

# To Boost Power Supply, TCN Receives 7 New Power Transformers in Lagos

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

To boost its current wheeling capacity, the Transmission

Company of Nigeria (TCN) yesterday announced that it had received additional seven power transformers to augment

electricity supply to Lagos.

A statement by the General Manager, Public Affairs of the TCN, Ndidi Mbah, said the new

transformers will substantially increase the government-owned entity's delivery capacity.

"Seven new power

transformers with capacities ranging from 60MVA to 100MVA and their accessories were recently delivered to

Akangba 330/132kV transmission substation.

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Despite Nigeria's 20m Out-of-School Children Crisis, States Fail to Access N68bn UBEC Fund... Page 5

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# THIS DAY



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## Tinubu to Gov Aiyedatiwa: Take Charge, Mobilise Ondo People to Move State Forward

● New gov visits Akeredolu's family, vows to keep his legacies ● Ondo, Oyo declare three days of mourning  
● Jonathan, Atiku, Osinbajo, Abiodun, Otti, others mourn ex-gov, Na'Abba

Chuks Okocha, Adedayo Akinwale, Sunday Aborisade in Abuja, Segun James in Lagos,

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia, Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo, Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan,

and Fidelis David in Akure

President Bola Tinubu, last night, met

with the new Ondo State Governor, Mr Lucky Aiyedatiwa, at his Lagos residence, and encouraged him to

take charge of things, and mobilise the people to move the state forward. This was as Aiyedatiwa, vowed

that the name of his late predecessor,

Continued on page 5

## Dangote's \$20bn Refinery Gets Third Crude Shipment, May Start Production in January

● Fourth shipment on the way, company gearing up to commence operations at 350,000 bpd

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The much-awaited Dangote refinery near Lagos has received its third shipment of 1 million barrels crude oil feedstock, with a fourth one expected to arrive before the end of the year.

It was gathered that the latest cargo came from Shell International Trading and Shipping Company Limited (STASCO), bringing the total volume of feedstock to 3 million barrels at the facility's Single-Point Mooring (SPM).

Arise Television, THISDAY sister news channel reported yesterday that while the fourth shipment of crude is on the way, the company is gearing up to commence operations at 350,000 bpd, with the production of diesel and aviation fuel by the middle of January next year.

However, the refining of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) or

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### SUPER FALCON ASISAT VISITS TINUBU...

L-R: Super Falcons of Nigeria striker, Asisat Oshoala; President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, and First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, during Asisat's visit to the President at his Lagos Residence ...yesterday

Tinubu: Democracy Must Address Poverty, Create Opportunities... Page 6

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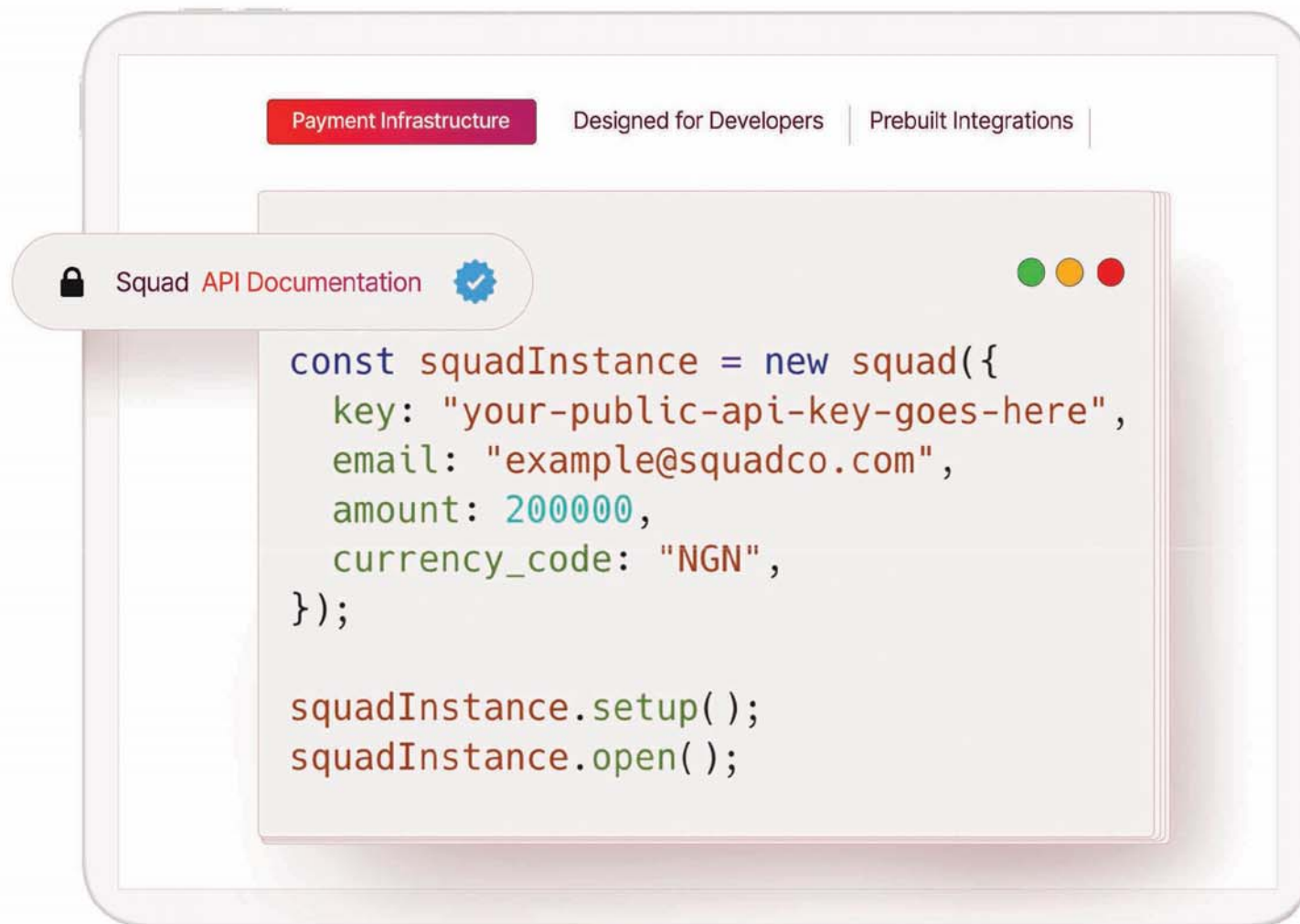


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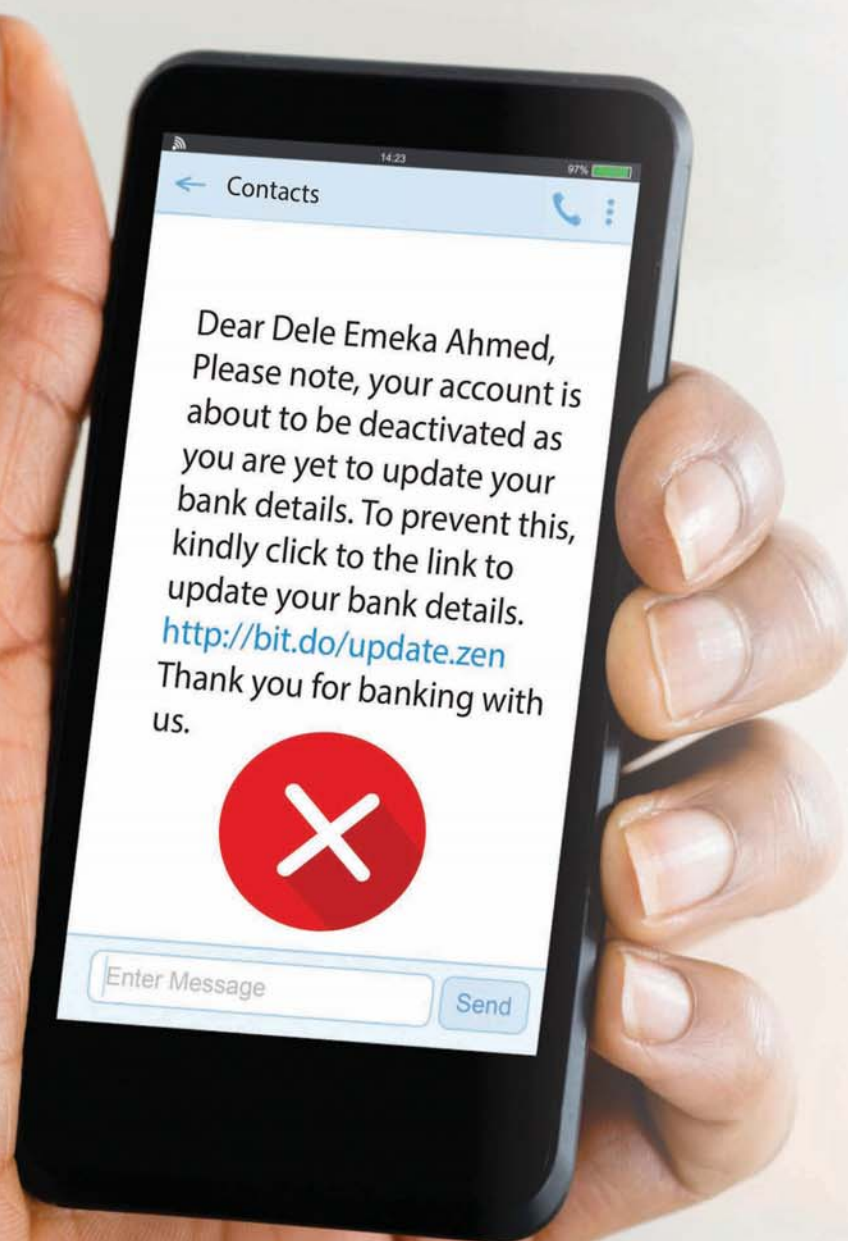
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## PAGE FIVE

# Despite Nigeria's 20m Out-of-School Children Crisis, States Fail to Access N68bn UBEC Fund

## ● Falana may approach the courts to compel action by sub-nationals

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja and  
Wale Igbintade in Lagos

Despite Nigeria's growing crisis in the education sector, leading to the challenge of over 20 million out-of-school children nationwide, several Nigerian states have failed to access the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) matching grant.

To compel the states to take appropriate steps to access the funds, renowned human rights activist, Mr Femi Falana (SAN) yesterday in a statement vowed to approach the courts to get an order of mandamus to ensure the states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) take action.

Falana stated that in early 2023, the United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) estimated the total number of out-of-school children in Nigeria to be 20.2 million.

Quoting from the report, the renowned lawyer disclosed that one in three children in Nigeria is out of school, totalling 10.2 million at the primary level, and 8.1 million at the junior secondary school level.

UNICEF, Falana said, added that one in every five out-of-school children in the world is in Nigeria, with over 60 per cent of the illiterate in the North and confirmed that Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children globally.

"Disturbed by the figure of out-of-school children, we requested the UBEC to furnish us with information on access to UBEC fund by the 36 state governments and the FCT.

"In its prompt reply to our letter, the UBEC disclosed that the total un-accessed matching grant from all states of the federation and the FCT stood at N68, 737, 873, 073. 52 as of December 11, 2023," Falana said in a statement.

In view of the fact that state governments had failed to comply with section 3 of the Education Reforms Act, which mandates them to contribute half or 50 per cent of the total cost of projects to

be executed in the state as their own commitment in the execution of the projects, Falana stressed that he was compelled to call on the UBEC to disburse the fund directly.

"This call is in line with the combined effect of sections 12 and 17 which have saddled the commission with the responsibility to ensure effective implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the UBE programme of the federal government.

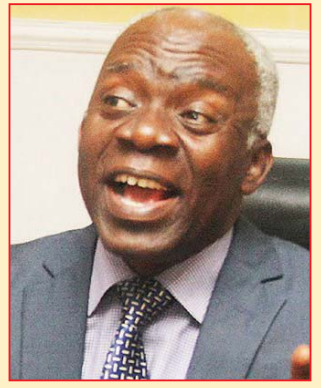
"This is to help teachers, schools managers and other stakeholders in basic and secondary education institutions in Nigeria to identify areas of deficiencies in achieving

curriculum goals and help to remedy these deficiencies.

"As a matter of urgency, we call on the federal government, state governments, and the 774 local governments to adopt remedial measures to ensure the immediate registration of the 20.2 million out-of-school children in schools.

"If the said sum of N68 billion unmatched grant is not accessed by the 36 state governments and the FCT before January 15, 2024, we shall seek an order of mandamus to compel them to do so forthwith," he added.

Earlier, the letter written by Falana Chambers to UBEC said it confirmed



Falana

that un-accessed matching grant by state governments and the FCT administration from 2005-2023 to be N80.1 billion.

"As this request is made pursuant to the provisions of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2011, you are required to accede to our request within seven days of the receipt of this letter," Falana stressed.

## TINUBU TO GOV AIYEDATIWA: TAKE CHARGE, MOBILISE ONDO PEOPLE TO MOVE STATE FORWARD

Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, would never be forgotten because his legacies and impacts could be seen and felt across the state and the country.

Aiyedatiwa, who said this, when he led members of the State Executive Council on a condolence visit to the Akeredolu family in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, however, declared three days of mourning in honour of the governor.

Also, toeing the path of Ondo, the Oyo State Governor, 'Seyi Makinde, has declared three days of state mourning for the deceased Chairman of the South-West Governors' Forum.

Meanwhile, former President Goodluck Jonathan; former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar; former Vice-President Yemi Osinbajo; and the Abia State Governor, Alex Otti, among other prominent Nigerians and groups, who have continued to mourn the former governor, and 8th speaker of the House of Representatives, Ghali Na'Abba, who also passed Wednesday.

However, when asked by journalists what President Tinubu's response was during their meeting, Aiyedatiwa said, "It was a paradox, a mixed feeling, he commiserated with me, even though he put a call through yesterday to condole with us in Ondo State.

"Through me, he still did the same today, and also wished me well, that there can never be a vacuum, one era ends, another one begins, but still within same administration and that's the first time such a thing will be happening in Ondo State, to have a transition within an administration, due to the demise of the governor.

"So, it's basically an advice and to also encourage me to take charge and mobilise everybody as one administration that we are known for. So, to pull everybody together to work together and see how we can move the state forward," he said.

Explaining the purpose of his visit to Tinubu, Aiyedatiwa said, "I'm here to see Mr President, to further brief him on the events that happened in our state; the loss of our governor, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu, and to also let him know that I have just been sworn in, because there can never be a vacuum, as the governor of Ondo State, being his former deputy.

"To also thank him for standing

by us during the critical moment in our state. It's no longer news what happened in the last six months in Ondo State that was in the news. Ondo State was practically in the news almost everyday in the last six months, but all that has been put to rest now, and he stood by us as the President of the country.

"So, I'm here to just thank him for being a father-figure to the state, all his advice and the development - right now, and what we are looking forward to do in the days ahead," he said.

Also, yesterday, the Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, who was also a guest of the president, said he visited to commiserate with him and update him on developments in his state.

Speaking at Akeredolu's residence in Ibadan, Aiyedatiwa, while speaking about his late principal, said he was a sincere, courageous, selfless and patriotic leader, who fought for his people, championed development and touched many lives.

The new governor, in an emotional tribute, also described Akeredolu as a caring and compassionate husband, father and grandfather, adding that it was a rare privilege to have served under his tutelage.

He reiterated that the demise of his late boss was a great loss to Ondo State, the Southwest region and Nigeria at large, stressing that his struggle for a peaceful, fair and just society was one that could never be forgotten in a hurry.

He noted that the legacies of Akeredolu would continue to reverberate in his invaluable contributions to the socio-economic and infrastructure development of Ondo State, the growth of the Anglican Church and the reforms in the legal profession in Nigeria.

The governor emphasised that Akeredolu completed and fulfilled his mission on earth and was blessed with wonderful children that could sustain his good name.

Responding on behalf of the Akeredolu Family, the younger brother of the deceased, Pastor Kola Akeredolu, thanked the delegation for the thoughtful visit.

Prayers were also offered for the Akeredolu family while Aiyedatiwa led others to the signing of the condolence register.

will receive two transformers each.

"When installed, the transformers will substantially increase the company's transmission capacity," Mbah stated.

Nigeria has a huge power supply deficit, relying mostly on an average supply of 4,000mw for its 200 million citizens.

Recently, the federal government estimated that Nigerians generate as much as 40,000mw through self-help everyday to power their homes and offices.

Meanwhile, the Ondo State Government has declared a three-day period of mourning in honour of Akeredolu.

The state government said the period of mourning, with fasting and prayer, took effect from yesterday, December 28 to Saturday, December 30.

In a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Ebenezer Adeniyi, the governor also ordered national flags to be flown at half-mast across the state.

"In a solemn declaration, the Governor of Ondo State, Hon. Lucky Orimisan Aiyedatiwa, has announced a three-day period of State mourning in honour of the late Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Odunayo Akeredolu, SAN, CON, former Governor of Ondo State, who died in the early hours of Wednesday, December 27, 2023.

"This period of mourning, with fasting and prayer, takes effect from Thursday, December 28 to Saturday, December 30, 2023. Also, all national flags are to be flown at half-mast in reflection of the mood of the State for seven days.

"The Governor also announced the suspension of State government ceremonies during this period of mourning.

"Meanwhile, condolence registers have been opened at the Governor's Office and the Government House in Akure, as well as State Liaison Offices in Lagos and Abuja."

Similarly, Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State, yesterday, declared three days of state mourning for Akeredolu.

Makinde, who is the Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Governors' Forum, gave the directive in a release by his Chief Press Secretary, Sulaimon Olanrewaju.

The governor equally ordered that all flags at public offices in the state be flown at half mast for

the three days.

Meanwhile, tributes have continued to pour in for Akeredolu as more and more notable Nigerians, praised the deceased for his roles in nation's development.

### Goodluck Jonathan:

Former president Jonathan described Akeredolu as a sincere patriot and legal luminary, who prioritised equity, justice and the collective peace of the nation above personal, political and ethnic interests.

The former president, who stated this in a condolence message he personally signed noted that the late governor would be remembered for his forthrightness and advocacy for constitutionalism, democracy and good governance.

"Mr Rotimi Akeredolu was a prominent lawyer and politician, who helped shape democratic governance and promoted peace and development in Nigeria.

"As a lawyer, he was a sound and courageous legal luminary renowned for his advocacy for constitutionalism, democracy and good governance.

"As a politician, Mr Akeredolu served his state and the nation diligently as a sincere patriot who prioritised equity, justice, collective peace and unity of the nation above personal, political and ethnic interests."

### Atiku Abubakar:

Ex-vice president Atiku posted on his X Account his shock over the death of both Akeredolu and Ghali Na'Abba.

He said, "It was with a rude shock and sadness that I read about the passing of the Governor of Ondo State, Chief Rotimi Akeredolu, SAN, and former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Gali Umar Na'Abba.

"Governor Akeredolu was a quintessential gentleman, who

took the finesse to governance. A two-term elected governor of the Sunshine State, Akeredolu was a politician of class because he was never known for destructive politics.

"Hon. Na'Abba on the other hand raised the bar of legislative enterprise in Nigeria as it is evident that the 1st Session of the National Assembly where he served with distinction between 1999-2003 remains one of the best in the annals of our legislatures.

"Both Governor Akeredolu, Aketi, as he was fondly called, and Speaker Na'Abba will be sorely missed for the inestimable roles that they played in our national development."

### Yemi Osinbajo:

Professor Yemi Osinbajo, wrote: "Dolly and I express our sincere condolence to Her Excellency Betty Akeredolu, children, family, friends, associates of HE Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu @rotimiaketi and the government and people of Ondo State on his passing.

"I have lost a brother and friend of over 40 years. Aketi was bold, courageous, forthright, fair-minded, kind and God-fearing. He firmly believed in our democracy, in Justice and the rule of law.

"He loved the people of Ondo State and was passionate about their security and economic advancement. We pray that the Almighty God will comfort the family and people of Ondo State on this great loss. Amen. Sun re o, Aketi Baba!!"

### Alex Otti:

Governor Otti expressed his sadness in a statement by his chief press secretary, Mr. Kazie Uko, saying the late Akeredolu was a courageous fighter for the rights of the citizens.

He also described the late governor as an astute lawyer, an interventionist in politics, a friend and a man whom he shared special relationship with.

## DANGOTE'S \$20BN REFINERY GETS THIRD CRUDE SHIPMENT, MAY START PRODUCTION IN JANUARY

petrol will come at a later date, it was learnt. In a November interview, Aliko Dangote had said: "We're more than ready and you will see our gasoline products soon."

The 650,000 bpd capacity has been in the works and it aims to not only meet but exceed Nigeria's demand for refined products, including petrol, diesel, kerosene, and aviation jet fuel.

Also, it anticipates surplus production for export purposes, potentially reshaping Nigeria's standing in the global energy market and helping the country save lots of foreign exchange.

Despite facing delays since its announcement in 2013, activities at the plant had recently raised hopes of commencement of operations.

It was learnt that the refinery was wary of embarking on a start and stop operation because of how it would negatively impact the machines which need to run on schedule.

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), holds a 20 per cent stake in the refinery and was reported to have struck an agreement to supply 6 million barrels of crude oil as feedstock.

With its strategic location and production plans, Dangote Refinery aims not only to transform Nigeria's energy sector but also to solidify its position as a significant player in the West African region's energy landscape.

As it inches closer to full-scale operations, the refinery's impact on Nigeria's energy security and global export potential has become increasingly imminent.

Earlier, a tanker chartered by the NNPC symbolised the initial crude supply to Dangote's state-of-the-art refinery as it geared up to initiate production.

The owner, Dangote had earlier stated that the Dangote refinery, will fully come online with the refining of 650, 000 barrels per

day by the end of 2024.

Dangote, in an interview in November, also said that the refinery would start with refining Nigerian crude, insisting that the refinery's first priority is to supply petrol to Nigeria before exporting elsewhere, including the West African region.

"We don't want to start our refinery with foreign goods, we want to start with the Nigerian crude," he stated.

In September 2023, the refinery had announced that it will start producing diesel and kerosene in October 2023 and gasoline one month later.

In October, it was clear that the refinery would not yet be able to start operations because the supply of crude oil was stalling, which caused considerable public reaction.

About a week ago, Dangote refinery made a further move towards the commencement of production of refined petroleum

Otti revealed that Akeredolu was "my personal lawyer prior to assuming office" and regretted that the former Ondo governor did not live long enough even to serve out his second term in office.

He urged the Akeredolu family to find solace and encouragement by the positive impact he made in the society and the formidable legacy he left behind.

He, however, congratulated the new Ondo State governor, Mr. Lucky Aiyedatiwa, who was sworn-in shortly after the state government confirmed the death of his former boss.

He expressed confidence in Aiyedatiwa's ability to steer the ship of Ondo State even though he was assuming office at a very critical moment in the political life of the state.

### Bode George:

Former old Ondo State military governor and chieftain of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Olabode George, has described the death of Akeredolu, as a monumental loss, and a big lesson that those in position of authority to always strive to defend the interests of Nigerians.

George, who recalled the role played by Akeredolu in the formation of the local security outfit in South-West, Amotekun, said he (Akeredolu) stood out when lives and property of people of Ondo State in particular and Yoruba people of South-West were threatened by invaders.

"Akeredolu, who I always referred to as 'My Aburo', made a great difference in the lives of his people and the nation through a combination of purposeful leadership and commitment to excellent service delivery.

"It is really unfortunate and sad that we are referring to this legal giant, great scholar, politician and

Continued on page 43

## TO BOOST POWER SUPPLY, TCN RECEIVES 7 NEW POWER TRANSFORMERS IN LAGOS

"The transformers are part of the ongoing TCN/World Bank power projects and would be distributed to Alausa 132/33kV Transmission Substation, Akoka 132/33kV Transmission Substation, Maryland 132/33kV Transmission Substation, Itire 132/33kV Transmission Substation and Amuwo 132/33kV Transmission Substation," the TCN stated.

In addition, it noted that the above listed substations will receive one transfer each, while the Akoko 132/33kV substation and Amuwo 132/33kV substation



## WE SHARE IN YOUR GRIEF...

L-R: Wife of the late former Governor of Ondo State, Arabinrin Betty Akeredolu; Mrs. Olufunso Amosun and her husband, former Governor Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun State, when the duo paid a condolence visit to the Akeredolu family in Ibadan... yesterday

# Tinubu: Democracy Must Address Poverty, Create Opportunities

● *APC to launch e-register, institute of progressive studies, says Ganduje*

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Bola Tinubu has stressed that democracy must address poverty through the provision of job opportunities for youths and quality education for all Nigerian children.

Speaking yesterday while receiving members of the National Working Committee (NWC) of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Lagos, the president declared that democracy has faced challenges in the past, but said Nigeria's future remains bright.

"I am committed to supporting a strong and ideologically-determined democracy that is progressive, inclusive, and focused on eliminating poverty while providing quality education for our children.

"Collaboration with various government arms is crucial, and I commend the leadership of our party for working hard to promote these essential ideals," he said.

Tinubu expressed support for the establishment of the National

Institute of Progressive Studies by the party.

He noted that the institute is expected to conduct diligent research and educate all party members on the principles of democracy and good governance while providing a distinct identity for the party.

The president called on the leadership of the party to target more youths and women in its e-registration and digital membership validation exercise scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

"I stand solidly with you in the advancement of the progressive ideological stance of our party and we will pursue it with vigour," he stated.

Tinubu thanked members of the party for the overwhelming show of support for him during the campaigns, the electoral victory, and with the affirmation of his presidency by the Supreme Court.

"It has been a while since we have had the opportunity to come together, especially since

the Supreme Court ruling. I had hoped for a gathering, but the demanding tasks of my office that we fought for have called for increased focus, dedication, and time," the president said.

Expressing concern over the alarming figure of out-of-school children in the country, Tinubu declared: "We must address this issue by establishing more schools, recruiting teachers, and providing at least one meal a day for the school children, aligning with the progressive ideology we aim to pursue."

Earlier in his speech, the National Chairman of the APC, Abdullahi Ganduje informed the president that plans were being put in place by the National Working Committee (NWC) to ensure the success of the party in the coming bye-elections into national and state legislative houses in February 2024.

"We assure Your Excellency that under our leadership and with your consent, strategies have been put in place to win the support of our people and

secure all the seats available for the electoral contest," he said.

Speaking with newsmen after the visit, APC National Chairman disclosed that the party has perfected plans to launch its electronic registration to expand its reach as well as develop a reliable database.

Ganduje also revealed plans by the party to establish a National Institute of Progressive Studies.

He said the NWC was in Lagos for two reasons; to felicitate with the President for the Christmas/New Year festivities and to commiserate with him over the deaths of the late Governor Rotimi Akeredolu and former Speaker Ghali Umar Na'Abba.

On what Nigerians should expect from the ruling APC in the new year, Ganduje said both the party and the government will do more for Nigerians in the new year.

He said: "Nigerians should expect more from the government of the federation and the APC as an institution. You have seen how we have started forging ahead

in order to increase the coverage of the party in terms of having more states for the party, more members of National Assembly, State Assemblies, and we are continuing to do that.

"I believe we have some innovations for the party, because now we're introducing e-registration of our own political party, where our members will be electronically registered so that we have a database that we can rely upon, that we can plan, that we can be able to expand the party.

"Also, we have in our

programme for the establishment of National Institute of Progressive Studies, so that we enlighten our members, even members of the public in Nigeria, on the doctrine of democracy, on the issues of internal democracy, issue of avoiding hate speeches, and also issues of abiding by the rules of the law pertaining to election and other processes.

"So, you can see that this institution will work with the government in terms of coming up with appropriate policies that are conducive for democracy."

## Shettima Reiterates Commitment to Rural Devt, Lauds Nasarawa Gov

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

Vice President Kashim Shettima yesterday officially opened the five kilometre Masaka-Luvu Road, saying the project aligned with the federal government's Renewed Hope agenda for nationwide development.

Speaking while inaugurating the road, Shettima applauded Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule, for his commitment to infrastructure development, even as he praised the state government's collaboration with the federal government on key projects.

"This project is not just about asphalt and concrete," he declared, adding that "it's about opening doors to new opportunities for the people of Masaka and beyond."

The vice president highlighted the potential for economic growth the new road unlocks, as it is nestled within the Karu local government area which has a strategic significance due to its proximity to the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

"Karu is a metropolis on the rise, and this road is a key step towards unlocking its full potential. It will improve access to markets, jobs, and essential services, ultimately boosting the lives of countless residents," he stated.

The vice president assured

the community that the federal government would continue partnering with Nasarawa state to ensure further infrastructure development in the area.

"We will not rest until every Nigerian has access to the infrastructure they need to thrive," he declared.

Urging the community to take ownership of the new road, Shettima said, "This project is yours. Protect it, maintain it and use it to build a brighter future for yourselves and your children."

Earlier in his speech, Sule expressed gratitude to the vice president for his presence, highlighting the significance of the road project.

He acknowledged the earlier inauguration of the 248 Housing Unit Estate in the area by the federal government and the subsequent community request for improved access roads.

"It was for these reasons and in consideration of the growing population that I approved the immediate construction of this five kilometre road," the governor said.

He emphasised the administration's commitment to prioritising infrastructure development across urban and rural areas, describing it as a "panacea for economic growth and societal development."

## Capacity Building: NLNG Trains Rivers Teachers on Science, Technology

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

The Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) limited has sensitised hundreds of public schools teachers in Rivers State, on teaching mechanism for science and technology.

The teachers selected from over 10 government-owned schools in the state expressed satisfaction at the end of the three-day capacity building workshop organised for them in Port Harcourt, the state capital.

Speaking at the programme, Head of Sustainable Development, NLNG, Vera Ogolo, explained that the workshop was part of the Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) for host communities of the gas company.

She explained that the training will empower the teachers to become more efficient in impacting knowledge to the students in their various schools.

"What we just witnessed is one of our CSRs which is under education, science quiz. After the science quiz edition for this year, we got all the teachers who trained those students that participated in the quiz and organised this for them to enhance their teaching methods.

"We are not going to tell them on how to teach, but strategizing them on engaging the students in a way that the children are better than we met them. We have teachers from 10 schools who participated in this programme.

"Education, without a teacher

the classroom might as well be a playground. We saw the gaps during our quiz competition for the students, we brought the teachers to show them the need to empower themselves.

"What they are doing today, is learning new skills to deliver those subjects they are actually good at to the students", Ogolo explained.

One of the facilitators who spoke with THISDAY during the training, Segun Oyegbesan, Head of People Development at Dagnet Solution Limited, expressed the satisfaction that the teachers were fully impacted at the end of the programme.

Oyegbesan who applauded the teachers for their commitment during the workshop, said "they were very energetic through out the

session and they provided us with feedback as well".

He added: "We were engaged by NLNG to deliver this three-day teachers training. One of the core objectives was to deliver a programme that will impact on the teachers even after the training exercises is completed.

"Some key things for us was to make sure that we impact, improve on their communication skills and make sure they engage all their students effectively after now. We wanted to make sure that we built on their capacity to engage with different types of students."

A teacher who gave her name as Naomi Ikpoki, from Oginigba Comprehensive Secondary School, Port Harcourt, expressed joy that she participated at the training.



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## NEWS



## LAUNCH OF SAMSUNG GALAXY A05...

L-R: Head of Marketing, Samsung West Africa, Chika Nnadozie; Head of Retail, MX Division, Samsung Nigeria, Olaoluwa Olayera; Head of Group, MX Division, Joy Tim-Ayoola; Product Manager, MX Division Steven Okwara; and Business Manager, MX Division, Nathan Lee, during the launch of Galaxy A05 in Lagos, yesterday  
SUNDAY ADIGUN

# Diri Signs N489.4bn 2024 Appropriation Bill into Law, Ogun Assembly Passes 2024 bill of N703bn

James Sowole in Abeokuta and Olusegun Samuel in Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, yesterday signed the state's 2024 appropriation bill tagged "Budget of Sustainable and Shared Prosperity" totalling N489,443,632,374 into law.

This figure represents an increase of N8.450 billion from

the earlier N480,993,632,369 the governor presented to the House of Assembly for consideration on November 29, 2023.

His Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Daniel Alabrah, quoted Diri as saying that the budget signed at the Government House, Yenagoa, prioritises key sectors like education, infrastructure, healthcare delivery and agriculture.

He expressed optimism that

a careful implementation of the budget would improve the living conditions of the people and address rural and urban poverty.

He said: "In order to realise our vision of sustainable and shared prosperity, we have carefully crafted this budget to prioritise key sectors aimed at improving our infrastructure, expanding access to mass education with emphasis on technical, science and vocational

manpower development, enhance healthcare services, and promote agriculture as a means of creating employment opportunities and reducing poverty.

"You recall that I presented a budget proposal of N480,993,632,369 to the Assembly. But I observed an upward review to the tune of N489,443,632,374, which gives us a difference of N8,450,000,000 to provide more

funding for the construction of an ultra-modern stadium, ultra-modern renal centre at the Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, Okolobiri, the construction of an administrative block for the Primary Health Care Board and other critical overhead expenses.

"Having adopted the bottom-top approach in the preparation of this budget, specific rural community needs are being prioritised. It is our intention to ensure that the benefits of this budget are felt by all. We will work tirelessly to bridge the gap between the urban and rural areas in order to reduce the menace of urban poverty."

Earlier, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Abraham Ingobere, stated that a slight upward review was made on the budget proposal of the governor to meet the present economic realities in the country. He appreciated Diri for presenting an all-inclusive budget that captured the economic realities and the yearnings of people of the state.

Diri also assented to the Bayelsa State Electricity Law 2023, charging the Managing Director of the state electricity board, Olice Kemenanabo, to ensure that the state sets up its electricity outfit to not only generate and distribute but also commercialise power.

He also directed Kemenanabo to issue licences to private investors interested in the sector as Bayelsa was endowed with gas, which is the primary resource.

Meanwhile, the Ogun State House of Assembly yesterday passed the 2024 appropriation bill of N703.28 billion earlier presented to it for consideration by Governor Dapo Abiodun.

The bill was presented about four weeks ago, with a review in the capital and recurrent expenditures as well as projected revenue of 18 Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

The passage of the bill followed the presentation of the report of the House Committee on Finance and Appropriation by its Chairman, Hon. Musefiu Lamidi, who subsequently moved the motion for its adoption, seconded by Hon. Damilola Soneye and was supported by the Whole House through a voice vote.

Consequently, the bill was read and adopted clause-by-clause by the Committee of Supply, led by the Speaker, Hon. Olakunle

Oluomo, during Thursday's plenary held at the Assembly Complex, Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta.

According to the report, the first schedule saw the upward review of the recurrent expenditure in the budget proposals of the Ministries of Industry, Trade and Investments; Agriculture, Forestry, Transportation, Community Development and Cooperatives, Rural Development, Culture and Tourism, Education, Science and Technology, as well as TRACE and State Waste Management Authority.

Others that had their recurrent expenditures jacked up were: the Bureau of Lands and Survey, State Planning and Development Permit Authority, amongst others.

The change led to a reduction in total revenue target of government leading to a downward review from N210.248 billion to N198.748 billion, giving a reduction of N11.5 billion.

The revenue from excess crude was jacked up from N3.845 billion to N13.845 billion, resulting in an increment of N10 billion, just as capital receipt was moved from N128.372 billion to N136.872 billion, giving an upward review of N8.5 billion.

The report also indicated an increment in the proposed expenditure under the second schedule for the Office of Auditors General (state and local) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Majority Leader, Yusuf Sheriff moved the motion for the third reading of the bill, seconded by the Minority Leader, Lukman Adeleye and supported by the Whole House through a voice vote.

After that, the Clerk/Head of Legislative Service, Mr. Deji Adeyemo took the third reading of the bill before the lawmakers.

Responding, the Speaker, Oluomo directed that the clean copy of the appropriation bill be transmitted to Abiodun for his assent, adding that the people of the state would begin to enjoy more democratic dividends from the first day of the next fiscal year.

Abiodun had presented a total of N703.028 billion as the year 2024 appropriation bill to the state legislature, consisting of N415.656 billion for capital expenditure, while N287.37 billion was to cater for recurrent expenditure.

## Third Mainland Bridge: FG to Shut Oworonshoki-Lagos Island-bound Lanes from Jan 9

Bennett Oghifo

The federal government has said it would close the Iyana Oworonshoki- Adeniji Adele bound lanes of the Third Mainland Bridge for the effective repairs of the entire section of the bridge.

A statement by the Federal Ministry of Works, signed by the Federal Controller of Works,

Lagos, Olukorede Kesha said was to ensure that the important road was put in proper shape.

"I wish to inform the motoring public that the emergency repairs of Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos will continue with the closure of Iyana Oworonshoki-Adeniji Adele bound for the effective repairs of the entire section of the bridge.

"Consequent upon the above,

motorists are hereby advised to use alternative routes - Ojota-Ikorodu road- Funsho Williams Avenue - Eko bridge-Apogbon-CMS.

"Ojota-Ikorodu road- Jibowu - Yaba- Oyingbo-Iddo- Carter bridge- CMS. Gbagada-Anthony-Ikorodu road- Funsho Williams - Eko bridge- Apogbon - CMS," Kesha said.

The ministry further advised

motorists to cooperate with the traffic management officials deployed to manage traffic and ensure hitch-free movements in order to minimise the discomfort during the repair period.

"While thanking the general public for their past cooperation and understanding, more is expected this time around," the ministry added.

## Dickson Not a Godfather, Says Diri

Olusegun Samuel in Yenagoa

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has commended the exemplary character of his predecessor, Senator Seriake Dickson, saying the former governor does not act like a political godfather.

Governor Diri also said their relationship remains cordial and unbroken.

The Bayelsa governor, who stated this at Toru-Orua, Senator Dickson's hometown in Sagbama Local Government Area of the state, during his usual Christmas visit on Wednesday, said since leaving office in 2020, the former governor has supported him and had not been overbearing.

His Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Daniel Alabrah, quoted the governor as saying that the unity between himself and the immediate past governor, who now represents Bayelsa West in the Senate, has contributed greatly to the peace and development of the state.

He recalled their long-standing relationship from their days in the

Ijaw National Congress (INC) and as commissioners during the Dr. Goodluck Jonathan administration in the state and expressed the optimism that the bond will remain strong.

Diri again expressed gratitude to Dickson for his role in his emergence as his successor and also for his support in the November 11 governorship election in the state.

The governor equally stressed the need for unity among leaders and the people of the state while assuring that his second tenure will be dedicated to moving Bayelsa to greater heights.

He said: "Today is another day for merriment. You all remember in our first year, we had some challenges. So it was difficult for us to do anything meaningful that year. But from 2021, we instituted this visit and it has continued.

"There can be nothing more refreshing than the fact that we are alive and together today. We all know the history of successors and predecessors in Nigeria but the story in Bayelsa is different.

"From the bottom of my heart, I

say thank you for tolerating me and for accepting me. This is the time people want to play godfatherism but you are not doing that. We have worked together and shared a lot in common and I am sure this should be an example.

"In politics, if you do not tolerate and accept people, you will not move forward. Today we are happy because we all worked together as one. We went into the election united.

"Let me again seize this opportunity to thank the people of Bayelsa. You have done well to keep the peace in our state. To all those we might have offended, please forgive us."

In his remarks, Senator Dickson lauded Governor Diri for sustaining the visit since it was initiated three years ago, describing it as refreshing.

Dickson said the visit typifies brotherliness, love and peace and called on the people to imbibe a similar spirit of togetherness to move the state forward.

While congratulating Diri on his electoral victory,



## KWARA GOV. SIGNS AKEREDOLU'S CONDOLENCE REGISTER...

Kwara State Governor/Chairman of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq, in company of Oyo State Governor and Vice Chairman of the NGF, Seyi Makinde signing the condolence register at the Ibadan home of the late Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN), on Wednesday evening

# Seventh-day Adventist Condemns Plateau Attack

- Urges govt to step up efforts, fish out perpetrators
- Middle Belt Forum claims gunmen sent another letter of planned attacks
- House minority caucus alleges collusion, conspiracy in recent carnage

**Chuks Okocha, Adedayo Akinwale** in Abuja and **Segun Awofadeji** in Bauchi

Seventh-day Adventist Church, Northeast Nigeria Conference, has condemned the recent attacks on the people of Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Mangu local government areas of Plateau State by a group it described as "blood-thirsty" gunmen on the eve of Christmas.

The church lamented that the lives of many women, children, and the aged were lost, while property worth billions of naira were destroyed. It urged the government to step up efforts to fish out the perpetrators.

Meanwhile, the Middle Belt Forum (MBF) said the insurgents had sent another letter of impending attack to a community in the Plateau State.

The alleged letter of fresh attack came as the Minority Caucus of the House of Representatives said there was an act of collusion and conspiracy in the bloodletting going on in Plateau State.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stated its position in Bauchi, in a press release by Pastor Joshua Ezra Mallum, President, Northeast Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The release said, "The Seventh-day Adventist Church is deeply disturbed by the recent rounds of gruesome attacks and is hereby expressing her stern position of disapproval and outright condemnation; most especially as the recurrence of such over the past few years hints at a well-calculated orchestration aimed at achieving an evil agenda of decimation for obvious reasons.

"It is on this note that the North East Nigeria Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church issues this press release to express the church's utter dismay, shock and sorrow, noting that the acts were as senseless and barbaric, just as they were unjustifiable.

"The church also observes with chagrin that despite repeated calls from well-meaning groups and individuals on the government to set up a machinery for tackling the security challenges in Plateau State and across the federation, repeated manhunt and genocidal invasions of territories have become the order of the day, sometimes happening for long hours within the proximities of security outfits and in manners

that overwhelm the inhabitants of the besieged communities."

The church said what was "more worrisome is that these recent attacks were perpetrated in broad daylight, unlike the previous ones that were achieved under the cover of the night dark.

"It becomes much more worrisome that any distress cries through the modern means of communication that promises to be swift and efficient to get the attention of security personnel seem to dissipate into thin air as if the community has been thrown into a region of oblivion from where it cannot be heard."

The statement said the church acknowledged that the people of Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Mangu, and, indeed, Plateau State as a whole were peace-loving and hospitable people undeserving of such visitation of mayhem.

The release sympathised and mourned "with the innocent victims of these heinous acts, and call on the security agencies to beef up security measures to curb further occurrences and restore the erstwhile peaceful status quo of Bokkos, Barkin Ladi and Mangu as well as Plateau State as a whole".

The church called on government agencies, corporate organisations and good-spirited individuals to expedite action for the immediate provision of relief materials to the displaced victims and those in the IDP camps.

It stated, "We also urge the government to step up efforts at fishing out the perpetrators and bringing them to book by the requirements of justice.

"We encourage the entire people of Plateau State to remain steadfast in its reputable peaceful disposition and to initiate measures of protection against further attacks.

"While the church mourns with Plateau on the dastardly act, we take solace in the word of God that sorrow, death, and pain will all end when Jesus wipes away all tears in our eyes. Revelation 21:4."

### Middle Belt Forum Alleges Gunmen Inform of Impending Attacks

As Nigeria mourns the recent bloody attacks on some communities in Plateau State, Deputy National Publicity Secretary of Middle Belt Forum (MBF), Stanley Kavwam, said

insurgents had sent a letter of an impending attack to a community in the state.

Speaking yesterday during an interview on AriseTV, Kavwam said the terrorists were planning to launch the attack on Pushit community in Mangu Local Government Area on December 29.

Kavwam alleged that the military was aware of the identity of the attackers and their hideouts, adding that some communities are still being invaded.

He stated, "While I was driving down from Jos to this place, I received a call. A letter was sent to my own village by the terrorists that the attackers were going to invade on the 29th of this December.

"All the attacks that were orchestrated, there was a letter to that effect that was dropped by an anonymous person, intimating the residents of Mangu LGA that there would be attacks."

Commenting on the question of informing the security forces of the impending attacks, Kavwam said over 30 distress calls were made to the security personnel before the recent attacks in Plateau State.

He said most of the communities attacked in Plateau were Christian settlements, adding that the operation usually lasted for about 24 hours

without security intervention.

Kavwam said security agencies knew that an attack was coming before the Christmas eve massacre.

He stated, "They received about 37 distress calls, that is Operation Safe Haven or the Joint Task Force. About 37 distress calls!! Yet, nothing was done.

"All the casualties that we are talking about are in a community inhabited by Christians and the security forces know the attackers, they even know their hideouts for the two decades.

"They know where they orchestrate the attacks from because that autonomous community called Manga, which is at the foot of Bokkos hills, bordering Wamba in Nasarawa state to the south.

"It's this autonomous community from where these attacks are orchestrated from, just the same way we have in the Mandara hills in Borno State."

### House Minority Caucus Alleges Collusion, Conspiracy in Plateau Carnage

Minority Caucus of the House of Representatives alleged that there was an act of collusion and conspiracy in the bloodletting going on in Plateau

State.

Minority Leader, Hon. Kingsley Chinda, in a statement yesterday, said what was more sinister was that warnings of impending attacks were unheeded by security agencies, coupled with the apparent unwillingness of the political leadership to arrest perpetrators and nip violence in the bud.

Chinda said, "The invasion of five communities and the killings of over seventy persons by unknown gunmen in Gashish and Ropp Districts of Barkin Ladi and Bokkos local government areas of Plateau State on Christmas eve have raised national and global concerns about the security of persons in Nigeria, particularly the North-central region of Nigeria and murders that have gone for too long on the Plateau."

According to him, these murders, which have become the cyclical outcomes of inter-communal violence in Plateau State, show how grievances between communities can be turned into organised violence by unidentified groups and persons who use violent methods to address perceived differences.

The caucus added that when Jos was turned into an infernal theatre and a killing field in which 1,000 people lost their lives in 2001, many thought that the violent expressions

of differences had reached the zenith.

Unfortunately, it said more attacks followed in Jos, Wase, Langtang North, Langtang South, Shendam, Mikang, Qua'an Pan, Barkin Ladi, and Riyom, resulting in many deaths and the destruction of property.

The caucus doubted that the reasons adduced by observers for the state of affairs, which ranged from inter-ethnic fights between indigenes and settlers for natural resources to inter-ethnic rivalry ensuing between ethnic groups no longer appear plausible, in view of the increasing rates of attacks, sophistication of invasions of communities, and the anonymity of the perpetrators of the attacks.

It noted that there was something about this anonymity which made the murders of the Plateau sinister.

The caucus said, "What is more sinister is that warnings of impending attacks are unheeded by security agencies, coupled with the apparent unwillingness of the political leadership to arrest perpetrators and nip the violence in Plateau State in the bud.

"If the accounts of witnesses are to be believed, what stands clear is the act of collusion and conspiracy in the bloodletting. The murders on the Plateau have gone on for too long and must be stopped now!"

## ...ActionAid Blames Plateau Killings on Gov't's Incompetence, Insensitivity

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

ActionAid Nigeria has laid the blame of the massacre in Bokkos and Barkin-Ladi Local Government Areas of Plateau on the doorstep of state and federal governments, insisting that governments at both levels are glaringly incompetent and insensitive.

The non-governmental agency in a statement yesterday signed by its Country Director, Andrew Mamedu, while condemning the brutal massacre, also said the security agencies were culpable.

"This horrific incident lays bare the glaring incompetence and insensitivity of both the federal and state governments, as well as security agencies in responding to

human rights violations swiftly.

"The security agencies have failed woefully in their fundamental duty to protect citizens and the tardiness in responding to critical situations must be promptly addressed and rectified," the organisation said.

ActionAid noted that the security agencies must ensure that the perpetrators behind the heinous crime are promptly identified, apprehended, and subjected to the full extent of the law.

"The government's duty is to demonstrate that such atrocities will be met with unwavering justice.

"The federal government must urgently deploy a substantial military presence in vulnerable areas to prevent further bloodshed,

reprisal attacks and guarantee the safety of citizens.

"The Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) must expedite the delivery of humanitarian aid to the displaced, addressing their immediate needs for safe shelter, quality food, and accessible medical care. A lackadaisical approach to this humanitarian crisis will not be tolerated as this will exacerbate the suffering of already traumatised families.

"The state government must confront and resolve the longstanding causes of ethno-religious conflicts in Plateau State through comprehensive community engagement, dialogue,

and reconciliation efforts. The recurrence of the same tragic events is a damning indictment of governmental failure," it noted.

It warned that it would not hesitate to engage citizens to vehemently demand an end to the government's apathy and the tardiness of security agencies that blatantly disregard human rights.

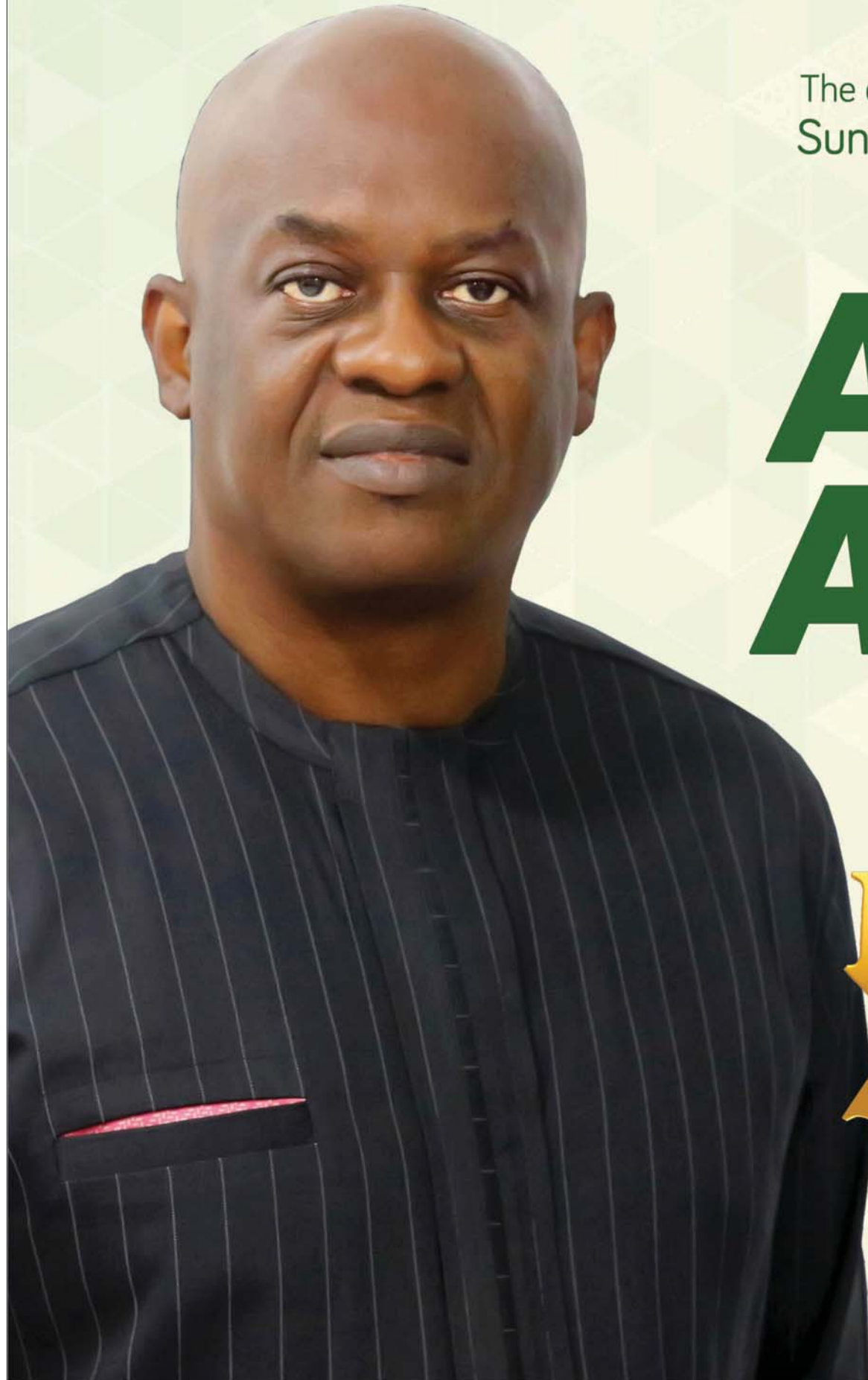
"We demand a paradigm shift in all tiers of government from a reactive stance to a proactive approach in addressing security challenges. It is imperative to prioritise preventive measures over reactionary responses to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens, fostering the creation of a resilient and secure nation," the group said.



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# *A Retirement Well-deserved!*

My dear friend, Chief Chris Uche, SAN, for over thirty years since we have known each other, you have consistently demonstrated rare virtues and a profound wisdom, offering valuable counsel to your community and leaving a positive impact on those around you.

As a respected lawyer and elder, your traditional retirement (Igboto Nma) and elevation marks a new chapter of serving the younger generation and the nation as a whole.

I pray that the Almighty continue to bless you with wisdom and the strength to guide future generations on the path of virtue and honor.

Today, I celebrate you.

Warm regards,

**ABDUL SAMAD RABIU, CFR, CON  
CHAIRMAN, BUA GROUP**

**CHIEF CHRIS UCHE, SAN**



***Congratulations***  
on Your  
Homecoming,  
Deputy Speaker  
and  
Unveiling  
of the  
**Peace  
Project!**

Rt. Hon.  
**BENJAMIN  
OKEZIE KALU**

*Deputy Speaker House of Representatives,  
Federal Republic of Nigeria*



On behalf of my family and constituents, I join the good people of Bende Federal Constituency of Abia State, the Igbo and Nigerians in general to celebrate my friend, brother and colleague, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu, the Deputy Speaker of the 10th House of Representatives on his homecoming and the official unveiling of Peace in South East Project (PISE-P).

*Congratulations!!!!*

**Signed:**

**Rt. Hon. Nnolim Nnaji**

Nkanu East/Nkanu West Federal Constituency of Enugu State,  
Chairman House of Representatives Committee on Ports & Harbours



# *Need funds for your personal expenses?*

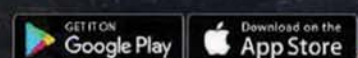
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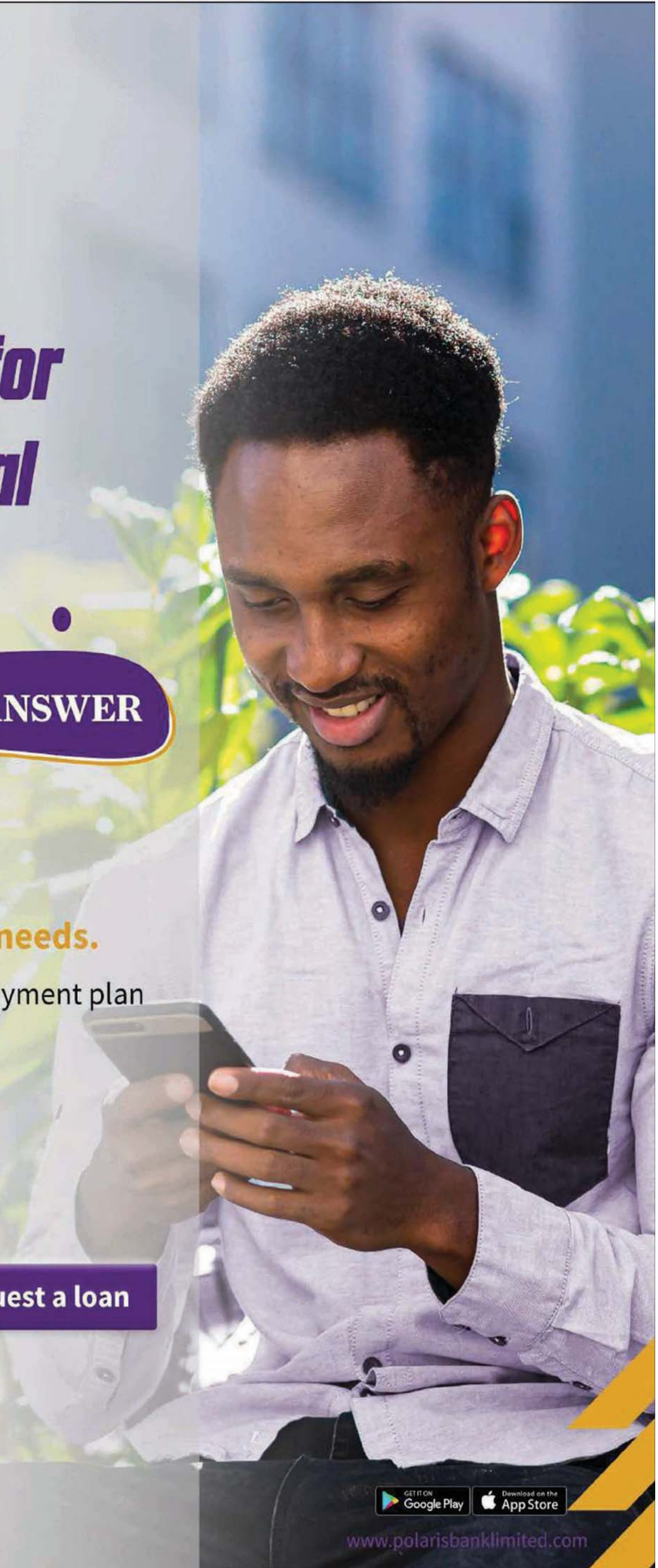
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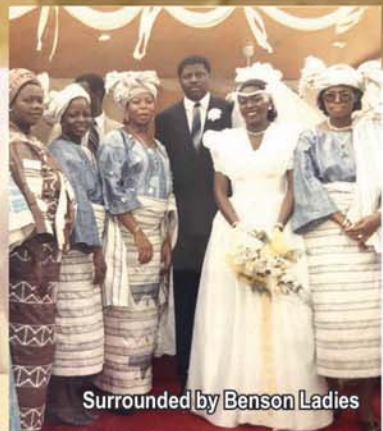
35 Eventful Years



Signing the marriage contract 29 12 88



Couple before Holy Cross Cathedral Lagos 1988



Surrounded by Benson Ladies



The Biblical pledge to a Life Union.



TOS Benson rides his daughter to church



Olayemi and Bimbo 60 years ago at Corona school ikoyi

35 Eventful Years



1984 Citi Bank officers Yemi Cardoso & Bimbo Benson



1984 at the Opening of Citibank where yemi and Bimbo started their Courtship. Jim Newton and Bimbo Cardoso.

Commemorating this 35 year Union and 60 year association from the mid 1960's child hood days in Corona School Ikoyi to attending same sister and brother secondary school namely Holy Child and St Gregory's College Ikoyi in the mid 1970's to becoming Banker Colleagues in CitiBank in the mid 1980's blessed with the rare gift of Triplets and Twins in the 1990's, showered with the Grace of seeing their Childrens Children, this Union is a living Testimony of Destiny, the higher divine purpose of their Life's journey.....

*Happy Anniversary*



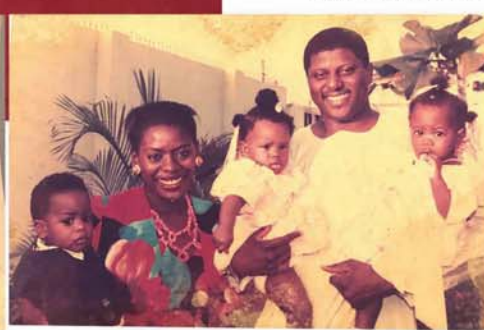
2022 send off dinner for Chairman of the Bank Dr. Olayemi Cardoso



Sister in Law Dr Stella Ameyo Adadevoh receives the Cardoso's Bride Bimbo as she arrives the Family home.



Bountiful arrival of triplets



A hand ful of triplets



Bimbo and Twins visit older Triplet Brother in Shanghai China 2011.



Mr and Mrs F.B. Cardoso taking sons bride home Dec 1988.



Welcome hug by Mrs Ibilola Cardoso (late) mother of Yemi Cardoso Dec 29 1988.



1960-1966 President of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (left) T.O.S Benson (behind) and Dr Mercy Benson (right) Bimbo's biological mother.(deceased).



Yemi and Bimbo Cardoso outside Church of assumption Falomo after the Baptism of their triplets 1989.



Bimbo and her mother in law at home in 2020.

35 Eventful Years



Couple with former Governor of Lagos State now President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.



At The 30th Birthday of the Triplets



At the senate screening September 2023



A 62nd birthday kiss for Bimbo from her Hubby June 2021.



Iya Oge of Lagos Chief Dr. Opral Benson, Mrs Bimbo Cardoso and Mr Modupe Alakija.



Celebrating Dr Yemi Cardoso upon the conferment of the award of Doctorate degree by Aston University. Hosted by the Emuwa's.



Former Gov of Lagos State and now President of Nigeria, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu (right) condoling Bimbo Cardoso on the death of her father T.O.S Benson in 2008.



Family representation at Rotimi & Eniola Alakija wedding in June 2023.



DYC and Bimbo paddling 2018.



With mother in law Iya Oge of Lagos Chief Dr. Opral Benson.



T.O.S Benson Jnr grandson of Late Otunba T. O.S with his Uncle in Law



Babajide Benson and Yemi Cardoso



Dr Yemi and Bimbo Cardoso on his 60th Birthday in July 2017.

35 Eventful Years



Fireworks for Bimbo on her 60th June 2019

Lending a shoulder at the Funeral of Prince Soji Benson older brother of Bimbo



Sisters in Law Bimbo and Lola at the engagement ceremony of nephew Bankole Cardoso 2019



R-L: Bola Ahmed Tinubu , Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Yemi & Bimbo Cardoso and Kehinde Cardoso, at the Funeral Mass for Yemi Cardoso's mother January 2022



A day out with Nana June 2023



Family Gathering on NYC's 66th birthday July 2023



L-R: Abimbola Fashola; Apostle Folurunsho Alakija; Lagos State Governor, Jide Sanwo-Olu; Aisha Babangida; CBN Governor, Dr. Olayemi Cardoso and wife Bimbo Cardoso at the commissioning of Centre Point building in Lagos recently October 2023



Roses for Busola welcome event; Busola (left) and Kole Cardoso (right)



Christmas Cheer with Wife and Mother In law December 2020



L-R: Governor, CBN, Mr. Yemi Cardoso; Mrs Abimbola Chima Cardoso; Founder, NESH Foundation, Mr. Emeka Ugwu-Oju; Commissioner of Health, Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi; Secretary to the State Government, Lagos State, Barrister Abimbola Salu-Hundeyin, during the CIBN 58th Annual dinner, November 2023.



Dr & Mrs Cardoso host Dick Kramer to a send off dinner at home to mark his 41 years in Nigeria

Family Thanksgiving on the appointment as CBN Governor, September 2023



## CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION

Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama District, P.M.B. 198, Garki, Abuja

### PUBLIC NOTICE

## EXTENSION OF TIME FOR FULL APPLICATION OF PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO FILE ANNUAL RETURNS BY COMPANIES

Further to its earlier notice published on Thursday, 2nd November 2023 informing the General Public that it shall commence the full application of the penalties prescribed by the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 and the Companies Regulations 2021 against Companies and each of their Directors or Officers for failure to file annual returns, the **Commission hereby extends the commencement date from 1st January 2024 to 1st April 2024.**

This extension has become necessary in view of the glitches presently experienced on the Company Registration Portal (CRP) and in deference to appeals from the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector.

All entities registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Act (Companies, Limited Liability Partnerships, Limited Partnerships, Business Names and Incorporated Trustees) are encouraged to take advantage of the window provided by this extension to file their annual returns to date with the Commission.

***The General Public should please note that this publication/extension of time does not affect the striking-off proceedings commenced by the Commission prior to the publication of Thursday, 2nd November 2023.***

Furthermore, Companies, their Directors and Officers should note that the Commission shall henceforth proceed against Directors and Officers of struck-off Companies for recovery of undischarged penalties against them.

***For more information and enquiries, kindly visit our website: [www.cac.gov.ng](http://www.cac.gov.ng) or contact us at [cSERVICE@CAC.gov.ng](mailto:cSERVICE@CAC.gov.ng); [helpdesk@CAC.gov.ng](mailto:helpdesk@CAC.gov.ng); +234 708 062 9000 (Call Center)***

Signed:  
**MANAGEMENT**



# RIVERS ELDERS AND LEADERS FORUM

11 OPOBO CRESCENT, NEW GRA, PHASE 1, PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

24 DECEMBER, 2023

His Excellency,  
**Alhaji Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR,**  
 President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Your Excellency Sir,

## AN OPEN LETTER ON THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN RIVERS STATE

Your Excellency, we hope this letter meets you well and compliments of the Season.

We will like to commend Your Excellency, for heeding to our call; to help mediate in the political rift between Chief Barrister Nyesom Wike, the Honorable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory and Sir Siminialayi Fubara, the Executive Governor of Rivers State. However, as a people, we are now at a loss as to whether your intervention has helped in quelling the crisis or escalated it.

For us, as custodians of the Rivers peoples conscience and morality, we find the directive resolution document lopsided and skewed in favour of the interest of your current Minister, Chief Barrister Nyesom Wike, to the detriment of the Governor, Sir Siminialayi Fubara, the governance of the state and the interest of the generality of the good people of Rivers State.

### OUR OBSERVATIONS AND STAND:

1. The composition and attendance showed lack of balance between the two warring factions.
2. The faction recognized by a court of competent jurisdiction, the Elders of Rivers State, traditional rulers, women and youth leadership, were not represented at the meeting.
3. The eight point resolution or directive asked for the reinstatement of commissioners who willfully resigned, and the 27 former legislators who in all clear conscience and by legal implication jumped boat and got themselves dismissed from the affairs of the Assembly, should be reinstated and remunerated, smacks of a sense of political irresponsibility, lack of sensitivity to the laws of the land and due process. Furthermore, **DOES THE PRESIDENT HAVE THE POWERS TO OVERRULE THE RULING OF A COURT OF COMPETENT JURISDICTION WHEN HE IS A PRODUCT OF THE COURT HIMSELF?** Central to this, Mr. President, is the sacred doctrine and practice of the separation of powers. May we inform Mr. President that the seats of the cross carpeting members have been declared vacant by the Speaker, known to law, Rt Hon Ehie Edison through an ex parte order issued by the Federal High Court Port Harcourt division.
4. We cannot but imagine how providing accommodation and meeting venue for legislative business becomes the duty of members of the House of Assembly who you directed to seat

wherever they choose and not by the Executive Arm as in the case of the National Assembly Complex where Legislative Quarters are provided and maintained by the Executive Arm.

5. Given the foregoing, it is obviously evident that Governor Siminialayi Fubara, the Chief Executive Officer of Rivers State, was coerced into submitting to your premeditated action plan even when it is well known that Mr. President does not possess such powers to give directives to a democratically elected Governor or impose his will on the State Government and the good people of Rivers State.
6. As far as we are concerned, that meeting did not happen and those directives are not implementable because to do so will be acting against the constitution and the rule of law.

Mr. President Sir, please accept the assurances of our highest regards.

### SIGNED:

His Excellency, Chief Rufus Ada George CON GSSRS \_\_\_\_\_  
 HE Alabo (Dr) G.T.G. Toby, KSC, DSSRS \_\_\_\_\_  
 HE Ibim Princewill \_\_\_\_\_  
 Rear Adm. O. P. Fingsi, (Rtd), OFR \_\_\_\_\_  
 HRH Alabo Emeritus Prof Dagogo Fubara \_\_\_\_\_  
 HRH NLA Iraron, Ede Obolo II \_\_\_\_\_  
 HH Anabs Sara Igbe \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sen Bennett Birabi \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ms. Annkio Briggs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Captain Nwankwo \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prof. A.W. Obianime JP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Aseme-Alabo Prof. E. T. Bristol Alagbariya, JP, KSC \_\_\_\_\_  
 High Chief Marcus Atata JP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sen Wilson A. Ake \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr Silva Opusunju \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sen Andrew Uchendu \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dr. Kalada Dick Iruenabere. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Atamuno Atamuno \_\_\_\_\_  
 Prof. King N O Nyenke \_\_\_\_\_  
 Omie G Abbey \_\_\_\_\_



## Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate

No. 22 Katsina-Ala Crescent, Off Yedseram Street, Maitama, Abuja.

# REJOINDER

## OUR RESPONSE TO SAHARA REPORTERS ONLINE PUBLICATION TITLED; NIGERIA BANK OF AGRICULTURE PENSIONERS RESORT TO PRAYERS OVER UNPAID 13 MONTHS PENSION, MOVE TO ORGANISE SESSIONS IN MOSQUES, CHURCHES.

The attention of the Directorate has been drawn to a publication that was published on Wednesday 13th December 2023, on the online platform of Sahara Reporters, alleging that PTAD has failed to enrol the legacy pensioners of Bank of Agriculture numbering about 830.

2. It is important to note that the Directorate received the directive of the Federal Government to take over the management of the pensioners and related legacy pension liability of the Bank of Agriculture (BOA) which was formerly operating as Nigeria Agriculture & Cooperative Bank, before its restructuring and transmutation to become BOA, through a letter from the Federal Ministry of Finance dated 07th September 2020.

3. Subsequent to this directive, and in line with its policy and procedure for take-over of new Agencies onto the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme, the Directorate carried out appropriate due diligence with the BOA towards gathering relevant data that could help to ascertain eligibility, computation and enrolment. Such information includes the nominal roll of eligible pensioners, approved salary structure, applicable pension increment & pension emolument, geographical distribution of pensioners, details of accrued unfunded pension liability (if any), audited account of pension funds, schedule of job grading peculiar to the Agency and sample computation sheet to name but a few.

4. Consequently, the Directorate carried out verification of the eligible ex-workers between May and October 2022 in Lagos, Kano, Owerri and Abuja being the locations that was agreed to be most convenient for the pensioners to convene, based on the preliminary information about their geographical distribution that had been received earlier.

5. The career and related records of the pensioners who showed up to participate in the verification exercise were subsequently reviewed, validated, computed and enrolled onto the pension payroll in batches with effect from December 2022. Additionally, pensioners who were enrolled for pension after the effective enrolment date of December 2022, were paid accrued arrears to cover the period from December 2022 to whatever month they got enrolled. All pension computation took cognizance of all approved and applicable pension increment including the most recent Consequent Pension Adjustment (CPA) approved by the Federal Government to take effect from April 2019.

6. The nominal roll of eligible legacy pensioners received from BOA at the time of take-over contained a list of 826 pensioners. However, only a total of 651 pensioners showed up across the four locations where verification took place, for their career records, bank details and biometric records to be captured on our verification database. In effect a total of 175 pensioners have failed to show up to be verified by the Directorate, and in line with the provisions of the Pension Reform Act 2014, establishing PTAD, and mandated the creation of a comprehensive database of eligible pensioners amongst others, verification is a mandatory requirement for any eligible pensioner to be enrolled for pension under the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.

7. In view of the above explanation, ex-workers of BOA who are currently resident outside the country would need to physically present themselves for verification and biometric capture before they can be enrolled for monthly pension. This position, as guided by Statute, is what has indeed been maintained for all eligible ex-workers who wish to be enrolled for DBS

pension managed by the Directorate, and not restricted to ex-workers of BOA alone, and this is in order to ensure that the previous ills and inefficiencies of the DBS scheme prior to the Pension Reforms of 2004 do not resurface again. It might interest the publishers of Sahara Reporters to note that diaspora pensioners, hitherto resident abroad, have responded positively to this directive to travel back to the country, to carry out their verification and promptly get enrolled onto the pension payroll and were paid any accrued arrears due to them.

8. Out of the 651 pensioners files (which includes one test file) that were verified, a total of;

- 572 pensioners have been enrolled and currently receiving monthly pension to date.
- 29 pensioners were found not qualified for pension, having served less than the required number of years to qualify for same, and notification letters have been dispatched accordingly;
- 24 pensioners were noted to have insufficient documents to conclusively ascertain their qualification and rightful pension, and have been duly notified to submit the required documents;
- 22 pensioners' files are currently undergoing the mandatory review, validation before final enrolment onto the pension payroll; and
- 3 pensioners were noted to be currently on the DBS pension payroll of other Federal Government Agencies under PTAD, having taken up new employment post their earlier retirement, and thus their additional pension under BOA is being consolidated and paid together with their current pension.

9. The Directorate has, from the time of enrolment of the BOA pensioners, and in line with its resolve to always listen and respond to its pensioner's enquiry, petitions and complaints from all pensioners it manages under the DBS, continued to provide appropriate clarification and implemented corrections, where the observations made are found to be valid and credible.

10. The Directorate has gone to this length to provide the facts of the issues involved in the verification, computation and enrolment of verified eligible pensioners of BOA, so as to give opportunity for all Stakeholders who may have come across the allegation published by Sahara Reporters on its online platform, the chance to understand and assess same fairly and objectively, without any sentiments, and to avoid the danger of relying on a single, one-sided narrative.

11. It is indeed obvious from the details provided in this write up, that the information published by Sahara Reporters is unfounded, far from the truth, and a concocted fabrication of the so called "sources" from which it claimed to have got its scoop. It is indeed unfortunate that the online journal did not make any effort to get the opinion of other Stakeholders such as the Bank of Agriculture, the Pensioners Association and indeed PTAD in consonance with the tenets of balanced & fair reporting that true journalism entails.

12. Finally, we would like to enjoin all Pensioners, the Pensioners' Union and all other related Stakeholders, including the media, to continue to work with the Directorate towards ensuring that the Defined Benefit Pension Scheme of the Federal Government continues to benefit all eligible pensioners in a fair and equitable manner as envisioned by the founding fathers that initiated the reforms of the Pension Sector that led to the establishment of PTAD and brought in the positive changes and outcomes that have been achieved over the last ten years.

Signed: **Management**



## ONLINE REGISTRATION FOR NIGERIAN NAVY BASIC TRAINING SCHOOL BATCH 36 RECRUITMENT EXERCISE

The Nigerian Navy wishes to inform the general public and all potential applicants that the online registration for its Nigerian Navy Basic Training School (NNBTS) Batch 36 Recruitment Exercise will commence on Tuesday 2 January 2024 and close on Friday 2 February 2024. Applicants are to apply online at [www.joinnigeriannavy.com](http://www.joinnigeriannavy.com). Applicants must possess a minimum of 5 credits in SSCE, GCE, NECO and NABTEB in not more than 2 sittings. School certificate must not be older than 6 years from date of application. Applicants must be between the ages of 18 – 22 years by 30 April 2024 for SSCE and its equivalent. For entry requiring NCE, Diploma (OND), Registered Nurse/Midwife qualifications, as well as Sportsmen/Sportswomen, Imam/Chaplain and Drivers/Mechanics, applicants must be between ages of 18 - 26 years by 30 April 2024. It is important to note that application is free and applicants are advised to apply once as multiple applications/registrations will be disqualified. Applicants are advised to read the detailed instructions and requirements on [www.joinnigeriannavy.com](http://www.joinnigeriannavy.com). Beware of fraudsters. Do not pay anyone for recruitment.

Announcer:  
Navy Secretary

# WE ARE HIRING

We are a group of company with interest in construction, project management, SME Business Development consultancy with Head office in Abuja and operational offices in Lagos, Ogun state and other South west states including Akwa Ibom state.

We are desirous of engaging competent and qualified Engineers (Civil and Structural), Land Surveyors, Quantity Surveyors and Architects, Group Head SME Development & Training, Accountants, Administrators.

### Requirement and qualification detailed below;

#### Position: Chief Engineer

##### Basic Requirements:

All interested applicant should possess the following:

- Must have a degree in either Civil or Structural Engineering from a reputable Higher institution (As applicable)
- Must be a COREN Member
- Minimum of 10 - 15 years proven experience in road and building construction
- Excellent computer skills

#### Position: Road Engineers

##### Requirements:

All interested applicant should possess the following:

- Must have a degree in any of the following; Civil Engineering from a reputable Higher institution
- Minimum of 3 years proven experience in road and Highway construction.
- Project Management skill will be an added advantage
- Excellent computer skills

#### Position: Structural Engineers

##### Requirements:

All interested applicant should possess the following:

- Must have a degree in any of the following; Structural Engineering, Civil Engineering or Building Engineering from a reputable Higher institution
- Minimum of 3 years proven experience in road construction / Building construction.
- Project Management skill will be an added advantage
- Excellent computer skills

#### POSITION: Registered Land Surveyor

##### Requirements:

- Graduate of Land Surveying and Geoinformatics
- Minimum of 3 - 5 years proven experience as a surveyor.
- Associate and above membership of NIS is an added advantage
- Excellent computer skills

#### POSITION: Chief Quantity Surveyor (Akwa Ibom)

##### Requirements:

- Minimum of BSc/HND in Quantity Surveying
- Minimum of 3 - 5 years proven experience as a QS.
- Associate and above membership of NIQS is an added advantage
- Experience in an engineering servicing firm is an advantage
- Additional Information Excellent project management and organisational skills
- Excellent computer skills

#### POSITION: Senior Administrative Officer (Lagos, Akwa Ibom)

##### Qualifications

- Minimum of BSc in Business Administration, Management, Economics or any social related field
- 5-7 years' experience in Admin related field
- 2-3 years in Banking will be an added advantage
- Excellent computer skills

#### Position: Accountant (Lagos, Akwa Ibom)

##### Requirement:

- Applicants must possess a minimum of Second Class University Degree or a HND in Accounting
- 3 - 5 Years proven experience in the field of Accounting
- Must be a Chartered accountant
- Excellent computer skills

#### Position: SME Development & Training Specialist (Lagos, Akwa Ibom)

##### Requirement:

- Applicants must possess a minimum of Second Class University Degree or a HND in Finance, Business Administration
- A minimum of 5 years' experience in SME development required
- Experience in designing and delivering capacity development programmes essential: including hands-on experience in training need identification, design of training programmes and tools, and delivery of training in developing country contexts required
- Strong organisational skills and attention to detail
- Excellent computer skills
- Experience in writing and editing reports desirable
- Some experience in administration or project management desirable

#### POSITION: Cost Estimator

- University degree or HND in Engineering or Sciences. Certification as a Cost Estimator/ Engineer will be an added advantage
- 5-8 Years proven experience in the field of Accounting
- MSc in Project Management is a must

#### POSITION: Architect (Lagos, Akwa Ibom)

##### Requirements:

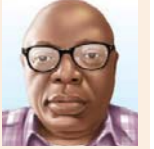
- Minimum of B.Sc. in Architecture from a reputable higher institution.
- 3 - 8 Years proven experience in the field of architecture
- Highly Proficient in space management.
- MSc in Project Management will be an added advantage

Applications for all above mentioned position closes **Friday 12th January, 2024**. Qualified candidates should forward their CVs and cover letters to; [funcastconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:funcastconsulting@gmail.com).

**SIGNED: MANAGEMENT**

# POLITICS

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## Wike, Fubara and the 48 Laws of Power

**Etim Etim** writes about the resolved crisis between Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers state and his predecessor, Nyesom Wike, and steps being taken by the former to douse tension in the oil-rich state.

In words and actions, Governor Siminalayi Fubara has shown that he is a good student of history and power dynamics. He has surprised and outsmarted his enemies and impressed his admirers with the manner he's dealt with the political crisis in his state.

So far, the governor has maneuvered deftly through Nyesom Wike's threats, combusive anger and the subtle intimidations of the Presidency.

I think we need to pay attention to Mr. Fubara's strategy in the context of Nigeria's politics of avarice, corruption and application of power to serve selfish interests. Fubara, we recall, was the state's accountant-general when Wike was governor, and they worked together in managing and spending the resources of the state.

Last year, the EFCC suspected that there were some unethical practices in the manner they used these monies and so the commission moved to arrest Fubara who went into hiding. He was subsequently declared wanted by the EFCC.

But to protect him, Wike made him the PDP governorship candidate and went ahead to get him elected governor. Fubara now has immunity from arrests and prosecution, but Wike, who was Fubara's boss and knows everything about how Rivers' funds were managed has not been questioned by the EFCC. We have seen this play out in many states across the land, including my own Akwa Ibom, since 1999.

In these arrangements, the outgoing governor would dictate how much he would be paid in cash periodically by his successor as a reward for facilitating his emergence, in addition to other perks and patronages.

In return, the governor will take steps to discourage the arrest and prosecution of his predecessor. In addition, the former governor will assume the status of the 'emperor' of the land. But all too often, these agreements don't last.

After a few months in office, Fubara repudiated the understanding he had with Wike (some accounts say the former governor was receiving N2 billion monthly) and discontinued the payment.

All hell broke loose and there began the crisis that has engulfed the state since October, 2023.

Two weeks ago, President Bola Tinubu stepped in and invited both men for a peace meeting. The terms of the peace agreement seemed to favour Wike more, prompting many to term it as a presidential directive rather than an agreement. Some persons who attended the peace meeting in the Villa actually said in interviews that it was only the President who spoke at the meeting; and that he was essentially directing the parties on what to do, after which they all signed the paper without as little as stating their own sides.

Both Wike and Fubara however elected to stay silent until Boxing Day when the governor released a lengthy statement, in which he announced that he would abide by the terms of the proclamation because "the Peace Pact is not as bad as it is being portrayed by those who genuinely opposed it", adding that "it is certainly not a death sentence".

Many persons interpret this to mean that the governor has finally capitulated, having been subtly intimidated by the President at the meeting, and that Wike would soon return to his former status as the emperor of the state.

Fubara's motives, implicit in his Christmas message and evident in some of his actions, show that he is smarter than he's given credit for. He seems to be taking some lessons from The 48 Laws of Power propounded by Robert Greene, the American author of books on strategy, power and seduction, 25 years ago.

Governor Fubara is dealing with this matter with a great deal of political astuteness and clever tactics. He says one thing in public, but is stealthily undermining his enemies in secret. He has shown that he is a good student of history and power.

Law 3 of the 48 Laws of Power states: "Conceal your intentions: Keep people off-balance



and in the dark by never revealing the purpose behind your actions. If they have no clue what you are up to, they cannot prepare a defence. Guide them far enough down the wrong path, envelop them in enough smoke, and by the time they realize your intentions, it will be too late".

By pledging to abide by the terms of the Peace Pact, when in fact, he does not mean it, Fubara is leading Wike and the President on a wrong path, keeping them guessing, while constantly digging into the trenches and undermining Wike's moves.

While those in Abuja see this as political disagreements, the governor and indeed, the Ijaw people of Rivers of whom Fubara is a scion, have turned it into an ethnic war.

Their constant threats to bomb crude oil pipelines if the governor is impeached and

removed from office should not be ignored.

I am sure that President Tinubu is not taking those threats lightly. Between Wike and crude oil exports, I know whom the President will choose!

Fubara also seems to be taking the 12th Law of Power to heart. "Use Selective honesty and generosity to disarm your victim. One sincere and honest move will cover over dozens of dishonest ones. Open-hearted gestures of honesty and generosity bring down the guard of even the most suspicious people. Once your selective honesty opens a hole in their armour, you can deceive and manipulate them at will. A timely gift – a Trojan horse – will serve the same purpose".

Paragraph 12 of the governor's speech succinctly captures this selective act of honesty. His words: "I reaffirm my acceptance of the

Presidential Peace Pact Proclamation and my commitment to implementing both the spirit and letters of the declaration... without compromising the collective interest of our people and our cherished and shared democratic values". Who determines what the interest of Rivers people are and what are the cherished and shared democratic values? Does the interest of Rivers people entail illegal payments of monies to a former governor? Is it part of shared and cherished democratic values for the governor to remain subservient to his predecessor? In other words, only Fubara will determine what constitute the collective interest of his people and their cherished and shared democratic values.

The governor is also drawing on the 21st Law which states that: "Play a Sucker to catch a sucker – seem dumber than your mark. No one seem stupider than the next. The trick, then, is to make your victims feel smart – and not just smart, but smarter than you. Once convinced of this, they will never suspect that you may have ulterior motives". By constantly calling Wike "my Oga" and pretending to be compliant and respectful, Fubara is playing the fool, a tactic well captured in paragraph 14 of his speech: "I have said before, there is no price too much to pay for peace. And with the realization that the worst peace is better than the best war, we will try to make peace with all segments and interest groups without surrendering our freedom or jeopardizing the interest and well-being of the good people of Rivers State who graciously entrusted us with their cherished mandate".

-Etim writes from Lagos

NOTE: Interested readers should continue in the online edition on [www.thisdaylive.com](http://www.thisdaylive.com)

## Obazee: A Report Mutilated By Politics

**Sola Odewole** questions the objectivity of the leaked report of Jim Obazee-led committee set up by President Bola Tinubu to investigate activities of the Central Bank of Nigeria.

There's something about the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) that seeks to defy logic and commonsense.

Even worse, it belies progressivism. Although this practice is not alien to Nigeria's contemporary politics, the now opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) once had a whiff of such political demagoguery.

Unfortunately, in the case of the APC, it appears the agreed standard for its existential political opportunism. And the days ahead, seems more inauspicious.

The story of Jim Obazee, President Bola Tinubu's beloved investigator, who is looking into the activities of the Central Bank of Nigeria, among others, is a Google search away.

As then head of the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRC), Obazee was sacked by former President Muhammadu Buhari.

His sack followed the implementation of his agency's law, which led to the exit of Pastor E.A Adeboye as the active General Overseer of RCGG.

Curiously, this was the same man President Tinubu found worthy to investigate alleged malfeasance at the CBN. The fact that a man sacked by his predecessor from the same party was his choice for such a job, was already suspect.

Whatever informed that choice, was arguably not in collective good but to serve, perhaps, some interest, more so when none of the allegations against him had been cleared, including why he was sacked from FRC.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the report released on the investigation of the CBN, has begun to generate serious criticisms, which are beginning to make nonsense of his efforts and expose what may appear the latent intentions behind the probe, ab initio.

The trio of Godwin Emefiele, former CBN



governor, who is being investigated; former Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, who has been mentioned derogatively in the report and the Tropical General Investments (TGI) Group, which spoke for Union Bank, have all come out to dispute all the claims against them.

Emefiele, who responded to the series of allegations in the report, dismissed every bit of it in a statement, hours after he regained his freedom from the Kuje Correctional Center.

"Having gone through the publications, and I say boldly that the contents of the said publications are false, misleading and calculated to disparage my person, injure my character and to serve the selfish interest of the private investigator," he said, in part.

Speaking, too, Mustapha, who denied reports of alleged involvement in illegal withdrawal of \$6.3 million from the CBN, dismissed the allegations as outrageous, unsubstantiated and malicious fabrication.

The former SGF, who claimed to have served

the nation with dedication and transparency, and that his record spoke for itself, vowed never to allow "this baseless and defamatory attack" go unchallenged. I demand a thorough and transparent investigation into this matter.

"Let the relevant authorities probe the source of these fabricated documents and expose those responsible for this malicious attempt to damage my reputation. I have nothing to hide and welcome any legitimate investigation that sheds light on the truth."

On its part, Tropical General Investments (TGI) Group, also clarified the aspect where Obazee linked the group's ownership of Titan Trust and Union Banks to Emefiele.

A statement issued by the TGI's Head of Corporate Communications, Ms. Rafiat Gawat, stated that, some of the assumptions made in the purported document were incorrect, thereby resulting in a conclusion that may not necessarily reflect the actual reality.

It pointed out that Union Bank was not owned by the government, adding that no government money through the CBN or AMCON was used to buy it contrary to claims made by Obazee.

Therefore, when considered from an objective standpoint, if it had only taken a few hours – not more than two – to logically tear down what Obazee spent several weeks coupling together, traveling to places for and writing to invite people for interrogation, then, it is dead on arrival.

Much as there is the argument, bordering on the legal backing for the Obazee initiative, especially when the EFCC could have easily undertaken the assignment, it is evident that the report was not just a poor "work to answer" but one steeped in politics by design.

-Odewole writes from Lagos

# Obituary



The Board, Management and Staff of **Platform Petroleum Limited** commiserate with the **Konyebagu and Opute families** of Abbi, in Ndokwa West LGA of Delta State on the passing to eternal glory of

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## MR. EMMANUEL OPUTE KONYEBAGU

Former Group Managing Director/CEO,  
Platform Petroleum Limited

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*May his soul rest in peace.*

Signed:

MANAGEMENT



Platform Petroleum Ltd.

# OPINION

www.thisdaylive.com

opinion@thisdaylive.com

## 25 YEARS ON, WAITING FOR DEMOCRACY'S PROMISE

Government should implement and sustain economic reforms that promote diversification, innovation, and social inclusivity, writes **JOSHUA J. OMOJUWA**



See page 25

## WHO IS THE YOUTH FOR NYSC?

**JOSHUA OCHEJA** argues the need to rejig the NYSC to reflect the peculiarities of the time



See page 25

## EDITORIAL

## REVAMPING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION



26



The recent killings, like the previous ones, raise more questions than answers, reckons **ETIM ETIM**

## KILLINGS ON THE PLATEAU

The brutal killings of over 160 Nigerians in three LGAs in Plateau State on Christmas eve and Christmas Day by terrorists have once again illustrated the failure of the Nigerian State to protect its citizens. Over 20 villages across Barkin Ladi, Bokkos and Mangu LGAs were attacked in what has become a pattern of a failed or a fast-failing state. I am sad, pained and aggrieved by the flagrant failure of the security agencies to thwart the terrorists' plots or arrest them after their heinous crimes. Many Nigerians, including a retired general who had once served as the Commander of Operation Safe Haven on the Plateau, Gen. Henry Ayoola, believe that there are elements in the security agencies that collude with the terrorists and are complicit in these killings.

Defence Headquarters, the highest authority of the military high command, has stated that although the military did receive over 30 distress calls from the villagers when the attacks were going on, it could not respond soon enough because the terrains to those communities are bad. What an excuse! It sounds like the police telling victims of armed robbery that they had no petrol in their vehicles or the fire service complaining of lack of water in their trucks while a home is burning. How did the terrorists gain access to the communities if the terrains are that bad? Excuses like this give credence to speculations that some soldiers and, perhaps, officers may be sympathetic to the agenda and ideology of the killers.

The frequency of the killings and the fact that no single person has ever been arrested and prosecuted also support the theory of collusion by some members of our police and armed forces. It brings a sinking feeling to my stomach. Last June, over 100 villagers were slaughtered by terrorists in Mangu LGA alone. Nigerians of different walks of life and some members of the international community, have been shocked by what is apparently ethnic cleansing of the Christian communities of some parts Northern Nigeria. The Sultan of Sokoto, Middle Belt Forum, PANDEF, Nigeria Governors' Forum, Northern Governors' Forum, Peter Obi, Shehu Sani are among those who have shown outrage at the carnage.

The Pope and Amnesty International (AI) have cried out. AI has a long history of criticizing the military for what it describes as human rights abuses, but in the aftermath of the Christmas killings in Plateau, the Country Director of AI, Isa Sanusi, is going a step further to



ask for a probe into the activities of the military. "The Nigerian authorities must investigate the inexcusable security lapses that allowed the horrific killing of over 140 people by gunmen across over 20 villages... Our investigation shows that the gunmen were on rampage of killing and destruction for more than 48 hours, moving from one village to another", said Saunusi.

A few days after the attacks, Gen. Henry Ayoola (rtd), former Commander of Operation Safe Haven, the very security organization that was put in place to prevent terrorist attacks on the Plateau, was on Arise TV, suggesting that some elements in the military are more loyal to the terrorists than the country. He should know. Ayoola said in the interview that he had submitted a detailed report to the military authorities on this before his retirement a few years ago.

The police authorities have also come under severe criticisms for their tardiness and inability to secure the safety of the people. Nigerians are also venting their anger on President Bola Tinubu for hunkering down in his Lagos home, instead of visiting Plateau State to express solidarity and compassion. Although the President has dispatched Vice President Shettima and the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, to Jos to meet with Plateau leaders, that is not enough to assuage frayed nerves. Why are US Presidents eager to jump into Airforce One to fly to disaster areas, visit with local officials and offer words of comfort to affected communities?

In the last two years, President Biden has visited over half a dozen cities to assess damage and comfort the hurt. In September 2021, he flew down to New York and New Jersey to survey damage from Hurricane Ida. In January 2023, he

went to California to see the damage from a series of devastating storms that slammed the western part of the country, forcing residents to flee mudslides and rising floodwaters. In May 2023, he was in Utah and offered federal assistance to aid recovery efforts in areas affected by flooding. In August, the President travelled 13 hours to Hawaii to tour destructions caused by wildfires and the following month, Joe Biden was in Florida to survey destruction from Hurricane Idalia and comfort victims. The essence of these visits is to show compassion and empathy.

Just two months ago, terrorists crossed over from Gaza Strip and killed over 220 people in Israel. Pronto! Prime Minister Netanyahu declared war against the terrorists and today, bombs are falling on Gaza. But in Nigeria, terrorists from the same ancestry and with the same ideological bent, have been killing thousands of people of Plateau, Benue and Southern Kaduna for years now in a well-organized pogrom designed to seize their lands, yet no Nigerian leader has shown any capacity and political will to bring justice to them. On the day of the attacks – October 7 – Netanyahu addressed his nation and promised to dismantle Hamas from power and destroy their military capabilities.

The world has been watching with both admiration and anger as Israel Defence Force is pummeling Gaza. Leadership is everything. Those who trenchantly criticized Buhari for appearing soft on terrorists because he is of same ancestry with them will need to come up with new explanations now. The images of Plateau women rolling on the floor, crying and wailing over their misfortunes, and the men fleeing their villages with their mattresses and household items are too heart-wrenching for me. The sufferings of the vulnerable members of our communities cut me to the quick.

On December 5, the Nigerian military mistakenly dropped two bombs on the people of Tudun Biri in Kaduna State. Defence Headquarters later explained that the people were mistaken for terrorists. On December 24, terrorists invaded 20 villages in Plateau State and murdered over 150 people. The same Defence Headquarters explained that they couldn't launch counterattacks to repel the attackers because of bad terrains. What more excuses should we expect? The shame of a country! ■

Etim  
is a Journalist

Government should implement and sustain economic reforms that promote diversification, innovation, and social inclusivity, writes **JOSHUA J. OMOJUWA**



## 25 YEARS ON, WAITING FOR DEMOCRACY'S PROMISE

It's been almost 25 years since Nigeria's latest and ongoing democratic experiment. On May 29, 2024 —exactly five months from today — President Olusegun Obasanjo's inauguration as the first president of the 4th Republic would have been a quarter of a century ago. If the elections defined 2023, national security remains the most urgent and important matter of national importance. However, everything that is considered important will be tied to the economy. 2024 marks a significant milestone for Nigeria, as it reflects 25 years since the inception of our latest democratic experiment.

As the nation approaches this quarter-century mark, it is essential to reflect on the progress made, the challenges faced, and the trajectory for the future. May 1999 marked a new era for Nigeria, transitioning from military rule to democracy. Over the years, we have undergone significant socio-political and economic transformations.

The most recent elections in 2023 played a defining role in re-shaping the nation's political landscape. The democratic process, though imperfect, remains a cornerstone of Nigeria's governance structure. The people's voice, expressed through the ballot, continues to be a powerful force in steering the nation's course. However, despite the relative political progress, the overarching concern in 2024 will be national security.

The evolving nature of security challenges demands a comprehensive and adaptive approach to safeguarding the lives and properties of Nigerian citizens. The urgency and gravity of this matter cannot be overstated, as it directly impacts the well-being and stability of the nation.

It is quite evident that many issues are interconnected, with economic factors playing a central role. As the saying goes, "everything that is considered important will be tied to the economy." Nigeria's economic landscape, characterized by opportunities and challenges, serves as both a catalyst and a constraint in addressing the nation's pressing issues. The state of the economy has a ripple effect on various aspects of society, influencing employment rates, poverty levels, and overall quality of life. Therefore, any comprehensive approach to addressing national concerns, including security, must encompass strategic economic policies that foster inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Over the past 25 years, Nigeria has experienced economic fluctuations, grappling with issues such as corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and an unhealthy dependence on oil revenue. It is imperative for the government to implement and sustain economic reforms that promote diversification, innovation, and social inclusivity. By addressing these economic challenges head-on, Nigeria can create a more resilient and robust foundation for addressing pressing national issues.

Education, healthcare, and infrastructure development are integral components of a nation's socio-economic fabric. Investing in these areas not only enhances the well-being of citizens but also contributes to long-term national stability. A forward-looking approach to governance in 2024 should prioritize policies that strengthen these foundational pillars. Education serves as the bedrock for societal progress, empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to contribute meaningfully to the economy. Therefore, efforts should be intensified to enhance the quality of education, making it accessible to all citizens, irrespective of socio-economic backgrounds.

Similarly, healthcare is a fundamental human right and a critical determinant of a nation's productivity. In 2024, Nigeria should focus on



improving healthcare infrastructure, expanding access to quality healthcare services, and prioritizing public health initiatives. President Tinubu appointing Prof. Ali Pate as the Minister of Health was a hopeful signal for what is to come.

Infrastructure development, encompassing roads, energy, and technology, is crucial for fostering economic growth. Investing in modern and efficient infrastructure not only facilitates trade and commerce but also enhances the overall quality of life for citizens. Strategic investments in infrastructure will be key to unlocking the nation's full potential.

Now is a moment for reflection, evaluation, and strategic planning. While celebrating the progress made in democratic governance, it is essential to address the persistent challenges, with national security taking precedence. Recognizing the interconnected nature of issues, economic reforms that promote inclusive growth should be at the forefront of government priorities.

As Nigeria charts its course for the future, a commitment to education, healthcare, and infrastructure development will be pivotal. By fostering a resilient economy and addressing the root causes of challenges, Nigeria can build a foundation for sustained growth and prosperity in the years to come. The journey of the past 25 years serves as a roadmap for the nation's continued evolution, emphasizing the importance of unity, innovation, and a collective commitment to building a better Nigeria for all.

The road ahead will not be less bumpy, seeing as some of today's challenges will further compound and possibly evolve. We must approach our challenges differently from how we have in years past.

We need to make viable and wholesome alternatives for our young people. Sports has always been a present alternative. However, beyond focusing on our national teams, we have largely ignored the power of sports to build character, create jobs and provide entertaining engagements for our young people. Even the national teams we see as the be all and end all of sports are beginning to suffer from our lack of attention to sports development. We used to rule athletics in Africa, not anymore. The African Nations Cup will kick-off in Cote d'Ivoire days from now, we are attending with a disjointed team, a clueless manager and loads of hope and prayers. We'd be lucky to make the finals.

In the early days of the 4th Republic, "dividends of democracy" appeared to be a popular phrase as the essence of governance. It has since more or less disappeared from the political lexicon. I often wonder why that is the case.

**Omojuwa**  
is chief strategist Alpha Reach/author, Digital Wealth Book

**JOSHUA OCHEJA** argues the need to rejig the NYSC to reflect the peculiarities of the time



## WHO IS THE YOUTH FOR NYSC?

Who is a graduate? There are various definitions. But the most acceptable is "a person who has completed a course of study or training, especially a person who has been awarded an undergraduate or first academic degree." The next question is, what is a degree? "A course of study at a college or university, or the qualification given to a student after he or she has completed his or her studies."

In Nigeria, only graduates of tertiary institutions are eligible to participate in the mandatory National Youth Service Corps (NYSC). I wonder why someone who attended a music or culinary school with a good reputation and was awarded certificates cannot participate in the NYSC.

In Section 2 of the NYSC Act, the following persons are eligible for call-up: Nigerian graduates from Nigerian Universities, Polytechnics and other Degree awarding institutions. Nigerian graduates from foreign universities or other degree-awarding institutions. Those who obtained their National Certificate of

Education (NCE) between 1975 and 1984. What is the objective of the NYSC? "The National Youth Service Corps is a program set up by the Nigerian government during the military regime to involve Nigerian graduates in nation-building and the country's development." I prefer to substitute the phrase graduates with youths.

Here is my version: The National Youth Service Corps is a program set up by the Nigerian government during the military regime to involve Nigerian 'youths' in nation-building and the development of the country." After all, it is called the National Youth Service, not the National Graduate Service. We may be living in the past. When you think you have seen it all, wait for Sections 12 and 13 of the NYSC Act:

### SECTION 12

"For employment anywhere in the Federation and before employment, it shall be the duty of every prospective employer to demand and obtain from any person who claims to have obtained his first degree at the end of the academic year 1973-74 or, as the case may be, at the end of any subsequent academic year the following-

a copy of the Certificate of National Service of such person issued under section 11 of this Decree

a copy of any exemption certificate issued to such person under section 17 of this Decree such other particulars relevant there to as may be prescribed by or under this Decree.

"It shall also be the duty of every employer to produce on demand to a police officer, not below the rank of an Assistant Superintendent of Police, any such certificate and particulars or copies thereof."

### SECTION 13

"Any person who fails to report for service in the service corps in the manner directed by the Directorate of, as the case may be, prescribed under the provisions of this Decree, who refuses to make himself available for service in the service corps continuously for the period specified in subsection (2) of this section, is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine of N2, 000 or imprisonment for a term of 12 months or both such fine and imprisonment."

The NYSC Act is stale. It was convenient at some point in the annals of the country. But not anymore. Is the essence not for the

participation of youths in nation-building and development of the country? As of 2019, only 4.7 million youths have participated in the NYSC. "Approximately 34 million Nigerians make up the age group 15-35 years as of 2019." That meant that 29.3 million youths didn't participate or contribute to nation-building and the country's development.

We are deceiving ourselves. We are still adopting a model designed in 1973 in 2023. That is a clear 50 years. A child born 50 years ago has transformed into a full-fledged adult. Biological, physical, emotional and psychological changes have occurred. But why has the NYSC remained the way it is?

The answer is simple. We have refused to think strategically. We are doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting a different result. For me, the NYSC is a festivity now. It could be labelled a jamboree where a fragment of the youth population in the country travels to other parts of the country for a year.

This piece is to advocate and not criticize. Some years back, I read a book, "Who Moved My Cheese" by Spencer Johnson, an American physician and author. He talked about adapting to changes in life. The book highlighted some lessons. They are: The world is changing, and you must be prepared for it. Move on, let go of the past. Adapt—be open-minded to new things. Learn to enjoy change. Be prepared for



continuous change.

We must think again about how we want to maximize the NYSC platform. This platform can translate our hopes and aspirations into tangible realities. Its structure spreads across all the local government areas in the country. Beyond the rigmarole, there is more. The NYSC is the only platform that can control the buzzing youthful population in the country and channel their energies into productive ventures. We can't scrap it. But we can rejig to reflect the peculiarities of the time. Serious nations are utilizing their youthful population. But we are wasting ours. Youth is one of the largest determinants of a country's economic growth.

Here is a bit of alternate history. The service period is three months. Participation in the NYSC is restricted to those wishing to pursue a public service career. Recruitment into the public service is from the NYSC database.

There are lessons this government can pick from my analysis. I didn't advocate for its scrapping. But to innovate. The potential of the NYSC is enormous. We need to innovate it in line with the present realities.

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# EDITORIAL

## REVAMPING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

Local governments should be alive to their responsibilities

**T**he idea behind the creation of local governments is essentially to bring the effect and benefit of governance nearer the people at the grassroots. The need for this tier of government is further demonstrated by their sheer number – 774. The 1999 Constitution not only recognises the third tier of government, but it also prescribes its functions to include having the duty to “participate in economic planning and development of the area.” Unfortunately, despite trillions of Naira that have accrued to them over the years, Nigerians have hardly felt their impact.

In the fourth schedule of the constitution, the specific functions of the local government are well specified. One of it, for instance, says, “local governments shall be responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads, streets, street lightings, drains and other public highways, parks, gardens, open spaces or such public facilities as may be prescribed from time to time by the House of Assembly of a state.” Also, the local government administration has the duty to provide and maintain public conveniences, sewage and refuse disposal.

However, the performance of local governments has been disappointing because they bear very little or no impact on the lives of the people at the grassroots. Indeed, most of the local governments have abandoned their basic duties. But for the physical existence of their offices, many local governments exist only in name. Worse still, council officials are adept at the collection of rates and tolls from the communities, markets, motor parks, among others, without much thought to even maintain the structures and facilities from which those rates and taxes are collected.

The terrible state of feeder roads, street roads, filled and overflowing drains and inability to clear even refuse bins are all signature malaises of the failure of local government administration. In several of these



**The performance of local governments has been disappointing because they bear very little or no impact on the lives of the people at the grassroots**

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

## LETTERS

### INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A CALL FOR RESPONSIBLE POLICING

As the global community celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ, a tragic incident unfolded in Plateau State. A Christian community became the target of a terrorist attack, resulting in the loss of over 100 innocent lives. The heart-wrenching scenes of crying babies strapped to the backs of their deceased mothers circulated on social media, amplifying the gravity of the situation. While leaders worldwide, including the President of Nigeria, condemned this heinous act, a disconcerting comment from a notable figure in the Nigerian social media sphere exposed a shocking level of insensitivity and hypocrisy.

The individual, a former media assistant to a past president of Nigeria, callously suggested that the mass killing in Jos could be excused due to the vastness of the region and the purported lack of adequate policing. This remark did not only lack empathy but also highlighted hypocrisy, given their history of enjoying government-issued security personnel during unofficial outings.

The irony is evident when recalling a personal encounter with this ex-government official, who once arrived at a La-

gos restaurant in a government-issued SUV accompanied by two uniformed police officers for a non-official trip. It is hypocritical for someone with a history of parading the streets with uniformed police officers to claim that Nigeria's police force is undermanned to fulfill its constitutional duty of safeguarding citizens. This contradiction raises concerns of hypocrisy or cognitive dissonance.

The prevailing practice of government appointees, celebrities, and their families enjoying armed police escorts exacerbates the issue. The recent Christmas day killing is not an isolated incident but a recurring tragedy in Nigeria's middle belt region. Despite a substantial presence of security forces, terrorists continue to evade security measures, terrorizing innocent citizens.

Nigeria currently falls short of the United Nations' recommended ratio of one police officer for every 450 citizens, with the actual ratio being one officer for every 600 citizens. It is crucial to note that the issue of inadequate policing is not unique to Nigeria. In Canada, for instance, as of 2022, there was one police officer for every 550 citizens,

and the country is significantly larger than Nigeria. However, crimes are promptly addressed, and law enforcement agencies intervene without prolonged delays. During the Christmas day attack in Nigeria, terrorists reportedly operated unchallenged for 10 hours before leaving.

While there is a clear need to augment the manpower of the Nigerian Police Force, it is equally imperative to ensure that personnel are strategically deployed to areas requiring heightened security. The misuse of police escorts by the political class and their associates must be curbed to redirect resources where genuinely needed.

In conclusion, the Christmas day tragedy underscores the urgent need for responsible and strategic policing in Nigeria. It is a call to action for political leaders and their appointees to refrain from abusing the use of security operatives, ensuring that these resources are utilized judiciously for the benefit of all citizens.

*Olayemi Olaleye,  
Manitoba, Canada*

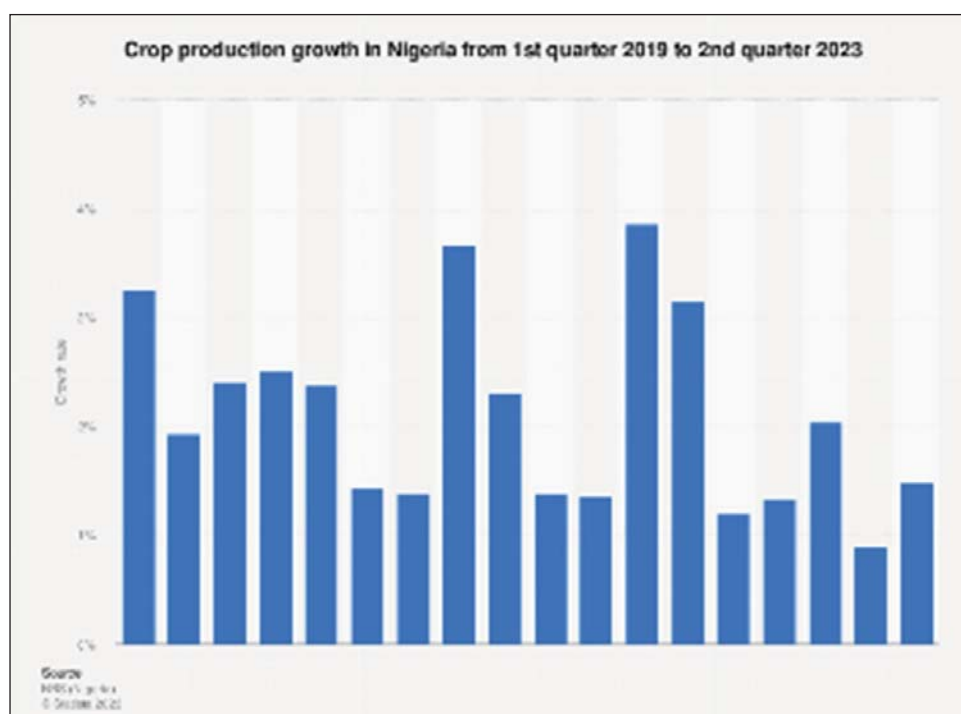
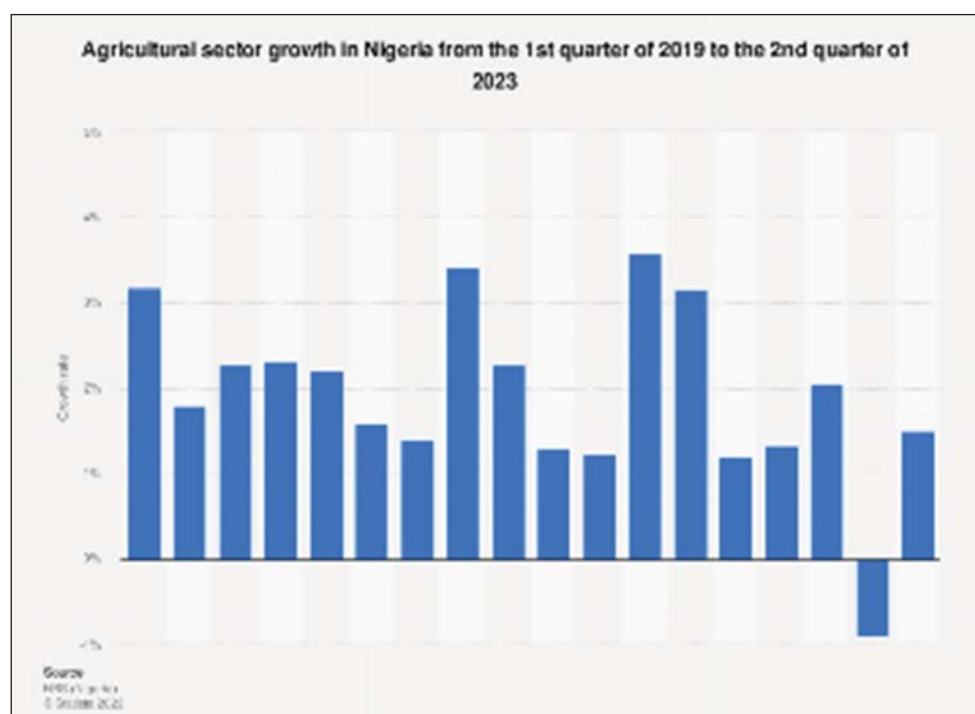
# BUSINESSWORLD

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R A T E S A S A T D E C E M B E R 2 8 , 2 0 2 3

MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX		EXCHANGE RATE
OPR	11.25%	CALL	19.12%	INDEX LEVEL	611.31%	1/4 TO DATE	-0.07%	N795.28/1 US DOLLAR*
OVERNIGHT	11.50%	1-MONTH	16.25%	1-DAY	0.03%	YEAR TO DATE	0.48%	*AS AT MONDAY, JULY 24, 2023
		3-MONTH	15.75%	MONTH-TO-DATE	-0.7%			

## Amidst Climate Change, FX Crisis, Nigeria's Agric Sector Growth Dipped 4.06% in Three Quarters of 2023



**Gilbert Ekugbe**

Nigeria's agricultural sector in the first three quarters of 2023 was able to garner an abysmal growth of about 1.9 per cent as against the 6.1 per cent recorded in the first three quarters of 2022.

The growth was no doubt hindered by the naira scarcity, foreign exchange scarcity, declining investment in the sector, climate change, the Russia-Ukraine war and many more.

The 1.9 per cent growth recorded was a far cry from what it recorded in the first three quarters of 2022. The first three quarters of 2022 recorded a growth rate of 6.1 per cent and managed a growth rate of 2.05 in the fourth quarter of 2022, which is more than what the sector recorded

in three quarters of 2023.

As of December 2023, the agricultural sector remains an important contributor to the country's economy, accounting for about 23 per cent of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the four sub-activities such as crop production, livestock, forestry and fishing make up the agricultural sector, stressing that the sector grew by 5.24 per cent year-on-year in nominal terms in Q1 2023, showing a decrease of 6.31 percentage points from the same quarter of 2022.

"Looking at the preceding quarter's growth rate of 18.67 per cent, there was a decrease of 13.44 percentage points. Crop production remained the major driver of the

sector and it is evident as it accounts for 86.85 per cent of the overall nominal value of the sector in the first quarter of 2023.

"While Quarter-on-quarter growth stood at -28.83 per cent in the first quarter of 2023, the sector contributed 19.63 per cent to nominal GDP in the first quarter of 2023. This figure was lower than the rate recorded in the first quarter of 2022 and lower than the fourth quarter of 2022 which recorded 21.09 per cent and 24.90 per cent respectively," the NBS said.

NBS added that the agricultural sector in the first quarter of 2023 grew by -0.90 per cent (year-on-year) in real terms, a decrease of 4.06 per cent points from the corresponding period of 2022, and a decrease of 2.95 percentage points from the preceding quarter which recorded a growth

rate of 2.05 per cent. It grew on a quarter-on-quarter basis at -30.95 per cent.

"However, the sector contributed 21.66 per cent to overall GDP in real terms in Q1 2023, lower than the contribution in the first quarter of 2022 and lower than the fourth quarter of 2022, which stood at 22.36 per cent and 26.46 per cent respectively. Although the growth of the agriculture and industry sectors contributed less to the aggregate GDP in the quarter under review compared to the first quarter of 2022," it added.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) had at the beginning of 2023 projected that with the removal of barriers to agricultural development aided by new investments, Africa's agricultural output could increase

from \$280 billion per year to \$1 trillion by 2030.

The AfDB President, Akinwumi Adesina, in a statement to herald the Dakar II summit in Senegal's capital city Dakar, urged heads of state and government to develop transformational country-specific food and agriculture delivery compacts while also tasking African countries to make measurable political commitments to implement policies designed to eliminate extreme poverty, hunger and malnutrition in Africa.

Since then, not much has changed as food prices continue to skyrocket making it almost impossible for the common man to feed.

The then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mohammad Abubakar, on assumption to office

assured Nigerians that he would focus on the provision of necessary policy direction to position agriculture as the mainstay of the nation's economy. Under his short spell as Agric Minister, the sector showed positive performance.

In the second quarter of 2022, the sector contributed 23.3 per cent to the nation's GDP, outperforming several other sectors, including trade, telecommunications, manufacturing, oil and gas, real estate, finance, and insurance.

The sector's performance under his leadership demonstrated a commitment to sustaining programmes on farm inputs subsidy, registration, clustering and validation of farmers, mainstreaming women and youths in agribusiness and developing cooperatives.

## Stakeholders Raise Concern over Bloated Appointments in Aviation Sector

**Chinedu Eze**

Although many industry stakeholders are upbeat about the future of the aviation industry under the watch of Festus Keyamo, as the Minister of Aviation and Airspace Development, others have complained about the bloated appointment of directors in the aviation industry.

Last week the minister announced the appointment of 48 Directors in the five aviation agencies: the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the Nigerian Airspace

Management Agency (NAMA), the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET), the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) and the Nigerian Safety Investigation Board (NSIB).

The stakeholders argued that with the current economic situation, where government ought to be conserving funds, the minister was busy with the bloated appointment of directors.

The General Secretary of the industry think-tank, Aviation Round Table (ART), Olu Fidel Ohunayo, said the changes made were expected because when a

new administration takes over the saddle, it immediately follows the existing tradition to appoint the people that would work with the administration.

He however frowned at the appointment of a large number of directors by the minister, which he insisted, ought to be trimmed down.

According to Ohunayo, "The changes are expected. Looking at the trajectory of almost all the past ministers, we see that they always just clear the table completely

and bring in their own person, irrespective of the party in place. It's that kind of rat race. There is a blend between the technocrat and bringing in fresh blood into the agency.

"But for the directors, I have serious issues there. We were complaining about the high number of directors that was imposed on us by the immediate past minister, which we saw that rather than do a staff audit that he promised, in order to reduce the number as promised, he even expanded the

directorates. But unfortunately the new minister, without even listening to the yearnings of the people, further expanded the directorate. And you expect these agencies to survive with this expansion of directorate that requires more personnel, and more payment of salaries?"

Ohunayo who expressed his displeasure over the appointment of too many directors, said having that huge number brought into the industry and agencies would be a huge financial burden.

"Sincerely, I thought the minister

was going to look at the issues and maybe return the directorate to the pre-Sirika era. But what have we seen now? It has even gone beyond that. We have seen the appointment of director of special duties, and the next step will probably be the appointment of general manager, special duties; deputy general manager, special duties; assistant general manager, special duties, and all the way down.

The story continues online on [www.thisdaylive.com](http://www.thisdaylive.com)

### MARKET DATA AS AT THURSDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2023

BONDS					BILLS					CPS					OTC FX FUTURES			
DESCRIPTION	Price	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Time	CONTRACT TENOR (MONTH)	Contract	Current Rate (\$/N)	Date
^13.53 23-MAR-2025	101.40	12.14	-36.00	November 2, 2023	NTB 26-Oct-23	1.80	1.80	0.00	November 2, 2023	JULI CP II 25-OCT-23	16.95	17.00	0.00	November 2, 2023	1	NGUS OCT 30 2024	-	November 2, 2023
^12.50 22-JAN-2026	99.00	13.00	-12.00	November 2, 2023	NTB 9-Nov-23	2.57	2.57	0.00	November 2, 2023	ZEDC CPI 17-NOV-23	14.71	14.89	0.00	November 2, 2023	2	NGUS NOV 27 2024	-	November 2, 2023
^16.2884 17-MAR-27	108.14	13.23	-1.00	November 2, 2023	NTB 7-Dec-23	3.92	3.94	0.00	November 2, 2023	NSDL CPI IA 22-NOV-23	19.25	19.60	0.00	November 2, 2023	3	NGUS DEC 24 2024	-	November 2, 2023
^13.98 23-FEB-2028	99.81	14.02	-6.00	November 2, 2023	NTB 25-Jan-24	3.50	3.53	0.00	November 2, 2023	MTNN CP V 23-NOV-23	11.27	11.39	0.00	November 2, 2023	4	NGUS JAN 29 2025	-	November 2, 2023
^14.55 26-APR-2029	98.98	14.82	-5.00	November 2, 2023	NTB 8-Feb-24	4.39	4.45	0.00	November 2, 2023	NSDL CP IIB 23-NOV-23	19.24	19.60	0.00	November 2, 2023	5	NGUS FEB 26 2025	-	November 2, 2023

## BUSINESSWORLD

## AIR WATCH

# TAAG Angola to Operate Daily Flight to Lagos

Stories By Chinedu Eze

TAAG Angola Airlines has announced that it will start daily flight service to Lagos, as the company is providing daily connections between Luanda (Angola) and Lagos (Nigeria) from January 8th.

Nigeria is one of the largest economies in Africa, and Lagos a key regional destination.

Currently, the Luanda – Lagos

route has five weekly frequencies, on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday operated by Boeing 737-700 aircraft, with 120 passengers' total capacity (102 in economy class and 12 in business class).

A positive impact on trade and people mobility between Angola and Nigeria is expected while Luanda is reinforcing its status as an important hub for regional and international connections powered

by TAAG Angola Airlines.

Recently, TAAG Angola Airlines has been upgrading the network, leveraging the connectivity to regional routes: São Tomé Island, Windhoek (Namibia), Pointe-Noire (Republic of Congo), and Maputo (Mozambique).

The airline restated its commitment to provide quality and convenient services to customers, positioning Angola as a preferred hub for regional and intercontinental connections.

# Egypt Air Opens New Office in Kano, Engages GSA

In line with its new marketing strategy in Nigeria, Egypt Air has opened a new office in Kano for a better reach out to its customers and excellent services.

Equally, the airline has also deepened its market access in the Nigerian market by engaging the services of a General Sales Agent (GSA) to drive its sales and marketing strategy in the market.

The airline has therefore partnered Elite Tours, a renowned GSA firm with a track record in offering excellent airline sales and marketing in Nigeria; with its mother company, Master Travels, an Egypt based Travel and Tourism

Management Organisation.

Speaking on the pedigree of the GSA, the Managing Director of Elite Tours, Mr. Mohamed Said said: "The company has a strong history in Egypt. We are one of the top four operators in Cairo, with a mother company in Egypt known as Master Travels."

General Manager, GSA Nigeria, Mr. Muharram Abdelrahman, said: "This is a significant milestone in the history of Egypt Air in Nigeria since the airline started operations in Nigeria more than 45 years ago. During this time Egypt Air used to carry out its business in Nigeria by itself

through its offices in Lagos, Kano and Abuja. In order to get more quality service, the airline took a decision to have a GSA in Kano and Lagos in order to satisfy the customer needs and to be closer to the customers."

Also speaking, the airline's Country Manager, Mr. Amr Basha stated: "The airline tends to operate through a GSA in order to make its operations more efficient as it moves to expand to many other new destinations. So, instead of building or renting staff and offices, we contract with a GSA with more experience in the market."

# Qatar Airways Unveils 2024 Network Expansion Plan

Qatar Airways has announced its 2024 network expansion plan with exciting new destinations as well as resumptions, bookable ahead of the New Year.

Travellers can start planning their 2024 summer travels with the resumption of Venice, Italy in June, followed by the exciting new destination of Hamburg, Germany in July.

These gateways will act as a vehicle for increased economic and tourism activity as they connect to Qatar Airways' award-winning network of over 170 destinations. Venice is expected to see high demand from destinations such as Japan, China and Australia while Hamburg will serve as a gateway to South Africa, Thailand and the Philippines.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: "As this year comes to an end, we are delighted to present our passengers with new and exciting travel

opportunities for the year 2024. Starting with our resumption to Venice and an inaugural flight to Hamburg, Qatar Airways and its hub, Hamad International Airport, continues to position itself on the

global map as a leading gateway for international travel and connectivity. We look forward to seeing our passengers uncover new experiences and resume flying to their favourite destinations."

# Embraer Doubles Service Centre Capacity in USA

Embraer has announced that it is doubling its maintenance service capacity in the United States of America (USA), to support the continued growth of its executive jets' customer base through the addition of three Executive Aviation Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities in Dallas Love Field, TX, Cleveland, OH, and Sanford, FL.

According to Vice President MRO Services, Embraer Services and Support, Frank Stevens, "We are pleased to offer additional service locations for our customers as we will significantly expand the capacity, capability, and footprint of our MRO network in the USA. Our Executive Jets fleet has been growing rapidly over the last several years as strong demand continues across the entire product portfolio. This

expansion will provide immediate additional capacity and ensures that we are poised to care for our valued customers and strategically grow for many years to come."

Embraer will also substantially increase its Mobile Response network by 28 teams, and enlarge its capabilities including access to interior services, paint, and component repairs as part of this expansion. Service at these locations is set to begin in the second quarter of 2024. Embraer currently has three owned U.S.-based service centers dedicated to its executive jet customers located in Mesa, AZ, Melbourne, FL, and Fort Lauderdale, FL. Further, the company has 24 authorized service centers for its executive jets across the USA.

# Airtel Africa Registers 150 Millionth Customer

Emma Okonji

Airtel Africa has registered its 150 millionth customer, and has expressed happiness in giving millions of people access to reliable and high-quality digital and mobile money services.

Led by the purpose of transforming lives, connecting 150 million customers is a significant milestone that underscores the company's commitment to enriching the lives of its customers.

Pleased with the development, Airtel Africa said it would focus on further expansion, increased innovation, and continued

investments to ensure a digitally empowered future for all.

The growth reflects Airtel Africa's commitment to reaching more people, with more services, in more places than ever before. By bringing mobile banking, data, and telecoms to underserved communities across sub-Saharan Africa, Airtel Africa is driving financial and digital inclusion and helping to unlock the potential of people, businesses, and societies.

In response to the increased demand for accessible and affordable services, Airtel Africa is continuing to expand its network and invest in the future through fiber and 5G.

## AIR WATCH



# The Ugly Side of Nigerian Airport Toilets

Passenger traffic in Nigerian airports hits 3-year high (million)

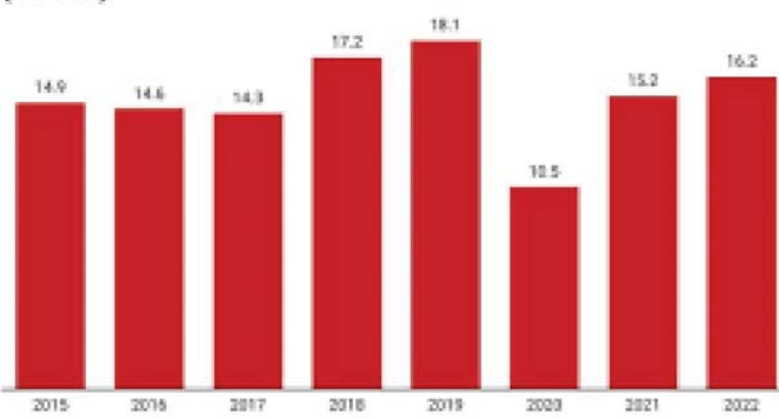


Chart: BusinessDay - Source: Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) - Created with Tableau

Chinedu Eze

For several years, air travellers in Nigeria have complained about the toilets at the airports, describing them as dirty, squalid and dilapidated.

As a matter of fact, many Nigerians and foreigners familiar with the toilets don't use them; they rather wait till they get home before they relieve themselves or they seek for alternatives to airport toilets.

The toilet facilities are known for their filthiness for decades that it seems to have become a tradition.

THISDAY investigation revealed that in all the airports managed by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), the toilets are inadequate for the number of passengers that use the facilities. Also, they are not cleaned regularly and the toilet system suffer frequent breakdown.

It has been observed that at the domestic terminals of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja and the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, the small toilets are usually crowded and toilet rolls are either not there or it is being handed over to passengers by an attendant.

Industry stakeholder and erstwhile General Manager, Business Development, FAAN, Adams Nuhu, told THISDAY that there was urgent need for FAAN management to review the toilet system at the airports and make a radical change, observing that airports are the first port of call for foreigners who start the rating of a country from what they see at the airport.

He urged FAAN to take action urgently in response to many years of complaints by travellers and other airport users.

"FAAN should re-plan the toilets at the Lagos and Abuja airports, make them bigger and add more urinals and toilet basins. Travellers were elated when the check-in counters were expanded at Lagos airport and provided better facilitation for passengers who now spend less time on the counter. The airport toilets should receive that kind of expansion. The toilets should be made user friendly," he said.

It was learnt that the major drawback is that FAAN gives the management of these toilets to contractors who collect money from the agency and provide embarrassing service. The contracts are given out as third party, which means the main contractor sub-contracts the service, indicating how low they rate the importance of toilets in an airport.

THISDAY findings also showed that the toilet rolls they use are very inferior, which leaves particles on the body of the users. As if that is not enough, the attendants who provide service there, most of the time, beg for alms, especially after handing over some pieces of the toilet rolls.

Recently, an America who said he has been travelling to Nigeria through the Lagos airport said he travelled through the international airport in Togo and compared the two airports, saying that the airport in Togo is very clean with easy passenger facilitation and above all, the airport workers do not beg for money or try to extort travellers.

Nuhu suggested that FAAN should review its decision to contract out the management of the toilets and urged that they should employ toilet attendants directly, give them job security and supervise them closely, adding that quality toilet rolls should be procured and reiterated that the airport is the window, which foreigners see

Nigeria; so, it is important that there should be total revamp of the toilet system.

He also admitted that the international wing of the Abuja airport has clean toilets but the domestic terminal has dirty toilets and said they are overused because they are inadequate.

Many passengers that travel through the Nigerian airport complain about how unfriendly the facilities are and whenever they talk about airport service, they always rate the domestic terminal in Lagos (MMA2) better. MMA2 managed by Bi-Courtney Aviation Services Limited has remained consistent in maintaining very clean toilets and the number of toilets is very adequate for the passenger capacity of the terminal. This explains why there are no queues on arrival because there are toilets at every turn at the airport.

Country Manager of one of the foreign airlines that operate to Lagos, told THISDAY that flight crew of foreign airlines do not use the toilets at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos; rather, they wait until they get to their hotels.

He disclosed that the Lagos airport toilet is known globally as very dirty.

THISDAY learnt from a FAAN official that the contract to manage the toilet is usually given at the ministerial level.

"We have been talking about this over the years but what Nigerians who criticize FAAN do not know is that many of these things are micromanaged from the Ministry of Aviation. You just come around and somebody will come and introduce himself that he has been given the contract to manage the toilets," he said.

THISDAY also learnt that the attendants who manage the toilets are underpaid and their salaries are delayed. One of them who was cornered at the international wing of the Lagos airport, told THISDAY that although the main reason they come to the airport is to maintain and manage the toilets but that they depend on other means of survival in order to make both ends meet.

"If the pipes are broken and you complain you will not get a response from the contractor. Everyday people who use the toilet spoil things. It is either they want to flush and the handle breaks or the float may just break down or the chain or the refill tube in the cistern. In fact, because most of those fittings are old, they easily break down and need urgent replacement but this does not happen. Do you know that sometimes we beg to get detergents and even the toilet rolls they supply is inadequate but we have to be managing things," he said.

THISDAY spoke with the new Director of Airport Operations at FAAN, Captain Zubair Mahmood, who said that there would be urgent improvement of the toilets, adding that giving the airports better outlook and enhance easy passenger facilitation are some of the priorities of the new Managing Director of FAAN, Mrs. Olubunmi Oluwaseun Kuku.

"We know the challenges and we have mapped out our priorities and one of them is improving the outlook of the airports, especially the Lagos and Abuja airports. So we are going to work on the toilets immediately and address other yearnings of the passengers," Mahmood said.

## THE BUSINESS TEAM

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# COP28: How BayelsaPRIME is Answering Climate Question

As greenhouse gasses and climate change become more topical, a basic education reform programme is contributing to reducing emissions through technology, writes **Oluchi Chibuzor**



Gov Douye Diri at the recently concluded COP28

**E**bilayefa Ituaton (not real name) is a quality assurance officer with Bayelsa State Universal Basic Education Board (BY SUBEB).

His job entails visiting schools (most of which are far-flung from, Yenagoa, the state capital) to ensure that teachers are in school when they should be, instructional materials are in place and children are learning with the approved curriculum.

"There are times I would travel for over five hours across 93.8 kilometers just to get to a school for quality assurance monitoring," the 30-year-old said.

On a recent trip, I started on a bus, then took a speed boat for over 10 kilometers before ending the trip on a moto-cycle that took me another one and half hours," he said, his face betraying the stress that comes with such tedious journeys.

Across Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), this is often the case (except for the element of travelling by water), where modern technology that provides real-time data for decision making has not been fully integrated into quality-assuring public primary schools.

As expected, these trips come at a cost not just to the physical traveler, but also the environment as many of the schools being visited are in hard-to-reach areas which require land and water vehicles (which contribute to atmospheric pollution and gas emissions) to reach.

## BEHEMOTH IN DISGUISE

Research conducted at Columbia University suggests that, "the transportation sector is responsible for a significant portion of greenhouse gas emissions, the majority of which derive from passenger road vehicles."

According to researchers in the New York based university, "road transport accounts for 17 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, a major factor contributing to climate change."

Information provided by the federal government in its Energy Transition Plan (ETP) document suggests that "the transportation sector represents about 24 percent of in-scope emissions."

To address this issue, government announced a commitment to carbon neutrality by 2060.

The Energy Transition Plan (ETP) released in 2021 highlights the scale of effort required to achieve the 2060 net zero target, steps to be taken to ensure success while also proffering a roadmap to meet the nation's energy needs.

A major feature of the Bayelsa State Promoting Reform to Improve and Modernise Education (BayelsaPRIME) reform programme launched by Governor Douye Diri's government in early 2023 is the use of technology to reduce needless travel for quality assurance activities in state owned primary schools. This inadvertently has an impact on the level of emission contributed by such endeavours.

## LESSONS FOR THE REST OF NIGERIA

BayelsaPRIME is a homegrown reform programme that addresses shortcomings in basic education management and administration using modern technology. It addresses challenges the state used to face with teacher absenteeism and truancy, poor and inadequate instructional materials, outdated teaching methods and curriculum.

Beyond these, it uses technology to address the challenge of distance and long travel.

Activities in the 222 schools where the programme has been implemented can be monitored remotely without quality assurance officers being necessarily present in schools.

From the BayelsaPRIME terminal or network of computers (which will soon become a full fledge situation room), basic education sector administrators



A teacher instructing children with BayelsaPRIME Teacher Tablets



Another teacher instructing children with BayelsaPRIME Teacher Tablets

in the state capital can monitor when each teacher arrived and departed school each day, what subjects were taught, if lessons were completed, and the performance and attendance record of each child in the state-owned basic education ecosystem.

Essentially, schools can be monitored effectively remotely.

This new system drastically reduces the need for long bus, car, boat or motorcycle journeys to schools across several kilometers, several times during the academic calendar.

It also obliterates the issue of distrust as information is largely collected through a network of smartphones, tablets and computers which are less prone to human manipulation and distortions.

Although school visits are still a part of the quality assurance process, because in-school upskilling of teachers is a continuous process, under BayelsaPRIME basic education administrators no longer have to be physically present at a school to know what is actually going on before, during and after school hours.

"It's a dramatic positive change we have come to embrace since the state implemented BayelsaPRIME. I can tell you that we are like people who have emerged from the dark since we started BayelsaPRIME," the Executive Secretary of the Bayelsa State Universal Basic Education Board, Chief

Victor Okubonabo said in an interview at his office.

Each teacher in the programme is assigned a teacher-tablets which facilitates teaching and learning in school. Lesson guides are sent to the teachers through their tablets to ensure that a structured approach to teaching is attained across all schools and classrooms simultaneously.

Through the tablets, teachers who are not teaching and those who are not punctual in school can be identified remotely on a daily basis, so they can receive the necessary help to meet up with the requirements of the reform.

The tablets also serve as a source of information and news from BY SUBEB and the State Ministry of Education. It is the tool through which school attendance is electronically recorded for teachers and pupils.

Few states in Nigeria (Edo, Lagos and Kwara) have such capabilities, where technology is the fulcrum of basic

education reform and management.

It is understandable why Bayelsa is a leader. It is a coastal state desiring to be more efficient in adopting technology and the governor of the state is at the forefront of implementing measures that will make the basic education system more agile and amenable to latest trends in education.

## MATCHING WORDS WITH ACTION

In the afternoon of 4, December 2023, Governor Diri lent his voice to the growing calls for global attention to the challenges facing coastal states as he sat shoulder to shoulder with leaders of the "Deltas Unite" environmental campaign.

Later that evening he would write on X (formerly Twitter), "Today, I joined in the formal unveiling of the United Nations Convention for Conserving River Deltas (UNCCRD) at the ongoing Climate Change Conference, COP 28 in Dubai.

"The gathering of eminent leaders across the globe including Nigeria's President, H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, in Dubai at this time underpins the sense of commitment and determination to save our planet.

"From the Niger Delta region where Bayelsa State is located, the impact of climate change continues to wreak unimaginable havoc on our environment, ecosystem, and human resources, hence, this unveiling today to draw global attention to the threatening and impending extinction of world's deltas and wetlands."

Certainly, the governor who aptly describes Bayelsa State as "more delta than Delta State and more rivers than Rivers State" is at the forefront of responding to the climate change question. As his presence at COP28 sent a strong message of commitment to stopping the debilitating impact of climate change.

## A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE

One of the lessons from the example of Governor Diri is that leaders and policy makers can make change possible through their actions.

The overall Nigerian environment will benefit immensely if similar policies are implemented across several sector thereby reducing travel time, stress and resources deployed on travel and the consequent impact on the environment.

What is even more important is the cutback on dangerous vehicular emissions that do not only impact the environment but also the overall health and wellbeing of several citizens.

## PRINCESS IYEFU MARGARET ADOBA FOUNDATION

This is to inform the general public that the above name has applied to Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) for registration under part C of the Allied Matters Act 2020.

### NAMES OF TRUSTEES

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Lady Susan Adoba: Chairperson        | 4. Anita Elameyi Adoba: Treasurer |
| 2. Ene Caroline Adoba: Vice Chairperson | 5. Gracie Okwu Adoba: Member      |
| 3. Ochanya Elizabeth Aje Oga: Gen Sec   | 6. Adoba James Adoba: Member      |

**AIM:** To provide a holistic transformation of young people and disadvantaged communities by offering education and vocational training, empowerment and exposure to technology and technological advancement.

**OBJECTIVES:** The Organization shall have the following specific objectives:

- To mobilize resources and establish educational opportunities for vulnerable children.
- To ensure children are safe, healthy and protected at home, in schools and communities.
- To facilitate the rehabilitation of traumatized children through sports, music, dance and drama.
- To support community-led initiatives with focus on using sustainable technologies to enhance development.
- To build capacity and sensitize children and communities on sexual reproductive health, rights and other preventable viral diseases such as HIV and chronic Hepatitis.
- To inculcate spiritual principles.

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to:  
The Registrar, Corporate Affairs Commission  
Plot 420 Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi St, Maitama, Abuja  
within 28 days from the date of this publication.

SIGNED: The Board of Trustees

# IMAGES

Photo Editor Abiodun Ajala  
Email [abiodun.ajala@thisdaylive.com](mailto:abiodun.ajala@thisdaylive.com)



Chairman/Chief Executive Officer, Channels Media Group, Mr. John Momoh (left), and member, Board of Trustee (BoT), GAMSU, Toyosi Akerere-Ogunsiji (right), during the inauguration of Gamaliel and Susan Onosode International Management and Research Centre at the Lagos Business School, Lagos...recently  
PHOTO: ABIODUN AJALA



L-R: Osun State Deputy Governor, Prince Kola Adewusi; state Governor, Senator Ademola Adeleke; Secretary to State Government (SSG), Hon Teslim Igbalaye; and Speaker, state House of Assembly, Rt Hon Adewale Egbedun, during the inspection tour of the ongoing dualisation of the Old Garage-Okefia-Lameco Roads in Osogbo...recently



Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), Force CID, Alagbon Annex, Lagos, Idowu Owohunwa(left), and the new Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Fayoado Adegoke, during the latter's courtesy visit to the AIG at Alagbon Annex in Lagos...recently



L-R: Overall Supervisor, Best Joe Ventures, Joel Joshua; members of Daisy Star Dance Crew; and owner, Aderonke Stores; Madam Aderonke Ibeji (extreme right), during the choreography competition third place prize presentation to Daisy Star Dance Crew at the 13th Kids Time Out (KTO) during the Ogeradiant Christmas Fair for children in Ajegunle community, Lagos...recently



L-R: Nollywood actor, Seun Akindele; Nigerian movie producer, director and actress, Funke Akindele; and famous Yoruba actor, Odunlade Adekola, at the premiere of Funke Akindele's new movie 'A Tribe Called Judah', held at Film House Cinema IMAX, Lekki, Lagos...recently



L-R: Secretary, Board of Trustee (BoT), GAMSU, Spencer Onosode; Chairman, Arco Group, Chief Joseph Akpiewi; President-General, Worldwide, Government College Ughelli Old Boys Association, Chief Albert Akpomudje; member of BoT, GAMSU, Mr. Alfred Okoigun; Director, Arco Group, Mrs Julie Okoigun; and member of BoTGAMSU, Mr. Ese Onosode, during the inauguration of Gamaliel and Susan Onosode International Management and Research Centre at the Lagos Business School, Lagos...recently  
PHOTO: ABIODUN AJALA

# **This** **Weekend**

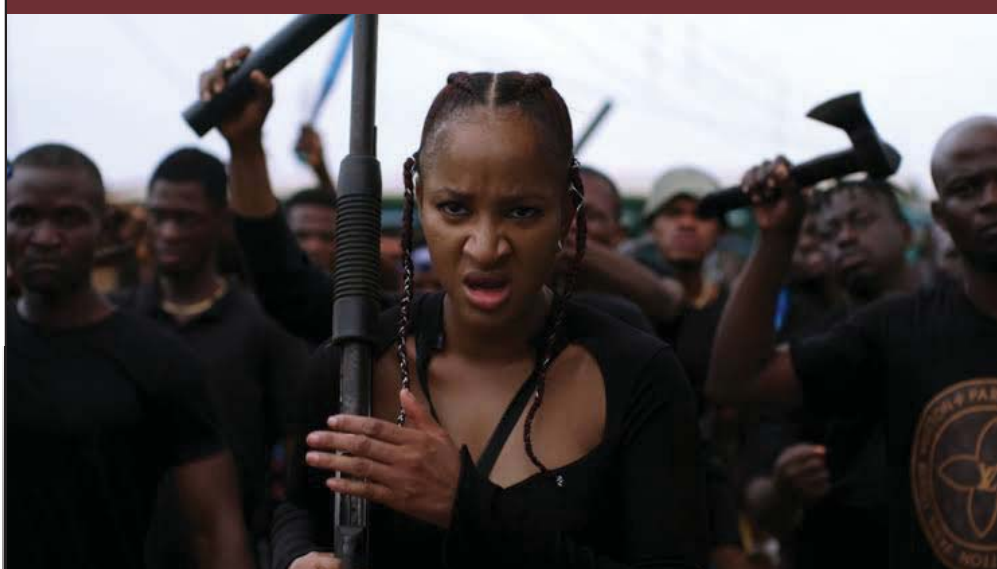
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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2023

**THIS DAY**  
**WEEKLY MAGAZINE**



## **Spotlight on 10 Time Capsule Film, Series of 2023**



# Spotlight on 10 Time Capsule Film, Series of 2023

The year 2023 was such an important moment for Nollywood, Nigerian film industry. This year, the productions churned out emphasised the leaps local filmmakers have attained through strategic collaboration with film industries globally, as well as their sheer audacity to dream and challenge the status quo, as a result, capturing the attention of a range of stakeholders in other well-established film industries such as Hollywood. **lyke Bede** captures 10 of such film and series



**E**ras in popular culture are significantly marked by trends in the entertainment landscape—from the style of music that goes mainstream to the latest fashion and lifestyle adopted, to how filmmakers choose to impact audiences through storytelling that mirrors contemporary issues.

Each year, filmmakers meticulously capture these cultural journeys, usually with the help of the ever-dynamic nature of technology in cinematography, to tell and retell stories in a more visually striking manner.

2023 was not short of such moments in the Nigerian film industry monikered as Nollywood. If anything, their productions emphasised the leaps local filmmakers have attained through strategic collaboration with film industries globally, as well as their sheer audacity to dream and challenge the status quo, as a result, capturing the attention of a range of stakeholders in other well-established film industries such as Hollywood.

Ten films and series have left a lasting impact in 2023, not only as commercial successes but also garnering praise from most critics.

## WURA (SERIES)

Based on the South African telenovela 'The River,' 'Wura' launched in January 2023 for its pilot season and recorded 100 episodes in July, becoming a flagship show on the Showmax app.

With a five-man directorial team, the show explores the double life of Wura (played by Scarlet Gomez) as she navigates the mining world while maintaining a pristine reputation within her family. But aside from Gomez playing the lead role, the series manages to address other sociocultural issues, little wonder it is a hot topic discussed by netizens every weekday.

## REAL HOUSEWIVES OF LAGOS (SERIES)

This is another Showmax series that garnered so much social media buzz with its sophomore season after it debuted in 2022. The series is a local version of the international franchise 'The Real Housewives,' chronicling the relationships of eight wives and lovers of high-profile individuals.

Like the international versions, RHOLagos boasts a considerably high SHU (scoville heat unit) rating steeped in gossip, drama, and sheer opulence that helped it break streaming records



on the platform.

## SHANTY TOWN (SERIES)

Holding the record for the most streamed Nigerian title on Netflix between January and June with 27.3 million hours watched, the thriller series exposing the underground world of human trafficking and corruption in politics quickly captured the attention of many movie lovers who were quick to draw parallels.

Undoubtedly, the impressive portrayal of Scar by Chidi Mokeme surely did a number on everyone's psyche.

## FAR FROM HOME (MINI-SERIES)

Released in December of last year, 'Far From Home' introduces an aspiring artist torn between peddling drugs for a cartel and actualising his dreams of travelling to

London to become an apprentice under the tutelage of a respected artist.

Set in the fictional Wilmer Academy, no one is safe from the ire of Oga Rambo, a ruthless cartel head, making this series a binge-watcher paradise.

## MAMI WATA (FILM)

Shot in black and white, C.J. Obasi delivers a resplendent visual experience — adorned by intricately crafted costumes — to audiences to earn a 100 per cent fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes.

Adding to its appeal as a highly critically acclaimed work, it was selected as Nigeria's official entry for Best International Feature Film at the 96th Academy Awards but did not make the shortlist. It also gained a nod in the Best International Film category at the 39th Independent Spirit Awards.

## THE ORIGIN: MADAM KOI KOI (TWO-PART FILM)

Maintaining the number one spot on the Netflix Nigerian chart for weeks, this beautiful retelling of the mythical figure Madam Koi Koi gains new life through the directorial lens of Jay Jituboh who masterfully unravels all her layers of 'slow simmer' style.

In Jituboh's attempt to establish a globally referenced figure in the ranking of Houdini and BigFoot, this writer reckons he's on the right path.

## BLOOD VESSEL (FILM)

A case of multiple misfortunes steeped in unbridled conundrums, 'Blood Vessel' recounts the plights of an impoverished community nestled in an area affected by an oil spill and the resulting violence that

sends a group of youngsters to seek greener pastures.

While visually compelling, it reflects the realities of current-day Nigeria and the 'Japa' (brain drain) syndrome.

## A TRIBE CALLED JUDAH (FILM)

Currently holding the title of highest grossing film this year, earning N400 million in 12 days, 'ATCD' waltz onto this list with the charisma of a filmmaker that has proven her 'commercial' mettle with two previous successful titles: 'Omo Ghetto: The Saga,' and 'Battle on Buka Street.'

## GANGS OF LAGOS (SERIES)

When a series captures the attention of residents in the actual state where its fictional character is set, then it is certain to have made a bold statement.

'Gangs of Lagos' mirrors the political setting in Nigeria's megacity, throwing light on the emotional and psychological impact of political dynamics on its residents. The show captures the attention of locals by presenting a narrative that feels intimately connected to the lived experiences of those in Lagos. As viewers engage with the series, they find a compelling exploration of socio-political themes that not only entertain but also prompt contemplation on the realities of their own lives.

## BREATH OF LIFE (FILM)

Released last month, 'Breath of Life' is slowly gaining a cult following that will continue into 2024.

The tale woven in 'Breath of Life' unfolds as a man confronts a profound loss of purpose. However, his journey takes a transformative turn when he encounters a young man, setting in motion a series of events that reshape his very existence.

**“If anything, their productions emphasised the leaps local filmmakers have attained through strategic collaboration with film industries globally, as well as their sheer audacity to dream and challenge the status quo, as a result, capturing the attention of a range of stakeholders in other well-established film industries such as Hollywood.”**

## NEWS

# PUNUKA Celebrates Staff, Gets New Partner as Idigbe Advises Young Lawyers

Precious Ugwuzor

Senior Partner at Punuka Attorneys and Solicitors, Chief Anthony Idigbe (SAN), has urged young lawyers to find their niche to succeed in the legal profession.

He gave the advice at the firm's end-of-the-year party.

A former Senior Associate at the firm, Adeyinka Abdulsalam, was announced as a new partner at the event.

He was until his elevation the Assistant Head for the Maritime, Aviation and Transport Law Practice Groups.

According to Chief Idigbe, Punuka has survived these years because the firm focuses on expert knowledge and has built competence in areas it has a competitive advantage.

He, therefore, urged aspiring lawyers and firms to be well-focused and build knowledge in their areas of strength.

"As parochial as the Nigerian system seems to be, there is still space for merit," he said.

The senior partner also praised the members of staff for prov-



L-R: Partner, PUNUKA Attorneys & Solicitors, Nnamdi Oragwu; Partner, Ebelechukwu Enedah; Senior Partner, Dr Anthony Idigbe (SAN); Managing Partner, Elizabeth Idigbe; ex-staff, Tochukwu Onyiuke (SAN), a staff member, Mike Okoh and the Executive Director, Angela Ezenweani at the law firm's end of year party in Lagos

ing their worth and helping to entrench the firm's strength and competence.

He said: "One thing I find interesting is that as parochial as the Nigerian system seems to be, there is space for merit.

"We found it and we are there. So I will urge colleagues in this profession to find their space in the market.

"At Punuka, we believe in merit, even in how we handle our cases and deal with our clients.

"Because we are based on merit, we believe your work will lead you to the next stage, not patronage, emotions, ethnicity or parochial considerations. Be focused and you will move ahead.

"At Punuka, our greatest asset is our human capital, and we

encourage them to reach for the greatest peak of their careers.

"It is also good to focus on areas of strength and competence.

"One thing that has made Punuka survive and stand out is our focus on expert knowledge.

"We continue to build on our areas of competence - capital market, insolvency, construction law, arbitration, and laws.

## At NBA Lagos Dinner, Bank Chief Seeks Judicial Reforms to End Delays

Precious Ugwuzor

Delays in adjudication of commercial cases have made the courts a haven for chronic debtors, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Polaris Bank, Adekunle Sonola, has said.

The inefficient system, he noted, also boosts impunity rather than the courts serving as a deterrent to criminality.

"The weaknesses of the legal/judicial system encourage illicit economic activities. There is a strong correlation between illicit economic activities and the effectiveness of the legal system across countries," Sonola said.

The Polaris Bank chief delivered the lecture at the 2023 annual dinner of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Lagos Branch, which was held at the weekend.

The theme was: "Favourable investment and business environment through legal policy and reforms."

He noted that even when a protracted case is eventually decided, the value of the recovered debt would have depreciated massively.

The consequence, according to him, is that the economy suffers, with many investors afraid of entering into contracts because their rights are not adequately protected and contracts are not effectively enforced.

"There is a general disregard for contract terms which makes the economy less investible.



L-R: Chair, Communications and Publicity Sub-Committee, Hassana Barnabas-Agbada; Co-chair, Logistics and Entertainment, Johnson Amaechi; NBA General Secretary, Adesina Adegbite; NBA Lagos Branch Chairman, Olabisi Makanjuola; Abia State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Ikechukwu Uwanna, who is a former chairman of the branch, and Dinner Committee Secretary Kike Ojewale at the event

"Many Nigerians reject direct investments when they will not be actively involved in operations and management, as contracts cannot be timely enforced.

"This makes capital inaccessible, and the economy suffers for it," Sonola said.

Sonola said banks' inability to effectively use the legal system to get loan defaulters to honour their obligations increases their 'cost of risk', which is in turn reflected in loan pricing.

"An effective legal system must be designed to prevent opportunistic loan defaulters from exploiting vulnerabilities within the system," he said.

He, therefore, stressed the need to restore faith in the legal system.

"The public confidence in the legal system must be rebuilt. This will positively impact businesses and investment.

"Timely and efficient delivery of justice is imperative for fostering a conducive business environment and instilling confidence in legal processes," Sonola said.

He called for specialised courts or commercial tribunals with powers to determine commercial disputes faster. Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms, he said, must be a critical part of the system, while court processes should be digitalised.

The legal system, Sonola believes, must be end-to-end automated as much as practicable and be accessible to all. At the same time, reforms

must keep up with the dynamic economic and social environment.

To him, the importance and criticality of an efficient legal system to businesses, investment and overall economic well-being have not enjoyed proportional public discourse attention, which must change.

He advised: "Ensure the adequate number of judges with equally adequate remuneration. Continuously review court rules to strengthen process efficiency.

"Lawyers are critical agents of reformation. They must prioritise justice delivery above playing the legal system.

Reformation will require support from the Ministry of Justice and the National Judicial Council.

"Government, at all levels, must show commitment and provide the necessary funding."

Aside from legal challenges, Sonola said the business environment is also dealing with rising inflation that has hit 27.3 per cent, high interest rates, foreign exchange illiquidity and volatility, high energy costs which have more than doubled, weak infrastructure base, insecurity, rising risk profile, declining purchasing power, among others.

NBA Lagos Branch chairman Olabisi Makanjuola noted that the economy would thrive best if the judiciary is more efficient.

He said the association would continue to engage with the Bench towards improving the system and strengthening the Bar's relationship

## COLLOAFRICA UNVEILS REVOLUTIONARY FINTECH PLATFORM



ColloAfrica CEO, Olayinka Odunbaku

In a groundbreaking move at the intersection of tradition and technology, Collo Africa, spearheaded by tech-driven finance professional, Olayinka Odunbaku, is set to reshape the landscape of Ajo, Adashi, Esusu, and similar community-based contribution groups as it digitises the traditional savings groups.

To this end, ColloAfrica has introduced an innovative fintech platform designed to seamlessly digitise the management and operations of traditional savings groups.

This transformative solution offers a secure, transparent, and efficient means of creating contribution groups, managing members, and facilitating instant payouts.

CEO and Founder of ColloAfrica, Olayinka Odunbaku, who envisions a future where age-old practices seamlessly integrate with modern technologies, noted, "In an era of digital transformation, it is necessary to combine the capabilities of technology with the benefits of traditional saving systems to easily build sustainable wealth."

ColloAfrica's commitment to sustainable community-based savings goes beyond mere financial transactions; it's about fostering long-term financial health within communities. The platform seeks to establish a robust and enduring framework for savings that not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the collective prosperity of the community. By integrating technology with traditional savings practices, ColloAfrica aims to create a sustainable financial ecosystem that stands the test of time, serving as a foundation for intergenerational wealth.

## ORALUGO UNVEILS FIRST-EVER STORE IN LAGOS

A fledgling locally-made fashion brand, Oralugo has been unveiled in Lagos to the delight of fashion enthusiasts and its first-ever store opened to customers in Victoria Island, Lagos. The ambitious clothing line has also promised to embark on a rapid expansion across the nation. Oralugo was launched recently at its first store on Idowu Martins Street, Victoria Island Lagos as fashion and style lovers and influencers paid tribute to the innovative designs on display.

Oralugo commenced as a business in 2021 and has released 4 collections so far.

The fourth collection which was recently showcased at the flagship store is named Chaos to Charm, the brand continues to express its brand identity through quality fabrics, bold colours and clean cuts which challenge the status quo of fashion, urging people to be confident about their personal style, body form and skin colour.

## WINNERS EMERGE IN THE 2023 AFRICA FINANCE AWARDS

The organisers of the Africa Finance Awards have released the list of winners for the 2023 awards in Lagos. Top winners for the 2023 awards include Tranex Plc, Sage Grey Finance, Spectranet, Sewa Capital and Lilvera Group among others, a statement from the organisers stated.

In a statement, the organisers said that the 2023 edition of the Africa Finance Awards will take place in December 2023 at the Leola Hotel in Maryland Lagos.

Mr. Abidemi Adesanya, Project Director at Africa Finance Awards said "The event is an evening of excellence designed to celebrate outstanding achievements of leading brands and CEOs across sectors such as finance, Logistics, ICT, marketing communications, healthcare, real estate and oil and gas among others."

The awards have produced reputable winners in the past such as Nestle Plc, NNPC Retail, Infinity Trust Mortgage Bank Plc, Quantum Construct, Linkpoint, Vitafoam, Keystone Bank, Crystal Finance, Powergas, and Cashigo among several others.

## FEDAN Brightens Festive Season with 'FIL to the World' Campaign

Stories By Mary Nnah

As part of the effort to make Nigerians experience a memorable festive season against the harsh economy in the country, a Lagos-based mobile phone accessories company, FEDAN Investment Limited, has launched a Yuletide season campaign tagged, "FIL to the World" to put smiles on the faces of Nigerians with innovations of its latest technologies in mobile phones accessories, electrical lightings and security gadgets.

According to the management of the company, the newly launched massive campaign is aimed at bringing comfort to Nigerians with innovations as well as to widen the Nigeria mobile phone accessories market growth.

The CEO and Managing Direc-



CEO/MD, FEDAN Investment Limited, Mr Stephen Chinemelum (right) with Santaduring the launch of the 'FIL to the World' campaign in Lagos

tor of the company, Mr Stephen Amaechi Chinemelum, noted that the campaign was part of the company's motive to reposition

the company ahead of its 30th anniversary in 2024, adding that, "FIL to the World" encapsulates the vision of the company to become

a leading global mobile phone accessories organisation reputed for providing innovative products that make daily living a delight to all." Speaking further at the end-of-the-year prayer meeting of the staff, Chinemelum, emphasised that the vision of the company is to become a global brand.

"We are not in competition with anybody. Our goal is to give quality products at affordable prices to our numerous customers. That is why we say, Think Quality, Think FIL." Fedan Investment Limited has been around since 1994 providing Nigerians with quality products in electrical fittings, security gadgets, and mobile telephone accessories, and will be 30 years old in 2024.

"It will be recalled that the

advent of mobile telephony in the country under former President Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 2000 had opened a floodgate of a variety of mobile accessories brands in the country.

Fedan Investment Limited, with its FIL range of products, since then has remained a leading player in the multi-billion mobile telephone accessories industry," headed. The company's Marketing Communications Consultant and CEO, Tova African Media, Mr Tosin Bakare, described the innovation as part of the lineup of marketing strategies to reposition the company ahead of its 30th anniversary. Bakare noted that FIL has come to reclaim its pride of place as a leading mobile telephone accessories brand in the country and internationally.

"Going forward, the mobile telephone accessories industry will begin to witness a variety of innovative marketing communications strategies that will further excite the consumer base and lovers of FIL brands known for our quality, affordability, and ease of use. Nigerian consumers will certainly be better for it.

"With a population of over 200 million people, Nigeria is home to one of the biggest markets of mobile telephone accessories in the world. The market is driven by the rising penetration of smartphones and a huge youth population who operate on the cutting edge of technological innovations. According to 6Wresearch, "The Nigeria Mobile Phone Accessories Market size is estimated to gain traction between 2024-2029," he added.

## Amasu Village Holds Sixth Annual Thanksgiving amidst Astronomical Growth



Pastor Ikechukwu Eze, Convener



Pastor Emeka Okereke



Mazi Chimereze Okoro (Okeigbo)

### Chiemelie Ezeobi

To thank God for a year of abundance, life, healing, prosperity, Amasu Praise Night and Thanksgiving 2023 was a night of praises, prayers, sermon and worship.

Themed Power of Praise, the entire thanksgiving was berthed on Psalm 100 vs 1 which says "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord oh Ye Lands".

The event was premised on "For the Almighty God has been faithful, full of kindness, protective, merciful, therefore we shall praise Him with understanding".

Held in Amasu Village Square (Ogo Amasu) on December 28, 2023, Amasu, one of the many villages that dot Arochukwu Local Government Area in Abia State, was agog.

According to the convener, Pastor Elijah Ikechukwu Eze, the vision to

hold the annual thanksgiving started six years ago when he clearly heard God tell him to get the entire village to praise Him.

He said: "I started this vision you see today when I clearly heard God tell me six years ago that 'Amasu should praise Him'.

"At first, I was scared to tell people what I heard because I felt they would laugh at me. But I knew I received this message from God. I had no choice but to obey.

"Six years down the line, we are seeing the fruit of the obedience. Amasu is growing in leaps and bounds today.

"When we started, I could count the number of storey buildings at the top of my fingers but today, that singular obedience has brought astronomical growth to our village.

"Now, we have buildings springing forth on every corner. The sons and daughter of Amasu are doing great and it's worth giving God thanks again."

Corroborating, the Special Assistant to Abia State Governor on Internally Generated Revenue, Mazi Isaac Chimereze Okoro (Okeigbo), said he was also pleased at the rate of growth being witnessed in Amasu Village.

He also commended the convener of the event for his doggedness in holding firm for the past six years despite all odds.

Pledging to key into the event henceforth, he said it was a pointer to other villages in Arochukwu that God honours obedience.

In his sermon, the Guest Minister, Pastor Emeka Okereke of Grace House, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State,

said thanksgiving brings blessings and harvest.

He charged the teeming crowd on the need to acknowledge God for what He has done for them throughout the year, adding that it was also a call to repentance because God needs His people to be holy.

After the sermon, the crowd was led in an hour of hot praises and worship that entered into the wee hours of the morning, by Minister Godwin Marshal (Apostle of Worship).

Earlier, Pastor Moses Okomba had also the crowd into another session of worship, which the convener, Pastor Eze was the sole essence of the gathering.

However, beyond the sermon, praises and worship, there were also prayers of thanksgiving, repentance and healing.

Encouraged at the turnout, the convener pledged to keep the faith and obedience to God who gave the vision

## Foundation Hosts One Night Thanksgiving Concert

The 3rd edition of the annual Thanksgiving, gospel musical concert, "Hosanna Night of Praise" held on December 15th night, spanned into the early hours of Saturday morning at the Lakeview Hotel, Amuwo-Odofin Lagos.

Hossana Night of Praise is organised by the Urukanachukwu Charity Foundation because of a desire to show gratitude and appreciation to God almighty.

The foundation also seized the opportunity to feed and offer free medical outreach to the Lagos communities.

The concert paraded some of the notable names in the Nigerian gospel music industry, and artists on the list included: Chioma Jesus, Frank Edwards, M and M Revelation, Israel Anyanele, Roro King, Onyeka and many others.

The convener, Ezechukwuka Obinna said the reason for the the event was because of the hard times he had faced trying to make ends meet and how God lifted him from nothing to something.

"This concert is a celebration of the grace and goodness of God in our lives. This one day Hossana Night of Praise is not enough to lavish Him with praise, it is a token of our appreciation of how he has led us through these years, confirming his word and leading us on a perpetual victory parade", he noted.

Obinna recalled how he started the initiative four years ago in his living room, but he took it out to the street three years ago with the maiden edition recording 700 participants. Meanwhile, he said the second edition was 2000 and this third edition was over 3000 persons, which shows progress.

Speaking further, he said, "My journey symbolises a beacon of hope and I expressed it through worship. I never knew I could get this far, considering my humble background."

"We know that as our praises rise as an offering



L-R: Project Coordinator, Princess Obiageli Basil Bethel; Mrs Obinna and Ezechukwu Casimir Obinna

to the only one who can turn things around for us, His blessings will come in divine intervention, alighting like the morning dew upon us, our nation, and our shared future. Beyond being a concert, he fed and distributed food items to the crowd, taking a leap from His advocate Jesus Christ after ministry spiritual food gave a physical one.

He also had a free medical check and treatment

for members of the Lagos community. Medical outreach, according to the organiser, is a social intervention for the less-privileged targeted at helping the needy to cushion the effects of the economic downturn in the country.

The exercise saw both adults and children in the community getting free medical checkups on HIV status, hypertension, diabetes, malaria,

typhoid treatment and eye tests, among others.

On his part, the Chairman of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, (PFN), Apostle Dr Enyinnaya Emeka Okwuonu said the concert has a spiritual, physical and emotional impact, adding, "When people are in God's presence there is peace and when they praise, God's blessings come down.

# TRIBUTE

## Gordian Egwuagu, Builder of Men and Monuments

Ozonkpu Egwuagu

Today, Friday, December 29, 2023, is the 20th year remembrance of our great patriarch, Chief Gordian Okoye Egwuagu. Many will always remember our patriarch as a community leader, teacher, policeman and businessman from Uruekwo Village, Enugwu-Ukwu, Njikoka LGA of Anambra State. He was a builder of men and monuments.

As part of activities marking his remembrance, a legacy project, Obu Obionwu, a massive edifice singlehandedly built and furnished by the Gordian Egwuagu family and financed by his daughter Iyom Chief Chinwe Egwuagu, Ndubuisi, Adakaibe Enugwu-Ukwu na Umunri, will be inaugurated today. The gigantic structure was donated to Umu Obionwu kindred, Uruekwo Enugwu-Ukwu.

Late Chief Gordian Okoye Egwuagu was born in 1929. The parents, late Ichie Iyiegbu Egwuagu- the legendary hunter/ marksman of the Egbenu-Oba fame and late Madam Maria Nwaku Egwuagu (Nee Okoye-Imegwu), an influential community leader, were tormented by childlessness due to infant mortality problem of the age.

The arrival of Gordian however opened the survival gate for on coming offspring into the family. When Iyiegbu Egwuagu prematurely joined his ancestors leaving behind a very young family, the mantle of family leadership fell heavily on Gordian's shoulder. With the guidance and support of such influential benefactors and philanthropists and family relations like late Michael Okafor Nwikelugo, late Sydney Okoye Eze, etc, the family went through thick and thin in a survival war that raged for decades.

It however pleased God Almighty to sustain the light lit in the family with the arrival of Gordian by blessing him with wisdom and knowledge and a sense of justice, with total commitment to liberty of the individual in the society. This must have informed his uncompromising stance on certain social issues of his time.

After his formal education, Gordian enlisted into the teaching profession and made his mark at St. Anthony's Catholic School Enugwu-Ukwu and later St. Joseph's Catholic School, Umuawulu. During this era, Gordian in collaboration with such ebullient contemporaries as Jonathan Akabike, Samuel Akametalu, Emmanuel Okonkwo and others mobilised the youths of the village under the umbrella of the Anadimma Youths Movement, an offshoot of Uruekwo Youth Movement of 1940 and charged with the responsibility of providing vigilante services in the village particularly Okpuana village stream. It was the movement that organized the famous 'Dodokido' Dance Troupe that won star prize during the Enugwu-Ukwu General return competition of 1950. Gordian was the Provost Marshall of the Dance Troupe and performed his role with great deal of admiration of spectators and respect from members.

After his brief stint in teaching, Gordian ventured into the Nigeria Police Force where for nine year's he learnt criminology and social engineering and soon matured into an articulate social scientist. It was in this era that in the prime of his youth, Gordian encountered his first love in 1953 when he married a



Late Gordian Okoye Egwuagu

beautiful damsel -Josephine Mgbugo from Okoroafor Onyema family of Arochukwu, Abia State through whom he was blessed with seven children. Later in 1966 another beautiful lady Constance Nwogo from Onyeso family of Agukwu-Nri came into his life in marriage, a marriage that was blessed with four children.

Gordian on leaving the Police Force joined the Leventis Group of Companies rising to the position of Stores Manager. During this period, he acquired the necessary exposure to attain the peak of his career as a successful businessman being the Chief Executive of his own commercial Enterprise-Benz Brothers Limited in Aba, a household name in motor spare parts and distribution of Fiat model of vehicles with International connections before the outbreak of the Nigerian Civil War.

Gordian Egwuagu was not just an accomplished community leader and philanthropist but was also an indefatigable 'Ochiliozuo' (a trainer of groups of people), who impacted positively on the lives of many successful young men from far and near who benefitted immensely from his goodwill. Among the many younger men from his Uruekwo Village that he mentored were Sir Chris Mmoh and Mr. Goddy Egungwu, both in their 80's. Sir Mmoh, in his tribute to his memory

recalled that the late sage invited him to relocate to his Aba base from Enugu where he was an applicant seeking employment after his primary school education. He secured employment for him in his Stores Department of Leventis Motors Ltd in Aba. He also offered him accommodation in his apartment at No 42 Hospital Road Aba where he lived with him until he got married and had to live apart to have a family of his own. Even during his marriage preparations, Elder Gordian was there for him in all aspects. To Sir Chris Mmoh, late Gordian Egwuagu was a role model in business, marriage and human relationships.

Similarly, Chief Goddy Egungwu was another junior associate of Enenebeaku and was Manager of his Benz Brothers Limited in Aba for many years. He also testified to his boss' forthrightness, dynamism, spirit of entrepreneurship, philanthropy and patriotism. He recalls that Chief Egwuagu was the leader of Uruekwo Development Union (UDU) for many years and he (Elder Goddy) mentored him into taking over the leadership stool of Uruekwo people in Aba from him. He also recalls with relish the many glorious years of Enugwu-Ukwu Community Development Union (ECDU) Aba branch with Chief Goddy Egwuagu as Secretary.

Egwuagu enjoyed his high regard and recognition from premier institutions and authorities in Enugwu-Ukwu including the Cabinet of late Igwe

Osita Agwuna of Enugwu-ukwu and the Enugwu-Ukwu Community Development Union (ECDU) of which he was installed Life Patron in 1997.

Gordian Egwuagu was one of the pioneers of the Catholic Church in Enugwu-ukwu but later in life found fellowship with some other Christian denominations. It is gratifying however to observe that, in the twilight of his sojourn on earth, he, in a unique incursion into the spirit world was directed and guided back to the Catholic Church just before he passed on. We pray, hope and believe that the good Lord will show him mercy, forgive all his offences and receive his amiable soul and grant him eternal rest in the bosom of the Lord in Jesus Name. Amen.

Enenebeaku left many indelible footprints on the sands of his time. Apart from his two wives Ezinne J. Ugo Egwuagu and Mother C. Nwogo Egwuagu, eleven children and many grandchildren that survive him,

The Obu Obionwu is a befitting monument in memory of a man who came, saw and conquered. Chief Gordian Okoye Egwuagu, Enenebeaku Enugwu-Ukwu na Umunri left us 20 years ago but his legacy is everlasting and his memory lives with us everyday of our lives. To live in the minds of those we leave behind is not to die.

•Ozonkpu Charlie Egwuagu wrote from Enugwu-Ukwu Anambra State.

## BUSINESS/MONEYGUIDE

# 10 Millionaires, 2,300 Cash Prize Winners Emerge in FCMB Promo

**Nume Ekeghe**

Four customers of First City Monument Bank (FCMB) became instant millionaires at the final draws of Millionaire Promo Season 9 held in Lagos.

They each won N1 million during the grand finale draws supervised by Federal Competition & Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) officials and National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) in Abuja, Lagos, Ondo, and Port Harcourt.

Season 9 of the millionaire promo, which ran from April to November, gifted 2,310 lucky customers of the Bank cash prizes ranging from N5,000 to N1 million respectively. Of this, ten lucky customers were rewarded with N1 million each. A total of 14,780 customers also won various consolation prizes, bringing the total number of winners to 17,080.

The nationwide promo encouraged people to save for financial security, future planning, and investment opportunities, which will reduce their reliance on social assistance, helping them build a brighter future.

Affirming this, a civil servant from Ondo State, Thompson

Akinodi, said: "The FCMB Millionaire promo shows the bank keeps its promises." He was happy that the winners were chosen openly. Thompson plans to use his money for his children's education and Christmas celebrations. "Christmas is sorted for his family, thanks to God and FCMB!"

A businessman from Port Harcourt, Onuoha Harol, was pleasantly surprised, saying: "This N1 million is a fantastic Christmas gift!" He thanked FCMB and plans to invest it in his block industry and real estate business. He plans to employ more people and grow his business. Onuoha recommends banking with FCMB for success."

Mrs Omoye Oyakhire from Lagos, another N1 million winner, thanked FCMB and said: "I'm excited! I'll use the money for poultry farming." She said FCMB is the right Bank, and its Millionaire Promo is genuine".

Tanimu Suleiman from Abuja, expressing his newfound belief in the promo, said: "I never believed in this until FCMB called me about winning N1 million." He plans to invest in his

business and encourages Nigerians to bank with FCMB for excellent customer service. "I am so happy. The money will be invested in my business. I encourage Nigerians to bank with FCMB. The Bank attends to customers' needs very well."

FCMB's Divisional Head for Personal Banking, Shamsideen Fashola, expressed his pride in the programme's impact: "We are happy to produce another set of millionaires in season 9 of the promo.

Since we commenced the promo in 2012, it has driven financial inclusion and promoted a savings culture in society, particularly in the unbanked segment. We have also used it to transform the lives of thousands of people nationwide. The draws took place nationwide, and winners emerged from every region. We thank all FCMB customers for their loyalty and congratulate all the winners. We will continue to reward our customers and deliver offerings that align with their personal and business aspirations. I advise the winners to make judicious use of their cash prizes."



L-R: Chairman, League of Airports and Aviation Correspondents (LAAC), Mr. Segun Koiki, General Manager, Public Affairs, Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority, (NCAA), Mrs. Carol Adekotoju, Wife of the immediate past General Manager, NCAA, Mrs. Adeola Adurogboye, her husband/ immediate past General Manager, Public Affairs, CAA, Mr. Sam Adurogboye and Regional Manager, NCAA, Mr. Samuel Ngene, at the sendforth ceremony in honour of Mr. Sam Adurogboye held at the NCAA Headquarters, Ikeja, Lagos...recently

KOLAWOLE ALLI

## Pololuxury Hosts Bovet Collectors, Showcasing Latest Luxury Timepieces

In a celebration of horological artistry and refined taste, Pololuxury together with longstanding partner, Bovet 1822, recently played host to an intimate gathering of esteemed Bovet collectors. Against the backdrop of sophistication and luxury, the event unfolded as an enchanting evening, seamlessly blending culinary excellence with a showcase of the latest masterpieces from Bovet.

Headlining the event was the global Vice President of Bovet 1822, Audrey Raffy who flew in to grace the occasion. The venue, carefully selected for its ambience and exclusivity, set the stage for an opulent affair as the guests mingled in an atmosphere of understated glamour.

One of the highlights of the evening was the speech given by the Managing Director of Polo Limited,

Mr John Obayuwana, who spoke about the heritage of the Polo brand and the unique bond that binds the two organisations together.

He said, "Bovet 1822 stands in a class of its own with over 2 centuries of timeless art and engineering brilliance. This is evident in every piece designed from the brand to date. For many years, Polo has represented Bovet 1822 in West Africa, and we are very proud to be expanding the Rolex presence in the country, upholding the highest standards of quality and service that are integral to both the brand and our own business."

As the evening progressed, the focus shifted to the evening's brightest stars: the Bovet watches. Keen interest was particularly given to the captivating Bovet Amadeo Fleurier Virtuoso V Jump-

ing Hours; the piece that could be transformed from a wristwatch to a pocket watch or even a table clock.

From the intricately detailed dials of the Guilloché to the miniature artistry of the hand-painting, each watch told a tale of timeless grace and precision. With innovation and consistency as its watchword, Bovet continues to astound the world of watchmaking with decorative arts and savoir-faire, qualities that won it the best Astronomical timepiece award in 2023 at the GPHG.

As the night drew to a close, echoes of laughter and the sparkle of Bovet timepieces lingered. Pololuxury's soirée for Bovet collectors proved to be more than an event—it was a symphony of taste, refinement, and a celebration of the enduring allure of timeless craftsmanship.

## Uber, Travelstart Reiterate Commitment to Improve Drivers' Earnings

**Oluchi Chibuzor**

Uber and Travelstart have reiterated their commitments to ensure that drivers continue to improve earning and more discount in view of the economic challenges facing the economy.

Speaking at Uber Driver Appreciation event in Lagos, the Country Manager, Uber, Nigeria, Tope Akinwumi, said, the company recognise that drivers have faced hurdles this year due to the economic challenges.

He also said their resilience and dedication have been exceptional, adding drivers have remained committed to providing reliable service, particularly during these challenging times.

At the event which saw some drivers being rewarded with different prizes, Akinwumi, said that Uber remained steadfast in its commitment to providing drivers with sustainable earning opportunities and has significantly invested in key safety measures.

According to him, "As we approach the end of this year, Uber remains committed to supporting the drivers who operate on the App, enhancing safety measures, and fostering an environment where excellence thrives. We look forward to continuing this journey together into the new year.

"A lot of macro-economic challenges that we had, fuel crisis are going up by almost 200 percent. FX issues, infla-

tion even with that we have seen growth because people need to move, parcels need to move from one point to the other. Our fingers crossed that next year will be a much better year, we will keep innovating and finding cheaper ways for people to move around."

However, for the Country Manager, Travelstart Nigeria, Bukky Akomolafe, "The ultimate reward is seeing drivers and riders winning flights, enjoying ride discounts, and feeling celebrated. The dedication of Nigerians is what fuels our partnership with Uber, and we will keep seeking ways to create cost savings and ease for our country's travelers. Stay tuned, we will be announcing another engagement soon."

## MARKET INDICATORS

### MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)

	August, 2023
Money Supply (M3)	65,445,154.2
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	552,553.58
Money Supply (M2)	64,892,600.61
-- Quasi Money	40,870,301.28
-- Narrow Money (M1)	24,022,299.33
--- Currency Outside Banks	2,295,309.10
--- Demand Deposits	21,726,990.23
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	7,144,158.92
Net Domestic Assets (NDA)	58,300,995.27
-- Net Domestic Credit (NDC)	87,273,966.81
--- Credit to Government (Net)	32,511,333.17
--- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	0.00
--- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	0.00
--- Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	54,762,633.63
-- Other Assets Net	13,347,376.27
Reserve Money (Base Money)	19,429,603.25
-- Currency in Circulation	2,660,138.92
-- Banks Reserves	16,769,464.34
-- Special Intervention Reserves	428,519.21

• Source - CBN

### Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)

Month	August 2023
Inter-Bank Call Rate	3.89
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	18.75
Treasury Bill Rate	5.13
Savings Deposit Rate	5.26
1 Month Deposit Rate	7.31
3 Months Deposit Rate	7.55
6 Months Deposit Rate	8.30
12 Months Deposit Rate	8.13
Prime Lending rate	13.99
Maximum Lending Rate	27.59

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

### OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2023

The price of OPEC basket of thirteen crudes stood at \$97.48 a barrel on Thursday, compared with \$97.08 the previous day, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations. The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basrah Medium (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela).

MARKET NEWS

# Investors' Interest in MTN, 35 Others Lift Market Cap by N402bn

Kayode Tokede

The stock market of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) bounced back yesterday, following previous session losses, as the market capitalization added N402 billion on investors' renewed interests in MTN Nigeria Communications (MTNN) Plc and 35 others.

The NGX All-Share Index rose by 733.94 per cent or 0.99 per cent, to close at 74,502.58

basis points.

Consequently, the overall market capitalisation value gained N402 billion to close at N40.769 trillion.

The market positive performance was driven by price appreciation in large and medium capitalised stocks which are; MTNN, Dangote Cement, Stanbic IBTC Holdings, Julius Berger and Multiverse Mining & Exploration. Investor sentiment, as measured by market breadth

closed positive, as 36 stocks advanced, while 27 declined. Ikeja Hotels recorded the highest price gain of 10 per cent to close at N5.50, per share. Multiverse Mining & Exploration followed with a gain of 9.96 per cent to close at N16.89, while Julius Berger rose by 9.94 per cent to close at N39.80, per share.

Industrial and Medical Gas Nigeria (IMG) appreciated by 9.87 per cent to close at N12.25, while McNichols rose by 9.86

per cent to close at 78 kobo, per share. On the other hand, UAC of Nigeria (UACN) led the losers' chart by 10 per cent to close at N12.15, per share. John Holt followed with a decline of 9.73 per cent to close at N2.32, while DEAP Capital Management & Trust declined by 9.38 per cent to close at 58 kobo, per share.

R.T. Briscoe Nigeria shed 8.96 per cent to close at 61 kobo, while United Capital

lost 7.53 per cent to close at N22.10, per share.

Meanwhile, the total volume of trade decreased by 11.17 per cent to 384.576 million units, valued at N5.667 billion, and exchanged in 8,336 deals. Transactions in the shares of Jaiz Bank topped the activity chart with 49.401 million shares valued at N83.190 million. Zenith Bank followed with 27.936 million shares worth N1.055 billion, while Access

Holdings traded 23.423 million shares valued at N539.242 million.

Veritas Kapital Assurance traded 21.688 million shares valued at N7.836 million, while Transnational Corporation (Transcorp) transacted 19.395 million shares worth N165.426 million. Analysts at Afrinvest Limited stated that "Today, we expect the improved investor sentiment to spur the market to a positive finish to the year."

## PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF DECEMBER/28/23

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED ( N )
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN BANKING</b>				
1 UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	872,085.24	25.50	-0.39 ↓	442 10,099,403
2 ZENITH BANK PLC	1,193,066.76	38.00	0.26 ↑	456 15,458,772
<b>BANKING</b>				
<b>SIN OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</b>				
3 ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	824,649.23	23.20	0.22 ↑	468 15,251,581
4 FBN HOLDINGS PLC	852,513.20	23.75	-1.04 ↓	127 8,228,007
<b>OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</b>				
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>ICT</b>				
<b>SIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES</b>				
5 MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	5,269,885.59	251.00	0.40 ↑	288 690,395
<b>TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES</b>				
<b>ICT</b>				
<b>INDUSTRIAL GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
6 DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	5,333,678.82	313.00	-2.19 ↓	92 577,495
7 LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	599,056.34	31.60	0.49 ↑	152 1,068,308
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
<b>INDUSTRIAL GOODS</b>				
<b>OIL AND GAS</b>				
<b>SIN EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION</b>				
8 SHELL ENERGY PLC	1,359,308.94	2,310.00	-	29 21,153
<b>EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION</b>				
<b>OIL AND GAS</b>				
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>				
<b>SIN CROP PRODUCTION</b>				
9 ELLAH LAKES PLC	5,800.00	2.90	-	10 385,273
10 FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	5,850.00	1.50	-3.25 ↓	56 2,858,618
11 OKOJU OIL PALM PLC	240,385.32	252.00	-4.51 ↓	59 586,732
12 PRESCO PLC	193,000.00	193.00	-	45 394,061
<b>CROP PRODUCTION</b>				
<b>SIN LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES</b>				
13 LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	5,610.00	1.87	8.09 ↑	41 1,540,954
<b>LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES</b>				
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>				
<b>CONGLOMERATES</b>				
<b>SIN DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES</b>				
14 CUSTODIAN INVESTMENT PLC	49,701.75	8.45	5.06 ↓	52 1,597,475
15 JOHN HOLT PLC	1,000.12	2.97	0.83 ↑	40 343,474
16 S C O A NIG. PLC	1,286.65	1.98	-	8 31,932
17 TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	361,767.11	8.90	1.14 ↑	675 31,088,571
18 U A C N PLC	39,502.78	13.50	-10.00 ↓	129 12,578,755
<b>DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES</b>				
<b>CONGLOMERATES</b>				
<b>CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE</b>				
<b>SIN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION</b>				
19 ARBICO PLC	152.96	1.03	-	0 0
<b>BUILDING CONSTRUCTION</b>				
<b>SIN INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION</b>				
20 CHAPEL HILL DENHAM NIG. INFRAS DEBT FUND	97,235.83	113.90	-	14 8,108
21 JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC	57,929.00	36.20	-	47 275,431
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION</b>				
<b>SIN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT</b>				
22 UPDC PLC	23,014.36	1.24	0.81 ↑	16 756,051
<b>REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT</b>				
<b>CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE</b>				
<b>CONSUMER GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS</b>				
23 DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	-	0 0
<b>AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS</b>				
<b>SIN BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS</b>				
24 CHAMPION BREW. PLC	28,186.19	3.60	1.41 ↑	34 3,018,644
25 GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC	3,227.70	3.15	-	0 0
<b>CONSUMER GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS</b>				
26 GUINNESS NIG PLC	135,803.73	62.00	-	65 132,431
27 INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	128,937.93	4.80	9.00 ↑	42 400,218
28 NIGERIAN BREW. PLC	380,216.90	37.00	2.78 ↑	118 2,898,049
<b>BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS</b>				
<b>SIN FOOD PRODUCTS</b>				
29 BUA FOODS PLC	3,580,200.00	198.90	-	65 485,603
30 DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	688,728.00	56.70	-1.31 ↓	213 2,776,076
31 FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC	139,412.91	34.00	1.49 ↑	62 495,204
32 HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	25,931.75	3.27	-2.14 ↓	53 1,115,332
33 MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.10	0.36	-	0 0
34 N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	8,108.10	45.50	-	44 442,237
35 NASCON ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	136,181.13	51.40	0.29 ↑	141 2,584,800
36 UNION DIGNO SALT PLC	2,214.04	8.10	-	0 0
<b>FOOD PRODUCTS</b>				
<b>SIN FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED</b>				
37 CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	32,868.54	17.50	-	42 200,328
38 NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	871,921.88	1,100.00	-2.65 ↓	56 244,407
<b>FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED</b>				
<b>SIN HOUSEHOLD DURABLES</b>				
39 NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC	1,467.42	19.30	-	0 0
40 VITAFAM NIG PLC	26,580.44	21.25	-	56 313,203
<b>HOUSEHOLD DURABLES</b>				
<b>SIN PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS</b>				
41 P Z CUSONS NIGERIA PLC	103,232.46	28.00	-	65 2,611,898
<b>CONSUMER GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS</b>				
42 UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	85,313.33	14.85	-	49 628,468
<b>PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS</b>				
<b>CONSUMER GOODS</b>				
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN BANKING</b>				
43 ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	383,505.62	20.90	-	34 90,790
44 FIDELITY BANK PLC	339,329.44	10.60	0.95 ↑	287 15,670,700
45 GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	1,184,804.96	40.25	0.50 ↑	245 20,485,821
46 JAIZ BANK PLC	60,101.84	1.74	8.75 ↑	203 35,382,093
47 STERLING FINANCIAL HOLDINGS COMPANY PLC	128,117.36	4.45	-1.11 ↓	160 10,593,248
48 UNITY BANK PLC	19,170.51	1.64	2.50 ↑	92 25,116,745
49 WEMA BANK PLC	70,591.27	5.49	-	137 3,256,238
<b>BANKING</b>				
<b>SIN INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES</b>				
50 AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	-	0 0
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES</b>				
51 AIICO INSURANCE PLC	28,186.06	0.77	2.60 ↑	60 2,433,333
52 AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	46,710.00	5.19	9.96 ↑	87 3,751,628
53 CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK HOLDINGS PLC	13,333.20	1.23	6.96 ↑	42 6,950,672
54 CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	25,432.95	1.40	1.45 ↑	9 5,021,912
55 CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	16,794.18	0.70	6.06 ↑	49 3,782,451
56 GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	-	0 0
57 GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	2,303.41	0.29	7.41 ↑	26 2,427,736
58 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	1,784.88	1.39	-	0 0
59 LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	3,502.15	1.91	0.53 ↑	38 840,949
60 LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	11,200.00	0.80	8.75 ↑	8 965,958
61 MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	10,030.81	0.50	-3.85 ↓	19 1,032,423
62 NEM INSURANCE PLC	28,844.75	5.75	-	7 110,580
63 NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,547.90	0.20	-	0 0
64 PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	6,228.70	0.47	-	12 64,846
65 REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	2,467.44	0.37	-	7 43,668
66 SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	4,318.50	0.38	8.57 ↑	7 175,140
67 STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,483.72	0.48	-	0 0
68 STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	2,582.21	0.20	-	0 0
69 SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC	6,740.53	1.16	-	6 78,127
70 UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	4,160.00	0.28	3.85 ↑	55 12,196,045
71 VERITAS KAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	4,714.67	0.34	-2.86 ↓	43 16,651,479
<b>INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN MICRO-FINANCE BANKS</b>				
72 NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	11,506.43	1.92	-	6 31,110

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED ( N )
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN MICRO-FINANCE BANKS</b>				
<b>MICRO-FINANCE BANKS</b>				
<b>SIN MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES</b>				
73 ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	18,683.08	1.84	-	3 4,713
74 ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	-	0 0
75 INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	20,768.87	4.98	9.93 ↑	6 200,329
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES</b>				
76 RESORT SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	2,265.95	0.20	-	0 0
77 UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	2,949.22	3.02	-	0 0
<b>MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</b>				
78 AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	13,200.00	6.60	-	32 221,856
79 DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	1,050.00	0.70	4.48 ↑	12 763,400
80 FCMB GROUP PLC	139,609.11	7.05	3.68 ↑	172 28,220,943
81 NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP	41,635.67	21.30	-	34 206,483
82 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	3,498.85	0.68	6.25 ↑	59 10,260,316
83 STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	855,161.81	66.00	-	55 1,057,317
84 UNITED CAPITAL PLC	108,600.00	18.10	1.12 ↑	106 2,594,415
<b>OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS</b>				
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>				
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>				
<b>SIN HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS</b>				
85 EKOCORP PLC	2,886.00	5.79	-	0 0
<b>HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS</b>				
<b>SIN MEDICAL SUPPLIES</b>				
86 MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	2,522.36	2.55	-	1 3,015
<b>MEDICAL SUPPLIES</b>				
<b>SIN PHARMACEUTICALS</b>				
87 FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	37,408.44	16.30	-	33 126,334
88 GLAXO SMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	19,971.14	16.70	-1.18 ↓	20 832,233
89 MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	8,884.96	5.15	-	12 163,625
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>				
<b>SIN PHARMACEUTICALS</b>				
90 NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	8,759.86	2.05	0.49 ↑	27 984,491
91 PHARMA-DEKO PLC	396.78	1.83	-	0 0
<b>PHARMACEUTICALS</b>				
<b>HEALTHCARE</b>				
<b>ICT</b>				
<b>SIN COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS</b>				
92 OMATEK VENTURES PLC	2,265.18	0.77	5.48 ↑	38 1,891,750
<b>COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS</b>				
<b>SIN IT SERVICES</b>				
93 CWG PLC	18,178.75	7.20	-	9 14,282
94 NCR (NIGERIA) PLC	427.68	3.96	-	0 0
<b>IT SERVICES</b>				
<b>SIN PROCESSING SYSTEMS</b>				
95 CHAMS HOLDING COMPANY PLC	8,922.51	1.90	-4.04 ↓	87 6,295,733
96 E-TRANZACT INTERNATIONAL PLC	59,800.00	6.50	-	2 6,594
<b>PROCESSING SYSTEMS</b>				
<b>SIN TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES</b>				
97 AIRTEL AFRICA PLC	6,764,672.71	1,800.00	-	14 440
<b>TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES</b>				
<b>ICT</b>				
<b>INDUSTRIAL GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
98 BERGER PAINTS PLC	13,000.00	13.00	-	14 29,225
99 BUA CEMENT PLC	3,284,842.34	97.00	-	59 150,508
<b>INDUSTRIAL GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
100 CAP PLC	16,294.95	20.00	-	12 73,035
<b>INDUSTRIAL GOODS</b>				
<b>SIN BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
101 MEYER PLC	1,907.14	3.59	-	3 8,939
102 PREMIER PAINTS PLC	1,230.00	10.00	-	0 0
<b>BUILDING MATERIALS</b>				
<b>SIN ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS</b>				
103 AUSTIN LAZ & COMPANY PLC	2,192.12	2.03	-	0 0
104 CUTIX PLC	8,066.85	2.29	1.33 ↑	13 329,000
<b>ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS</b>				
<b>SIN PACKAGING/CONTAINERS</b>				
105 BETA GLASS PLC	35,638.00	59.40	-	11 7,860
106 GREIF NIGERIA PLC	232.39	5.45	-	0 0
107 TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	1,177.99	2.38	-	5 11,725
<b>PACKAGING/CONTAINERS</b>				
<b>SIN AGRO-ALLIED &amp; CHEMICALS</b>				
108 NOTORE CHEMICAL IND PLC	100,754.14	62.50	-	0 0
<b>AGRO-ALLIED &amp; CHEMICALS</b>				
<b>INDUSTRIAL GOODS</b>				
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>SIN CHEMICALS</b>				
109 INDUSTRIAL & MEDICAL GASES NIGERIA PLC	4,245.70	8.50	-	1 10
<b>CHEMICALS</b>				
<b>SIN METALS</b>				
110 ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION IND. PLC	1,572.69	7.15	-	0 0
<b>METALS</b>				
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>				
<b>SIN MINING SERVICES</b>				
111 MULTIVERSE MINING AND EX				

Friday, December 29, 2023

### Thisday Afrinvest Index up 42bps

Thisday Afrinvest 40 index gained 42bps to close at 3528.28 index points following price appreciation in **MTNN** (+4.6%), **ZENITHBANK** (+0.5%), and **DANGCEM** (+2.2%). Cumulatively, these stocks account for 17.9% of the index.

### MTNN, DANGCEM Lead Gains on the Domestic

#### Bourse... ASI up 0.9%

Yesterday, In line with our expectations, the NGX-ASI rose 0.9% to 74,502.58 points due to buy interest in **MTNN** (+4.6%), **DANGCEM** (+2.2%), and **STANBIC** (+8.2%). As a result, YTD return improved to 45.4% (previously 43.9%) while market capitalisation increased ₦401.6bn to ₦40.7tn. Activity level dipped as volume and value traded declined by 14.3% and 57.7% to 371.0m units and ₦5.4bn respectively.

### Bullish Sector Performance

Performance across our coverage sectors was positive, as four indices gained, one lost while the **Oil & Gas** index closed flat. Leading the gainers, the **Insurance** and **AFR-ICT** indices advanced 2.1% and 1.9% respectively, following price appreciation in **MANSARD** (+5.9%), **PRESTIGE** (+8.8%), and **MTNN** (+4.6%). Similarly, the **Industrial** and **Consumer Goods** Indices rose by 1.1% and 1bp respectively due to buy interest in **DANGCEM** (+2.2) and **PZ** (+1.3%). Conversely, the **Banking** index lost 0.2% following price decline in **UBA** (-1.5%).

### Outlook

Investor sentiment, as measured by market breadth, improved to 0.2x from -0.2x in the prior session as 36 stocks advanced, 27 declined, while 59 closed flat. Today, we expect the improved investor sentiment to spur the market to a positive finish to the year.

## THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 INDEX

Fundamental Performance Metrics for THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 Index

Ticker	Current Price	Previous Price Change	Current Weighting	Price Change YTD	Price Change Index to Date	ROE	ROA	P/E	P/BV	Dividend Yield	Earnings Yield
<b>THISDAY AFRINVEST 40</b>	<b>3528.28</b>	<b>0.42%</b>		<b>51.7%</b>	<b>258.2%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>3.4%</b>	<b>5.3x</b>	<b>1.3x</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>11.2%</b>
1 BUA Foods PLC	198.90	0.0%	21.4%	206.0%	46.5%	54.0%	18.0%	28.7x	14.0x	2.3%	3.5%
2 MTN Nigeria Communications PLC	262.50	4.6%	7.8%	22.1%	-4.0%	85.8%	8.6%	22.6x	17.8x	6.0%	4.4%
3 Airtel Africa PLC	1,887.60	0.0%	11.2%	15.4%	43.0%	10.0%	3.1%			2.3%	
4 Guaranty Trust Holding Co PLC	40.05	-0.5%	7.0%	74.1%	14.4%	38.3%	5.6%	2.8x	0.9x	8.2%	35.9%
5 Zenith Bank PLC	38.20	0.5%	6.3%	59.2%	11.5%	27.6%	3.0%	2.7x	0.6x	9.0%	37.1%
6 FBN Holdings Plc	23.55	-0.8%	4.8%	116.1%	38.1%	24.9%	2.3%	3.0x	0.6x	2.1%	33.0%
7 Dangote Cement PLC	319.90	2.2%	3.8%	22.6%	12.2%	40.4%	15.3%	12.4x	4.1x	6.3%	8.0%
8 Lafarge Africa PLC	31.50	-0.3%	3.0%	31.3%	6.8%	11.6%	7.9%	10.6x	1.2x	6.3%	9.5%
9 United Bank for Africa PLC	25.10	-1.6%	4.8%	230.3%	104.9%	39.5%	3.9%	1.7x	0.5x	5.5%	57.6%
10 SEPLAT Energy PLC	2,310.00	0.0%	3.3%	118.7%	65.0%	1.5%	0.8%	54.9x	0.9x	3.4%	1.8%
11 Nestle Nigeria PLC	1,100.00	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	-12.0%		-6.1%			5.6%	-3.1%
12 Access Holdings PLC	23.15	-0.2%	4.7%	172.4%	148.9%	20.5%	1.5%	3.0x	0.5x	6.9%	32.8%
13 Stanbic IBTC Holdings PLC	66.00	8.2%	2.1%	97.3%	22.2%	31.5%	3.4%	6.5x	1.8x	5.3%	15.4%
14 Ecobank Transnational Inc	20.90	0.0%	2.2%	97.2%	37.5%	26.9%	1.2%	1.8x	0.5x	2.4%	55.4%
15 Okomu Oil Palm PLC	252.00	0.0%	1.4%	52.7%	7.2%	47.0%	24.2%	12.6x	5.5x	1.8%	7.9%
16 Nigerian Breweries PLC	36.90	-0.3%	1.0%	-10.0%	-18.0%	-39.6%	-9.3%		2.7x	3.7%	-19.2%
17 Fidelity Bank PLC	10.55	-0.5%	1.8%	142.5%	50.7%	26.2%	2.1%	3.3x	0.8x	4.7%	30.1%
18 Flour Mills of Nigeria PLC	33.00	-2.9%	0.8%	16.2%	-3.2%	6.0%	1.0%	11.6x	0.7x	6.8%	8.6%
19 Transnational Corp of Nigeria	8.80	-1.1%	2.1%	678.8%	150.7%	11.9%	3.0%	24.3x	2.9x	0.6%	4.1%
20 International Breweries PLC	4.80	0.0%	0.8%	2.1%	-7.7%	-37.7%	-9.3%		1.1x		-36.7%
21 AXA Mansard Insurance PLC	5.50	6.0%	1.0%	175.0%	39.2%	40.8%	11.2%	3.7x	1.3x	2.2%	27.1%
22 FCMB Group Plc	7.50	-2.0%	0.8%	94.8%	47.1%	18.0%	1.7%	2.6x	0.4x	3.3%	38.5%
23 PZ Cussons Nigeria PLC	26.35	1.3%	0.6%	132.2%	19.8%	-106.3%	-14.9%		12.6x		-25.5%
24 Guinness Nigeria PLC	62.00	0.0%	0.4%	-10.5%	-22.5%	-24.1%	-7.9%		2.3x		-13.5%
25 Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC	57.40	1.2%	1.2%	257.6%	129.6%	2.2%	0.5%	245.3x	5.5x	2.6%	0.4%
26 Presco PLC	193.00	0.0%	0.5%	40.4%	8.4%	45.9%	13.7%	9.4x	3.8x	4.6%	10.7%
27 United Capital PLC	22.10	-7.5%	0.6%	57.9%	40.3%	22.9%	1.6%	12.7x	2.2x	6.5%	7.8%
28 BUA Cement Plc	97.00	0.0%	0.4%	-0.8%	5.1%	25.0%	12.6%	32.6x	8.0x	2.9%	3.1%
29 NASCON Allied Industries PLC	51.40	0.0%	0.8%	363.1%	174.9%	60.2%	19.8%	4.9x	5.0x	1.9%	20.3%
30 TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeri	385.00	0.0%	0.3%	99.5%	10.0%	28.3%	3.9%	9.1x	2.4x	7.2%	11.0%
31 Wema Bank PLC	5.43	-1.1%	0.2%	39.2%	2.6%	23.1%	1.3%	3.1x	0.6x	5.5%	32.1%
32 Jaiz Bank PLC	1.85	6.3%	0.2%	101.1%	10.8%	38.4%	2.2%	6.9x	2.3x	29.4%	14.6%
33 Geregu Power PLC	399.00	0.0%	0.3%	167.8%	33.0%				24.6x	2.2%	
34 Union Bank of Nigeria PLC			0.0%	#VALUE!	-100.0%	15.8%	1.6%		#N/A		
35 Julius Berger Nigeria PLC	39.80	9.9%	0.2%	62.4%	28.4%	14.5%	1.7%	6.4x	0.7x	6.3%	15.6%
36 Unilever Nigeria PLC	14.85	0.0%	0.1%	28.0%	-8.9%	10.0%	5.0%	13.2x	1.3x	1.7%	7.6%
37 Oando PLC	10.30	-2.8%	0.2%	162.8%	79.1%		3.2%	3.4x			29.5%
38 Conoil PLC	83.90	0.0%	0.1%	216.6%	1.1%	41.0%	16.3%	4.9x	1.7x	3.0%	20.6%
39 Transcorp Hotels Plc	63.80	0.0%	0.2%	920.8%	172.6%	6.9%	3.7%	143.2x	9.8x	0.2%	0.7%
40 Notore Chemical Industries Ltd	62.50	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-140.7%	-24.8%				-71.9%

#### Top 10 Gainers

Ticker	Price	Price Chg %
IKEJAHOTEL	5.50	10.0%
MULTIVERSE	16.89	10.0%
JBERGER	39.80	9.9%
IMG	12.25	9.9%
MCNICHOLS	0.78	9.9%
INFINITY	5.47	9.8%
MORISON	2.80	9.8%
ABBEYBDS	2.02	9.8%
TRANSEXPR	1.15	9.5%
DAARCOMM	0.82	9.3%

#### Top 10 Losers

Ticker	Price	Price Chg %
UACN	12.15	-10.0%
JOHNHOLT	2.32	-9.7%
DEAPCAP	0.58	-9.4%
RTBRISCOE	0.61	-9.0%
UCAP	22.10	-7.5%
CAVERTON	1.65	-2.9%
FLOURMILL	33.00	-2.9%
WAPIC	0.68	-2.9%
OANDO	10.30	-2.8%
FCMB	7.50	-2.0%

#### Top 10 Trades by Volume

Ticker	Volume	Price Chg %
JAIZBANK	49.4	6.3%
ZENITHBANK	27.9	0.5%
ACCESSCORP	23.4	-0.2%
VERITASKAP	21.7	8.8%
TRANSCORP	19.4	-1.1%
UBA	14.6	-1.6%
FIDELITYBK	13.0	-0.5%
UACN	12.8	-10.0%
DAARCOMM	9.3	9.3%
OMATEK	8.9	8.6%

#### Top 10 Trades by Value

Ticker	Value	Price Chg %
ZENITHBANK	1055.0	0.5%
MTNN	792.5	4.6%
ACCESSCORP	539.2	-0.2%
UBA	367.4	-1.6%
GTCCO	291.2	-0.5%
DANGCEM	175.9	2.2%
DANGSUGAR	172.2	1.2%
FLOURMILL	171.3	-2.9%
UACN	166.6	-10.0%
TRANSCORP	165.4	-1.1%

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MARKET NEWS



**FUND MANAGERS  
ASSOCIATION OF  
NIGERIA**

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

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

floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

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

**GUIDE TO DATA:**

**Date:** All fund prices are quoted in Naira as at 27-Dec-2023, unless otherwise stated.

**Offer price:** The price at which units of a trust or ETF are bought by investors.

**Bid Price:** The price at which Investors redeem (sell) units of a trust or ETF.

**Yield/Total Return:** Denotes the total return an investor would have earned on his investment. Money Market Funds report Yield while others report Year- to-date Total Return.

**NAV:** Is value per share of the real estate assets held by a REIT on a specific date.

**DAILY PRICE LIST FOR MUTUAL FUNDS, REITS and ETFs**

<b>MUTUAL FUNDS / UNIT TRUSTS</b>			
<b>AFRINVEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD</b> aaml@afinvest.com Web: www.afinvest.com; Tel: +234 818 885 6757			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Afrinvest Equity Fund	307.18	307.18	62.95%
Afrinvest Plutus Fund	100.00	100.00	9.82%
Nigeria International Debt Fund	340.16	340.16	5.25%
Afrinvest Dollar Fund	110.18	110.18	6.43%
<b>AIICO CAPITAL LTD</b> amfm@aiccocapital.com Web: www.aiccocapital.com, Tel: +234-1-2792974			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AIICO Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	14.15%
AIICO Balanced Fund	4.93	5.03	46.36%
<b>ANCHORIA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> info@anchoriaam.com Web: www.anchoriaam.com, Tel: 08166830267; 08036814510; 08028419180			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Anchoria Money Market	100.00	100.00	0.03%
Anchoria Equity Fund	190.56	193.06	31.47%
Anchoria Fixed Income Fund	1.28	1.28	3.80%
<b>ARM INVESTMENT MANAGERS LTD</b> enquiries@arminvestmentcenter.com Web: www.arm.com.ng; Tel: 0700 CALLARM (0700 225 5276)			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ARM Aggressive Growth Fund	30.11	31.01	37.20%
ARM Discovery Balanced Fund	657.51	677.34	26.15%
ARM Ethical Fund	54.21	55.84	20.16%
ARM Eurobond Fund (\$)	1.18	1.18	4.43%
ARM Fixed Income Fund	1.16	1.16	4.63%
ARM Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	10.63%
ARM Short Term Bond Fund	1.07	1.07	3.25%
<b>AVA GLOBAL ASSET MANAGERS LIMITED</b> info@avacapitalgroup.com Web: www.avacapitalgroup.com; Tel 08069294653			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AVA GAM Fixed Income Dollar Fund	106.17	106.17	16.56%
AVA GAM Fixed Income Naira Fund	1,119.01	1,119.01	4.50%
<b>AXA MANSARD INVESTMENTS LIMITED</b> investmentcare@axamansard.com Web: www.axamansard.com; Tel: +2341-4488482			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AXA Mansard Equity Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AXA Mansard Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>CAPITAL EXPRESS ASSET AND TRUST LIMITED</b> info@capitalexpressassetandtrust.com Web: www.capitalexpressassetandtrust.com; Tel: +234 803 307 5048			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CEAT Fixed Income Fund	2.23	2.23	9.51%
Capital Express Balanced Fund(Formerly: Union Trustees Mixed Fund)	3.05	3.12	34.79%
<b>CARDINALSTONE ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> mutualfunds@cardinalstone.com Web: www.cardinalstoneassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 (1) 710 0433 4			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CardinalStone Fixed Income Alpha Fund	1.05	1.05	8.09%
<b>CHAPELHILL DENHAM MANAGEMENT LTD</b> investmentmanagement@chapelhilldenham.com Web: www.chapelhilldenham.com, Tel: +234 461 0691			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Chapelhill Denham Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paramount Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Women's Investment Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CHD Nigeria Bond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CHD Nigeria Dollar Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>CORDROS ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> assetmgteam@cordros.com Web: www.cordros.com, Tel: 019036947			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Cordros Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	10.42%
Cordros Milestone Fund	173.43	174.69	34.43%
Cordros Fixed Income Fund	107.63	107.63	10.34%
Cordros Halal Fixed Income Fund	109.30	109.30	10.93%
Cordros Dollar Fund (\$)	114.33	114.33	6.21%
<b>CORONATION ASSETS MANAGEMENT</b> investment@coronationam.com Web: www.coronationam.com, Tel: 012366215			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coronation Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>EDC FUNDS MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> mutualfundng@ecobank.com Web: www.ecobank.com Tel: 012265281			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class B	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC Nigeria Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>EMERGING AFRICA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> assetmanagement@emergingafricagroup.com Web: www.emergingafricagroup.com/emerging-africa-asset-management-limited/, Tel: 08039492594			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Emerging Africa Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emerging Africa Bond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emerging Africa Balanced Diversity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emerging Africa Eurobond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>FBNQUEST ASSETS MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> invest@fbnquest.com Web: www.fbnquest.com/asset-management; Tel: +234-81 0082 0082			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
FBN Bond Fund	1545.09	1545.09	12.02%
FBN Balanced Fund	269.09	271.39	45.44%
FBN Halal Fund	133.52	133.52	13.22%
FBN Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	12.37%
FBN Dollar Fund	123.82	123.82	7.53%
FBN Smart Beta Equity Fund	247.09	250.11	62.80%
FBN Specialized Dollar Fund	111.73	111.73	9.49%
<b>FCMB ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> fcbamhelpdesk@fcbm.com Web: www.fcbassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 462 2596			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Legacy Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	8.68%
Legacy Debt Fund	3.58	3.58	0.13%
Legacy Equity Fund	2.73	2.79	36.75%
Legacy USD Bond Fund	1.32	1.32	5.04%
<b>FSDH ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD</b> coralfunds@fsdhgroup.com Web: www.fsdhaml.com; Tel: 01-270 4884-5; 01-280 9740-1			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coral Balanced Fund	5,754.97	5,798.71	37.17%
Coral Income Fund	3,995.46	3,995.46	7.72%
Coral Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	12.44%
FSDH Dollar Fund	1.20	1.20	5.80%

<b>GUARANTY TRUST FUND MANAGERS LIMITED</b> enquiries@investment-one.com Web: www.gtccop.bank; Tel: +234 812 992 1045,+234 1 448 8888			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Guaranty Trust Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Guaranty Trust Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Guaranteed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Guaranty Trust Equity Income Fund (VEIF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vantage Dollar Fund (VDF) - June Year End	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>LOTUS CAPITAL LTD</b> fincon@lotuscapitallimited.com Web: www.lotuscapitallimited.com; Tel: +234 1-291 4626 / +234 1-291 4624			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Investment Fund	1.81	1.85	18.01%
Lotus Halal Fixed Income Fund	1,215.40	1,215.40	10.97%
<b>MERISTEM WEALTH MANAGEMENT LTD</b> info@meristemwealth.com Web: www.meristemwealth.com/funds/; Tel: +2348028496012			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Meristem Equity Market Fund	18.26	18.43	55.75%
Meristem Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	12.98%
<b>NORRENBERGER INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> enquiries@norrenberger.com Web: www.norrenberger.com, Tel: +234 (0) 908 781 2026			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Norrenberger Islamic Fund (NIF)	104.49	104.49	12.00%
Norrenberger Money Market Fund (NMMF)	100.00	100.00	12.79%
Norrenberger Dollar Fund (NDF) (\$)	104.15	104.15	11.54%
<b>PAC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD</b> info@pacassetmanagement.com Web: www.pacassetmanagement.com/mutualfunds; Tel: +234 1 271 8632			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
PACAM Balanced Fund	2.29	2.34	45.58%
PACAM Fixed Income Fund	11.98	12.22	8.15%
PACAM Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	8.74%
PACAM Equity Fund	2.21	2.24	55.66%
PACAM EuroBond Fund	131.91	135.04	18.40%
<b>SCM CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED</b> info@scmcapitalng.com Web: www.scmcapitalng.com; Tel: +234 1-280 2226,+234 1- 280 2227			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SCM Capital The Frontier Fund	165.80	169.79	31.89%
<b>SFS CAPITAL NIGERIA LTD</b> investments@sfsnigeria.com Web: www.sfsnigeria.com, Tel: +234 (01) 2801400			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SFS Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>STANBIC IBTC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD</b> assetmanagement@stanbicibt.com Web: www.stanbicibtassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 280 1266; 0700 MUTUALFUNDS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Stanbic IBTC Balanced Fund	4,945.21	4,987.87	45.92%
Stanbic IBTC Bond Fund	255.62	255.62	8.51%
Stanbic IBTC Ethical Fund	2.04	2.06	62.70%
Stanbic IBTC Guaranteed Investment Fund	352.79	352.94	12.69%
Stanbic IBTC Iman Fund	371.95	376.50	59.26%
Stanbic IBTC Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	11.39%
Stanbic IBTC Nigerian Equity Fund	18,049.74	18,274.36	65.34%
Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund (USD)	1.46	1.46	13.28%
Stanbic IBTC Shariah Fixed Income Fund	128.19	128.19	9.65%
Stanbic IBTC Enhanced Short-Term Fixed Income Fund	125.79	125.79	18.25%
Stanbic IBTC Absolute Fund	5,006.02	5,006.02	17.67%
Stanbic IBTC Aggressive Fund	5,371.63	5,439.65	93.22%
Stanbic IBTC Conservative Fund	5,273.38	5,298.78	38.59%
<b>UNITED CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD</b> unitedcapitalplcgroup.com Web: www.unitedcapitalplcgroup.com; Tel: +234 01-6317876			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
United Capital Equity Fund	1.35	1.36	47.43%
United Capital Balanced Fund	1.84	1.85	41.52%
United Capital Wealth for Women Fund	1.41	1.42	31.21%
United Capital Sukuk Fund	1.18	1.18	11.37%
United Capital Fixed Income Fund	1.95	1.95	6.88%
United Capital Eurobond Fund	124.25	124.25	5.52%
United Capital Global Fixed Income Fund	1.08	1.08	8.63%
United Capital Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	11.12%
<b>WWW.QUANTUMZENITH.COM.NG; Tel: +234 1-2784219</b>			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Zenith Balanced Strategy Fund	18.35	18.56	32.48%
Zenith ESG Impact Fund	21.81	21.99	37.84%
Zenith Income Fund	25.31	25.31	7.44%
Zenith Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	11.76%
<b>VETIVA FUND MANAGERS LTD</b> funds@vetiva.com Web: www.vetiva.com; Tel: +234 1 453 0697			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Vetiva Banking Exchange Traded Fund	8.79	8.89	117.70%
Vetiva Consumer Goods Exchange Traded Fund	11.33	11.43	93.12%
Vetiva Griffin 30 Exchange Traded Fund	27.02	27.22	52.51%
Vetiva Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	10.93%
Vetiva Industrial Goods Exchange Traded Fund	27.02	27.22	35.04%
Vetiva S&P Nigeria Sovereign Bond Exchange Traded Fund	147.83	149.83	-6.26%
<b>REITS</b>			
Fund Name	NAV Per Share	Yield / T-Rtn	
SFS REIT	N/A	N/A	
Union Homes REIT	59.38	12.00%	
Nigeria Real Estate Investment Trust	101.79		
UPDC REIT	10.04	-12.08%	
<b>EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS</b>			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Equity Exchange Traded Fund	21.33	23.57	44.63%
SIAML Pension ETF 40	460.00	460.00	257.36%
Stanbic IBTC ETF 30 Fund	717.95	717.95	611.90%
MERGROWTH ETF	22.54	22.91	61.93%
MERVALUE ETF	37.50	37.94	113.70%
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE FUND</b>			
Fund Name	NAV Per Share	Yield / T-Rtn	
Chapel Hill Denham Nigeria Infrastructure Debt Fund	N/A	N/A	

The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise. Past performance is a guide and not an indication of future returns. Fund prices published in this edition are also available on each fund manager's website and FMAN's website at www.fman.com.ng. Fund prices are supplied by the operator of the relevant fund and are published for information purposes only.

## NEWS

**SHALLIPOPI'S HOMECOMING CONCERT...**

Commissioner for Arts, Culture and Tourism, Mrs. Uyi Oduwa Malaka (right), with music artist, Crown Uzama, also known as Shallipopi, at the Benin Airport... yesterday

# Olawepo-Hashim: Na'Abba, Akereedolu's Demise Great Loss to Nigeria's Democracy

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

A chieftain of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Mr. Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, has described the death of the former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Ghali Umar Na'Abba and former Governor Rotimi Akereedolu of Ondo State, as a huge loss to Nigeria's politics and democracy.

In a statement released by his media office in Abuja, Olawepo-Hashim explained that the duo were political giants who bestrode the nation's political landscape.

He maintained that the former speaker was a patriot, selfless

politician, and true democrat who sacrificed his ambition by repelling dictatorship and instituting the independence of the legislature.

He added that Na'Abba was inspiringly principled, courageous and a deeply patriotic Nigerian who was completely detribalised, tolerant, liberal, gentle and affectionate.

According to him, Nigeria and Nigerians will surely miss the great Nigerian and a selfless politician whose effort to sustain democracy and good governance in the country remains indelible.

On Akereedolu, Olawepo-Hashim stressed that the former governor of

Ondo state contributed immensely in the struggle to uphold the rule of law in Nigeria through his legal practice and as president of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), before venturing into partisan politics.

The former presidential candidate noted that the former Ondo State

governor was a believer in the principles of true federalism and his death would remain as a great loss to the nation.

He said: "Both men I knew closely. With Na'Abba, we were in the 'class of 1999' together as I was active in the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ruling party

both as a national officer and as founding chairman of the group of 54 NEC members when the late Na'Abba succeeded Salisu Buhari as speaker.

"In 2019 when I contested as president, Na'Abba with Dr Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), co-chaired my campaign council. I shared the

deep hope of full recovery with him as he struggled to survive the illness that took him at my last visit with him".

Olawepo-Hashim prayed that God would grant the families and the loved ones of the two great Nigerians the fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

## Gov. Yusuf Doles out N20,000 to 2000 PWDs in Kano

Ahmad Sorondinki in Kano

No fewer than 2,000 People with disabilities received N20,000 as part of the empowerment package of the Kano State Government.

Speaking at the launch of the programme, held at the Coronation Hall in Kano on Thursday, Governor Yusuf said the gesture was in fulfillment of his campaign promises.

According to him, he was delighted to have been in the midst of the people with disabilities in the state and acknowledged their immense contribution towards his election in March 18.

Governor Yusuf said the gesture was a payback to their overwhelming support to his administration, expressing readiness to continue supporting them to be self-reliant.

He said, the idea of inviting the beneficiaries to the Government House for receiving the empowerment package was informed by the desire of his administration to deal with all segments of people irrespective of their physical appearance and economic background.

According to him, the empowerment programme is a tip of the iceberg as the government is planning big to support the PWDs

and their families in the state.

He noted that his administration is currently renovating the state's disabled and vulnerable homes, adding that his government would introduce home for the care of elderly people.

His words: "In addition to the cash grants, I ordered that you should be given bags of food items. You should be given the food stuff even if you have been given before.

"You are so important to us and we will do everything humanly possible to support you. We are aware of your overwhelming support to our government which was key to our election success".

In her remarks earlier, Hajiya A'isha Lawal Saji, Commissioner for Women Affairs, Children and Disabled, explained that the beneficiaries had been drawn from the 480 wards of the state's 44 Local Government Areas.

She pointed out that that each of the 2,000 People with Special Needs would benefit from the N20,000 grant for the beneficiaries to start up small scale businesses, aimed at becoming self-reliant.

"This is not the first. It is a tip of the iceberg. Under the ministry, the state government had empowered vulnerable and downtrodden under our ministry.

## Mountain Top Varsity Confers 36 Graduates with First Class Degrees

Mary Nnah

Mountain Top University, has conferred 36 of its graduates with first class degrees out of out of a total of 348 students who graduated at the event held in Ogun state.

Also, 155 students of the university had second class upper degrees, 120 students got second class lower degrees, while 18 students had third class degrees.

The overall best graduating student, Miss Iganya Judith of the department of economics had a cumulative grade point Average of 4.94.

Speaking during the event, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Elijah Ayolabi said the occasion was a landmark event which

underscored the university's commitment and inclination to success.

"These numbers of successes adequately reflect the university's commitment to ensuring that only the best and brightest among the students graduate with the deserving degrees.

"In addition to their degrees, the graduates are well tutored and brought up in a sound moral environment so that they are impeccable ambassadors who would contribute their quota in impacting our society positively.

"We must realise that apart from academic excellence, youths these days should be well-groomed to uphold the virtues of social and moral

codes. This is generally lacking in our society. That is why you notice all manner of deviant attitudes among young people. So, the Mountain Top University graduates stand out in many ways," Ayolabi said.

He noted that since its establishment in 2015 as a faith-based private institution, Mountain Top University has been contributing to the uplift of the Nigerian nation and its citizens.

"Our university has a distinguished record of being one of Nigeria's leading private institutions of higher learning while its students are rated among the best this nation can boast of.

"The university has remained consistent in its quest towards

becoming a world-class research-intensive institution developing along the way a considerable track record for achieving high standards in teaching, research and community service", the VC added.

He said that a vital ingredient for the successes being recorded by the university was the unwavering focus it places on providing high-quality teaching supported by a safe, serene and beautiful environment.

The Chancellor of the university, Dr. Daniel Olukoya, said the university was recognised as one of the best private universities in Nigeria, because God has supported the vision and granted them innumerable mercies to pursue it with vigour.

## Katsina Drug Dealers Forfeit 33 Motorcycles, 2 Vehicles to FG

### ● As NDLEA nabs 919 suspects

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

The Katsina State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) has secured an order from the Federal High Court in the state for the final forfeiture of 33 motorcycles abandoned by drug dealers in the state.

The State NDLEA Commandant, Hassan Sani Abubakar, who unveiled this while briefing journalists in

Katsina, said the agency had also secured interim forfeiture of one Toyota Sienna vehicle and final forfeiture of a Primera Nissan vehicle.

He explained that the command also arrested 919 suspects comprising 894 males and 25 females between January and December, 2023, lamenting that bandits had interrupted the agency's operations in the state.

He said the legal department of the agency had within the year

under review, filed 98 cases before the Katsina Federal High Court and secured 76 convictions, while 161 cases were under various stages of prosecution.

Abubakar added that 563.5541 kilogram of drugs, 450.963 kilogram of cannabis and 111.5911 kilogram of other psychotropic drugs were seized by operatives of the command within the period under review.

He said: "We also secured the

interim forfeiture of one Sienna vehicle and final forfeiture of 33 abandoned motorcycles and one Prime Nissan vehicle. Our DDR unit counseled 842 suspects. The unit also admitted 82 clients.

"25 of them are government sponsored, while 75 are self-sponsored. We were also engaged in 148 war-against-drug-abuse sensitisation programmes with estimated number of 77,339 participants."



**COMMENDATION AWARD...**

L-R: Chairman of Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Prof Tunji Olaopa presenting a Commendation Award to Oladipo Babatunde Agboola, at the graduation ceremony of the Second Batch of the Leadership Enhancement and Development Programme (LEAD-P) organised by the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation in Abuja...recently

# Tinubu, Wife Host Super Falcons Star, Asisat Oshoala in Lagos

**Deji Elumoye** in Abuja  
President Bola Tinubu and the First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu, Thursday hosted Super Falcons striker and 2023 CAF

Women's Player of the Year, Asisat Oshoala, at their Lagos residence. The first family also congratulated the Barcelona Femeni star on winning the

best African female footballer of the year for the sixth time. According to a release issued by the presidency, the duo commended Oshoala for distinguishing herself in the

sport, applauding her significant contributions to women's football on the continent. "Nigerian women will always have a pride of place in the world. What our ladies

have achieved in football, our women are achieving in all fields of endeavour around the world—rising to the top and demonstrating the best of the Nigerian character of

excellence, tenacity, ingenuity, and resilience," the president said. Conscious of the feats of the star sprinter, Tobi Amusan, and the presence of multiple Nigerian women on the Forbes' 2023 World's 100 Most Powerful Women' List, including media mogul, Ms. Mo Abudu, and Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the president and the first lady assured Oshoala of the nation's continued support for her and other Nigerian women striving for excellence in their chosen paths.

## Shettima Inaugurates Redesigned Kano Governor's Office Complex

**Ahmad Sorondinki** in Kano.  
Vice President Kashim Shettima has commissioned the multi-

million-naira governor's office complex redesigned by Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, at the Kano State Government House.

The purpose of the new complex is to facelift and modernize the governor's office in line with a modernized architectural design.

The remodeled office complex included an executive Conference room, a council chamber, and a VIP lounge with state-of-the-art office facilities.

"I congratulate Gov. Yusuf and members of the executive council for a job well done," the Vice President declared.

"The Vice President, Speaker, and Deputy Senate President were in Kano to condole with the Governor, the good people of Kano, and the family of the late Ghali Umar Na'abba who died in the early hours of Wednesday," he said.

## Group Raises Alarm over Alleged Denial of Visas to Nigerian Business Mogul

**Folalumi Alaran** in Abuja

He highlighted Okpala's significant contributions to the trade of producing and manufacturing phone accessories in partnership with Chinese companies, emphasising that the persistent visa denials based on accusations of using a fake passport are unjust.

A statement issued by the Director General Media and Publicity to the governor, Sanusi Bature Dawakin-Iofa, said the Vice President, while commissioning the complex, was assisted by Governor Yusuf; Speaker of

the House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, Deputy Senate President, Sen. Barau I. Jibril, Sen. Kawu Sumaila, and Deputy Governor, Aminu Gwarzo. He commended the political commitment demonstrated by Yusuf to ensure the timely execution of the project.

The statement recalled that the complex was constructed by the first military administrator of the state, the late Commissioner of Police Audu Bako, in 1967.

Speaking to newsmen after the warm reception, Oshoala said: "I want to appreciate the president and the first lady for giving me the opportunity to present the award to them. "During the last World Cup, we had a couple of issues, and they intervened and have been very supportive to the girls, even after the competition."

A group, the National Civil Society Council of Nigeria (NCSCN) has called on the federal government to urgently intervene in the alleged denial of visas to the Chief Executive Officer and founder of New Age Mobile Concepts Limited, Mr. Kingsley Okpala, who has been conducting business with Chinese partners for several years.

"These visa denials have not only impeded the company's business but have also caused emotional distress, loss of opportunities, and financial hardship for Okpala. "The potential impact on New Age's business operations in Nigeria, risking the livelihoods of over 2,000 citizens who depend on the company for employment. This, in turn, could escalate unemployment rates and negatively impact the country's economy.

## Firm Petitions NPA, Protests Alleged Fraud at Warri Pilotage District

**Sylvester Idowu** in Warri

activities. The Technical Director of ESPNL, Captain Charlie Tobi, in a copy of the letter made available to THISDAY, lamented that a sting operation carried out on operators of oil service boats in the mandate area revealed that majority of them have not been presenting for signing/endorsement the mandatory documents, particularly "the Master Declaration Sheet".

Investigations by ESPNL revealed that majority of the recalcitrant oil service boat operators have been colluding with unnamed NPA top officials who, in effect, have been letting them off the hook on issuing them what is known in the local parlance as 'off record', after receiving unspecified gratifications, thus diverting revenue meant for the federal government to private pockets.

"They are sabotaging management's good efforts, and they are economic saboteurs. We cannot fold our arms and watch them continue these cruel habits. "The management lacks funds to rebuild the Escravos submerged breakwaters, but these set of people are diverting the revenue that is supposed to come to the NPA's purse. Only revenue generated from oil service boats is enough to rebuild the breakwaters.

The NCSCN also issued a 48-hour ultimatum to the Chinese Embassy, urging them to satisfactorily address the matter or face possible picketing of the Chinese Embassy and all Chinese business premises across Nigeria.

"We called on Nigerians and relevant authorities, both nationally and internationally, to address this business conspiracy against a Nigerian and the nation as a whole," he said. The NCSCN urged people to carefully consider the implications of the injustice, emphasising the need to stand against such practices to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

A pilotage firm, Escravos Ship Pilot Nigeria Limited (ESPNL), has protested alleged sharp practices at the Warri pilotage district of Delta state to the Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA). ESPNL, recently contracted by the federal government to conduct pilotage services on ships sailing out of the Warri pilotage district, lamented that the alleged collusion of operators of oil service boats with officers at the Warri port has been short-changing the NPA of revenue to the tune of millions of naira.

the Warri Port is poor. The bad eggs within the NPA have been sabotaging the good efforts of the federal government," he said. THISDAY gathered that while Intels is presently doing the monitoring, ESPNL is doing pilotage of oil service boats. Tobi noted that operators of all oil service boats within the operational area are mandated to sign/endorse their "Master Declaration Sheet" showing the particulars of the ship, the owners, agents, cargo type as well as the gross registered tonnage, among others, in the course of any voyage undertaken for NPA's record and for the safety of the vessel.

"They are referred to as off record vessels. These practices were carried out by the previous harbour masters and were stopped by the management for contracting of Escravos Warri Pilotage District to ESPNL. "This is one of the reasons why

"Harbour Master is supposed to fight for the interest of the NPA. We are appealing to the management to use its good offices to arrest this ugly act being carried out in this harbour," he said. A vessel owner, Joseph Fuludo, owner of MV David Rhema, admitted that the contractors that took over from Intels for oil service boats pilotage had not seen master declarations for his vessels for four trips.

During a press conference in Abuja, the Executive Director of NCSCN, Blessing Akinlosotu, questioned the Chinese Embassy's authority to authenticate a Nigerian passport when the federal government and the Nigerian Immigration Service had done so. "We draw the attention of the Nigerian government, the government of the Republic of China, and the international community to a high-level injustice and business conspiracy against Kingsley," Akinlosotu stated.

## NEWS



## GOLDEN SUGAR'S CSR...

L-R: The Anglican Bishop of Kutigi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Jeremiah Kolo; Wife of the Executive Chairman of Mokwa Local Government of Niger State, Hajiya Amina Ahmed; General Manager, Sunti Golden Sugar Estate, Mr. Andries L. Du Pisani; Executive Chairman, Mokwa Local Government, Hon. Jibrin Abdullahi Muregi; and Representative of the Etsu Nupe, Galadima Rabba Nupe, during the official commissioning of a four classroom block, offices, and modern toilets built by Golden Sugar Company - Sunti Division, a subsidiary of Flour Mills of Nigeria (FMN), at Saint Matthias Anglican Primary School, in Kusogi Community, Mokwa Local Government Area of Niger State ...recently

# Court Extends Order Halting INEC from Nullifying Seats of 26 Rivers Lawmakers

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Justice Donatus Okorowo of a Federal High Court, Abuja, has extended his interim order stopping the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP) from declaring vacant, the seats of 26 members of the Rivers State House of Assembly, over their recent defection from the PDP to the All Progressives Congress (APC).

The extension was based on

the application by counsel to the embattled lawmakers, Steve Adehi, SAN, and supported by Ken Njemanze, SAN, who appeared for the Rivers State House of Assembly.

The court had on December 15, in a ruling in an exparte

application ordered INEC and PDP not to take any steps towards sacking the plaintiffs from the assembly, pending the hearing and determination of a suit seeking their removal as lawmakers because of their defection from the party that brought them to office.

Okorowo at the last proceedings had also ordered the service of the interim order as well as the main suit on the defendants and fixed December 28, for hearing.

However, when the matter came up yesterday, the lawyer representing the lawmakers informed the court that he was taking over the case of the plaintiffs from the earlier counsel, Mr Lukman Fagbemi, SAN, who had withdrawn appearance from the case.

While urging the court to grant a short adjournment to enable him prepare for the hearing, he also informed that a new counsel had

entered appearance in the matter for the 3rd defendant (Assembly) and in view of the fact that the 2nd defendant (PDP) had just served on them their response this morning.

Although PDP's lawyer, Adeyemi Ajibade, SAN, objected, the court however granted the request "in the interest of justice", and fixed January 24, 2024 for hearing.

Ajibade, who is also the National Legal Adviser of the party, objected on the grounds that he had an application challenging the jurisdiction of the court to handle the suit and the competence of the suit itself.

Earlier, Njemanze, who told the court that he had the instruction of the 3rd defendant (Assembly) to take over from Fagbemi, informed the court that he was yet to be served with the processes filed by the PDP to enable him respond accordingly. While disclosing that he

intended to react to the processes filed by the plaintiffs, Njemanze hinted of moves to resolve the dispute politically, following the intervention of President Bola Tinubu.

"Without prejudice to the information by my learned friend this morning about a political solution brokered by Mr President, I need to get my client's reaction to this and then report back to this honourable court. In the circumstance, we pray for an adjournment to enable me file my processes," he said.

The 4th defendant (Clerk of the Rivers State House of Assembly), through his lawyer, Chief Ferdinand Orbih, SAN, informed the court that he was yet to be served with any process in the matter.

Meanwhile, there was no representation of the electoral umpire, the IG and DSS in court when the matter was called.

## WHO, Partners Deliver Aid to 2 Gaza Hospitals in High-risk Missions

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and partners have delivered fuel and other essential supplies to two hospitals in northern and southern Gaza this week.

The UN agency, in a statement, said the teams that undertook the high-risk missions witnessed intense hostilities in their vicinity, as well as high patient loads and overcrowding caused by people seeking refuge.

It said the teams also reported that food needs remained dire across the enclave, which was impacting operations, with hungry people stopping convoys in hopes of finding something to eat.

WHO Director-General, Tedros Ghebreyesus, issued a fresh call for the international community to "take urgent steps to alleviate the grave peril facing the population of Gaza." Ghebreyesus also called on the international community to support humanitarian workers.

According to him, personnel visited two hospitals: Al-Shifa in northern Gaza and Al-Amal Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in the south.

Both hospitals also serve as shelters for people displaced by the ongoing conflict, with 50,000 reported at Al-Shifa and 14,000 at Al-Amal.

At Al-Shifa, WHO delivered fuel to keep essential health services running. Staff also brought medical supplies, alongside UN children's agency (UNICEF).

In support of NGO partners, the World Central Kitchen, WHO also delivered materials that would support a kitchen at the hospital.

The Gaza Central Drug Store also received medical supplies and would act as a hub for delivery to other hospitals.

Teams that went to Al-Amal saw

the aftermath of recent strikes that disabled the hospital's radio tower and impacted the central ambulance dispatch system for the entire Khan Younis area, affecting more than 1.5 million people.

Only five out of nine ambulances the hospital once had are now functioning.

WHO staff reported that it was impossible to walk inside the hospital without stepping over patients and people seeking refuge.

"Furthermore, only a few functioning toilets are available in the hospital, adjacent community buildings and PRCS training centres.

"As they were transiting across Gaza, staff witnessed tens of thousands of people fleeing heavy strikes in the Khan Younis and Middle Area on foot, on donkeys, or in cars.

"Make-shift shelters were being built along the road," said the UN agency.

WHO feared this new displacement will further strain health facilities in the south, which are already struggling to meet the immense needs.

"This forced mass movement of people will also lead to more overcrowding, increased risk of infectious diseases, and make it even harder to deliver humanitarian aid," said Dr Rik Peepkorn, Representative for the West Bank and Gaza.

Latest WHO assessments show that Gaza currently has 13 partially functioning hospitals and two minimally functioning ones, while 21 are not functioning at all.

Facilities include Nasser Medical Complex, the most important referral hospital in southern Gaza, which is partially functioning, and recent reports of nearby residential areas being ordered to evacuate are

extremely concerning.

WHO said its ability to supply medicines and fuel to hospitals is being increasingly constrained by the hunger and desperation of people both on the way to hospitals, and inside them.

Peepkorn stressed that the safety of WHO staff and continuity of operations depended on more food arriving in all of Gaza, immediately.

## Edo Woos Investors at 27th World Investment Conference

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

The Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO) has said its successful outing in 2023 is a testament to the proactive stance of the Godwin Obaseki's administration in fostering a conducive business environment in Edo State.

Managing Director Uwaibi of ESIPO who spoke in Benin City after returning from the WAIPA-organised 27th World Investment Conference in Delhi, India, said Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, has consistently highlighted the state's commitment to becoming a cosmopolitan hub and a preferred destination for investors and digital nomads by 2030.

According to him, "Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO) has made a significant impact at the WAIPA-organised 27th World Investment Conference in Delhi,

India.

"This is as representatives from the Edo State Investment Promotion Office (ESIPO) led by Kelvin Uwaibi, MD of ESIPO, and Henry Oqua, Communications Director, engaged discussions with industry leaders at the Government-to-Business (G2B) meetings."

Uwaibi said the discussions with industry leaders sparked genuine interest in collaborating with Edo State.

His words: "As the only foreign sub-national Investment Promotion Agency in attendance, ESIPO's presence stood out prominently, thanks to the backing from the EU-funded UNDP Integrated National Financing Frameworks programme."

"The final day's Government-to-Business (G2B) meetings were especially impactful, sparking promising investment prospects across vital sectors such as

agro-processing, supply chain management, manufacturing, and renewable energy.

"Robic Rufarm, a sustainable agriculture advocate, saw Edo's agricultural potential as grounds for fruitful collaboration. Equally impressed, Ninjacart, a prominent agritech platform, recognized Edo as a strategic hub for their operations. Discussions with MIB Technologies, a mobile factory manufacturer, showed promise for potential investments, especially leveraging the burgeoning energy sector in the state."

Continuing, Uwaibi said, "RDZ Foods, a major food processing company, found Edo's infrastructure and resources appealing, with discussions advancing steadily towards the establishment of factories in the state and empowering women through training programs. Fertis/Farmgate, specializing in

fertilizer and agricultural equipment, envisioned Edo as a launchpad for their expansion into Nigeria."

Noting that ESIPO forged strategic partnerships with international Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) like Invest India and Business France, he added that "Invest India committed to supporting Indian investors looking at Edo, while Business France expressed interest in joint investment missions to France. These alliances further underscored Edo's position as a prime global investment destination."

Uwaibi who emphasized ESIPO's commitment to actively engage with diverse businesses, forge strategic partnerships, and cultivate an environment conducive to business growth said, "Through these endeavors, ESIPO aims to pave the way for a prosperous future for Edo State, driven by innovation and sustained investment."



## SARDINES PROMO DRAW...

L-R: Chinedu Egwuonwu of Ice Investment Limited; Corporate Communications Manager, Ekulo Group of Companies, Gift Nwachukwu; General Manager, Ekulo Group of Companies, Joseph Okonkwo; Mr Tobechukwu Obiakor of Oba Imports Exports Company Limited and Brand Manager, Titus Sardine, Mr Chukwuebuka Jacob at the second Titus Sardines Promo draw held in Lagos ... recently

# Obaseki, Matawalle, Tuggar, Musa, Lagbaja Others Decorate 47 New Major Generals

● *Navy decorates newly promoted commanders, captains, commodores*

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yusuf Tuggar, Chief of Defence Staff, Gen Christopher Musa, and Chief of Army Staff, Gen Taoreed Lagbaja, yesterday, participated in the decoration of the newly promoted 47 Major Generals of the Nigerian Army.

The Edo State Governor, had earlier congratulated senior army officers of Edo State origin who have been promoted to the rank of Major

Generals in the Nigerian Army.

In a statement, the governor hailed them for being worthy ambassadors of the state, hailing their invaluable contributions to the peace, security and territorial integrity of the nation.

He said: "It is with great pride that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the senior military officers of Edo State origin who have been elevated to the rank of Major Generals, in recognition of their outstanding commitment to the Nigerian Armed Forces, as well as their hard work,

sacrifice and meritorious service to our great nation.

"I offer my sincere felicitations to Maj.-Gen TB Ugiagbe, Acting Chief of Military Intelligence; Maj.-Gen. JE Osifo, Commandant of the Nigerian Army School of Finance and Administration; Maj.-Gen. M.O Ihanuwaze, Director Budget Army Headquarters, Maj.-Gen SI Musa, Director Legal Services (Army), and Maj.- Gen EO Agbekaku.

"As a government, we take immense pride in the fact that our sons in the Nigerian Army have continued to display the indomitable Edo spirit, which places hard work, diligence, and determination as core virtues in pursuit of excellence, and we celebrate their genius and accomplishments.

"Your promotions come at a critical and challenging time in our history when the country is in dire need of distinguished individuals with the zeal, expertise, and leadership skills to brave the odds in tackling the various security challenges it faces head-on.

"I am confident that you will bring your zest and unparalleled expertise to bear in addressing these challenges, ensuring the safety and security of our people."

The governor extended his best wishes even as he expressed the hope that their well-deserved elevation will bring about improvements in military operations and strengthen Nigeria's capacity to overcome the nation's myriad of security challenges.

The Nigerian Navy also decorated 22 senior officers promoted to the

rank of commander, captain and commodore from their previous ranks.

Speaking at the ceremony held at the Nigerian Army Headquarters in Abuja, the Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, who was the special guest of honour, urged the newly promoted senior officers to lead by example.

The Army Council had on December 21 approved the promotion of 47 brigadier generals to the rank of major general, while 75 colonels were elevated to the rank of brigadier general.

"This promotion is a beacon of hope to all Nigerians and a call to elevate your efforts in the fight against insecurity especially in the North West and other parts of the country.

"Your promotion is a testament to your many years of hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving our great nation. As a Nigerian, I know firsthand the sacrifices that come with attaining this height. It takes a lot of courage, discipline, and resilience to rise through the ranks.

"I am also aware of the rigorous process of selecting those being honoured here today and I am bold to say you are all indeed one of our finest breed and the nation is proud of you.

"You have all shown exceptional leadership skills, strategic thinking and a deep understanding in the course of your careers. Your contributions to the Nigerian Army are invaluable, and we are confident that you will continue to serve our nation with honour and distinction," he said.

Lagbaja, in his speech, congratulated the newly decorated major generals, and said their promotion was a reward for their hard work and commitment to duty.

Lagbaja said the Nigerian army as a system frowned at incompetence and urged them to give their best having attained the level of policy formulation in the Nigerian army.

He urged them to be logical and objective in their professional dealings in order to deliver on his command philosophy.

He advised those, who did not benefit from the promotion to see it as a challenge and work harder for it in the future.

"I want to add that getting here is not the end, what you do with the rank and the responsibilities that comes with it count tremendously. "Going from here, I must remind you that you have now joined the system and going forward, when you point a finger at the system, know that four fingers are pointed at you and the rest possibly misdirected."

In his vote of thanks on behalf of other decorated officers, Maj Gen GTO Ajetimobi, said they were highly motivated with their new rank.

He also pledged unalloyed loyalty and dedication to duty in line with the army chief's command philosophy.

The newly decorated Major Generals included Onyema Nwachukwu, WB Etuk, JE Osifo, WM Dangana, TB Ugiagbe, ASM Wase, MA Abdullahi, BI Alaya, AO Oyelade, OO Arogundade, EI Okoro, CR Nnebeife, FU Mijinyawa, MT Abdullahi, M Adamu, ND Shagaya,

ME Onoja, MO Erebulu, BA Ilori, MO Ihanuwaze, EE Ekpenyong, SI Musa, M Galadima, and AP Ahmadu.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Navy also decorated 22 senior officers promoted to the rank of commander, captain and commodore from their previous ranks.

The Navy Board had on December 21 approved their promotions to the new rank.

The senior officers decorated with rank of commodore and captain were TM Abdulrahim, Captain BA Kuton, Captain TS Ngada, Captain GU Nwabunike, Captain OE Oladipo, and Captain SM Tasiu.

Those decorated with the rank of Captain were Commander BI Hadi, Commander EO Omeje, Commander TG Abusi, Commander NF Omeire, Commander OA Ekokotu, Commander TG Adeyemi, Commander AM Idu, Commander YA Kurba, and Commander RE Oparaji.

Officers decorated with the rank of commander included Lt Commander S Munnir, Lt Commander AS Adamu, Lt S Nenshi, Lt Commander Y Tegina, Lt Commander S Yakubu, Lt Commander RO Iyinbo, and Lt Commander IK Mohammed.

Speaking at the event, the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ogalla, charged the newly promoted officers to be more dedicated to their duties.

The CNS, who was represented by the Chief of Naval Policy and Plans, Rear Admiral Joseph Apkan, said the officers emerged successful after rigorous screening.

## Bago Meets IBB over National, State Issues

Laleye Dipo in Minna

Niger State Governor, Mohammed Umaru Bago, has met with former military president General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida at his Minna uphill residence, over issues bordering on national and state concerns.

The meeting was, however, held behind closed doors.

But a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to Bago, Bologi Ibrahim said the former military president and the governor discussed matters bordering on state and national issues.

According to the statement, the governor seized the opportunity of the visit to seek "the wise counsel and fatherly advice" of the former military president."

Bologi quoted the Governor as saying after the visit, his administration would continue to tap from the wealth of experience of the elder statesman for the overall benefit of the people."

After the visit, according to the statement, Bago inspected ongoing construction and reconstruction works at the three Arms Zone to ascertain the level of progress attained.

"Bago also stopped over at the construction site of the IBB University Teaching Hospital, where he reportedly commended the workers for being on their toes in carrying out the job.

Bago called on the Youths to take advantage of the ongoing projects in the state to make legitimate money for themselves.

## TINUBU TO GOV AIYEDATIWA: TAKE CHARGE, MOBILISE ONDO PEOPLE TO MOVE STATE FORWARD

administrator par excellence in past tense. He was a consummate and courageous politician, who spoke truth to power till he breathed his last."

### Adeleke Congratulates New Ondo Gov

Governor Ademola Adeleke has congratulated the newly sworn-in Governor of Ondo State, Hon Lucky Aiyedatiwa, describing his emergence as "the will of God"

The Governor, who again lamented the demise of Akeredolu said God was the alpha and omega, the giver of life and power, urging the new governor to continue his devotion to the service of the people and humanity.

"I rejoice with my colleague, the new Governor of Ondo state. This is a golden opportunity to expand

delivery of democratic dividends, heal the wounds of the past and unite the state for greater advancement.

"Ondo state has passed through multiple turbulence. It is my prayers that the power transition will deepen democracy and widen the hope and aspirations of the people for a people-oriented Governor."

### Edwin Clark:

The National Leader of the Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF), Chief Edwin Clark, has on behalf of the people of the South-South geopolitical zone, expressed pain over the death of Akeredolu.

PANDEF, in a statement by its National Chairman, Senator Emmanuel Ibok Essien, acknowledged the late Akeredolu's standings as a great Nigerian lawyer, jurist, public servant, and politician, amongst other things.

Essien said PANDEF and the entire Nigerians "will eternally remember Akeredolu's forthright views on issues of constitutional law and national importance"

The group cited the roles he played particularly when he held sway as the President of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA).

"His critical thoughts on daily affairs and constitutionalism in major ways contributed to the consolidation of our democracy and peaceful coexistence as a people.

"It is also an ineffaceable fact that under his watch as Governor, Ondo State became a center point of economic and social development.

"As Chairman of the South-West Governors Forum, Rotimi Akeredolu played critical roles that culminated in the birth of 'Amotekun', a sub-regional security outfit, being the first of its type in our country.

"This singular initiative, substantially, brought down the spate of kidnapping, killings, and brigandage in the South West zone.

"Aketi, as he was fondly called was a dogged fighter and was an outstanding, strong, and steadfast proponent of the quest for the rotation of the presidency to the southern part of the country in 2023."

### House Southern Caucus:

The Southern Caucus of the House of Representatives, has described Akeredolu as a warrior and a courageous fighter and a giant.

The caucus under the leadership of Hon. Nicholas Mutu, expressed its heartfelt condolences to the Ondo State government and the immediate family of Akeredolu over his demise, describing it as a painful loss.

The caucus in a statement by its Secretary, Hon. Afam Ogene,

described Akeredoku, as an accomplished legal luminary, intellectual and a courageous voice of reason whose individuality and unambiguity on issues of societal and national importance were never in doubt.

"Aketi was a charismatic personality, who contributed immensely to the development of Nigeria's legal profession and democracy, with passion, grace and fearlessness.

"He loved his people so passionately that it was never in doubt where he stood on matters that concerned the Yoruba race, the south and his immediate constituents, the Ondo people.

"Arakunrin was always there in the forefront, to speak for his people, fight for their interests and was an advocate for equity and fairness in the Nigerian system, till the end."

### Jimoh Ibrahim:

The senator representing Ondo South senatorial district in the National Assembly, Dr Jimoh Ibrahim, said he was sad and devastated that Akeredolu could not survive his illness.

He said in a statement that while Ondo State has lost an illustrious son, a fearless advocate of unity, equity and fairness and a faithful servant of the people, Nigeria has lost a strong voice.

"It is a monumental loss to Ondo in particular and Nigeria as a whole. A fearless commentator on national affairs is gone," he said.

He said Akeredolu's legacy projects dot Ondo state's landscape and that the greatest honour that could be done to him is to build on the foundation for development that he has laid.

## NEWS



## 2024 ARMED FORCES REMEMBRANCE DAY EMBLEM LAUNCH...

L-R: Oyo State Commissioner of Police, Adebola Hamzat; General Officer Commanding, 2nd Division of Nigeria Army, Major-General Bamidele Ali Alabi; Chairman, Nigerian Legion, Oyo State Chapter, Evangelist Ogunkojo Julius, and Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde, during the launching of the 2024 Armed Forces Remembrance Day Emblem and Appeal Fund, in Ibadan... yesterday

# Police Burst Child-Kidnapping Syndicate, Arrest 9, Rescue 7 in Kano

Ahmad Sorondinki in Kano

The crack team of the Kano State Police Command has unmasked a cartel specialised in the kidnapping and trafficking of minors from Bauchi, Kano, Imo and Anambra States.

Addressing journalists in

Kano yesterday, the state Police Commissioner, Mohammed Usaini Gumel, revealed that the police burst a notorious gang that has been operating for 10 years now in the state.

According to him, on December 15, 2023, one Comfort Amos, 45, was intercepted at Mariri luxury

bus park in Kano while transiting five-year-old Abdulmutallib Sa'ad to Lagos State.

Gumel revealed that: "Preliminary investigations led to the arrest of other accomplices

that include Chika Ezugbu, 52; Joy Nzelu, 43; Clement Ali, 35, and Emeka Ekeidigwe, 55, all residing in Kano for being part of the syndicate committing the crime.

"Also, it was discovered that the five-year-old Sa'ad was abducted on December 12, 2023, from Zango Quarters in Bauchi State.

"Further investigation revealed that the suspects are in the same

cycle of abduction, buying and selling minors from Bauchi and Kano States, trafficking and selling them to people within their racket in different locations in Lagos and Anambra States."

## Diri Signs N489.4bn 2024 Appropriation Bill into Law

Olusegun Samuel in Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has signed the state's 2024 appropriation bill of N489,443,632,374 into law.

Governor Diri appended his signature on the "Budget of Sustainable and Shared Prosperity" yesterday in the Government House, Yenagoa. This figure represented an increase of N8,450 billion from the earlier N480,993,632,369 the governor presented to the House of Assembly for consideration on November 29, 2023.

His Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Daniel Alabrah, quoted Senator Diri as saying that the budget prioritised key sectors like education, infrastructure, healthcare delivery and agriculture.

Alabrah expressed optimism that a careful implementation of the budget would improve the living conditions of the people and address rural and urban poverty.

The governor said: "In order to realise our vision of sustainable and shared prosperity, we have carefully crafted this budget to prioritise key sectors aimed at improving our

infrastructure, expanding access to mass education with emphasis on technical, science and vocational manpower development, enhance healthcare services, and promote agriculture as a means of creating employment opportunities and reducing poverty.

"You recall that I presented a budget proposal of N480,993,632,369 to the Assembly. But I observed an upward review to the tune of N489,443,632,374, which gives us a difference of N8,450,000,000 to provide more funding for the construction of an ultra-modern stadium, ultra-modern renal centre at the Niger Delta University Teaching Hospital, Okolobiri, the construction of an administrative block for the Primary Health Care Board and other critical overhead expenses.

"Having adopted the bottom-top approach in the preparation of this budget, specific rural community needs are being prioritised. It is our intention to ensure that the benefits of this budget are felt by all. We will work tirelessly to bridge the gap between the urban and rural areas in order to reduce the menace of urban poverty."

## Bauchi Reserves N15bn for Education in 2024, Says Mohammed

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

Bauchi State Government said it reserves N15 billion for execution of various projects aimed at repositioning the state Education System. The State Governor Bala Mohammed made this known yesterday at the Second Graduation Ceremony of Sultan Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar Primary, Islamiyya and Secondary School Miya in Ganjuwa Local Government Area.

Governor Mohammed said the state has also fulfilled all the requirements for accessing a number of intervention projects from Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) as part of its efforts to reduce the number of out of school children in the state.

the school into the state education system, construct more classrooms and laboratory.

He commended the Sultan of Sokoto Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar for adopting the school and charged others to emulate his exemplary leadership.

In his remark, the Sultan of Sokoto stressed the need for government and parents to prioritise girl-child education to bridge the education gap in northern parts of the country.

Earlier, the Principal of the school Abdulkali Umar, said with support of the Sultan and Emir of Bauchi Dr. Rilwanu Sulaimanu Adamu, the school has achieved tremendous success in areas of students enrollment and infrastructural development.

The event featured presentation of prizes to outstanding teachers and students, recitation of the holy Quran and entertainment.

## Rivers Community Seeks Gov's Intervention in Land Grabbing, Kidnapping

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Communities in Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State have called on the state government to intervene in the massive challenge of land grabbing and kidnapping incidents being experienced in the area recently.

The communities made the

call yesterday while speaking with journalists through the Bishop of the Etche Diocese, Anglican Communion, Rt. Revd Okechukwu Nwala.

Speaking on what he titled: 'Pertinent Issues Affecting the Security and Economy of the Etche Nation', the clergyman lamented that the area has suffered

so much insecurity and high rate of kidnapping in the past months.

He said: "Abduction for ransom though not peculiar and/or new to Etche nation is another ugly incident that has remained unabated. "The sponsors have graduated from using fellow locals to now engaging some Fulani herdsmen with heavy

rifles and charms to keep the victims in their hideouts."

Bishop Nwala said Etche people are predominantly agrarian in nature, and despite being blessed with large oil and gas deposits with contribute significantly to the economy of Nigeria, the area has remained largely underdeveloped

## Akeredolu: I Have Lost My Friend and Brother, Fayemi Mourns

Sunday Okobi

The immediate past Governor of Ekiti State and former Chairman of the Nigerian Governors (NGF), Dr. Kayode Fayemi, has expressed profound grief over the passing of late Ondo State Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu (SAN).

Fayemi described late Akeredolu as a nationalist and statesman whose death is a great loss to the country, especially the people of Ondo State.

In a statement issued by the Head of the Fayemi Media Centre, Mallam Ahmad Sajoh, the former governor described

the late Akeredolu as a true friend and brother with whom he collaborated over the years, in and out of government, on several national causes, to make life better for the ordinary people.

He recalled many instances when the late governor intervened fearlessly on critical national

issues, and consistently stood on the side of equity, fairness, and justice.

According to the statement, "As a lawyer, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) president, and governor, he was an unwavering champion of the oppressed and a defender of the common man."

## Otu Commences \$5bn Green Economy Programme in Cross River

Sunday Okobi

Cross River State Governor, Senator Bassey Eket Otu, is set to commence a \$5 billion green economy initiative that will see the state as the first sub-national in Nigeria to achieve a net-zero programme in the country.

Otu made this known when

he spoke to journalists in Calabar, the state capital, yesterday on the important role that sub-nationals play in stimulating economic growth from stronger investor interest, and increasing economic activity through the development of a buoyant green economy.

Speaking on the benefits of green

economy, deriving from the state's participation at the recently held COP28 discussion, he said his administration has developed a set of roadmap for the exploration of green initiatives.

According to the governor, "To this end, our administration has developed a roadmap towards

leading the sub-nationals in transitioning and creating a vibrant green economy.

"In the coming days, the state will be unveiling its various plans targeting an array of green economic sectors, including e-mobility, reforestation, power, and biodiversity.

## Oyebanji Signs N159.5bn Ekiti Fiscal Estimates into Law

Gbenga Sodeinde in Ado Ekiti

Ekiti State Governor, Mr. Biodun Oyebanji yesterday signed into law the 2024 appropriation Bill with an assurance that his administration is fully prepared to implement the budget for the

realization of his administration's shared prosperity agenda.

The 2024 Appropriation, Christened "Budget of Sustainable Growth and Development" was presented to the Governor by the speaker of the Ekiti State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon Adeoye

Aribasoye and other principal officers at the Exco Chamber of the Governor's Office, Ado Ekiti.

The 2024 Budget estimate is N159,572,481,915.51, out of which 56 per cent is appropriated for Recurrent Expenditure and 44 per cent for Capital Expenditure.

Speaking while signing the budget, Governor Oyebanji reiterated his administration's determination to ensure that the budget is fully implemented to drive sustainable growth and improve the standard of living for the people of Ekiti State.

## Kogi Chief Judge Admonishes Leaders on Peace, Security

Ibrahim Oyewale in Lokoja

The Chief Judge of Kogi State, Justice Josiah Majebi, has disclosed that issues of peace and security are interwoven and must not be toyed with by leaders if the economic improvement of followers is paramount.

Justice Majebi made this assertion when he received traditional, community and religious leaders who felicitated with him at his residence in Ageva, Okene, during the Christmas celebration.

The leaders paid homage on the chief justicw in both official and

personal capacities representing their respective groups.

They appreciated the chief judge for the improvement they said they have noticed in the state's justice delivery system since he assumed office particularly in the area of location of courts closer to the people.

They commended the chief justice for his participatory leadership style. The Ageva, Obehira and Ozuma communities specifically recalled his swift response and intervention that restored their water supply in the communities when it broke down.

## We've Demonstrated Commitment to Ekiti Cause, Says Oyebanji

Gbenga Sodeinde in Ado Ekiti

Ekiti State Governor, Mr. Biodun Oyebanji, has said his administration in the last one year had demonstrated commitment to the state development by successfully implementing various infrastructure projects and human

capital development aimed at improving the standard of living of the people and actualising the shared prosperity agenda of his administration.

Governor Oyebanji, who disclosed this during the End-of-the-year Community Stakeholders

Engagement in Ado Ekiti, yesterday said his administration has demonstrated ability and commitment to workers and pensioners' welfare as well as human capital development within resources available to the state.

A major highlight of the

community engagement was a presentation by the Internal Revenue Service Chairman, Mr. Olatona, on the modernity for the collection and utilisation of the Land Use Charges being reintroduced by the government and billed to commence in January next year.

NEWS XTRA



**CHECKING NOISE POLLUTION...**

L-R: Chairman, Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), Lagos State Chapter, Dr. Abdulahi Shuaib, Member, NIREC, Dr. Ashiru Ajoke Shariyu; Special Adviser to Lagos State Governor on Religious Matters (Christian), Rev. Bukola Adeleke; General Manager, Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), Dr. Babatunde Ajayi; Special Adviser on Religious Matters (Muslim), to Lagos State Governor, Mr Jebe Abdulahi, and Chairman, Christian Council of Nigeria, Lagos State Chapter, Archbishop Adekoya Olafimihan, at the stakeholders' meeting on minimising noises from worship places in Lagos... recently ETOPUKUTT

# Zamfara Closes 11 Cattle Markets over Banditry

Zamfara State Government has again closed down 11 cattle markets across the state until further notice. The State Commissioner of Information, Munnir Haidara, disclosed this on a statement issued to newsmen in Gusau yesterday. He said that security reports showed that bandits were using those markets to sell their rustled cows. The affected markets, according to the commissioner, include: Tsafe and Bilbis markets in Tsafe Local Government Area, Jangebe market in Talata-Mafara

LGA and Wuya market in Anka area. Other markets were Magazine Diddi market in Maradun LGA, Galadi market in Shinkafi LGA, Mada market in Gusau LGA and Sabon Birnin Danali in Birnin Magaji LGA. The rest are: Kokiya, Chigama and Nasarawar Godel markets all in Birnin Magaji LGA. Haidara said the state government found it necessary to close down those markets due to security reports that the bandits are conniving with

some unscrupulous elements to sell off their rustled cows in those markets. He said that the state government had directed the security agents to ensure total compliance and arrest any person who violated the order. "The security personnel have since been directed to arrest any person found in these affected markets," he added. He called on the people of the state to abide by the order and cooperate with the state government in its efforts to rid the state of banditry.

community guards is not a state police or a rival to Nigeria police. He noted that his administration came with the idea of the Sokoto Community Guard Corps in order to provide support to the efforts of the President Bola Tinubu led administration in providing adequate security for the populace. "The signing into law of this Sokoto Community Guard Corp

is a very important milestone in the lives of this administration. "As we are all aware, Sokoto State is facing security challenges, especially of banditry thereby destabilizing the peaceful nature the state is known for. "Indeed, we pledge to do everything humanly possible to maintain peace and security in the state, the creation of this

Security guard corps is gear towards supplementing the efforts of conventional security outfits to protect lives and properties of the people especially at the grassroots. "Let me say it here clearly that the community guard corps is not Sokoto police, it is not a force created by the Sokoto State government.

## Sokoto Gov Signs Community Guard Corps Bill into Law

Onuminya Innocent in Sokoto

The Governor Ahmed Aliyu of Sokoto State, on Thursday signed into law the state community guard corps bill passed by the state house of assembly. Speaking while signing the bill into law at the council chambers, government house, Sokoto, the governor clarifies that the

community guards is not a state police or a rival to Nigeria police. He noted that his administration came with the idea of the Sokoto Community Guard Corps in order to provide support to the efforts of the President Bola Tinubu led administration in providing adequate security for the populace. "The signing into law of this Sokoto Community Guard Corp

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## Borno Assembly Passes 2024 Budget

The Borno House of Assembly yesterday passed the 2024 budget presented to it by Gov. Babagana Zulum. The *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) reported that the house jerked up the budget from the initial N340.6 billion presented by the governor to N358.7 billion. The budget was passed at the plenary presided over by the Speaker, Abdulkarim Lawan, following presentation of the budget report to the house by the Chairman, House Committee on Appropriation, Alhaji Bukar Alibe (APC-Kaga). After the presentation, the house dissolved into Committee of the Whole to consider and the budget report.

Leader of the House, Alhaji Dige Mohammed (APC-Kalabaje), moved motion for the adoption of the report and was seconded by Alhaji Baba Mala (APC-Bama). The speaker after the passage, directed the Clerk of the house to prepare clean copies of the budget known as "Budget of Consolidation and Progress" for the governor's assent. According to the *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN), the house at the plenary also approved the request by the governor to appoint 20 Special Advisers and the establishment of Borno State Great Green Wall and State Information Communication Technology Agency.

## Police Officers' Wives, Traders Protest Planned Demolition of POWA's Complex

Some police officers' wives and other traders, owners of shops at the Police Officers Wives Association (POWA) Shopping Complex, Computer Village, Ikeja, have protested against a planned demolition of the complex. They carried out a peaceful protest yesterday in Ikeja after the complex was allegedly sealed by the state government to pave the way for the demolition. The *News Agency of Nigeria* (NAN) reported that the officers' wives and traders had earlier raised the alarm over alleged plan by a group of persons parading themselves as policemen and using the name of the wife of the Inspector General of Police (IG), Mrs Elizabeth Egbetokun, to demolish the complex. NAN learnt that a senior police officer, allegedly connived with a property developer to displace thousands of traders, including

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police officers wives trading at the complex. Immediate past chairman of the complex, Mr Tobechuwku Maxwell expressed sadness over the proposed demolition, stressing that the complex was feeding thousands of families, including police officers. and 21 others in a suit numbered LD/9297GCMW/2022. Others listed as defendants in the suit are the Governor of Lagos State, the Attorney General of Lagos State, the Commissioner for Local Government and Community Affairs, Lagos State, the Ibeju Lekki Local Government Area.

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## Lagos Traditional Ruler Faces Contempt Charge

Wale Igbintade

The Onibeju of Ibejaland and paramount ruler in the Ibeju-Lekki Local Government Area of Lagos State, Oba Waliu Olanunmi, is reportedly risking being committed to prison for contempt of court. The Form 48 (Notice of

consequences of disobedience), dated December 15, 2023, warned that unless the traditional ruler obeys the order of the court, he would be guilty of contempt, and liable to be committed to prison. Justice K. O. Dawodu had on December 12, 2023, ordered the Lagos State Government to

reverse the Oba's installation as well restrained him from parading himself as the Oba of Ibeju Kingdom. Justice Dawodu made the orders while granting mandatory injunction filed by Prince Adewale Abdul Rauf Oniwonlu against the deposed Oba listed as ninth defendant

and 21 others in a suit numbered LD/9297GCMW/2022. Others listed as defendants in the suit are the Governor of Lagos State, the Attorney General of Lagos State, the Commissioner for Local Government and Community Affairs, Lagos State, the Ibeju Lekki Local Government Area.

## Annual Returns: CAC Extends Penalty Deadline to April

The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) has extended the deadline for the commencement of penalties against companies that failed to file annual returns, from January 1 to April 1, 2024. A statement issued in

Abuja yesterday by the commission's Director of Press, Mr Dominic Inyang, said management decided to extend the penalty date following glitches experienced on the Company Registration Portal (CRP).

He stated that date was also extended due to appeals from the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector. "Further to its earlier notice published on Nov. 2, informing the general public that it shall commence.

The full application of the penalties was prescribed by the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020 and the Companies Regulations 2021 against companies and their directors or officers for who failed to file annual returns.

## State Police'll Address Insecurity in Nigeria, Says Group

A group, Initiative for Better and Greater Nigeria (IBBN), yesterday in Jos. El-buba was reacting to the Christmas eve killings in some communities of Bokokos and Barkin-Ladi Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Plateau. The Convener of the group, Prophet Isa El-buba, made the call in a news conference

killed scores, injured many others, destroyed houses and properties worth millions. The ugly incident also left 29,350 persons displaced and currently taking refuge in some worship centres within Bokokos and Barkin-Ladi towns. But the convener, who described the killings as

'heart-wrenching', maintained that state policing would complement the efforts of the federal security architecture. "One of the recommendations we want to make is that we call on the federal government to do a constitutional alterations to provide for state policing.

'heart-wrenching', maintained that state policing would complement the efforts of the federal security architecture. "One of the recommendations we want to make is that we call on the federal government to do a constitutional alterations to provide for state policing.

## Six-month-old Baby Needs N9m for Severe Heart Surgery

The family of Yahaya Abubakar has called on all well-meaning individuals to come to its aid in order to help save their six-month-old son, Sa'ad Abubakar's life,

who needs N9 million to undergo severe heart surgery in India over the next few days, as he battles against time to stay alive. Abubakar's only child is battling with 'Pentology of Fallot', a severe heart condition

that requires immediate surgery in India. The parents' plea for donations by well-meaning Nigerians comes as every other option has been exhausted, including emptying their savings, selling off personal

property, and seeking help from family and friends. Little Sa'ad was born with a rare form of cyanotic congenital heart disease. Although the condition wasn't discovered at birth, he became ill two days after delivery.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I formerly known and addressed as PETER KEHINDE BOLA, now wish to be known and addressed as OGO KEHINDE BOLA. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.  
I formerly known and addressed as MISS ALERO ADENIHUN ADEWUSI, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. ALERO ADENIHUN BALOGUN. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.  
I formerly known and addressed as HAMMED OLAITAN OLAITAN HAMMED, now wish to be known and addressed as HAMMED ISMAILA OLAITAN. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.  
This is to confirm that EGBO OMOERE, EGBO OMOEFE, SO-KARI & TAMUNO SELEDE JUMBO refers to one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as TAMUNO SELEDE JUMBO. All documents remain valid. The general public should take note.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
I formerly known and addressed as EMERUWA SUSSAN UGOCHI, now wish to be known and addressed as NJOKU SUSSAN UGOCHI. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.  
I formerly known and addressed as OLORODE IYABO BERNICE, now wish to be known and addressed as ODUNLEYE IYABO BERNICE. My Date of Birth is MAY 26TH, 1972. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.  
I formerly known and addressed as (MISS) KALU, SHARON AMARACHI HEPHIZIBAH, now wish to be known and addressed as (MRS) RANTI-AKERELE, SHARON AMARACHI HEPHIZIBAH. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.  
MY NAME WAS WRONGLY WRITTEN DURING MY BANK ACCOUNT OPENING AS NTIEGO, MICHAEL IKIAMINANENGIM INSTEAD OF IKIAMINANENGIM, NTIEGO MICHAEL. MY CORRECT NAME THEN IS IKIAMINANENGIM, NTIEGO MICHAEL. ALL FORMER DOCUMENT REMAINS VALID AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC SHOULD PLEASE TAKE NOTE.

# Osimhen Arrives Nigeria Ahead AFCON 2023

Femi Solaja

SSC Napoli forward and 2023 African Footballer of the Year, Victor Osimhen was yesterday reported by Italian outlet, TuttoNapolias having arrived Nigeria in anticipation of featuring in what will be his second Africa Cup of Nations appearance.

Osimhen made his AFCON debut at Egypt 2019 where he came in as a substitute for Odion Ighalo in the third placed match with Tunisia.

That game remains his only AFCON match as he did not feature in the next edition in Cameroon due to injury.

Although Nigerian players are supposed to gather in Abu Dhabi (UAE) early in the New Year, Osimhen reportedly headed for Nigeria to first join his family.

He left on Thursday after training and had also obtained permission from the Azzurri club.

Below is the statement from SSC Napoli: "At the end of today's training, Osimhen was given a day's leave so that he could join his family before leaving for the national team training camp. Recall that the former Lille man is suspended in the league and would have missed the match against Monza anyway."

Meanwhile, former AC Milan and Napoli striker Massimo Agostini has stated that Osimhen is better than Roma star Romelu Lukaku and Inter Milan hitman Lautaro Martinez.

The Serie A is home to some of the best strikers in the world. Stars like Dusan Vlahovic, Lukaku, Martinez, Arkadiusz Milik, and Ciro Immobile ply their trades in the top flight.

However, Osimhen distinguished himself from the rest last season, scoring 26 goals to cart away the Capocannoniere and help Napoli win the Scudetto for the first time in 33 years.

Consequently, the Nigeria international has attracted interest from several top European clubs, with Arsenal, Chelsea, Real Madrid, and Bayern Munich all in the mix. However, Osimhen has opted to remain at Naples.

This season, Osimhen has yet to reach last season's heights due to injuries and Napoli's lack of form. However, whenever his supporting cast have been at their best, Osimhen has performed well.

Retired striker Agostini has been impressed with the 24-year-old striker, and he believes Osimhen is a top asset. To Agostini, the former Lille man is better than Martinez and Lukaku.

"If I had to choose one between Osimhen, Lautaro, and Lukaku, I would pick Osimhen. He has grown exponentially and has made great improvements. Unfortunately, he has had some problems, but I would pick him," he pointed out to Tuttusport.com.

This season, Osimhen is one goal behind Lukaku and eighth goals behind Martinez on the Serie A goal scorers' charts. And with potential departure for the Africa Cup of Nations, which will make him miss some games, it is unlikely that he will win the Capocannoniere this season



Victor Osimhen is already in Nigeria ahead Super Eagles trip to AFCON 2023 in Côte d'Ivoire

## Oshoala Celebrates 6th CAF Award with All-Star Match

It's was an electrified atmosphere at the Campos Mini Stadium Lagos Island on Tuesday December 26th as the annual Asisat Oshoala Celebrity AllStars Match took center stage.

The event which got on the way with an entertaining exhibition match between the Asisat Oshoala Academy and Flourish FC serves the best of Women's football with the girls from Flourish Academy

throwing the stadium into frenzy with three exquisite strikes to secure a 3 -1 victory in the pulsating tie.

The MVP of Match, Effiong Sandra, of Flourish FC received a 40 inch TV, while the most outstanding goalkeeper Kuti Taiwo also of Flourish Academy got a Microwave courtesy one of the partners of the event MTN.

The Much anticipated fixture was the Celebrity

Game that saw Team Naija All-star captained by former Super Eagles forward, Obafemi Martins, lock-horns against Team Naija Celebrity led by ace Comedian and Actor Ayo Makun know as AY. It's was a fixture that started with "Fun Games" between both sides as they engaged in a run challenge while having a ball between each players closed together on a straight line, team Naija Celebrity came tops in this one.



## AGBA BALLER....

Asisat Oshoala given a guard of honour before the friendly match to celebrate her winning CAF Best Women's Player of the Year for the sixth time

## Tinubu, Wife, Salute Excellence of Nigerian Women, Host Oshoala

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Bola Tinubu and the First Lady, Oluremi Tinubu, yesterday hosted Super Falcons striker and 2023 CAF Women's Player of the Year, Asisat Oshoala, in their Lagos residence.

The first family also congratulated the Barcelona Femeni star on winning the best African female footballer of the year for the sixth time.

According to a release issued by the presidential spokesperson, the duo commended Oshoala for distinguishing herself in the sport, applauding her significant contributions to women's football on the continent.

"Nigerian women will always have a pride of place in the world. What our ladies have achieved in football, our women are achieving in all fields of endeavour around the world—rising to the top and demonstrating the best of the

Nigerian character of excellence, tenacity, ingenuity, and resilience," the President said.

Conscious of the feats of star sprinter, Tobi Amusan, and the presence of multiple Nigerian women on the Forbes' '2023 World's 100 Most Powerful Women,' List, including media mogul, Ms. Mo Abudu, and Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the President and the First Lady assured Oshoala of the nation's continued support for her and other Nigerian women striving for excellence in their chosen paths.

Speaking to newsmen after the warm reception, Oshoala said: "I want to appreciate the President and the First Lady for giving me the opportunity to present the award to them. During the last World Cup, we had a couple of issues, and they intervened and have been very supportive to the girls, even after the competition."

## GOtv Boxing Night 30: Iwatt Wins N2m, National Title

Swift puncher, Sifon 'Best' Iwatt, on Tuesday, won the Mojisola Ogunsanya Memorial Trophy and a cash prize of N2 million for emerging the best boxer at GOtv Boxing Night 30.

Iwatt was a double winner on the night, as he produced a cracking performance that saw him clinch the first title of his professional career. Iwatt secured the national super flyweight title, courtesy of a unanimous decision victory over Saheed 'Eagle' Azeze.

The explosive six-bout event also saw national welterweight title holder, Taiwo 'Gentle Boy' Olowu, clinch the West African Boxing Union (WABU) super welterweight title on the back of a split decision victory over hard-

hitting Alidu 'Dynamite' Sulemana of Ghana.

The national bantamweight challenge bout between Arabambi Ojo and Ibrahim 'Golden Boy' Opeyemi ended in a draw, while Ahmed 'Eshe' Ganiyu, knocked out Ayanfe 'Battle Boy' Adeoye in the fifth round of their national light welterweight bout.

In the national super welterweight category, Abdulafeez 'Big Name' Osoba, defeated Christopher Ucheji via a technical knockout, while national female cruiserweight champion, Bolatito 'Black Tito' Oluwole, secured another unanimous decision victory over her challenger, Blessing Abisoye, in a national female cruiserweight challenge fight

## Lokpobiri Football Tournery to Hold Jan 30

The Heineken Lokpobiri football tournament will now

hold on January 30 in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, according to the Chairman of the Local Organising Committee (LOC), coach Meinke Fekete.

The tournament, earlier schedule for November this year, was pushed forward by circumstances beyond the control of the organisers, coach Fekete said.

The tournament is aimed to fish out hiding talents in the 60 Bayelsa State villages.

According to the LOC chairman, 25 players would be picked after the tournament to play two friendly matches against the Flying Eagles of Nigeria and the Cameroon U-20 team in Cameroon to honour Nigeria former international, Jossy Donbraye, the first player to score a goal at Cameroon at the Ayije Stadium, Cameroon, where his statue was built.

Coach Fekete, who took Bayelsa United to win the Nigeria Premier League and reached the semifinal in CAF Cup, said the Lokpobiri tournament is the first of its kind in the state.

## THE TRAVAILS OF EMEFIELE (1)

decision would be taken because of one man? Or was it because he had a lot of old naira notes stashed in vaults to torpedo the will of the people? It is noteworthy that out of the eighteen presidential candidates, Tinubu was the only one that complained about the policy.

Anyway, if by any stretch of the imagination that was the case, then I dare say, it was well intentioned and in the national interest. As far as I am concerned, Tinubu's ascension to the highest office in the land through whatever means and however has forever damaged our national values and self-esteem. You wake up every day believing this dreadful nightmare cannot be true. But it is true. It is very depressing and you perceive that general feeling of melancholy and a sense of foreboding. It is very unsettling that all the precious values of old passed down from generation to generation failed to stop Tinubu from becoming the president of this land of our fathers.

As lawyers are fond of saying, the "fruit of a poisonous tree, is poison". Early actions and inactions of his government thus far have confirmed our worst fears that this man was and is still unqualified for the presidency of Nigeria.

He is too deeply flawed, too self-centred, too unrighteous, too materialistic, too consumed by the quest for personal benefits and too incapable of rising above primordial ethnic and political/group interests to engender national rebirth. To those who pin all their hopes on him to drive national redemption, it is misplaced. You are betting on the wrong horse. He is part of the problems of Nigeria. Wake up and smell the coffee. Just take a look at many in his cabinet and those he supports to high positions and you will get the message.

I had written about 1,600 words of this article when news broke that the special investigator, Jim Obazee appointed by Tinubu to investigate Emeziele's tenure as CBN governor had submitted his final report. So I paused this write up to take a look at the report. Some of the initial news stories emanating from the report on Friday last week were very odd, and so I decided to look for the report itself to get a sense of what it actually contained. But having read it, I am still trying to make sense of it, because as in the initial news reports, something just didn't quite sit well with me.

It looked like a political hit job by a malicious undertaker. I think any discerning mind would immediately see from the very second page of the report that this government went after Emeziele because of the naira redesign policy which Tinubu had claimed was targeted at undermining his chances of winning the February 25 presidential election.

Arguably, it is not a coincidence that the special investigator started off the report with what then Candidate Tinubu feared was targeted at him. The claim that former President Muhammadu Buhari didn't approve the naira redesign policy before it was implemented by the CBN is clearly intended to prejudice Nigerians against the former governor. It would be a grave mistake for anyone to accept this grotesque report.

Here is a direct quote, or should I say salvo from page two of the report. It reads like the talking points of Tinubu's inner orbit or another "presidential proclamation" akin to the purported presidential proclamation on the Rivers crisis: "It was surprising that the currency redesign that was done in October last year (2022) was neither recommended by the Board of CBN nor approved by the then President Mohammadu (sic) Buhari. It was a conspiracy against the Nigerian people and specifically the political class by the then CBN Governor (Mr. Godwin Emeziele and one of the erstwhile Deputy



Emefiele

Governor (sic) (Mr Flashodun Shonubi). The idea was that of Mr Shonubi (claiming interwoven challenges) and Mr Godwin Emeziele, designed and approved the currency 19th October 2022. The former president tagged along but did not approve the redesign as required by law. It was only mentioned to the Board of CBN on 15th December 2022 after Mr Emeziele has (sic) awarded the contract to NSPM Plc on 21st October 2022.

"It was indeed meant to frustrate the political class and make their election agenda very difficult. It turned out to be a huge punishment to Nigerians and the Nigeria (sic) Economy coincidentally. Accordingly, the redesigned (sic) is illegal and should be withdrawn from circulation with immediate effect. Mr Godwin Emeziele, Mr Folashodun Shonubi and other conspirators in this regard should be made to face criminal charges for this aberration that led to loss of lives of many Nigerians, the closure of business (sic) and joblessness."

You see, it is fairly easy to see through this poorly written hatchet job in which the special investigator had the temerity to assign himself the role of adjudicator. I had to look carefully again to be sure it was actually Obazee's report. It seemed like a product of malice, designed to achieve a predetermined end, and poorly disguised as an investigation conducted by a professional. Almost every sentence in the report was dripping with hate, malice, and motor park rumours that had been circulating on social media for several months. These were carelessly disguised as the truth and nothing but the truth.

If I may ask, why was he so concerned about the political class being frustrated? Was that one of his terms of reference? Obazee has to tell Nigerians if it was to frustrate politicians from buying votes? And since when did he become the spokesman for the political class? By "political class", was he referring to Tinubu?

For me, Obazee didn't need to hide behind a finger by saying that the naira redesign was to frustrate the political class. He should have just named who in particular it was meant to frustrate. At least, then Candidate Tinubu made that

claim repeatedly during the presidential election campaign that it was meant to frustrate him.

So which political class was Obazee referring to when the man who appointed him to the job was the town crier on this particular issue? For him to now claim it was to frustrate the political class was disingenuous to say the least. Tinubu had already alleged that the naira redesign was targeted at him. It was actually the reason for targeting Emeziele whom he accused of spearheading the policy.

Furthermore, the claim that Buhari did not approve the naira redesign initiative of the CBN beggars belief. It directly contradicts available public information. In his hurry to deliver an indictment, Obazee forgot that Buhari made a nationwide broadcast to the country to sell the benefits of the policy to Nigerians while asking for their patience and understanding on the implementation. You see, Obazee desperately tried to minimise Buhari's role to nail the former CBN governor at all cost, not caring a whit about the collateral damage to the former president. Unwittingly, he has done irreparable damage to the integrity and credibility of his entire report.

This really is an insult to the intelligence of all Nigerians. I am baffled beyond belief that Obazee drew such an unflattering conclusion about the former president's decision making or the lack of it, and was so willing to heap all the blame on Emeziele and a few others. Look, Buhari "tagged along", yet he made a broadcast giving reasons why he approved the policy. There is a plethora of evidence confirming that the former president approved the policy. On November 10, 2022, in London, after a meeting with the British Monarch, King Charles III, Buhari in an interview defended the naira redesign policy, saying enough time had been given for people to change their old naira notes to the new ones. And that he wanted to leave a legacy of an electoral system free of vote buying.

On November 23, 2022, Buhari himself unveiled the newly-redesigned notes at a ceremony in the Presidential Villa. Again, last month in an interview with the NTA, the former president defended the policy saying,

he endorsed it to "protect his integrity and to show Nigerians there was no shortcut to success". It is patently absurd therefore for this so-called special investigator, masquerading as a judge, to actually claim that Buhari merely "tagged along" on such a consequential policy. He must explain to Nigerians what he meant by Buhari "tagged along".

Maybe he smoked marijuana before writing his report. Pray, if I may ask, why was Buhari tagging along with such a major policy decision he did not agree with? And if true, who was he afraid of? Going by Obazee's position on such a policy decision, who knows how many of the policies of the former government that Buhari did not approve but merely "tagged along" with? Who knows, maybe it was Emeziele or one of Buhari's aides, the all-powerful Tunde Sabiu that disguised as the then president to make the broadcast and to defend the naira redesign on several occasions?

That Obazee deliberately attempted to mislead Nigerians tells a lot about his character. To him, let me restate here, the fruit of a poisonous tree is poison. Since the entire investigation was predicated on malice, its outcome was predictable. By now, I expect that Buhari and his aides should have recognised the damage inflicted on him by Obazee's claim and react accordingly.

But even if we had to put aside the report, in the build up to the presidential election, Tinubu told us that the Buhari government didn't know how to think. He decried the exchange rate then and boasted he would teach the Buhari government how to think. He said Emeziele mismanaged the CBN, particularly the exchange rate. When Emeziele was the CBN governor, the naira exchanged for N460 to the dollar at the I&E window, while on the parallel market, it was between N740 and N760 to the dollar.

Fellow Nigerians, what is the exchange rate today that Emeziele is no longer the CBN governor? The naira exchanges at the NAFEX window for N1,039 and on the parallel market for N1,245 to the dollar on the watch of a man who claimed to know how to think better than anyone else. Again, can anyone tell us why the naira notes are scarce under the reign of this thinker?

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**MISSILE**  
**Clark to President Tinubu**  
*"So, I am pleading with President Bola Tinubu to listen to the other side of the story and review his view about what is happening in Rivers State. Wike appointed all the commissioners in Fubara's government and nine have resigned and cannot go back. Twenty seven members of the House of Assembly have decamped from PDP to APC and have lost their seats. So, it is the courts that will decide their fate"* -Elder Statesman, Edwin Clark, condemns Fubara's purported peace deal with Wike.

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# The Travails of Emefiele (1)

A few hours after Godwin Emefiele, the then Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was suspended by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on June 10, 2023, he was arrested with a vengeance by the operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS), his case later transferred to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and was only released on bail from the Kuje Correctional Centre on December 22, 2023.

For those who may have forgotten, allow me to refresh your memory with a brief chronicle of DSS's modus operandi in what turned out to be a complete fiasco. Emefiele's ordeal started in December 2022, when the DSS secretly and deliberately attempted to mislead a Federal High Court in Abuja to issue a warrant for the then CBN governor's arrest and detention over allegations bordering on "acts of financing terrorism, fraudulent activities and economic crimes of national security dimension". It did this while deliberately failing to disclose in that vexatious application material facts about the person it was seeking the warrant of arrest against, including the position of the "Godwin Emefiele" it wanted to arrest.

It took the eagle-eyed Justice J.T Tsoho to spot the mischief and he subsequently declined to grant the application for the CBN governor's arrest on December 9, 2022, wondering aloud why the DSS failed to state the man's position. While declining to issue a warrant and detention order sought by the agency, the judge noted in his ruling: "The entire affidavit deposition, especially as per paragraph 4 of the supporting affidavit, purports that preliminary investigation has revealed various acts of terrorism financing, fraudulent activities perpetrated by the respondent and his involvement in economic crimes of national security dimension. These are no doubt grave allegations, but which the applicant has not presented any concrete evidence to support.

"The applicant should have taken the court into confidence, while seeking the exercise of its discretion in favour of granting its application. It is my respectful opinion that the ipse dixit (an assertion made solely by the DSS) of the applicant standing on its own, is not sufficient evidence upon which to deprive a person of his liberty. The respondent in this application is named as 'Godwin Emefiele' without disclosure of his status or position anywhere; not even in the affidavit.

"It is left to speculation if the 'Godwin Emefiele' is the same person as the serving Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria. If it is, then he is unarguably a high ranking



Emefiele

public official in Nigeria and indeed occupies a sensitive position as one of the key drivers of the nation's economy. Therefore, an application of this kind should have evidence of the approval of the respondent's boss, that such measures are authorised to be taken. I, however, do not find such evidence in this instant application, whereas it is a necessary procedure in the observance of the rule of law disclosed in the supporting affidavit. This is not the situation here, as Godwin Emefiele, the CBN governor, was shown on television, even last night, having an audience with the President of Nigeria. It therefore seems that the applicant intends to use the court as a cover for an irregular procedure, which is unacceptable."

For any discerning mind, it was obvious why the DSS was after Emefiele. Politics! Pure politics was at the heart of the matter. And that is why it is so dangerous for a security agency to be so brazenly partisan in exercising its statutory powers. What this shows is that on the basis of malicious politics, the DSS can fabricate allegations against an individual and then approach a court to grant an order for the arrest and detention of that individual. And if the judge lacked the presence of mind to interrogate what was presented by the DSS to see if it was enough to deny Emefiele his freedom,

he would have gone ahead to grant such a malicious request. Who knows how many of such orders on the basis of fabricated evidence have been used to secure the arrest and detention of innocent people?

Now, over six months after the Federal High Court ruling that left the DSS red-faced and humiliated, the Service, despite a specific court order not to arrest Emefiele, picked him up gestapo-style on June 10, just hours after he was suspended by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. But the agency was obviously not acting in the national interest in its earlier quest to arrest the apex bank governor.

Those who earlier used the Service to go after Emefiele, it seemed, had the twin objectives, viz. to keep him out of circulation before the election and to instigate his replacement in the last days of Muhammadu Buhari's government. The baffling thing was the total lack of leadership exhibited by Buhari under whose government the DSS ran amok and became susceptible to partisan influence.

Look, if the DSS could do the bidding of the dramatis personae in this government when they were not in power, imagine for a second, the abuses they would use the agency to commit now that they are in power. How else does one explain that

after detaining Emefiele for five months, the DSS transferred him to the EFCC without a charge?

The earlier single charge of possession of a gun without a licence it preferred against him was greeted with public derision and scorn. With all the drama it created around the arrest and detention of the former CBN governor, all it managed to come up with was a laughable charge of possession of a rickety dane gun. It was clear to all and sundry that the Service has become susceptible to external influences and has lost its way. It was being used to mete out punishment to perceived enemies.

There was nothing remotely related to the reason for seeking the court's warrant for Emefiele's arrest and detention in the first place. Nothing related to economic crimes of national security dimension that the DSS lied to the court then. As the judge noted in his ruling then, the DSS presented no shred of evidence to support its claim, nor has it up till this moment, presented any evidence of terrorism against Emefiele to Nigerians. Instead, after detaining him for over five months, and ignoring multiple court orders to release him, it transferred him to the EFCC, which after about another one month in their custody finally charged him with a procurement breach. It was shocking that this was what they finally came up with.

Now, why should the DSS not be held to account for lying to the court and under false pretense, sought judicial cover for its nefarious intent?

Of course we saw the same thing play out with the suspension and arrest of the then Chairman of EFCC, Abdulrasheed Bawa who was detained for several months without an explanation.

President Tinubu had repeatedly claimed publicly that there was rot in the CBN under Emefiele. He appointed a special investigator to probe his tenure and regaled the country with the rot uncovered by a man whose own integrity had earlier been called to question. But with all the rot at the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited headed by Mr Mele Kyari, Tinubu has looked the other way, pretending he cannot smell the faeces emanating from that rotten, fantastically corrupt and opaque state-owned oil firm.

The truth is that the president targeted Emefiele for punishment because he believed that the former CBN governor's naira redesign policy was targeted at him, to weaken his chances of winning the presidential election. Whether that is true or not, I cannot tell. But to those bandying that narrative, is it just possible that such a consequential policy

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