Crown Prince Salman Promises to Invest in Nigeria's Refineries, Support CBN's Foreign Exchange Reforms

● *Naira resumes fall at parallel market, sells at N1,150/$*

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja and **Nume Ekeghe** in Lagos

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has pledged to provide financial support to sustain the Central Bank of Nigeria's foreign exchange reforms in addition to investing in the revamping of Nigeria's refineries.

Also yesterday, Naira continued to depreciate for the fourth day running at the Parallel Market, ending its short-lived gain of last week, by exchanging at N1,150/$1.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammad Idris in a statement yesterday said the Saudi Crown Prince, HRH Mohammed bin Salman made the promises to assist Nigeria at a bilateral meeting with President

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Alaghodaro Summit: We've Reengineered Edo for Growth, Says Obaseki... Page 6

THISDAY

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Appeal Court Affirms Peter Mbah as Enugu Governor... Page 8

Tension As Imo, Kogi, Bayelsa Elect Governors

●*Uzodinma tackles Athan, Anyanwu, in Imo* ●*Kogi: Ododo, Ajaka, Dino Melaye in intense contest*
●*Diri, Sylva, Eradiri, battle for the soul of Bayelsa* ●*Police ramp up security, deploy 92,000 officers, men* *See story on page 5*

KOGI STATE FRONTRUNNERS...


Ododo


Ajaka


Dino

BAYELSA STATE FRONTRUNNERS...

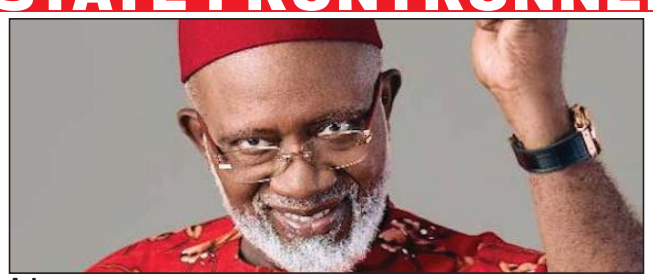

Diri

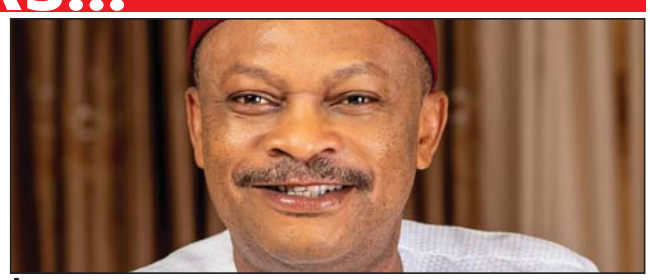

Sylva


Eradiri

IMO STATE FRONTRUNNERS...


Uzodinma


Athan


Anyanwu



GTCO FSHN WKND
Promoting Enterprise





Jourdan Dunn
Model

Masterclass Topic:
Mental health - how to look after mental well-being, with the demands of the industry.



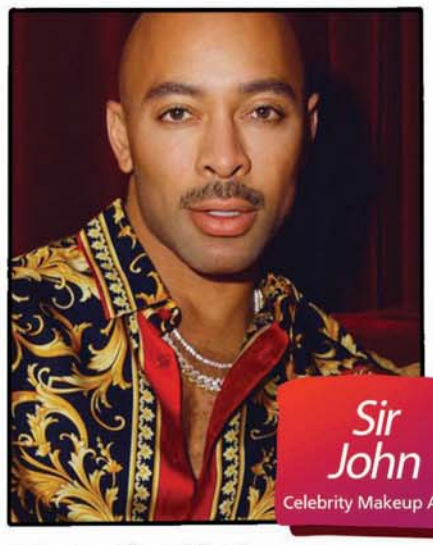
Julee Wilson
Fashion Editor

Masterclass Topic:
Black is (Beyond) Beautiful: Championing diversity in the beauty industry through unapologetic storytelling and fierce authenticity



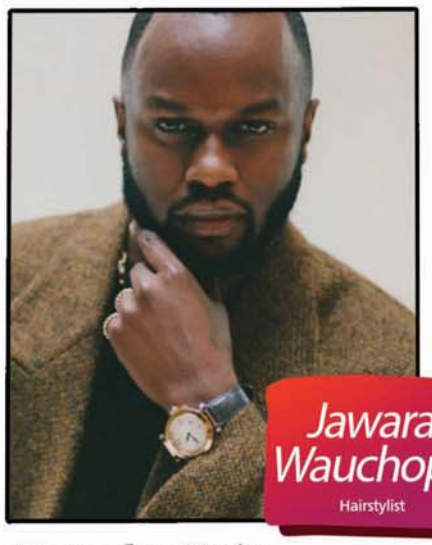
Sergio Hudson
Creative Designer

Masterclass Topic:
Unveiling the path to fulfilling dreams: Sergio Hudson's journey of focus and determination.



Sir John
Celebrity Makeup Artist

Masterclass Topic:
The importance of skincare when using makeup products while building coverage that's undetectable.



Jawara Wauchope
Hairstylist

Masterclass Topic:
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PAGE FIVE

TENSION AS IMO, KOGI, BAYELSA ELECT GOVERNORS

Charles Ajunwa in Lagos, **Ibrahim Oyewale** in Lokoja, **Tony Icheku** in Owerri, **Olusegun Samuel** in Yenagoa

Tension remains very high in Kogi, Imo, and Bayelsa states as voters file out this morning to elect governors that will manage affairs in the next four years.

Governor Hope Uzodinma of Imo State and his counterpart in Bayelsa State, Douye Diri, are seeking re-election, while Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State who is rounding off his second term, is supporting the All Progressives Congress' candidate, Usman Ododo, whom he anointed, among the aspirants, to win the party's ticket.

After weeks of acrimonious campaigns, voters are bitterly divided between the leading governorship candidates, with allegations and counter-allegation of violence and rigging by the different camps.

Fear of violence is palpable in the three states, but the police and other security agencies have assured voters of maximum security. Indeed, every nook and cranny of the states are heavily policed.

As at press time, tough-looking security agents were on the streets of Bayelsa, Kogi and Imo states, while the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) pleaded with the political parties for a peaceful poll.

The commission disclosed that 5,169,692 registered voters who collected their PVCs would cast their votes in the three states today.

The breakdown indicates that out of 1,056,862 registered voters in Bayelsa State, 1,017,613 have collected PVCs. In Imo State, the number of registered voters is 2,419,922 out of which 2,318,919 have collected PVCs. In Kogi State, out of 1,932,654 registered voters, 1,833,160 have collected PVCs.

The Inspector-General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, has ordered restriction of vehicular movement in the three states from 11:59 p.m yesterday to 6.00 p.m today to curb the movement of illicit arms and political thugs.

Egbetokun has deployed no fewer than 92,000 officers and men for election duties in the three states.

By yesterday morning, the Police had completed its operational deployment in the three states. The IG assured that the force has enough manpower ready for election duty.

Egbetokun said his men will deal with hoodlums who may be planning to snatch ballot boxes during today's governorship elections.

Egbetokun said: "Concerning security at the collation centres, if collation centres have been porous in the past, I've said it before now, collation centres in this election will be heavily secured."

The IG also ordered the distribution of additional 220 operational vehicles for election security management across the states.

Anti-riot equipment, including water cannons, Armoured Personnel Carriers, helmets, bulletproof vests, and tear gas canisters have also been deployed across the three states.

The IG also announced that dignitaries and Very Important Persons would not be allowed to move around with police escorts on election day, adding that it violates the Electoral Law.

"And anyone that does that is violating the electoral law and is liable to prompt arrest, and such people will get dealt with when they're arrested," the police chief stated.

Also yesterday, the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, assured residents of Kogi, Bayelsa, and Imo states of their security during the governorship elections.

This is as he warned political actors against any act of violence in the states.

Ribadu stressed that there would be "severe consequences" for anyone found trying to disrupt the elections in the three states.

Ribadu noted a monitoring system had been established with monitors deployed to the field to collect any evidence of violence and irregularities.

KOGI STATE

Today's gubernatorial election is a three-horse race in Kogi State. The leading contestants are Usman Ododo of the APC, Dino Melaye of the PDP and Murtala Ajaka of the SDP. Analysts argue that the three candidates are from different ethnic backgrounds, namely Ebira, Okun and Igala, respectively and that the voting pattern may likely reflect the same. While APC will dictate the pace in Kogi central, the SDP will make a huge statement in Kogi East and PDP will dominate Kogi West.

Usman Ododo

Ododo was, in the last seven and half years, the Local Government Auditor General of Kogi State before his emergence as the flag bearer of the APC. He hails from Okene (Kogi Central) just as the outgoing governor.

Ododo, an Ebira, is expected to win the five local government areas in the zone.

He will have it tough in Kogi West, where agitation for power shift is intense. However, based on the dividends of democracy enjoyed in the area under Governor Bello, particularly with the establishment of a university in Kabba, Ododo is expected to get a fairly good number of votes here.

In Kogi East, the cries of marginalisation and agitations for power shift will deny Ododo significant votes. The influence of the incumbent Deputy Governor, Edward Onoja, and Ododo's running mate, Joel Oyibo, both from the zone, may however help to attract some votes. The fact that Kogi East has 14 governorship candidates in today's election may be a plus for Ododo.

Murtala Ajaka

As a result of his inability to secure the governorship ticket on the platform of the APC, Ajaka dumped the party and subsequently emerged as the candidate of SDP. Prior to this time, he was the National Deputy Publicity Secretary of APC. With his emergence, the political observers in Kogi State have argued that it may have altered political permutations, with many in his zone seeking a return to power tagged "Igala Agenda."

The rising profile of Ajaka in Kogi East allegedly led to violent clashes between APC and SPD supporters in the state. Ajaka is expected to dominate Kogi East.

In Kogi West, the presence of SDP is felt in few local government areas but Ajaka will still make an impact. Ajaka's chances in Kogi Central are very slim.

Dino Melaye

Dino Melaye's emergence as PDP's flag bearer not only split the party, but also resulted in a gale of defections. The big wigs from the Kogi West axis left the party over alleged doctoring of the delegates' list at the primary. This notwithstanding, Melaye has put his acts together in his determination to wrest power from the APC.

Melaye hails from Aiyetoro Gbede in the Ijumu Local Government Area of Kogi State. Unfortunately, some leaders of the party in Kogi West are not happy with 2015 episode when Dino played the role of a spoiler, preventing an Okun son becoming the governor after the sudden death of Audu. However, Melaye may still dominate Kogi West. He will struggle to make an impact in Kogi Central and Kogi East.

IMO STATE

The key contestants in today's election in Imo State are incumbent Governor Hope Uzodinma of the APC, Sam Anyanwu of the PDP and Athan Achonu of the Labour Party. The race is seen as unpredictable and could swing in favour of any of the three leading contenders.

Hope Uzodinma

Factors definitely not in Uzodinma's favour include Imo State's degeneration from centre of relaxation and hospitality to hotbed of insecurity and violence.

Ordinarily, the incumbency factor would have given Uzodinma an edge, but the state's persisting insecurity could hinder his chances. Some say his actions and body language are contributory factors in the violence and uncertainty in the state.

Additionally, there is the populist sentiment that his best had not been good enough for the state.

What stands out in Uzodinma's favour is the spread of the APC structures across the length and breadth of Imo State.

Further enhancing Uzodinma's chances include the squabbles in the two main opposition parties - PDP and LP.

Two jokers Uzodinma may finally play include the ethnic card, and the Federal might. The former two-term Senator of Orlu zone, with its 12 LGAs, is the man to beat today.

The Federal might would equally come in handy for Uzodinma as the APC-led federal government would not be willing to lose Imo, its strongest South-east ally, either to the LP or the PDP.

APC, as a ruling party is an attractive bait to political elites, some seeking political rehabilitation and revival or as a haven to escape investigation or prosecution for corruption charges. Such big names which had clustered around Uzodinma would bargain for a piece of the pie and support him.

Athan Achonu

Achonu is expected to pool the majority of the votes from the Okigwe zone. The Peter Obi LP sentiments would equally enhance Achonu's chances, especially in the metropolitan capital city of Owerri where collapsing infrastructure, particularly road network, had distanced the people from Uzodinma.

But the LP is weakened by internal bickering after its hotly contested governorship primary which led to the exodus from the party of several 'Obedients' who would have brought the Peter Obi wave to bear on the election.

Besides Ochudo Martin Agbaso, another LP chieftain, General Jack Ogunewe left the party to pick the Action Alliance ticket. Others like Dr Sam Amadi have refused to support Achonu, while some like Dr Fabian Ihekweme, a former Commissioner and one-time gubernatorial candidate had subtly defected to the Uzodinma camp.

A decisive Mindshift by the people and a high turnout of voters might favour the LP candidate, but there are fears that the insecurity scare would checkmate such development.

Sam Anyanwu

PDP's internal bickering, including the Emeka Ihedioha factor, may work against Anyanwu's chances today. It would seem the absence of Ihedioha in the race united his Mbaise people to solidly line up behind Uzodinma.

The PDP boasts of widespread structures, but the bickering and sabotage rocking the party had clearly diminished its potential and robbed Anyanwu of the enormous goodwill the party hitherto enjoyed.

Findings show that Ihedioha was able to triumph in 2019 by winning with the largest votes from the nine LGAs of Owerri zone and consolidating with votes from one or two LGs from Orlu and Okigwe zones. Would the same formula work for Anyanwu? Perhaps not.

While both Owerri and Okigwe zones are bitter that the Orlu zone has had more than its fair share of the governorship, occupying it for 20 out of 24 years of democracy, they do not have a winning formula that could effectively combine their joint 15 LGAs against Orlu's 12, thus the Uzodimma joker, even as he seems to have votes from Orlu's 12 LGAs safely under his belt.

BAYELSA STATE

The leading candidates in Bayelsa State are incumbent governor Douye Diri of the PDP, Timipre Sylva of the APC and Udengs Eradiri of the LP.

Douye Diri

Diri, a former teacher, Organising Secretary of the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC), hails from Kolokuma/Okpokuma Local Government Area. He was a Senator, a former member of the House of Representatives, and former Commissioner for Youth and Sports in the state.

The incumbent governor is looking good for a second term based on his first term performance and the fact that leading opposition parties in the state are in crisis.

Diri is heading to the warfront with a more formidable and united party. The PDP has been ruling Bayelsa State since 1999.

During the last general election, PDP cruised to victory in most of the seats contested, winning all the National Assembly seats and majority of the state's House of Assembly seats.

Timipre Sylva

Sylva, who hails from Okpoama, Brass Local Government Area, based on his antecedent and pedigree, is the strongest among those jostling to wrestle power from Diri.

However, his campaign was negatively affected by the failed attempts to disqualify him through the court.

He was a former governor of the state for four years and immediate past Minister of State for Petroleum Resources.

Some members have accused him of running the party as his private estate, they blame the abysmal performance of the party in the state at the 2023 elections on his overbearing attitude.

They accuse Sylva of imposing himself as the party gubernatorial candidate to the detriment of a more popular candidate in David Lyon.

Udengs Eradiri

Eradiri is the youngest among the leading candidates at just 47. He is an Engineering graduate from the University of Benin.

The former President, IYC worldwide was Commissioner for Youths and later Environment under the Seriake Dickson administration. Eradiri is regarded as the dark horse among those jostling to occupy the Creek Haven.

The youth activist turned politician is from Agudama-Ekpetiama, Yenagoa Local Government Area.

Key Battle Areas in Bayelsa

Going by feelers from the Bayelsa East, comprising Brass, Nembe and Ogbia local government areas, regarded as the APC stronghold and Sylva's Senatorial District, the APC might cause the PDP some pains here.

Diri is expected to win big in the Bayelsa West Senatorial District which has Sagbama and Ekeremor local government areas. This is also home to PDP big wigs like former Governor Seriake Dickson; Fred Agbedi; the Deputy Governor, Lawrence Ewrujakpor.

In Bayelsa Central, one of the largest senatorial districts in terms of land mass and voters' strength, the key battle will be in Southern Ijaw, where Sylva's running mate, Joshua MacIver hails from.

Yenagoa, made up of the three local governments, will also be a place where an upset cannot be ruled out. With Eradiri and the Labour Party's pressure, votes may likely be divided among the three contenders. Reasons being that Eradiri's LP is targeting the youths, made up of over 70 percent of eligible voters in the state capital.

Though it is expected that Diri will get the majority of the votes in Opokuma Local Government Area, being his own local government. Diri looks good to win Bayelsa Central and ultimately return for a second term.

CROWN PRINCE SALMAN PROMISES TO INVEST IN NIGERIA'S REFINERIES, SUPPORT CBN'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE REFORMS

Bola Tinubu on the sidelines of the Saudi-Africa Summit in Riyadh.

Idris, who attended the bilateral meeting, explained that as part of the support for the ongoing CBN reforms of the country's foreign exchange regime, Saudi Arabia, which is the world's largest producer of crude oil, will also make available a substantial deposit of foreign exchange to boost Nigeria's forex liquidity.

Prince bin Salman commended the economic reforms being implemented by President Tinubu, and expressed the commitment of the Saudi government to supporting these reforms, and enabling Nigeria to reap the full benefits.

The statement read: "The Crown Prince expressed the eagerness of Saudi Arabia to ensure the economic prosperity of Nigeria under President Bola Tinubu, and realize its full potential as the economic giant of Africa.

"In addition to these, they also highlighted agriculture and renewable energy as major areas of investment interest for Saudi Arabia, in Nigeria, to help the country attain food and energy security, respectively.

"The Saudi authority hinted that the refinery investments in Nigeria will be led by the Saudi state-owned oil company, Saudi Aramco, with the revamp to be completed within a two- to three-year timeframe.

"Prince bin Salman also expressed appreciation to Nigeria for its active participation in and support for the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) of which Nigeria is a key member," said the minister in the press statement.

In his remarks, President Tinubu thanked the Saudi Prince for the proposed investments, while pledging that Nigeria would ensure judicious management and oversight.

The two leaders expressed commitment to working together over the next six months to develop a comprehensive road-map and blueprint to deliver on the agreed investments and outcomes.

In the same vein, both Tinubu and Prince bin Salman expressed the need to strengthen security cooperation to mitigate terrorism, illegal migration and other crises, not just in Nigeria, but across West Africa and the Sahel region.

They discussed existing economic and socio-cultural cooperation between Nigeria and Saudi Arabia, and agreed to open new vistas in bilateral relations.

Naira Resumes Fall at Parallel Market, Sells at N1,150/$

Meanwhile, Naira yesterday continued to depreciate for the fourth day running at the Parallel Market, ending its short-lived gain of last week, by exchanging at N1,150/$1.

The Nigerian currency staged a big recovery last week following the Central Bank of Nigeria's commencement of the clearance of some of its FX backlog, marking a pivotal effort to alleviate the mounting pressure in the foreign exchange market. It closed at N950/$1 at the parallel market on November 3.

The downturn in the Naira's value in the parallel market this week coincided with a notable revelation in the aviation sector, where foreign airlines, represented by the International Airline Operators, disclosed that nearly 90 percent of their unrepatriated funds, amounting to $783 million, remain unpaid.

Simultaneously, a commendable appreciation occurred at the official market within the Investors and Exporters (I&E) window, closing at N780/$1 making a commendable ascent from its frightening closure at N996.75/$1 on Thursday.

Conversely, the parallel market witnessed the Naira depreciate to N1,150/$1. This movement marked a marginal decline of N70 in comparison to its valuation of N1,080/$1 on Thursday.

A comprehensive week-long analysis of the parallel market, November 6 to 10, revealed a significant depreciation. Commencing on Monday at N1,000/$1, the market witnessed an upswing on Tuesday to N990/$1. However, the trajectory changed on Wednesday, influenced by reports of trapped funds from foreign airlines, leading to a depreciation that slid the exchange rate to N1,020/$1.

Thursday experienced a further decline to N1,080/$1, culminating in yesterday's pronounced depreciation to N1,150/$1.

NEWS

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LINE OF LEADERSHIP…

L-R: Former Edo State Governor, Chief Lucky Igbinedion; Governor Godwin Obaseki; former Edo State Governor and Senator representing Edo North Senatorial District, Adams Oshiomhole,; and former Edo State Governor, Chief John Odigie-Oyegun, at the 2023 Alaghodaro Investment Summit, at the Government House in Benin City...yesterday.

Alaghodaro Summit: We've Reengineered Edo for Growth, Laid Foundation for Future, Says Obaseki

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has said his government has in the past seven years reengineered the state for growth and development and consciously laid a solid foundation for the state's future.

This is as past governors of the state, including the immediate past governor, Senator Adams Oshiomhole, former governors John Odigie-Oyegun and Chief Lucky Igbinedion, who were guests at the 2023 Alaghodaro Investment Summit, commended the incumbent governor for his developmental strides across all sectors of the state economy.

The 2023 Alaghodaro Investment Summit was held as part of celebration of the 7th year anniversary of the Obaseki-led administration.

Obaseki, while speaking at the summit, said the government focused on six thematic pillars including institutional reforms, economic revolution, social welfare, infrastructure development, environmental sustainability and arts and culture, noting that the bold reforms have positively impacted the lives of millions of Edo people, placing the state on the path of sustainable and accelerated growth and development.

The summit in its seventh edition had the theme, 'The Edo Story: Creating Shared Opportunities into the Future'.

The summit is a rallying point for stakeholders in Edo's shared vision of prosperity and greatness to deliberate and reach key decisions that drive programmes, initiatives and policy of government, which have so far, transformed Edo to emerge as Africa's most competitive sub-national.

Other dignitaries at the occasion include the Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki; Governor of Delta State, Sheriff Oborevwori, Chairman and CEO of the Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Alaghodaro Economic Summit Ltd/Gte, Dr. Asue Ighodalo, Secretary to the Edo State Government, Osarodion Ogie, former Edo State Deputy Governor, Mike Ogiadomhe and Speaker of the Edo House of Assembly, Hon Blessing Agbebaku. Chief of Staff to Edo State Governor, Osaigbovo Iyoha, Edo State Head of Service, Anthony Okungbowa, Chief Judge of Edo State, Daniel Okungbowa, among others.

Governor Obaseki, who noted that Edo has the potential to produce 70 per cent of Nigeria's imported products and reduce the burden on Foreign Exchange (Forex), said his government has attracted investments in agriculture, manufacturing, retail, health, arts and culture, tourism and hospitality, among other sectors.

Ajaero: I Was Beaten Like Common Criminal in Imo State

IG orders probe

Onyebuchi Ezeigbo and Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

President of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Joe Ajaero, has said that he was beaten and humiliated like a common criminal by the policemen who he alleged brutalised him during the ill-fated workers protest in Imo State last week.

This is as the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, yesterday, ordered an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the alleged assault on the person Ajaero.

He said that the only known offence he and other officials of the NLC committed was that they asked thousands of workers being owed arrears of salaries to come out and protest the violation of their rights by the Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodinma.

Ajaero said that the NLC had earlier undertaken similar protest in Imo State when then Governor Rochas Okorocha was in office and also in Rivers State during the time of Governor Nyesom Woke but the two governors resolved issues amicably with the workers.

Narrating his ordeal at a Press Conference in Abuja yesterday, Ajaero, who still wore a neck collar, said policemen arrested him "hit me and with all manner of objects at the NLC Secretariat in Imo State.

He said, "The policeman that arrested me, came with all manner of documents and they were asking me why I was challenging Hope, that I should say my last prayer, and that they were taking me to where they called Nja-aba River, and that's where they will throw me.

"That was in the process, I don't know how the same people carried me to police headquarters, to talk with their boss, and brought me down there. And the police people were standing outside as if they were waiting for a common criminal.

"But that wasn't the end of my journey. When I got there, they transferred me to another boss, to where they call Tiger Base. It was there that they brought out even what they call court order, and started interrogating me.

"There I was pleading that I need some medical attention. They interrogated me for hours. I think it was in that process that they got a call and took me to the office of the commissioner of police, who now ordered that I should be taken to police hospital," he added.

Edo Police Detain Husband of "Mummy Calm Down" Mother over Her Suicide

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

Four days after the news of the suicide of the woman identified in the 'Mummy Calm Down' video, which went viral in 2020, Mrs. Toluige Olokoobi Babalola, broke in Benin City, the Edo Police Command yesterday confirmed that the husband of the deceased had been arrested for interrogation.

Mrs. Babalola, whose video of her encounter with her then four-year old son, Oreofeoluwa Lawal-Babablola, went viral, when the little boy went theatrical while asking his mother to "calm down" before administering corporal punishment on him for the infraction of taking what he was not permitted to take, was said to have committed suicide in her Benin residence on Monday.

Speaking on the development, Edo State Police Command Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Chidi Nwabuzor, who confirmed the incident, added that Mrs. Babalola's husband, who reported the matter to the police, had been taken into custody.

According to Nwabuzor, the now-arrested husband of the deceased was said to have reported at the Evbuotubu Police Station, off Ekehuan Road, Benin City, that when he returned from the market, he met his wife hung on a rope round her neck.

Mr. Babbalola was said to have raised alarm, which attracted his neighbours, who accompanied him to take the woman to the hospital where she was confirmed dead, before her corpse was taken to the mortuary.

The Police Spokesman added that the Divisional Police Officer (DPO), in charge of Evbuotubu Police Station, queried the action of the deceased's husband for not reporting to the police when he found his wife in the suicide position, but chose self-help by taking the deceased to the hospital and mortuary without recourse to the police, which has the constitutional responsibility to investigate matters

A'Court Affirms Eno's Election as Akwa Ibom Governor

Wale Igbintade

The State and National Assembly Appeal Court sitting in Lagos, yesterday dismissed the petition filed by Action Alliance (AA) and Accord Party (AP) against Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State.

The three-member panel led by Justice Tani Hassan, said that the findings of the tribunal were valid and unassailable.

"I resolve the issue against the appellant and uphold the judgement of the tribunal.

"I dismiss the petition as lacking in merit," Hassan held. The Action Alliance and its Governorship candidate, Mr. Akpan Udolt, had contended that the party's name was not captured on the ballot paper.

They therefore urged the court to nullify the election.

However, Eno and his party, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), prayed the court to discountenance the submission of AA.

Former President, Nigerian Bar Association, Mr. Paul Usoro (SAN), counsel for PDP and the governor, argued among other things that the appellants were not vested with the locus standi 'to present or initiate the petition.

He based his argument pursuant to the provisions of Section 133(1) of the Electoral Act 2022.

According to him, the aforementioned section unambiguously stipulates that "an election petition may be presented by one or more of the following persons (a) a candidate in an election; or (b) a political party which participated in the election." He argued that Section 133(1) of the Electoral Act was clear that the appellant did not have locus standi to initiate the appeal. Usoro urged the court to dismiss the appeal.

Earlier, the appeal had reserved judgement in the case filed by All Progressives Congress (APC) against the same governor of Akwa Ibom State.

Oborevwori Visits Ailing Kokori, Takes over Hospital Bills

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

Governor Sheriff Oborevwori of Delta State, yesterday evening, visited ailing elder statesman and erstwhile General Secretary of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), Chief Frank Kokori, at an undisclosed hospital in Warri.

Oborevwori visited the hospital after information reached him that the senior citizen was ill.

Speaking during the visit, Oborevwori said the state government would do everything possible to assist the former Labour leader in getting quality treatment.

He said Kokori deserves the attention and support of the state government as a renowned elder statesman who had paid his dues for good governance for the nation.

The governor, who also paid hospital bills for two other patients, Nnadi Silas and Adenusi Michael at the hospital, said despite their political differences he would ensure Chief Kokori was given the due attention he deserves as an illustrious elder statesman from the state.

"I know people will think that because he is an APC chieftain I won't be here, Deltans voted for me as governor. It is not a party matter now because we have finished election and all of us are one.

"Whether he is APC or not, am governor for all Deltans so am here as Governor for all not for any party," he emphasised.

Responding, Chief Kokori commended Governor Oborevwori for behaving like the Yorubas who treat their elder statesmen well irrespective of their party or political leanings.

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NEWS



KEEPING TO TRENDS…

L-R: Busayo Fabunmi, GM Operations Asiko Energy, Dr. Mohammed Ibrahim, Chairman Nigerian Gas Expansion Programme, Felix Ekundayo MD, Asiko Energy, Alh aji Bello Idi Wudil, Kaigaman Kano, represented Emir of Kano, Adesuyi Ajayi, Operations Manager , Asiko Energy at the autogas launch... yesterday

Appeal Court Affirms Peter Mbah as Enugu Governor

● *Mbah: Verdict consistent with our people-given mandate*

Wale Igbintade

The State and National Assembly Appeal Court sitting in Lagos has affirmed the election of Peter Ndubuisi Mbah of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the governor of Enugu State.

Governor Mbah has hailed the judgement of the Court of Appeal, Lagos, which upheld his victory in the March 18, 2023 governorship election in the state, saying it was consistent with the mandate freely given to him by the people of Enugu State.

Mbah also described the verdict as victory for the people and transformation of the state in line with his manifesto, assuring that he would never fail the people.

He further said the judgement had put paid to falsehoods peddled to malign the people's government.

The appellate court yesterday in its unanimous decision resolved all the three issues canvassed against the appellant, Chijioke Jonathan Edeoga of the Labour Party (LP).

The three-member panel presided over by Justice Tani Yusuf Hassan held that the appellant failed to prove that the respondent was not qualified to contest the governorship election.

On the allegation of over voting, Justice Hassan in her lead judgement held that "Voters' Register was never placed before the lower tribunal, stressing that failure to tender the Voters Register rendered the appeal inadmissible.

The court held that the testimony of all the witnesses called by the appellant failed to prove that there was overvoting in the governorship election.

Consequently, the court dismissed the appeal for lacking in merit and affirmed the judgement of the election tribunal, which declared Mbah of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as winner of March 18 governorship election.

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had declared Mbah of the PDP the winner of the March 18 governorship election with 160,895 votes.

Edeoga of the LP came second with 157,552 votes, while Frank Nweke of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) polled 17, 983 votes to claim third place.

Dissatisfied, Edeoga and his party approached the tribunal to disqualify Mbah and declare him the winner of the election, while claiming to have polled the highest valid votes cast.

The petitioners also challenged the candidacy of the governor over an alleged forgery of a National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) certificate.

In its judgement, the Enugu State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal affirmed Peter Mbah as the duly elected governor of the state.

Again, Court Halts Organised Labour from Proceeding on National Strike

Alex Enumah in Abuja

For the second time in five months, the National Industrial Court has stopped organised labour from proceeding on a nationwide industrial action.

President of the court, Justice Benedict Kanyip, yesterday, held that the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) as well as their affiliates at the moment cannot embark on any form of strike or industrial action scheduled to commence from next week, November 14, 2023.

Kanyip stated this while delivering ruling in an ex parte application brought by the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice.

Recall that the same court had on June 5, issued a similar order stopping the organised labour from proceeding on strike over the removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) also known as fuel or petrol.

However, five months after, following a similar request, Justice kanyip yesterday invoked Sections 17 and 19 of the National Industrial Court Act to stop the workers union from leading their members to down tools against the government nationwide.

Traditionalist: Let Politicians Swear with Ogun to Make Nigeria Better

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

For Nigeria to overcome the present socio-economic crisis bedeviling the country occasioned by corruption, a traditionalist yesterday advocated for the use of objects of god of iron (Ogun) to swear-in public office holders.

The Oluwo Aseyin and Araba of Iseyinland, High Chief Olusoji Fashola, who made the call yesterday, while speaking with journalists at the commencement of the 2023 Ifa Asorodayo Festival, in Iseyin, Oyo State, also urged President Bola Tinubu and Governor Seyi Makinde, to appoint Isese adherents into their administrations.

Programmes for the 2023 festival include free medical outreach held at the palace of Aseyin of Iseyin.

Fashola said Nigeria is going through economic and social crisis because its leaders harbour religious sentiments that favour their pecuniary interests which made it possible for them to engage in corruption and other vices that have lowered expected ethical standards of Nigerians.

He lamented that part of the religious sentiments exhibited by the present administrations of President Tinubu and Governor Makinde is the non-inclusion of traditional religion worshippers in their cabinets or other public offices.

According to him, "Nigerian leaders starting from the President, our own governor and others are used to religious sentiments that make them give preferential treatment to the Muslims and Christians against we Isese adherents.

Rotary Club of Ikeja Scores a Double

Rotary Club of Ikeja, Lagos State scored a double recently when it launched the annual Polio programme as well as empowered petty traders from the Isolo community with an interest seed fund of Five Hundred Thousand Naira only.

Speaking at the events which held at the Rotary Center, Isolo, the Hope President of the club, Emeka Ibe said that the club decided to launch the Polio program by participating fully in the Rotary Polio Awareness Week which was a micro-cozen of the Rotary Family Health Day (RFHD).

According to Rotarian Ibe, "Rotary International is fully determined to wipe the Poliomyelitis virus off the surface of the earth. This is in line with the theme ' A polio threat anywhere is a threat everywhere'. The Rotary Club of Ikeja therefore lent its weight to this laudable goal and organized the awareness seminar at Isolo Community. The occasion was equally used to administer the oral polio vaccine to our children in the community.

"Again, the Rotary International monthly theme for October is Community Economic Empowerment. Rotarians, as part of their cardinal principles are committed to using their time, treasure and talents to enhance the economic well-being of the community."

The Rotary Club of Ikeja decided to disburse interest free seed fund worth about N500,000 to some select petty traders in Isolo Community. This we hope would boost the working capital of the selected traders and improve their economic well-being as well as reduce their cost of doing business which we hope would reduce prices of food stuff in the community."

He added that Rotary Club of Ikeja is committed to having and witnessing a healthy community with robust economic welfare, and that it would not hesitate to continue to play its role in ensuring that the community enjoyed these dual dividends on a continuous basis.

NDIC Disburses N1.39bn to 36,163 Depositors of Failed Banks

Nume Ekeghe

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) has disclosed that they have paid out N1.393 billion to 36,163 insured depositors and also disclosed they have recouped N16 billion for customers of 20 failed banks and urged affected customers to come forward.

The Managing Director/Chief Executive, NDIC, Bello Hassan, disclosed this recently at the NDIC Special Day at the ongoing 2023 Lagos International Trade Fair.

He also urged the attendants at the fair to desist from patronising wonder banks and Ponzi schemes.

Hassan, who was represented by the Director, Corporate Communication, Bashir Nuhu, said "Following the recent revocation of licenses of some Microfinance Banks and Primary Mortgage Banks by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the NDIC promptly commenced the liquidation of these banks and began disbursing insured sums to depositors within a record time of three days of the banks' closure.

It would be recalled that on September 22, 2023, the corporation had paid a cumulative insured sum of N1.393 billion to 36,163 depositors of 110 closed MBs and three Primary Mortgage Banks. Most importantly, payments of the statutory insured sums are still ongoing, and depositors with funds exceeding the insured limit will receive liquidation dividends after the recovery of debts and the sale of the closed banks' physical assets."

He added that the corporation has pulled together around N16 billion from assets and that NDIC is currently in the process of verifying and paying liquidation dividends to depositors and stakeholders of 20 banks in liquidation including Allied Bank, Peak Merchant Bank, Commerce Bank, Continental Merchant Bank, Financial Merchant Bank, Fortune Bank, Gulf Bank, Hallmark Bank, Icon Merchant Bank, Liberty Bank, Nigeria Merchant Bank, North South Bank, Premier Commercial Bank, Prime Merchant Bank, Progress Bank, and Merchant Bank.

He reiterated that NDIC protects the interests of all depositors t in the event of imminent or actual bank failures amongst others.

"The NDIC complements the Central Bank of Nigeria in ensuring the safety, soundness, and stability of the financial system thereby instilling public confidence in the nation's banking system.

"While the NDIC continues to collaborate with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in ensuring the effective supervision of banks and adherence to prudential thresholds and the Code of Corporate Governance for banks to safeguard the safety and stability of the Nigerian banking system, I would like to therefore call on the general public, especially traders and businessmen, to always ensure that their funds are saved in licensed banks and to avoid patronage of wonder banks and Ponzi schemes which always leave their victims with untold stories," he added.

NEWS



TINUBU MEETS WITH CROWN PRINCE SALMAN...

President Bola Tinubu and Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman during a meeting on the sidelines of the Saudi-African summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia…yesterday

Shettima Sets Up Ad-hoc Committee to Harmonise Nigeria's Position at COP28

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

In a move to present a strong position that will benefit Nigeria at the forthcoming COP28 Climate Change Conference in the United Arab Emirates, Vice President Kashim Shettima yesterday constituted an ad-hoc committee to harmonise Nigeria's agenda at the event.

Speaking during an interaction with stakeholders in his office, the Vice President tasked the committee to come up with a roadmap that will enable Nigeria benefit maximally from its participation at the conference.

He said "we need to be proactive and see to it that we go to the conference prepared and sure of what we want to get. It will not be a joke, we need to come back with some tangibles so we can tell the Nigerian people that these are the benefits we got from our participation at COP28."

Responding to a presentation for Nigeria to sign on to the Battery Energy Storage Systems at the forthcoming COP28, Shettima said the proposal was a commendable initiative, noting that it "offers green field opportunity for our nascent energy sector to adopt green, affordable and accessible energy for our people."

"Our energy needs are huge but they also provide us with a vista of opportunities to transform the entire sector for the benefit of our economy and wellbeing of the people," he added.

The Vice President said he looked forward to the technical assistance and funding opportunities, among others, that will come to Nigeria with the signing on to the Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) consortium.

JTF Rejigs Security Architecture on Atlas Cove Pipeline with Operation Secured Line

Chiemelie Ezeobi

Operation AWATSE (a Hausa word for scatter), a joint task force comprising the Armed Forces and elements of the paramilitary, yesterday, launched Operation Secured Line, a maritime offshoot aimed at curbing pipeline vandalism and crude oil theft.

THISDAY gathered that the operation was launched to rejig the security architecture to safeguard the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) pipeline from Atlas Cove to Ijegun, which would soon be re-opened.

The pipeline had been shut down for about six months after it was vandalised, hence the repair that took place on the affected parts.

With its re-opening looming, Operation Secured Line was kicked off to further solidify the gains of the JTF in battling vandalism and crude oil theft in Lagos and Ogun creeks and backwaters.

The operation was kicked off by the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Western Naval Command (WNC), Rear Admiral Mustapha Hassan, at the Forward Operating Base (FOB) Tarkwa Bay.

Hassan was joined by the Commander NNS BEECROFT, Commodore Kolawole Oguntuga, who also doubles as Maritime Component Commander; WNC Fleet Commander, Commodore Victor Choji; Land Component Commander, Brigadier General Adegoke Adetuyi;

Air Component Commander, Air Commodore Olasunkanmi Abu; WNC Operations Officer, Commodore NS Lakan; Head, Anti Vandal, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, ACC AJ Musa; as well as representatives of the Department of State Security Services (DSS) and the NNPC.

ASUSS Embarks on Indefinite Strike in Taraba to Protest Killing of Teacher by Student

Wole Ayodele in Jalingo

The Academic Staff Union of Secondary Schools (ASUSS) Taraba State Chapter has declared an indefinite strike to protest the killing of Mr. Bassey Sardauna Nkuphee of Government Day Secondary School (Model), Jalingo, by one of his students.

Mr. Nkuphee was killed yesterday afternoon after close of work by a yet to be identified former student of the school who, in company of his friends, pulled him out of the Keke NAPEP he boarded and stabbed him severely.

In a statement signed by the Chairman of ASUSS in the state, Comrade Sule Abasu, and made available to journalists in Jalingo yesterday, the union said they will not return to the classrooms until justice is served to its slain member.

"Fellow comrades, on a very sad note we received shocking news of the demise of our colleague who was stabbed to death. This is an inhuman act meted to the most peaceful group of persons and organisation.

"Teachers are known for their contributions to the development of our society. You are to note that an injury to one, is an injury to all of us.

"We hereby register our displeasure over this barbaric devilish act where a teacher becomes a prey to his students and other hoodlums in the society.

"We, therefore, call on you to suspend academic activities in all schools across the state, until this issue is addressed so that our duty is carried out without encumbrance."

Arab Coordination Group Pledges $50bn for African Development

Increasing their support for African partner countries ahead of the crucial COP28 climate change conference, the Arab Coordination Group (ACG) announced yesterday that it aims to allocate up to US$50 billion to help build resilient infrastructure and inclusive societies in the African continent.

The announcement was made by Islamic Development Bank President, Dr. Muhammad Al Jasser, at the Arab-Africa and Saudi-Africa Summits' Economic Conference held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Many countries in Africa are particularly vulnerable to climate change, making strengthening climate resilience and adaptation an urgent priority.

In a joint communiqué, the group of 10 development institutions states: "Recognising that the link between sustainable development and climate financing is cross-cutting and complex, the ACG reaffirms its commitment to scaling up financial assistance for climate change in line with the Paris Climate Agreement and to helping bridge investment gaps in energy access, including low-carbon energy sources, climate mitigation, adaptation and resilience, as well as food security."

The ACG financing will support initiatives in areas such as energy security and energy transition, regional integration and connectivity, trade finance and facilitation, gender and youth initiatives, enhanced support for fragile states, enhanced development effectiveness, private-sector financing, food security, and poverty and unemployment.

Court Jails Ex-Convicted Drug Dealer for Illegal Possession of Cocaine, Indian Hemp

Wale Igbintade

A Federal High Court in Lagos has convicted and sentenced an ex-convicted drug dealer, Adelakun Ilelabayo Oluade, and one Nruama Chinemelum Precious, to 18 years imprisonment for illegal possession of 8.49 kilograms of Cocaine and 28.8 kilograms of Cannabis Sativa, popularly called Indian hemp.

Justice Akintayo Aluko convicted the drug dealers after they pleaded guilty to six count-charge of conspiracy, unlawful possession and dealing in the banned drug.

The prosecutor, Mr. Umar Hussain, while arraigning the convicted men, told the court that they were arrested with the prohibited drugs, on August 4, 2023, at Atlantic Ocean Nominee Estate along Lekki-Epe Express Way, Lagos.

Hussain informed the court that the two convicts were arrested with 8.49 kilograms of Cocaine and 10.3 kilograms of Cannabis Sativa.

Africa Investment Forum Secures Fresh $34.8b in Investment Interests

Ugo Aliogo Marrakech

The Africa Investment Forum (AIF) has secured a fresh $34.8 billion in investment interest for the continent.

The amount which is an outcome of a three-day AIF Market Days held in Marrakesh, Morocco, brings the total value of investment commitment secured by the forum since 2018 when it started to close to $178 billion. At the close of last year's edition held in Côte d'Ivoire, about $143 billion was mobilised.

Speaking at the closing ceremony yesterday, the President of African Development Bank Group, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, said the interests cut across health, creative industry, renewable energy, agriculture, infrastructure and other critical sectors of the economy.

Adesina said the meeting demonstrated that Africa has emerged as a destination for global investment. He described Africa as the frontier of the global economy, noting that it is bankable.

Earlier in his remarks, the Managing Director and Chief Executive of Nigeria Liquified Natural Gas, (NLNG) Limited, Dr. Philip Mshelbila, has listed federal government's import tax, Value Added Tax (VAT) and the chronic shortage of foreign exchange facing importers as key variables behind rising cost of cooking gas in Nigeria.

Abuja Disco Leverages Mini-grids to Reach Underserved Customers

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) and its partners have launched a 352.24kWp interconnected mini-grids scheme in Toto community, Nasarawa State, in its latest efforts to reach unserved and underserved locations in its franchise areas.

Speaking at the event, the Managing Director/CEO of the Electricity Distribution Company (Disco), Mr. Christopher Ezeafulukwe, noted that the deployment of interconnected mini-grids will help boost economic activities for the beneficiaries.

Ezeafulukwe said the successful execution of the project by the AEDC in collaboration with PowerGen Nigeria Limited and the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) was part of plans to optimise renewable energy to complement its grid capacity.

Represented by the Head, Regulatory and Government Relations, Olajumoke Delano, he disclosed that the project which was initiated by the company in 2020 was to explore innovative ways to better serve AEDC's customers.

NEWS



STRENGTHENING INTERNAL SECURITY...

L-R: Comptroller of immigration Kano Command, Aliyu Bagari and his Katsina Command counterpart, Adamu Adamu, receiving the Acting Comptroller General of Immigration, Wuraola Adepoju , at the Aminu Kano Airport, upon her arrival for the 2023 Passing out Parade of new recruits in Kano today

NBTE Boss Lashes At El-Rufai Over Demolition of Markets

John Shiklam in Kaduna

The Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Kaduna, Dr. Idris Bugaje, has said that he had no hand in the demolition of the Panteka Market in Kaduna.

Speaking at the graduation of Panteka Artisans under the National Skills Qualification (NSQ) Certification, Bugaje, decried how former governor Nasir el-Rufai displaced ordinary traders in the markets he demolished and reconstructed.

He alleged that the newly constructed shops, especially in Kasuwan Barchi Market, were being sold to people who have nothing to do with the market.

Bugaje said the NBTE presented a proposal on Panteka and El-Rufai promised that the people of Panteka would not be displaced.

He added that he did not support the former governor on many issues including the demolition of Panteka.

He said he was delighted that Uba Sani who succeeded El-Rufai as governor has shown interest in promoting skills acquisition and will not tow the path of his predecessor.

Buhaji said, "I am happy the new governor of Kaduna state has shown interest (in skills acquisition).

"Senator Uba Sani as governor is going to be different from the last one. I am very sure of that.

"I am not condemning el-Rufai, but Uba Sani has human feelings, he has a human heart.

"I did not support the former governor on many issues (including the demolition of) Panteka.

"Before he (el-Rufai) was elected, we met at one of the functions where the Ulamas were gathered.

"When he finished his speech, we greeted and he said to me, 'after my election, that your issue on skills, we have to work with you to ensure that we upskilled the people of Kaduna state.'

"Alhamdulillahi, he won that election and he called me over the phone and invited me to come to the government house.

Over 54 Students Benefit From Alumni Star Project Initiative

Over 54 students of Government Secondary School, Owerri, Imo State, have benefitted from a multimillion Naira human capital development initiative of the alumni of the institution.

The project is part of the STAR programme which includes digital skill training and was marked with disbursement of over N7 million cash book subsidy for students with stellar performances across the Junior and Senior Secondary cadre.

Similarly, the skill acquisitions initiative offered three Techpreneurs amongst the student beneficiaries in 2023.

Emeka Mba, Chairman of the STAR project committee explained that the career mentorship boot camp is a desirable investment in humanity.

Okoya: Industrial Hubs Across Nigerian States Will Boost Human Capacity, Economy

Sunday Ehigiator

Foremost industrialist and Chairman of Eleganza Group of Companies, Chief Rasaq Akanni Okoya, has called for the creation of new industrial zones in 36 states where small scale industries can spring up. Okoya, suggested that the small scale industries should have residential accommodation for workers, adding that the strategy will stem rural-urban migration and reduce congestion in cities.

Okoya made the call during an interaction with journalists at the Lagos International Trade Fair at the Tafawa Balewa Square, Onikan.

He said: "The picture on my mind places all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as industrial hubs, varying in speciality where average Nigerian citizen should be able to live, work, shop, have access to healthcare and other conveniences like recreational, worship facilities, all without leaving their state of origin, within their industrial hubs."

He called for what he described as "industrial training schools" to offer skill acquisition training in carpentry, bricklaying, sewing, mechanical work, wood work, pharmaceuticals, and electrical works.

Christmas in Badagry: Lagos Celebrates First Ever Festival in Nigeria

Segun James

As part of efforts to make the yuletide period memorable for Lagos residents and commemorate the beginning of Christianity in the country, the Lagos State Government is to host the Christmas in Badagry from the 23rd to the 26th of December.

The event tagged, 'Christmas in Badagry (CIB)' is in partnership with Lagos State Government through the Ministries of Tourism, Art and Culture and Home Affairs which would be a beacon of tradition and unity. At least 20,000 visitors are expected to participate in a 181st Christmas celebration in the country.

The project manager of CIB, Olufemi Iroko, who disclosed this during a press conference in Alausa, Ikeja, said it was to commemorate the first Christmas that was ever marked in Nigeria and which took place in Badagry.

According to Iroko, the four-day event promises to be an immersive and rich cultural experience that would capture the essence of the season, noting "We are reminded of the enduring spirit of joy and goodwill that continues to unite us as a community and a nation."

The festivities will kick off with the largest Santa walk and lightening of our 40ft tall Christmas Tree. Other activities include an exhilarating Beach Soccer Tournament, where teams will compete against the stunning backdrop of Badagry's beautiful beaches and party hard.

A'Ibom Exco Approves Over N841bn Draft Budget for 2024 Fiscal Year

Okon Bassey in Uyo

Ahead of the 2024 financial year, the Akwa Ibom State Executive Council has endorsed a draft budget estimate of N840,632,409,990 billion.

The 2024 budget proposal was presented by the Commissioner for Finance, Mr. Linus Nkan, during the State Executive Council meeting.

The estimate shows that N352,737,281,810 is recurrent expenditure and N487,895,128,180 capital estimates.

A statement issued by the State Commissioner for Information, Comrade Ini Ememobong, at the end of the meeting also said that the Council approved the payment of one month's basic salary to civil servants as Christmas bonus; while the new Political Adviser to the Governor was formally admitted into the Council.

"HC-Finance presented the draft recurrent and capital estimates for the state government for the year 2024, with the policy thrust of supporting the execution of the ARISE Agenda.

"The total recurrent estimate is N352,737,281,810, while Capital estimates stand at N487,895,128,180 bringing the total budget to N840,632,409,990. The budget was subjected to detailed deliberation and thereafter was adopted by motion duly moved and seconded.

Bank-Olemoh Calls for more Sustainable Investment in Digital Technology

Funmi Ogundare

As Nigeria continues to invest in digital infrastructure and foster innovation, the co-Founder of Knit Technologies and former Senior Special Adviser to the President on Education, Mr. Fela Bank-Olemoh, yesterday, called on the government to sustain the investments, saying that the country has the potential to become a leading digital economy in Africa.

Bank-Olemoh who made this call at the inauguration of Knit, an event listing and ticketing app; which enables people to discover and engage in programmes and activities through a user-friendly platform, Bank-Olemoh, explained that Nigeria has undergone a rapid and transformative evolution in digital technology; from expanding internet accessibility to enhancing broadband connectivity.

Asiko Builds, Kickstarts LPG Autogas Filling Station in Kano

Asiko, a leading provider of clean energy solutions, has commenced its LPG autogas adoption and utilisation trial in Kano in a bid to accelerate fuel transition and deepen gas penetration in the country.

To kickstart the autogas trial programme in Kano, Asiko converted two minibuses and five Keke Napep vehicles to run on autogas and built an autogas filling station to facilitate convenient refuelling for the converted vehicles.

By embarking on the autogas trial project, Asiko will assess the tangible outcomes and effects from the study and also help drive up the conversion rate for autogas-powered vehicles across the state.

The autogas trial project was lauded by the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado Bayero, who expressed his excitement about the initiative.

CIO Award to Honour Tech, Innovation Drivers in Africa

The organisers of prestigious CIO Awards Africa have continued to promote innovation and development through the annual award initiative that aimed to spur growth in the Africa region.

Announcing the 2023 and fourth edition of the award initiative, CEO of Edniesal Consulting and Covener of the award,Abiola Laseinde, in a statement disclosed that the hitherto national award has extended to the African region to celebrate incredible tech giants in the continent.

Laseinde disclosed other African countries captured in this year's award, scheduled for November 25 at Muson Centre, Lagos to include:Ghana, Egypt, South Africa, Senegal, Kenya and South Africa.

She reiterated the objective of the award as to reward top technology leaders, including CIOs, CTOs, CISOs, and industry veterans who have significantly impacted their organisations and industries through innovative technology strategies.

Notable tech icons who have won the award before now included Funke Opeke, Kofo Akinkugbe, Juliet Ehimuan,Randy Bikraj, Seun Solanke, John Obaro and Kunle Ogedengbe, amongst others.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS. ABALA ITORO EDEMMBA,** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. ITORO INNOCENT THOMAS.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as **ORDU ONYINYECHI,** now wish to be known and addressed as **MICHAEL SONIA ONYINYECHI.** All former documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

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COMMENTARY

FROM ALABI AISIEN TO THOMPSON USIYEN

Dele Olowu writes with intimacy why Hussey College was such a huge sports power

In 1960 I sat the entrance examination to four famous schools. They were Government College Ughelli, Urhobo College Effurun, St Peter Claver's College Aghalokpe and Hussey College Warri. I flunked all the examinations. Only Hussey College Warri gave me the nod. The failure did not hurt me personally. I was eleven and probably had no capacity to frame my grief. But it did hurt me in my neighborhood and home, where I was commonly regarded as the 'bright one'. I however knew in my heart that my admission into Hussey College was an act of mercy!

The prevailing reports about my brightness were not entirely correct. I was a one trick pony, good only in English and not much else. In tests or examinations, I would ignore the mathematics side of things and deal with English and essay only. I was very verbal but words alone cannot rule the world! Hussey College, being a bigger school had greater absorptive capacity and therefore admitted pupils in larger numbers. In my year, those admitted numbered 120 pupils in four streams. But this mass intake, still, did not conceal my mediocrity. In my first term exam, I was ranked 89th out of 120. It was a dismal showing but my mother who ran my life, and who was a teacher in Warri Township school herself, surprisingly did not specially decry my unflattering output. Hussey College admission protocol was perhaps elastic and indulgent but Government College Ughelli which with some justification carried itself as the knowledge aristocracy of the time, became the subject of my undying envy and resentment. Wherever I saw their colors, their vehicle or students, I came close to being convulsed by memories of the rejection I had suffered.

But gripes aside, it was an outstanding college and it was run competently by the long-serving ex-soldier Mr. C. C Carter, whom legend said, knew all his students by name. The school excelled in many ways and intrigued some of us with its participation in the abstruse game of cricket, in which incomprehensible shouts of owzat could be heard, when more clarity was required from the umpire. I remember once watching a cricket match, and reaching the bewildered conclusion that both players and umpires looked like noon time witches!

St Peter Claver's College Aghalokpe, my other detractor was a well-known catholic college tucked in rural Aghalokpe near Sapele. It had a high success rate in the WAEC exams and its long serving Principal, Father Cardogan seemed to epitomize the College. It was a small school and ran two streams only. Founded in 1950, It was a popular school but I did not long dwell on my rejection by this respectable institution. I could live with the setback. But Urhobo College Effurun rankled. The school though located far from the city center, had a boisterous reputation and seemed to provide local counter poise to the rampart supremacy of Hussey College in athletics and football. Academics at Urhobo College was quite demanding and it granted admission in limited numbers only. My exclusion from the portals of Urhobo College Effurun completed the trinity of failures I endured in the entrance examinations. Considering all this, my admission into Hussey College was therefore a massive reprieve. Before going into the school I had encountered a bit of its history and fame. The school was founded in 1947 and named after Eric Robert James Hussey, an Olympic athlete who was also the first British Director of Education in Nigeria. Hints of ethnic nationalism may have featured in the visions of its promoters. The transfer of Warri College from Warri to Ughelli in 1946 and the founding of Urhobo College in 1947 created a lacuna in Warri. It was in order to address this deficit that Chief O.N. Rewane, lawyer and occasional politician, along with his colleague Chief E. N. A. Begho decided to establish Hussey College. It's founding vision may have been somewhat limited, but the emergent educational entity was one so robust and cosmopolitan that Hussey College qualifies as a truly pan-Nigerian product.

It started by seeking to train the lads in the immediate Warri district, but it ended up giving intellectual, moral and social instruction to the entire Nigerian landscape. Hussey College flourished in many ways, but it was its unquestionable dominance in sports that placed it firmly on the national imagination. Just where did the enchantment come from? The influence of the name has been suggested. But what does a name have to do with character and performance? This is an unresolved conundrum. A rose by any name will still smell as sweet. But names sometimes have the force to push and inspire. And the instance of Hussey is sometimes cited as one in which a name has inspired outstanding success and performance. Hussey, the Olympic athlete after whom the College was named, has turned out to be a talisman that has inspired generations of athletes, of track and field event champions and of grand style footballers, who have won fame for themselves, earned victory for their school and nation and ultimately made Nigeria a force to be reckoned with in competitive sports. It begins with the first day at Hussey College. The air is dominated by the fragrance of sports. There is a prevailing sense of ongoing informal mock competitions as anyone goes through the gates. There are howls of foul or shrieks of goal as unavailing referees attempt to impose sporting order. This is a futile experience but it provides unknowable satisfaction for Hussey students for whom the sporting experience is an epic passion.



EVEN THOUGH IT WAS 1961, STUDENTS COULD TELL THE TALES OF GREAT HUSSEY PLAYERS FROM THE 50S LIKE ALABI AISIEN, EWEREBOR, TOM LAWYER, DANIEL OKWUDILI, ONOKWUAKPOR, AND GOALKEEPER NWULI ALIAS ZANTA DUDU. THEY WERE ALSO OTHER OUTSTANDING INTERNATIONALS LIKE MORTON OWOLO, JOSSY DONBRAYE AND THE BABY FACE THOMPSON USIYEN. THESE WERE NOT JUST NAMES; THEY BROUGHT HONORS TO THE SCHOOL, TO THE REGION AND ULTIMATELY TO THE COUNTRY

Apart from this elemental passion, there is also the point that sports at Hussey is something of a tradition and is embedded into the folklore of the College. One of the surprising features of life at Hussey College was that all the narratives of the great sporting triumphs of the institution were at the fingertips of several students. An oral tradition which memorialized sports excellence had become part of the college experience. Many of us even in form one knew that the national record in javelin stood at 202 ft and that it was held by Nwakwo of Government College Ughelli. Even though it was 1961, students could tell the tales of great Hussey players from the 50s like Alabi Aisien, Ewerebor, Tom lawyer, Daniel Okwudili, Onokwuakpor, and Goalkeeper Nwuli alias Zanta Dudu. They were also other outstanding internationals like Morton Owolo, Jossy Donbraye and the baby face Thompson Usiyen. These were not just names; they brought honors to the school, to the region and ultimately to the country. Ewerebor for example played in the same Hussey College champion team in the 50s with Alabi Aisien. And together they played for the Warri eleven, to which Hussey College alone contributed up to seven players.

Warri's triumph was in some sense a victory for Hussey College. Ewerebor and Alabi Aisien together with a few other Hussey College students also formed Amukpe Eleven which caused a football stir by winning the challenge cup in 1964. A small disagreement in the boardroom of the Sapele F. A led to the breakaway of a faction led by a popular football enterpreneur, Mr. Khalil. Ewerebor, serially, captain of Hussey College, and Captain of Warri Eleven, became Captain of the Amukpe team. It produced seismic football turbulence, defeating most teams it encountered and winning the ultimate football prize in 1964. One of its astonishing players was goalkeeper Abu Malaya, an Onitsha lad, whose exotic sounding name gave an edge of mystery to his extraordinary saves. The Triumph of the Amukpe Eleven was manufactured by the rampaging footballing genius of the Hussey boys. They were Ewerebor, Alabi Aisien, Daniel Okwudili, Tom Lawyer, and Abeke. Their coach was a local hand called Ogbokodo. An important convention established at this time, was the steady support student talents gave to city sports. There was a regular traffic which saw student footballers feeding club outfits and assisting the flourishing of sports in general. It was a trend that expressed itself all around the country. The reigning teams, for example the Nigerian Railways, or the Western Rivers of Ibadan and the Northern Lions, all featured student players.

Olowu is a Veteran Journalist

RASH OF RENOVATIONS

In the face of the prevailing harsh economic conditions those in government should spend wisely, **Ike Willie-Nwobu**

It makes eminent sense that in the face of soaring poverty and surging unemployment, those in government should check their spending

One would think that in Nigeria renovation equals reforms. If a country where poverty is widespread could be more modest, more miserly, Nigeria is anything but.

In a country of starving citizens, one would expect that renovating properties that are otherwise in good condition, or changing vehicles that are still usable, would be the last thing on the mind of the government.

However, for the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, it appears that the mundane takes priority over the masses.

Some N13.5bn is what has been allocated for the renovation.

In a country of avaricious politicians, lying bureaucrats, how much of this money will be used for their stated purposes?

In a country of starving children, it is immoral that such impossibly outrageous amounts of money are allocated for actions that are a little more than luxurious.

Nigeria has in place wastage as an unofficial policy. Successive administrations at the federal, state, and local government levels have conspired to ensure that Nigeria has washed billions of dollars down the drain.

This is so even when one considers the difficulty of collating and presenting credible date in Nigeria. This is even without paying attention to the monstrous effects of corruption on the national treasury and public life.

The budget hastily passed by the National Assembly mirrors perfectly what the governance has become in Nigeria today: an inordinate spending spree. It Is not just the N1.5 billion approved for vehicles for the office of the First Lady, a position which is unknown to the constitution, it is the billions appointed for what has become a ritual of annual renovations.

In a country where a scandalous housing crisis continues to lead to a hemorrhage of human dignity, it should be inconceivable that these are the things the government is giving priority. But it is an indication of just how deeply Nigeria has sunk that the government is prioritizing wasteful spending above genuine actions that can provide respite for a handful of long-suffering Nigerian families.

When a presidential Yacht was mentioned as part of the proposed budget which has now been passed, the presidency reacting to bilious backlash from Nigerians hurriedly deflected the blame to the Nigerian navy.

While there is no doubt that without maintenance, a house, any house, would fall into disrepair after a while, Nigerians loath renovations without reforms.

In a country ridden with corruption, past efforts at renovation have often run into the muck of graft and sleaze.

For a new government, invention should count and come in handy. There should be a frantic effort made to depart from the ways of previous governments, especially when those ways were shown to have led the country down the road of perdition.

Since assuming office on May 29, the president's aides have been desperate to sever his administration from the administration he succeeded. Having taken note of the disastrous eight-year showing by former President Muhammadu Buhari, they have been eager to delink the two administrations. But they can only do so much.

President Tinubu supported Buhari to the presidency in 2016 and again in 2019, all in the hope of succeeding him someday. Both men were founding members of the APC and have been profoundly shaped by ruling party. It largely explains why the attempts to separate one administration from the other has been so difficult.

It makes eminent sense that in the face of soaring poverty and surging unemployment, those in government should check their spending.

What is clear is that Nigeria cannot continue with wasteful politicians who are hell-bent on destroying all that the country has worked hard for.

It also remains glaringly true that unless Nigeria curbs waste and cuts loose the swarm of locusts masquerading as public officers, it may soon be reduced to nothing.

Ikewilly9@gmail.com

INSIGHT



Let their votes count

TO OUR READERS

Letters in response to specific publications in THISDAY should be brief (150-200 words) and straight to the point. Interested readers may send such letters along with their contact details to **saturdayeditor@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 (950-1000 words). They should be sent to **saturdayeditor@thisdaylive.com** along with the email address and phone numbers of the writer.

The Country Women Deserve

It is unacceptable, and even scandalous that Nigeria, a country where women have always stood tall, and continue to play such critical roles, has been ranked the 16th unsafest country for women.

Where do Nigerian women rank in the grand scheme of things? Certainly, the country of Tobi Amusan, Chimamanda Adichie, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Hilda Baci, should have enough space for women to thrive? No?

According to the 2023 Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Index report, Nigeria ranks as the 16th most unsafe country for women in the world.

If this is not a scandal, then pray what is?

The odds stacked against women in NIgeria are well documented. In a country that is the perfect microcosm of a patriarchal world, women play second fiddle to men in almost every sphere of life.

In politics especially, while women form the bulk of the Nigerian electorate and grassroots supporters, they embarrassingly play catch-up when the pies are going to be shared. According to the report, Nigeria ranks 16th worst country out of 177 nations in terms of the status of women. The ranking was compiled along indicators linked to education, jobs, laws, and organized violence, divided into three categories: inclusion, justice, and security.

According to the report, all the bottom 20 countries, including Nigeria, experienced violent conflicts between 2021 and 2022. Furthermore, 2022 has been identified as the most fatal year for conflict-related deaths since the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

According to the rankings, the top five countries for women to live in are Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland.

The greatest indicator of the unmitigated arginalisation of women in Nigeria is in politics. The National Gender Policy prescribes that 35 per cent of all political appointments be reserved for women.

If the NGP has been given a particularly short shrift by successive Nigerian administrations because it is a mere policy, there was a groundbreaking judgment of the Federal High Court in 2022. The Court ruled that 35 per cent of all political appointments should be reserved for women.

The current administration which took off on May 29 has not abided the judgment of the court even if it initially promised to do so. A raft of early appointments initially promised to meet the 35% requirement for women until follow-up appointments put paid to those hopes.

There is no doubt that the trend has to be reversed soonest if Nigeria is to drop out of the list of the worst countries for women completely. Women are nation builders, peacemakers and crucial components in the wheel of any nation that aspires to development. As Nigeria has teethered very dangerously on the brink of complete disintegration due to bad governance and insecurity, women have emerged as heads of families and breadwinners.

The benefits of creating an inclusive society for women are well documented. It includes significant gains for children and the economy. It also includes great strides in all the indices that decorate a prosperous society.

What Nigeria must do is clear- build a society that prominently features women in every sphere. In politics, education, the economy and just everywhere, women should be granted the visibility they need to contribute what they have in abundance. It is Nigeria that will be better for it.

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Why AU Should End Discrimination Against Humanists

The African Union (AU) should stop discriminating against humanists, atheists, agnostics, and other belief minorities in the region. This observation has been made following a regional forum that is holding in Kigali this month. The event officially excludes representatives from the humanist community. The African Union is organizing with the KAICIID dialogue center a general assembly for its Interfaith Dialogue Forum(IFDF). The theme is: Faith in Harvest: Sowing Seeds of Climate Resilience. The program will also feature the election of the AU IFDF steering committee. Unfortunately, humanists will not be participating in this event. Humanists will not be attending because the humanist community has not been invited.

It is important to note that the AU is the African Union, not a religious union. The regional body exists for all Africans, including Africans from minority faith and belief traditions. So the AU should not discriminate on grounds of religious belief or nonbelief. It should not exclude minority groups in its programs. The AU should endeavor to be inclusive and not demonstrate bias against belief minorities. While many Africans profess religion or faith in God, millions of Africans identify as nonreligious or as religiously unaffiliated. They describe themselves as atheists, humanists, agnostics, or simply as nones. Millions of nonreligious Africans suffer religious oppression and persecution. They are targets of abuse, violence, and conflict. A regional program that fosters interfaith dialogue must include humanists and other minority belief groups.

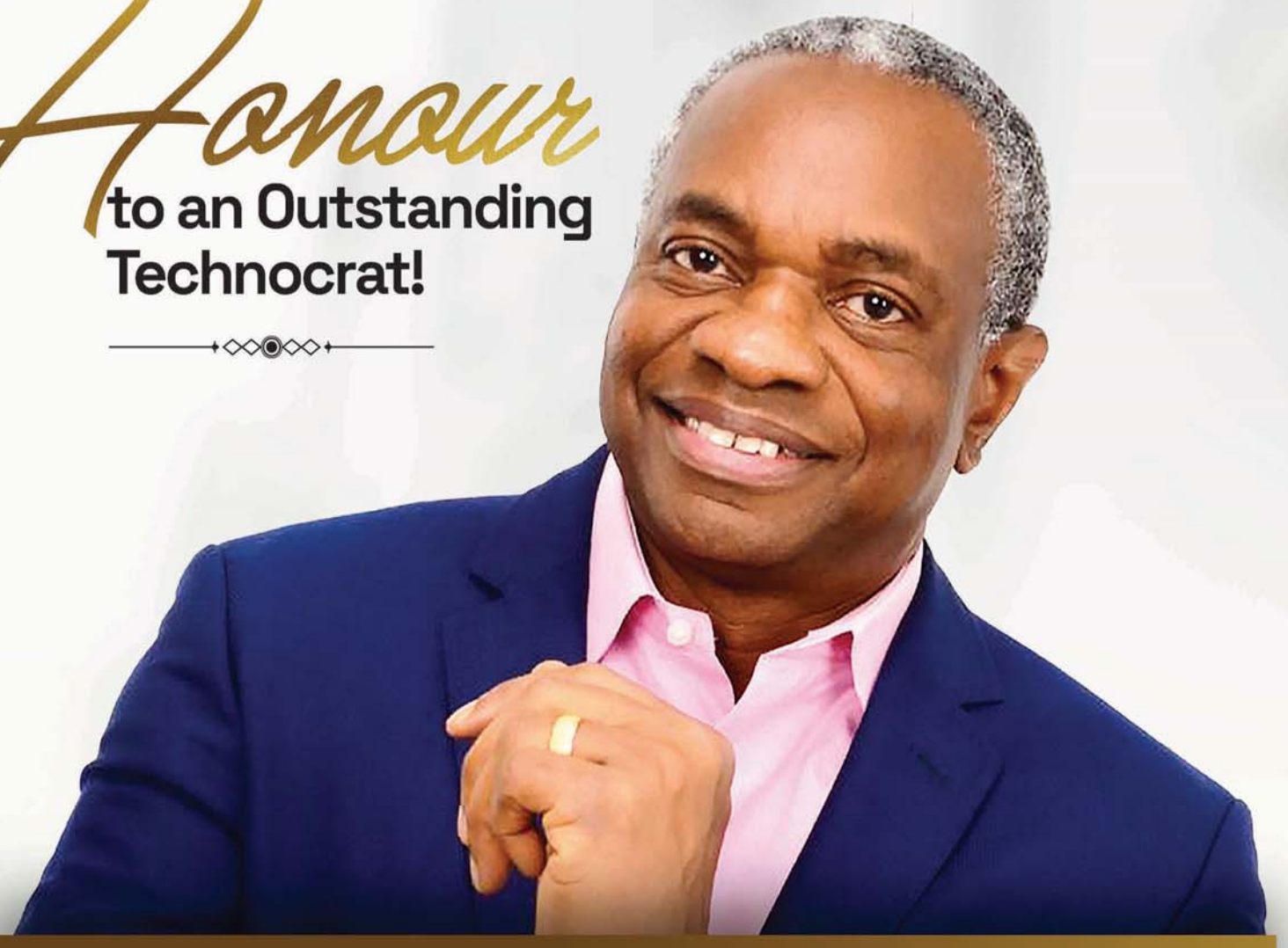
Leo Igwe is a board member of Humanists International, UK

Quite Believable

In the court discussions about the family finances, Don Trump Jr is almost certainly telling the truth when he says he is ignorant.

Dennis Fitzgerald,
Melbourne, Australia

Honour to an Outstanding Technocrat!



Dr. Udom Inoyo

B.Sc (Hons.), LLB (Hons.) Calabar, BL, LLD (Honoris Causa), Uyo.

Former Vice Chairman, ExxonMobil Companies in Nigeria

We congratulate our friend on the **conferment of the Honorary Doctor of Law degree on him today by the University of Uyo.**

This well-deserved honour is in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the educational, human capacity and economic development of Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria in general.

We wish him and his family good health and greater honours in future.

Courtesy

- Capt Victor Iriobe
- Susan Eshett
- Charles Edelduok
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Yemi Adebowale



Military's Comical Airstrikes and Raging Terrorism

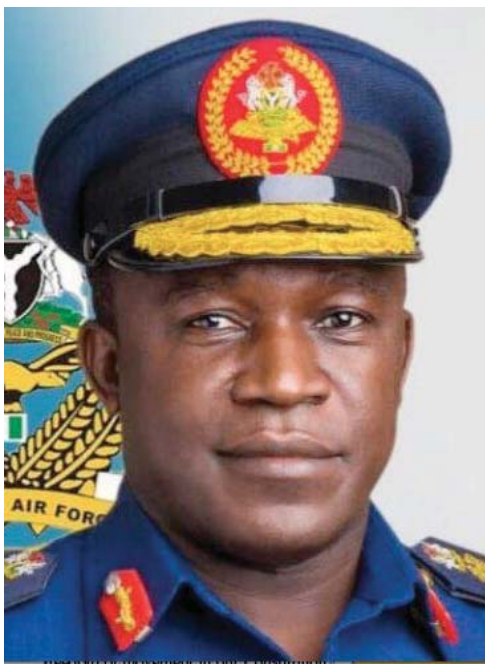
Traumatised residents of Kusa village in Musawa Local Government Area of Katsina State are still struggling to recover from the attack on a procession of Maulud celebrants by terrorists on November 5. It resulted in the death of no fewer than 22 people in the community, with women and children not spared by the guerillas. Several others were abducted. Scores of injured residents of the community are still receiving treatment at the Musawa General Hospital and Katsina Orthopaedic Hospital.

There were other coordinated attacks across Nigeria on this same November 5. In Maru town, Maru LGA of Zamfara State, a band of terrorists invaded, killing and maiming hapless people. Many were also abducted. In Borno State, Boko Haram attacked rice farmers in Mafa LGA, killing 13 of them. A Maiduguri-based businessman simply identified as Alhaji Gana, who was on his farm in Mafa for inspection, was among those killed during this attack. This week, no fewer than 11 persons were killed by terrorists in two villages in Gandi area of Rabbah LGA, Sokoto State.

No doubt, attacks by terrorists across Nigeria are raging. Almost all the states in the North-east and North-west and parts of the North-central are under the servitude of terrorists. Attacks in the South-east only slowed down a bit. Amid these killings, daily, Nigerians are regaled with stories of bombardments of terrorists by the military. Many are sick and tired of being persistently told that "airstrikes by the air components of Operation Hadarin Daji in the North-west and Operation Hadin Kai in the North-east have killed several terrorists and destroyed their enclaves." Always the same old story from the military. It is followed by more vicious attacks by the same terrorists said to have been dismembered as seen from the examples above.

I remember the Nigerian Air Force telling us early this year that they had bombarded the camp of terrorist kingpin, Babaru, who was accused of killing over 100 residents of Bakori LGA of Katsina. We were told the airstrikes killed several terrorists in the operation, and Babaru's camp was destroyed. As at press time, attacks by Babaru and his boys are still a daily occurrence in Katsina State.

We are persistently told of the bombardment of the Lake Chad region in Borno



Abubakar

State. "Feedback received after the strikes revealed the expected outcome was achieved as several terrorists were neutralised while over 40 motorcycles and six gun trucks were destroyed," said the Air Force in one of such statements. Today, the Lake Chad area is still dominated by Boko Haram and ISWAP. Abadam LGA, on the western coast of Lake Chad, remains a stronghold of terrorists. ISWAP has its headquarters at nearby Kamuya village, which is its largest camp in Lake Chad, about eight kilometres from Malam Fatori. Guzamala and Kukawa LGAs in Borno State are also dominated by Boko Haram and ISWAP.

Even in Maru LGA of Zamfara State where there have been so much killings of recent by the terrorists, the NAF told Nigerians that air strikes were carried out on the terrorists on October 11 this year by the air component of Operation Haradin Daji around the Sangeko axis of Maru LGA of Zamfara State. NAF said: "The terrorists, who were in a convoy of about 70 motorcycles on the road from Kabaro towards Sangeko, were subsequently engaged with several terrorists neutralised, their motorcycles were destroyed and others injured." In Maru today, the terrorists still dominate, moving around in hundreds, unhindered.

These so-called air strikes are not achieving the desired result. I have my doubts about the positive results being pushed out by the military. If indeed, such a large number of terrorists had been wiped out, this country will not be experiencing killings by terrorists on such a large scale in Zamfara, Katsina, Sokoto, Borno, Benue, Plateau, Kaduna, Yobe, Imo and Niger states.

In just 10 days of this November alone, no fewer than 200 hapless Nigerians were killed by non-state actors in Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, Niger, Borno and Yobe states. This is a gory statistic. In this part of the world, the government is less concerned by the slaughtering of citizens by terrorists. It is not so in sane climes. That was why the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom recently issued travel advisory to their citizens to avoid Nigeria's troubled states.

Canada warned its citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Nigeria, "due to the unpredictable security situation throughout the country and the significant risk of terrorism, crime, inter-communal clashes, armed attacks and kidnappings."

The United States issued a warning to its citizens in Nigeria to avoid major hotels in the country, citing security threats targeted at these hotels in the larger cities of the country.

The United Kingdom, due to the unending attacks by terrorists, warned citizens against travelling to Kogi, Imo, Bayelsa, Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, Gombe, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, and the riverine areas of Delta, Rivers, Akwa Ibom, and Cross River states.

The much-talked about change in the war against terrorists by President Bola Tinubu remains an illusion. I'm yet to see any seriousness in this direction as shown by the long list of killings in the last six months. Tinubu must fix insecurity. He must fulfill the commitment he made to Nigerians in his May 29, 2023 inaugural address to frontally and courageously tackle insecurity. The truth that must be told is that nothing has changed regarding carnages nationwide, over five months after Tinubu assumed office as President. Terrorists are still roaming unhindered across beloved Nigeria, killing and maiming innocent countrymen.

Tinubu's promise to tackle insecurity inherited from calamity Muhammadu Buhari and reform Nigeria's "security doctrine and its architecture" is still a subterfuge. He said security shall top the priority of his administration "because neither prosperity nor justice can prevail amidst insecurity and violence." Honestly, I have not seen any reform in this country's security doctrine and architecture in the last six months that is yielding results. Mr. President must lead in coming up with a comprehensive and well-planned strategy to end the killings across the country. A people-oriented government will seek help from anywhere to protect the people against terrorists. So, Tinubu should seek help from healthy climes.

The era of issuing rubbish condolence messages after killings by terrorists as exemplified by former president Buhari must end. Tinubu has to go beyond this in line with the leadership expected of him as Commander-in-Chief. He must provide a leadership that will swiftly end the slaughtering (daily) of innocent Nigerians across our cities, towns and villages. This is the meaning of effective leadership. It is what it means to be Commander-in-Chief.

Also, a country that wants to increase food production must efficiently tackle insecurity. I remember that Tinubu in his July 31 address to the nation, talked about making staple foods available and affordable to Nigerians. He also said he would provide 225,000 metric tonnes of fertilizer, seedlings and other inputs to farmers who are committed to the food security agenda of his government. Where are the farmers Mr President is talking about? It seems he has forgotten that many farming communities in Zamfara, Borno, Katsina, Benue, Plateau, Sokoto, Kaduna and Niger states are deserted because of killings by terrorists. Security agents that should be inhibiting the terrorists are not doing too well.

Sometimes, I wonder if Tinubu is even aware that he has spent almost six months in office as President? During this period, terrorists have slayed no fewer than 2000 innocent Nigerians. These are just the reported cases. A comprehensive count will reveal higher figures.

The Nigerian military must also change its tactics in this war against terrorists. Technology, intelligence, quality equipment and quality manpower are modern necessities for taming terrorists. They obviously lack the capacity to effectively monitor the movement of terrorists. This is why these guerrillas move around in hundreds undetected. In this modern era, the military should be talking about dealing with terrorists with drones from a preemptive and properly staffed control centre. Use of drones for intelligence gathering and attacks is vital. Emphasis should also be on the use of bulletproof attack helicopters against terrorists instead of vague air strikes. With steel-clad attack helicopters that can go as low as 100 metres to the target, precision is guaranteed.

Still on Tinubu's N2.17tn Extra Budget

The presidential candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi, was apt when he said President Tinubu, by signing the N2.17 trillion supplementary federal budget, failed to consider the pressing needs of the country. "Going by the manner the budgetary allocations were done, it is obvious the President is unaware of the dire crisis in the country," declared Obi.

I'm also still shocked by some of the items in the budget. It is good that the largest chunk of N605 billion was earmarked for security, to enhance the capacity of security agencies. But why would a President that has presented tough economic reforms to Nigerians allocate N4 billion for the renovation of his official residence in Lagos, and another N3 billion for the renovation of that of the Vice President also in Lagos?

Another N4 billion was allocated for the renovation of presidential quarters in Abuja; N4 billion for the construction of an office complex within the state house; N2.5 billion for the renovation of Aguda House, the official residence of the vice president located within the Aso Rock Villa; N3 billion for the acquisition, renovation, and rehabilitation of four quarters in Mabushi and Guzape within Abuja and N2.9 billion allocated for acquisition of cars for the presidency.

These are non-essential spending at a time Nigeria is battling an economic crisis. They are profligate expenditures in a stressed economy where many are struggling for a meal a day. The official residences of the President and Vice President in Lagos are rarely used. This is the truth. Former Muhammadu Buhari used the official residence in Lagos just four times in his eight years.

I'm equally worried about the N1.5 billion allocated for the purchase of vehicles for the First Lady's office. The office of the First Lady is not recognised by law. It is an illegal allocation. Our languid lawmakers still passed an allocation for an illegal body. What a country!

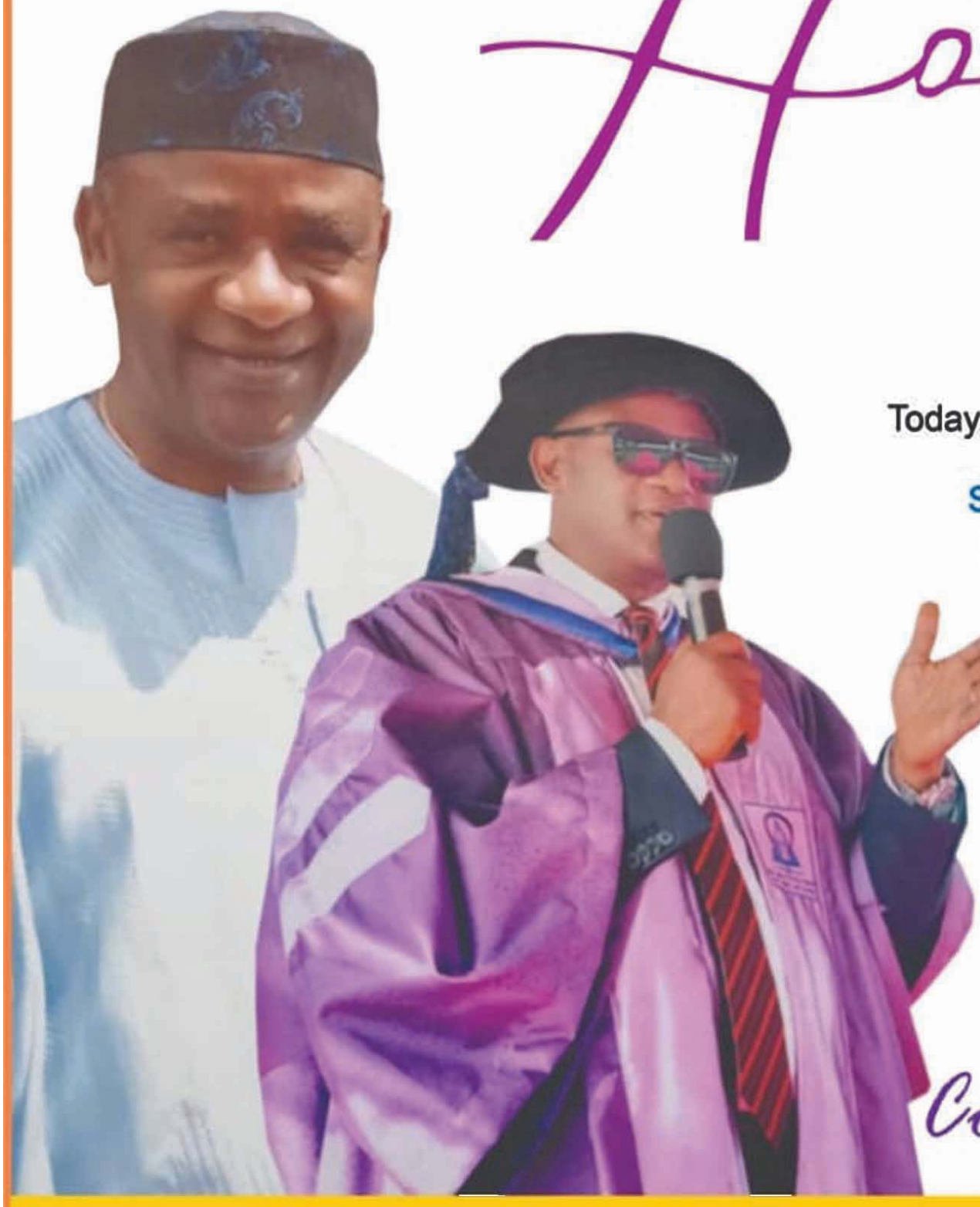
Justice for Grace Silas

For those not following the story, a quick recap. Grace Chalya Silas was an NYSC member serving in Kaduna State. She was murdered by yet-to-be-identified assailants while jogging in Barnawa, Kaduna South LGA. The assailants wanted to snatch her phone which she resisted. They stabbed and left her in a pool of blood. Grace was rushed to the clinic, where she was later confirmed dead. That was on October 18.

The Commissioner of Police, Kaduna State Command, CP Musa Garba, immediately directed a manhunt for the killers of Grace. He held an emergency meeting with the top hierarchy of the command, and ordered the Barnawa DPO to get the killers. Twenty-five days after, nothing has happened.

Today, I'm challenging CP Garba to actualise his vow. The killers of Grace must be brought to justice.

You deserve this
Honour



Today, we salute a learned gentleman and celebrate a friend indeed,
SIR (DR.) BASSEY DAN-ABIA,
as the Wesley University, Ondo State, at its Convocation Ceremony, confers on him an
Honorary Doctorate Degree.

Sir, this honour is an eloquent recognition of your patriotism and service to this country, especially the Niger Delta Region.

We are indeed proud of you.

Congratulations

SIR (DR.) BASSEY DAN-ABIA, LLM. BL, KJW

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Mr. Ella Paul Abechi
Barr. Sunny Okon Obiofiong

For and on behalf of the committed admirers of Sir, Dr. Bassey Dan-Abia

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SHOWBIZFLAIR

Bolanle Austen-Peters Gets on with 'Wire Wire'

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

After the newly concluded project, "House of Gaa", and awaiting its release, award-winning director, Bolanle Austen-Peters' Productions begins principal photography of their new project, "Wire Wire". BAP Productions commenced the shoot of their new movie with an incredible and phenomenal cast.

Among the cast members are Blossom Chukwujekwu, Neo Akpofure, Bisola Aiyeola, Erica Nlewedim, Boma Akpore, Lilian Afegbai, Bucci Franklin, Olarotimi Michael Fakunle, Lasis Elenu, Emeke Nwagbaraocha, Kelvinmary Ndukwe, Onyeka Fiaka, Abayomi Alvin, Uzo Osimkpa, Jide Kosoko, Shaffy Bello, and Tacha.

Bolanle Austen-Peters earlier posted on her Instagram page, "Started Wire Wire with an incredible line-up of phenomenal actors and amazing story." She further teased with behind-the-scenes clips showing some of the lead cast like Blossom Chukwujekwu and Bucci Franklin whom she praised dearly.

"The magic is real. The energy and vibe of these set of actors is so beautiful. Everyday I get goosebumps at the delivery and just smile thanking God for the gift of creativity and to be blessed with so many talents around me," she said on set of the movie. Though not much is given on the plot.

Since 'Bling Lagosians' was launched at the box office on the 16th of June, 2019, none of Bolanle Austen-Peters' products has been to the cinema, although her biopic title, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti was at the cinema for just one week from Friday 8th of September, 2023 as part of the requirements to be fulfilled for being shortlisted for Oscars.

'Bling Lagosians' grossed a sum of N120.13 million. Four years after the hiatus from the big screen, is Bolanle Austen-Peters making a comeback to the cinema with Wire Wire? For now, nothing is yet to be said about the distribution channel that the film will be taking.

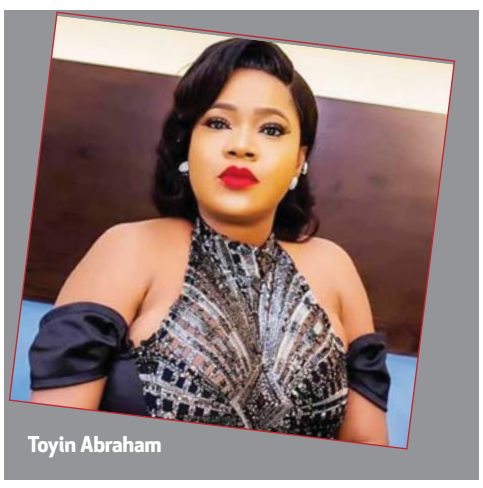
In an exclusive with Shock, Austen-Peters admits that she would love to come back to the box office when she gets the muscle to push such an adventure. "Wire Wire" could be that movie she has exerted the energy on.

Bolanle Austen-Peters Production's Netflix Original, Man of God, won two awards, The Best Nigerian Film and The Best Costume Design in the Africa Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) 2022. The title was released on the 16th of April, 2022. The title stars Akah Nnani, Osas Ighodaro, Jude Chukwuka, Ayo Mogaji, and Dorcas Shola-Fapson.



Bolanle Austen-Peters (l) and Bucci Frankkin

Toyin Abraham releases Trailer for New Movie



Toyin Abraham

Ferdinand Ekechukwu

Actress and Producer Toyin Abraham has released the trailer for her upcoming film, "Malaika." The film, set to debut in cinemas on December 22, 2023, is directed by Steve Olufemi Sodiya.

Malaika, focuses on Toyin's character who is struggling to cope with her infertility and anger issues. She is surrounded by a supportive group of friends and family, but she ultimately must embark on a spiritual journey to find healing.

The trailer also reveals a star-studded cast, including Ugandan entertainer and comedian Anne Kansiime; Emeka Ike; Odunlade Adekola; Adebayo Ridwan Abidemi (Isbae U); Uzor Arukwe; Oderhohwo Joseph "Carter" Efe; Ibrahim Chatta; Pelumi Olawuni (Abike Shugaa); and veteran actress Taiwo Ajai-Lycett.

Interestingly, Malaika marks Emeka Ike's return to with the new title set to unravel an intriguing story. In the recently released clip, Ike pairs with Toyin Abraham as a married couple faced with issues that turn them against each other. After several years of trying, the wife voices out the frustration of being childless and desires answers to the situation at hand.

Produced by Abraham, Malaika comes a year after her last movie Ijakumo: The Born Again Stripper, which also drew loads of attention with its captivating storyline.

Without regard to the critical acclaim awarded Ijakumo, Toyin has proven that she truly believes in her craft. Known for her highly topic-driven titles, the anticipation is high to see what this feature will bring forward this time around.

Sola Cymbal Rocks London with Live Concert At The Arc

Saturday, November 11 is surely a day Londoners have been waiting for. Friends and fans of Gospel singer Dr. Sola Cymbal have on their own done many personal videos to promote this event set for The Arc, 66A Sebert Road, Forest Gate, London.

It is another album launch for Sola Cymbal following the successful release of her first album in Nigeria about four years ago and the single launch in the UK soon after she moved to London three years ago.

The University of Lagos graduate said: "It's an album launch and live recording concert. What we have is a revival encounter; an evening of praise and worship. I will be releasing nine songs in the album, part of which are Talitacumi, Addicted to Praise, My Sufficiency, Titobi, Cheer up among other tracks.

"I use opportunity to invite everyone around London to take the chance and join us. It's a live recording and surely it's going to be a wonderful time well spent."

Cymbal regularly ministers Live on FaceBook and IG but this particular event will not be streamed live.

There are quite a number of guest ministers to share the stage with Sola on the night. Some of them are Adetutu Voj, Lanre Shedowo and Pastor Duyilemi Aramide.

She says she is determined to make the date worthwhile for everyone involved: "This is my first major concert since I relocated to the UK. The purpose of the event is to connect people to the throne of Grace in order to obtain mercy for this time and season using the power of praise and worship. I know that the programme is set to liberate souls and restore hope to people."

Sola was well known for her live stage performance while she was resident in Nigeria performing at different concerts in and outside Lagos. She was a regular feature with Rhema Chapel International Churches, Yaba events – a church where she served passionately for over a decade in the music department.



Sola Cymbal

Naija Star Search Season 2 Opens

Following the success of its inaugural season, StarTimes and Trace TV have announced the opening of auditions for Naija Star Search Season 2.

The show is regarded as Nigeria's biggest Afrobeats reality show, offering contestants the chance to win N20 million worth of cash and prizes.

The organisers in a statement on Wednesday said: "The online audition for Nigeria's biggest Afrobeats show has begun and will run from October 18 to November 22, 2023, and OAP Do2tun has lent his voice to it on his social media pages to invite Afrobeats talents to participate in the online audition.

"Naija Star Search is a unique platform for aspiring Afrobeats stars to showcase their talent and compete to become the next big thing. The show features a panel of renowned judges who provide feedback and mentorship to the contestants, helping them to develop their skills and reach their full potential.

"The winner of the show will receive 20 million Naira worth of cash and prizes, as well as a chance to work with some of the top Afrobeats producers and artists in the industry."

To participate in the online audition, aspiring stars need to do a one-minute cover of their favourite Afrobeats song and upload it on their social media handle(s) using the hashtags - #NSS2 and #NaijaStarSearch, as well as tag @startimesng on Facebook/Instagram/TikTok or @startimes_ng on X . Then visit naijastarsearch.com/register or StarTimes ON to register their details.

The online audition is open to anyone 18 years or older with a passion for Naija music.

The first season of Naija Star Search was a huge success, attracting millions of viewers across Africa and beyond. The show featured some of the best Afrobeats talents in Nigeria, who competed for the coveted title of Naija Star.

The season one had some of the most influential Afrobeats personalities as judges, mentors and guests, led by Afrobeats legend, Kenny Ogungbe, and supported by ace producer ID Cabasa and music artist Asha Gangali.

"Naija Star Search Season 2 promises to be bigger and better than ever before. Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your talent and become the next Naija Star. Register now and get ready to rock the stage," Lazarus Ibeabuchi, PR Manager, StarTimes Nigeria said.

Zainab Ashadu's Chrysalis Collection

Rebecca Ejiforma

Atelier Zashadu, a trailblazing leather accessories heritage brand led by Zainab Ashadu, has taken the Nigerian art and fashion scene by storm with the launch of their latest collection, "The Chrysalis Collection."

This exclusive exhibition, held in collaboration with Temple Muse and in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Lagos Paris Accelerator, took place on November 4 in Lagos.

The Chrysalis is a stunning showcase of craftsmanship and innovation, featuring 10 main pieces designed to captivate the hearts of fashion enthusiasts and art connoisseurs alike.

Inspired by the metamorphic stages of a butterfly and signifying evolving states of consciousness in design; this collection obscured the boundary between fashion and art. Through the eternal cycle of deconstruction and rebirth, The Chrysalis reflects creations informed by adaptability, and the transformative power of change, inviting wearers to embark on a courageous, personal journey of curiosity, self-discovery, and expansion. The collection is a reminder that, like the butterfly or a Phoenix rising from the ashes, we reveal our true beauty and potential by deepening trust, surrender and resilience.

A reparative brand with sustainability at its core, Atelier Zashadu and Zashadu Foundation work to restore the ecosystem by alchemizing waste leather into collectible pieces. With an unwavering commitment to ethical practices, preserving traditional techniques from Nigeria's cultural heritage is at the heart of its operations.

The week-long provided a unique opportunity for attendees to immerse themselves in the world of Atelier Zashadu. The exquisite craftsmanship, attention to detail, and sustainable practices that underpin the brand's identity were on full display. Fashion and art lovers from Lagos, Nigeria, turned up in large numbers to witness the unveiling of The Chrysalis Collection, celebrating the fusion of art and fashion at its finest.

The event not only showcased the brand's dedication to sustainable practices but also featured exclusive pieces from Atelier Zashadu's luxury collectors club launched in July 2023.

This exclusive club offers collectors access to limited-edition pieces and be part of a thriving community passionate about preserving and celebrating the art of leather craftsmanship.

EVENTS

Founder of AT3 Resources, **Ms Tosin Adefeko**, supported by her husband, Ade recently invited friends and associates to celebrate with her on her firm's 5th anniversary at their newly opened Ikoyi, Lagos office. The show of support was impressive



The celebrant with her husband, children and grand children



Prince Ayorinde Adedoyin and Oloriewe Raheem Adedoyin in a conversation at the dinner



Media guru, Sir Folu Olamiti , delivering a Goodwill message at the dinner



Prince Bode Odetundun, Business Head, Real Estate Advisory, Investment One Financial Services Group and other guests at the dinner



Celebrant's Sister-in-Law, Alhaja Afusat Adebayo and her friend with the celebrant (middle)



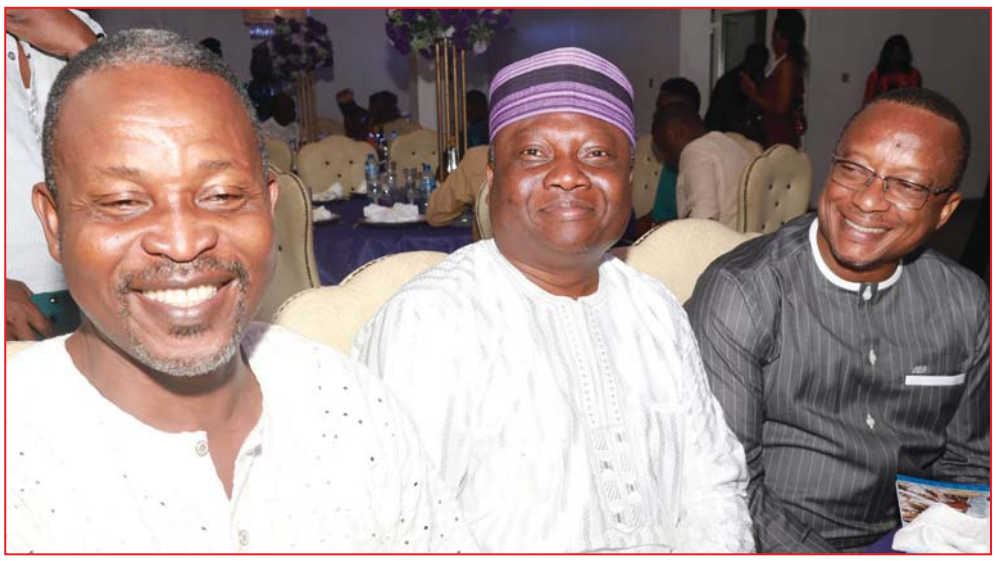
An officer of the University of Lagos, Mass Communication Alumni Association (UMCAA), Mrs. Mopelola Alli and her husband, Engr. Oluwole Alli at the dinner



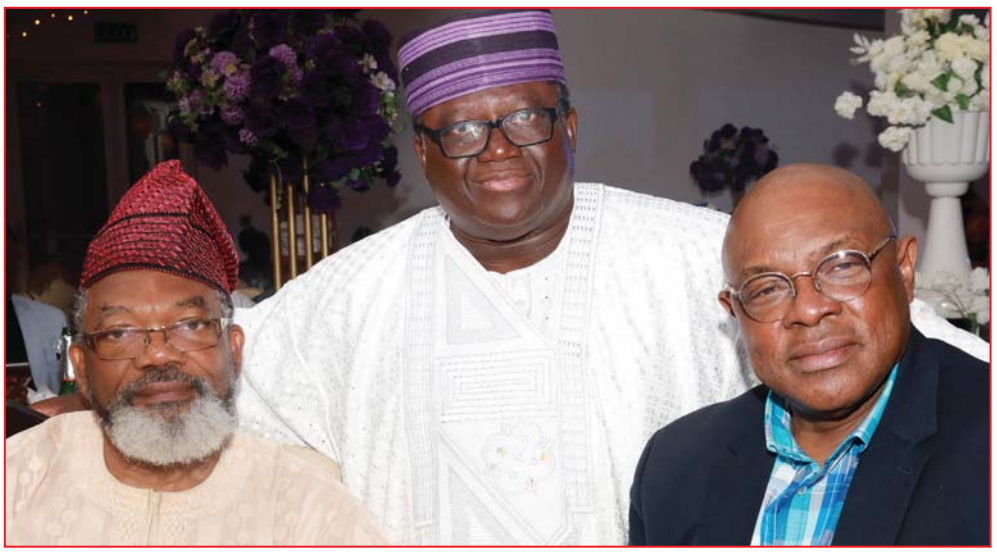
Chief Fattah Amolegbe (representative of the Deputy Governor of Kwara State, Mr. Kayode Alabi) and wife, Chief Mrs. Grace Amolegbe at the dinner

The remains of **Mama Margaret Olayemi Odujinrin** who died in July 28, 2023 was laid to rest recently at the Ikoyi Cemetery, Lagos. Reception of guests and friends of the Odujinrin family was held at the Regal Hall, Glover Court, Ikoyi. Here are the faces of some of the personalities that graced the occasion.

PHOTOS: **ABIODUN AJALA**



L-R; Mr. Alli-Balogun Adekunle, Mr. Gbenga Odujinrin(Deceased's son) and Mr. Shina Badaru



L-R: Mr. Demola Ajayi, Mr. Deji Odujinrin(Deceased's son) and Mr. Ladi Smith



Pastor and Pastor Mrs Ayodeji Smith



Mr. Ade Odunuga and his wife, Temitayo



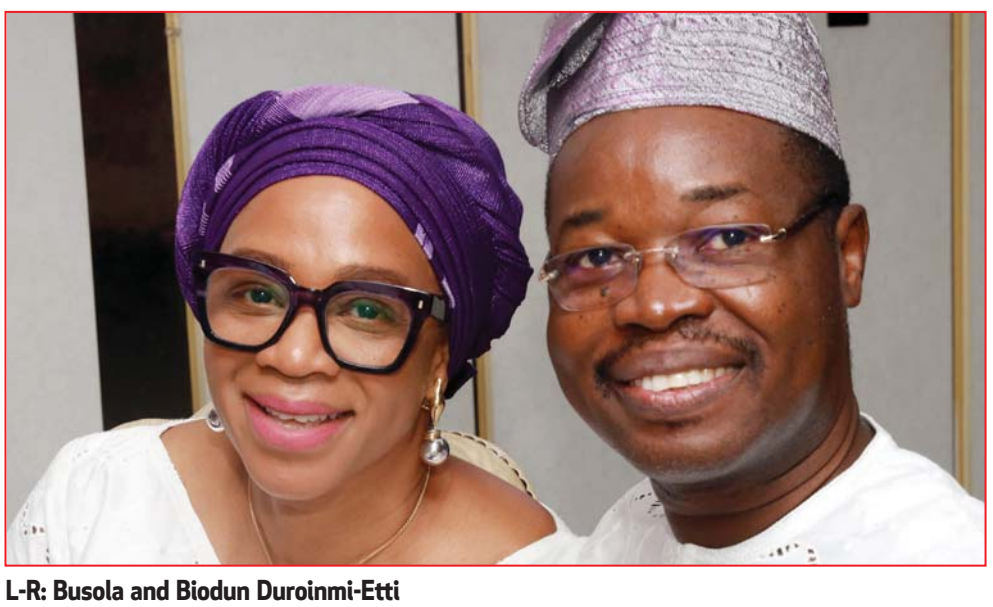
L-R: Mr. Babatunde Okeniyi and Mr. Kayode Oladipupo



L-R: Mr. Gbenga Adamolekun and Mr. Hakeem Fadipe



L-R: Mr. Deji Sule and his wife, Anne



L-R: Busola and Biodun Duroinmi-Etti

AUTO WORLD

Bennett Oghifo

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The all-new Ford Territory

Coscharis Unveils All-new Ford Territory

Coscharis Motors officially unveiled the all-new Ford Territory, signifying its launch into the Nigeria market.

Ford Territory is a midsize SUV designed for tech savvy automobile enthusiasts. This vehicle is sure to satisfy the work and leisure needs of our customers and other stakeholders alike.

At the unveiling during the week, the Deputy Group Managing Director, Coscharis Group, Fred Amobi said, "As part of our corporate objectives as Coscharis Group to continually deliver value to our stakeholders in any industry in which we find ourselves as players, Coscharis Motors, our flagship subsidiary and the exclusive representative of the iconic Ford brand in Nigeria is today laying emphasis on the leadership status within the Nigerian automobile ecosystem with the introduction of the All New Ford Territory today.

"As with all the brands and nameplates that we represent in Nigeria, Coscharis Motors has invested heavily on both human and material resources in order to ensure that all necessary support including; workshop equipments, certified OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) trained technicians and OEM approved original parts and accessories required to keep the vehicle in top shape, for optimum performance at all times, are readily available."

He said, "Our steadfastness in the regular introduction of new innovative products into the Nigerian automobile industry underpins the level of confidence we repose in the possibility of a revamped national economy. This is also evidenced in our huge investment in our automobile assembly plant located in Awoyaya, Lagos, where we currently assemble the Ford Ranger and other brands.

"With a sense of humility, I am excited to say that our product line-up is one of the strongest and most diverse in Nigeria, but with the introduction of the Ford Territory, it is clear that we will keep dominating the automobile sector of the market.

"We hope that the market's huge acceptability of the Ford Territory, which is being introduced today, will motivate us to add the nameplate to the list of our locally assembled Ford vehicles in our stable. This will surely translate into opportunity for more job creation, manpower development and reduced product price amongst other things."

Amobi reassured "all our customers and stakeholders that Coscharis Motors has put all necessary measures in place to ensure that you enjoy the best ownership experience when you purchase the All New Ford Territory.

Toyota Reaches Global Production of 300 Million Cars

Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC) has reached a cumulative global production total of 300 million cars, Including production numbers for September 2023.

A statement by the automaker said this number was achieved 88 years and two months after Toyota's very first cars, the Model G1 truck, was produced by the Automotive Production Division of Toyoda Automatic Loom Works, Ltd. (later Toyota Industries Corporation) in August 1935. It includes domestic and international production, with 180.52 million cars produced domestically, and 119.6 million produced abroad (as of end September 2023).

The model with the highest total production is the Corolla, with the Corolla series achieving cumulative global production of 53.399 million (as of the end September 2023).

Chairman and Master Driver Akio Toyoda and President Koji Sato offered the following comments about this landmark.

Chairman and Master Driver Akio Toyoda said, "Kiichiro Toyoda said, 'Carmaking is something everyone does together.' I think this number of 300 million stands as proof of all the hard work, every day, of our colleagues at Toyota, our suppliers and dealers, and all the many other stakeholders, as well as all those who came before us. This history did not just start when they built the first car. The founding members repeatedly tried and failed, continually building prototypes, and their efforts led to the Toyota of today. Toyota has faced danger time and again to this point. Each time, what has saved us are the customers who love Toyota cars. I think the number of cars tells the stories of our



Toyota Land Cruiser Se

customers, and the customers who have chosen Toyota cars to be their partners through their own stories are what allow us to continue making cars to this day. I am grateful from the bottom of my heart. I love cars, too, and we will carry on making cars, one by one and with care, along with all our car-loving colleagues."

According to the President of Toyota Koji Sato, "I want to offer my heartfelt gratitude to the customers who have chosen Toyota cars, and to those who have built each car with heart and soul, as well as to the suppliers and dealers who have delivered them with care, and to all our other stakeholders. I believe that this number of 300 million units could only have been achieved with the unending effort of colleagues across the company, from part and vehicle planning and design, to production, logistics, sales, and service, along with all those working to support each step. All our colleagues have overcome countless challenges.

TIPS OF THE WEEK

5 Symptoms of a Bad AC Compressor and How to fix

What to look out for if you think your compressor is faulty. Ever been disappointed to find that your AC isn't cooling enough on an already unbearable hot summer day? It happens to the best of us. Fortunately, we know exactly how to fix the symptoms of a bad air conditioning compressor.

Insufficient cooling — among various other things — is a key indicator that something is wrong in your car's air conditioning system. While it's frustrating and annoying for you, fortunately, it is a problem that a Natrad technician can help sort out for you.

There are plenty of components in your air conditioning system, so if you want to know how to pick the culprit, read on to find out.

Natrad workshops are a part of Australia's largest network of cooling specialists. With vast industry experience in cooling and air conditioning, Natrad can help you determine problems with A/C compressors efficiently.

Symptoms of a failing A/C compressor

Let's understand the reason you're here — symptoms of a failing car air conditioning compressors.

Compressors generally last the lifetime of a car, or approximately 12 to 15+ years depending on how well the car is looked after. In saying that, it's important that you regularly check up on and service your car to prevent premature failure.

Some ways you can tell if something is failing can include:

Leaks
Odd noises
Lukewarm air
ECU error
Seized compressor clutch or belt

We'll outline what these things might indicate a little bit later, but first what actually is a compressor and how does it work?

What is this thing?

A compressor is a key component of the air conditioning system and without it, your car's air conditioning wouldn't be able to function.

It's also the only moving part within the A/C system since it's connected to the crankshaft via a drive belt. Meaning it derives its power directly from the engine unlike other aircon system components.

Given this factor, it's important to check up on the compressor often as it can be subject to more wear and tear.

What does a compressor do?

The compressor is a part of the high pressure side of the A/C system, which converts refrigerant gas to liquid as it passes through the condenser.

The compressor does exactly what it sounds like, it compresses the refrigerant gas which then makes it very hot. This is passed onto the condenser which cools the gas, converts it to liquid and circulates it to the receiver drier and expansion valve.

From here it enters the evaporator, where it is exposed to warmth from air in the cabin and turns back to gas. As the name suggests, it 'evaporates' and as a result becomes very cold. This cold is conducted through the metal tubes and fins of the evaporator to deliver cool, dry air into the cabin as dictated by the blower fan.

As you can probably tell by now, the compressor is an essential part of this process.

Key indicators of compressor failure

We mentioned above some typical symptoms of compressor failure, but what do they mean and how do they happen?

Leaks — often mean that refrigerant will be escaping the system somewhere along the line. Compressor leaks typically happen around the shaft seal, hoses, O-rings and gaskets. They can be hard to spot and might require the use of a special UV dye or electronic leak detector to locate. The refrigerant also carries an oil mist that circulates to keep everything lubricated. Without enough refrigerant, the aircon cycle will not happen and can result in damage to other parts, not just the compressor.

(Source: Natrad)

PEOPLE

Ted Wilson

Nigeria Needs Peace for Prosperity to Reign

After nearly one week in the country celebrating 100 years of Adventism in the Southeast, President of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Pastor Ted Wilson, and wife, Nancy, are back to their headquarters in Silver Spring Maryland, US. Wilson's recurring evangelism was anchored on Peace, humility, and freedom of worship, what the country needs to prosper in all departments of human existence. **Nduka Nwosu** reports

The President of the World Church of Seventh-day Adventists Pastor Ted Wilson was in Nigeria for four days last week, to celebrate 100 years of the Seventh-day Adventist church in the Southeast of Nigeria. The celebration was the peg of his visit, but he moved round the entire south of the country ministering to his flock, shaking hands with dignitaries and admonishing men in authority.

It was good news to know Alhaji Aliko Dangote's aircraft was on ground to fly the Adventist leader to Uyo when the earlier aircraft of Dr. Adedeji Adeleke, a member of the church and a business tycoon, developed a minor fault. Two important religious bodies through their members had a handshake of friendship, partnership, and brotherliness, what Wilson was to later talk about by way of exhortation that only an environment of peace can create prosperity in a country such as Nigeria.

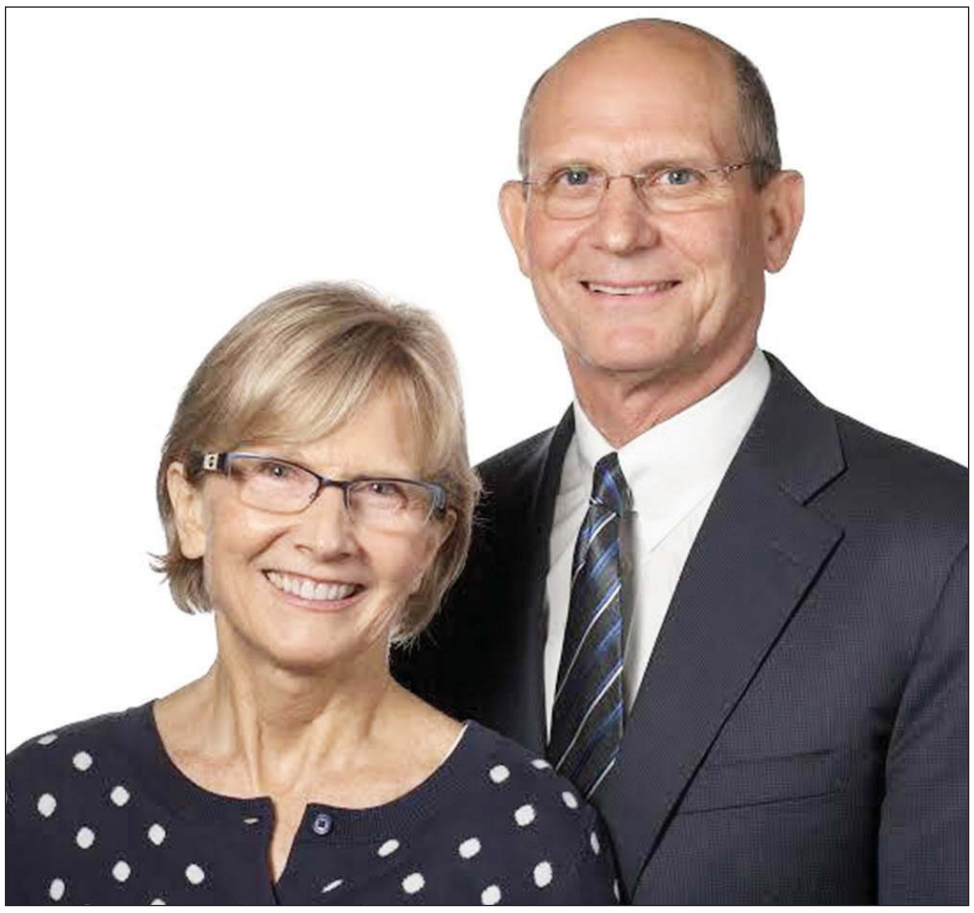
Eventually Wilson's aircraft touched down Uyo Airport where he met Governor Umo Eno, a fellow pastor who had assembled his team in government to receive him. Whilst Wilson was hosted by top members of the church who are in government, his primary constituency was the grassroots membership, and he had all the time interacting with them, letting the new shepherds and the flock who were meeting him for the first time know he was not a stranger to the country. Wilson was in Nigeria in 2014 and his current theme of reconciliation to Christ, of peace and religious freedom, was not too different from that of his last visit.

He harped on freedom of conscience and liberty in the expression of one's faith. According to Wilson, any nation that wants peace and prosperity must espouse freedom of conscience. Of course, Wilson, an American citizen, remembers the voyage for a new country by the founding fathers of the New World, the United States of America (USA) was initiated by those who were not ready to mortgage their conscience by the British monarchy. They wanted freedom of thought, and of expression not whittled down by any dictator.

Wilson in his 2014 visit said: "I want to thank the Christian community in Nigeria. I also want to give my appreciation to the Federal Government and to the state for the religious liberty that is provided for all citizens. This is really the foundation of progress and prosperity in the nation."

He said Adventists try to be good citizens in Nigeria and in other nations where they are domiciled. Indeed, the Adventists are strong in education and health through which the evangelical work is given a practical content.

Babcock University in Ogun State and its highly recommended medical centre attest to this. The church which was founded in 1863 in Battle Creek Michigan, is adept in missionary work and revivals with a strong belief and teaching that Jesus Christ is coming again. Ted Wilson's track record of achievements in the Seventh-day Adventist ministry is impressive. His father Neal C Wilson who was the GC President between 1979 and 1990 and with his wife Elinor C Wilson were part of the formation of the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), visiting about 178 countries doing evangelism and expanding the work of the church with a passion for the underprivileged and the disenfranchised people of the world. His wife Nancy preached to the women of the Western Nigeria Union Conference on a day their children denounced the LGBTV+ community.



Nancy and Ted

Wilson had taken over from Robert H Pearson and handed over to Robert S Folkenberg whose Global Mission Initiative witnessed a huge growth in church membership. The worldwide organisation of Adventists elected Ted Wilson President in 2010 for a five-year tenure which was renewed in 2015; on June 6, 2022, at the 61st World Congress of Adventists, Wilson was voted to remain in office until 2025 when the World Congress of Adventists would reconvene.

While in the country Wilson spoke on the need for men in power to rule with mercy, justice, and humility.

He told Governor Eno freedom of conscience for all should be one of the central pegs of governance. The governor could not hide his joy receiving the Adventist leader and his entourage. Eno said he was blessed to receive such a high-ranking church leader with less than five months in office, adding: "your visit is significant to us as a world leader; we cannot take it for granted."

The governor did not fail to add as a footnote that Akwa Ibom was a God-centric state. He encouraged Pastor Wilson to continue to serve God diligently and with his flock, live the life Christ taught his disciples. Eno said he knew he would be held accountable of his earthly performance as governor the moment he was sworn in as in as Governor.

"I know in my heart that I will stand before God and answer to the oath of office I took. I am not perfect, and I cannot claim to be perfect. That is the whole idea I bring into governance because, for me, Christianity is not just about the name of the Church. It is about your life, who you are, and what you do," Eno said, using the opportunity to thank the members of the church for having joined other members of the Christian community and the non-Christian community who saw him as worthy of service to the people, to elect him governor.

The Seventh-day Adventist guest reminded his hosts the church once described as the fastest growing church in the world, has over 22 million baptised Adventists spreading across 212 countries where it has contributed so much to the growth of humanity through education, health, culture, physical, mental, and social values of individuals notwithstanding their religious leanings. According to Pastor Wilson, the Adventists are everywhere doing the work of the Lord.

He commended the aesthetics of Akwa Ibom as a state while also saying he has followed the Governor's leadership style in five months and what he saw were leadership qualities expected of a pastor, thanking the people for their expression and accommodation of other religious groups, what he said was the reason there was so much peace and progress in Akwa Ibom State.

Wilson visited the Seven-day Adventist owned Babcock University which was originally opened as the Adventist College of West Africa on September 17, 1959, for the training of church workers from where he arrived the headquarters of the Western Nigeria Union Conference in Maryland, Lagos.

He had earlier on Saturday November 4 been the guest of Arise television's 30 minutes Morning Show programme. The next day Sunday, Wilson met members and officers of the Western Nigeria Union Conference in Maryland, concluding his visit with an exhortation. On television, he restated the need for men in authority to accommodate Adventists in all governance issues that fall on Saturdays, when the church elects to serve God according to Biblical injunction.

At the robust Maryland Church welcome, Wilson spoke on evangelism as central to his ministry. Think of God's kingdom, he told the congregation, stressing the need for the faithful to revive their focus on Christ. He referred to the Apostle Paul who talked about the Ministry of Reconciliation. "God can bring all our problems together for good through the Holy Spirit. You are ambassadors of Christ. Be reconciled to God."

According to him, this was the same instruction given to Moses, Isaiah, et al, adding the Bible remained the ultimate word of God for every Christian: "Don't let the world squeeze you. You are ambassadors for Christ We must be united in his proclamation and be part of his activities in reconciling others to God. Jesus was sinless that he might become the righteousness of God in Christ. We have an amazing opportunity to become ambassadors of Christ and we must avoid every form of antagonism and vitriolic attacks against the church.

"The Devil is trying to disrupt God's proclamation. Jesus is coming. Jesus will look down and say well done, good and faithful servants. Lord prepare their hearts and help them in the months and years ahead to be an ambassador for Jesus. Desire to be part of the mission because it is a chosen formation. We commit these beautiful people to you Lord. We want to be united to Jesus with the Western Nigeria Union Conference in the proclamation of the everlasting gospel for Jesus."

Wilson has long returned to his headquarters in the United States.

While in the country Wilson spoke on the need for men in power to rule with mercy, justice, and humility. He told Governor Eno freedom of conscience for all should be one of the central pegs of governance

POLITY

Solid Minerals: Imperatives of Increased Regulation

Julius Nwangwu

There appears to be a renewed interest generally, drawing the attention of critical stakeholders to the abysmal performance of the Nigerian Solid Minerals sector. There is also a genuine reason to believe that the neglected solid minerals sector is long overdue for deserved attention and the fact that the job of opening that gold mine goes to one of the President's trusted allies, underscores the administration's interest in revitalizing the sector. This time around, both the minister and the custodians of legislative oversight functions in the sector must work assiduously to navigate the sector through a paradigm shift away from the prevalent structural quagmire.

A number of very compelling factors have underscored the glaring imperatives for revolutionizing the Nigerian solid minerals sector, through new sets of regulatory and policy frameworks.

Quite interestingly, Chief Alake in his maiden ministerial press briefing, thunder-bolted the solid mineral space with an audacious target of raising the sector's contribution to the nations GDP to 50 percent. This will imply an ingenuous drive towards a superlative multiplication of the sector's current 0.6 percent contribution to GDP, and the 5 percent targeted contribution to GDP in 2025 by the previous administration.

While previous administrations have at one time or the other introduced some sets of policy frameworks to drive strategic objectives in various sectors, the success rates generally depended on the quality of implementations. To realize the stated optimism in the Solid Minerals sector this time around, will therefore require stronger regulatory and policy frameworks that ensure a dispassionate and pragmatic implementation of the initiatives.

Central to Simon Kuznets theoretical assumptions on structural transformation is the limited possibility that the high rate of economic growth can occur without sustained increase in the contributions of other strategic sectors of the economy. Also the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Report of 2017, emphasized that structural transformation as a catalyst for economic diversification is a key rational option for developing countries. It is apparent that the inability of past administrations to diversify Nigeria's economy to other high income and employment-generating sectors over the years has significantly slowed down economic growth and development. It has left the economy highly debilitated and at the mercy of the volatile international oil market prices.



Alake

Aside the perennial fluctuations in the international oil prices and the attendant consequences on national economic planning, there is also the issue of deliberate sabotage and vandalism on oil facilities which have impacted negatively on the nation's oil output. Similarly, crude oil theft has also consistently impeded the nation's capacity to meet her OPEC oil production quota. With the growing recourse to cleaner and renewable energy as alternatives to the use of hydrocarbons, national economies that depend on oil as major source of revenue, now face monumental threats.

The nation's drive for substantial increase in revenue from the solid minerals sector and in stemming the tide of insecurity, banditry and terrorism also underscored the urgent need for robust reforms. The recent revelation from NEITI 2021 Report that the Solid Mineral sector generated a cumulative sum of N814.6 billion in fifteen years 2007-2021; is a far cry from the huge revenue potentials of the solid mineral sector in Nigeria. The Senate in 2021 investigated alleged annual loss of $9 billion USD to illegal gold miners and smugglers; which the then Minister for Mines Chief Uche Ogar claimed were the illicit activities of private jet owners.

Evidently, the nation has incurred monumental loss of revenue from the solid minerals sector, to illegal miners and smugglers amounting to trillions of naira; which not only represents an economic sabotage but have also contributed significantly in acerbating insecurity and terrorism. In a related 2017 report of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) it emphasized that there are strong nexus between illegal mining activities, illicit financial flows and increase in the activities of armed criminal non state actors. These to a large extent provides insight into the un-abating insecurity, conflicts and killings in Northern Nigerian states such as Katsina, kaduna, kebbi, Plateau and Zamfara; where illegal mining activities are highly prevalent.

It is a welcome development that the present administration has identified key areas in the solid mineral mining ecosystem focusing on seven priority minerals that require very urgent intervention. The list, which is not exclusive, include minerals such as gold, coal, limestone, bitumen, lead, iron-ore and barite. The Tinubu administration can expand the scope to other high yield minerals. For instance, taking advantage of the country's huge deposits of cobalt, manganese, lithium and nickel; being core raw materials for electric vehicle batteries. While this will attract foreign direct investments from the world's automobile giants, it will catalyze technology transfer and ultimately generate significant level of domestic value additions that will translate into creation of millions of jobs, strong linkages effects and spillovers.

However, as new policies are initiated to regulate and expand mining activities in the sector, it is also imperative for the articulation and development of Solid Mineral Supply Chain Metrics. This could be tailored towards Friedrich Schumacher economic localization theoretical assumption which emphasizes technology transfer of capital intensive technology from high industrialized nations to developing nations like Nigeria and others.

Evidently, the increasing global demand for solid minerals has reflected in the corresponding increase in global mining activities and have generated a number of ethical, environmental and human rights issues in host communities. To this effect, the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011 Report; emphasized protection of the rights of artisanal miners and host communities in line with global best practices. Nigerians do hope that the Minister and National Assembly will utilize their instruments of strong policy and regulatory frameworks, to revolutionize the solid minerals sector.

Julius Obeta Nwangwu a Local Content Development Consultant, (obetanwangwu@gmail.com; 08023438488) writes from Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Celebrating Air Peace's New London Route

Chidiebere Nwobodo

It was not an accident let alone a coincident that the symbol of a 'soaring eagle' became the logo of Air Peace Airlines, West Africa's largest carrier. When Allen Onyema conceived the idea of floating an airline of this magnitude, he knew that the journey would not be easy, especially coming from a country that has witnessed the rise and fall of several airlines in less than two decades. Nigerian airlines found it difficult to excel in the international routes. The eagle in Air Peace's logo symbolizes vision, fortitude and preparedness to ride on any storm that comes the way of the Airline as it marches towards placing Nigeria on the global map of aviation. Nine years in the sky, Air Peace has truly demonstrated attributes of an eagle in weathering storms in the industry. It has been from one milestone of growth to another history of achievement.

When it became news that Air Peace had been granted permit to fly into United Kingdom, UK, after scaling through stringent audit of British aviation authority, it sent aviation observers in the country into celebration mood. This is a big breakthrough for the Nigeria's aviation industry—that is worth celebrating. Nigeria's travelling public yearned for a day that a Nigerian indigenous airline would be flying into United Kingdom, especially London. Few days before this development became public, Air Peace had launched its sixth international route, Jeddah—Saudi Arabia. Before then, Air Peace flights into Saudi Arabia were only limited to charter flights—airlifting of Muslims pilgrims going on Haji, but it has commenced full commercial flights operations in the Middle East country.

When fully operational in the London-route, Air Peace will bring a huge sigh of relief to Nigerians who are being exploited by foreign airlines via exorbitant ticket fares, and stereotyping, etc. Imagine an ugly situation where Nigerians have been paying more in ticket fares to travel to London than their counterparts in other neighbouring countries. Nigerians are the most mobile populace in the world. We have the humongous population and mobility which make our international routes very lucrative and attractive for foreign airlines. Unfortunately, our indigenous airlines are yet to fully benefit from this market due to politics in the industry, orchestrated by these foreign airlines and their agents in Nigeria meant to keep indigenous airlines out of these busy routes, thereby shortchanging Nigeria in the long run.

In the past, before the emergence of Air Peace, these oligopolistic foreign airlines cornered these lucrative international routes to themselves. Every effort made by indigenous airlines to break into these routes were frustrated by these foreign interests with their local collaborators, who put their selfish interests above patriotism. Some of now defunct indigenous airlines who made attempts to ply these foreign routes, fell to the trap of these foreign airlines by not working very hard to increase capacity and efficiency of their airlines. It became easy for these foreign airlines to use the propaganda of "not-having-capacity" to keep them out of these busy routes, while milking Nigerians dry.



Onyema

With Air Peace in the picture, that propaganda expired, because since inception the Airline took issue of increasing its capacity and efficiency seriously. While three aircraft are required to get operating licence for commercial flight, Air Peace began operation with seven aircraft. It has increasingly expanded its fleet to more than 40 aircraft. With firm order of 33 aircraft and purchase right of 17 aircraft, Air Peace boasts of total order of 50 brand new aircraft, making it fastest growing airline in Africa—in just less than a decade of operation. The aircraft in its order list include: 15 Boeing 737 MAX 8 and MAX 10, 13 Embraer 195-E2 (of which 5 have been delivered), 5 Embraer 175 and purchase right of 17 Embraer 195-E2. Imagine the fleet of Air Peace when all these planes will be fully delivered.

So, with the argument of capacity out of the way, Air Peace has become really unstoppable rising above the stormy weather that caught indigenous airlines of the past who made attempts to compete in these international routes. For the first time, an indigenous airline is set to become a major player in the ever-busy Nigeria-London route with its attendant economic opportunities, both for the Airline and Nigerian flying public. I learned also that Air Peace Airlines is making a demand for a slot in the Heathrow Airport. This is a welcome development. British authorities will have no excuses not to oblige to this noble request. Anything contrary to this will imply that United Kingdom want to keep Nigeria airlines out of British airspace and Nigerian government has to reciprocate by denying British airlines access to our primary airports—Abuja and Lagos.

With the spate of migration out of the country (Japa Syndrome), especially to the United Kingdom by Nigerian youths for studies and greener pasture, it becomes imperative and economically wise to position the country's leading airline, Air Peace, as one of the carriers plying the very busy route—that is increasingly getting busier. Population of Nigerians in the United Kingdom, UK, is skyrocketing at astronomical level to the extent that some school of thought jokingly refers to the UK as Nigeria's 37th State. Some businesses that hitherto operated in the country are sadly relocating abroad, including United Kingdom. Some Nigerian entrepreneurs are strategically setting up branches of their businesses in the UK to target Nigerians there, earn in foreign currency in the face of depreciating naira and equally preserve their wealth.

In the foregoing context, there is no better time for Air Peace to commence its long-awaited UK-route than now. I have to commend Dr. Allen Onyema, Air Peace's chairman, who recently got conferred a Doctorate Degree of Management Science by the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA), and his Management team, for not giving up in the face of hurdles it encountered while pushing to obtain this very important permit that have opened aviation doors of United Kingdom to an indigenous airline and Nigeria aviation industry in general.

Irrespective of daunting challenges in the industry like infrastructural inadequacies, administrative bottlenecks, foreign exchange crisis and lack of efficient maintenance facility, etcetera, which have reduced easy of doing busy, Air Peace Airline has not been discouraged in its quest to give Nigeria its rightful place in the aviation world, especially in the international routes where absence of a viable Nigerian airline has robbed us of alot of opportunities and privileges.

According to International Air Transport Association (IATA), base on its August, 2023 data, trapped funds of foreign airlines operating in Nigeria stood at $783 million. Out of these funds, how much belongs to Nigerian airline(s)? Foreign airlines are repatriating hundreds of millions of dollars from Nigeria annually, but we don't earn equivalent of such amount from their own economics via any of our indigenous airlines yet we still wonder why naira keeps depreciating and jobs varnishing.

Read full article online - www.thisdaylive.com

POLITY

Gbajabiamila, Ogunbiyi Inspect Solar Project at Iponri Market

The Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila alongside Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL), Damilola Ogunbiyi, yesterday visited Iponri Market in Surulere, Lagos State and inspected the first phase of solar installations deployed within the popular market.

Those that accompanied them were the Managing Director, Sterling Bank, Abubakar Suleiman; CEO, All On, Caroline Eboumbou; markets leaders; amongst others. This visit to Iponri Market afforded the dignitaries the opportunity to interact with the end-users and provided valuable insights into the impact of clean and reliable energy on their respective business operations.

The solar projects, funded by Universal Energy Facility (UEF) a results-based finance facility administered by SEforALL and executed by SOLAD Integrated Power, a clean energy and technology company, is an exciting development that underscores the commitment of both the Nigerian government and UEF to promoting sustainable energy solutions in the country.

Gbajabiamila and Ogunbiyi lauded the initiative at making clean and sustainable energy accessible for all.

"The electrification of the Iponri Market with sustainable energy solutions exemplifies Nigeria's unwavering commitment to enhancing energy access, driving economic growth, and embracing the transformative potential of solar energy. This visit to witness the impact of clean, affordable energy reaffirms our dedication to businesses, emission reduction, and advancing our nation toward a more sustainable and prosperous future," Gbajabiamila said.

"Sustainable energy access is the cornerstone of a brighter and more equitable future for all. Our visit to the Iponri



L-R: Managing Director, Sterling Bank, Abubakar Suleiman; Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabiamila; Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All, Damilola Ogunbiyi; and CEO of All On, Caroline Eboumbou; during Gbajabiamil's visit to Iponri Market, Lagos.

Market today underscores our commitment to empowering communities with clean, affordable, and sustainable energy solutions, setting the stage for Nigeria's energy transition to a greener future," Ogunbiyi.

In August 2023, SOLAD Integrated Power began the provision of clean, sustainable and renewable energy solutions to empower business owners within Iponri market. Through the utilization of solar power, the market's micro, small, and medium-scale enterprise (MSME) owners are gaining access to stable, affordable, and clean energy, which is set to revolutionize the way they operate.

As of November 2023, SOLAD Integrated Power has successfully connected in the first phase, 200 commercial customers in the Iponri Market to high-capacity stand-alone solar power and battery storage systems for productive use.

SOLAD Integrated Power with support from the UEF has also undertaken a similar project at Ayangburen Market, Ikorodu where small businesses are already enjoying clean electricity supply.

UEF is a multi-donor results-based finance facility established to significantly speed up and scale up energy access across Sub-Saharan Africa, in line with SDG7 and the Paris Agreement. It provides catalytic, results-based grant payments to qualified renewable energy companies that provide verified end-user electricity connections.

The facility supports sustainable business models such as the energy-as-a-service and lease-to-own models – that alleviate the upfront cost barrier to adopting clean energy, enable the displacement of fuel generators and help developers to catalyze private commercial capital to scale their business operations.

UEF is managed by SEforALL and supported by the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet, Shell Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation, Africa Minigrid Developers Association, Power Africa, Good Energies, UKaid, Carbon Trust, IKEA Foundation, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

IT Firm Launches App to Simplify Event Listing, Ticketing, Social Networking

Chris Asika

Considering the ever-changing ways people discover events and connect with individuals who share similar interests, and the need for innovation to enhance and simplify these processes, Knit Technologies has launched its event listing and ticketing app known as Knit.

The live launch event which held recently was hosted by renowned socialite, Tomike Adeoye.

According to the founders, Knit enables people to discover and engage in events and activities through a user-friendly platform. "It combines location-based event discovery, interest-based recommendations, social networking, analytics and ticketing features, making it the go-to app for anyone looking to find and attend exciting local events, create and monetise their events, as well as connect with like-minded individuals."

Speaking at the launch, the co-founder, Fela Bank-Olemoh said: "We have a truly world class app and we are more than thrilled to introduce the app to Nigeria and beyond. Our goal is to further simplify the process of both organising and attending events. However, our mission extends beyond the event themselves; it has always been about fostering meaningful connections within local communities. With Knit, we have an app that allows individuals to efficiently create or discover events, secure tickets to their favourite shows and establish meaningful connections."

Bank-Olemoh further explained that the app was born out of an understanding of the pain points within the events industry and a resolve to proffer solutions through distinctive features which allows event organisers to create events and sell out tickets fast.

He said notable features include- social networking features, enabling users to chat, send videos etc to their connections in-app, weather forecast feature for event organisers and QR code integration.

To get started on the Knit app, he said interested users could download the app on Play Store and App Store. The could also visit www.knittechapp.com to learn more.



L-R; Regional Sales Manager, Access Bank, Rivers 3, Peace Nemiya; DiamondXtra Season 15, N1million Winner, Nwabuike Unachukwu; and, Branch Manager, 13 Old Aba Road Mini Branch , Access Bank Sadiat Adetunji during the cheque presentation ceremony for Diamonxtra Season 15 winners held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State… recently



L-R: Zonal Head, Access Bank Rotary Operation Group, Lagos, Adenike Jegede; Head South, Access Bank Rotary Operation Group, Foluso Adedeji; Member, CSR Committee, Ukachi Nzota; Rep. Kosofe LGA, Council Manager, Ogudu, Olanrenwaju Olalere; Permanent Sectary Lagos State Health Board District 2, Dr. Mrs. Dayo Lajide and Medical Officer Health, Kosofe LGA, Dr. Oguntoyinbo Kehinde during the Access Bank Commissioning of the ROG CSR Project at Ogudu Primary Health Centre. Lagos…. yesterday



L-R: Chairman, Charzin Group, Prince Charles Ezeagwu; Managing Director, Neros Pharmacy; Prof. Poly Emenike; National Chairman, Association of Community Pharmacy of Nigeria (ACPN); Adewale Oladigbolu; Book Launcher and Chairman, GreenLife Pharmaceuticals Limited, Dr. Obiora Chukwuka; Book Reviewer, Prof. Ngozi Osarenren; Managing Director, Annes Luxury Suite, Mrs. Obiageli Chukwuka and Financial Controller, GreenLife Pharmaceuticals Limited, Mr. Shaiilesh Kumal; at unveiling of the book titled " My Wilderness Journey", written by Dr. Chukwuka held in Lagos..... recently



L-R: Chief Operation Officer of Cedrus Group Africa, Monisola Folorunsho; GMD, Emerging Africa Group, Toyin Sanni; Group Head MCC and Business Strategy Cedrus Group Africa, Bassey Ekpeyong; Investment Banking Analyst Cedrus Group Africa, Oluwafisayomi Toyo receiving the award of the Fastest Growing Trust Company of the Year at the Business Day's BAFI Awards 2023 in Lagos…. recently.

TRIBUTE

Celebrating Theodore Orji at 73

Charles Ajunwa writes that as Senator Theodore Orji marks another year, he stands out as a patriotic leader

His political ascendancy didn't come so easy. He got to the peak of his career through dedication, hard work, integrity, honesty, loyalty and above all, the fear of God. Many say that mother nature has been so kind to him - As he served as Chief of Staff to executive governor for eight years, became a two-term governor, and icing on the cake he served as a two-term Senator (Abia Central).

For an unbroken 24 years, Senator Theodore Ahamefule Orji, served Abia State in particular and Nigeria in general, meritoriously. Before this time, he had served in various capacities as a public servant where he left indelible marks, a feat that endeared him to all who came in contact with him.

Orji, who marked his 73 birthday on November 9, always observed it solemnly with his creator without any fanfare or parties. "I'm not a party man. Anything I do, I do it quietly. If my birthday comes I celebrate it in a very quiet way - praying to God and thanking Him," Orji explained.

Orji was born in his hometown Amaokwe-Ugba, Ibeku in Umuahia North Local Government Area of Abia State on November 9, 1950. He was the only son of his mother and one whose father, Chief Tom Orji, a well-known Warrant Chief that built the very first storey building in modern Umuahia, the state capital.

Orji, who had his primary education at St. Michaels Catholic Primary School, Umuahia, proceeded to Santa Crux Secondary School, Olokoro in Umuahia South Local Government Area, before moving to Holy Ghost College, Owerri. He capped his educational pursuit with Bachelor of Arts Degree in English, from the prestigious University of Ibadan, in 1977.

After successfully completing his National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) programme in Sokoto State in 1978, Orji was employed as Administrative Officer in the old Imo State Civil Service on December 18, 1979. Upon creation of Abia State in August 1991,he returned to Umuahia to ensure a solid foundation for the smooth take-off of the new state. He served, at various times, in the Government House, the Bureau of Budget and Planning, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Orji's entry into politics didn't come to many as surprise as his good works spoke for him. He contested for and won the Governorship primaries of the Progressive Peoples Alliance (PPA), and eventually won the 2007 election and was sworn-in as the Executive Governor on May 29, 2007.

Ochendo, as he is fondly hailed by his people, laid a solid foundation for the state, during his eventful eight years as governor. Apart from his policies and programmes which transformed the image of the state and positioned her as one of the most active states in the country, he ushered in a new lease of life in the state, with his developmental projects.

On March 9, 2014, Orji was elected as Chairman of South East Governors' Forum, and having distinguished himself in the service of his fatherland, Orji, on September 29,2014, was conferred with the prestigious National Honours awards of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON), by then President Good luck Jonathan.



Orji

Orji ascribes his emergence as governor and Senator to destiny, crafted by Almighty God. According to him, "Once you are born in life, God destines you and if you are hardworking and follow God's destiny you will achieve your goal. When I was growing up there was no time I thought I would be governor. Honestly speaking, God has blessed me so much that I have gotten those things I never expected I would get in life. I never thought I would be governor. I was a civil servant and I was following the dictates of my father who said what he wanted me to be was a permanent secretary.

"And after achieving that, I was ready to go and rest until destiny came. This window of being a governor opened. It was the work of God; it opened and I went into it and succeeded. I succeeded not only for the first tenure, I succeeded for the second tenure and did eight years. Despite all constraints, God was there for me. And after doing those eventful eight years as governor, I made up my mind to go into retirement and rest.

"It was still my people whom God pushed and used. The people of Abia Central came and started persuading me. They said no, you are not going to retire. You will still go to the Senate. The Senate form was bought by my constituents; they helped me with the campaigns by talking to the people...I remain grateful to God and to every other person who has remained with me right from the time I was governor."

Orji, in 2016 was adjudged the third most productive senator in the Senate due to the many bills he sponsored in the Red Chambers namely: The Nigerian Investment Promotion Council Act Cap N117 2004 Repeal and Reenactment Bill, The Nigerian Biodiversity Bill 2015 (SB 79), Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (Alteration), Portfolio Designation Bill 2015, Deoxyribonucleic Acid (NDA) Bill 2015,Food Security Bill 2025, National Emergency Bill 2016, Nigerian Oli Research Development Agency Board Bill and many others including Motions of urgent national importance that he moved on the floor of the Senate.

Many indigent and intelligent undergraduate students from the six local governments comprising his senatorial zone benefitted from Orji's annual scholarship scheme, as each student got N100,000. The former governor also empowered numerous constituents with cash, and other empowerment equipment to boost their businesses.

Before exiting the 9th National Assembly, Orji voluntarily announced his retirement from active politics at least for now, in order to give the younger generation an opportunity to also prove themselves politically. It will also afford him the opportunity to give adequate attention to family, relax with his darling wife, Osinulo, and play with his grandchildren. Orji, has every reason to be thankful to God for blessing and leading him so far. He came, he saw and he conquered!

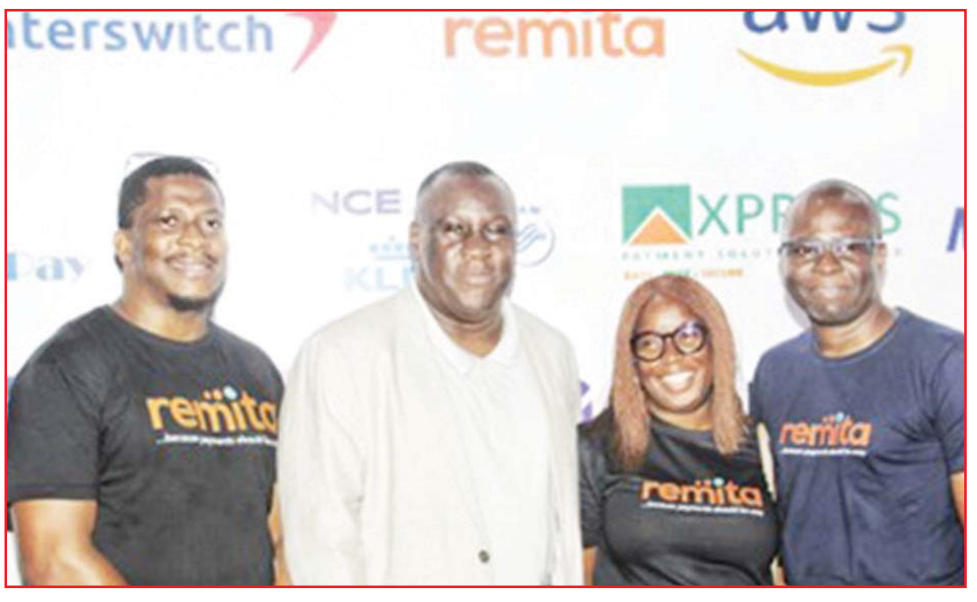
Once you are born in life God destines you and if you are hardworking and follow God's destiny you will achieve your goal. When I was growing up there was no time I thought I would be governor. Honestly speaking, God has blessed me so much that I have gotten those things I never expected I would get in life. I never thought I would be governor. I was a civil servant and I was following the dictates of my father who said what he wanted me to be was a permanent secretary

MARKET PLACE

with Omolabake Fasogbon... 08155131874



L-R: General Manager, Corporate Services, NEM Insurance Plc, Moji Teluwo; Managing Director, Andrew Ikekhua; Assistant General Manager, Underwriting, Bolanle Baruwa; Managing Director, Megalectrics Limited, Christopher Ubosi and Personal Assistant to Chairman, NEM Insurance, Stella Ugwu, during the presentation of Chief Executive Officer of the Year Award to NEM Insurance at the 2023 Almond Insurance Industry Awards, in Lagos...recently



L-R: Senior Vice President, Retail, Remita,Olatunji Ayodabo; Managing Director, SystemSpecs Technology Services Limited, Ademola Igbalajobi; Head of Strategy Management Office, Remita, Chika Nwogu; and Managing Director, Remita, Deremi Atanda at the 2023 Nigeria Fintech Week in Lagos...recently

Hero Larger Unveils Scheme to Formalise Apprenticeship System

Hero Lager, a product of International Breweries has announced an Apprenticeship System aimed at providing university education opportunity to young and aspiring entrepreneurs who have completed various trade apprenticeships.

Introducing the scheme at Onitsha Business School, Anambra, recently, the firm stated that the move aligned with its commitment to empowering young Nigerians to reach their full potential, improving youth employment and driving economic growth.

Marketing Director of International Breweries Plc, Bamise Oyegbami explained further that the programme, designed to bridge gap between trade skills and higher education is guided by a comprehensive academic curriculum that will undergo accreditation in select universities.

He said the apprenticeship curriculum was developed on the company's request by five professors and four Ph.D. researchers in Nigeria's universities who are quite conversant with the terrain.

He informed that the curriculum codified all the trade learning of an apprentice into a syllabus which would be supplemented with general studies courses from universities to become a certification course for apprentices.

Speaking further, Marketing Manager of Hero Lager, Dubem Orji stated that the company is in talk with key stakeholders in the education sector to ensure that the scheme receives the certification and recognition it deserves within the educational landscape.

"The goal for us is to project the importance of apprenticeship, making it more aspirational and a means for tackling unemployment.

"As a consumer-centric brand, we believe in empowering Nigerians and playing meaningful roles in the community. We are using this scheme to create employment that would benefit not just the applicants but their relatives and the larger society through the attendant positive domino effect. After completing their informal business training under a trade mentor, apprentices can proceed to the university to acquire formal business training to consolidate their learning", he said.

He added that up to 250 applicants will be granted access to a pool of N100 million seed funding to launch their businesses, upon completion of the three months course.

Commenting, the state's Commissioner for Industry, Christian Udechukwu, said, "The Igba Boi Apprenticeship System is the greatest business incubator in the world and what Hero Lager is doing by converging both formal and informal education is a breakthrough legacy and the state is fully supporting the company in this innovative step."

Stakeholders Lament Rising Poverty, Urge Policy Review

Stakeholders in the country have charged federal government on urgent review of economic policies such that will spur relief on suffering masses.

The stakeholders noted this recently at the 2023 edition of the MaroonSquare Discourse in Lagos, supported by Ross Luxemburg Foundation.

The discourse also saw to the presentation and review of a research work, themed: The Face of Poverty in Nigeria". The research was conducted by Yusufu Bala Usman Institute in Zaria.

Speaking at the discourse, a Professor of English at Obafemi Awolowo University, Chijioke Uwasomba decried worsening poverty, in which recent data by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) says over 133 million live below poverty line.

He blamed existing government policies for present plight, and called for sustainable interventions that will bring hope to the masses.

He said, "Nigeria's problem is dated back to 1981 with the austerity measures introduced by Shehu Shagari, which now got aggravated by the Structural Adjustment Programme of successive military government in 1983 and then the floating of the Naira on the advice of the IMF.

"A nation's currency is one of the most if not the most important element of a country. Nigeria's currency is today heading towards the way of Zimbabwe which has been completely undervalued.

"The government must quickly reset the economic policies that will see to the stability of the naira and make the industries productive."

Speaking further on the research, Policy Director of MaroonSquare, Onyeisi Chiemeke said the timing and theme of the research was apt, considering the present conditions of the masses.

Firms Partner to Build Capacity in Tech, Investment Research

A tech incubation platform, Instig Labs has teamed up with other software platforms- OpenBB and Pav Finance to train budding and intending financial analysts on investment research.

Programme Manager at Instig Labs, Michael Osumo explained that investment research which involve studying and analysing performance of financial assets has assumed a stage where it can be done better with innovative tools, given the advancement in technology.

He explained that the programme is aimed at helping financial analysts conduct investment research using latest technological tools including Python and OpenBB.

He said participants will be lectured using the python curriculum that aligns with JP Morgan Chase Python training programme.

"Participants will learn how to use Python to access, manipulate, analyse and visualise financial data from various sources, such as stock prices, earnings reports, financial statements, macroeconomic indicators and more," he said.

Founder of OpenBB, Didier Lopes said the firm is committed to democratising and making investment research accessible to everyone.

"Together with our innovative team, we have built AskOBB and OpenBB terminal into a collaborative platform for financial analysis", he said.

Also, Quant Researcher & Strategist at PAV Finance, Kalu Arunsi urged increasing impact of data and technology on finance.

"With useful data, as well as the techniques and technology to analyse them, we can achieve amazing results in terms of accurate insights that will guide our financial decisions," he said.

A facilitator at the programme, Paul Onyeka added that being equipped with digital technology skills will provide a huge advantage for operators in finance and business-related fields.

Fraud Examiners Urges Safer Digital Payment

The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE), Lagos chapter has called for strengthened security on digital payment platform to enhance adoption level and boost Nigerians' confidence in the innovation.

This is amid rising cases of digital fraud which has continued to rip the national economy.

Recent report by the Financial Institutions Training Centre (FITC) says Nigeria's loss to fraudulent activities has surged by 207.9 percent in the three months ending September of 2022.

Moreover, the banking sector has lost approximately N9.5 billion to electronic fraud in 2023, according to a report by Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS).

According to ACFE in a communique issued at the end of its 6th anti-fraud conference/investiture ceremony, this reality has continued to threaten the gains of technology and financial inclusion.

Stressing the importance of technology to the payment system, the association stated that this will drive innovations, with more businesses and individuals coming to embrace it.

"But stakeholders must provide reasonable assurance in the security and efficiency financial transactions for sustained acceptance. Once confidence is built and cyber security is assured, our payment system would be more modernised and this would drive the growth government desires and promote financial inclusion as the informal economy becomes subsumed into the mainstream economy", it noted.

On tackling digital fraud, the association recommended for collaboration between anti-fraud agencies and regulatory bodies across sectors, which it asserted that such would promotes a robust regulatory framework, and fosters public confidence.

T4 Education Unveils Prize Winners, Stresses Best Practices

Organisers of the World's Best School Prizes, T4 Education has announced winners of the 2023 edition of the global award initiative that aimed at societal growth and progress.

The award produced five winners in five categories, who got rewarded with $250,000 to be shared among them.

The organisers said the initiative was designed to celebrate exceptional schools committed to quality education and best practices, while emulating others to follow suit.

"We are out to celebrate players for the pivotal role they play in developing the next generation of learners and for their enormous contribution to societal progress", it stated.

A Nigerian school, Government Girls Day Secondary School made the list of the 10 finalists, following which the best five in the five award categories emerged.

The categories include: World's Best School Prize for Community Collaboration, Environmental Action, Innovation, Overcoming Adversity and Supporting Healthy Lives.

Winners in each category are identified as: SPARK Soweto, South Africa; Educativa Municipal Montessori sede San Francisco, Colombia; Riverside School, India; Max Rayne Hand in Hand Jerusalem School and EEMTI Joaquim Bastos Gonçalves in Brazil respectively.

A new Community Choice Award was also presented to Escola Municipal Professor Edson Pisani in Brazil after it won the most votes of all the World's Best School Prizes finalists in a public vote.

Commenting, Founder of T4 Education, Vikas Pota commended the efforts and input of award partners, including Accenture, American Express, and the Lemann Foundation.

EXPRESSION

'Overaged Children' Wrong



MEDIAGAFFES
BY
EBERE WABARA
ewabara@yahoo.com, 08055001948

"ICPC boss laments high rate of 'sex for grades' (sex-for-grades) in schools"

"Despite the huge money expended in (on) these periodic maintenance exercises, the nation's refineries have remained unproductive, forcing the country to depend so much on imported petroleum products at exorbitant rates."

Daily Independent Online of November 2 backs the floodgate of goofs this week: "The result is that many under-aged (sic) children are routinely subjected to abuse…." All the facts, all the sides: overage and underage (not 'overaged' or 'underaged') children.

The politics page of the above medium raises the tone with four slip-ups: "The Presidential Advisory Committee on National Conference recently kick started (kick-started) its sitting in Akure…."

"These facts have contributed greatly in (to) the level of congestion in the courts."

"…enjoy their loots and still aspire for (to) higher offices." Again, 'loot' is uncountable—and you aspire to, not for!

In order to address the divergent views on the plurality of 'machinery', I visited Wiktionary, an online portal on Google platform and here is the result: 'Machinery (countable and uncountable, plural machinery) (1.) The machines constituting a production apparatus, in a plant etc., collectively. (2) The working parts of a machine as a group. (3) The collective parts of something which allow it to function. (4) (Figuratively): The literary devices used in a work, notably for dramatic effect'. 'Machinery' is an assemblage of machines or mechanical apparatuses. If you must use a plural form for 'machine', use the word 'machines', not 'machineries' to avoid needless morphological controversies. The machinery, not 'machineries', of government.

My dear reader, here is a revelation: restricting yourself to the printed dictionary—no matter its currency—will circumscribe your knowledge span and development. Based on Mr. Ken Ugbechie's suggestion that I enquire more about 'machinery', 'convoy' and 'motorcade', I set out and rediscovered a boundless goldmine of knowledge: additional online dictionaries too numerous to be listed here and other related portals. Most of them, however, require subscription. I recommend grammarly.com because of its comprehensiveness.

It is a thin line between 'convoy' and 'motorcade'. From my research, both words can be used interchangeably. The only difference is their etymological origin. The underlining point is that the two words involve processions of vehicles for security/escort, essentially, mutual benefit, ceremony and other sundry deployments. So, the Kogi governor's fatalistic procession could be described as a convoy or motorcade.

"At Electro-hall, our trained engineers ensure that your photocopier get (gets) back to work as soon as possible."

"The Admiral lived a glorious live (life) of service to his community and to the nation."

THE NATION ON SUNDAY of November 5 contained a logistical infraction: "Irregularities, logistics (logistic/logistical) chaos mar Anambra poll" Truth in defence of freedom: Adjective (logistic—also logistical) and noun (logistics).

Now the inside pages: "Alaafin advocates for re-orientation of moral values" Firstly, yank away 'for' and secondly, do you re-orientate values or people?

"NURTW crisis: Ondo drivers' wives protest over detention of husbands" You protest against/at/about (not over) something. You can also protest something: I protested my friend's arrest. Similarly: Ondo drivers' wives protest husbands' detention

"Then another committee of eminent bureaucrats would be set up to prepare what we know as Government White Paper…." My comment: delete 'government'. 'White papers' are issued by governments.

Still on THE NATION ON SUNDAY: "The 4th Conference of the Forum of Cities in Transition holds (held) recently in Kaduna…."

"We have always believed in the team's enormous potentials (potential/potentialities) for greatness and our support has been consistent and unwavering." (Centre-spread advertisement by Guinness) 'Potential' is uncountable.

"Oduah: Pitfalls of Reps (Reps') report"

SATURDAY INDEPENDENT of November 4 disseminated many improprieties starting from the front page: "THISDAY bomber bags life sentence…N150m awarded to family victims" A rewrite of the sub-head: Victims' families awarded N150m

"EFCC arrests Lamido's sons over N11b money laundering" A voice of your own: The governor's sons were arrested for (not over) N11b money laundering!

"Let's go to England…All expense paid trip for 60 people" (Full-page advertisement by DStv) Lexical terms and conditions apply: All-expenses-paid trip for 60 people. There is nothing like 'all expense paid trip'! Grammar is not Samba. In the months ahead, DStv will continue to replicate this promotional blunder.

"Abiola's wife, others charged over N617m bank fraud" The SATURDAY INDEPENDENT sub-editors must be obsessed with 'over'. They were charged with (not over) fraud.

"Ethiopia set to fly over (this word, again!) Ethiopia (Ethiopian) Antelopes"

"Sanwo-Olu assures on making Lagos liveable (livable)" Furthermore, who did he assure?

"Man bags 21 years (years') imprisonment for snatching motorcycle in Ibadan"

"1.3m people die yearly through road mishap (mishaps)"

"…is one celebrity who seem (seems) to do big things without attracting the paparazzi."

"Producers calls (why?) for more local content at DISCOP"

Still on SATURDAY INDEPENDENT: "False allegations have promoted Liberation City" True confession: what is the meaning of 'false allegation'? My dear reader, please jettison 'false' so that our syntactic ministry can move to a higher realm. You can say grievous allegations—not false!

Finally from the back page with this boyish goof: "Ladipo, Taiwo tips (what?) Eagles for…"

FEEDBACK

READING through Nigerian dailies, one is always scandalized by the unbecoming repetition of a barrage of howlers which are painstakingly corrected week in, week out here (and Thisday on Saturday, Sunday Tribune, et al). The impression one always goes away with is that many people suffer from intellectual conceit (as earlier observed). They are beyond correction! If not, why do they remain heedlessly and pig-headedly incorrigible? Admission of one's shortcomings—of any hue—is an integral hallmark of true greatness.

(Folorunso Babafemi, Ilesa, 08133197524).

Where Bismarck Rewane Got It Wrong - 2



COUNTERPOINT
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We conclude the seminal 'treatise' of a rejoinder by Oluwaseun Theophilus Tubi, an economist, which probes certain economic elements and prognoses in the 86-page foundational 'treatise' of the respected economist and banker, Rewane J. Bismarck recently delivered at a session of Lagos Business School programme. Over to Tubi…:

"On page 32 of 86: WHY IS THE NAIRA DEPRECIATING?

1. On High Naira speculation. The following quote says it all, "The amount by which the parallel-market exchange rate exceeds the official rate, known as the parallel-market premium, will depend upon a host of factors, in particular, the penalty structure and the volume of resources devoted to apprehension and prosecution of violators." (Pierre-Richard Agenor, Princeton University Essays in International Finance, 1992.)

Suggested counter-measures on this: Nigeria as a sovereign republic cannot and should never allow itself to be at the mercy of speculators. Such a situation is anathema to nationhood and erodes the very concept, as it subjects the country to the vagaries of economic subjugation.

The Nigeria Naira is the only legal tender within Nigeria, and it is time our laws were dutifully enforced. Therefore, a timeline should be set for all Forex within the Nigerian economy to be lodged at DMBs for onward transfer and domiciliation/lodgement with CBN. Owners are at full liberty to access and transact legitimate transactions with their domiciliary accounts, other than cash withdrawal of USD$.

All Forex not within the banking system after the set timeline shall become forfeit to the federal government. This shall be added to the current whistle-blower system and the same reward condition shall be extended to it. Set up a Special Forex Recovery Task Squad for enforcement.

All foreign currency remittances should be cashed/credited to Nigeria and be domiciled with CBN.

Forex speculators causing unreasonably high (phantom) demand causing Naira depreciation will be effectively neutralised by CBN insisting on proper documentation of all Forex requests, disbursement, and usage. Collusion to circumvent this provision in any way should be treated as economic sabotage.

Any and all regulatory restrictions placed on import of Forex is therefore counter-productive and should be removed.

CBN to retain within its vaults (all bullion) and to keep Forex balances on its books against keeping the majority of it abroad.

Forex allocation should follow approved and well-defined national priorities.

The Banking Sector needs another round of integrity tests. Most are essentially not financially sound.

CBN must be financially re-engineered to deliver on its mandate to fund development programs. The current bullion purchase must be strengthened as well as the proper management of its Forex reserve.

2. On Low Forex Liquidity as Gross External Reserves down 13% to $33.24bn in September (y-o-y) despite higher oil prices. Oil production (OPEC quota - 1.6mbpd), and Average Forex turnover down 8.85% to $84.60m. According to a study, Nigeria's main forex revenue is haemorrhaging on two fronts: Lack of accurate data on the actual number of producing Oil Wells and Active Rigs operating within its territorial economic zone, caused by administrative inadequacies.

Dearth of verified actual crude oil and condensate production figures even from amongst so-called authoritative sources, both local and international.

Analysis under the Drilled and Completed Oil Wells Category found that between 1999 and 2017, a cumulative total discrepancy of ₦12.478 trillion or better still, when adjusted for inflation, ₦14.786 trillion in 2022 value. That is an average annual revenue loss of ₦1.643 trillion.

Analysis under the Active Rigs Category revealed that the Nigerian economy lost, in just nine years, between 2010 to 2018, a cumulative total of ₦28.358 trillion or better still, when adjusted for inflation, ₦34.170 trillion in 2022 value, an average annual revenue loss of ₦3.797 trillion.

Analysis under the Crude Oil and Condensate Production Category showed that for the period between 2010 and 2019, a cumulative total of $21.265 billion or better still, when adjusted for inflation, $22.967 billion in 2022 value, this translates to a consistent average revenue loss of $2.2billion annually. (Tubi & Adenikinju, 2023)

Nigeria is owed by international oil companies (IOCs) operating within its shores. According to Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) 2019 Annual Report, it was observed that "the latest years for which income tax examinations had been finalized for Nigeria was year 2000". Meaning Chevron Nigeria Limited is in arrears of 21-year income tax remittance!

Add to that the sum of $62 billion judgment debt being owed to Nigeria by IOCs in line with the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) law.

On page 33 of 86: WHAT IS THE FAIR VALUE OF THE NAIRA?

With due respect, BRJ's assertion and the 'way' he used purchasing power parity (PPP) to determine the fair value of the Naira is subjective and violates one of the cardinal rules and principles prescribing under what conditions absolute purchasing power parity holds, to wit: "absolute purchasing power parity holds when the purchasing power of a unit of currency is exactly equal in the domestic economy and in a foreign economy, once it is converted into foreign currency at the market exchange rate." (Gabriel Zucman, 2005).

Put in another way, PPP is a simple theory that holds that "the nominal exchange rate between two currencies should be equal to the ratio of aggregate price levels between the two countries, so that a unit of currency of one country will have the same purchasing power in a foreign country. (Taylor & Taylor, 2004). Emphasis mine.

In essence, PPP suggests that the value of one Naira in Nigeria should ordinarily be at par (short form of 'at parity'); that is, equal to one Dollar in the US, or one GB Pounds in the UK.

It is the reason why local currencies like the Naira can easily be classified as weak or strong against other major currencies. Whatever value the Naira assumes against other world currencies is ultimately a decision of the monetary authorities, using standard templates. Therefore, if a Big Mac costs one unit of the dollar ($1) in the US (dollar being their unit of currency), it should ordinarily cost one unit of the Naira (₦1) in Nigeria; NOT what one Naira has weakened to against the dollar. That is the point.

Again, and more importantly, PPP measurement index is not an end in itself but a means to an end, and as such, it is an indicator (one of many) used as a metric for comparing/measuring the standard of living conditions between two countries. The corresponding argument is, therefore, what wage rate (minimum wage) would afford a citizen at least one square meal a day in either economy? This is universally acknowledged as the barest minimum to keep citizens at least on, if not above, the poverty line. So, if you do not earn up to $1.20 a day (not per hour, for a whole day's work), you are considered living below the poverty line. US minimum wage is $7.50 per hour, while minimum wage in Nigeria is N30,000 - that is, N1,000 for a whole day's work, not an hour (less than $1 at parallel market rate), which equates to a low standard of living.

The PPP model assumes the value of each county's unit of currency must give an equal level of utility satisfaction. So, to isolate the current weakened value of the Naira, and ascribe it as its true or close to its true value, that I respectfully disagree with.

Finally, it was an enjoyable experience reading through the renowned expert's presentation, and learning from his wealth of invaluable experience."

(Tubi is a Consultant Economist and Energy Expert - tubiotesq@yahoo.co.uk,)

GLOBAL SOCCER

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULL-OUT

11.11.2023



TARGETING FIRST WIN

PAGE. 27



Nathan Tella

Dream Comes True



Tella challenged by an opponent in a Bundesliga match

Nathan Tella

Dream Comes True

He had always wanted to don the Super Eagles colours, but his wish may be achieved faster than expected. Ahead of Nigeria's upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifier matches and with regular left winger-Samuel Chukwueze out with injury, English-born Nathan Tella is seen as a direct replacement for the former Villarreal man and Jose Peseiro has included the Bayer Leverkusen forward in his 21-man list for Lesotho and Zimbabwe encounters

Ahead of Nigeria's 2026 World Cup qualifier matches against Lesotho and Zimbabwe on Thursday and Sunday respectively, Super Eagles head coach, Jose Paseiro is contending with injuries to some of his first team players and as a result, some fresh faces have been drafted into the team.

One of such beneficiaries is Bayer Leverkusen's forward, Nathan Tella, who has never hidden his intention to don the colours of the three-time African champions as he was seen as a direct replacement for injured AC Milan winger, Samuel Chukwueze.

The former Southampton forward has received his debut call-up to represent the Super Eagles in the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

The Super Eagles will face Lesotho and Zimbabwe in the coming week, but injuries to key players may pose a selection challenge for the Portuguese coach, who had already seen Tella as a replacement for Chukwueze.

Tella, a talented footballer born to Nigerian parents in England, has expressed his strong desire to represent the Super Eagles on the international stage.

"I've always said for the last three or four years that Nigeria is a big part of my life – even though I've been an 'England boy' from London all my life. If I got the chance to play for Nigeria, I would be more than happy and accept it. I've already told my parents and friends that I would do that," he mentioned, as quoted by Bild.

Reports suggest that discussions have been ongoing behind the scenes, and Super Eagles head coach has included the 25-year-old winger in his squad for the upcoming matches.

The winger, who made his move to Bayer Leverkusen in the summer, gained attention for his impact during Burnley's return to the English Premier League while on loan from Southampton.

"He has been doing really well and before anything else, I must mention his effort. It's so important to point that out. He has goalscoring ability but many with that ability don't put the work in for the team but he does. He has all the tools and helps us in so many ways, not just goalscoring." said Burnley boss, Vincent Kompany during Tella's successful loan spell at the club.

Tella's addition to the national team is anticipated to provide depth and excitement to the Super Eagles' lineup as they prepare to face Lesotho and Zimbabwe.

Despite being only 24 years old, Tella has a wealth of experience and is a well-travelled player, playing for Arsenal and Burnley.

The England-born Leverkusen striker has explained the rationale behind his decision to play for Nigeria.

A graduate of Arsenal's prestigious Hale-End Academy, Tella could've easily chosen to represent the Three Lions, but rather, felt a strong calling to play for Nigeria.

The midfielder sent a "come get me message" to the Nigeria Football Federation, NFF after declaring his intent to play for Nigeria.

"I feel like it's always been a big part of my life. I was born in London and I've been in England all my life, but at the same time my parents and grandparents are Nigerians, so I feel like it's the bright route to go down so I wanna do something that makes my family proud as well," the 24-year-old said in an interview with OmaSports TV.

Tella he'd been speaking with the two-time Bundesliga rookie of the month-Victor Boniface on how it feels like to play for Nigeria. "I've asked him quite a bit and at Southampton I had Joe Aribo as well, so I spoke to both of them just to see what it's like, but obviously, I've been with Victor and he's been telling me what's it like so if I get the chance, I'll love to play with him there," he added.

With the Super Eagles squad stacked with impressive attackers, Tella believes he can be a part of them if he continues to work hard.

"It's a very talented national team, but I've always liked a challenge myself. The reason I'm here is to push myself and challenge myself. I wanted to play with better players, and with the national team, you're playing with the best players in the country. By all means, I want to get to know them, play with them, learn from them and then get the opportunity to improve," the right-winger mentioned.

Tella initially started out life as a footballer in Arsenal's youth academy, where he spent 10 years before moving to Southampton as a 17-year-old in 2017 - just three months before his 18th birthday and following unsuccessful trials at both Reading and Norwich. With Saints, Tella made his professional debut in the EFL Trophy for the club's U23 side during the 2017/18 campaign and went on to earn a first senior appearance with a two-minute cameo against Norwich in the Premier League on 19 June, 2020.

It was away from Southampton that Tella delivered his best season, though, as he helped Burnley to the 2022/23 Championship title while his parent club suffered relegation from England's top-flight. Tella was the club's top-scorer with 17 goals in 39 league appearances as Burnley romped the division and collected 101 points in the process.

GLOBAL SOCCER



Ike Chinedu of Heartland FC challenges Leonard Ugochukwu of Enugu Rangers during the Oriental Derby last weekend at the Awka City Stadium, Awka

What NPFL Broadcast Deal Brings to the Table

Harry Iwuala

A new vista pointing to a growth trajectory for the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) opened on Thursday, November 2 when StarTimes and the League penned a deal worth a total of 5.9 billion over five years.

It was for many, an end to years of broadcast anomie as the last six years saw all manner of deals put on the table leading to erosion of broadcast quality and eventual loss of value for the most important asset of any football league.

"Put the league on tv or when will the league return to television" was always a common retort by critics and some others who apparently didn't understand the dynamics of broadcast rights marketing.

The point should be made that one of the biggest obstacles to selling the NPFL Broadcast right is the huge production cost occasioned by infrastructure deficit at most, if not all our poorly designed and constructed stadiums. For those who may not have been privy to the fact, it was a major reason for the exit of Supersport which also had issues with the forex.

In terms of value, the NPFL crashed to Ground Zero of Broadcast rights and the recent selling of the NPFL Broadcast rights to StarTimes is a helluva leap for the renewed hope for our domestic league which began with the defunct Interim Management Committee (IMC) that was the forerunner to the substantive NPFL Board led by Hon Gbenga Elegbeleye.

Interestingly, the cry of 'put our league on television' has become muted and morphed to excoriating comments on value of the deal in comparison with other African countries.

For proper perspectives, the NPFL deal over five years goes in progression of 1.06b, 1.10b, 1.20b, 1.25b and 1.30b bringing a total of 5.91b which at the official exchange rate is approximately $7.7m.

In January this year, the Ghana Premier League which has enjoyed a relatively stable broadcast rights market signed a similar five years deal with same StarTimes for $5.25 which is a flat $1,050,000 per year.

Like Nigeria, Ghana also suffered from the withdrawal of South Africa based Supersport from broadcast relationships.

In Tanzania, the Bakhresa Group based in Dar es salaam bought the Tanzania Mainland Premier League broadcast right through their Azam TV for £7,500,000.

Bakhresa is an indigenous founded company just as South Africa's DStv that bought the Premier Soccer League (PSL) in the country for approximately $119.3m.

It is not fair to compare the television broadcast market strength of Nigeria with some of these countries and it is perhaps only two groups of people who would not appreciate what the StarTimes deal represents for the NPFL going forward.

The first are clout chasers who want to be heard irrespective of their inability to properly read the market dynamics and make an honest informed commentary. The others are those who innocently do not understand the workings of broadcast marketing but would love to see games on television.

Today, the English Premier League (EPL) is considered the most valuable in terms of Broadcast sales at £4.896b spanning 2022-2025 but it hasn't always been this rich but has been an outcome of a foundation built since 1992 with the British Government and private businesses working together to develop a football economy that has not only created jobs but also become a major contributor to the Gross Domestic Product. Due to the power of television, the EPL has created a Football Tourism industry in the United Kingdom including a global capital inflow from sales of broadcast rights.

Elegbeleye, as the Chairman of the IMC and now NPFL did offer an assurance that his team would take all necessary steps to actualise the return of the matches to the screens. During the IMC one-season tenure, the league acquired a Broadcast Streaming Partner in Propel Sports Africa (PSA) that became one of the country's Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) channel during the tail end of the President Muhammadu Buhari administration as they brought in expensive high technology 10

Iwuala is NPFL Director of Communications

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Heartland Go in Search of First League Win against Bayelsa Utd

Kunle Adewale

With no win after seven matches in the Nigeria Premier Football League, Heartland FC of Owerri are determine to record their first league victory as the Naze millionaires welcome Bayelsa United to the Dan Anyiam, Stadium, Owerri in one of the Matchday 8 fixtures.

Both teams lost their last weekend's encounters and would be determine to get to winning ways. While Heartland lost on the road to Enugu Rangers 2-0 in the Oriental derby, Bayelsa United let down their supporters as they were beaten at the Samson Siasia Stadium, Yenegoa by high-flying Lobi Stars.

In a chat with THISDAY, head coach of the Naze Millionaires, Christian Obi, said he's optimistic of his side carting away all the three points at stake after undeservedly losing to Rangers last weekend in the Oriental derby.

"The boys put up a very heroic performance against Rangers but were unlucky to have lost in such a manner. However, they are determine to build on that and consolidate with Bayelsa's visit on Wednesday. We will definitely walk our way from the bottom as that is not our place," an optimistic Obi said.

Heartland are currently at the bottom of the table with four points resulting from four draws, three losses, and zero wins, while Bayelsa United is in the 19th position, with six points, having lost five and won two matches.

Bayelsa United have lost their last 5 away league games and on a poor run of just one win in 12 away matches and have failed to score a single goal in their last three away Premier League games.

The match, earlier billed to be held today, coincidentally falls on election day in Imo and Bayelsa States.

A statement signed by the league's Chief Operating Officer, Davidson Owumi, dated Wednesday, 8, 2023, said the match had been postponed till Wednesday November 15.

"Sequel to the governorship elections in Imo and Bayelsa state, kindly be informed that the above matchday eight fixture has been rearranged for Wednesday November 15, 2023.

"Please ensure that necessary logistics are in place for a hitch-free game. The above is for your information and continuous compliance. Accept the assurances of our warm and esteemed sporting regards," the statement read.

NPFL TABLE

Team	P	W	D	L	Pts
1 Lobi Stars	7	4	2	1	14
2 Enugu	7	4	1	2	13
3 Shooting Stars	7	4	1	2	13
4 Remo Stars	6	4	0	2	12
5 Abia	7	4	0	3	12
6 Sport Lagos	7	3	2	2	11
7 Bendel Ins.	6	3	2	1	11
8 Plateau Utd	7	3	1	3	10
9 Rivers Utd	7	2	3	2	9
10 Kano Pillars	7	3	0	4	9
11 Gombe Utd	7	3	0	4	9
12 Doma United	6	2	2	2	8
13 Sunshine	7	2	2	3	8
14 Katsina Utd	7	2	2	3	8
15 Kwara Utd	7	2	2	3	8
16 Enyimba	4	2	1	1	7
17 Akwa Utd	7	1	4	2	7
18 Tornadoes	7	2	1	4	7
19 Bayelsa Utd	7	2	0	5	6
20 Heartland	7	0	4	3	4

Matchday 8 Fixtures

TODAY

Doma Utd v Akwa Utd 15:00

SUNDAY

Kano Pillars	v Enyimba 16:00
Katsina Utd	v Rivers Utd 16:00
Kwara Utd	v Shooting 16:00
Lobi Stars	v Sporting Lagos 16:00
Niger Tornadoes	v Insurance 16:00
Plateau Utd	v Abia Warriors 16:00
Remo Stars	v Gombe Utd 16:00
Sunshine Stars	v Enugu Rangers 16:00
Heartland	v Bayelsa Utd 16:00

GLOBAL SOCCER

Chelsea Test Man City Resolve at Stamford Bridge

Manchester City will be looking to claim their sixth successive win in all competitions when they travel to Stamford Bridge to face Chelsea in the Premier League tomorrow. The Citizens followed up their thumping 6-1 top-flight win over Bournemouth last weekend with a comfortable 3-0 home victory against Young Boys on Tuesday to secure their spot in the last 16 of the Champions League with two Group G games to spare, while the Blues would be buoyed by their 4-1 defeat of Tottenham on Monday night



Senegalese former Chelsea defender, Kalidou Koulibaly tries to stop Manchester City striker, Erling Haaland last season

For the second gameweek running, Chelsea will headline the latest round of Premier League fixtures as the Blues welcome treble winners Manchester City to Stamford Bridge for Sunday afternoon's blockbuster battle.

Mauricio Pochettino's return to Tottenham Hotspur on Monday ended in an extraordinary 4-1 win, while the Citizens sealed a last-16 Champions League berth by putting three goals past Young Boys without reply in midweek.

Prowling the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium touchline nearly four years after being given his P45 by Daniel Levy, Pochettino's Lilywhites homecoming could have very well turned into a nightmare as Dejan Kulusevski's deflected effort broke the deadlock just six minutes in.

However, an unforeseen Spurs implosion saw two red cards to Cristian Romero and Destiny Udogie and two injuries to integral players in James Maddison and Micky van de Ven, allowing Chelsea to snap the Premier League's last remaining unbeaten record as Cole Palmer's penalty and Nicolas Jackson's hat-trick subjected Spurs to a humiliating night.

Even with two extra players on the field, Pochettino's team were left to rue wastefulness as Spurs held out, but Postecoglou inadvertently ended up hitting the self-destruct button as he deployed his defensive line high up the field, gifting Jackson three tap-ins as the Blues finally made their runs in behind pay.

After collecting just one point from two October London derbies with Brentford and Arsenal, Chelsea have opened November as they mean to go on with successive beatings of Blackburn Rovers and Tottenham, but the Stamford Bridge faithful are still staring the familiar sight of mid-table mediocrity as their side languish in 10th spot.

Points-wise, Chelsea have a chasm of nine separating them from both the top four and the relegation zone and remain wholly unreliable on home soil - their only Premier League win from their last 13 matches at Stamford Bridge came against new boys Luton Town - and they have failed to score in three of their last four top-flight games on familiar territory.

Manchester City certainly cannot relate when it comes to profligacy on home turf, as Pep Guardiola's men have averaged a goal every 20 minutes in their two most recent Etihad battles with Bournemouth and Young Boys, embarrassing the former 6-1 thanks to a Jeremy Doku masterclass.

The Belgian's opening goal and record-breaking quartet of assists propelled the champions to their rightful place at the top of the pile - one point clear of Tottenham before the ravaged Lilywhites take on Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday lunchtime - and Guardiola's charges barely had to break a sweat to progress to the Champions League knockout rounds in midweek.

It was truly men against boys when Man City hosted Young Boys, as a pair of Erling Haaland strikes either side of a sublime Phil Foden finish ensured that Man City would be present in the latter stages of Europe's premier competition, while also extending the visitors' winning sequence to five games in all competitions.

Since losing their attacking bite against Arsenal, the treble winners have netted 17 goals across their quintet of consecutive wins, but their only points dropped in the top flight this season have come on the road, where they also have just five Premier League clean sheets to boast in 2023.

However, one of those shut-outs came at Stamford Bridge in January, where a 1-0 win over Chelsea came three days before a 4-0 FA Cup thumping and also preceded a 1-0 Etihad success in May; the latter result condemned the hosts to a sixth successive defeat without a goal against the Citizens, whom they have not conquered since the 2021 Champions League final.

Meanwhile, pundit Chris Sutton has shared his prediction for Manchester City's upcoming Premier League clash against Chelsea.

Sutton drops Man City prediction ahead of Chelsea showdown

Written in his latest prediction column for BBC Sport ahead of this weekend's top-flight fixtures, Sutton had this to say about City's clash at Stamford Bridge.

He said: "This result really depends on how City play, though, rather than what Chelsea try to do. Pep Guardiola's side have a few injuries to contend with but it doesn't really make much difference who comes in or out of their team. Their squad is just so strong. Whoever plays, City are just relentless. They will win by two goals, it's only really a question of whether Chelsea will score or not."

With both sides having played 11 league games, City find themselves at the top of the table with 27 points having won nine and losing two of their matches.

Across those games, the Citizens have scored 28 goals and conceded eight, leaving them with the best attacking and defensive record in the division.

As for Chelsea, they have racked up a mixed bag of results so far, winning four, drawing three and losing four, finding the net 17 times and conceding 12 goals along the way.

Even though Mauricio Pochettino's side gave Tottenham Hotspur their first defeat of the campaign on Monday with a 4-1 victory away from home, it's easy to see why Sutton has backed City to grab all three points this weekend.

Moving forward, if the Manchester club can leave Stamford Bridge with a win this weekend, this will take them a step closer to regaining their Premier League title and put the players in a good space heading into the latest international break.

Head -to-Head

23/21/05	Man City	1 - 0 Chelsea
23/05/01	Chelsea	0 - 1 Man City
22/15/01	Man City	1 - 0 Chelsea
21/25/09	Chelsea	0 - 1 Man City
21/08/05	Man City	1 - 2 Chelsea
21/03/01	Chelsea	1 - 3 Man City
20/25/06	Chelsea	2 - 1 Man City
19/23/11	Man City	2 - 1 Chelsea
19/10/02	Man City	6 - 0 Chelsea
18/08/12	Chelsea	2 - 0 Man City

Premier League Table

TEAM	P	GD	PTS
Tottenham	10	13	26
Leicester	15	20	39
Ipswich	15	14	36
Leeds	15	10	28
Southampton	15	0	27
West Brom	15	10	26
Preston	15	-2	25
Cardiff	15	7	24
Sunderland	15	8	23
Hull	15	2	23
Blackburn	15	-1	22
Bristol City	15	0	21
Middlesbrough	15	-1	21
Stoke	15	-2	20
Swansea	15	2	19
Birmingham	15	-1	19
Watford	15	0	18
Norwich	15	-4	17
Millwall	15	-4	17
Plymouth	15	1	16
Coventry	15	-2	15
Huddersfield	15	-13	15
Rotherham	15	-12	11
QPR	15	-16	9
Sheff Wed	15	-16	6

PREMIER LEAGUE

TODAY

Wolves	v Tottenham	12:30
Arsenal	v Burnley	15:00
Crystal Palace	v Everton	15:00
Man Utd	v Luton Town	15:00
Bournemouth	v Newcastle	17:30

SUNDAY

Aston Villa	v Fulham	14:00
Brighton	v Sheffield Utd	14:00
Liverpool	v Brentford	14:00
West Ham	v Nott'm Forest	14:00
Chelsea	v Man City	16:30

La Liga

TODAY

Vallecano	v Girona	13:00
Almería	v Sociedad	15:15
Granada	v Getafe	17:30
Osasuna	v Las Palmas	17:30
Madrid	v Valencia	20:00

SUNDAY

Mallorca	v Cádiz	13:00
Barcelona	v Alavés	15:15
Sevilla	v Real Betis	17:30
Atlético	v Villarreal	20:00

Hot Shot

PLAYERS	CLUB	GOALS
Erling Haaland	Man City	11
Heung-min Son	Tottenham	8
Mohamed Salah	Liverpool	8
Jarrod Bowen	West Ham	7
Callum Wilson	Newcastle	7
Hwang Hee-chan	Wolves	6
Alexander Isak	Newcastle	6
Bryan Mbuemo	Brentford	6

GLOBAL SOCCER



L-R: Alli Adebayo; Director, Diageo Guinness Nigeria, Wahab Aminu-Sarumi; Golf Captain, golf section of Ikoyi Club 1938, Olusegun Alebiosu, Executive Director. Chief Risk Officer, FirstBank, Abiona Babarinde, General Manager, Marketing & Corporate Communications, Coscharis Group



L-R: President, Kaduna Polo Club, Mohammed Babangida, tournament manager, Atiku Abubakar Saleeh, Group Executive, Retail Banking, (FirstBank) North, Shehu Aliyu, Emir of Katsina, Abdulmumini Kabir Usman, Governor of Katsina State, Dr. Umar Dikko Radda in group photograph with the winning team; Kangimi

Leicester Boss Gives Return Date for Ndidi

The Nigeria Football Federation, on Thursday night, announced the roster for the Super Eagles' upcoming 2026 World Cup qualifying matches against Lesotho and Zimbabwe, with four key players Victor Osimhen, Samuel Chukwueze, Wlfred Ndidi and Zaidu Sanusi not called up.

Ndidi had a scan before Leicester City's home game against Sunderland and was advised by the Foxes medical team to rest until a proper and detailed investigation was carried out.

Subsequent tests revealed that the central midfielder was suffering from a muscular injury, which was worse than what was first reported.

Maresca has offered a timescale on Ndidi's recovery, saying the former Genk ace would likely make his comeback from injury after the upcoming international break.

In quotes relayed by Leicester City's official website, the Italian tactician stated: "Ndidi and Yunus are still out. Hopefully we can have both after the international break.

"Dennis is joining us for part of the session already, so hopefully he can have him after the break. Callum is still out and that's all."

Ndidi was in top form prior to his spell on the sidelines, registering three goals and four assists in 15 matches across all competitions.

Maresca faced the cameras yesterday morning to preview his side's EFL Championship clash against Middlesbrough at the Riverside Stadium and one topic he touched on was the injury situation.

Mikel Felicitate with Diaz over Kidnapped Father's Release

Former Super Eagles Captain, Mikel John Obi has reacted to the news of the release of Luís Díaz's father.

The Liverpool forward's father Luís Manuel Díaz was kidnapped last month and spent 13 days in the den of the kidnappers before his release.

The mother of the Colombian forward was also kidnapped but had been rescue d earlier by the security forces.

The unfortunate incident made the 26-year-old miss Liverpool's 3-0 victory over Nottingham Forest but he returned to action last weekend when they faced Luton Town and helped the Reds secure a vital point with a goal in the 95th minute.

It was confirmed that Díaz's father was released yesterday and Mikel has taken to social media to felicitate with the left winger.

He wrote on his Instagram account: "Glad your father has been released, I can relate to this feeling of Joy"

The former Chelsea midfielder had also been in familiar territory with the Columbian international on two occasions.

The 2013 AFCON winner's father was first kidnapped in 2011 and was also held to ransom seven years later, hours before Nigeria faced Argentina in the last group game of the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Over 200 Participants Set for 62nd FirstBank Lagos Amateur Golf Open Championship

As this year's edition of the annual Lagos Amateur Open Golf Championship tees off on Thursday, November 16, over 200 golfers from across the country and beyond will be battling for honours, while tournament's sponsor, FirstBank of Nigeria limited, has pledge its continuous support and sponsorship of World Amateur Golf Recognition (WAGR) recognised tournament.

Speaking at this year's pre-tournament briefing at the golf section of Ikoyi Club 1938 on Thursday, Chief Risk Officer of FirstBank, Olusegun Alebiosu, Executive Director, who represented, Chief Executive Officer, FirstBank Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan; said the continuous sponsorship of Lagos Open is a proof of the bank's commitment to the development of talents across all its legacy sports.

"Over the years, FirstBank has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the development of sporting talents in Nigeria, as part of our legacy sports initiatives which includes golf, polo, basketball, football and tennis among others, he said.

The 62nd in the series of the competition will tee off on November 16 with corporate golf challenge for charity, which according to. Alebiosu, is the bank's way of giving back to the society.

Last year, the sum some of N10m raised and shared between Pacelli School for the Blind and Down Syndrome Foundation Nigeria.

Qualified amateurs take their turn on the course the following day to battle for the event's trophy, while the low handicap golfer will return on Saturday in continuation of their quest for honour.

Sunday, November 19, which is the grand finale, will also see former Lagos Open Champion winners take turn on the course for their 18-holes round for a prize money of N4m.

The FirstBank Lagos Amateur Open Golf Championship is now one of the international golf events where all amateur golfers worldwide can participate and amass points to aid their WAGR rankings.

Chelsea, Man City Go Head-to-Head Live on GOtv

Reigning champions, Manchester City will be keen to extend their six-game winning streak against Chelsea when they visit Stamford Bridge this weekend for their Premier League clash which will be broadcast live on GOtv.

Chelsea's 1-4 away victory over nine men Tottenham Hotspur on Monday ensured City remained at the top of the league following their 6-1 drubbing of Bournemouth on Saturday. Tune in SuperSport Premier League (ch 66) on Sunday at 5:30pm to watch this match.

Meanwhile, Manchester United will continue their topsy-turvy campaign at home against Luton Town on SuperSport Premier League (ch 66) tomorrow at 5:30pm.

Arsenal will be on duty against Burnley today at 4pm, while Liverpool will host Brentford at Anfield on Sunday 3pm on SuperSport Premier League (ch 66).

In Spain, League leaders, Girona will be on away duty against Rayo Vallecano at 2pm today, while Real Madrid will host Valencia at 9pm. On Sunday, Barcelona will take on Alaves at 4:45pm on SuperSport La Liga (ch 62).

In Italy, Super Eagles duo, Maduka Okoye and Ademola Lookman will be on opposing sides when Udinese and Atalanta clash on Sunday at 3pm, while Champions, Napoli will be on home duty against Empoli at 12pm on the same day on SuperSelect 1 (ch 63) to watch.

FirstBank Sustaining Polo Legacies with Georgian Cup

The excitement that pervades the camp of Kaduna Kangimi winners of this years FirstBank sponsored Georgian Cup is better imagined. Back slapping, hugging, rapturous laughter in the midst of tumultuous crowd taking selfies with their favourite players better explained the excitement and mood of everyone who witnessed another history made.

For FirstBank of Nigeria Limited, the financial institution that has bankrolled the competition over the past 103-years, it was legacy sustained. And for Kangimi, the wild celebrations are justified after what seems to be an endless wait to savour fame, once again from the Silve-made Georgian Cup.

Thats the type of fame that comes when you win a big sporting tournament in the mould of FirstBank sponsored Georgian Cup, better expressed by Policeman +3 player, Lado Aliyu, a polo gladiator, who said winning the Georgian Cup, the biggest trophy on offer at the annual Kaduna International polo tournament is like winning the World Cup.

We have been trying to win this Cup for a very long time now. This year made it 10 years weve been trying, Lado said, But today our dream has come to pass, he added, running back to the Kangimi camp where his fellows were busy jubilating.

The excitement is understandable. It was all about the Famous FirstBank Georgian Cup, a High Goal Cup which currently sits as the premier and the most prestigious polo trophy in West Africa sub region.

The Georgian Cup, made out of the Georgian Silver in 1785 was first presented by the then British Bank of West Africa, now FirstBank and has since been sponsored by the Bank. This year marked the 103 years of the banks support. Thus winning it, confer instant fame, bragging right and honour on the winners.

But winning the elusive trophy didnt come on a platter of gold; they had in El-Amin, a formidable opponent to contend with.

Owned by Mohammed Babagida, a star in the polo world and 15-times winner of the coveted Georgia Cup, and Adamu Attah; Patron of the famed Fifth Chukker and Kaduna Kangimi.

Popularly referred to as Kerri Parker, Attah is a +3 handicap polo player and has in his team, Lado Aliyu +3, Abdulrahman Mohammed +3, Argentinas Fercudo Ratamor +6 and Nicolas Recaite +6.

The opposing side has Mohammed Babangida+3, the scion of the Babangida family, a man who loves winnings, Ibrahim Babangida +3, Ringa Genaro+6 and Bautista Arastus+6. The two teams assemble their team of international players with total handicaps that peak at +18. And so the action began.

A quick burst of speed from Babangidas dribbling runs and early goal from the +3-handicapper gave an indication of what is to come. But Kangimi were up to the task as Lado's charges forward to level for his side. With their actions, the players literarily set the field on fire, keeping the royalties who graced the finals on the edge of their seats in the six rounds.

Like they say in this clime, where two elephants fight the grass suffers. Truly, in this years FirstBank Georgian Cup, the grass suffered but fans were entertained.

Satisfied by the organization and skills displayed, Shehu Aliyu, Head Retail Banking, North, FirstBank, said the bank is just starting with it legacy sponsorship that span various sports.

"FirstBank is the nation premier financial services provider and as such we believe in legacies, across all our relationship. The Georgian Cup which is the most prominent and the most prestigious in polo calendar in Nigeria is one we have sponsored over the last 103-years is part of our legacy.

Of the over 130-years of our existence FirstBank has consistently been identified with sporting events.

Dala Tennis, over 35 years, we have consistent sponsor Lagos Open for 62-years because thus we believe in Legacies, we are a legacy institution and through our sponsorship and support for sporting even in Nigeria, we have been able to support the nurturing of talents in Polo, Golf and Tennis. We will continue to support sports in Nigeria.

Boniface Wins Rookie of the Month Award for Third Month Running

Super Eagles forward, Victor Okoh Boniface, has won the Bundesliga Rookie of the Month award for the third month running, since his arrival in the Bundesliga, Soccernetng reports.

The 22-year-old striker joined Xabi Alonso's side after a stellar season with Union Saint-Gilloise. He moved to the Bay Arena on a five-year deal, with the transfer fee costing up to €20m plus add-ons.

Boniface has heralded Bayer 04 Leverkusen to their best-ever start to a Bundesliga season, as they're currently unbeaten and are leading a surprise title charge against record champions, Bayern Munich.

Since joining the club, the 1.91m tall fleet-footed forward has scored 10 goals and assisted seven times in all competitions for Die Werkself.

He won the Bundesliga Rookie of the Month award in August and September, and the league have announced that the Nigerian has won the award for October.

Boniface swept RB Leipzig's Xavi Simons, and Mainz 05's Brajan Gruda aside to take home the award. PSG loanee, Xavi, has been in fine form for Die Roten Bullen. The 20-year-old has started ten games for Marco Rose and has been involved in nine goals for the club.

Lack of Funds Threaten Nigeria's Participation in Youth Winter Olympics

Nigeria, the only African country to qualify for the 2024 Youth Winter Olympics, is facing a major challenge: raising enough funds to send its team to Gangwon, South Korea.

The President of the Nigeria Curling Federation, Danmola Daniel said yesterday that the Federation has been running from pillar to post in search of funds to organise a camping exercise for the Nigerian team ahead of the competition in South Korea but with no success.

He described the situation as disheartening while calling on the relevant authorities to urgently come to the aid of the team meant to represent Nigeria and by extension Africa at next year's Youth Winter Olympics.

"We have done all we could trying to solicit for funds in and around the country and we couldn't," said the Nigerian Curling Federation boss.

"This is an amazing thing because we are not just talking about anyhow youth games, it is the Youth Winter Olympics. If it is football I'm sure money would come from every angle for that. An event such as the youth Winter Olympics should be encouraged because these kids were picked from every part of the country not that they had experience before or that people from the diaspora have come to play."

The Nigerian team qualified for the Youth Winter Olympics last December, but they need to train and compete in Finland and South Korea before the games begin in January.



THISDAY

Saturday, November 11, 2023 Price: N250

MISSILE

Nigeria to the United States

"We don't think the security alert is helpful, if anything, it creates unnecessary panic... They should rather emphasise what the government is doing to counter the threats and terrorism around the country" *– The Minister of Information, Muhammed Idris, dismissing the security alert issued by the United States against Nigeria.*

THISDAY 28 years OF ROBUST JOURNALISM SINCE 1995

PETER MBAH
GUEST COLUMNIST



Discovering Business Potential in Enugu and Indonesia

Nigeria and Indonesia share a lot in common. While Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and the world's sixth-most populous country, with a land mass coverage of 923,769 square kilometres and a population of over 200 million, Indonesia is the world's largest archipelagic state and the 14th largest country by area with 1,904,569 square kilometres. With your over 278 million people, your country is the world's fourth-most populous country.

Again, while Nigeria is a federal republic, a multinational state that is inhabited by more than 250 ethnic groups who speak 500 distinct languages and who identify with a wide variety of cultures, Indonesia is also a presidential republic with 38 provinces of which nine have special status.

Our country Nigeria and Indonesia have come a long way. On both political and economic spectra, both nations have related in mutually beneficial circumstances that have uplifted the lives of our peoples.

Our countries have also had economic relations that have remained positively consequential to both Nigeria and Indonesia. For instance, Nigeria has been Indonesia's second-largest trade partner in Africa after South Africa. The economic relations between Nigeria and Indonesia are so robust that, as at today, your country has over 200 companies that are currently operating in Nigeria. Some of these are, Indofood (producer of the popular Indomie noodles); Indorama (major shareholders of Eleme Petrochemical Refinery); Kalbe Farma, (in a joint venture with Orange Drugs Nigeria); Wings Group (producer of So Klin Detergent); PT. Timah, (mining and smelting company); PT. WIKA (energy procurement and construction company), among others.

Consequently, it comes as no surprise to any discerning observer that the trade volumes between Nigeria and Indonesia are continuing to grow and are currently above the $2.6 billion mark. I understand you have set for yourselves a target to lift those volumes to $4 billion before the end of December. Given your current trajectory and your antecedents, I have no doubt you will achieve this objective. I also recognise the efforts of all you individual Nigerian and Indonesian businesses here today, without you there would be no chamber and certainly this forum would not be happening. We appreciate you for making this event a priority today.

In my view, the holding of an elaborate Investment and Trade forum like this, involving businesses from both Indonesia and Nigeria is not only a good idea, but also is only natural, given the broad similarities between both our countries.

Beyond our similarities, it is also only fair to acknowledge and applaud Indonesia's performance in terms of economic growth since its independence. The Country's GDP has risen to an impressive $1.4 trillion, with the productive sector prominently driving the growth of the economy. Your industry now exports important industrial products like steel, machinery, textiles, footwear among others, while you still maintain a leading position in the areas of agriculture as exemplified by your production of Palm Oil and its derivatives, Rice, Cassava, rubber, cocoa, coffee etc.

More impressive still, is the fact that these great developments have been achieved despite many challenges that might have been expected to limit the growth of any normal country. These have ranged from your diverse ethnic and religious groups within the Country, to the unique geography of the Country (given the largely marine and dense vegetation of Indonesia). It is thus to your credit that you have not only surmounted these challenges, but you have converted many of them to advantages and opportunities that have now formed stepping stones for your rise.

With these levels of performance despite all odds, Indonesia certainly has much that should be emulated. Certainly, my Country will need to borrow a leaf from Indonesia in a number of areas including the development of a thriving agricultural sector, the evolution of a strong industrial base to add value to local produce, and of course the development of a strong and diversified export culture that reduces reliance on crude oil proceeds.

This collaboration and emulation for joint benefits is already taking place to some extent. To illustrate this, let me share with you two anecdotes that in my view show you that there is already a strong commonality between Nigeria and Indonesia. First is the story of Indorama Ventures, an Indonesian Group that many of you would have no doubt heard about. They first entered Nigeria to take over a moribund Government owned petrochemical facility in 2006. Today, the facility is not only the largest Olefins plant in West Africa, it is virtually a monopoly supplier of polyethylene resin in Nigeria. In fact, the company has in 2016 expanded into the production of urea fertiliser and is only the second producer of urea in the country. As we speak today, Enugu State offers similar opportunities with a number of potentially attractive Government enterprises which require improved management from experienced managers to unlock their potential.

The Second anecdote is also close to home. It is about the Indonesian Company Indofood, who entered the Nigerian market to promote their noodle brand Indomie in 1995. Today, not only is the brand a household name, the generic name for noodles in Nigeria is 'Indomie'. This is the sort of market re-defining opportunity I hold before you here today. Because of the similar culinary tastes of our countries there is in my view scope for the introduction of other similar food and snack products leveraging produce available in Nigeria to produce proven products from Indonesia within Enugu State.

As you know, while I am proudly Nigerian, I also currently serve as the Governor of Enugu State, one of Nigeria's 36 states. My State is located in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria. You may also know that Enugu State is a state of great historical consequence in Nigeria. Our capital city, Enugu town, has been a major administrative centre since the colonial times, and served as the administrative capital of Nigeria's Southern provinces in 1920s. The town of Enugu had initially become pivotal to the colonial government due to its extensive deposits of extremely good quality coal. Coal production which resulted from this discovery helped to power economic growth both at home and abroad as an import into Britain. To facilitate the transportation of the large volumes of coal produced, a rail line was constructed from Enugu to Ports at the Coast some 230 kilometers away. In addition, the coal also facilitated the development of a thermal power plant at Oji River also within today's Enugu State. This early power generating plant was crucial in terms of energy supply in Southern Nigeria before independence and even thereafter.

Upon independence, Enugu has continued to be relevant, serving as a capital territory to the Eastern Nigeria region, which comprised up to 9 states in modern day Nigeria. In my view, it was not by accident that Enugu and by extension Enugu State was selected to play these central roles. The parties behind those decisions must have perceived the homely but industrious nature of Enugu people, that makes the state a conducive base for productive activity.

A lot of time has since passed since those days of yore, but we believe Enugu State is still uniquely positioned to act as a vantage location from which to address not only the Nigerian markets but indeed also some of the markets in Central Africa given its road connections to Cameroun. To realise this potential, we appreciate that we would need to do a number of things differently than hitherto.

It was this line of thought that led me to set for our State the objective of raising our GDP from the current level of $4.4b to a new level of $30b, and by doing this, eradicate poverty across all areas of our State. Our understanding of what is required to achieve this objective makes it obvious to us that these levels of growth cannot be achieved without extensive attraction of private sector investment and utilisation of strong partnerships both within Nigeria and internationally. These partnerships may be either through relations with Nigerian private investors, or in partnership with government through Public Private Partnerships. It is in view of this, that we are here today reaching out to the government and business community in Indonesia to let you know in the clearest way possible that Enugu is open for business!

I enjoin you to stretch out your hands and take this opportunity to redefine your businesses for a better tomorrow both for you, your Nigerian partners and Enugu State as a whole.

To depict our strong commitment to welcoming you to Enugu State, we are also enhancing the ease of doing business environment within Enugu, to make the State even more conducive for investment and business.

Enugu State has established a functional One Stop Centre, which centralises and facilitates all of a prospective investor's interaction with the Government and regulatory agencies regarding licenses, permits etc. With this agency in place, no longer does a prospective investor have to oscillate from government office to government office attempting to resolve innumerable administrative challenges. Now all you need to do is report at the One Stop Shop and an associate from that centre will be detailed to interact with the relevant agency and address your needs.

We have also just last week launched a massive urban and rural road reconstruction effort, that will result in the construction of 3 major strategic roads and the repairs and modernization of up to 81 urban roads. This will result in improved ease of logistics for the business and industrial community to enable them seamlessly convey raw materials into the factories and evacuate finished products to their customers.

In addition, we are facilitating agriculture by establishing a major land bank with about 300,000 hectares of land which would be provided to serious businesses both for corporate farmers and for the operation of special agro processing zones which will facilitate the location and operation of businesses. These will take in fresh produce for processing into semi-finished or finished products.

Enugu state is also establishing Free Zones across the State to shield productive businesses from local taxes and facilitate production for re-export across the West African and Central African markets.

We have crossed a major hurdle in the journey to creating a free market for Electric Power in the State by recently signing into law an Enugu State Electricity law which will for the first time permit the State to license all electricity market operators within the State.

To provide a conducive hosting for hyper scaler businesses like Amazon, Tik Tok, E-Bay etc. Enugu State is also in the process of developing a Tier 4 Hyper Scale Data Center. This will also boost the quality of internet services available to businesses located within the State, and create an enabling environment for the emergence of an outsourcing industry in Enugu as well as the development of an ICT start up entrepreneurship culture in the State.

Finally, we are investing in other far-reaching reforms to boost the Ease of Doing Business Ranking of Enugu State especially with specific reference to issues like ease of enforcement of Contract, ease of procurement of land titles (with our recent e-government initiatives, title to land can now be procured in 72 hours), ease of procurement of approvals for property development.

Beyond the matter of Ease of Doing Business, Enugu State also appreciates that high rates of investment in the state will require that the State is conducive for workers in the new and emerging businesses that will operate in the State so they can live safely in the State with their families. Consequently, we are also boosting the capacity of our social services to make our cities pleasant and liveable by implementing initiatives like:

We are expanding the State's security networks to ensure high speeds of response and high levels of deterrence which will assure all residents of the State of a tranquil environment to live and work. This has involved making extensive investment in the security agencies including installing world class surveillance and security command and control facilities.

We are improving Schooling systems which will have the quality to provide world class education both to indigenes of the State and families of foreign workers. We are also revamping our healthcare facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels to provide quality healthcare not only for residents of the State, but also for the needs of neighbouring states many of whom currently travel outside Nigeria at the costs of over $1 billion annually for quality healthcare.

We have also adopted a number of strategies to support investors and reduce the risks typically inherent in international investment. Some of these initiatives include the following:

Enugu State is prepared to provide access to land for serious investors in key strategic industries, and the State is also able to facilitate the speedy completion of all procedures related to the procurement of land titles and development approvals.

We have earmarked a number of Special Industrial zones across the State, where industrial investors can benefit from world class infrastructure such as roads, access to power, water, waste treatment etc.

In instances where it is warranted, the State is willing to co-invest with investors to assure them of sustainable alignment of interests with Government in the businesses they have established.

Enugu State has established a functional One Stop Centre, which centralises and facilitates all of a prospective investor's interaction with the Government and regulatory agencies regarding licenses, permits etc. With this agency in place, no longer does a prospective investor have to oscillate from government office to government office attempting to resolve innumerable administrative challenges. Now all you need to do is report at the One Stop Shop and an associate from that centre will be detailed to interact with the relevant agency and address your needs

•This keynote speech was presented by Governor Peter Mbah of Enugu State at the Nigerian Indonesian Investment and Trade Forum in Jakarta last week.

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