there.

Anarah was reacting to allegations by a former President-General of Isuaniocha, Mr. Tony Onyeagolum, who had accused him of being behind the crisis in the community, while berating the state Governor, Prof Chukwuma Soludo, for appointing him as commissioner.

Meanwhile, Anarah in a statement made available to THISDAY by the Public Relations Officer of the Ministry of Homeland Affairs, Ukpa Ewa, stated that the allegations against him were borne out of envy, hate and jealousy, insisting that Onyeagolum is a shoddy character who is still undergoing trial for murder, during his time as president-general of the community.

House to Re-evaluate Benefits, Contributions of ECOWAS to Nigeria

Udora Orizu in Abuja

The House of Representatives has mandated its Committees on Inter-parliamentary Relations and ECOWAS Parliament and Foreign Affairs to appraise the benefits and contributions of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) towards the socio-economic development of Nigeria and Nigerians in the last 10 years.According to the lawmakers, this is with a view to determine the justification of the country's financial contribution to the sub0regional organisation (ECOWAS). The resolution was sequel to the adoption of a motion of urgent public importance sponsored by Hon. Awaji-inombek Abiante.

Moving the motion, Abiante noted that ECOWAS also known as CEDEAO in French, was established by the Treaty of Lagos in Lagos, Nigeria, on May 28, 1975, with the main goal of promoting economic cooperation among member states in order to raise living standards and promote economic development.

He also noted that the regional political and economic union of 15 countries called ECOWAS has its headquarters in Abuja, and its arms of governance include the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary.

The lawmaker said the House is aware that in16 years, Nigeria has contributed more than $1.177 billion to ECOWAS as its Community Levy, and this is the highest contribution by any member state since inception.

Abiante said ECOWAS Vision 2050, if well implemented, would ensure a secure, stable and peaceful region; a region endowed with strong institutions that complies with the rule of law and fundamental freedoms; and a fully integrated and prosperous region and sustainable development.

ECWA Denies Forcefully Converting Muslims, Almajiri to Christians in Plateau

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) has denied that the Department of State Security (DSS) agents raided one of its facilities in Jos, Plateau State, where 21 Muslims/Almajiri were held hostage and forcefully converted to Christians.

Describing the claim as false and misleading, ECWA President, Dr. Stephen Baba Panya, said it's a deliberate effort to discredit the church and cause religious crisis.

To present the fact, Panya, in a statement, said ECWA Discipleship Unit is established under the ECWA Church-Related Ministries Department of the ECWA headquarters.

He said: "The unit, among other activities, trains the less privileged in the society for capacity building, skill acquisition, Christian ethics and leadership skills with the sole purpose of making them relevant to the society. It also quips the trainees, upon completion of their one-year training, with tools that would help them to establish themselves.

"For lack of space at the ECWA headquarters, the office acquired a private property within Tudun Wada residential area in Jos as a temporary site for the training and housing of all trainees.

ICPC Docks NSCDC Deputy Commandant over N26.7m Housing Fraud

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) has docked a Deputy Commandant of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Mr. Edike Mboutidem Akpan, for defrauding prospective home owners of N26,655,000.

9 Akpan was charged before Justice V. S. Gaba of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court, sitting in Kwali, Abuja on a 17-count charge that include using a private real estate company, Danemy Nig Ltd, to defraud land subscribers.

The charge sheet revealed that the deputy commandant convinced many subscribers with the claim of being in partnership with NSCDC, to pay various sums of money for plots of land both in Karshi, Nasarawa State and Sabon Lugbe Extension, Airport Road, Abuja, which were never allocated to them.

ICPC told the court that the offence, committed between 2010 and 2015, violated Sections 19 and 26 (1) (c) of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act, 2000 and was punishable under Section 19 of the same Act.

CSOs Advocate Integration of Tuberculosis into Katsina Health Budget

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

Civil Society Organisations in Katsina State have advocated for the integration of tuberculosis (TB) services into the state 2023 health budget in order to tackle the infectious disease in the state.

The CSOs also called for an improved funding for tuberculosis and integration of its services into the state Contributory Healthcare Scheme to bridge "the huge existing gap" in the TB management.

Speaking at a CSOs engagement workshop for TB domestic resources mobilisation, the state Coordinator of Development Governance International Consult (DGI Consult), Abdulmalik Abdulrazeez, said 90 per cent of TB funding was from donors.

He explained that adequate budgetary allocations and timely release of appropriation for tuberculosis services as well as its integration into the health insurance scheme would significantly tackle the contagious disease.

The coordinator said: "Presently, there is no budget line for tuberculosis in Katsina and many other states in Nigeria. So we called on the Katsina State Government to integrate tuberculosis services into the state health budget to eradicate tuberculosis cases in the state."

In his opening remarks, the state Chairman of Coalition of Civil Society Organisations, AbdulRahman Abdullahi, urged the state government to enroll tuberculosis patients into its contributory healthcare scheme.

Kogi Set to Create 500,000 Business Outfits

Ibrahim Oyewale in Lokoja

Kogi State Government has restated its commitment to create over 500,000 new businesses in the state before the expiration of the present administration in 2024.

The state Governor, Yahaya Bello, made this known while speaking yesterday in Lokoja to commemorate the maiden edition of International Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Day.

The theme of this year MSME Day is: 'A Strategic Tool for Economic Development', as the governor said this would be achieved through stimulation of micro economies via innovativeness.

He explained that MSME accounts for 90 per cent of businesses, 60 to 70 per cent of employment and 50 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) worldwide.

Bello added that the MSME growth is a strategic tool for economic development, stressing that MSME contributes to both local and national economy.

The governor noted that MSME is to help sustain livelihood, especially for the poor, women, youths, and other vulnerable people in the society.

According to him, Kogi State Enterprise Development Agency (KEDA) was created to coordinate their immediate and long term needs, stressing that the state needed an outlet to engage and empower teeming youth population.

APC Women Leader Provides Free Medical Care for 3,000 Zamfara Residents

The All Progressives Congress (APC) National Women Leader, Dr. Betta Edu, has flagged off a free healthcare programme that includes free surgeries to over 3,000 residents of Zamfara, consisting of men, women and children.

This is part of the activities marking the empowerment programme initiated by Dr. Edu for grassroots development in Zamfara State.

In her address, Dr. Edu said it is imperative to support the effort of Governor Bello Matawalle of Zamfara State in his quest to governing the state towards the path of sustainable development.

She said one of the core factors that engenders personal and public development is quality of life provided by healthcare system.

"Quality health is priority. H.E, Governor Bello Matawalle has done very well, and we will support him to reach out to more citizens of Zamfara State, as well as Internally displaced persons," Dr Edu said.

Deborah Yakubu: Threats Can't Stop My Humanitarian Services, Says OPM GO

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Founder and General Overseer of Omega Power Ministry (OPM) Apostwle Chibuzor Chinyere, has stated that no form of threats by some persons from the northern part of the country would stop his humanitarian services, especially to the poor and downtrodden in the society.

Apostle Chinyere was reacting to threat messages and calls he has been receiving over his decision to uplift life status of the family of Deborah Yakubu who was gruesomely killed at the Shehu Shagari College of Education in Sokoto in May.

The clergy spoke yesterday in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, when an International Human Rights Commission presented him a global gold medal award for his years of service to humanity.

Apostle Chinyere donated an exquisite restaurant to the family of Deborah Yakubu, after which he moved the grieving family from Kaduna to Port Harcourt and gave them a 14 flat mini estate with certificate of ownership.

The clergy also gifted the family of Deborah a fully furnished two-bedroom flat, a car, with her younger siblings placed under scholarship.

NEWSEXTRA

IPMAN Threatens Legal Action over Purported Payment of N74bn to Marketers

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has threatened to drag the management of Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) to court over the latter's purported claims on the payment of N74 billion transport claims to marketers.

The Chairman IPMAN Northern Chapter, Alhaji Bashir Danmalam gave the threat while addressing journalists in in Kano.

Danmalam, who was reacting to the purported payment, said the claim was not true as their members were not paid unless the payment was made to "ghost marketers".

The IPMAN chairman, therefore challenged the management of the NMDPRA to publish the names of the marketers who benefited from the purported payment to prove their claims.

"I'm surprised to hear the story on payment of the N74 billion claims by the Chief Executive of the agency, Faruk Ahmed Maishanu. Either he was misinformed or he does not know what is happening in the organisation.

"Who and who were paid the money? I know some of the marketers who are being owed N10 billion each."

Surulere, SpringForth Foundation to Enhance Learning Outcome for 100,000 Children

Surulere Local Government in conjunction with Springforth Foundation is launching a 100,000 Students and Pupils Passing of Exam Initiative to provide free study materials for the study of Mathematics, English, and Science for Primary and Secondary schools pupils ahead of the upcoming exams It is an initiative of the Surulere Local Council under the auspices of the chairman, Hon Suleiman Bamidele Yussuf, the Vice-Chairman, Prince Muiz Adewale and Mr Kehinde Agoro the Secretary to the Local Government.

The project will be driven by Springforth a registered NGO in Nigeria under the auspices of HRM, Oba Kazeem Adeshina Salami (Ilufemiloba 1) Osobia of Makun-Omi, Mr Jubril Olayemi Salami, Mr Benjamin Ikhide, Mr Pereira Owolabi Omokayode, and Mr. Olusegun Balogun.

In a statement issued by Springforth and the Chairman of Surulere Local Council,they said building a solid academic foundation for our children has become an imperative, especially in the knowledge world of today.

" Regardless of the talents and innate abilities embedded in an average child-learner, the need to provide basic education for him/her cannot be ignored given the realities and expectations of the 21st Century. Efforts by the government to improve the level of education in the country has been commendable and, no doubt, yielded some considerable growth, but more can be achieved to better position our children to live in a world full of opportunities.

MAPOLY Alumnus: Schools Need Old Students' Support

The Chairman, Planning Committee of the 30th Graduation Anniversary of the 1992 set of the Association of Mass Communication Graduates of the Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, (MAPOLY)Abeokuta, Ogun State, Dr. Femi Adefila, has emphasised the need for old students to play active roles in developing their alma mater.

Adefila, the Founder of RAVE FM in Osogbo, Osun State, who said this in a statement, explained that alumni associations could become the pillars on which the development of the nation's schools would stand.

He said: "The economic situation across the globe isn't favourable at the moment. "Nigeria's situation is particularly precarious.

"This has led to the schools, especially government schools, being sidelined in the allocation of very scarce resources.

"This has placed a responsibility on old students to embark on a rescue mission to the schools by pulling resources together to support the schools in the areas of modern infrastructure and facilitating volunteers to help the students in bridging the gap in the impartation of critical knowledge."

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as EBUKA JAYDA NWOKEJI now wish to be known and addressed as CHERMAN EBUKA NWOKEJI. All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as NWAOHA JOY now wish to be known and addressed as NWAOHA IFEOMA JOY and my date of birth is *23rd April, 1968.* All former documents remain Valid. General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as ILOABANAFOR LILIAN CHIDINMA (MISS.) now wants to be addressed as MRS. UGBANA LILIAN CHIDINMA. All former documents remain valid. Public and private institutions take note.

I formally known and addressed as RITA TEIM MARK now wish to be known and addressed RITA MARK. All former documents remain valid, the general public please take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as MRS FUNMILAYO FATOYINBO now wants to be addressed as SAMPIL FLORENCE FUNMILAYO. All former documents remain Valid. General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as SAHEED AJOKE SHAKIRAT now wants to be addressed as ARIORI AJOKE SHAKIRAT. All former documents remain Valid. General public should take note.

I formerly known as AGBO RUTH OTSEANYA now wish to be known and addressed as ODINA RUTH OTSEANYA. All former documents remain valid. The general public, banks and concerned authorities should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as, MISS. JULIET KELECHI GAKWE, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. JULIET KELECHI NWACHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

NKEMDILIM

I, formerly known as **Egbo Nkemdilim Stephen** now wish to be known and addressed as **Stephen Nkemdilim.** All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

ONYINYECHUKWUKA

I, formerly known as **Dike Onyinyechukwuka Elizabeth** now wish to be known and addressed as **Stephen Onyinyechukwuka Elizabeth.** All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

BLESSING

I, formerly known as **Akhabighimhe Blessing Lamosi** now wish to be known and addressed as **Clement Blessing Onagemhe.** All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formally known and addressed as OMOKARO MELODY DESTINY now wish to be known and addressed as GEORGE OMOKARO MELODY. All former documents remain valid, the general public please take note.

I formally known and addressed as RITA TEIM MARK now wish to be known and addressed as RITA MARK. All former documents remain valid, the general public please take note.

This is to notify the general public that MISS STELLA CHIBUZOR, JOSEPH, STELLA JOSEPH IBEH and MRS ABUCHI CHIBUZOR STELLA are one and same person, and now wish to be known as MRS ABUCHI CHIBUZOR STELLA. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as RAWA OMOLERE HELEN now wish to be known and addressed as RAWA OMOLERE DAMILOLA HELEN. All former documents remain Valid General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as, MISS MARY TITILAYO ODUNFA now wish to be known and addressed as MRS MARY TITILAYO WALE-DADA. All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as, OYEDEPO TOYIN OPEYEMI now wish to be known and addressed as SAMSON TOYIN OPEYEMI. All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as, ARIYO SAMSON OLANREWAJU now wish to be known and addressed as SAMSON ARIYO OLANREWAJU. All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as, MARY JAMES UDOETTE now wish to be known and addressed as MARY GIFT AKPAN. All former documents remain valid. General public should take note.

I, MR UDEH GODWIN IFEANYI resident at No. 19 Betty Pride Way, Ajao Estate, Lagos wish to be known and called UDEH GODWIN IFEANYI and not UDEH IFEANYI G. All previous documents remain valid. The public should please take note.

WORLD OF ISLAM

Edited by: MJO Mustapha Email deji.mustapha@thisdaylive.com

The Spirituality of Hajj: Conclusion

By: Spahic Omer/IslamiCity

(continued from last week)

Hajj is one of the most important and, at the same time, most challenging Islamic rites. It would not be an exaggeration to say that in certain ways Hajj even personifies the whole message of Islam, combining its personal and collective dimensions, attending to the needs of spirit and overcoming the limitations of matter.

From generating unparalleled spiritual experiences and drawing educational and socio-cultural lessons, to rising to the tests of complex organization, travel and implementation logistics, Hajj has it all.

As the final and ultimate pillar of Islam, Hajj signifies the evidence of the functioning of the rest of pillars. It furthermore represents the achievement of one's religious development and self-fulfilment. It is the climax of one's Islam and of Islam altogether.

Hajj is the highest manifestation of one's consciousness. It is a sign of purposeful response to a heavenly call through which one enhances his relationships with his Creator, his surroundings and his very self. Hajj therefore is more about coming than going; it is more about returning than setting off. Hajj is about introspection and setting further benchmarks.

Hajj belongs to the Creator – just as everything else in the universe does. Man and everything he owns belongs to Him too. Thus, Hajj signifies one of the rights of the Creator and one of the responsibilities of man. Through Hajj man not only discharges a responsibility, but also contributes to settling the spiritual debt of existence he perennially owes to his Creator and Master.

From the moment a pilgrim puts on the garment of ihram, embarking then on a sustained series of ground-breaking activities in the holy mosque (al-Masjid al-Haram) and at 'Arafah, Muzdalifah and Mina, which are accompanied by correspondingly ground-breaking sensations, to the moment a pilgrim takes off the same garment – and significantly afterwards until he returns home – Hajj is an extraordinary journey through time, emotions, as well as the revealed existential dimensions.

Performing Hajj, it follows, should lead to the uppermost level of self-discovery and self-actualization. A person's true identity and purpose await to be discovered. Hence, after Hajj a person is expected to be a better Muslim and a better human being, and his life a better and more productive time on earth. For him, almost nothing will ever be the same again. Hajj is evidence and a testament (hujjah).

That is why the Qur'an declares: "Pilgrimage thereto (to the city of Makkah and its holy mosque) is a duty men owe to Allah - those who can afford the journey; but if any deny faith, Allah stands not in need of any of His creatures" (Alu 'Imran, 97).

Accordingly, the Islamic tenet is if anyone denies the obligation of Hajj he becomes a disbeliever. Not performing Hajj without valid excuses is equally detrimental. 'Umar bin al-Khattab is reported to have said: "Whoever can afford Hajj but did not perform it, there is no difference in his case if he dies while Jew or Christian." In this case, as if a person denied, or brushed aside, that the obligation of Hajj was incumbent upon all abled Muslims, including himself.

This statement of 'Umar bin al-Khattab is certainly due to a hadith of the Prophet (which is classified as "weak" though) featuring a similar content: "He who is not prevented from performing the pilgrimage by an obvious necessity, a tyrannical ruler, or a disease which confines him at home and dies without having performed the pilgrimage, may die if he wishes as a Jew, or if he wishes as a Christian."

The requirement for Hajj is the financial and physical capability. However, as an institution, so demanding is Hajj materially that its immaterial considerations must also be up to the mark, lest a sort of imbalance is created in a person. Going for Hajj means that a person should be sufficiently educated about it and about Islam in general, and should be sufficiently charged spiritually and mentally, so as to be able to rise to challenges and deal with endless issues, in addition to being healthy, willing and comfortably well-off, and feeling safe. Any imbalances and discrepancies howsomever are bound to leave a dent in one's encounter with and experience of Hajj. They can spoil the whole thing. They can make one's Hajj a missed opportunity.

What is Qurb and Qurban?

By:Sadullah Khan/IslamiCity

Referring to the first ten days of the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said; "There are no days grander or more loved for good deeds in the estimation of Allah, than the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah. So, increase tasbeeh, tahleel, takbeer and tahmeed (glorification, adoration, magnification, and appreciation of the Almighty). [Sahih Bukhari]

Such exaltation and (dhikr) remembrance of the Divine brings (qurb) increased attachment and closeness to the Creator; as intimated in a Hadith Qudsi; "I am with the thought of My servant and am with him when he remembers Me. …If he remembers Me in an assembly, I remember him in an assembly better than his assembly." [Sahih Bukhari]

Special Days of 'Amal-us-saalihaat

According to this prophetic statement, "There are no days grander or more loved for ('amal-us-saalihaat) good deeds than these ten days of Dhul Hijjah," 'Amal-us-saalihaat include every worthy endeavor, any pure action that contributes towards moral upliftment, spiritual development, individual improvement or social enhancement; all efforts that are performed sincerely in a good cause and for the sake of Allah.

Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani states that the possible reason for the excellence of the first ten days of Dhul Hijjah is that a person can perform in them all the main kinds of worship that include prayer, fasting, charity as well as hajj; while all these kinds of worship can not be gathered together in the other days of the year. [Fath-ul-Bari] This period incorporates the grandest day of the year, the Day of 'Arafah. For non-pilgrims, the Prophet said, "Fasting on the day of 'Arafah wipes away sins of the year." [Sahih Muslim]

Sacrifice

It is also the period of qurban or udhiyah/sacrifice; a perpetuation of the tradition initiated by Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail (PBUT). The father visioned a dream in which he sacrifices his son and both were willing to fulfill the dream and make the ultimate sacrifice (zibhin 'azeem); father sacrificing son and son willing to be sacrificed; a test of faith for both of them; to comply with what they believed to be the will of Allah. Allah accepted Prophet Ibrahim's intention, and the father and son's symbolic fulfillment of the test and therefore symbolically provided them a ram to be sacrificed.

This tremendous act of willing submission to the Divine Will moved father and son (PBUT) to qurbu il-Allah (closer to Allah), from which the notion qurban at the 'Eid-ul-Adha is derived. Qurban basically implies taking an action with the intention of drawing nearer (qareeb) to Allah. Through this level of dedication and submission, Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Isma'il (PBUT) were able to transcend the limitations of the self and attachment to the material world by prioritizing devotion to Allah.

Qurb and Qurban

It is the willingness to sacrifice for the sake of Allah that is most significant and reflected during the qurban, as Allah reminds us [Qur'an 22:37]; "It is neither the meat nor the blood of the sacrificed animal that reaches Allah, but the piety of the one who sacrifices." This verse eloquently highlights the fact that sacrifice in Islam is a natural expression of reverence for the Almighty and gratitude to the Creator. Sacrifice manifests the spirit of willful dedication, sincere devotion, and humble obedience to Allah.

The whole notion of qurban, therefore, is not confined to the ritual of udhiyah/slaughter or sacrifice of the animal, but rather a person's commitment to submit righteously to the Divine in an attempt to gain qurb/proximity to Allah. Proximity here does not imply physical closeness, as Allah is qareeb/ever near. Allah encompasses all things and is not (ba'eed) distant from anything. Allah reminds us in the Holy Qur'an: "…. And when my servants ask you concerning me, tell them I certainly am (qareeb) near." [Qur'an 2:186]. "We are closer to a person than even his jugular vein." [Qur'an 50:16]

This should conscientize us to the reality that Allah is near, it is perhaps we who may be distant from Him.

Drawing Closer to Allah

Let these days be the days of increased dhikr and good deeds; increased attentiveness to finding avenues of qurb-il-Allah (closeness to Allah). Sayyidna 'Ali said that the avenue to (taqarrub) divine proximity is through (ikhlaas-un-niyyah) sincerity of intention.

In this challenging era of trial and tribulation, in this period of a global pandemic; we ask for the protection of Allah and we pray the benevolent supplication of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH); "O Allah! I ask You to give me the ability to do good deeds, avoid bad deeds and that I have love for the poor. I ask that You forgive me and have mercy on me. I ask You for Your love, for the love of those who love You, and for the love of those actions which (yuqarribu) will draw me closer to Your love." [Tirmidhi]

FRIDAYSPORTS

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Moses Simon, Akinwunmi Only Nigerians in CAF Awards Short-list

Duro Ikhazuagbe

Super Eagles winger, Moses Simon and Akinwunmi Amao, are the only two Nigerians nominated in a 60-man shortlist for individual awards in the 2022 CAF Awards released yesterday. Winners will be announced at the CAF Awards 2022 slated to hold on 21 July 2022 in Rabat, Morocco.

Simon who created sensation in the group stage of the 2021 AFCON in Cameroon as Super Eagles raced to the Round of 16 before crashing out to Tunisia, is the only Nigerian senior player shortlisted for the African Footballer of the Year Award for 2021-22 previously won by the likes of Rashidi Yekini, Emmanuel Amuneke, Victor Ikpeba and Nwankwo Kanu.

The Nantes of France player linked to several English Premier League clubs only this week agreed personal terms with Ligue 1 club OGC Nice.

His club FC Nantes have already said they will not stand in the way of the winger should they receive an "interesting" offer for him.

Former Liverpool team-mates, Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah (both 30 years olds) were named in the list of 30 nominees for the Men's Player of the Year award.

Mane, who joined German champions Bayern Munich last week, had the upper hand over Salah at international level in recent months, with Senegal beating Egypt in the AFCON final last February before winning their 2022 World Cup play-off tie a month after. He's favorite to pick the away .

The Senegalese is the last man to have been crowned Africa's best, back in 2019 before Coronavirus knocked off the award amongst other sports awards.

Amao who plays for FC Copenhagen, was listed in the 10-man shortlist for CAF's Young Player of the Year category.

Nominees in the women's category have not been released yet even as speculations are rife that Nigeria's Asisat Oshoala may pick the award for a record fifth time as Africa's best female footballer.

In the National Team of the Year category, Nigeria's Super Eagles were glaring omitted in the 10 nominees even as Comoros, The Gambia and Equatorial Guinea made the cut.

According to the press statement by CAF, a stakeholder panel made up of Technical Experts, CAF Legends and Journalists decided on the list for the various categories taking into the consideration the performance of the nominee from September 2021 till June 2022 at all levels.



Moses Simon...only Nigerian senior player in CAF's 30-man shortlist for Player of the Year



Sadio Mane...tipped to retain CAF top honour

NOMINEES FOR THE PLAYER OF THE YEAR CATEGORY

- **Riyad Mahrez** *(Algeria & Man City)*
- **Bertrand Traore** *(B'Faso & Aston Villa)*
- **Blati Toure** *(B'Faso & Pyramids)*
- **Edmund Tapsoba** *(B'Faso & Leverkusen)*
- **Andre-Frank Z. Anguissa** *(Cameroon & Napoli)*
- **Karl Toko Ekambi** *(Cameroon & Lyon)*
- **Vincent Aboubacar** *(Cameroon & Al Nassr)*
- **Youssouf M'Changama** *(Comoros & Guingamp)*
- **Franck Kessie** *(Cote d'Ivoire & AC Milan)*
- **Sebastien Haller** *(Cote d'Ivoire & Ajax)*
- **Mohamed Abdelmonem** *(Egypt & Al Ahly)*
- **Mohamed ElNeny** *(Egypt & Arsenal)*
- **Mohamed Salah** *(Egypt & Liverpool)*
- **Mohamed Shenawy** *(Egypt & Al Ahly)*
- **Musa Barrow** *(Gambia & Bologna)*
- **Naby Keita** *(Guinea & Liverpool)*
- **Aliou Dieng** *(Mali & Al Ahly)*
- **Hamari Traore** *(Mali & Rennes)*
- **Yves Bissouma** *(Mali & Tottenham)*
- **Achraf Hakimi** *(Morocco & PSG)*
- **Sofiane Boufal** *(Morocco & Angers)*
- **Yahya Jabrane** *(Morocco & Wydad)*
- **Yassine Bounou** *(Morocco & Sevilla)*
- **Moses Simon** *(Nigeria & Nantes)*
- **Edouard Mendy** *(Senegal & Chelsea)*
- **Kalidou Koulibaly** *(Senegal & Napoli)*
- **Nampalys Mendy** *(Senegal & Leicester)*
- **Sadio Mane** *(Senegal & Bayern Munich)*
- **Saliou Ciss** *(Senegal & Nancy)*
- **Ali Maaloul** *(Tunisia & Al Ahly)*

Super Falcons, 11 Others Chasing World Cup Tickets in Morocco

WAFCON 2022

Nigeria's Super Falcons and 11 other teams will tomorrow begin chase of Women's World Cup places when the CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations, kicks off in Morocco.

Only the top four finishers are guaranteed places at the 2023 finals in Australia and New Zealand.

Nigeria and South Africa will rekindle their rivalry when they clash in an early group game in Rabat on Monday that could be an indicator as to the outcome of the tournament.

Super Falcons and Barcelona Femeni forward, Asisat Oshoala, admits that the South Africans will not be a walk in the park for the Nigerians who are seeking their 10th continental title in Morocco.

"They (South Africa) are a very strong team, and a very competitive one as well," said Oshoala on whose shoulder lies Nigeria's ambition.

She however insisted that the Falcons are not solely plotting their game plans against the Banyana Banyana.

"I don't think the focus must only be on that match. There are other teams to also worry about."

Nigeria defeated South Africa on penalties in the final of the last Women's Africa Cup of Nations in Ghana in 2018.

The 2020 edition was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic but South Africa last September beat Nigeria 4-2 away in the Aisha Buhari Invitational Tournament in Lagos.

"The first thing we must do is to avoid conceding because we're always going to create chances," said South Africa coach, Desiree Ellis, of their Group C opener on Monday.

"It's going to be a very tight battle. Last September's game showed we have quality but we've been lacking the consistency and Nigeria have always had that consistency," she added.

Africa previously had three places at the 2019 Women's World Cup in France, but with the field for the 2023 tournament expanded to 32 teams, there are now four automatic berths for the continent and the chance of two more places via a proposed 10-team playoff tournament.

The four semi-finalists at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations will qualify for the World Cup and there will be playoff matches to determine places five and six, with those two teams taking part in the World Cup qualifying playoff tournament.

The African championship, being hosted in Casablanca and Rabat, and will runs through to July 23, is itself expanded to 12 teams, with Nigeria's dominant position in the women's game on the continent under threat.

France's Withdrawal Gives Nigeria Lifeline in Women's 4x100m Relay

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Nigerian women's 4x100m relay team will compete at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon, USA after France failed to name a team for the event.

The French Athletics Association yesterday unveiled its list of athletes for the championships without including its women's 4x100m relay team while six athletes viz Amandine Brossier, Shana Grebo, Diana Iscaye, Sokhna Lacoste, Sounkamba Sylla and Marjorie Veyssiere were named in the 4x400m team.

Although no official reason was given, checks revealed that the French cannot present a decent team for the event as the highest ranked sprinter out of the European nation is Mallory Leconte who is rated 148th in the world this year with an 11.33 seconds personal season's best.

The other sprinters are ranked between 295 (Chloe Galet, 11.48 and Leelou Martial-Ehoulet, 11.48) and 421 (Serena Kouassi, 11.57).

France is one of the 10 countries which secured qualification for the 4x100m relay event at the 2021 World Relays in Poland.

Nigeria was not at the competition and had to compete for the remaining four spots on offer. Led by Blessing Okagbare, Nigeria secured her spot at the Tokyo Olympics following the relay team's 42.97 seconds run at the Olympic Trials and Invitational Relays held in June 2021 in Lagos.

The result was within the qualification period for the Oregon 2022 World Championships and the Nigerians thought they could qualify as the 16th nation until Monday June 27, 2022 when the Athletics Integrity Unit announced a further one year ban on Okagbare.

The 33-year-old was accused of additional anti-doping rule violations – specifically evading sample collection, and tampering or attempted tampering with the doping control process.

Abuja All Stars Tackle USF on Opening Day of Veterans Tourney

The much talked about Abuja All Stars Veterans Invitational Tournament will kick off Saturday 2nd of Julyat FIFA Goal Project, Moshood Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

The tournament that has been noted for its opportunities to give retired ex-internationals, captains of industries and passionate football lovers the podium to showcase their skill, artistry and relieve the past to teeming football fans, will serve off once again as All Stars Abuja will trade tackles with USF on the opening day of the championship.

The tournament will also see Nyanya All Stars tackle Unity Veterans while CKSC will slug it out with Metro City

In other matches scheduled for the opening day, Like Minds Stars will fight it out with Alieta All Stars while Capital Sportiff will go to war with Kuje All Stars.

In the last fixture for the day Gwagwalada All Stars will be battle ready to take on Lugbe All Stars in what is expected to be a classic.

The 12-team tournament will be played every weekend for five weeks with first, second and third best teams going home with about N650,000 cash prizes.

Abuja International Marathon to Hold December 17

After three years of planning and hard work, the stage is now set for the first edition of the Abuja International Marathon (AIM).

At a press conference yesterday in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, AIM's Managing Director, Zsuzsanna Ogunmiloyo, stated that the first edition of the much-anticipated race will be taking place on December 17, 2022.

Mrs Ogunmiloyo who is also CEO, of Unicentral Resources said she was delighted the Abuja International Marathon is finally moving away from being an idea into reality.

She said: "The journey to the first international marathon in our great city, Abuja, begins today. I am appealing to all residents of FCT and Nigerians, in general, to join hands with Unicentral to ensure we have a world-class race that will sell FCT and Nigeria to the world as a tourist destination, a place to invest and do business.

"With the cooperation of every one of us, especially the sporting press the number one stakeholder in this project we can build a race that will rival the best in the world like New York and London in record time," the MD, Abuja International Marathon added

Mrs Ogunmiloyo thanked the Honourable Minister of FCT, Honourable Minister of State, members of the National Assembly, the Permanent Secretary of FCT, the Mandate Secretary, Director of Sports, FCT administration, the National Assembly and every stakeholder that has ensured the Abuja International Marathon finally gets a life of it own.

On his part, Senator Ayo Akinyelure representing Ondo Central Senatorial District reiterated the Abuja International Marathon (AIM) as a fully-backed government project that already enjoys the approval of the National Assembly

Akinyelure noted that an initiative like the AIM which was guaranteed to raise the profile of Abuja as a city and Nigeria as a whole will be nurtured into a world-class event.

"This is another worthy addition to the laudable achievements of the Honourable Minister of FCT and Honourable Minister of State, this project will definitely enhance the image of FCT and Nigeria as a whole, we are enthusiastic about it and fully behind it," Senator Akinyelure affirmed.

SPORTS

Mikel: Why Super Eagles' Qatar 2022 Flight Crashed

The inability of Super Eagles to qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar has remained like a bitter pill for Nigerian football fans to swallow. In this interview with former Super Eagles' Captain, John Mikel Obi, the former Chelsea midfielder counseled Nigeria's football family to accept the failure and expect a better tomorrow. He also gave an insight into certain aspects of his illustrious career never talked about in past interviews. **FEMI SOLAJA** spoke with Mikel. Excerpts...

After your time out with the senior national team, the Super Eagles, this your visit seems to be your longest stay in the country? Is it because of your involvement in the Back2base talent hunt programme or for other reasons?

No doubt, this is my longest stay in one city (Lagos). I frequently travel here same way as Abuja but this time around, it's been a great moment to have to stay all through in Lagos. I'm happy that the events went as planned in the last three weeks. If I am to evaluate, this is absolutely my best time in Nigeria.

Back to Super Eagles, can you evaluate the various generations of the senior national team right from Christian Chukwu/ Segun Odegbami through Stephen Keshi & Co to the 1996 Stars that include the Austin Jay Jay Okocha, Daniel Amokachi and Nwankwo Kanu to your set that won the 2013 AFCON and now the present generation that missed qualifying for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar?

Every generation has its own purpose and It's difficult to compare one to the other since they all won laurels for the country. But I will like to speak mainly of my own generation. If you can recall when the likes of Okocha and Nwankwo Kanu left the national team, a lot of people were in doubt about what we can do since there was a major drop in terms of quality of players. It will Interesting you to note that that generation did not win any trophy of note for the country. Now back to my generation, we started to build cohesion and understanding among each other and knowing each other better. I remember winning the UEFA Champions League with Chelsea and I was getting several SMS from Nigerians wanting to know when will I win trophy for the nation instead of only for my club. It was a great challenge and I really took it as a big challenge. It has always been my wish from childhood to win with my country. Fortunately, I was able to achieve that, winning the AFCON with the Super Eagles eight months after I've won the Champions League with Chelsea. It was a great moment in my career. We were able to achieve this feat in South Africa because we had great friendly atmosphere in camp. We were there for one another and not that there were no big players among us. We saw each other as a unit. We knew what we wanted and we got it. But this present generation, I have no idea of what the plans are and I just hope they get back to winning ways and achieve glory individually and collectively for the nation. There must be discipline within the rank and file of the team that is players reporting to camp at the appropriate time and having mutual respect for one another. In total, camp attitude is very important. I don't know what is happening now but I just hope all is well since they are professionals as well.

As a follow-up, you said you don't know much about the present Super Eagles, but the bulk of the players in the team today were there when you captained the senior Nigerian team to win bronze medal at the AFCON 2019 in Egypt. Secondly, the football family was a bit surprised by your decision to quit the national team on the eve of that third-place match in Egypt. What happened?

Few things happened towards my final days in the national team and I was very careful not to react in a way that will affect the group. I thought I had a good relationship with the coach (Gernot Rohr) but after I left, I read somethings in the media that there were issues between Alex Iwobi and I during the Nations Cup in Egypt. Unfortunately, it was the opposite because I have a solid relationship with the player just like others in the national team. I read it just the same way I learnt few days ago about my disagreement with Sunday Oliseh when he was the coach. All these are mere distraction and will not want to join issues with anyone. Respect is the key rather than unnecessary attention.

You and Ighalo left the national team almost at the same time. Did both of you plan to do so at the same time?

It was a coincidence. I've already made up my mind that the AFCON in Egypt was going to be my last with the national team. It's was a matter of principle, I don't like to over-stay in a place. I feel when it is time, I should give other people their chance to establish themselves because when I was coming into the fray too, the likes of Okocha gave me the opportunity to establish myself. A lot of people told me to still stay and be a mentor to the players and play few more minutes, be their leader and mentor them but I felt I can still do that from outside of the camp instead of unnecessary distractions my continued stay will pose to the new generation. I did my best and left the players to stay focused and get the best from their coaches. But it is sad that few things happened in the camp. I do believe in the abilities of most of the players in the camp now. They have the strength, they are fast and talented. All we need to do is to find a way to ensure they all work together as a unit with the likes of Joe Aribo, Alex Iwobi, Kelechi Iheanacho and Samuel Chukwueze playing for one another. And one more thing I need to say, we need to find a group and



John Mikel Obi...fond memories of Chelsea

when you find the group, you start working with the group and then you start adding others to make a team but in the past few years what we have been doing is adding almost 10 fresh players for every match and the experiment has been unending. Unfortunately, we don't have a core group but we keep experimenting instead injecting some of the domestic league players with the core group.

How do you feel with Nigeria missing the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, most especially losing the Play-off match to Ghana's Black Stars?

I was busy with my kids putting them to bed before the match and at match time, I searched all the channels and could not pick it and I had to rely to monitoring online. It was really painful that we did not qualify because it's been a long time, we experienced non qualification (Germany 2006 finals). It was strange and felt really sad because I can't imagine watching the FIFA World Cup without Nigeria and it's even more painful to lose the chance of qualification at home. It is strange and I just hope we have learnt some lessons by looking forward to the next four years. I remembered the last edition in Russia when we even qualified with almost three matches to the end of the qualifying round of matches. We were motivated, we had a direction on the pitch we had a leader on the pitch. All the 11 players were listening to only one man on the pitch not many leaders in the pitch. We need a leader on the pitch for others to follow. You don't need five leaders but just one because when you have four or five people giving instructions on the pitch that it not a unit.

You worked under many coaches during your time at Chelsea and same thing with the Super Eagles. In both places who are the coaches that really got the best out of you?

At Chelsea, Di Mateo really understood me and that was why in 2012, I had my best moments with the club because he gave me the freedom to play to express who I am on the pitch and same thing with Carlos Ancelotti because I played a lot of games under him. He gave me the license to do whatever I can do to make the team strong in the middle just like Guus Hiddink but in all of them, I will single out Di Mateo as my best. But in the national team, it's a straight forward answer, Late Stephen Okechukwu Keshi (Big Boss). I have not seen a man like him, he was a special person, I recalled the way he resolves problems and he was such a calm fellow with the way he dishes out instructions. Everything was just perfect and during the games, he knows what he was doing and we all respect him for that as a former player, captain and manager.

Meaning there are still potential indigenous coaches that could still handle the national team despite they could not qualify the country for the World Cupon two different occasions?

Whichever way you look at it, there is always a good reason to have your own, develop him, give him all the cooperation. The indigenous coaches need to be given longer time to get the best out of them. (Austin) Eguavoen was in-charge for less than three months before he was sacked but when we pay a lot to hire foreign managers and results are not forth coming, we still give them a lot of time before we fire them. I think our local coaches deserve better treatments to get the best out of them. Less I forget, Samson Siasia was another good coach but I don't know what the problem is. I just hope he would have sorted himself now. He is one coach I worked with and I know his capability as a manager same with Eguavoen who was my first manager in the national team (U-17 World Cup). But the major problem of the indigenous coaches is that they always find it difficult to locate the player leader on the pitch and the moment you don't have that it becomes a problem.

In 2003 at the FIFA U-17 finals in Finland, you were part of the Golden Eaglets side that failed to go beyond the group phase, what was running in your mind considering the fact that young players have always used the opportunity to launch their careers but it turned out a crashed dream?

If I can be honest with you, I think I knew from day-one that my career is go beyond the bounds of Nigeria because after our first match, I had about three football agents running after me with dollars. The then NFA Secretary General, Late Taiwo Ogunjobi was the one looking after me. One of the agents was from Holland but can't remember where the rest are from but the Secretary General shielded them off me so as to avoid camp distraction. Imagine one of them came with $50,000 and press further that I should sign agreement with him. From there I knew I will get something from the tournament. Although it was painful that we exited the competition in the first round, things really went according to plan in my career. The rest is history.

You played several matches for Chelsea and other teams including the national team across several stadiums in Europe, which of them would you consider memorable to you?

My toughest was probably the UEFA Champions League final match we won against Bayern Munich at Allianz Arena in Munich. The adrenaline of that day was something else. For the 120 minutes of play, it was full concentration because any distraction we were going out without the cup. They were all over us with a depleted team as well. We knew that was our only chance to win the trophy after many trials. That wasn't our best group but we were in the final, which could go either way. And going into the match, the likes of John Terry, Didier Drogba, Ashley Cole, Frank Lampard, Malouda and Peter Cech were already in the final playing days for the team and we had to win the game. Another memorable match was at the last World Cup finals in Russia, when my father was kidnapped back home in Nigeria. It was a horrible moment of my life and I have never faced such a situation like that in my entire life. It was really tough. Imagine as the captain and going into a crucial match against one of the power-house nations in world football in which we must not lose and the news of the kidnap came about two hours to the kick-off. The old proverb says, 'Problem shared is problem solved' but in this case I kept the information away from everybody in camp including the coach and the players because I know it will negatively affect the team's morale. I was in my room when the call came from my brother in Nigeria and broke the news. I asked him what he expects me to do you from Russia? I knew I just had to play this most important game. If I had informed the coach, it would have effect on the team. The match-plan will have to change at such a late hour to the kick-off. Unfortunately, we had another penalty call which the referee turned down and I just kept playing till the final whistle. Thereafter, I told everybody and they all feel for me and even imagined how I was able to hold on to such information for almost four hours with no effect on my contribution on the field of play. It was such a horrible moment of my playing career.

Looking back at the match against Argentina, what costs us that game?

I think it was momentary loss of concentration. We had the Argies in our hands they seemed not to have a headway to break our defence line. We even had the opportunities to lead but that is football. We lost another penalty call. The referee told me, 'Mikel I won't give you the penalty' everyone saw that the player's hand actually touched the ball. It's part of the game if calls go your way but on that night the calls were against us. That is football anyway. There is no need to blame anybody. We lost the match.

What about the toughest stadium you ever played?

That should be at Anfield. Every time we (Chelsea) go to Anfield against Liverpool, it's always tough experience because of the way the fans react to the opponents. Everywhere is red, they sing and the echo from the stand is very close to the field and this always have impact on the opponents. There was never a time I leave Anfield without body aches and muscle pulls because you have to be at alert all through the 90 minutes. No escape from Liverpool fans because the tunnel is so small that impact of their noise would be felt. Then playing against the likes of Xavi Alonzo, Steven Gerard, Mascherano all in the midfield makes games very tough on that ground.

The Elective congress into the board of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) is coming soon, what is your take on change or continuity of those at the helms of affairs?

I think it's not my duty to comment of administration of the game in the country. But I know a lot of people are clamouring for change just as the leadership too has the backing of some stakeholders but in life, we have to make changes to move forward. People always complain that Roman Abramovich changes his coaching crew most of the time and interestingly, the result was the trophies we won while he was with the club. Some changes do bring about negative consequence. For the best achievements of life to be attained there must be some element of change. I wish all the contestants the best of luck. But we must put people who are interested in the game at the federation. If the next composition will still be of almost the present regime, there must be change in style of management of the game. Amaju Pinnick is my friend. He's amazing fellow and same with others whom I have had contact with.

You seem to be an apostle of change, was the federation right to have sacked Gernot Rohr with just one and half months to the last AFCON tournament in Cameroon?

I think coach Rohr debate has been on for a very long time on whether we do away with him or stay and whether it happened at the right time or not I think the hand writing was on the wall a long time ago. He's the longest coach of the Super Eagles but he too was an amazing fellow and he had a good time with the team and I don't think he will have sleepless night any more now that he has parted way with Nigerian football.

Aside the final against Bayern Munich which Chelsea won, which other Champions League match was memorable to you?

I will never forget the second leg match against FC Barcelona at the Camp Nou in April of 2012. We travelled with a slim one goal win from the first leg and having to defend the lead at their Camp Nou fortress. We were up against 90,000 fans and our fans were kept in the upper terraces and can't even hear their chants. We know that if we overcome them, that will be our best chance to lift the trophy. They were all over us for 90 minutes but we scored good away goals but, in all honesty, we didn't deserve to overcome the Spaniards but that is football for you.

Ever since you had a brush with referee Mark Clattenburg in your days in the English Premiership, have you ever come across each other or what will happen if you meet him at the mall or restaurant?

I think its bye gone. If I meet him, I will be the first to extend hands of fellowship to him because in life you just have to move on.

What of Sir Alex Fergusson who was at the centre of the transfer saga between Manchester United and Chelsea?

I have never met face to face with him since then but he is a good manager, a great person. He is the boss of all coaches.

Then why didn't you follow him if you think he is the boss of all coaches?

I know that will be the next question (laughter). I respect him so much but I took the best decision at the time to go the other way instead of Old Trafford.



Obituary

It is with great sadness that the Trustees,
Executive Committee and Members of the
Capital Market Solicitors Association (CMSA)
announce the passing of our Trustee

Chief Magnus Olurotimi Willams

(Ariwajoye of Ikeja)
14/08/1949 to 09/06/2022

FUNERAL SERVICE

Lying-in-State
Venue: Foyer, St. Paul's Church Breadfruit
10, Davies Street, Lagos
Date: Friday 1st July, 2022
Time: 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Funeral Service
Venue: St. Paul's Church Breadfruit
10, Davies Street, Lagos
Date: Friday 1st July, 2022
Time: 11:00 AM

Interment
Family Vault, Ikoyi Cemetery, Lagos

Survived By

Mr. Mobolaji Oladeji Williams (Son)
Mrs. Morayo Oyinkansola Kusamotu (Daughter)
Mr. Mosope Olurotimi Williams (Son)
and Grandchildren

Sisters:
Mrs. Gladys Olutosin Fanimokun
Mrs. Florence Modupe Oguntuase

SIGNED
Chike Obianwu
Chairman, Capital Market Solicitors Association
on behalf of the Trustees, Executive Committee and Members



THISDAY

Friday July 1, 2022 Price: N250

MISSILE

Ango Abdullahi to Tinubu, Atiku

"No, we still haven't got the man who we think will fix Nigeria. What we have on the ground is not good enough. How can you look at Tinubu and Atiku to say they are the ones who will fix this country? They have been on the ground for the last 25, 30 years and so on. What have they done? We haven't got the materials on the ground unfortunately" *–Convener of the Northern Elders Forum, Ango Abdullahi, passed a no confidence vote on the duo's presidential ambition.*

THISDAY 27 years OF ROBUST JOURNALISM SINCE 1995

MAGNUS ONYIBE
GUEST COLUMNIST



Supreme Court Shenanigans and CJN's Resignation

Following the sack of Justice Walter Onnoghen as Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) in 2019 and particularly in the twilight of the first term of the outgoing administration, under circumstances that are still befuddling to the uninitiated, the judiciary started convulsing. And it appears to have remained in the sick bay thereafter, hence the sudden resignation on Sunday, 26th June 26, of Justice Tanko Muhammad who had replaced Onnoghen as CJN since 2019.

Following Muhammad's resignation, President Muhammadu Buhari had on Monday, June 27, sworn in Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, as the new CJN.

So effectively, there is a new guard who is now charged with literally cleaning the Augean stable.

But the fiasco in the apex court did not just happen. Rather, it was long in coming.

In his first public statement after his ouster, the former CJN, Onnoghen said the following during a book launch in 2021: "Prior to my suspension, I was confronted with no allegation. There were rumours that I met with Atiku in Dubai. As I am talking here today, I have never met Atiku one on one in my life.

"As if that was not enough, I was also accused of setting free high-profile criminals, whereas I ceased to be a High Court judge as far back as 1978.

"In Supreme Court, I did not sit alone. We sat in panel. In all these rumours and outright accusations, I was not given opportunity to defend myself.

"Let me make it clear that the office of the CJN was not for Onnoghen but for all Nigerians who had sworn to guide and protect the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"To say the least, the period of my ordeal was the darkest era in the history of the Nigerian judiciary."

Perhaps, as a fall out of the cold treatment meted to ex CJN, the Supreme Court which is the apex judiciary institution in our country, appears to have been stricken by a debilitating disease that is manifesting the symptoms of cancer.

And it might as well be a cancerous infection as being suspected because that strange disease that infected the system since 2019 seem not to be responding to treatment, positively.

Instead, the infirmity which by all intents and purposes is self-inflicted, appears to have metastasised. Hence it has not only degenerated into an open revolt of 14 justices against then CJN, Muhammad via a petition letter written to him and leaked to the public about the deplorable welfare condition of the senior members of the judiciary who are supposed to be crème de la crème and thus entitled to premium privileges, instead they are getting a raw deal via denial of most of the perks and appurtenances of which they are entitled.

It is not only in the dirty internal fight which has spilled into streets that the rot in the judiciary is manifesting. But the toxic state of affairs in the third arm of government had also taken a dramatic turn in the literary and common sense of the word.

While the dust was yet to settle on the blithe created by the spat between the justices in the apex court, a parody of the recent Supreme Court judgment legalising the wearing of hijab by Muslims in schools and as they deem fit, a human rights lawyer, Malcom Omoirhobo whose religious faith is African traditional worship appeared in the hallowed chambers of the apex court decked out in Oluokun worshippers' attire akin to a native doctor's costume.



Justice Muhammad

It is needless stating that turning up in court in such an outlandish outfit did not only cause a stir, but it was a powerful unspoken statement against the mixing up of religion and politics which the Supreme Court has via the ruling put its imprimatur on, wittingly or unwittingly.

In justification of the protesting lawyer's action, he made the assertion below: "I am very grateful to the Supreme Court. Just last week Friday, they made a very resounding decision that promotes Section 38 of the Constitution. That is our right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.

"That we are free to express our way of worship in our schools and in our courts. That decision was reached on Friday and that has encouraged me.

"Because I am a traditionalist and this is the way I worship. Based on the decision of the Supreme Court, this is how I will be dressing henceforth in court because I am a strong adherent to 'Olokun', the god of rivers."

Clearly, his statement is tongue in cheek and a sort of mockery of the somewhat convoluted and jaundiced justice system that has found a foothold in our country, and he got the attention that he desired via the drama. The wise crack: action speaks louder than voice rings true here.

The embarrassing level of absurdity currently bedeviling the Supreme Court in particular and the judiciary in Nigeria, is disconcerting and unacceptable because it is the third arm in the political leadership triumvirate comprising of the executive, legislative and judiciary which is a typical feature in a democratic system of government that Nigeria is practicing.

The immediate past CJN, Muhammad has denied any wrong doing and defended himself by stating that the judiciary arm like the other two arms of government, is suffering from paucity of funds to meet the expectations of the justices, despite the N110 billion reportedly allocated to the judiciary in budget 2022.

But the offensive by the justices venting their spleen on then CJN, who has just quit the job, exposes the level of decadence in the temple of justice where those who have the privilege of seating there, are supposed be in more ways than one, super humans.

That is by virtue of the fact that they seat in judgment over the rest of the members of society who are considered lesser mortals. And that being the case, they are meant to be above board and do not have the luxury of descending into the arena of less mortals by washing their dirty linens in public which the highlighted absurdities besetting the judiciary evince.

Perhaps as an aftermath of the conflict between him and his colleague justices, the CJN that was at the receiving end of ire of the 14 outraged justices, has literally thrown in the towel. Whether the yielding of the position by Justice Muhammad to Justice Ariwoola would sanitise the judiciary and return its old glory of being the last bastion is for the future tell.

Apparently am not alone in worrying about the descent of the judiciary from the high pedestal where it deservedly sits to mingle with ordinary mortals in our country that have been reveling in everything vile. And it is the reason a former British Prime Minister, David Cameron at a cocktail on the sideline of a global anti-corruption conference, with President Buhari of Nigeria in attendance, whispered into the ears of the Queen of England, Elizabeth ll, that our president is the leader of a fantastically corrupt country. That is in-spite of President Buhari's avowed intolerance for corruption.

Just before the current crisis rocking the judiciary burst into the open, I had just scanned through the aforementioned book by the respected Professor Sagay who dedicated a whole chapter titled, 'The Judiciary And Justice In A Developing Society Like Nigeria' to his concerns about the sordid state of affairs in his primary constituency-the legal profession.

I was particularly drawn to the content of a topic in the book which he aptly subtitled 'Corruption, Abhorrent to Judicial Culture'.

Let us hear it directly from Sagay as he espouses and articulates his thoughts in the excerpt below which has a bearing on the despicable events now wracking the judiciary.

"In a modern civilised state, members of the legislative and executive branches of government can afford to be corrupt without dangerously affecting the development and survival of the state, but not so, the judiciary. A modern state cannot survive large-scale judicial corruption. That will bring chaos, confusion and anarchy."

He argues further that "Even during the pristine, hallowed and much lamented First Republic, major political figures were accused and tried for corruption. A Commission of Enquiry was even set up to enquire into the alleged corrupt act of a major political figure. He resigned his high political position as head (Premier) of a Regional Government, parliament was dissolved, an election followed in which his party was returned with a bigger majority in the relevant House of Assembly and that was that."

According to him, "The point being made here is that the fabric of society was not shaken to its foundations amidst the political fervor, excitement and disagreement that followed this and other less earth-shaking developments. Why? Because the judiciary was intact, above the frenzy, noble, detached, unruffled, neutral, the epitome of integrity, nobility and honour."

Not done with sharing his candid view about judges, courts and the rest of society, Professor Sagay quipped: "Only one word strikes me when I enter the courtroom setting either as counsel or litigant – AWE! That is what the position of a judge is supposed to be – awe inspiring.

And it is not empty awesomeness. The judge is equipped with power to assert his authority by sending anyone to prison, lawyers included. We are meant to respect judges and view their office as sacrosanct because they represent the source of society's ultimate stability and as we also say they represent the last hope of the common man."

Wearing his anti-corruption cap, of which he is the current Chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC), Sagay did not mince words about his disdain for corrupt people.

"The public servants and politicians who conspire to bribe and corrupt our judges deserve especially, harsh punishment. The worst culprits in this sad and sorry state of affairs are the lawyers, mainly senior advocates, who shamelessly approach judges to introduce them into this demeaning and shameful culture. These senior advocates deserve the harshest punishment of all. The EFCC, ICPC and the police must monitor and investigate the activities of lawyers who receive a share of the proceeds of crime as their fees. They should be treated as accessories after the fact, because they share in the proceeds of the crimes of politically exposed persons and once paid from that stained loot, it becomes their life's struggle to protect and shield the primary criminals from the consequence of their crime."

The duty to accept a brief does not exonerate a lawyer, who convinced or suspects his client's guilt, urges him to enter a plea of "not guilty" which he goes on to defend vigorously.

Such a lawyer would be grossly in breach of the ethics of the legal profession."

Sadly, the mess threatening to wreck the judicial system in Nigeria is a reflection of the state of anomie that now reigns supreme in the entire gamut of government in Nigeria which could ultimately lead our beloved country into more perditions and ruins than it is in, already.

Putting all together, the shenanigans and chicanery that have been suffocatingly dogging the judiciary are not without implications and future consequences.

The dimension and potential catastrophic effect of the revolt of the 14 justices and melodrama by the lawyer in the hallowed chambers of the Supreme Court may not be phantom-able, right now, but the stench will remain in the atmosphere.

Although Justice Muhammad is now out and Olukayode Ariwoola is the new CJN, the fall out of the latest crisis that is latent could be simmering like a molten magma underneath an active volcano, that is likely to erupt without warning.

So the National Assembly should take more than a passing interest in the matter as they are currently doing via the investigation being conducted on the conflict by the relevant committee.

If apart from mixing justice with politics, the much speculated financial independence for the judiciary is also a contributing factor to the quagmire, especially as the galloping inflation takes its toll on the budget of that arm of government, succour should be provided before that critical sector gets irreversibly corrupted.

As the lawyers would say when concluding a matter before a judge: I rest my case.

•Magnus Onyibe, an entrepreneur, public policy analyst, author, development strategist, alumnus of Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Massachusetts, USA and a former Commissioner in Delta State government, sent this piece from Lagos

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