

In Bid to Bolster Economic Reforms, Support Businesses, Edun Presents Stabilisation Plan to Tinubu

● *Plan reveals fuel subsidy still being paid, projected to hit N5.4trn in 2024*
● *Prescribes N1tn stabilisation fund for manufacturing* ● *President to sign Executive Order on Plan*

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja
The Minister of Finance and Coordinat- ing Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun has presented the Accelerated Stabilisation and Advancement Plan (ASAP), designed to address key chal- lenges affecting the reform initiatives and stimulate development in various sectors of the economy. And in what appears to be the first official acknowledgement that the government has continued subsidising premium motor spirit (PMS), popularly known as fuel, the new plan revealed that "government is still supporting

Continued on page 9

THIS DAY

Wednesday 05 June, 2024
Vol 29. No 10647. Price: N400

www.thisdaylive.com



Editors Condemn Increasing Spate of Journalists' Abduction... Page xx

FG's CNG Programme to Slash Petrol Import by 5.5 Billion Litres, \$4.4 Billion Yearly

● *Stakeholders discuss safety issues in new initiative*

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja
The federal government yesterday disclosed that the new Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) programme will reduce the country's petrol imports by 5.5 billion litres as well as slash the yearly expenditure on bringing in the fuel by \$4.4 billion. The disclosure was made in Abuja at a programme themed: "Co-creation Session on Nigeria's Gas Vehicle Monitoring System Engagement", organised by the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas initiative (P-CNGi).

Continued on page 9

New Wage: Tinubu Directs Edun to Come Up with Cost Implications in 48 Hours

● *Labour suspends strike for one week* ● *Senate pledges speedy passage of minimum wage bill* ● *House cautions FG against increasing wage beyond country's economy* ● *Orji Kalu proposes N90,000 as minimum wage, senators lament grid shutdown*

Story on page 9



AND THE NEGOTIATORS BRIEFED THE PRESIDENT...

L-R: Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Wale Edun (second left), presenting report of the leaders of the federal government's team negotiating with the organised Labour unions that facilitated suspension of the industrial action, to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (middle), at the Presidential Villa Abuja... yesterday

PHOTO: GODWIN OMOIGUI



N1000
BONUS VOICE & DATA

10X
BONUS ON EVERY RECHARGE

DOUBLE
DATA BONUS

Buy & activate a Glo SIM to enjoy fantastic voice and data offers.

Dial ***301#** to enjoy
or Download the *GloCafé* app via

Available on the Google Play Download on the App Store



WE WILL TAKE YOUR LIFE SAVINGS AND INVEST THEM IN YOUR FUTURE, NOT OURS

Experience, foresight and discipline - these are what make us one of the nation's leading Funds Management Companies.

We guide our clients through industry-leading market insights and enhance their investment portfolios with simple solutions that put them in control of their finances.

Scan to
Get Started



Proudly African, Truly International

Banking • Fund Managers • Pension Managers • Payments



Guaranty Trust Fund Managers Ltd



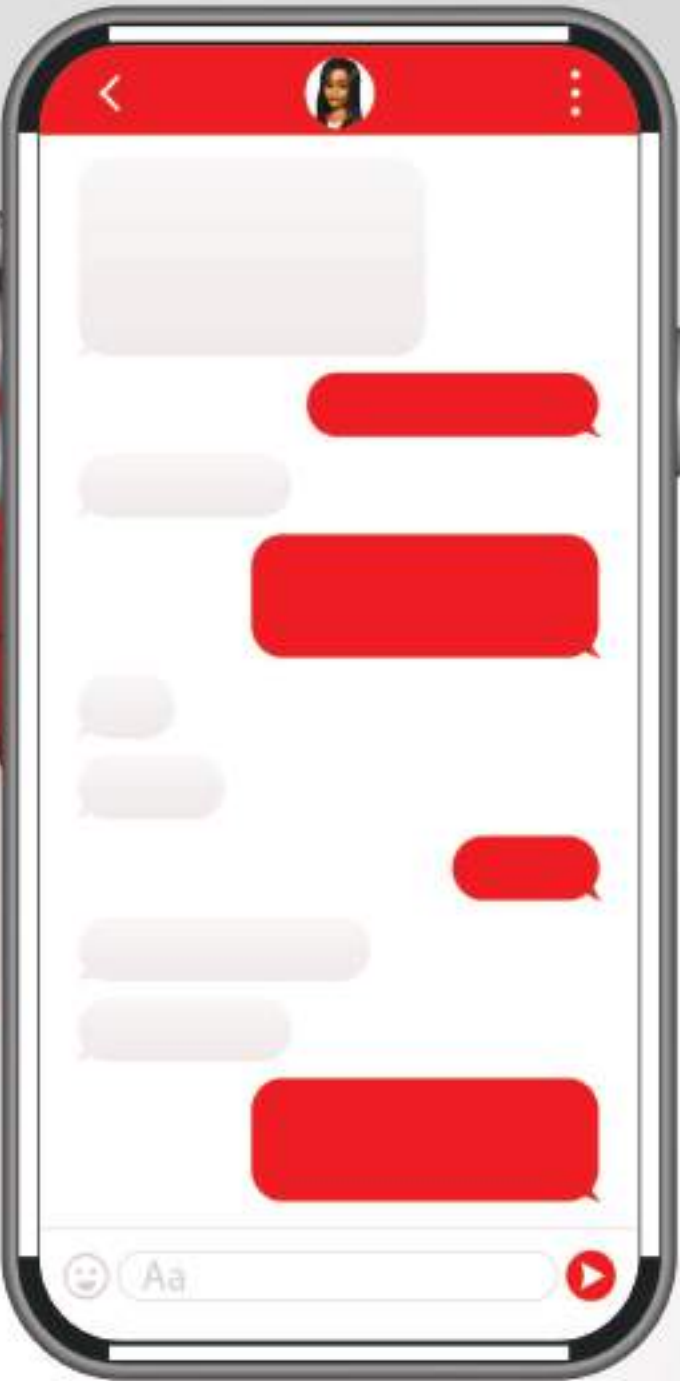
Hello, I'm **ZiVA**,

the Zenith Bank Intelligent Virtual Assistant.

What would you like to do today?

I can help you:

- Open a Zenith Bank Account
- Reactivate your account if it is dormant
- Check your account balance
- Buy airtime or data
- Transfer funds to any bank account in Nigeria
- Restrict transactions on your account
- Log dispense errors and other challenges
- Block your debit card
- Request for a loan
- ...and so much more.



Chat with

ZiVA

... on WhatsApp

"07040004422"

Bank the **EaZy** way with ***966#** EazyBanking **NO DATA REQUIRED**



For enquiries and feedback, kindly contact **ZenithDirect**, our 24hr interactive Contact Centre:



+234 1 278 7000, 0904 085 7000, 0700ZENITHBANK
zenithdirect@zenithbank.com

Zenith Intelligent Virtual Assistant (ZiVA) -
0704 000 4422 (WhatsApp)

www.zenithbank.com



Xtra FLEX Season

With ₦5,000 you stand a chance to participate in the draws and win exciting rewards like

A Star Prize of 3 Brand-New Cars 1 Car for one customer per quarter	Loyalty Rewards ₦50,000 X 20 winners per quarter ₦100,000 X 10 winners per quarter ₦500,000 X 4 winners per quarter	Regional Live Draws With cash prizes ranging from ₦20,000 to ₦1,000,000 to be won in each region.	Digital Cluster Draw ₦50,000 X 250 clusters
	Monthly Draws ₦20,000 X 200 winners every month	Onsite Draws Be rewarded on the spot at each onsite draw event ₦200,000 X 1 winner ₦100,000 X 2 winners ₦50,000 X 5 winners ₦20,000 X 40 winners	Free Digital Marketing Training For 1000 customers

Just dial *901*5# to open a Diamond Xtra account and fund it with 5,000 naira.

The more you save, the higher your chances of winning

Terms and Conditions apply

Banking with Access: branch | ATM | online | mobile | contact centre

More information:
0700-300-0000
accessbankplc.com



Facebook.com/accessbankplc | Twitter.com/accessbankplc
gplusid.com/accessbankplc | Youtube/user/accessbankplc
accessbankplc.blogspot.com



access

more than banking

Group News Editor: Goddy Egene
Email: Goddy.egene@thisdaylive.com, 0803 350 6821, 0807 401 0580



WELCOMING NINGI AFTER SUSPENSION...

L-R: Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele; Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau; Senator Abdul Ningi; President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio; Senator Olalere Oyewumi and Senator Onyekachi Nweboyin, during Plenary ... yesterday. Photo: Senate President's Office

CBN: No Plans to Revoke Additional Banking Licences

● *Insists industry remains safe, sound, declares recapitalisation will boost resilience*

James Emejo in Abuja

Following the recent revocation of the operating license of Heritage Bank Plc, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) yesterday clarified that there was currently no further plans to withdrawal additional banking license as insinuated in some quarters.

The central bank's clarification came against the backdrop of some information circulating in the public domain, suggesting that the apex regulatory institution was set to revoke the licenses of three additional banks.

In a statement, CBN acting Director, Corporate Communications, Mrs. Hakama Sidi Ali, described the allegations as false and intended to trigger panic in the financial system.

She maintained that the Nigerian financial system remained safe, sound, and resilient, adding that the ongoing recapitalisation of the industry would

boost capital injection among others.

She said, "Our banks have begun submitting implementation plans for the Banking Sector Recapitalisation Programme in compliance with the CBN Circular reviewing the minimum capital requirements for Commercial, Merchant, and Non-Interest Banks (CMNIBs).

"These plans are currently being reviewed by the bank. In addition to enhancing buffers to withstand economic shocks, this proactive measure by the CBN to require CMNIBs to recapitalise will result in increased capital for Nigeria's banks, enabling them to provide much-needed credit to critical sectors of the economy.

"This will increase the financial system's contribution to the growth and development of a \$1 trillion Nigerian economy."

Sidi-Ali further reassured all stakeholders of the central bank's

unwavering commitment to ensuring financial system's stability.

She said, "Our financial system remains on a solid footing, and the CBN will continue to take all necessary steps to maintain its safety and soundness."

The CBN had revoked the operating licence of Heritage Bank Plc with immediate effect, following its inability to improve its financial performance as well as breach regulatory guidelines.

Sidi Ali, the apex bank said the move was in accordance with its mandate to promote a sound financial system in Nigeria and in exercise of its powers under Section 12 (1) of the Banks and Other Financial Act (BOFIA) 2020.

Following the revocation of its banking license, the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) also disclosed that it had commenced the liquidation of the defunct bank in accordance with Section 55 sub-section 1 and 2 of the NDIC Act 2023.

The central bank pointed out that the Board and Management of the bank had not been able to improve the bank's financial performance, a situation which constitutes a threat to financial stability.

This followed a period during which the CBN engaged with the bank and prescribed various supervisory steps intended to stem the decline.

Sidi Ali said, "Regrettably, the bank has continued to suffer and has no

reasonable prospects of recovery, thereby making the revocation of the license the next necessary step."Specifically, the CBN said the action had become necessary due to the bank's breach of Section 12 (1) of BOFIA, 2020.

The CBN acting director further explained that the central bank had taken the action to strengthen public confidence in the banking system and ensure that the soundness of the financial system was not impaired.

She said the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) had also been appointed as the liquidator of the distressed bank in accordance with Section 12 (2) of BOFIA, 2020.

She said, "We wish to assure the

public that the Nigerian financial system remains on a solid footing. "The action we are taking today reflects our continued commitment to take all necessary steps to ensure the safety and soundness of our financial system."

The NDIC also announced the commencement of the liquidation process of the failed bank with immediate verification and payment of insured deposits to the bank depositors.

In a statement, NDIC Director, Communication and Public Affairs, Bashir Nuhu, said depositors of the bank that have alternate accounts within the industry will be paid up to the insured amount of N5 million per depositor using their Bank Verification Number (BVN) to locate their alternate account.

FRC Suspends Abel Onyeke

The Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRC) has suspended Mr. Abel A. Onyeke, the Engagement Partner at Nexia Agbo Abel & Co. over his inability to exercise adequate professional skepticism and due diligence during this engagement as required by auditing standards.

The FRC stated this in a circular titled: "Suspension of Mr. Abel A. Onyeke (Engagement Partner) at Nexia Agbo Abel & Co," posted on its website yesterday. The circular was dated June 3, 2024.

It stated: "The Council, after the review of one of the Public Interest Entity (PIE) clients of Nexia Agbo Abel & Co., hereby suspends Mr.

Abel A. Onyeke, the Engagement Partner of the reporting entity for an initial period of three months effective from 1st of June 2024.

"Mr. Abel Onyeke was found, among others, not to have exercised adequate professional skepticism and due diligence during this engagement as required by auditing standards and he did not obtain sufficient appropriate audit evidence in accordance with relevant standards.

"By this suspension, Mr. Abel Onyeke is not permitted to undertake any audit function/engagement pending the time a full practice review of the firm shall be conducted."

Fitch Hints on Nigeria's Next Credit Outlook Upgrade

James Emejo in Abuja

Fitch Ratings has hinted at a potential upgrade of the country's credit outlook by November should certain macroeconomic indices improve.

Earlier in May, the ratings agency had revised the outlook on Nigeria's Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating (IDR) to Positive from Stable, and affirmed the IDR at 'B'.

However, Senior Director, Sovereigns at Fitch Ratings, Douglas Winslow, in a report on Sovereign Rating Outlook for Nigeria, said reduction in external vulnerabilities, particularly due to a sustainable recovery in the CBN's FX position, and

further easing of domestic Foreign Currency (FC) supply constraints or sustained current account surpluses could be triggers for possible ratings upgrade.

Winslow said improved credibility and consistency in monetary and fiscal policy-decision and FX management, resulting in a sustained reduction in inflation and greater stability in the FX market would also be positive for the country.

Fitch further elaborated that the country's credit rating could be adjusted upwards with sustainable improvement in public finances, potentially arising from an increase in oil revenue, and stronger mobilisation

of domestic non-oil revenue.

On the other hand, Winslow said the country could be downgraded amid heightened external liquidity stress, potentially illustrated by a deterioration in the CBN's net FX position, due to severely constrained external financing sources, failure to push ahead with exchange rate reforms contributing to capital outflows or banks not rolling over FX swaps with the CBN, and/or sustained lower oil receipts.

He warned that higher risk of debt servicing difficulties, stemming from a widening fiscal deficit, failure to put the interest/revenue ratio on a downward path, weaker demand

for domestic government debt, and constrained access to Eurobond financing may earn the country a credit outlook downgrade.

Other headwinds to credit outlook upgrade include greater macro-instability in the form of more entrenched high inflation or high GDP growth volatility, potentially due to renewed greater central bank fiscal financing, looser monetary policy settings, and the re-emergence of FX shortages in the economy.

Fitch's next scheduled sovereign review is due on November 1, 2024.

Continued online

BudgIT Expresses Concern about Nigeria's Lower Ranking on Fiscal Transparency

● *Country ranked 92nd in open budget survey global index*

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

BudgIT, a civic-tech organisation promoting transparency, accountability and effective service delivery in Nigeria has expressed concern over the country's performance in the 2023 Open Budget Survey (OBS) conducted by the International Budget Partnership (IBP).

According to the latest ranking, Nigeria scored lower than the global average of 45 (out of 100) in the Open Budget Index, ranking below Cameroon, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sierra Leone, and Benin.

The Open Budget Survey is the world's only comparative, independent,

and regular assessment of transparency, oversight, and participation in national budgets. It was designed to help local civil society organisations and the public evaluate government reporting on public funds, ensuring they are spent on public interests.

The 2023 survey assessed 125 countries, home to 95 per cent of the world's population, and included budgets totalling more than \$33.5 trillion in spending in the 2022 fiscal year.

According to the 2023 survey obtained by THISDAY, despite a 24 per cent global increase in transparency, Nigeria scored 31 (out of 100) in transparency, 19 (out of 100) in public participation, and 61

(out of 100) in institutional oversight, resulting in an overall rank of 92 out of 125 countries.

In comparison, Nigeria's 2021 OBS performance was more promising, with scores of 45 (out of 100) in transparency, 26 (out of 100) in public participation, and 61 (out of 100) in institutional oversight.

Nigeria's disappointing performance was primarily due to the government's failure to promptly publish in-year reports and mid-year reviews online and adopt innovative public participation practices.

Continued online

Peter Obi: Revocation of Heritage Bank's Licence Will Hurt Confidence in Banking System

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Former Anambra Governor and the presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the last general election, Peter Obi, yesterday, said that the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) revocation of Heritage Bank's operating licence, has a far-reaching impact on the bank's depositors given the current hardship in the country.

Obi, who stated this via his official X handle, urged the government to immediately pay depositors of the bank to avoid unnecessary hardship.

He called on both the CBN and the NDIC to ensure that all

customers of the bank are paid their money.

According to the former governor of Anambra State, "Given the harsh economic realities in the country now, I will urge the federal government via NDIC to ensure immediate payment of all depositors in Heritage Bank in full to help alleviate the prevailing hardship the people are going through in the country.

"Many individual savers and SMEs are already groaning under severe negative effects of the economy and already living in abject poverty. These depositors depend on the savings they have in the now-liquidated bank to survive.

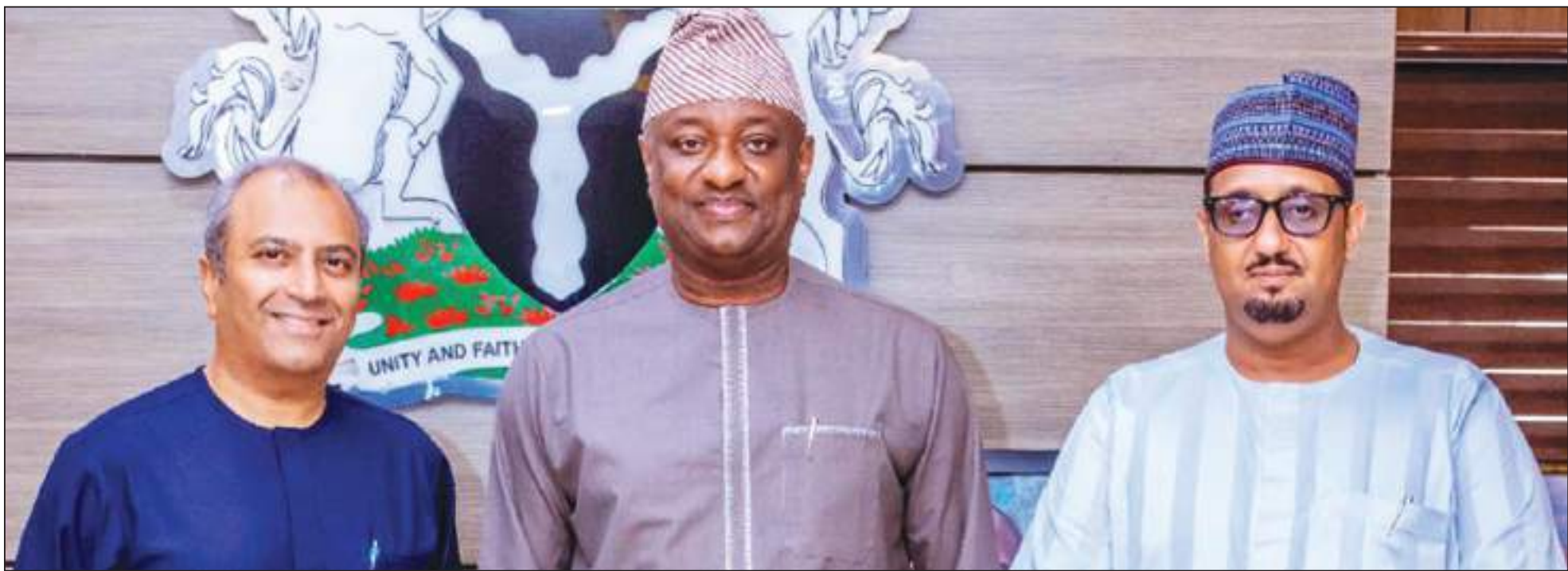
"Any attempt to deny or delay payment to these depositors would worsen their economic woes and could lead to a crisis of confidence in the banking system.

"Anything short of immediate and full payment can create panic in the banking sector which our already fragile economy cannot afford.

"On no account should the actions of the government through the CBN destabilise the financial system or shake public confidence in the integrity of the system."

The CBN on Monday, revoked the operating licence of Heritage Bank, saying the move was in line.

NEWS



DANA PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO KEYAMO...

L-R: Managing Director/CEO, Dana Airlines, Jacky Hathiramani; Minister of Aviation, Festus Keyamo; and Dana Airlines Director, Hassan Grema, when Dana Airlines leaders paid a courtesy visit to the minister in his office in Abuja...recently

Phase 1 of Customs' \$3.2 Billion Trade Modernisation Project Nears Launch

●To generate \$250bn for FG within 20 years ●Positions service for 22nd century challenges, opportunities

James Emejo in Abuja

The first phase of the Nigeria Customs Service's \$3.2 billion Trade Modernisation Project (TMP), aimed at automating and simplifying its mandatory as well as enhancing revenues will soon be inaugurated,

the service said yesterday. The project which has been concessioned to TMP Limited for 20 year will generate over \$250 billion for the federal government within the period. On assumption of office, the Comptroller General of Customs

(CGC), Mr. Wale Adeniyi, had made trade facilitation as a key priority to simplify trade processes for all stakeholders. Phase one of the project covers years one to six where all systems must be deployed including – hardware, software, and technology

services. Phase two covers years seven to 13 where the concessionaire continues to manage, maintain and replace components as needed. The third phase - 14 to 20 years remains a significant phase where TMP will take a back seat while customs officers would take charge after a six years of hands-on training in implementation.

Providing update to journalists after a tour of the facilities, particularly the software design and development, Chief Superintendent of Customs, National Public Relations Officer, Abdullahi Maiwada, said the trade modernisation project will aid trade facilitation, efficiency in customs delivery which remains the essence of trade modernisation. He told THISDAY, "It is just about simplification, standardisation, harmonisation and automation of processes and procedure. "It is part of our efforts to ensure that we facilitate trade and effectively collect revenue for the federal government and enforce fiscal policies of government in terms of anti-smuggling and other responsibilities."

Specifically, he said under the Unified Customs Management System, the service would be able to scan 200 containers within an hour, adding that this would significantly aid the decongestion of the nation's ports. General Manager, Trade Modernisation Project (TMP) Limited, Mr. Ahmed Ogunsola said as the concessionaire, TMP continues to work closely with the NCS, adding that the project commenced in 2022 and "we continue to work closely to deliver on the project". He said, "We are currently in the phase one of the project and we would move to phases two and three at the appropriate time. "We have made significant progress with respect to the deliverables of the project. We are jointly developing and we will jointly deploy a new customs management system in addition to many other areas. "We have carried the customs along in jointly designing and developing these solutions, and there is 100 per cent knowledge transfer in everything that we are doing." Ogunsola said Customs would

continue to perform all its activities and operations –adding that none of those responsibilities had been concessioned to anyone, and "they will continue to man all their stations". He said, "All we are doing is that we are providing systems and platforms as well as services that enhance those functions and activities. "We believe that by the end of the project, NCS will be a pride among its peers. The project builds on the successes the NCS has had over many decades and this is what will bring the NCS into the 22nd century to ensure that it earns its place of pride among customs administrations around the world. "We are building the foundations for changes in terms of deploying new technology advancements in terms of how Customs service's work." Head, Business Processes, NCS, CSC Usman Abbah, also said the Unified Customs Management System would increase productivity and boost revenues. He said the systems are protected by seven layers of security, and aided by 40 servers.

Tinubu Approves Naming of Abuja Road after Wole Soyinka

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

President Bola Tinubu has approved the naming of the arterial road N20 from Northern Parkway in Jabi District, Abuja after Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka. The ratification was given yesterday, at the commissioning of the road after the FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, requested for Soyinka to be honoured while he was still alive. Tinubu, described the recommendation on Wole Soyinka Way as well received, describing Soyinka as the country's foremost playwright, novelist and Nobel Prize Winner. "Let me say here that your momentous recommendation to name this road Wole Soyinka Way is well received. He is our foremost playwright, novelist, and Nobel prize winner, who has brought Nigeria fame and pride of international acclaim. Thank you for thinking that way, we all accept your recommendation on behalf of the people and the Federal Republic of Nigeria. "Professor Wole Soyinka has brought immense honour and fame

to Nigeria through his unparalleled contributions to literature and his unwavering commitment to human rights and social justice. "Naming this highway after him is a fitting tribute to a man who has dedicated his life to the pursuit of truth, freedom, and artistic excellence," the president said. He said the completion of the strategic project with its underground system of wastewater duct and fiber optic and many other facilities cannot but be mentioned, stressing with a growing population of FCT it is necessary to invest in infrastructure to sustain the growth and economic prosperity to the people. He lauded the FCT Minister and his team, saying his presence at the commissioning was to say thank you for giving the administration a very successful first year landing. "What more do you want me to say is that my heart is full of joy, full of pride because they thought you, Nyesom Wike will not perform. I heard that from several quarters. "I made my choice. You didn't let me and the country down.

You are a worthy ally, creatively thinking and doing. The reforms you recommended were approved by me, which we are benefitting from as permanent secretaries and civil servants. "The job you are creating during these activities is extremely encouraging while I said in Lagos during the kick-starting of the coastal road, then it was my bragging time. Today again, I can brag," Tinubu said. In his remarks, Wike, said the contract for the Wole Soyinka Way was awarded in 2020, at the cost of N30.6 billion noting it was completed in four years, without variation. He also boasted that with the work done in the FCT under the Tinubu administration, it would be impossible for anyone to challenge the president in the FCT. "In fact, I don't want to talk politics now, but I do know it will be difficult for anyone to challenge you in the FCT. It will be very difficult. I dare say so because the facts and things are there. It's not about theory, it's about the reality", Wike said.

EU Selects Abia Among States to Enhance Good Governance with LoRAC Programme

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

Abia State has been included by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International Idea) among the seven states that would participate in the second phase Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption(RoLAC) Programme. The programme funded by the European Union (EU) is run by the International Idea, an intergovernmental organisation headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, with 35 countries as members, has a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. Head of Programme of the organisation in Nigeria, Mr. Danladi Plang, made known the choice of Abia as focal state for the Phase II of the programme when he led a team of EU partners on a working visit Abia State Governor, Mr. Alex Otti. He told Otti that Abia was chosen, "following internal conversations at the EU and what has been said about the reforms that are taking place in Abia State." According to a press release by the

Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Kazie Uko, Plang, who came with his team on Monday, said that five focal states had participated in the phase I of the programme, which started in 2017 and ended last year. But Plang said the programme has been extended for another five years with Abia and Plateau States were selected to join Lagos, Anambra, Edo, Kano and Adamawa states for the Phase II(of the RoLAC programme), beginning this year. He commended Otti for his leadership qualities, saying, "for us, it confirms what has been said about Abia" since he assumed office, adding that his team was in Abia "to seek your support and cooperation as we begin this project." "It is a testament to the good work that you're doing and also a testament to the fact that the people of Abia State did not make a mistake in electing you, seeing the support that is coming from the other development partners," Plang said. He noted that "nobody wants to be associated with failure, so it's also in our own interest that we're associated

with the success that Abia State is recording through your leadership." The Head of Programme stated that most times politicians concentrate on physical infrastructures like building of roads, hospitals while neglecting those intangible things that promote good governance such as efficient justice system. However, he said that he has every reason to believe that "there will be sufficient interest shown by (Otti's) leadership for issues of justice(given) the interest that has been shown by members of your cabinet that we had met before now." Plang, explained that the RoLAC programme aims at contributing to the consolidation of rule of law and good governance reforms within participating countries or states with specific objective to help improve the justice and anti-corruption systems. With the programme the International Idea hopes to enhance the performance, quality and oversight of the criminal justice system and justice services delivery of participating states; improve access to justice for vulnerable groups.

Shettima to Declare Open National MSMES Business Clinic in Ekiti

Gbenga Sodeinde in Ado Ekiti

The Vice President, Kashim Shettima would tomorrow declare open the Third Expanded National Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Business Clinic in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State. The State Commissioner for Information, Rt. Hon. Taiwo Olatunbosun, in a statement made available to newsmen in Ado Ekiti, disclosed that the event would hold at the Bishop Adetiloye Hall at the

Trade Fair Complex, Old Iyin Road in Ado Ekiti at 9am. Noting that the initiative was one of the strategies of the federal and Ekiti State governments to increase ease of doing business in the State, Olatunbosun stated that the forum would provide opportunity for small business owners in the State to interact with key federal government agencies and regulatory bodies. He added that the focus was to provide lasting solutions to

the challenges hindering the development of MSMEs, boost their access to capital, formalise their businesses, and advertise their products among others. The Commissioner reiterated the commitment of Governor Oyeibanji administration to the development of MSMEs in the State as enshrined in the youth development, job creation, infrastructure and industrialisation as well as human capital development pillars of the administration.



A Legacy of Innovation



FIRSTBANK IS AN FBN HOLDINGS COMPANY



- You First -



NEWS



INAUGURATION OF THE FULL SCOPE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTERIAL ROAD N 20...

L-R: Chairman House Committee on FCT, Muktar Betara; Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu; President Bola Tinubu; FCT Minister Nyensom Wike and others at the inauguration of the Full Scope Development of Arterial Road N20 from Northern Parkway to Outer Northern Expressway, held at Road N20, by Murtala Muhammad Expressway, in Abuja... yesterday

PHOTO: GODWIN OMOIGUI

Editors Condemn Increasing Spate of Journalists' Abduction

● Say cybercrimes Act not enacted to persecute journalists

The Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) has condemned the increasing sequence of abduction and arrest of journalists in the country by security agencies, especially the Nigeria Police Force, under the guise of enforcing the Cyber Security Act, and warned of the consequence of such illegal actions on press freedom.

The professional body of media executives and senior editors also warned of the dangers of allowing certain territories of the Nigerian states falling into the hands of terrorists and bandits, expressed optimism that the federal government has all it takes to flush out these enemies of the country, and guarantee peace and security of the country and its people.

The Guild stated these in a statement issued and signed by its President, Mr. Eze Anaba and General Secretary, Dr. Iyobosa Uwugiareri, at the end of its Standing Committee meeting in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

According to the Guild, "The meeting deliberated on the state of the media with emphasis on the increasing spate of abduction and arrest of journalists in the country - under the guise of enforcing the

Cyber Security Act, and warned of the implications of such illegal actions on press freedom.

"The professional body of media executives and editors while warning the security agencies, especially the Nigeria Police, against press freedom violation, called for a proper understanding and intention of the Cyber Security Act, declaring that the law was enacted as a legal framework for combating cybercrimes and not for persecuting journalists, who are performing their legitimate duties in a democracy."

The editors particularly condemned the method of abduction/arrest of journalists, the long detention and inhuman treatment they are subjected to, saying it was a negation of a democratic space.

"Press freedom is the ability of the media to report news and express opinion without government interference, censorship, or retribution.

"It is a fundamental human right essential for a healthy democracy, allowing citizens to access accurate information, hold leaders accountable, and participate in informed public discourse," the editors added.

The NGE noted the harsh economic ecosystem under which the

media currently operates in Nigeria, and called on the federal government to ensure the sustainability of the media industry through robust economic policies and direct interventions that are capable of enhancing its capacity to transcend existing challenges.

Commenting on the state of the nation, the Guild congratulated the government on its one year in office and advised it to step up its fight against insecurity in certain parts of the country in order to flush out terrorists and insurgents, who have continued to perpetrate mayhem

in some communities.

The NGE also decried the current high cost of living - exacerbated by the harsh economic policies and programmes of the federal government, and called for sustainable interventions to mitigate the several biting effects of the policies.

The Guild expressed its appreciation to the Rivers State Government for providing a conducive environment for the meeting and hoped that the current peace-initiative by the government will be sustained in the general interest of the people and development.

...Police Invite Premium Times Reporter as Newspaper Demands Details of Alleged Offence

● Journalist summoned over yet-to-be-published story

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

Premium Times, one of Nigeria's online newspapers, has demanded the details of the alleged offence committed by its reporter, Emmanuel Agbo, after the police in Abuja invited him for questioning.

In a statement yesterday, the media organisation stated that merely summoning its employee without giving the reason for his invitation will deny him of the chance to fully prepare and take along any needed

documents.

"We are thus always ready to assist law enforcement agencies in the course of their professional duties. However, in your letter to Mr Emmanuel Agbo, you only stated that your 'office is in receipt of petition...' but did not provide any details of the petition.

"We ask that you provide more details of the petition to enable our reporter, Mr Agbo, to make adequate preparations and bring along relevant materials when he appears in your

office.

"We trust that you will treat this promptly so we and Mr Emmanuel Agbo can prepare adequately and assist you in the course of your work. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or clarifications," Premium Times' Managing Editor, Idris Akinbajo, wrote in response to the invite.

It stated that Agbo had received an invitation letter dated May 31 from the office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Intelligence Response Team (NPF-IRT), Abuja via WhatsApp on Monday. The police, Premium Times said, sent the letter after Agbo requested a formal invitation instead of their initial invitation via phone call.

Agbo was first contacted over the telephone on 30 May by a man who identified himself as a police officer named Ezemba Ezekiel. The man requested the journalist to come over to the office of the police's Intelligence Response Team (NPF-IRT) in Guzape, Abuja.

"I am Ezemba Ezekiel from the Intelligence Response Team. I am calling you on behalf of Homadils. You are expected to come over to our office at Abattoir in Guzape to clarify a petition," he said via phone call.

Since the policeman mentioned Homadils, Premium Times said it might be connected to a story that the reporter is currently working on, but stated that its employee needed additional information before appearing before the security personnel.

The firm, Homadils Realty Limited, referenced by the police officer in the phone conversation, Premium Times said, is a land developer and major party to a land dispute which Agbo's planned story is focusing on.

The police invitation was said to have come after Agbo reached out to the Chief Executive Officer of Homadils, Bilkisu Aliu, over

the phone, with Agbo and Aliu further exchanging messages on WhatsApp where she shared with the the journalist her reactions to allegations levelled against her by a family laying claim to the land in dispute.

After the phone call with the policeman on Monday, Agbo was said to have asked Ezekiel, the police officer who initiated the phone call, to make the police invitation formal by writing to him through Premium Times.

Following this request, Ezekiel, it said, sent an invitation letter dated May 31 to Agbo via WhatsApp on Monday, with the invitation from the IRT only stating that Agbo's name was in a petition without giving any details.

It further requested the Premium Times journalist to appear on Wednesday, 5 June, at 2 p.m. at the IRT Complex, Old Abattoir by Guzape Junction, Abuja.

"We have received a letter from you to our reporter, Agbo Emmanuel, in which you invited him to appear before you on 05/06/2024 at your office at IRT Complex, Old Abattoir by Guzape Junction, Abuja".

"We received the letter today, 03-06-2024, although it is dated 31-05-2024," the Managing Editor of Premium Times, Akinbajo, added in the letter delivered to the office of the Deputy Commissioner of Police, IRT, on Monday.

Based on the interaction with the police officer who first invited Agbo through a phone call, Premium Times hinted that the police invitation has to do with a dispute involving Homadils Realty Limited and a family over a piece of land in Guzape, a choice area of Abuja.

The dispute, it said, had thrown up allegations of document falsifications which, it said it learnt, are being investigated by the Federal Capital Development Authority.

Alaribe Emerges ICAN President

Dike Onwuamaeze

Mr. Davidson Chizuoke Stephen Alaribe, who was sworn in yesterday as the 60th president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), has pledged to pursue the establishment of ICAN University and the enhancement of chartered accountants' digital technological capacity.

Alaribe, who took his oath of office during his investiture as the Diamond President at ICAN's head office in Lagos, said the theme of his presidential year would be "Upholding ICAN's Legacies" by deepening professionalism, accountability and transparency that had been the modus operandi of ICAN.

He said: "It is, therefore, with humility, a profound sense of responsibility, and a determination to continue to serve selflessly that I, Chief Davidson Chizuoke Stephen Alaribe, FCA, graciously accept my election as the 60th President and flag bearer of the accountancy profession in Nigeria, as pioneered and represented by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria,

for the 2024/2025 presidential year. "My standing here today can only be by the special grace of God who has the final say in my life.

"The goal of this presidential year is to deepen this resolve by bolstering already-existing initiatives and engendering new ones against the backdrop of present realities" through the pursuit of "the agenda that we have codified in the acronym DIAMOND."

One of the core elements of his DIAMOND Agenda is to enhance the digital and technological savvy of professional accountants in Nigeria.

"In this presidential year, we shall revisit our technological architecture to create an institute that constantly and effectively adds value to members and stakeholders through cutting-edge information technologies.

"We will create a technical committee on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which will be saddled with the responsibility of regularly informing members on the potential of AI for chartered accountants and how this technology can be leveraged for improved and efficient services

to society.

"This committee will equally equip members with the skills required to derive maximum benefits from AI technology, such as deploying prompt engineering to take advantage of generative AI.

"The infusion of emerging technologies in our services and processes will also be critical in our overall strategic intent of attracting the millennials and Gen Zs into the profession."

He added: "My team and I will rigorously pursue the establishment of ICAN University, which is envisaged to serve as the best-in-class institution for research and innovation in accounting, finance, and management disciplines."

Alaribe also said he would commit his presidential year to ensuring the realisation of the amendment of ICAN's Act.

"We will prioritise and sustain effective communication with stakeholders in the value chain of getting our Act amended. We will make a convincing case that our request for amendment is for the good of the profession and the

economy," he added.

He added that the institute would continue to update the contents of its examinations syllabi, training, and other capacity-building initiatives to ensure that they are aligned with present realities.

"In line with global dynamics, we will endeavour to commence online examinations. We will place more emphasis on areas like sustainability reporting and generative AI," he said.

Alaribe also acknowledged the significant improvement achieved in the last the tenure of his immediate predecessor, the 59th President of ICAN, Dr. Innocent Iweka Okwuosa, on the issuance and renewal of the institute's practice licence.

Iweka, in his valedictory remarks, said that his presidential year as the 59th president of ICAN was able to improve relationship with the body of past presidents of ICAN and made the voice of ICAN to be heard through the publications of 10 position papers on topical national economic issues and other public engagements.

He wished his successor a very successful tenure.

Investors' Rush for 357-day OMO Pushes CBN's Sales to N513.95bn

Kayode Tokede

Investors' demand for 357-day Open Market Operation (OMO) auction lifted the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) total sales to N514.95 billion in the first auction for June 2024. The central bank's aggressive OMO auctions reflected its drive to control liquidity in the economy. By selling bills at high-interest rates, it aimed to mop up excess money supply, which was crucial for combating inflation and strengthening the naira at the foreign exchange market.

From the auction conducted yesterday, THISDAY gathered that there was significant interest from investors in the 357-day OMO auction by CBN, with subscriptions and sales reaching N487.95 billion, thus, oversubscribing the N150 billion bills offered. The apex bank sold the 357-day OMO bills at a stop rate of 22.33 per cent, making it another record high for the institution as it was determined to tackle inflation rate and stabilise the local currency. The 189-day bill also had N75 billion on offer, but saw a lower

subscription of just N21 billion, with a stop rate of 19.59 per cent and eventually sold N16 billion. In addition, the 105-day bill recorded a N25 billion as offered amount with N10 billion subscription by investors at a stop rate of 18.74 per cent. CBN, however, settled for N10 billion sales on 105-day OMO offered June 04, 2024. The high interest rates also indicated the central bank's commitment to making Nigerian securities attractive, especially to foreign investors, thereby drawing

in capital that could help stabilise the financial market. CBN was scheduled to hold a Treasury Bills (T-Bills) primary market auction today. At the PMA, existing T-Bills totalling N221.13 billion (N14.42 billion, N26.82 billion and N179.89 billion across the 91-day, 182-day and 364-day instruments, respectively) would mature and be rolled over. The OMO and T-Bills auctions in June 2024 were the first since CBN's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) raised the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 26.25 per cent in

May 2024. The CBN governor, Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, had explained that the strategy was to curb rising inflation rate, stabilise the exchange rate, and spur confidence in the banking sector and economy, at large. He had further highlighted in the meeting with investors an outlook for sustained increases in the CBN's foreign currency reserves, improved liquidity in the foreign exchange market, and imminent settlement of the remaining backlog of genuine foreign exchange transactions by the CBN.



CBN Governor, Cardoso

NEW WAGE: TINUBU DIRECTS EDUN TO COME UP WITH COST IMPLICATIONS IN 48 HOURS

Deji Elumoye, Chuks Okocha, Onyebuchi Ezigbo and Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, yesterday, directed Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, to within two days come up with the cost implications of an affordable, sustainable and realistic new minimum wage for Nigerian workers. The directive came as organised labour resolved to suspend its nationwide strike for the next one week. Both Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), yesterday, directed their state branches to ask members to resume work immediately. Equally yesterday, Senate pledged that the National Minimum Wage Bill would be given accelerated hearing any time Tinubu forwards it to the National Assembly for legislative action. But the House of Representatives cautioned the federal government against increasing the minimum wage beyond what the economy could sustain. Spokesman of the House, Akin Rotimi, in a statement issued Tuesday, said the call became imperative to avoid unintended outcomes, such as inflation, layoffs, and other adverse economic consequences. Nonetheless, civil society group, Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), yesterday, called on Senate President Godswill Akpabio and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas, to cut the bogus National Assembly budget of N344.85 billion as sacrifice

to enable the federal government meet the demands of organised labour. Tinubu gave the marching order to Edun at a closed-door meeting with the government negotiation team on the new minimum wage, led by Secretary to Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator George Akume, at State House, Abuja. Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, made the president's order known while speaking to newsmen after the closed-door meeting. Other members of the team, which had been meeting with organised labour, who were at the meeting with Tinubu included Ministers of Budget and National Planning, Atiku Bagudu; Labour, Nkiru Onyebucha; as well as Group Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Mele Kyari. Idris said the president directed the Minister of Finance to present the new minimum wage figures that would form the basis of negotiation with organised labour. According to the information minister, "The president has just summoned a meeting of all those who negotiated on behalf of the federal government, led by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, the Minister of Finance was there, the Minister of Budget and National Planning, the Minister of Information, the Minister of Labour, and the NNPCL CEO. "We were all there to look at all issues and the president has directed the Minister of Finance to do the numbers and get back to him between today and tomorrow so that we can

have figures ready for negotiation with labour." Idris assured of the president's readiness to accept the committee's resolutions with labour representatives in line with his commitment to the welfare of Nigerians. He explained that the federal government was keen to ensure a balance of its commitments with the economic realities of the country. According to Idris, "And let me say that the president is determined to go with what the committee has said and he's also looking at the welfare of Nigerians. "Government is not against or opponent of labour discussions, government is not an opponent of wage increase, but what is there is that government is always there to ensure that there is a balance between what government pronouncement is and what the realities are on ground. "And, therefore, we will work assiduously to ensure that whatever promises government makes is promise that will be kept, that is the idea of this meeting." The minister further said Tinubu had directed government representatives at the tripartite committee meeting to work with the organised private sector and the sub-nationals to achieve a new affordable and sustainable wage award for Nigerians. He stated, "The president has given a marching order that all those who have negotiated on behalf of the federal government and all those who are representatives of organised private sector, the sub-nationals, come together to have a new wage award that is affordable, sustainable and that is also realistic for Nigerians.

"The wage award is not just that of the federal government, like I mentioned earlier, the sub-nationals are involved, the organised private sector is involved; it was labour that stepped out during that procedure. Now we have come back to the negotiation table." Idris assured that all parties to the negotiation of the new minimum wage would work together with organised labour to present a new minimum wage for Nigerians in one week. "All of us will work together assiduously within the next one week to ensure that we have a new wage for Nigeria that is acceptable, sustainable and also realistic," he stressed. **Labour Suspends Strike for One Week** Organised labour suspended its nationwide industrial action yesterday for one week, with both NLC and TUC directing their state branches to ask members to resume work immediately. The decision was as a result of the commitment made by Tinubu to ensure that the workers got a fair deal from the ongoing minimum wage negotiations. At the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting held yesterday, at the NLC headquarters, Abuja, the two labour centres examined key issues involved in the federal government's fresh proposal, including a commitment to offering a higher national minimum wage. The unions said they considered ongoing demands for the reversal of the electricity tariff hike back to N66/kwh as well as demand for the stoppage of the apartheid classification of electricity consumers into bands. In a communique signed by NLC President, Joe Ajaero, and TUC

President, Festus Osifo, the unions agreed to relax the industrial action for one week with immediate effect. The communique said, "The NEC-in-session affirms that the federal government has agreed that their offer of N60,000 was not sufficient and has, therefore, shown commitment to making better wage offer to Nigerian workers and reaching agreement on the same within one week." It added, "In view of the deliberations, the NEC-in-session resolved as follows: there is a greater need to create the right ambience for negotiation to continue unhindered. "The indefinite nationwide strike action is, therefore, relaxed for one week from today to allow the federal government commit to a concrete and acceptable National Minimum Wage; take definitive steps to reverse the electricity tariff hike back to N66/kwh and abolish the discriminatory classification of electricity consumers into Bands. "The NLC and TUC national leadership are mandated to continue to maintain open channels of communication with the federal government to negotiate and secure favourable outcomes for Nigerian workers and people." NLC and TUC directed all affiliate unions and state councils to relax the indefinite nationwide strike and return to their respective workplaces immediately. Both labour unions expressed gratitude to Nigerian workers and the general public for their unwavering support and solidarity in this critical struggle for improved living and working conditions.

would be given fast-tracked hearing any time it was forwarded to the National Assembly by Tinubu for legislative action. The bill would be sent to the federal legislature for legal backing whenever organised labour and the federal government conclude negotiations on it. Senate President Godswill Akpabio gave the assurance at plenary while reacting to news of the suspension of the industrial action embarked upon by NLC and TUC. The upper chamber was debating a motion on the "Urgent Need for the Organised Labour Unions to Call off their Industrial Action," when the news of the suspension of the strike was announced by Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau. Chairman, Senate Committee on Labour and Employment, Senator Diket Plang, from Plateau Central, had moved the motion for deliberation at plenary. Akpabio said taking the motion would amount to jumping the gun since the labour unions had already put the industrial action on hold. "On our part, we will continue to do our best by making contributions and at the same time awaiting the incoming bill on minimum wage for us to enact for the benefit of all Nigerians," Akpabio said. He appealed to the labour unions to consider all variables surrounding the increment in wage before insisting on a particular amount. The senate president said, "There are many variables that they will look at. Capacity to pay and the ability of states, local governments and the private sector to even pay. "They will also be looking at the fact that if the minimum wage is too high, then the possibility of

FG'S CNG PROGRAMME TO SLASH PETROL IMPORT BY 5.5BN LITRES, \$4.4BN YEARLY

In a presentation at the event, the Coordinator, Regulations, Compliance and Facilitation of the PCNGi, Zayyan Tambari, reiterated that the federal government plans to convert 1 million vehicles in the coming years. The PCNGi office further stressed that about \$890 million investment would be required to develop infrastructure for the alternative fuel programme being executed by the Bola Tinubu administration. Tambari explained that the government expects CNG to replace 20 per cent of the current 50 million litres of petrol consumed in the country daily by the time the government begins to ramp up the programme as part of the fiscal gains of gas transition. The engineer added that with a decrease of 15 million litres of petrol consumption per day, natural gas supply cost will be \$250 million annually. Also speaking, the Programme Director and Chief Executive Officer of the PCNGi office, Michael Oluwagbemi, stated that the meeting was organised so as to be able to understand the potential hiccups as the scheme gains momentum. "It's very important that we understand the potential hiccups. And the number one hiccup that should give everyone a worry is the potential for incidents, not accidents because one incident is too much," he stated. As the country transitions from petrol and diesel, Oluwagbemi stated that it has been established that natural gas is cheaper, cleaner,

safer and more reliable as well as more sustainable for the economy. "We have natural gas everywhere. But in doing that transition itself, we need to make sure that the transition is smooth and that we comply with the necessary basic technical regulations. "In achieving that, however, we need the cooperation of all members of the ecosystem. Right from the point of inspection or conversion to the point of use, right from the point of manufacturing or importation of ready parts to the point of installation. "There's a need that we have a very strong regulatory regime. Even with a strong regulatory regime, there has to be potential for bad actors. But what will make us succeed, what will allow us to be able to walk back and identify those who are bad actors and take action, will be to have a strong monitoring system. "That monitoring system has to be smart. It has to be technology-driven. But more importantly, it has to be centred around our sociology, our human behaviour," he pointed out. Also speaking, the Chief Executive of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA), Farouk Ahmed, pledged to continue to collaborate to make sure that Tinubu's outlook in the sector is achieved to the benefit of all Nigerians. Represented by the Executive Director, Distribution, Storage Systems and Retailing Infrastructure, Ukoha Ogbuho, he underscored the importance of ensuring compliance

to quality requirements. "The pressure of CNG must be within the specified range to ensure proper engine performance and safety. And in terms of pressure, the recommended maximum pressure, recommended cylinder pressure should be 200 bar at settled temperatures of 15 degrees centigrade. It's also important that moisture is also considered. "The dew point of compressed CNG and water content is of critical importance for the handling of CNG because it impacts on the storage cylinders, whether vehicular or those that are static at stations, refuelling stations. The piping as well, refuelling, coupling, and valves are also impacted by moisture as well as regulators and injection systems. "The authority, in its guidelines, also is critical about particulate matter, whether dust or dirt. And we will insist that every appliance is incorporated with filters," he added. Minister of State Petroleum (Gas), Ekperikpe Ekpo, who was represented by one of his Advisers, Abel Nsa, noted that with 209 trillion cubic feet of gas, Nigeria has got a tremendous amount of reserves, which it has to put to good use. But he lamented that a lot of the gas is also stranded, explaining that the country needs infrastructural connectivity, reason it declared the 'decade of gas' scheme. "A decade of gas means we're going to change the economy, drive the economy using gas. So, indeed, compressed national gas is a convenient and eco-friendly alternative fuel," he stated.

IN BID TO BOLSTER ECONOMIC REFORMS, SUPPORT BUSINESSES, EDUN PRESENTS STABILISATION PLAN TO TINUBU

downstream consumption." The Plan further noted: "At current rates, expenditure on fuel subsidy is projected to reach N5.4trillion by the end of 2024. This compares unfavourably with N3.6 trillion in 2023 and N2.0 trillion in 2022." The presentation of the stabilisation plan to the president yesterday occurred about 48 hours after Edun, during a television interview last Sunday, said a stabilisation package was underway in response to a question on the recent exit of some multinationals from Nigeria. A draft copy of the Plan, which was presented to the president yesterday with an accompanying Executive Order to bolster the plan, gave an insight into how the administration seeks to address some of the many problems which seem to be trying to torpedo it's reforms, among others. ASAP is structured to advance Tinubu's economy-related eight priority areas and is broken down into Agriculture and Food Security Sub-Committee plan, Energy Sub-Committee plan: Oil, Energy Sub-Committee plan: Gas, Energy Sub-Committee plan: Power, Health and Social Welfare Sub-Committee plan, and Business Support Sub-Committee plan. Apparently, the Executive Summary of the Plan, apparently situated the underlying reason for the plan which is to curb the 'difficult' economic conditions threatening to unravel bold

reforms undertaken by Mr. President." Assessing the macro-economic environment, ASAP cited persistent high inflation, high interest rates which make it difficult for businesses to borrow, and a volatile exchange rate with the consequent uncertainty disruptive of economic activity, among others. ASAP outlined the various sectoral challenges with specific remedial steps to be applied in addressing them. For instance, the Plan noted that the oil sector is currently beset by problems of extensive pipeline vandalism; high cost of production with 40 per cent cost premium above other jurisdictions; production level at 1.4mbpd, below budgeted level of 1.78mbpd, thereby straining country's fiscal position, adding that "government still supporting downstream consumption." The plan therefore recommended the immediate implementation of presidential directives (such as removal of signature bonuses) to attract investments, support the achievement of Final Investment Decision (FID) for three identified blueprint projects in 2024 and for more other projects enabled to attain FID by 2026. On Business Support Sub-Committee plan, ASAP observed that businesses currently face high inflation and cost of raw materials, high interest rates, lower consumer purchasing power. Foreign exchange

volatility, and lack of access to finance. To help ameliorate the challenges faced in the area of forex volatility and raw materials, the plan recommended a N1 trillion stabilisation fund for light and heavy manufacturing to ease asset utilisation gaps, inventory refinancing, among others. Also, there is a value chain financing fund of N200 billion, lower interest rate, short-term financing facility for MSMEs on strength of receivables. This is sector-focused, and targeted at food processing, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and wholesale and retail trade. The Plan prescribed an accelerated disbursement of the N200 billion Intervention fund (N75 billion for manufacturing and N125 billion for MSMEs) announced in 2023 and included in ASAP. According to ASAP, Edun is expected to advise on macro-fiscal position of the Plan, and is to consider non-exclusive options, including push for prioritisation of initiatives to reduce supplementary budget requirements, pursue supplementary budget as a partial funding source, pursue virement of current budget, and sale of government assets (but this will have a time lag). President Bola Tinubu is expected to sign an Executive Order on ASAP after due consultations and finetuning of the draft presented by the Minister.

Continued on page 36



**Invitation to
Commissioning of
300 MMscfd
Kwale Gas Gathering
and injection facility**



The Co-Chair of the Governing Council of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) and Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), **Hon. Ekperikpe Ekpo** and the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Engr. **Felix Omatsola Ogbe**, cordially invite stakeholders of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry to the official commissioning of the 300 MMscfd Kwale Gas Gathering and injection facility.

The project was developed by Nedogas Development Company Limited (NDCL), a joint venture between Xenergi Limited and NCDMB Capacity Development Intervention Company.

The project harnesses and converts natural gas resources from oil fields for domestic use and export, as well as develops Local Content.

Date: Thursday, June 6, 2024
Venue: Kwale Gas Gathering Facility, Umusam, Community, near Kwale, Delta State
Time: 10am

Signed
Engr. Felix Omatsola Ogbe, FNSE
Executive Secretary, NCDMB

NCDMB

    /OfficialNCDMB
www.ncdmb.gov.ng
...Building local capacities in the Nigerian
oil and gas industry.



Faculty Vacancies

James Hope University’s mission is to educate and inspire men and women to excel in every aspect of life and to exert lasting positive impacts on the world. Its Business School is seeking **world-class professors and researchers** across disciplines at all levels, including:

- Advanced Macroeconomics, Public/Economic Policy Design, Analysis and Evaluation
- Algorithmic Trading and Market Microstructure
- Blockchain and Cryptocurrency
- Data Analytics and Financial Modelling, Financial Econometrics
- Director, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center
- Employment and Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management
- Financial Data Privacy and Security
- Fintech, Business and Managerial Data Analytics
- Innovation, Intrapreneurship and Entrepreneurship
- Institutional Economics, Urban and Regional Economics, Political Economy of Development, Globalization and International Economics
- Labour Economics, Education Economics, Forensic Economics and Social Entrepreneurship
- Mathematical Economics, Quantitative Techniques and Financial Econometrics
- Microeconomics, Economics of Health and Health Care, and/or Environmental Economics and Sustainable Development
- Operations Research, Design and Scheduling
- Risk Management, Banking Regulations and Compliance

Why join us?

- **Innovative Environment:** Be part of a vibrant community of scholars and practitioners dedicated to pushing the boundaries of finance and analytics.
- **Impactful Research:** Enjoy ample support and resources to pursue high quality research that addresses real-world challenges and opportunities.
- **Inspiring Students:** Shape the next generation of business leaders and innovators, empowering them to drive positive change in the global economy.
- **Collaborative Culture:** Thrive in a collaborative and inclusive environment that values diversity, creativity, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Location

James Hope University is in Lekki, a few minutes away from Victoria Island, and offers a dynamic setting with access to a thriving business ecosystem and cultural amenities in the greater Lagos metropolitan area.

For more information, visit www.jhu.edu/careers/.



Celebrating A Knight in Shining Armour

With heavy hearts but with gratitude to God for a life well spent
we the Emeruem family of Umuduruojiaku Umunumuka, Ezeoke Nsu,
Ehime Mbano LGA, Imo State announce the transition to glory of our father and patriarch.



**CHIEF (SIR) ANTHONY CHUKWUEMEKA
EMERUEM, KSC**
(Odokoro Omee) Oke Eze 1 of Nsu
1935-2024

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

ABA

Monday, 10th June, 2024
Service of Songs
Knights & Ladies Abu Diocese
Time: 2pm
St Michael's Cathedral Congregation
Time: 4pm
Venue: 46 Ekenna Avenue, Aba

Tuesday 11th June, 2024
Service of Songs
(Aba Sports Club 1926)
Venue: Aba Sports Club
Time: 5pm

Thursday, 13th June, 2024
Whistle stop at AC Motors Limited
Body arrives & is Received at his residence
Time: 9am
Valedictory Session Aba Sports Club 1926
Time: 10am

Thursday, 13th June, 2024
Commendation Service
St Michael's Cathedral Church Aba
Time: 12 noon

EZEOKES NSU

Service of Songs
by Knights of Okigwe South Diocese
At his Country Home Ezeoke Nsu.
Time: 2pm

Service of Songs
by St Paul's Cathedral
Congregation Ezeoke Nsu.
Time: 5pm

Friday 14th June, 2024
Lying in State at his Country Home Ezeoke
Time: 8am-10am

Funeral Service
At St Paul's Cathedral Church Ezeoke Nsu
Time: 11am

Interment follows thereafter at his
Country Home Ezeoke Nsu

Sunday 16th June, 2024
Outing Service St Paul's Cathedral Ezeoke Nsu
Time: 9am

Survived By:
Ijeoma Emeruem, Ogechi & Afam Nwokedi,
Chukwuemeka Emeruem, Ola & Godson Anyanwu,
Ikenna & Nwanaka Emeruem, Odunze & Nma Emeruem
and 14 Grandchildren

Signed:
Chukwuemeka Emeruem
Dr (Sir) D.S.C Emeruem
Ezedibia 1 of Nsu
For the family



***Need funds for
your personal
expenses?***

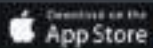
VULTe IS THE ANSWER
BY POLARIS BANK

Get a loan to suit your needs.

- ◆ Flexible & convenient repayment plan
- ◆ Competitive interest rate
- ◆ No collateral Required

Sign up on VULTe and request a loan

0700 POLARIS (0700 765 2747), 0806 988 0000,
01 297 9500, 01 448 2100
yescenter@polarisbanklimited.com
@polarisbankltd



www.polarisbanklimited.com



ALP PROFESSIONAL SERVICES LIMITED

REQUEST FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION / REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Project Title: Renewable Energy Solution Project
Project Number: RFP-2024-05-001

ALP Professional Services Limited ("ALP PSL") on behalf of its client, is inviting qualified and interested parties to submit their qualifications for pre-qualification to participate in the subsequent proposal process for the following project:

1. Project Description:

The project involves the complete overhaul of the energy infrastructure of a 11-Storey building and its replacement with a modern, efficient Solar PV System. The selected contractor will be responsible for the end-to-end Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) of a Solar PV System to be integrated into the power supply infrastructure of the client's building

2. Pre-Qualification Submission Deadline:

June 28, 2024, at 5:00 PM
All pre-qualification submissions must be received by the specified deadline. Late submissions will, regrettably, not be considered.

3. Pre-Qualification Submission Instructions:

Interested parties must submit their pre-qualification documents via email with the title "RFQ for Renewable Energy Solution Project" to the following address:
clientprocurement@alp-psl.company

4. Required Pre-Qualification Documents:

- a. Copy of Certificate of Incorporation issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission
- b. Current Tax Clearance Certificate
- c. Evidence of current Pension Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024
- d. Evidence of current Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024
- e. Evidence of current Nigerian Social Insurance Trust Fund Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024
- f. Company's Audited Financial Statements for the last three (3) years – (2021,2022,2023)

g. Evidence of financial capability to execute the project, such as, a Reference Letter from a reputable commercial bank or other reputable financial institution indicating willingness to provide funding support for the execution of the project, if required.

h. All documents for submission must be transmitted with a Covering/Forwarding letter under the Company/Firm's letterhead bearing, among other things, the Registration Number (RC) as issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Contact Address, Telephone number, and email address. The Covering/Forwarding letter letterhead must bear the names and nationalities of the Directors of the company at the bottom of the page, duly signed by the authorised officer of the company/firm.

5. Evaluation Criteria for Pre-Qualification:

Pre-qualification submissions will be evaluated based on the following criteria:
a. Relevant Experience
b. Technical Expertise
c. Financial Ability

Only those parties who successfully pass the pre-qualification phase will be invited to submit detailed proposals (RFP).

Proposal Submission Instructions:

Qualified parties will be provided with detailed instructions and requirements for the proposal submission after the pre-qualification phase is complete.

Contact Information:

For further details or inquiries, please contact:
Client Procurement Officer
15 Military Street,
Onikan, Lagos.

We look forward to receiving your pre-qualification submissions and working with you on this landmark project.

Disclaimer:

ALP PSL reserves the absolute right to accept or reject any or all pre-qualification submissions and to annul the selection process at any time without incurring any liability to the affected parties.

ALP PROFESSIONAL SERVICES LIMITED

15, Military Street, Onikan, Lagos, Nigeria
Telephone: +234 201 700 2570-9
Email: alppsl@alp.company
www.alp-psl.company



HOLD A SMARTLOCKER FRANCHISE

with **₦9.5million** only

The SmartParcel Locker is an express self-service machine designed to automate Pick-Up and delivery of packages. Hence, making logistics one less stress point to the ease of doing business in Nigeria.

- ◆ Earn 25% ROI per annum
- ◆ Minimal KYC required
- ◆ Insured Compartments
- ◆ Nationwide Deployment
- ◆ E-Commerce, Click & Ship, Virtual Mail Boxes



Deployment partners



Courier partners:





+234 913 111 1160

+234 916 229 9000



franchise@smartparcel.ng

www.smartparcel.ng/franchise



@smartparcelng



UNVEILING OF 20TH ANNIVERSARY LOGO OF BRIDGE HOUSE COLLEGE...

L-R: Chairperson, Advisory Board, Bridge House College Ikoyi, Dr Mosun Bello-Olusoga; Special Guest, Sir Steve Omojafor and the Executive Director, Bridge House College Ikoyi, Dr Foluke Abdulrazaq, during a media briefing and Unveiling of 20th Anniversary Logo of Bridge House College, at the School in Ikoyi Lagos ...yesterday

PHOTO: SUNDAY ADIGUN

FG Condemns Vandalism of Structures on Newly-inaugurated Second Niger Bridge

●Says whistle-blowers to be handsomely rewarded

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The federal government yesterday condemned the destruction of some structures on the Second Niger Bridge, a few months after it was officially handed over to the government by the contractor, Julius Berger.

A viral video of the vandalism of some portions of the road infrastructure had surfaced earlier, raising an online debate as to the attitude of certain individuals to publicly-owned facilities.

In a statement in Abuja, the Minister of Works, David Umahi, said he was aware of the incident, describing it as cruel and cowardly.

"The minister is in receipt of a report on the activities of vandals on the superstructure of the 2nd Niger Bridge, particularly the cruel and cowardly incident of destruction of the expansion joints used to absorb the thermal expansions of the 2nd Niger Bridge.

"He expresses deep shock that reports of vandalism are still being recorded despite the presence of the private security outfit deployed by the Federal Ministry of Works to man the area.

"The minister condemns in the strongest terms this ruthless

destruction of the expansion joints as a deliberate act of sabotage on a key national infrastructure that has immense socio-economic benefits to the contiguous states and indeed the entire nation.

"It is saddening that a human being with the right senses could destroy such a critical and strategic treasure that catalyses Nigeria's socio-economic advancement," a statement by Uchenna Orji, the minister's spokesman noted.

Umahi said that the 2nd Niger Bridge which was handed over to the current administration on December 12, 2023, after its completion, is one of the presidential infrastructure projects intended to bridge the gap in the road infrastructure yearnings of the people of the area.

Besides, he noted that it was expected to boost economic activities by expanding access into the southern part of Nigeria, creating vistas of tourism and trade opportunities and improving road safety along the corridor. "But it is heartrending that the facilities are being vandalised by those who are meant to own the benefits it serves," he added.

The minister appreciated the public for their concern, particularly the patriotic young Nigerian who raised

the alarm that trended widely on media platforms, and assured the public that a more formidable security architecture is being activated to forestall further havoc on the facilities.

He explained that a technical team has been directed to inspect, evaluate and reinstate the damaged parts of the superstructure.

Umahi enjoined all road users, residents and authorities within the 1.6km concrete box girder bridge of the 2nd Niger Bridge, to help keep watch against persons who vandalise, attempt to vandalise or tamper with the road infrastructure facilities on the project, and arrest or report such persons to the nearest

police station.

He listed other facilities that should be protected around the area as: The two secondary bridges of 21.7m each on Amakon village road, the cloverleaf interchange at Onitsha-Owerri road and the approach roads between Asaba, Delta State and Onitsha, Anambra State.

He stated that if contacted, the Federal Ministry of Works shall promptly and handsomely reward any person or group who nabs or gives useful information on the identity of perpetrators of vandalism of facilities on the 2nd Niger Bridge or on any of Nigeria's road infrastructure nationwide.

Kwara Govt Distributes Fresh 17,578 50kg Bags of Cereal Palliatives to Indigents

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Kwara State Government has commenced the distribution of another 17,578 50kg bags of maize, sorghum and millet palliatives it received from the federal government.

The gesture was to further support vulnerable citizens amid the inconveniences from fuel subsidy removal.

Speaking at the event in on Tuesday, Senior Special Assistant to Governor AbdulRahman Abdul-Razaq on Community Development, Dr. Lawal Olohungebe, stated that,

"The food items are already being distributed among the less privileged across the 16 local government areas of the state

Olohungebe said the palliatives distribution is guided by the template the state received from the federal government, and that his office only supervises it to ensure that it gets to the right people.

His words: "The instructions given by the federal government is that there has to be a committee in each local government area that will oversee the items.

"The committee comprises the DPMs (Directors of Personal Management) in the absence of the chairmen of local government areas; traditional rulers; representatives of the DSS; ICPC; civil society organizations; National Youth Council of Nigeria; women groups; development officers; and so on and so forth.

"These are the people that will

take care of it in each local government area, and the distribution is directly being handled by the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA).

"So, what we are doing is just to ensure that it gets to the local government area. By the time it gets there, they will now identify the vulnerable ones among them."

Secretary for SEMA, Mallam Saadu Mashood Magaji, on his part, confirmed that the office recently took delivery of the items and has started sharing them since last Saturday, based on the template they got from Abuja.

"These palliatives are for distribution to vulnerable people across the state. It is a federal government intervention in collaboration with NEMA and the office of the National Security Adviser. It was around two months ago that we received them through the federal government,"

he said.

He further added that, "We have millet, sorghum, and maize. Millet is 2,216, maize is 7,042, while sorghum is 8,320 bags, which makes a total number of 17,578 50kg of the three items. They are shared across the sixteen local governments.

"We started the distribution for 6 LGAs on 1st June, 2024, such as Baruten, Kaiama, Asa, Ilorin East, Ifelodun, Oke-Ero.

"On the 2nd of June, we gave out to Patigi, Edu, Oyin, Offa, Ilorin South and Moro. While the third part of it includes Irepodun, Ilorin West, Isin and Ekiti Local Government Areas, respectively."

He described the exercise as smooth and rancour-free, commending the state government and other key stakeholders for their support towards identifying the target beneficiaries in all nooks and crannies of the state.

Bridge House College Celebrates 20th Anniversary, Harps on Diversity, Skills Inclusion

Funmi Ogundare

As Bridge House College, Ikoyi, Lagos, commemorates its 20th anniversary, the management, yesterday, called on schools in the country to include skills and diversity as part of their curriculum saying these will add to students' academic strength.

The Vice Principal (School Operations) of the college, Mrs. Rosemary Dokun, made this call during a press conference which also featured the unveiling of its commemorative anniversary logo and hoisting of flags.

Dokun explained that diversity and skills inclusion are important aspects that all schools must pay attention to, as they go a long way in boosting a child's academic strength and ensuring that they are globally competitive.

She said empathy is another key ingredient that they must also pay attention to, as this is the foundation of human skills in problem solving and communication.

Her words: "Nowadays, everybody is taking about skills and we need to encourage students to look at that area. In Bridge House College we have project-based learning as part of our curriculum and the students are doing brilliantly.

"They have come up with laudable projects that they can use to support themselves and give back to the committee. This is one thing schools must introduce and also encourage skills."

Earlier in her remarks, the Executive Director of the college, Dr. Foluke Abdulrazaq, expressed delight about its accomplishments in the last 20 years, adding that its anniversary logo represents its commitment towards embracing emerging trends, fostering continued innovation, customer satisfaction, community engagement and continuing to provide exceptional value to its partners and stakeholders.

"The new anniversary logo, is designed to reflect the college's rich history and future aspirations. This

logo will be used throughout the college's 20th anniversary year, appearing on marketing materials, social media, and other communications channels," she said.

The executive director highlighted some of its achievements including: consistent excellent results in Cambridge Assessment International Education Examinations (CAIE) over the years (Top in the World Award in Law, Top in Nigeria Awards in Physics, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Economics and Business, high achievement awards in Psychology, Sociology, Biology, Business, Accounting, Law, Information Technology, Economics and Further Mathematics).

Others include excellent performance in IELTS, SAT and TOEFL over the years, winner University of Dundee International Mooting competition, Nigeria champion, 2021 and 2024, first position at the US Consulate International Education Week competition, 2023, among others.

A'Ibom Schedules October 26 for LG Elections

Udeme Utip in Uyo

Elections of chairmen into the 31 local government areas and councilors for the 329 political wards in Akwa Ibom State has been scheduled for October 26, 2014.

The schedule by the state government was announced in Uyo, during a stakeholders' engagement meeting organized by the Akwa Ibom State Independent Electoral Commission (AKISIEC) on Tuesday.

Represented by the commissioner for local government and chieftaincy affairs, Frank Archibong, Governor Umo Eno presented the election plan to representatives of political parties and other stakeholders.

According to the governor, "This event is a precursor to all of the

electoral activities that will ultimately culminate to 2024 local government elections.

"We are all aware that the governor assumed office May 29 last year and because of the shortness of time between May and December, he was not able to conduct the local government elections which is why we have caretaker committees manning the local governments.

"I know how he has pressurized the AKISIEC to have the local government elections. Nothing stops us from having the elections this year because Akwa Ibom State and His Excellency do not want to be counted among those running caretaker committees."

The governor assured that elected

council chairmen will be sworn in on December 7, in compliance with the electoral plan of the state.

According to the timetable, political parties are expected to conduct their primaries between July 22nd and August 26th 2024 while commencement of campaigns is on August 26 among other activities.

Speaking earlier, the Chairman of AKISIEC, Aniedi Ikoikwak, assured political parties of free, fair and credible education as well as adequate security during the exercise.

"Given the critical importance of human and material security during elections, the Commission will take very practical measures to ensure there is adequate security before, during and after the local government elections.

Ondo Guber Poll: Agboola, 15 Other Candidates Move to Unseat Aiyedatiwa

Fidelis David reports that the people of the sunshine state are optimistic that the forthcoming governorship poll among 17 political parties' candidates in the state including incumbent Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa, will be a catalyst to the speedy transformation of the state and ultimately free the people from evils of want, ignorance, social injustice and economic exploitation.



Aiyedatiwa



Agboola



Abass Mimiko

The traditional carver knows what he's doing when he doesn't just get up to cut a tree to work with. He believes in the appropriateness of pacifying the soul of the tree first, to explain to it why he has to end the tree's life by cutting it down.

Besides, political experts believe that the major deficiency in Nigeria's political organisation seems to be the lack of internal democracy within political parties themselves, as many factions in competition for leadership slots within these parties strive to distort local arrangements.

These are done through devious schemes and intrigues in the selection of candidates for elective posts, including tinkering with the processes of choosing delegates, and the staging of rival congresses.

These are archetypal to the political situation in Ondo State ahead of the November 16 governorship election in the state.

Jimoh Ibrahim's Swift Twist

Last week, the Senator representing Ondo South Senatorial District, Jimoh Ibrahim, withdrew the suit he instituted in court against the governor of the coastal State and the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the November 16 governorship poll in the state, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, marking a farewell to the pre-primary and post-primary discord with the governor.

This came days after the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court Abuja, Justice John Terhumba Tsoho, approved the request of the APC to transfer the case filed by Ibrahim against Aiyedatiwa from Abuja to the Akure Division for hearing.

Specifically, in a letter written to the Chief Judge by Matthew Burkaa SAN, counsel to APC and the 1st Respondent in the suit, the convenience of the parties was cited as the reason for the transfer, since the plaintiff and defendants are based in Ondo State. Additionally, there is a Federal High Court in the state.

Ibrahim had instituted the suit at the Abuja Division of the Court on May 3, 2024, seeking to void the primary election that produced Governor Aiyedatiwa as the candidate of the party for the November election.

However, in a swift twist, the plaintiff said his

decision was due to the President Bola Tinubu's intervention and the respect he has for the President.

He stated: "This suit is now withdrawn due to the intervention of President Bola Tinubu. The president called me, had a meeting with me, and assured me he will, as the leader of the party, improve internal democracy within our party. I will need to withdraw the case to enable him to chart a way forward. The Governor of Ondo State, Lucky Aiyedatiwa, earlier visited my Asokoro residence for several hours after another unsuccessful visit to my hotel room in Akure.

"I cannot disobey the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria because the issue I am fighting for is not personal. It is simply to improve internal democracy, which the President has promised to enhance. My respect for the President

is absolute!"

Coinciding with President Tinubu's first anniversary in office, Ibrahim described the withdrawal of the lawsuit as a "gift of the 'cake' of the first anniversary."

Unsubstantiated Claims of no Primary Election

Reacting to the development, Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice of Ondo State, Dr Kayode Ajulo (SAN), hailed the legal team defending Governor Aiyedatiwa, INEC and APC for their robust and persuasive defense, which he said, "demonstrated Governor Aiyedatiwa's legitimacy as the duly elected APC candidate.

"With unwavering conviction, the defence team presented an unassailable defence, bolstered by meticulous forensic analysis of facts and figures, which unequivocally established Governor Aiyedatiwa as the party's unequivocal choice. This masterful presentation left no room

Be that as it may, there are permutations as to the chances of the candidates but for the two major political parties, the PDP and APC, their candidates - Agboola and Aiyedatiwa - have striking similarities. The two are from the southern senatorial district of the Sunshine State. The former is from Ese-Odo while the latter is from Ilaje local government area and they both served as deputy governor at various times during the seven-year tenure of late former Governor Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN). Political pundits also believe that the only constant thing in life is change, thus, it's too early to predict where the pendulum will swing come November 16. All these notwithstanding, the people of the coastal are hopeful that the forthcoming governorship poll will be a catalyst to the speedy transformation of the state and ultimately free the people from evils of want, ignorance, social injustice and economic exploitation.

for doubt, utterly demolishing the baseless claims of no Direct Primary Election by the APC in Ondo State, and silencing all opposition with the weight of irrefutable evidence."

In view of the above, seemingly, the APC is wholly united and ready for the governorship election but other political observers believe that Ibrahim's decision doesn't mean that all the internal wranglings in the party have been settled.

It is often said that the affairs of the heart are difficult to fathom, the hearts of men do not open up to each other like mole holes, and the affairs of the heart are a dense forest which no one can penetrate but some people believe that Ibrahim and other aggrieved members of the party will rather stay aloof than working for Aiyedatiwa in the coming poll.

Besides, the confirmation by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that 17 political parties met the May 20, 2024 deadline for submission of the list of candidates and deputies as specified in its guidelines makes the preparation more interesting.

The development implies that 17 political parties met the Monday, May 20, INEC deadline for the submission of candidates list by the participating parties.

Findings also show that out of 1,991,344 registered voters in the state, a total of 1,729,641 have collected their PVCs. With the figure, no fewer than 261,703 Permanent Voters' Cards (PVCs) remain uncollected.

Participating Political Parties

The parties' governorship candidates with their deputies include – All Progressives Congress, Lucky Aiyedatiwa and his deputy, Olayide Adelami; People's Democratic Party, Agboola Ajayi, deputy, Samuel Ogunmusi; Accord Party, Ajibola Falaiye, deputy, Samuel Ikuyajolu; Action Alliance, Omolere Akinuli, deputy, Oluwatosin Adeyemi; African Action Congress, Oluwaseyi Ajayi, deputy, Abiodun Lijofi; All Progressive Grand Alliance, Olatunji Popoola, deputy, Ayorinde Adedeji, and Allied Peoples Movement, Isaac Ogunfeyimi, deputy, Arowolo Afolabi.

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

CRIME & PUNISHMENT



Court Sentences Businessman to Three Years' Imprisonment for Theft

Funke Olaode

A Lagos businessman, Nwogu-Anucha Peters, has been sentenced to three years in prison for theft. Justice Rahman Oshodi of the Lagos State Special Offences Court, Ikeja, convicted and sentenced Peters for stealing N700,000 property of Obinna Ukpabi. The judge pronounced Peters and Business Defence Solutions Limited guilty of stealing, contrary to section 390 of the Criminal Code Law Cap. C17, Vol. 2, Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003.

In the charge designated ID/4625C/2017, the federal government accused Peters of fraudulently converting the said sum to his use. The government added that as the firm's alter ego, the convicted Peters had advertised an office space on Victoria Island, Lagos. In his judgment, Justice Oshodi, who confirmed that the victim (Ukpabi) had indicated an interest in leasing the property from the convicted Peters through a realtor, said, "You showed the Ukpabis the property and had them sign a

memorandum of understanding, collecting the sum of N700,000 from them." The judge added, "However, contrary to your representations, you had no legal interest in subleasing the property. Even more egregious, after collecting the money, you became incommunicado and never delivered possession of the property to the victim as agreed or refunded their money. "You dissipated the money on 27 July 2010, the same day you received it. All evidence points to the inescapable conclusion that

you obtained this money with the dishonest intention of permanently depriving the victim of it. You have been standing trial for this offence for several years since you were first arraigned in 2018. "Your lawyers contributed to the delay by failing to attend court or being unwilling to proceed with the trial. However, the trial length cannot detract from the severity of the offence and its impact on the victim. I have also considered that you are in the custodial centre for a similar offence before another court of

coordinate jurisdiction." The judge noted that Peters "habitually engaged in fraudulent schemes to trick unsuspecting victims of their hard-earned money." Oshodi stressed that the sentence "I will impose must reflect the need to prevent you from further engaging in criminal conduct that wreaks financial and emotional havoc on innocent citizens." He stated, "At sentencing, you showed no remorse and no regret for your crime. Considering all the above factors, I now sentence you, Nwogu-Anucha Peters, to three years imprisonment from 12 March 2018, the date of your remand by this court. As an artificial legal person, I now impose a fine of N500,000 on the second convict, Business Defence Solutions Limited, which must be paid within ninety days of this judgment. "If the company fails to pay the fine within the stipulated time, its assets will be sold, and the proceeds will be forfeited to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Furthermore, by Section 297 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law of Lagos State, 2015, I now make an order of restitution against both convicts, jointly and severally, in favour of the victim, Mr Obinna Ukpabi, in the sum of N700,000." He also ruled that this sum must be paid within 90 days of "this judgment and shall include funds standing to the credit of the convicts," pointing out that the sentence "is without prejudice to other cases pending before different courts of coordinate jurisdictions." According to the charge dated March 2, 2017, but filed April 4, 2017, the prosecution had accused the defendants of stealing. They pleaded not guilty, and the trial had commenced. The prosecution called three witnesses: First City Monument Bank representative Harrison Ebishue (PW1), an estate surveyor Mrs Nkeiruka Nijike (PW2), and the investigating officer, Nwikega Gbnekanu (PW3), while Peters testified as defence witness One (DW1).

Property Dispute: Court Orders Substituted Service on Billionaire, Olu Okeowo

Wale Igbintade

Justice Akintayo Aluko of the Lagos Division of the Federal High Court has granted a firm, Manna Real Estate Company Limited, and two of its shareholders leave to serve a Lagos-based billionaire and property developer, Oluwatumininu Okeowo, court processes by substituted means over a dispute on their late father's company. The other plaintiffs in the suit marked FHC/L/CS/2615/2023 are Tolulola Babarinde (nee Okeowo) and Temitope Solabi (nee Okeowo). Oluwatumininu Clement Okeowo, Gibraltar Construction Limited, Joshua Okeowo, Tolulope Okeowo, and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) were listed as defendants. Among others, the judge held that "having heard S.B. Olarinde, Esq., for the plaintiffs who moved in terms praying it to grant the reliefs sought as endorsed on the motion paper. That leave is granted to the Plaintiffs/Applicants to serve the writ of summons, statement of claim, witness statement on oath and all other processes or forms in

this matter on the first respondent to wit by pasting same at the first respondent's last known place of abode being at Palacio de Okeowo, 35 Olusegun Aina Street, Parkview Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos." The judge added, "That leave is granted to the plaintiffs/applicants to serve the writ of summons, Statement of claim, witness statement on oath and all other processes or forms in this matter on the first respondent to wit: by publishing same in newspaper or tabloid circulating nationwide that the plaintiff shall adopt the two modes to ensure due service of the process on the first respondent. Justice Aluko, after that, adjourned the case until June 11 for a report of service. In a witness statement on oath deposed to by Tolulola Babarinde (second plaintiff), she stated that the first plaintiff is a real estate company incorporated in October 1969 under the Company Decree of 1968 by Sir Taiwo Okeowo who was the majority shareholder of the company and the managing director until his death on November 8, 2003.

The deponent averred that the company's share capital is N2,000,000 divided into 2,000,000 ordinary shares of N1.00 each. She stated, "The shareholding structure is as follows: Sir Taiwo Okeowo 1,500,000 shares, Grace Adesola Okeowo 250,000 shares, Tolulola Tadeva Okeowo 100,000 shares, and Temitope Onajonwa Okeowo 150,000 shares. Upon the death intestate of Sir Taiwo Okeowo, the second and third plaintiffs, alongside Grace Adesola Okeowo (their mother), became the only surviving shareholders and directors of the first plaintiff with powers to act on behalf and in the interest of the company." The plaintiffs averred that before the death of Sir Taiwo Okeowo (the father of the second and third to fourth plaintiffs as well as the first, third and fourth defendants), the only named Directors and shareholders of the first plaintiff were Sir Taiwo Okeowo, Grace Adesola Okeowo, Tolulola Tadeva Okeowo, Temitope Okeowo, adding that the first to third and fourth defendants were never and are not directors

or shareholders of the company. She further alleged that upon the death intestate of Sir Taiwo Okeowo on November 8, 2003, and without the knowledge or consent of the surviving shareholders and directors of the first plaintiff, the first defendant who is not a shareholder or director of the first plaintiff and with no letters of administration over the estate of Sir Taiwo Okeowo began dealing with the company's assets without any authorisation. One of the first plaintiff's property upon which the first defendant allegedly carried out his unlawful acts is the property known as Plot 15a & 15b, Bayo Kuku Road (formerly 15 Waring Road) Ikoyi, Lagos, covered by a Federal Certificate of Occupancy with title number L09312. She averred that the first defendant unlawfully began demolishing the property at Bayo Kuku Road, a built block of 6 Flats and 2 Houses, without the knowledge and authorisation of the first plaintiff's surviving shareholders and directors.

Breach of Contract: Appeal Court Dismisses Firm's Preliminary Objection

Wale Igbintade

The Court of Appeal, Lagos Division, has dismissed Elegushi Property Investment's appeal against the ruling of Justice Deborah Oluwayemi of the High Court of Lagos State, which refused to strike out a suit instituted against the firm over alleged breach of contract. In its judgment, the appellate court held that the appeal lacked merit and deserved dismissal. Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem (who presided) delivered the lead judgment, which was aligned with the other members of the panel, namely Justice James Abundaga and Justice Abubakar Talba. The appellant at the lower court filed a Notice of Preliminary Objection dated December 22, 2014, seeking the striking out of the suit instituted by Subulade Properties Limited (claimant/first respondent) on the grounds that section 8(1)(a) of the Limitation Law of Lagos State, Cap L67, Laws of Lagos State, 2003 provides that the limitation period for the enforcement of a simple contract is six years. The appellant also submitted that the lower court lacked jurisdiction to hear the matter, contending that the statement of claim is defective because it is signed by an unknown person, giving it the effect of an unsigned court process. In response to the notice of preliminary objection, the claimant/first respondent filed a counter-

affidavit and a written address. After hearing both sides' arguments, the court delivered its ruling and struck out the appellant's notice of preliminary objection. Dissatisfied with the decision of the trial court, the appellant, through its lawyer, Dr. Muiz Banire (SAN), filed a notice of appeal and urged the court to determine whether the appellant's notice of preliminary objection dated December 22, 2014, constitutes a demurrer and whether the learned trial Judge is permitted by law to look at any other court process aside from the writ of summons and statement of claim to ascertain the signature of the claimant's pleadings. The appellant also prayed the court to determine whether the case was caught by the Limitation Law of Lagos State, Cap L67, Laws of Lagos State, 2003. Resolving the issues, the appellate court, in its lead judgement delivered by Justice Dongban-Mensem, held, "From the records and briefs of counsel, it was not in dispute that the cause of action arose in 2004 and the first respondent instituted an action in the same year 2004 which remained pending until it was struck out in 2014. "The action which generated this appeal was filed on 21st November 2014. On the authority of Sifax Nig. Ltd. V. Migfo Nig. Ltd Supra, I agree with the learned counsel to the first respondent that time freezes for the purpose of limitation law when an action, though subsequently withdrawn, is instituted in court."

Legal Experts Mulls AI Potential to Drive Growth in Nigeria

Funke Olaode

Legal experts have pointed out the significant economic opportunities artificial intelligence (AI) presents and noted its potential to drive growth in Nigeria. They emphasised that the global AI market is expected to soar to \$15.7 trillion by 2030, offering substantial growth potential for Africa, with Nigeria poised to benefit significantly. The legal expert disclosed this at the maiden edition of the Nigerian Bar Association Ikeja Branch Business Forum (NBA-Ikeja) held in Lagos recently, which stated that Nigeria's AI market was projected to reach approximately \$4.64 billion by 2030. In his address on the theme 'The Future of AI and Corporate Governance for Companies,' legal practitioner Desmond Oriakhogba said increasing awareness of AI will grow the economy and form strategic partnerships.

Dr Hakeem Ogunniran, chairman of the Lagos Building Investment Company and a corporate governance expert, also explained the critical aspects of corporate governance and AI's transformative impact on business practices. Oriakhogba said that as Nigeria continues to adopt and integrate AI technologies, it could create potential jobs, enhance business efficiency, and improve service delivery in sectors such as healthcare and agriculture. "The Nigerian government and private sector are working together to harness the transformative power of AI, which is expected to drive economic growth and development across various sectors," Oriakhogba stressed. He said robust regulatory frameworks were needed to ensure ethical and responsible AI use while highlighting the opportunities and challenges ahead. He added that AI was evolving and constantly driven

by advancements in information and communication technologies. "We can define AI broadly as powerful algorithms, machines, or computer systems that mimic specific human activities using techniques like machine learning, neural networks, logic programming, and fuzzy logic," Oriakhogba explained. He distinguished between Narrow AI and Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), saying, "Generative AI, a subset of Narrow AI, can semi-autonomously create new content like text, images, music, and videos, offering transformative potential in sectors such as entertainment, scientific research, education, healthcare, and corporate governance. "AGI, capable of surpassing human intelligence, is predicted by scientists to emerge by 2030. Whether AGI will actually materialise by then remains to be seen, but we must prepare for its potential impact."

On AI's influence in Africa, especially Nigeria, Oriakhogba said, "AI is making significant impacts in various sectors including legal processes, business ethics, governance, democracy, gender equality, human rights, and the rule of law. AI remains one of the top five most disruptive technologies. It can enhance decision-making processes, cybersecurity measures, and risk management but also poses risks such as cybersecurity threats, data breaches, and ethical dilemmas. Human oversight is essential to ensure ethical and unbiased decision-making." Oriakhogba, therefore, commended the Nigerian government's proactive stance on AI development, citing initiatives such as establishing the National Center for AI and Robotics by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) and developing a national AI policy.

OPINION

www.thisdaylive.com

opinion@thisdaylive.com

SEASON OF CHEER?

The Sanwo-Olu administration is committed to transforming Lagos into a modern state, reckons **SAMSON ADEGOKE**



See page 21

ISPS MAY BOW TO STARLINK

SONNY ARAGBA-AKPORE writes
Starlink is gradually making some inroads into the Nigerian telco market



See page 21

EDITORIAL

TACKLING DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT



22

The bank has insufficient assets to meet its liabilities, writes **ETIM ETIM**



HERITAGE BANK: WHY THE LICENCE IS REVOKED

Many Nigerians were caught unawares by the revocation of the license of Heritage Bank by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), but among many industry operators, it was widely known that the bank has been severely distressed in the last five years. Under Godwin Emefiele, the CBN did not have the appetite to close down a bank, and so Heritage was under life support for a long time, relying mostly on borrowing from the CBN and the interbank market to support its businesses. But Yemi Cardoso is taking the apex bank in a different direction. He's trimming the workforce, streamlining functions and divesting it from noncore regulatory duties. Heritage has therefore become the first bank since the 2005 consolidation to be allowed to crash. There have been a few sick ones since then – notably Intercontinental and Diamond – but they were not liquidated. They were purchased by a healthier one. So, why was Heritage not purchased by one of the stronger banks?

According to CBN's Revocation Order signed by Cardoso, dated June 3 and seen by this writer, Heritage Bank contravened Section 12 (1) of the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act (BOFIA) 2020 in five different ways: It has insufficient assets to meet its liabilities; conducted its business in an unsound manner; failed to comply with specific obligations imposed upon it under BOFIA, 2020 and the Central Bank of Nigeria Act as well as rules, regulation, guidelines and directives made under both Acts; is critically undercapitalized with a capital adequacy ratio below the prudential minimum applicable to its license category; and its financial performance and condition constitute a threat to financial stability.

Based on Heritage Bank's 2021 audited (but qualified) Statement of Accounts and Annual Report, its net interest income (that is interest income less interest expense) was in the negative. Net interest income measures the profitability of a bank and is a major source of income for a bank. It is the difference between what a bank earns as interest on loans and what the bank pays out to depositors as interest on their deposits. Heritage was paying out more to its depositors (mostly interbank lenders and CBN) than what it was earning on loans. This is largely because the bank's non-performing loan (NPL) ratio was as high as 81.2 per cent. In other words, Heritage had too much



bad loans in its books and so was not earning enough interest income. Out of every N100 it gave out as a loan, N81.2 was bad and unrecoverable. This is a recipe for disaster for any bank.

In addition, the bank's operating expenses were also higher than its interest income, and so for the 2021 financial year, the bank recorded a loss of N82.928 billion and an accumulated loss of N459 billion. It is the largest loss recorded by any bank in this country in the last 30 years. Heritage Bank's shareholders' funds were -N230 billion (Negative N230 billion). At 81.2 per cent NPL, accumulated losses of N459 billion and Negative Shareholders' funds of N230 billion, Heritage was a dead bank in the world of the living. There was nothing to do to revive it. Just imagine putting a cadaver in a shop and claiming

The bank's operating expenses were also higher than its interest income, and so for the 2021 financial year, the bank recorded a loss of N82.928 billion and an accumulated loss of N459 billion. It is the largest loss recorded by any bank in this country in the last 30 years

that it is the shopkeeper!

You can now understand why no other bank was willing to buy Heritage. A distressed bank is bought for the value it would add to the purchaser despite its ill health. It could be the large branch network; size of customer base or its retail franchise with considerable savings and current account balances. Diamond Bank was distressed when Access Bank bought it in 2014, but it was an attractive investment because it had a lot of retail customers which Access didn't have then. Intercontinental was very distressed too, but Access went into it because it had a wide branch network which Access didn't have then. And so, because of these two acquisitions, Access automatically became the nation's biggest bank by assets and customer base.

Heritage had nothing to offer any potential buyer apart from its long and complicated history which might have been its Achilles heel. It was founded in the 1970s as Société Générale Bank (SGBN), a subsidiary of a French Bank, by the late Kwara politician, Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki. He was the leader of the Senate in the Second Republic under the NPN, and his son, Bukola Saraki, a medical doctor like the father, was Kwara State governor in 2003 and senate President in 2015. In 2006, the CBN closed down SGBN after the Soludo consolidation for failure to meet the N25 billion minimum capital requirement. But SGBN successfully challenged the closure in court.

In December 2012, the CBN reissued SGBN promoters a regional banking license and with new owners, the bank was rebranded as Heritage Banking Company Ltd. It opened for business under the new name in March 2013. Heritage was eager to grow inorganically, and so it acquired EnterpriseBank, a distressed bank formerly known as Afribank, from AMCON (Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria) in 2015 for N56.1 billion. A rebranded distressed bank buying another rebranded distressed bank! The Holy Book says "when the foundation is weak, what can the righteous do?" (Psalms 11:3).

Now, the NDIC has its job cut out for it. It should move quickly to take possession of whatever remains of Heritage, liquidate it and pay off the insured depositors. There are a few lessons to learn from this. ■

Etim
is a Journalist

The Sanwo-Olu administration is committed to transforming Lagos into a modern state, reckons
SAMSON ADEGOKE

SEASON OF CHEER?



It is not unusual in our clime to find executive officers of states slowing down pace of work after winning a second term election. But the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, has maintained the tempo of development of remarkable projects he started since 2019 when he was first voted in as the governor.

Riding on the crest of the THEME Agenda, Governor Sanwo-Olu prioritised critical infrastructure in health, transportation, traffic management, amongst others. Many Lagosians witnessed unprecedented development in various sectors, including social support for many vulnerable Lagosians. The people were fascinated by the pro-masses policy thrust of his government that placed premium on social investments and access to quality essential services like healthcare.

The first four years of his administration consolidated on the gains of the previous administrations, and set the stage for the emerging greater Lagos where endless potential of the state will be fully harnessed. Now, the internal revenue generation capacity of the state has been enhanced through the creative enabling of critical sectors of the state economy. Pushing up the stake, at the beginning of his second term in 2023, Governor Sanwo-Olu declared that the tenure will run on the steam of THEME-PLUS. The THEME acronym stands for Transportation and Traffic Management; Health and Environment; Education and Technology; Making Lagos State a 21st Century Megacity, Entertainment & Tourism; and Security & Governance. "Henceforth, it will be known as "T.H.E.M.E.S+," the "plus " representing the incorporation of an intensified focus, in these next four years, on Social Inclusion, Gender Equality and Youth," the governor declared while making his remarks during inauguration for second term. He added, "In other words, we are strengthening and reinforcing THEMES with a 'No One Left Behind' philosophy. No one will be left behind on account of their social status, gender or age; we will design all our policies and programs to ensure that everyone is carried along and catered to. This is our solemn promise to you."

One year after, the governor has kept to the promise and so far endeared himself to Lagosians through his unique governance style. Governor Sanwo-Olu has made significant strides in transforming the state's infrastructure, economy, healthcare, education, and overall governance. Numerous impactful projects and policies, he championed, have significantly improved the quality of life of Lagosians. Here are some of the notable achievements: Under the pillar of traffic management and transportation, the governor has made significant progress in easing the perennial traffic congestion that impedes productivity and

economic well-being of the people. He scaled the existing intermodal transportation system, thereby ameliorating one of the most pressing issues in Lagos State - traffic congestion. On this score, the administration has undertaken several initiatives like the completion of Lagos Blue Line Rail Project started by the previous administrations. The Lagos Blue Line Rail project has significantly reduced road traffic and provided a reliable and efficient mode of public transportation.

Likewise, the administration has rehabilitated and constructed over 600 roads across the state, including major roads like the Agege Pen Cinema Flyover, Oshodi-Abule-Egba BRT Corridor, Oba Sekumade Road, Ikorodu and the Lekki-Epe Expressway, among others. What is more fascinating is the standard the administration has maintained in road construction. Babajide Sanwo-Olu built most of the roads with concrete reinforcement, thereby making them more durable than asphalted roads.

Water transportation has also received a great boost under the administration of Governor Sanwo-Olu. To ease movements on Lagos waterways, the governor acquired more modern ferries into the existing fleets, improved the conditions of the jetties, and providing alternative means of commuting and reducing pressure on road networks. In furtherance of this, the governor recently added additional locally-built 40-passenger ferries to boost water transportation in the state.

The project, tagged, "OMIBUS", delivered in partnership with Caverton Marine, aims to advance the state's transport infrastructure, providing residents with a reliable, safe, and efficient mode of transportation in conformity with the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In his address at the commissioning of the ferries, which took place at Badore-Ajah area of Lagos State, Governor Sanwo-Olu said with 22 percent of the state's landmass covered by water and waterways surrounding 42 out of its 57 local governments and LCDAs, there is significant potential for marine transport.

According to him, the investment in the sector is designed to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services across the city, contributing to its economic growth.

He highlighted the comprehensive approach to ensuring an integrated urban mass transportation system that will not be short-changed, adding that the government will ensure that no verticals around public transportation are left unattended to.

The governor said the 15 new 40-seater passenger ferries commissioned marked the first phase of a broader plan to enhance marine transportation in the State. A total of 25 ferries are planned.

He said the new ferries, crafted to international standards with only the engines sourced from abroad, symbolised a shift towards local manufacturing. "This initiative is a testament to our commitment to creating an integrated, multimodal transportation system that makes daily commutes smoother and more seamless", the governor declared.

Health and environment have also been greatly impacted in Lagos, under Governor Sanwo-Olu's watch. The governor demonstrated unprecedented leadership in curtailing the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic, and gave adequate support to vulnerable people in Lagos to access quality healthcare in government-owned health facilities in Lagos State. ■

Adegoke
writes from Lagos

SONNY ARAGBA-AKPORE writes
Starlink is gradually making some
inroads into the Nigerian telco market



ISPS MAY BOW TO STARLINK

Apart from telecommunications companies (telcos) who provide ubiquitous internet services today, only few conventional internet service providers (ISPs) offer pockets of a semblance of service.

The situation now is akin to the advent of Global System of Mobile Communications (GSM) in 2001 when everyone migrated seamlessly to Digital Mobile Service.

Before GSM, there were Time Division Multiple Access (TDMA), Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) among others. But all that has now been confined to the dustbin of history.

No one, not even telecommunications regulators, the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) can volunteer reasons for the extinction of these once vibrant operators that provided services despite the threat of comatose Nigerian Telecommunications Limited (NITEL).

Industry players are also strangely silent about the fate of TDMA, CDMA and others.

If we saw the threat of GSM to TDMA and CDMA, are we seeing in clear terms the likely fate that will befall Internet Service Providers (ISPs) following the entry of Elon Musk's Starlink in the Nigerian telecom environment?

Starlink came with disruptive technologies that are already making a world of difference for consumers and we look on as if nothing is happening.

The company came prepared.

It obtained licences from the NCC and got various permits and approvals to flag off the business of internet services via satellite and equally signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and distribution agreements with Nigerian companies including Technology Distribution Africa (TD), a big distributor of major technology brands and promoted by a restless technology czar, Leo Stan Ekeh.

Starlink didn't stop there. It has decided to take services to even the unserved and underserved communities in Nigeria and parts of Africa for which TD boasts it's ready for the long haul partnership.

Although, the Internet connectivity provider, Starlink has prohibitive entry level and subscription prices, it's still going on with what it sees as an agenda for a potential captive market as a result of not very robust services by other ISPs and when it slashed the price of its hardware to N440,000 recently, the company thought it was doing a big favour to subscribers.

This follows the recently increasing strengthening of the naira against the dollar.

This accounted for 45 per cent reduction from the N800,000 cost of the hardware router earlier.

According to a new price update released by the company, the monthly subscription for the internet service remains unchanged at N38,000.

"N440,000 new hardware price. Unlimited high-speed internet for N38,000 per month, by every standard is high and prohibitive but it is available everywhere in Nigeria," the internet company said on its website.

As of February 2024, the Starlink router was sold for N378,000. An increment regime implemented in

early March saw a price jump to N800,000. This was evidently in response to the rapidly declining value of the naira to as high as N1900 to a dollar.

But by Starlink's aggressive marketing being deployed, can indigenous ISPs cope with this complex competition?

So far, both wireless and cable ISPs are jolted and returning to the drawing board to rejig their strategies for competition with Musk reputed to be one of the richest men in the world.

And with satellite infrastructure dotted around the globe, Starlink is ready to give local ISPs a run for their money?

Will Starlink push local ISPs into extinction and out of relevance like GSM did to CDMA?

Space Exploration Technology Corporation (Space X) owners of Starlink got six licenses in a roll from the NCC and is expected to deploy nearly \$30b over time for the Nigerian operations alone.

The government is excited that with the entry of Starlink, it may achieve 70% broadband connectivity by 2025 as enshrined in the National Broadband Plan (NBP) 2020-2025.

But is the government just desperate to achieve this at the expense of low purchasing powers of subscribers? Time will tell.

Starlink's six licenses include that for ISP, Gateway Service Provider, international Data Access (IDA), Sales and Installation Major, Gateway Earth Station and Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT), thus making it a mega player and a big threat to other players in the industry.

Starlink officially announced its presence in Nigeria in January 2023. The company, which initially quoted its prices in dollars at \$600 for the hardware and \$43 for the subscription, changed to naira upon its official announcement.

According to Internet Service Providers (ISPs) data released by the NCC, Starlink is now one of the leading ISPs in Nigeria in terms of customer numbers. As of Q3 2023, Starlink Nigeria's customer base stood at 11,207.

While cable cuts remain a nightmare, Starlink's boasts of bridging the gap, with its potential impact extending far beyond addressing temporary outages. These include reaching Underserved Areas where Traditional ISPs often struggle to reach remote regions due to the high cost of infrastructure deployment.

Starlink's satellite-based approach can effectively bridge this gap, offering high-speed internet access to previously underserved communities by unlocking educational and economic opportunities for millions of Nigerians currently excluded from the digital world. Starlink boosts business continuity by avoiding frequent internet disruptions that can be detrimental to businesses, especially those reliant on online operations. Starlink claims to be reliable with independent internet access that can provide much-needed resilience, ensuring business continuity even during cable outages.

The recent cable cuts hampered online learning and remote work arrangements. Starlink's stable internet connection may have facilitated smoother online learning experiences for students and enable seamless remote work for professionals across the country.

But that is where the beauty ends.

TD Africa, the major distributor for Starlink said, it planned to leverage Starlink's unique selling points such as high speed, low latency, broad coverage and scalability to bridge the digital divide.

In 2023, Starlink's global customer base rose to 2.3 million with a presence in over 70 countries ■

Aragba-Akpo
is a member of THISDAY Editorial Board



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

EDITORIAL

TACKLING DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT

There is need to reset the country's environmental agenda

With 'Land restoration, desertification and drought resilience' as theme, the 2024 World Environment Day is significant in many respects. We hope Nigeria's delegates to the session being hosted today in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to mark the day understand the gravity of the challenge at hand. A recent report by the United Nations that Nigeria has the highest deforestation rate in the world, with an estimated 3.7 per cent of its forest lost every year, should concern all relevant stakeholders.

Of all the five most critical factors that affect the global environment, namely, air pollution, overpopulation, deforestation, climate change and global warming, the biggest threat to Nigeria's environment remains deforestation. This is without losing sight of the waste management challenges, flooding, desertification, gully soil and coastal erosion that bedevil various parts of the country. Ordinarily, forests are home to wildlife which perform a broad range of critical environmental and climatic functions including the maintenance of constant supply of water and ensuring clean air and prevention of desertification, soil, and gully erosion.

In its report, 'High and Dry: Climate Change, Water and the Economy' a few years ago, the World Bank said: "Water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, could cost some regions up to six per cent of their GDP, spur migration and spark conflict." The report claimed that climate-driven water scarcity could hit economic growth by up to six per cent in some regions and that the combined effects of growing populations, rising incomes and expanding cities would see demand for water rising exponentially, "while supply becomes more erratic and uncertain." The report particularly contains a serious warning for Nigeria that is yet to be heeded. "Food price spikes caused by droughts can inflame latent conflicts and drive migration. Where economic growth is impacted by rainfall, episodes of droughts



Environmental remediation measures such as the Great Green Wall Project should be taken more seriously and adequately funded

THISDAY

EDITOR SHAKA MOMODU

DEPUTY EDITOR WALE OLALEYE

MANAGING DIRECTOR ENIOLA BELLO

DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR ISRAEL IWEGBU

CHAIRMAN EDITORIAL BOARD OLUSEGUN ADENIYI

EDITOR NATION'S CAPITAL IYOBOSA UWUGIAREN

THE OMBUDSMAN KAYODE KOMOLAFE



THISDAY NEWSPAPERS LIMITED

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF/CHAIRMAN NDUKA OBAIGBENA

GROUP EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS ENIOLA BELLO, KAYODE KOMOLAFE,

ISRAEL IWEGBU, EMMANUEL EFENI

DIVISIONAL DIRECTORS SHAKA MOMODU, PETER IWEGBU,

ANTHONY OGEDENGBE

DEPUTY DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR OJOGUN VICTOR DANBOYI

SNR. ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR ERIC OJEH

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR PATRICK EIMIUIH

CONTROLLERS ABIMBOLA TAIWO, UCHENNA DIBIAGWU, NDUKA MOSERI

DIRECTOR, PRINTING PRODUCTION CHUKS ONWUDINJO

TO SEND EMAIL: first.name.surname@thisdaylive.com

and floods have generated waves of migration and spikes in violence within countries," it said.

Therefore, the need for environmentally and socially equitable approaches to these challenges is imperative. The desert is still encroaching at the speed of more than 1.6 kilometres annually. There are almost 3,000 erosion sites in the Southeast. Flooding in Lagos is anything but ordinary. Rising temperature is increasingly becoming unbearable while agriculturists are struggling to adapt to the attendant climate variability with serious socio-economic implications. The National Park Service that is charged with the responsibility of protecting swathes of forests and their biodiversity is lacking in capacity apart from being inadequately funded and supported.

As things stand today, only less than 4 per cent of the country's untouched forest cover is left. More frightening is the fact that 1.5 million trees are felled every day owing to illegal logging. There is need to completely reset the country's environmental agenda. The fight against insurgency and banditry should be ramped up to rein in the devastation

and degradation of the natural environment across the country. Environmental remediation measures such as the Great Green Wall Project should be taken more seriously and adequately funded. Stringent statutory provisions should be put in place to protect the various ecosystems and their biodiversity.

Beyond the foregoing, there should be more transparency and accountability in the application of Ecological Funds that must be made to serve their purpose fully and directly. Tougher measures should be put in place to checkmate wanton emission of noxious and deleterious gases through gas flaring and use of outdated machines. Electricity challenges in the country should be addressed to minimise the use of power generating sets. The Green Recovery Project of the Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) must attract deserved encouragement and partnership.

If we must reclaim our country from the hazards of nature, several important measures will have to be taken in the coming years.

Letters to the Editor

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

LETTERS

HOW HUMAN ACTIVITY INFLUENCES EXTREME WEATHER

Have you been feeling the heat in your part of the country lately? Since the beginning of this year, the weather in many parts of Nigeria has been very hot! Experts in the health sector have also expressed concern over the ongoing heat-wave in many parts of the country. In fact, the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) warned that if safety precautions are not taken, Nigerians in Abuja, Kano, and many other northern states are likely to suffer heat strokes due to the scorching heat-wave.

In many parts of the world, extreme weather is becoming increasingly frequent and intense. But what is meant by the term "extreme weather"? Extreme weather refers to a noticeable change in weather patterns that includes extreme situations such as significantly high or low temperatures, heavy rainfall, and strong winds over a relatively short span of time. Weather is made up of six main components: temperature; atmospheric pressure; cloud formation; wind; humidity and rain. Any small change to any of these conditions can create a different weather pattern.

So, what are some of the causes of extreme weather, or heat waves in particular? Climate researchers say that heat waves occur when there is high pressure in the atmosphere that forces hot air

downward and traps it near the ground. This high-pressure system acts like a lock that prevents the hot air from rising, causing the temperature to rise further.

But apart from natural factors, human activity also causes rapid changes to the climate that can contribute to extreme weather conditions. For example, when fossil fuels are burned for electricity, heat and transportation, carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that traps solar radiation, is released into our atmosphere. Over a long period of time, as carbon dioxide, methane and other greenhouse gas emissions continue to increase, they act as a blanket, trapping heat and therefore causing the temperature to rise. Also, extreme heat increases the demand for air conditioning, thereby fueling carbon pollution and putting a strain on our energy system which leads to poor electricity supply or power outages. Global warming, fueled by burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial activities, has also contributed to the increase in climate temperatures. Additionally, heat-wave is worsened or aggravated in urban environments by the urban heat island effect, caused by the concentration of concrete and asphalt surfaces as well as reduction of vegetation and other human sources of heat.

One other factor which some experts have identified as a major contributor to the current heat-wave being experienced in the country is Methane emission. Methane is a colourless, odourless flammable gas which is the main constituent of natural gas. Methane is 80 per cent more potent in trapping heat and carbon dioxide. What that means is that when Methane traps the heat, getting it released until it disperses increases the wave of heat, and that is why it is said that Methane on its own causes about 40 per cent of global heat-related issues within the environment.

Experts have therefore called on Nigerians to take measures towards reducing Methane emissions in the environment. The experts say that by reducing human activities that lead to methane production, we can reduce the emission of Methane into the atmosphere. There is also a need to take control in terms of advocacy and in terms of trying as much as possible to manage our waste well as a way of reducing the short-term Methane emissions into the atmosphere. We should also ensure that we reduce the indiscriminate dumping of waste at dumpsites.

*Daniel Ighakpe,
FESTAC Town, Lagos*

Bridging Financial Inclusion Gap

Nume Ekeghe writes on the various products under the body of the 'W' initiative, a women-focused effort that aims to bridge the financing gap of women, providing them with tailored banking solutions and a supportive community that fosters personal and professional growth.

In the evolving financial landscape, Access Bank's 'W' Initiative stands out as a transformative program designed to bridge the financing gap for women. This women-focused initiative not only addresses the unique needs of women by providing tailored banking solutions but also creates a supportive community that fosters both personal and professional growth. As the world increasingly acknowledges the importance of gender equality and financial inclusion, the 'W' Initiative's relevance and impact have never been more significant.

ORIGINS OF 'W' INITIATIVE

In 2006, Access Bank laid the foundation for what would eventually become the 'W' Initiative by introducing the Gender Empowerment Marketing (GEM) program. This early effort, supported by an on-lending facility from the International Finance Corporation (IFC), trained over 750 female entrepreneurs and facilitated businesses with N2.5 billion in financing. Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive approach, Access Bank launched a holistic Women's Market Strategy in June 2013, engaging the IFC as technical partners and AC Nielsen for market research. This research led to the development of Customer Value Propositions (CVPs) specifically for the women's market, which evolved into tailored product bundles. On July 11, 2014, the 'W' Initiative was officially launched, cementing Access Bank's commitment to empowering women and helping them build sustainable, profitable futures. This initiative aims to be "The Bank of Choice" for women, providing them with banking solutions tailored to their diverse career and lifestyle needs.

TAILORED SOLUTIONS FOR WOMEN

The 'W' Initiative offers a wide range of products and programs designed to meet the varied needs of women. These offerings include financial services, health support, educational programs, and networking opportunities, all aimed at empowering women to achieve their personal and professional goals.

THE 'W' ACADEMY

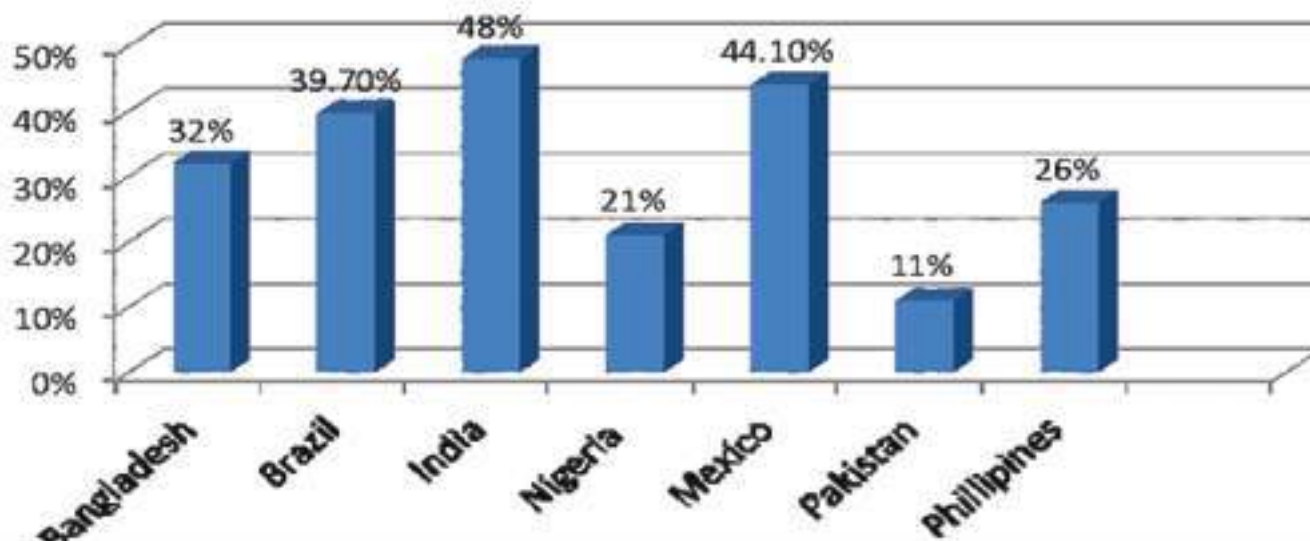
A cornerstone of the 'W' Initiative, the 'W' Academy focuses on capacity building and networking opportunities. This program addresses critical gaps in gender financing, technology, business, and management through workshops and events. In today's competitive environment, equipping women with these skills is essential for their success. Thousands of female entrepreneurs have benefited from the 'W' Academy, gaining valuable knowledge and connections that help them navigate the complexities of modern business.

WOMENPRENEUR PITCH-A-TON

Launched in 2019, the Womenpreneur Pitch-a-ton project directly addresses the challenges identified through market research, such as the lack of proper business structure, management skills, access to finance, and mentorship for female startups. This flagship program offers female business owners financial grants and world-class business training in collaboration with the IFC. Since its inception, 645 women have participated in the Mini MBA program, with \$175,000 awarded to 65 winners. This initiative empowers women to build sustainable and successful businesses, contributing

"You hear a lot of people talk about loans and they want training and support. When they say support, everything I hear is loan and training and that already we have. However, we might not call it a name (like) 'loan for caterers', so maybe you're waiting for that."

% of Household with Access to a bank Account in Selected Countries



significantly to economic growth.

W HEALTH LOANS

In an era where health and wellness are more critical than ever, the W Health Loans provide discounted financing for fertility procedures, natal support, and other specialized health services. The Maternal Health Service Support (MHSS) is a flagship product under this category, offering financing that has significantly impacted over 156 women and families, amounting to N241.5 million. This product has enabled the birth of 103 babies through the discounted health financing scheme, reflecting Access Bank's commitment to addressing the health needs of women.

W HEALTH MONTH

October, designated as W Health Month, is dedicated to addressing the health and wellness concerns of women. This initiative includes health screenings, webinars, advocacy walks, and minor cancer surgeries. Since its inception, it has provided 15,667 health screenings, educated over 17,200 women on various health topics, and supported numerous health-related events. This holistic approach underscores Access Bank's commitment to women's health and well-being.

POWER LOAN

Access to affordable finance remains a significant challenge for female SMEs in Africa. The W Power Loan, introduced in 2018, is designed to bridge this gap by providing discounted finance, business support services, and visibility for female entrepreneurs. Since the launch of this product, over 100,400 women SMEs have accessed funding worth N110.4 billion, enabling them to scale their businesses and contribute to broader economic development.

At a recent roundtable organised by the bank for women in the event industry, Group Head of Women Banking at Access Bank, said: "You hear a lot of people talk about loans and they want training and support. When they

say support, everything I hear is loan and training and that already we have. However, we might not call it a name (like) 'loan for caterers', so maybe you're waiting for that."

"There is a big umbrella of loans, which we call the W Power Loan which is available for market expansion or business expansion as the case may be. It's available for working capital. It's available for asset acquisition, and every of those loan needs falls into this basic category. So, already, we have something for them but then, we are now trying to bring it to their fore."

Also, the Team Lead for Women Banking at Access Bank, Gbemisola Ajibulu, highlighted the significance of the events industry, valued at over N20 billion, and the bank's dedication to creating fit-for-purpose products that cater to the unique needs of this burgeoning sector.

COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUITY

Access Bank's 'W' Initiative is a testament to the bank's unwavering dedication to promoting gender equality and enhancing the socio-economic welfare of women. By offering specialized banking services and fostering a supportive community, Access Bank aims to inspire, connect, and empower women, enabling them to build successful businesses and lasting brands. The initiative has earned numerous accolades, including the Best Financier for Women Entrepreneur (Platinum) from the Global SME Finance Forum and recognition from the Development Bank of Nigeria for its impact on women SMEs. These awards highlight Access Bank's role as a leading advocate for a gender-balanced society and its contribution to sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

ADAPTING TO MODERN CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 pandemic posed unprecedented challenges, particularly for women entrepreneurs. In response, the 'W' Initiative launched the W Webinar Series, providing a platform for female business owners to gain insights and support during these difficult times. This series has become a core part of the 'W' business, allowing the initiative to engage with its virtual community effectively. To date, 30 webinars have been hosted, with over 110,000 registrations and more than 18,000 attendees. This proactive approach has helped many women navigate the pandemic's challenges, maintaining their businesses and personal well-being.

"There is a big umbrella of loans, which we call the W Power Loan which is available for market expansion or business expansion as the case may be. It's available for working capital. It's available for asset acquisition, and every of those loan needs falls into this basic category."

FUTURE INITIATIVE

As the 'W' Initiative continues to evolve, its focus remains on empowering women through tailored financial solutions and support systems. Future plans include expanding the reach of the initiative to more women across Africa, enhancing existing programs, and introducing new ones that address emerging needs. Access Bank is committed to staying at the forefront of women's financial inclusion, ensuring that the 'W' Initiative adapts to changing circumstances and continues to provide valuable support to women.

In today's rapidly evolving world, the 'W' Initiative by Access Bank stands as a pioneering model for women's financial inclusion and empowerment. Through its comprehensive offerings, the initiative continues to make significant strides in bridging the financing gap for women, fostering a community that supports their growth and success. Access Bank is not only enhancing the lives of women but also contributing to broader economic development and social progress, ensuring that women have the resources and support they need to thrive in today's dynamic environment. By addressing the unique needs of women and providing them with tailored banking solutions, the 'W' Initiative is making a profound impact on the socio-economic landscape. This commitment to gender equality and financial inclusion is essential for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. As Access Bank continues to champion the cause of women through the 'W' Initiative, it sets a high benchmark for transparency, trust, and operational excellence in the financial sector, paving the way for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Enhancing Public Awareness on CPS

Ebere Nwoji posits that failure of National Pension Commission to assume the position of chief marketer of the pension sector may frustrate operators' proposed awareness campaign on CPS

On going plan by the Pension sector operators to embark on media campaign to sensitise Nigerians on the need to key into Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) has been commended by stakeholders in the pension sector.

In planning the awareness campaign, the operators said it has become necessary against the backdrop of prevailing high level of public ignorance of the workings of the CPS despite 20 years after.

Good as the plan is, pension sector observers have expressed doubt on the efficacy of the campaign in pulling the large population of Nigerian workers and employers both in public and private sector still operating outside the CPS territory.

According to them, the possibility of the campaign achieving the set objective is doubtful because the National Pension Commission (PenCom), which supposed to be the chief marketer of the sector has over the years chosen to remain at the background as well as faceless at public functions where it supposed to market the scheme, educate the public on the merits of the scheme and make them hear from the horse's mouth the inherent benefits in the funded scheme when compared with the old scheme.

Indeed, stakeholders have questioned the attitude of PenCom towards educating Nigerians on the workings of CPS severally. CPS has been practiced for 20 years in Nigeria, that PFAs are still struggling to win the mindsof many employers and employees including state governments leaves much to be desired.

This has compelled both stakeholders and sector observers to describe PenCom as a non forward looking regulator and one too complacent and nonchalant towards expanding the frontiers of the scheme it is regulating.

According to them, one hardly notices the presence of the Director General of PenCom at pension fora irrespective of the caliber of people at the forum, the importance and topic of discussion.

RETREAT FOR FEDERAL LAWMAKERS

A case in point was the recent retreat organised by the pension Fund Operators Association of Nigeria (PenOp) for members of House of Representatives Committee on Pension and some members of House Committee on Establishment and public service.

The two day retreat had the theme, "The CPS: Navigating Challenges and Unlocking Secured Future for Pensioners."

When deliberations were at the peak, some of the law makers expressed their disappointment and regrets that the Director General of PenCom, Aisha Dahir Umar was absent insisting that she should have been there personally to address some of the issues raised at the retreat.

But thanks to one of the CEOs, precisely the Managing Director Access Pension, Mr Dave Uduanu who was on ground to competently and satisfactorily address all



the issues raised at the retreat and was able to pacify the law makers.

RETREAT FOR JOURNALISTS

Similarly, at the Annual media retreat instituted by the pioneer Director General of PenCom, Muhammad Ahmad, for journalists reporting pension matters, media men have for several years complained that since the tenure of the incumbent PenCom DG they have not had the privilege of having her address them at the retreat.

According to the journalists as a result, they hardly get FrontPage stories from the annual event. This, they said, was quite unlike the tenure of Amad when his statements at the retreats gave journalists front page stories as part of take home package from the retreat.

According to the journalists even during the tenure of the immediate past Director General, Mrs Chinelo Anohu -Amazu, journalists reporting pension generated front page stories for their various media houses because just like her predecessor Ahmad, Anohu-Amazu was always present at retreat and other important pension fora and was competent enough to market the CPS and interact with the media.

The obvious continued absence of PenCom authority at public fora has been given various interpretations by both stakeholders and industry watchers. While some said it was because of the DG's busy schedule, majority said it was a sign of incompetence on her side because she couldn't have been too busy to defend and market the sector she

has been employed to regulate.

Even some of her staff alleged that the best she does in this situation was to attack her corporate communications staff anytime there was negative media report on the commission.

Against this backdrop pension sector analysts said there was need for a wake up attitude by the PenCom authority if the proposed awareness campaign would yield positive result.

According to them, this is because in creating awareness about the scheme targeted at luring the people; the masses will believe whatever comes from PenCom more than what the operators of PFAs tell them.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF PFAS

They noted that in most cases, Nigerians see PFA managers as people who sit in executive air-conditioned offices enjoying their hard earned money. As such, they don't so much believe what comes from the PFA managers.

A case in point on this negative perception of the public on PFAs was seen in the statement made in some paragraphs of a good will message delivered at the retreat by the Chairman House Committee on Pension, Husaini Mohammed Jallo in which he said: "Retirees under CPS are said to be allegedly suffering from the exploitation and rip off under the guise of managing their benefits and entitlement. In 2004, retirees were compulsorily asked to join the CPS operated by the Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) under the control of PenCom, by virtue of 2014 amended Act, the narrative of retirees plights under the CPS does not change the situation any better. The narrative is that CPS denies them having greater share of lump sum after retirement and dispenses a paltry monthly pension to retirees across the board under this scheme.

"The assertion was made clear with a case study of one of the retirees in the hands of CPS who served the Federal Government of Nigeria from July 15, 1981 and retired in July 15 2016 on salary grade level 14, having worked for a mandatory period of 35 years and attained the maximum age of 60 years.

"For all the years he put in, the total balance standing to his credit was N6,745,823,34 out of this, he was paid 25 percent of his savings which amounted to N1,686,455,84 while the balance of 75 percent was retained by PFA for their investment in capital market and other large institution with high returns which is never been added to retirees'

paltry monthly payment while still alive.

"He received N26,703.15 every month since 2016 till date despite the huge profits declared every year under CPS which can barely buy a loaf of bread at the price of N1000 currently per day for 30 days. The same apply to all others under this arrangement."

In conclusion he said, "Retirees under this scheme worked for their life-saving benefits while those collaborators (referring to PFAs) under CPS enjoy their hard earned benefits in the name of investing their funds for them."

With the above statement by the house chairman, one can imagine the perspective from which other members of the public see the PFA managers let alone believing their words in the proposed awareness.

Analysts have said had the PenCom DG been the eloquent type, the proposed awareness would have yielded the desired result.

A managing Director of one of the PFAs who pleaded anonymity reasoned that this is why years after the launch of Micro Pension scheme there are still very low contributors because PenCom, which supposed to be the chief marketer is not always available at occasions where like Ahmad or Anohu-Amazu the present DG suppose to address the public herself.

PENCOM VS OTHER REGULATORS

This is quite unlike what happens in Insurance sector where the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) is very much available at occasions to market the industry himself.

Way back in the days of late Chief Oladipo Bailey as the commissioner for insurance he was the chief marketer of the insurance sector and had used occasions like the Ikeja Cantonment explosion to X-ray the need for people to patronise insurance.

The immediate past commissioner for insurance, Sunday Thomas never left any stone unturned in his efforts to market the sector to the public. Even the present commissioner, Mr Ayo Omosehin has started from where his predecessors stopped in marketing insurance sector to the public.

This has raised the question on why the case of pension sector should be different. Since the tenure of the present DG started, aside newspaper advertisements, awareness creation on the CPS and its workings has been left in the hands of Managing Directors of PFA while PenCom which is supposed to be the leader is in deep slumber.

Industry watchers said this explains why there are agitations for exit from CPS by many groups such as the Nigerian police force and aviation workers.

"This has raised the question on why the case of pension sector should be different. Since the tenure of the present DG started, aside newspaper advertisements, awareness creation on the CPS and its workings has been left in the hands of Managing Directors of PFA while PenCom which is supposed to be the leader is in deep slumber. Industry watchers said this explains why there are agitations for exit from CPS by many groups such as the Nigerian police force and aviation workers."

PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

Land Restoration, Desertification, Drought Resilience Focus of World Environment Day

Bennett Oghifo

Today, there will be a special focus on land restoration, desertification and drought resilience, as humanity marks World Environment Day (WED 2024). WED is the biggest international day for the environment. Led by the United Nations Environment Programme

(UNEP), and held annually since 1973, it has grown to be the largest global platform for environmental outreach. It is celebrated by millions of people across the world. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will host World Environment Day 2024 with a focus on land restoration, desertification and drought resilience. Land restoration is a key pillar of

the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, which is critical to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. UN Secretary-General António Guterres, said in a message that “humanity depends on land. Yet, all over the world, a toxic cocktail of pollution,

climate chaos, and biodiversity decimation are turning healthy lands into deserts, and thriving ecosystems into dead zones. They are annihilating forests and grasslands, and sapping the strength of land to support ecosystems, agriculture, and communities. “That means crops failing, water sources vanishing, economies weakened, and

communities endangered – with the poorest hit hardest. Sustainable development is suffering. “And we are trapped in a deadly cycle – land use is responsible for eleven percent of the carbon dioxide emissions heating our planet. It’s time to break free. “Countries must deliver on all their commitments to restore degraded ecosystems

and land, and on the entire Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. They must use their new national climate action plans to set out how they will halt and reverse deforestation by 2030. And we must drastically scale-up finance to support developing countries to adapt to violent weather, protect nature, and support sustainable development.

NCF Urges Nigerians to Collectively Address Environmental Issues

Fadekemi Ajakaiye

Nigerians have been urged to get involved committedly in solving the nation’s environmental problems. Hon. Justice R.I.B Adebisi Chairman NEC of NCF, stated this in his opening remarks at the 22nd Chief SL Edu Memorial Lecture of Nigerian Conservation Foundation (NCF) on the topic Carbon Credits opportunities and pitfalls.

Hon. Adebisi said, “Environmental problems are numerous, serious and require urgent attention, they include deforestation: Forest cover in Nigeria has reduced from 10% to 6% within the last three decades, species loss remains on the increase as they lose their natural habitat, loss of biodiversity, Greenhouse Gas emissions; which leads to the trapping of heat and leads to global warming. Climate

change: which causes rising sea levels, extreme weather events, land degradation, fresh water shortage and food insecurity. “Other human activities that affect the environment are industrialization, Air Pollution, intensive farming practices; such as use of heavy pesticides and fertilizers, water contamination and pollution, over fishing, improper waste management, urbanization to mention a few.

“It is important that we pause and reflect on how we can individually and collectively commit to and make a positive impact and difference to these numerous and interrelated environmental issues. We all can by making responsible choices, adopting sustainable practices; such as reducing our carbon footprint protecting natural habitats, phasing out the use of single use plastics, all contribute

towards safeguarding the Earth for future generations “NCF pursues the conservation of nature and its resources with the aim of improving the quality of human life both in the present and the future. “The organization core values include reliability, account ability, excellence, environmental responsiveness and commitment to conservation.” Hon. Adebisi said, “It is important that we pause and

reflect on how we can individually and collectively commit to and make a positive impact and difference to these numerous and interrelated environmental issues. We all can by making responsible choices, adopting sustainable practices; such as reducing our carbon footprint, protecting natural habitats, phasing out the use of single use plastics, all contribute towards safeguarding the Earth for future generations.

ACREeSAL Hybrid Implementation Support Mission Examines Dryland Management, Community Climate Resilience, Others

Bennett Oghifo

The Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACReSAL) is holding a Hybrid Implementation Support Mission to ensure proficient execution of its projects in the 19 northern states of Nigeria, including the Federal Capital Territory. The Hybrid Implementation Support Mission will examine four components of the

ACReSAL project critically. The components include: Dryland Management, Community Climate Resilience, Institutional Strengthening and Project Management and Contingency Emergency Response. ACReSAL is a six year multi-sectoral and multi-level agency of the Nigerian government, with funding from the International Development Association of the World Bank. The Project

is coordinating efforts towards restoring one million hectares of degraded land in the northern part of the country. Eventually, four million hectares of degraded land would be set for broader landscapes restoration by 2030. ACReSAL is planned to help reduce the vulnerability of millions of the extremely poor people in northern Nigeria, strengthening their own roles in achieving environmental sustainability. It will also seek to address some of the critical environmental challenges in 19 Northern states of Nigeria, including the FCT.

This region is characterized by high poverty, low literacy rates, environment of fragility, conflict, various levels of violence, depletion of natural resources, poor agricultural productivity, climate risks, desertification, poor penetration of modern technology and weak institutional capacity. Addressing these issues will require effort in multiple sectors. The Hybrid Team had a meeting in Nasarawa State, one of the benefiting states to review and re-strategise and provide more insightful directions to the benefiting states through project monitoring and evaluation.

The event was declared open by the Governor of Nasarawa State, Engr. Abdullahi A. Sule, who was represented by Deputy Governor Dr. Emmanuel A. Akabe, at the Alh. Aliyu Akwe Doma Banquet Hall, Government House, Lafia. The theme of the mission is to enhance resilience in semi-arid landscapes through sustainable or simply put, Smart Agricultural Practices, Climate-Smart Technologies, and Community Engagement for Sustainability.

Governor Sule emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing climate change and environmental degradation, lauding participants for their commitment to sustainable development and community welfare. Dr. Joy Agene, the World Bank ACReSAL Task Team Leader, highlighted the



L-R: Nasarawa State Commissioner of Finance, Hajjiya Munirat Abdullahi, representative of the Federal Ministry of Finance, Soji Kayode, World Bank Task Team Leader, ACReSAL, Dr Joy Iganya Agene, Deputy Governor, Nasarawa State, Dr Emmanuel Akabe, National Programme Coordinator, ACReSAL, Mr Abdulhamid Umar and an official of the World Bank, Dr Manivel Emmanuel at the joint World Bank Food and Agricultural Organisation and Support Mission to Nasarawa State... recently



No 1 water feature company in Nigeria since 1990

- Swimming Pools
- Fountains
- Waterfalls
- Irrigation Engineers

www.dexdee.com

LAGOS OFFICES:

- VI: 16, Adeola Hopewell
- Ikeja office: 17, Adeniyi Jones.
- Instagram: dexdee_fountains
- Tel: 0805 584 9920, 0803 308 5915

Sanwo-Olu Offers Free Medical Services to Over 2,000 Vulnerable Residents of Ojo, Environs

Bennett Oghifo

Over 2,000 vulnerable residents of Ojo and its environs have benefitted from the Lagos State Government’s free medical services under its Free medical outreach tagged “Alaafia Eko”.

This latest outreach, which includes free treatment of malaria, diabetes, blood pressure, HIV/AIDS, and eye problems with free eye glasses, amongst others. It was held at Ojo Local Government Secretariat and three other councils in Health District V on Thursday, this week.

The Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu, initiated the free medical programme in line with his administration’s efforts to lighten the burden of the vulnerable residents that cannot afford good health care and other basic needs of life.

Speaking at the Free Medical Outreach, the Permanent Secretary of Health District V, Dr Oladapo Asiyambi noted that the present administration in the State initiated several social intervention programmes under the “Eko Cares” project which comprises of “Ounje Eko, Transportation subsidy, “Alaafia Eko,” amongst others for the benefits of residents of the State to cushion the present economic situation of the county.

Dr. Asiyambi, who presided over the Flag-off ceremony of the Outreach for residents of health District V, explained that Alaafia Eko is the provision of free medical services targeted at reaching over 25,000 beneficiaries.

According to him, the free medical programme would offer free screening for common medical conditions, which include malaria, diabetes, blood pressure, HIV/AIDS, and eye problems with free eye glasses, amongst others.

He added that the programme would ensure that vulnerable residents with critical medical conditions are referred to appropriate facilities for further treatment and would also enjoy free health services for one year under “Ilera Eko,” the State Social Health insurance Scheme.

He, however, urged the beneficiaries of the social intervention programs to pay cursory attention to their health by frequently checking their health status.

IMAGES

Photo Editor Abiodun Ajala
Email abiodun.ajala@thisdaylive.com



Group Managing Director/CEO of Felak Concept Group, Dr. Aisha Achimugu (left), receiving the Champion Newspapers’ 2023 Philanthropist of the Year award from the Chairman of the awards ceremony and Chairman, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig. Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd) (right), and other well-wishers at the Newspapers’ annual awards ceremony held at the Eko Hotels and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos...recently



L-R: Chairman, Awards Panel of Judges, 2024 Almond Insurance Industry Awards, Prisca Soares; Vice Chairman of the panel, Dr. Jide Fadun; and Chief Executive Officer, Almond Productions Limited, Faith Ughwode, during the 2024 Almond Insurance Industry Awards press conference and unveiling of the website for nominations, held in Lagos...recently



L-R: Co-founder, Zuri Health, Mr. Titilola Olaolu-Hassan; Chief Strategic Alliance and Growth, Advantage Health Africa, Mr. Mayowa Adeagbo; Vice President, Market Access, Advantage Health Africa, Yewande Adekoya; and Programme Director, Advantage Health Africa, Dr. Uzodinma Umeh, during the ‘Unveiling My ZuriCare’ programme in Lagos...recently

PHOTO:ETOP UKUTT



L-R: Learning Programmes Lead, Incubator Nigeria, Emmanuel Olatunji; Head of CSR, Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Continent 3, Pastor Bayo Olugbemi; Executive Director, Africa Missions Global, Eyono Fatayi-Williams; Continental Overseer, RCCG Continent 3, Pastor Johnson Odesola; and Executive Director, Incubator Nigeria, Oluwafemi Oyetunde, during the grand finale of the Incubator Nigeria Future Clan BootCamp, held at the Redemption City, Ogun State...recently



L-R: General Manager, TotalEnergies Country Services, Adesua Adewole; General Manager Retail and Cards, TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeria Plc, Alhaji Abdullahi Umar; General Manager, Commercial, TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeria Plc, Weruche Wagbara; SFS and Marketing Manager, TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeria Plc, Olufunmilayo Alero Gombe; Leader of the Motorcycle Operators Association of Nigeria (MOAS), Chief Abiodun Ibrahim; and member of All Nigerian Autobike Commercial Owners and Workers Association(ANACOWA) during the launch of the company’s Helmet 4 Life Initiative (to distribute 4,000 helmets to the two-wheeler riders), held at the TotalEnergies Service Station, Ajegunle, Lagos State...recently



L-R: General Manager, Reckitt Sub-Saharan Africa, Akbar Ali Shah; Chairman of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Ogun State, George Olutope Onafowokan; Reckitt Global Chief Executive Officer, Kris Licht; Deputy Governor of Ogun State, Noimot Salako-Oyedele; Chairman of Reckitt, Chief Olufalomo; and Oba Lukman Agunbiade, Olute III, the Alagbara of Agbara, at the 44th year celebration of the Reckitt Agbara Factory and inauguration of the Jik Sachet line in factory in Agbara, Ogun State...recently

EDUCATION

Nigerian Teams Shine at Huawei ICT Competition

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

Four teams from Nigeria have secured two grand prizes, and two first prizes at the Huawei ICT competition 2023-2024 global final.

At the fierce competition held recently in Shenzhen, China, designed to help students enhance their ICT knowledge and practical skills, the Nigerian teams emerged part of 19 teams from nine countries who won the grand prizes of the practice and innovation competitions.

This 8th edition of the Huawei ICT Competition themed ‘Connection, Glory and Future’, attracted more than 170,000 students from over 2,000 universities and colleges across more than 80 countries and regions, making it the largest offline competition since its launch. More than 160 teams consisting of over 470 contestants from 49 different countries and regions made it through national and regional competitions to reach this year’s global final.

The Nigerian team comprising four students from the University of Ibadan - Rufus Adisa, Tolani Adisa, Chibueze Ibekwe, and Lawrence Chukwuemeka- won the grand prize in Computing Track category.

In the Cloud Track category, another Nigerian team also from the University of Ibadan won the grand prize. The students were - Lukman Abdulyekeen, Sodiq Babawale, and Temiloluwa Oloye.

Two teams from the Federal University of Technology, Minna, also won first prizes in the Network Track category. Students in team one included Knimi Musa, Kaosar Ahmad, Taiye Ayantola, Oluwagbemiga Ogundele; and team two consisted of Justus Ilegiuno, Yusuf Toye, and Jamiu Dahunsi.

The Nigerian stars beat thousands of competitors at the national competition, testing a range of practical and theoretical digital skills, and represented Nigeria at the regional contest where they qualified for the finals in China.

Speaking at the event, Ritchie Peng, President of Huawei’s ICT Strategy and Business Development Department, said, “ICT is the cornerstone of the intelligent world. Through the Huawei ICT Competition, we aim to provide students with a global platform to compete and exchange ideas.”

Zhou Hong, President of Huawei’s Institute of Strategic Research, stated that, “to make sure everyone can truly enjoy the benefits of digitalization while such technologies are making radical progress, Huawei believes it is crucial to guarantee that digital technologies are accessible to all.”

Meanwhile, Huawei also held the ICT Accelerating Education Transformation Summit. At the summit, the company awarded 24 instructors with the title ‘Huawei ICT Academy Global Most Valuable Instructor’, which is the first of its kind.

Tuition-free School Seeks Urgent STEM Intervention

Oluchi Chibuzor

Cornerstone Mission Academy, a tuition-free school in Papalanto, Ewekoro Local Government Area, Ogun State is seeking for urgent Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematical (STEM) and other educational learning materials.

The intervention is to support over 150 children who are currently not paying school fees in the rural community.

Speaking to journalists

recently, during a tour of the school, the founder, Abraham Olorunimilo, said because the school stopped providing food for the children a significant number have dropped out.

He said from school uniforms to books, all the 150 schoolchildren receive all free as teachers are not paid.

For him, reducing out-of-school children in the community was a great burden since the establishment in 2017.

“When we started in this community which is predomi-

nantly poor families it was a boarding school and we fed all of them. But because the burden was huge we stopped providing food and we noticed a significant number dropped out. We currently have 150 children which reduce because we stopped feeding.

“In this community, most parents cannot afford school fees. We want to fill that gap by providing them a place where they can nurture their minds to achieve greatness,” he said.

The mathematics teacher and a graduate of Usman Dan fodio University, Mrs. Tomilola Stephen, said teaching in the remote community is challenging as they are doing it voluntarily.

“We need more teachers to support our vision here for the less privileged children. We are soliciting corporate entities to come to our aid and support us with STEM laboratories, books, chairs, and financial support to complete our classrooms.”

Winners Emerge at 2024 Microsoft Office Specialist World Championship

Funmi Ogundare

ReadManna Empowerment Initiative (REI) has unveiled the Nigerian team for the 2024 Microsoft Office Specialist World Championship for Students (MOSWC), to hold from July 28 to 31, at Disneyland, USA.

The MOSWC is keenly competed annually by students in over 150 countries. In the past 15 years, Nigeria has emerged second and third positions in the World Championship and has had top 10 finishes nearly every year.

The winners and their ICT teachers to represent Nigeria at the World Championship are: Olamiposi Ajsafe of Faith Academy, Gowon Estate, Lagos (Excel 2019) with a score of 1,000/1,000 taken in 13min 15sec; Rume Gabari of Grace High School, Gbagada, Lagos (Word 2019) with a score of 1,000/1,000 taken

in 15min 29sec; Daniel Uzugbo of Faith Academy, Ota, Ogun State (PowerPoint 2019) with a score of 1,000/1,000, taken in 10min 10sec.

Others are: Bolurinwa Fabuyi of City of Knowledge Academy, Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State (Excel Office365) with a score of 980/1,000 taken in 13min 8sec; Oluwadamisola Arigbabu of Faith Academy, Ogun State (Word Office365) with a score of 1,000/1,000 taken in 21min 30sec; and Excel Chukwuemeka of Faith Academy, Ota, (PowerPoint Office365) with a score of 1,000/1,000 taken in 16min 27sec.

The students will be accompanied by the two ICT teachers; Mr Stephen Aimufua, of Faith Academy, Ota, the ICT teacher of the student with highest score in the 2023 MOS Nigeria competition

Mr. Omotayo Adeniyi of

Louisville Girls High School, Ijebu-Itele, Ogun State, the ICT teacher of the school with the largest number of certified students in the Junior ICT competition (2024 ReadManna under13 Computing Fundamentals National Competition (ages 8 to 13).

The founder of the initiative, Mrs. Edna Augusto stated that the championship, sponsored annually in Nigeria by Zenith Bank PLC, challenges students to demonstrate their proficiency in the use of Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel.

According to her, “these Microsoft Office Specialist programs are the most commonly used productivity tools by businesses worldwide and the official MOS certification programme assesses and demonstrates proficiency in these programmes.”

Certified MOS users, she added, will become proficient

in the use of Microsoft Office programmes, thereby improving their chances of becoming gainfully employed in today’s digital world.

“It is globally recognised and gives certified users the opportunity to apply for jobs anywhere in the World. MOS certification also provides a solid foundation for advanced ICT training and certified users will be able to pursue training in advanced computer technologies,” Augusto stated.

The founder said out of a total of 136 candidates that applied for the keenly contested, 68 male and 58 females were shortlisted, while only seven scored 1,000/1,000 in various programmes.

She added that the competition is open to all students between the age of 13 and 22 who are enrolled in an institution.

Osun Monarch, Lawmaker, Others Named AFUED Fellows

The traditional ruler of Iragbiji Town in Osun, Oba Rasheed Ayotunde Olabomi, has been conferred with a fellow award by the Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo (AFUED).

Also, the member representing Ondo East/West federal constituency at the House of Representatives, Hon. Abiola Makinde, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Mr. Segun Adenipekun, and former Nigerian Envoy to Sierra Leone, Ambassador Godson Onyemechi Echegile, received a similar award.

Other recipients were Dr. Seun Bosede Osamaye, Mr. Steve Awosika and the National President of AFUED, Dr. Festus Olowogboyega Oyejade.

The conferment of the award was part of activities organised to mark the institution’s 60th anniversary.

In his welcome address at the well-attended occasion, the acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Samuel Akintunde, gave a historical analysis of the institution’s development from its establishment and highlighted its achievements in several areas, which include staff and personnel development, provision of infrastructure, and events leading to the upgrade of the institution from college of education to university of

education.

Akintunde lauded his predecessors’ contributions to the development of the institution and thanked Oba Victor Adesimbo Kiladejo, Hon. Abiola Makinde, Ambassador Godson Echegile, and numerous members of the alumni association for their efforts in attaining the university’s dream.

While assuring students and staff of the management’s commitment to their welfare, the acting university administrator also assured prospective students of available admission opportunities “now that we have control over admission policy.”

Regarding the recent resource verification exercise held in the institution by the National Universities Commission (NUC), Akintunde announced that 25 programmes, out of 61 verified by the body, were approved for the university. He expressed hope for the approval of additional programmes in the near future.

He identified inadequate power supply as one of the institution’s greatest challenges. He appealed to public-spirited individuals, groups, corporate organisations, and interested entrepreneurs who wished to invest in solar energy to come and do so at the university, promising that the management would receive them with open hands.

Wholesome Fun at Greensprings School’s Annual Funday

Funmi Ogundare

Excitement buzzed through the crowd, weekend, as pupils of Greensprings School, Anthony Campus, Lagos, reveled in an atmosphere of fun and games during its Funday, an annual programme organised by the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) to enable them have fun and network.

Speaking with journalists at the programme, the PTA Chairman, Mr. Babajide Familusi explained that the day was set aside as part of activities marking the Children’s Day. He added that the school is building wholesome children, aside from sports and academics and creating time to have fun.

“It is about creating a balance and because we are trying to develop wholesome children, it is important for everyone including the parents and teachers to come together after intense sessions to let our hair down and have fun,” he stated.

Familusi explained that since the education of the child starts from the home, the parents should work out ways to build resilience in their children and develop their mental strength.

“Mental health is a major challenge, but we need to build their resilience and ensure they engage in sporting activities such as learning how to swim tactically and going for competitions periodically,” he said.

According to him, the school

is teaching its pupils emotional intelligence, which helps develop the total child.

“They are learning leadership and to be good at what they do. They are also tope the charts academically, in sporting activities and entrepreneurship.

Mrs. Rashida Oyolola, Activities Committee Chairperson, described the experience as wholesome for the children and the community, saying that it is a day that was created for them to unwind and play together.

“We had a lot of games and parents also rode on some of

the fun rides. It was a pleasant experience for me. Parents who came with their children were able to mingle with others.”

She recalled that in the past, most of the games were for older students, but they had to sectionalised the games this year for the younger children in pre-school and primary school, so they could also be part in the activities.

In her remarks, the Head of School, Mrs. Magdalene Okrikri, said the games will help develop various skills and physical fitness in the students.

“They were able to mingle with each other and in so doing, they were able to develop their social skills. As a school, we intentionally created opportunities for our students to experience total development because we are not just focused on academics, but we are interested in developing a total child.”

She expressed delight about the students’ enthusiasm about the funday, saying that the opportunity they had also helped them to develop confidence and cognitive skills.



L-R: Dr. Mrs. Mosun Bello-Olusoga, Chairman, Bridge House College; Commissioner for Youth and Social development, Mr. Bolaji Ogunlende and Executive Director, BHC, Dr. Mrs. Foluke AbdulRazaq, at the unveiling of the 20th anniversary logo of the college, in Ikoyi, Lagos

Stanbic IBTC Holdings Chief Executive Tasks Youths on Personal, Professional Success

Dike Onwuamaeze

The Chief Executive of Stanbic IBTC Holdings, Dr. Demola Sogunle, has stated that continuous learning, strong imagination and integrity are necessary for success in personal and professional lives. Sogunle said this last week at the University of Lagos during the Stanbic IBTC Youth Leadership Series (YLS) with the theme ‘The Growth Code: Unlocking the Secret and Strategies for Personal and Professional Success’.

He said: “I am encouraging you to subscribe to very strong values. One of them is integrity. If Nigerians do not trust you they will not give you their N1 to keep for them.

“Integrity is one of the reasons Nigerians have trusted the Stanbic IBTC Group so much that in the pension business, one of our subsidiaries has gotten almost 40 per cent market share.

“I cannot tell you the trillions that we manage. But it is massive. Twenty per cent of official salary earners in Nigeria trust us so much that we have got more than 20 per cent of Retirement Savings Accounts (RSAs) because

of our strong values. Integrity is the key.”

He also told his audience to cultivate the habit of imagining the height they would like to attain in their career or academics right from their day one.

“I said that one day I will like to be the managing director when I joined the legacy IBTC. You can wish that in your mind. That is part and parcel of the power of imagination.

“Therefore, start your journey with an end in mind by asking yourself what do I want to be or do with my pursuit? But you have to work it out through diligence and commitment,” he said.

Sogunle also emphasised that continuous learning and personal improvement would get them to higher level of continuous growth.

“Whatever you have got, knowledge and application of knowledge are very important,” he said.

The chief executive also enjoined his audience to “search for better ideas every day,” adding that they “cannot make fundamental change with rational behavior.

Akin Fadeyi Foundation Empowers Bwari Area Council Staff, Students on Safety Awareness

Funmi Ogundare

The Akin Fadeyi Foundation recently held a sensitisation workshop on the ‘Be Safe Initiative’ in partnership with the MacArthur Foundation.

The programme, held at Bwari Area Council, Abuja, with the theme ‘Empowered to Create Safe Spaces Online and Beyond’, was aimed at promoting safety awareness among students and staff by equipping them with the requisite skills and essential knowledge to address and combat critical safety issues.

The founder and Executive Director, Mr. Akin Fadeyi, explained in a statement that the Be Safe initiative demonstrates the foundation’s continued commitment to its Behavioural Change, Gender Equity, and Social Inclusion (GESI) initiatives.

Fadeyi said, “It is a journey we have embarked upon to empower students and staff, equipping them with the requisite skills to combat corruption, cyberbullying, sextortion, gender-based violence and other issues of social injustice.”

The Programme Coordinator, Patience Ismaila, stated that the sensitisation workshop marked a significant milestone in promoting safety awareness among students and staff in the area council.

The programme featured participants from three public senior secondary schools within the Bwari Area Council: Government Day Secondary School Bwari, Government Day Secondary School Dutsen-Alhaji, and Government Secondary School Jibi.

It also featured interactive training sessions, including discussions, role-plays, advocacy drama messages (corruption not in my country) and activities that reinforced the concepts taught. Participants were equipped to serve as champions of the initiative and empowered to conduct step-down training sessions for their peers. Each participant received workshop materials, including jotters, pens, and the Be Safe manual, designed to support ongoing learning and to serve as reference materials.

During the interactive session, questions centred around corruption were asked.

In her response, the AFF project coordinator stated, “Corruption is a learned behaviour, and the urge to engage in it is also learned.”

She said that while the urge may come and go, what truly matters is how one responds to it. She added that it is important to adopt the mindset that change begins with oneself.

Some students who shared their thoughts on the conference explained that they feel confident and can speak out, but they should also be mindful of the information they share or post online.

Some staff also expressed delight about the workshop, saying they are encouraged to impart the knowledge on being safe to their students.

They appealed to other organisations and NGOs to organise such programmes in schools, which would educate students on the issue of bullying, which is prevalent in senior secondary schools.

UBEC Reiterates FG’s Commitment to Transform Basic Education

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

The Executive Secretary of the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Dr. Hamid Bobboyi, has restated the commitment of the federal government to transform basic education in the country based on the results of groundbreaking research to be coordinated by the Digital Resource Centre of the commission.

He stated this during a two-day workshop on Research

Proposals Screening and Execution Modalities organised by the Digital Resource Centre.

In a statement by UBEC spokesperson Mr. David Apeh, Bobboyi explained that the commission is making conscious efforts to focus on research in recognition of its pivotal role and potential to revolutionise the basic education subsector in Nigeria.

Speaking at the workshop’s opening ceremony, Prof. Bashir Galadanci, the National Coordinator of

the Digital Resource Centre, emphasised the transformative power of research for national development, particularly in the context of using digital and smart technologies to promote quality basic education in the country.

He underscored the centre’s commitment to enhancing training, content development, and research, expressing optimism that the workshop would produce strategies and desired next steps for implementing the

centre’s research framework.

For her part, the Head of Research and Development of the UBEC Digital Resource Centre, Dr. Phebe Veronica Jatau, explained that the workshop was aimed at reviewing recommended research topics and eliciting germane feedback from the screening committee, which would help the centre conduct world-class research on the use of digital technologies to promote basic education delivery.



Some students during a march past at the Children’s Day celebration organised by PHED at its head office in Port Harcourt

Lagos Celebrates Children’s Day, Advocates for their Wellbeing

Funmi Ogundare

Public school pupils in Lagos joined their counterparts across the country to mark this year’s Children’s Day, aimed at preparing them for the challenges of the future in an ever-changing and increasingly competitive world.

Themed ‘Advocate for Policies and Actions that Protect and Support Children’s Well-Being’, this year’s programme, held at Police College ground, Ikeja, featured a march past by students.

Some pre-nursery pupils were also admitted into schools by Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Obafemi Hamzat.

Sanwo-Olu congratulated the children, saying that the yearly celebration was about rededicating to the important responsibility which the government owes to the children as future leaders.

The theme, he stated is apt as it reminds all to speak up and take action to make sure that the children are always safe, happy and thriving.

“Since 2019, we have been working hard to support you with many programmes and initiatives aimed at protecting your rights and ensuring your happiness. We know how important early childhood education is for your future, and our goal is to make sure every child gets the chance to learn and grow.”

The governor, who highlighted some of his administration’s achievements in the sector, stated that it is helping students to develop skills for the future, providing paths to success based on what they are good at.

Sanwo-Olu advised the children to “continue to dream big, strive for your goals, and you will surpass your imagination. We will always advocate for your growth and ensure no

child is left behind.

“Let me reassure you that, we are fully committed to providing you with the environment, skills, and opportunities to achieve your dreams. As Lagos rises, a future filled with abundant opportunities is unfolding.”

The Commissioner, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Mr. Jamiu Alli-Balogun appealed to the children to continue to challenge themselves by excelling in academic and co-curricular activities.

“The state government has put a lot of facilities at your disposal and you have to effectively use them to your advantage,” he stated, while acknowledging the role of teachers in mentoring the children and parent/guardians, for being a good role model to them.

He commended the governor and his deputy for their genuine interest in the education, welfare and comfort of every

child in Lagos, as well as their approval to always celebrate the children through a week-long activities of various imparting, educative and entertaining programmes.

In his remarks, the Chairman, Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board (LASUBEB), Dr. Hakeem Shittu encouraged the children to dream big, explore their passions, and never stop learning, while acknowledging the incredible potential that lies within them.

“Today, we celebrate the joy, curiosity, and innocence that you bring to our lives. We recognise the importance of nurturing your growth, protecting your rights, and providing opportunities for you to thrive.

“Remember, you are the future leaders, innovators, and change-makers of tomorrow. Your smiles, laughter, and creativity inspire us to build a better world for you and for generations to come,” he said.

Children’s Day: PHED Celebrates Rivers Students

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

As part of activities to celebrate this year’s Children’s Day, the Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Company (PHED) hosted students from public and private schools in Rivers State.

During the programme held at the head office of PHED in Port Harcourt, THISDAY observed that the selected students from various schools displayed their talents in drama, dancing, talk-show, quiz competition, march

past, among others.

Addressing the students, the acting Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of PHED, Ochuko Amah, said the country celebrated the children because they are the future.

Amah, who admonished the students to be good and responsible citizens of Nigeria, told them to always live their lives believing to be leaders of tomorrow. He said, “as a child, think of yourself and feel special.”

Speaking with journalists at

the venue immediately after the programme, the MD said it is part of the company’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to its host communities, including their valued customers.

She noted the need for the adults to encourage and teach the children in how to become a productive citizen who is pose to take over leadership in the nearest future.

Amah added “Why we chose to celebrate the children today is because they are gift and the future of Nigeria. We are working

for them. We are working to make sure they have a future. When you begin to celebrate and recognise them you are showing them the part to success.”

Some of the students from Jephthah Comprehensive Secondary School, Community Secondary School Ogidigba, Serenifield Royal Academy, Christian Council College, others that spoke with journalists, expressed delight and thanked the management of PHED for hosting them on a day they described as special.

NSCDC's Giant Strides in Safeguarding Public Infrastructure, Curbing Terrorism in Nigeria

The Nigeria Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) was birthed in 2003 to serve as a paramilitary powerhouse in the fight against terrorism, safeguard public infrastructure and act as an emergency response institution for the Nigerian public. Rising through the ranks to become the NSCDC helmsman, the Commandant General, Ahmed Abubakar Audi's mantra since his assumption of office in 2021 is to build a world class corps at par with international best practices, while deepening the impact of the corps in local communities through surveillance of critical public infrastructure across Nigeria. As she x-rays Audi's third year in office, **Esther Oluku** writes that perhaps his most audacious achievement is the establishment of Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad (CG's SIS), which has made and is still making remarkable impact on the war against illegal bunkering, kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery among others



The Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad



NSCDC Commandant General, Ahmed Abubakar Audi

When former President Muhammadu Buhari appointed Ahmed Abubakar Audi as Commandant General of Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in 2021, his vision upon assumption of office was "to make the Corp a world class organisation aligning with world best practices".

These include the actualisation of one of its core function as outlined in section (3)(e) of the NSCDC Act (amended) 2007 which states that the Corp shall "maintain twenty-four hour surveillance over infrastructures, sites and projects of the Federal, State and Local Governments."

Sharing his philosophy during a tour of the NSCDC Training College, Nasarawa, last year, he maintained that securing public infrastructure would trickle into securing the life of Nigerians who use these assets.

He noted that combating the criminals who vandalise public infrastructure would require professionalism which is fueled by knowledge. This premise informed his drive to intensify training and retraining of officers.

Two other functions of the NSCDC as outlined in the Act section 3(h)(ii) are; to "syndicate activities which aims at defrauding the Federal, State and Local government"; and in section 3(k) to "provide and manage shelters for civilians during any periods of emergency."

Giant Strides

The giant strides of CG Audi are numerous but are not limited to providing purposeful leadership in ensuring tangible and intangible assets addition to the NSCDC.

He created the Civil Defence Academy in Jos, Plateau State as well as the NSCDC Arms Squad Training School at Ugede Development Area, Nasarawa LGA of Nasarawa State; NSCDC Female Squad to aid in tackling kidnapping and other restiveness in schools nationwide; and NSCDC Special Mines Marshal for stopping the menace of illegal mining in the country's mining sector.

He introduced career progression for personal of the NSCDC; increased welfare packages of personnel; led to massive acquisition of arms for NSCDC operational use; purchased mini fire fighting tankers for disaster management in case of emergencies; procured Armoured Personnel Carrier [APC] vehicles; and ensured staff welfare and motivational packages through massive promotion, conversion and upgrading, as well as provision of staff welfare buses.

He also constructed official and residential buildings within and outside the NSCDC Headquarters; procured operational and office

equipment; led to the destruction of 350 illegal refineries in the Niger Delta region; arrested and prosecuted vandals in several courts of competent jurisdiction within the country (the conviction rates are equally the highest in the history of the NSCDC); arrested and recovered critical assets and railway materials worth over 5 billion; and initiated the Save the School innovative program for the protection of vulnerable schools across the country.

Charting the Course with the Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad

In the third year in office of Dr. Ahmed Audi, which also marks the middle of his five-year tenure, the NSCDC has recorded with enviable progress. This can be attributed to robust training of its personnel and a tightening on the noose on vandalism, terrorism and related crimes in the country.

As part of efforts to spearhead the movement, the CG created the Commandant General's Special Intelligence Squad (CG's SIS) which has made and is still making remarkable impact on the war against illegal bunkering, kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery among others. The Commandant General Special Intelligence Squad is headed by DCC Dandaura.S. Appollos (JP), who has recorded tremendous successes in tackling crime nationwide.

One of the responsibilities of the NSCDC has been to tackle pipeline vandalism and illegal bunkering. Charged to coordinate this is the CG Special intelligence Squad and they have recorded results nationwide.

Recently, those deployed to Rivers uncovered a massive illegal oil bunkering site at Odagwa Community, Etche Local Government Area of the State in March. The oil well head, belonging to Heirs Energies and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), located around Imo River 2 Oil and Gas field at Odagwa in Etche was tapped by vandals at multiple points.

The State Command Spokesperson, Superintendent Olufemi Ayodele, hinted that the successful discovery of over 10 illegal Refineries with an estimated 500,000 litres of Crude oil contained in about 50 illegally constructed Reservoirs was based on credible intelligence.

Re-echoing the resolve of the CG, Ayodele said: "The Commandant General of the NSCDC, Dr Ahmed Abubakar

Audi, has reiterated over time that all acts of economic sabotage would be fought to stand still as suspects arrested would face the full wrath of the law irrespective of their sponsors.

"While conducting an operational tour across the large thick forest about 10 different cooking pots of 50,000 litres capacity were seen with one big Pumping machine, Receiver Tanks, 25 rubber hoses used for pumping crude oil and many long galvanised pipes with unqualified litres of crude oil and illegally refined Automotive Gas Oil stored in 6 very large reservoirs and other 20 smaller reservoirs dug in the ground.

"The names of the suspects who were handed over to the Rivers State Command for further investigation are:

Favour Chukwu (M) 29 years, Desmond Umeh (M) 25 years, Godwin Amos (M) 22years, Bineace Gallion (M) 38years and Goodnews David (M) 23 years.

The Rivers State Commandant, Basil Igwebueze, condemned the act while thanking the CG for commissioning the Special Intelligence Squad across the states of the federation.

In his remark, he expressed that the uncovering of the illegal bunkering site underscores the vital role of the agency in protecting critical national assets.

He said: "The uncovering of this massive illegal oil bunkering site is a landmark achievement and an indication that the NSCDC, as the lead agency in the protection of all critical national assets and infrastructure, will continue to combat crude oil theft with renewed vigour even as we work in synergy with sisters security agencies to salvage the nation's economy from saboteurs.

"Thorough investigation has commenced to unravel those behind the scene while all suspects arrested in connection with this act of vandalism and crude oil theft would be charged to Court of competent jurisdiction and their sponsors or cartels would be trailed and brought to book without compromise."

On August 4, 2023, the Commandant General's SIS led by DC Dandaura Appollos, arrested suspected rail line vandals disguised as scavengers who had vandalised rail track iron, concealed them inside scrap iron materials loaded in trucks and conveying them for sales to their vendors.

The vehicle used for concealment, a DAF trailer truck with registration number BSA 899 XA, and four [4] suspects were intercepted along Lafia- Akwanga-Abuja express way, Sabon-pagi , Shabu, Lafia, Nasarawa State.

The arrested vehicle was moved to the exhibit yard at NSCDC Nasarawa State Command, Lafia, and the scrap irons were offloaded. It was discovered that a large quantities of railway irons were under the loaded scrap, while the

four suspects were taken into custody for further investigation.

Among the arrested suspects include: AAnasAli, 27yrs, Yusuf Idris, 25yrs, Hafis Idris,18yrs and Nasiru Abdullahi,28years.

Appollos, while giving the brief hinted that the operational success was achieved through credible Intelligence that some suspects have vandalised a Multinational Company Well Head and connected galvanised metal pipes with large hoses thereby syphoning crude and processing it locally.

"Just as we value and protect our informants, the information received are always treated with caution and prompt alertness; as soon as we arrived the suspect took to their heels but we were able to arrest one Godspower Oyibo (M) 32 years from Delta State who is now assisting us with further investigation".

"On the crime scene there were reservoirs cemented with trampoline and filled with approximately 100,000 litres of crude oil. While the following exhibits were sighted:

A Yellow Colour Robin EY 20 Pumping Machine, Galvanized metal pipes, long large hoses, Already Vandalized Well head, stolen crude worth 100,000 litres stored in reservoirs, calibrated surface tanks, processed AGO in cooking pots and metal buckets".

"The Rivers State Commandant, Basil Igwebueze has been approximately intimated with the development; we assure the public that the Corps will not be fatigued in the relentless war against vandalism and crude oil theft across the nation even as suspects arrested would have their time in Court after diligent investigation".

In the same period under review, the NSCDC arrested 13 suspects in connection with vandalism of long rails worth over N800 million. The suspects were paraded alongside five trucks conveying large quantities of vandalised rails and sleepers at the NSCDC headquarters in Abuja.

Parading the suspects arrested by the CG's SIS, the NSCDC National Public Relations Officer fgg said that the arrests took place around Manchock area of Kaura LGA, Zonkwa area in Zango Kataf LGA, and Kaffanchan area in Jama'a LGA of Kaduna State.

While interviewing one of the truck drivers, he disclosed that he was offered N1.2million upon delivery of the stolen items to Ilorin. The suspect said that he was however given N200,000 advance payment from which he had giveb N100,000 to the agent who contacted him for the job.

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

Nigerian Navy @68 and Naval Dockyard's Contribution to Its Fleet Renewal

Just last week, the Nigerian Navy clocked 68 and it was commemorated with a beehive of activities including the inauguration of projects at the Naval Dockyard Limited, NDL, the Naval Hub of Engineering set up to enhance Nigeria's strategic self-reliance in maintaining naval vessels, developing expertise, and embarking on design and building of ships and craft in support of the nation's continental and global maritime seapower projection and its Blue Economy, **Chiemelie Ezeobi** reports



L-R: Navy Captain Olumide Faneye; Chairman, NN 60th anniversary committee, Rear Admiral Clement Atebi; Admiral Superintendent Naval Dockyard (ASND), Rear Admiral Abolaji Oredoru; Commander, NNS BEECROFT, Commodore Rafiu Taye Oladejo; and Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ikechukwu Ogalla during the inauguration of some projects at the Naval Dockyard Limited



L-R: ASND, Rear Admiral Oredoru; CNS, Vice Admiral Ogalla; Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Christopher Musa; Chief of Naval Engineering (CONE), Rear Admiral Kohath Levi; and Rear Admiral Noel Madugu, when the CDS went on a tour of the NDL

The Naval Dockyard Limited (NDL) is the premiere logistic facility of the Nigeria Navy (NN) which caters for third line or depot maintenance of ships and over the years, those capacities have yielded result with countless constructions including the three indigenously built vessels- Nigerian Navy Ships (NNS) ANDONI, KARADUWA, and ODIA, for the Nigerian Navy with two new ones including a 41 metre Seaward Defence Boat (SDB), the third in the series, in the offing.

For stakeholders, this demonstrates the immense potential NDL possesses in the shipbuilding/repair business as the yard has also built over 100 riverine patrol boats, constructed and maintained houseboats, constructed self-propelled barges, repaired vessels both military and merchant ships, and constructed GRP boats and numerous

maritime engineering construction as well as oil and gas platforms/assets currently performing optimally within Nigeria's maritime space.

On June 1, the Nigerian Navy clocked 68 and for the NDL, the culmination of the 68 years was a testament of the contribution the yard has achieved in boosting the fleet renewal and recapitalisation drive of the navy.

Asides playing host to bulk of the Navy Day celebrations, the NDL also had a lot to showcase as was seen when the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ikechukwu Ogalla toured the dockyard in the company of some senior officers and inaugurated some projects undertaken by the Admiral Superintendent Naval Dockyard (ASND), Rear Admiral

Abolaji Oredoru.

Earlier at the Interdenominational Church Service in commemoration of the 68th Anniversary Celebration in Abuja, the CNS said the new ships and platforms were in continuation of the fleet renewal effort of the navy through the support of President Bola Tinubu's administration and his commitment to make the service more efficient.

Ogalla said the navy's fleet renewal effort had been given serious boost through its local shipbuilding effort, saying it had become a cardinal point of his vision and its realisation is the only way to grow as a navy by tapping into local content in all its key areas of development of which shipbuilding is part of.

He added that the service also recognised that shipbuilding and ship repairs would contribute effectively to the overall growth

of the economy.

After inspecting the NDL Conference Hall and the Exhibition Tent that was used during the anniversary, he also inspected the construction site for Seaward Defence Boats (SDB) 4 & 5 and afterwards inaugurated the renovated General Manager Sea Training (GMST) Block, the Electroplating Plant, the Galvanising Plant, the newly constructed elevator for NDL Conference Hall, the NDL Gallery, the remodelled Administrative Block, the Upgraded NDL Officers Mess and the NDL Sports Complex.

With all he saw, the CNS commended the ASND for the good work and enjoined him not to rest on their oars.

This was later re-echoed by the Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Gwabin Musa (OFR), who was also taken on a tour of NN facilities & projects at Naval Dockyard Limited (NDL).

Celebrating a Great Leader: The Enduring Legacy of Prophet TB Joshua

Mary Nnah

Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua, or TB Joshua as he was affectionately known by millions, was more than just a Nigerian pastor. He was a captivating leader whose influence transcended the boundaries of religion and geography. As the founder of The Synagogue, Church of All Nations (SCOAN) and Emmanuel TV, he became a revered figure for Christians across the globe. This article celebrates his life, highlighting his profound spiritual leadership, his unwavering commitment to helping others, and the enduring legacy he leaves behind.

TB Joshua's ministry thrived on his dynamic and charismatic preaching. Crowds flocked to his Lagos-based church, drawn to his sermons that resonated with a deep yearning for spiritual renewal and miracles. He spoke of faith, love, and the transformative power of God's grace, messages that touched both the devout and those new to Christianity. Miraculous healings, attributed to divine intervention, became a hallmark of his ministry. Testimonies of the blind regaining sight, the lame walking, and the sick finding cures resonated with viewers worldwide through Emmanuel TV, solidifying faith and attracting visitors from all corners of the globe.

However, TB Joshua's greatness extended



Late Prophet TB Joshua

far beyond the pulpit. He was a man of immense compassion, deeply committed to alleviating the suffering of others. Through various charities and initiatives, he fought poverty, illiteracy, and the devastation caused by disasters. Scholarships for underprivileged students, healthcare assistance, and support for widows and orphans – his philanthropy touched countless lives. He cham-

pioned the cause of displaced persons and refugees, his benevolence reaching beyond Nigeria to embrace Africa and the world. His humanitarian work embodied his belief in "practical Christianity," a philosophy that translated faith into concrete action.

The impact of TB Joshua's ministry wasn't confined to Nigeria. His charismatic leadership drew a diverse international congregation, with thousands from different cultures and faiths attending his services. His teachings and acts of charity resonated globally, earning him recognition from world leaders and organizations. Through it all, he remained steadfast in his mission, facing criticism with unwavering dedication to spreading the Gospel and serving humanity. His message of love, compassion, and faith resonated across demographics, contributing to the growth of Christianity in regions where it was previously less prevalent.

Though his passing in June 2021 marked the end of an era, TB Joshua's legacy continues to inspire millions. SCOAN remains a vibrant centre of worship and service, carrying forward the work he began. His teachings, readily available through various media platforms, continue to uplift and encourage believers worldwide. Prophet TB Joshua's life and ministry stand as a testament to the power of faith and the impact of dedicated service. His legacy is one of unwavering devotion to God, tireless humanitarianism,

and an enduring influence on the global Christian community. He is remembered not just as a prophet and pastor, but as a beacon of hope and a symbol of God's love made real.

While the aforementioned details paint a vivid picture of TB Joshua's remarkable accomplishments, his true impact lies in the countless lives transformed by his message and actions. Countless testimonies exist, detailing stories of recovery from illness, mended relationships, and a renewed sense of hope. These individual transformations represent the true spirit of his leadership, a ripple effect of positive change spreading outwards in all directions.

Today, we celebrate Prophet TB Joshua not just as a spiritual leader, but as a compassionate humanitarian and a man who inspired millions to embrace faith, hope, and charity. His legacy continues to inspire, reminding us of the power of compassion, service, and unwavering belief in the potential for good within each of us.

Prophet TB Joshua's life wasn't just a memory to celebrate, it's a challenge for us to embrace. Let his generosity, unwavering faith, and dedication to improving the world become our guiding light. This isn't just a moment to look back, it's a call to action. Let's use his legacy as fuel for positive change, inspiring us to create a world filled with more compassion and hope.

Nasarawa, Aerthmetal, Boxmoor to Establish Uke Gold Company

Oluchi Chibuzor

In a landmark move poised to boost the local economy and Nigeria’s standing in the global mining sector, the Nasarawa State Government, Aerthmetal, and Boxmoor have formally signed a tripartite agreement to establish Uke Gold Company.

This strategic partnership aims to explore, develop, and produce gold mineral resources in the Uke community, promising substantial economic benefits and sustainable development.

Key government officials, business leaders including executives from Aerthmetal and Boxmoor, and representatives from the host community, attended the official signing ceremony, held in Lafia.

CEO of Aerthmetal, Dr.

Mariam Yahaya-Shiru shared her thoughts on the momentous occasion saying, “We are deeply grateful to the Uke community for their warm welcome and unwavering support. This partnership is a testament to the strength and potential of collaboration. Together with Boxmoor and the Nasarawa State Government, we are committed to establishing Uke Gold Company as a model of excellence in the mining sector.”

Yahaya-Shiru further emphasized the broader implications of this venture, noting, “The establishment of Uke Gold Company is not just about mining; it is about positioning Nigeria as a formidable leader in the global mining industry. We aim to set

new standards in sustainability, innovation, and community engagement, showcasing Nigeria’s capabilities on the world stage.”

Speaking, the Managing Director, Nasarawa Investment (NASIDA), Mr. Ibrahim Abdullahi stated that said, “this initiative aligns with the States strategy to participate in the mining sector, generate revenue and create jobs.”

The Uke Gold Company project is expected to bring numerous benefits to the region, including job creation, infrastructure development, and enhanced local business opportunities. The initiative also prioritises environmental sustainability and community involvement, ensuring that the growth is inclusive and responsible.



R-L: Head of Agriculture, First City Monument Bank (FCMB), Mr Kudzai Gumuny; Former President, Olusegun Obasanjo; Advocacy & Communication Lead, EFInA, Ms Chinasa Collins Ogbuo; Minister Of Communication, Innovation & Digital Economy, Dr Bosun Tijani; Managing Director, Prime Agro Seeds Limited, Mr Meka Nwabuko and Client Technology Lead, Microsoft, Mr Wole Odeleye at the AgriConnect Summit in Lagos...recently

Radix Pension Plans Expansion of Market Share

Ebere Nwoji

Radix Pension Managers, has said that its target was to be listed among the big ten pension fund administrators in the next five years.

With N20 billion assets under management and 49000 contributors, Radix said it was a major player in oil and gas business and was targeting further deepening of its market share through the inclusion of public sector clients in its portfolio and breaking grounds

in Micro pension space.

Radix Managing Director, Mr Victor Bisong, who disclosed these at the Retirees’ Forum organised by the company in Lagos said currently the pension fund administrator depends on corporate institutional clients but was targeting federal and state government workers as its contributors.

He explained that the retirees’ forum was a programme where Radix Management and staff engaged the retirees made them happy and gave them sense of

belonging.

He said, “It is a platform created to hear from them know their problems make them happy and let them know we are there for them. We want to know their needs and as PFA knows areas where we can come in through these programmes.

“Pension is a good but long term business that requires patients, as investors we have to follow regulations because retiree fund is not free fund you invest without formal regulation.”

Nestlé Equips Over 3.7 Million Children for the Future

In commemoration of Children’s Day, Nestlé Nigeria restated its commitment to fostering the well-being of children and equipping them for the future.

Through initiatives aimed at promoting healthy nutrition, STEM education, and grassroots sports, the company said it reached over 3.7 million children in 2023, demonstrating its dedication to preparing them for a brighter future.

These initiatives are in alignment with Nestlé’s commitment to enhancing quality of life for people of all ages. By empowering children with the values, tools and skills to make the right decisions, Nestlé is contributing to nurturing

future leaders that will transform the nation.

Highlighting this objective, Corporate Communications, Public Affairs, and Sustainability Lead at Nestlé Nigeria, Victoria Uwadoka, said; “Childhood is a critical period for forming life-long habits that could determine quality of life in the future. Therefore, teaching children to eat right, stay active, pursue their dreams, set and achieve goals is one of the ways through which we are nurturing the next generation of leaders. We achieve this through Nestlé MILO Building Champs, Nestlé MILO Basketball Championship, Nestlé for Healthier Kids and the

Nestlé Community Scholarships. This year, we are extending these programs to more schools and communities, to reach even more children.

“Through the community scholarships, Nestlé is promoting STEM education to give children within its communities the opportunity to access technical capabilities and skills to contribute to the industrialisation of the country. This is one of Nestlé’s creating shared value initiatives: creating value for society while delivering business growth: the children are equipped for the future, and Nestlé gains an increased pipeline of future talents.”

Arbico Delists from NGX

Kayode Tokede

Arbico Plc worth about N74.25 billion in market capitalisation has delisted from the daily official list of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX).

The company had applied for voluntary delisting of its entire 148,500,000 ordinary shares of N0.50kobo each from the main board of NGX.

Arbico joined GlaxoSmith-Kline Consumer Nigeria

inn 2024 to delist from the Exchange

The NGX disclosed in its weekly official report made available to newsmen in Lagos that the company was delisted May 20 2024.

Arbico, a building and civil engineering construction company, was established in 1958 and listed on the Exchange in 1978.

Shareholders of the company had in March 2024 approved the voluntary

delisting of the shares of the company from the bourse and sought the regulator’s approval.

NGX in a statement said: “Refer to our market bulletin of May 17, 2024, with reference number: NGXREG/IRD/MB26/24/05/17 wherein the Market was notified of the suspension placed on trading in the securities of Arbico Plc in preparation for the delisting of the company.”

IBEDC Appoints Agoha MD

The management of Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company (IBEDC), has named Mr. Francis Agoha, as its new Acting Managing Director.

The distribution company in a statement titled, “IBEDC’s Announces New Leadership and Strategic Direction”, disclosed that this is a sequel to the expiration of the tenure

of Mr. Kingsley Achife, which will not be renewed.

According to the statement, these appointments signify IBEDC’s commitment to operational excellence and customer-focused growth during a pivotal transition phase, insisting that this is a decisive step forward and a significant change in

its leadership and strategic direction.

The statement read in part, “In a major strategic move aimed at further consolidating our transformation journey, the Board of Directors at Ibadan Electricity Distribution Company has announced pivotal changes in leadership and direction.

MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)	
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	1,588,771.44
Money Supply (M2)	93,968,491.96
-- Quasi Money	63,691,242.70
-- Narrow Money (M1)	30,277,249.26
---- Currency Outside Banks	3,411,735.44
---- Demand Deposits	26,865,513.82
Net Domestic Assets(NDA)	88,149,253.67
---- Credit to Government (Net)	33,925,848.79
---- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	0.00
---- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	0.00
Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	80,863,019.16
--Other Assets Net	13,319,068.99
Reserve Money (Base Money)	21,230,656.70
--Currency in Circulation	3,693,573.23
--Banks Reserves	17,537,083.47
--Special Intervention Reserves	433,229.15

• Source - CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)	
Month	February
Inter-Bank Call Rate	19.25
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	22.75
Treasury Bill Rate	17.03
Savings Deposit Rate	5.86
1 Month Deposit Rate	8.69
3 Months Deposit Rate	9.89
6 Months Deposit Rate	9.61
12 Months Deposit Rate	10.75
Prime Lending rate	15.06
Maximum Lending Rate	26.55

NSE MARKET INDEX	
NSE	% Change
CAP	0.75%(52% YoY)
Index	0.9% (29% Y/D)

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT 4TH APRIL , 2024	
The price of OPEC basket of twelve crudes stood at \$87.33 a barrel on Monday, compared with \$86.00 the previous Thursday, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations.	
The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), 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

Stock Market Maintains Prof-taking Momentum, Drops by N38bn

Kayode Tokede

The Nigerian stock market yesterday saw a negative close for the second trading day in the month of June 2024 as market capitalisation went down by N38 billion. The All Share Index (ASI) depreciated by 67.84 basis points or 0.07 per cent to close at 99,051.02 basis points. Accordingly, market capitalisation declined by

N38 billion to close at N56.032 trillion. The downturn was impacted by losses recorded in medium and large capitalised stocks, amongst which are; Zenith Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA), FBN Holdings (FBNH), Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI) and Custodian Investment. Also, investor sentiment, as measured by market

breadth closed negative as 17 stocks advanced, while 22 declined. Nigerian Breweries recorded the highest price gain of 10 per cent to close at N28.60, per share. Presco followed with a gain of 9.99 per cent to close at N293.90, while Oando rose by 9.65 per cent to close at N14.20, per share. R.T. Briscoe Nigeria appreciated by 9.62 per cent to close at 57 kobo, while

DEAP Capital Management & Trust up by 9.09 per cent to close at 48 kobo, per share. On the other hand, Tantalizer led the losers’ chart by 10 per cent, to close at 45 kobo, per share. International Energy Insurance followed with a decline of 9.71 per cent to close at N1.58, while UPDC declined by 9.70 per cent to close at N1.21, per share.

Unity Bank depreciated by 9.42 per cent to close at N1.25, while Chams Holding Company declined by 6.67 per cent to close at N1.40, per share. However, the total volume traded decreased by 2.5 per cent to 347.389 million units, valued at N7.656 billion, and exchanged in 8,122 deals. Transactions in the shares of Veritas Kapital Assurance topped the

activity chart with 59.175 million shares valued at N40.220 million. Fidelity Bank followed with 48.121 million shares worth N468.227 million, while Oando traded 27.959 million shares valued at N397.019 million. Unity Bank traded 20.529 million shares valued at N25.923 million, while UBA sold 19.782 million shares worth N418.864 million.

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF JUNE 4 / 24

MAIN BOARD		DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
1	UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	718,187.85	21.00	-4.11 ⬇️	641 19,761,835
2	ZENITH BANK PLC	1,004,687.80	32.00	-3.03 ⬇️	435 6,122,601
BANKING					1,076 25,904,436
S/N	OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
3	ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	609,600.62	17.15	0.29 ⬆️	600 16,330,122
4	FBN HOLDINGS PLC	789,696.44	22.00	-1.37 ⬇️	233 11,311,036
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					833 27,641,158
FINANCIAL SERVICES					1,909 53,545,594
ICT					
S/N	TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
5	MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	4,828,978.82	230.00	-	269 608,032
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES					269 608,032
ICT					269 608,032
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N	BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
6	DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	11,150,591.31	656.70	-	119 7,292
7	LA FARGE AFRICA PLC	531,557.25	33.00	-	94 858,689
BUILDING MATERIALS					213 866,181
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					213 866,181
OIL AND GAS					
S/N	EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
8	SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	1,980,410.17	3,365.50	-	132 156,563
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION					132 156,563
OIL AND GAS					132 156,563
AGRICULTURE					
S/N	CROP PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
9	ELLAH LAKES PLC	8,343.97	3.03	1.00 ⬆️	21 823,735
10	FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	4,485.00	1.15	-1.71 ⬇️	151 8,005,054
11	OKOMU OIL PALM PLC	243,914.79	255.70	-	61 119,213
12	PRESCO PLC	293,900.00	293.90	9.99 ⬆️	235 1,200,108
CROP PRODUCTION					468 10,148,110
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES		MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
13	LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	5,310.00	1.77	-	21 127,741
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES					21 127,741
AGRICULTURE					469 10,275,851
CONGLOMERATES					
S/N	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
14	CUSTODIAN INVESTMENT PLC	58,524.55	9.95	-2.93 ⬇️	76 1,556,845
15	JOHN HOLT PLC	844.46	2.17	-	2 1,780
16	S C O A NIG. PLC	1,397.13	2.15	-	0 0
17	TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	445,095.49	10.95	-1.70 ⬇️	262 3,816,921
18	U A C N PLC	39,502.78	13.50	-	57 1,017,627
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES					397 6,396,173
CONGLOMERATES					397 6,396,173
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N	INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
19	AVA INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	4,075.00	1,000,000.00	-	0 0
20	CHAPEL HILL DENHAM NIG. INFRAS DEBT FUND	109,445.10	114.00	-	9 10,366
21	JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC	131,200.00	82.00	-	61 55,203
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION					70 65,589
S/N	REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
22	UPDC PLC	22,457.56	1.21	-9.70 ⬇️	18 351,794
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT					18 351,794
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					88 417,383
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N	AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
23	DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	-	0 0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS					0 0
S/N	BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
24	CHAMPION BREW. PLC	26,843.99	3.00	-	12 136,133
25	GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC	3,227.70	3.15	-	1 100
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N	BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
26	GUINNESS NIG PLC	109,190.58	49.85	-	57 12,881,419
27	INTERNATIONAL BEVERIES PLC	99,389.65	3.70	1.37 ⬆️	27 664,603
28	NIGERIAN BREW. PLC	293,897.39	28.60	10.00 ⬆️	213 2,021,506
BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS					310 15,703,761
S/N	FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
29	BUA FOODS PLC	6,838,200.00	379.90	-	39 3,271
30	DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	570,903.28	47.00	-	166 1,155,432
31	FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC	155,814.42	38.00	-	57 379,759
32	HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	24,187.10	3.05	1.67 ⬆️	37 1,017,110
33	MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.10	0.36	-	0 0
34	N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	8,607.06	48.30	-	6 15,352
35	NASCORN ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	110,384.15	40.85	-	64 678,856
36	UNION DICON SALT PLC	2,214.04	8.10	-	3 2,712
FOOD PRODUCTS					372 3,252,492
S/N	FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
37	CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	36,484.55	16.00	-	44 45,443
38	NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	717,353.91	905.00	-	89 48,738
FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED					133 94,175
S/N	HOUSEHOLD DURABLES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
39	NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC	1,467.42	19.30	-	0 0
40	VITAFOAM NIG PLC	21,264.35	17.00	-	33 144,588
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES					33 144,588
S/N	PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
41	P Z CUSONS NIGERIA PLC	87,350.49	22.00	-	15 49,390
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N	PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
42	UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	86,462.33	15.05	-	27 151,805
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS					79 5,195,350
CONSUMER GOODS					929 15,068,550
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
43	ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	390,845.44	21.30	-	41 383,545
44	FIDELITY BANK PLC	324,923.95	10.15	-0.49 ⬇️	275 13,283,734
45	GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	1,177,247.17	40.00	-1.25 ⬇️	392 47,634,224
46	JAIZ BANK PLC	71,154.82	2.06	-9.65 ⬇️	108 6,641,072
47	STERLING FINANCIAL HOLDINGS COMPANY PLC	118,040.71	4.10	1.49 ⬆️	59 1,860,184
48	UNITY BANK PLC	16,131.29	1.38	-9.80 ⬇️	99 6,268,876
49	WEMA BANK PLC	90,007.09	7.00	-	103 1,742,603
BANKING					1,077 77,614,238
S/N	INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
50	AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	-	0 0
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
51	AIICO INSURANCE PLC	36,239.22	0.99	-1.98 ⬇️	138 17,190,634
52	AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	46,260.00	5.14	-4.81 ⬇️	58 739,969
53	CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK HOLDINGS PLC	15,609.60	1.44	-	13 166,339
54	CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	35,787.79	1.97	-5.74 ⬇️	18 506,471
55	CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	16,794.18	0.70	-	15 748,224
56	GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	-	0 0
57	GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	2,541.70	0.32	-	28 1,231,097
58	INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	2,028.86	1.58	-9.71 ⬇️	28 1,603,307
59	LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	3,758.85	2.05	2.50 ⬆️	10 520,700
60	LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	11,900.00	0.85	-	4 14,110
61	MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	11,234.51	0.56	-3.57 ⬇️	28 1,759,027
62	NEM INSURANCE PLC	42,640.06	8.50	0.59 ⬆️	46 606,632
63	NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,547.90	0.20	-	0 0
64	PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	7,288.91	0.55	-	10 929,229
65	REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	2,734.19	0.41	5.13 ⬆️	30 2,472,525
66	SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	6,544.94	0.46	4.55 ⬆️	16 889,173
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	7,379.72	1.27	-3.05 ⬇️	13 605,304
70	UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	5,760.00	0.36	-	13 2,135,995
71	VERITAS CAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	9,568.00	0.89	7.81 ⬆️	72 59,174,738
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					540 91,293,474
S/N	MICRO-FINANCE BANKS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
72	NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	9,588.89	1.60	-3.12 ⬇️	46 2,011,775

MAIN BOARD		DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	MICRO-FINANCE BANKS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS					46 2,011,775
S/N	MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
73	ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	27,415.38	2.70	-	19 15,701
74	ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	-	0 0
75	INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	29,401.71	7.05	-	1 10
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
76	INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	29,360.01	7.04	-	0 0
77	RESORT SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	2,265.95	0.20	-	0 0
78	UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	2,949.22	3.02	-	0 0
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					14 7,889
S/N	OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
79	AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	12,800.00	6.40	-	47 383,777
80	DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	885.00	0.59	-8.47 ⬇️	8 524,169
81	FCMB GROUP PLC	160,401.96	8.10	2.53 ⬆️	180 13,567,029
82	NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP	48,611.87	24.75	-	30 283,319
83	ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	4,712.02	0.57	-6.56 ⬇️	57 9,984,983
84	STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	673,763.85	52.00	-	56 5,214,275
85	UNITED CAPITAL PLC	107,700.00	17.95	0.28 ⬆️	150 3,590,511
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					528 33,548,063
FINANCIAL SERVICES					2,355 17,514,871
HEALTHCARE					
S/N	HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
86	EKOCORP PLC	2,886.90	5.79	-	0 0
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS					0 0
S/N	MEDICAL SUPPLIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
87	MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	4,006.11	4.05	-	2 28,961
MEDICAL SUPPLIES					2 28,961
S/N	PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
88	FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	36,146.19	15.75	-	19 64,363
89	MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	12,076.64	7.00	1.45 ⬆️	45 873,925
HEALTHCARE					
S/N	PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
90	PHARMA-DEKO PLC	396.78	1.83	-	0 0
PHARMACEUTICALS					65 284,317
HEALTHCARE					71 287,045
ICT					
S/N	COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
91	OMATEK VENTURES PLC	2,235.76	0.76	4.11 ⬆️	20 1,139,441
COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS					20 1,139,441
S/N	IT SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME

CITYSTRINGS

Group Features Editor: Chiemelie Ezeobi

Email chiemelie.ezeobi@thisdaylive.com, 07010510430

Reminiscing a Legal Luminary, Lucius Nwosu, an Advocate of Environmental Justice

The need for environmental justice has been clamoured by so many people who believed that the existence of a man depends on how the environment is being treated. Lucius Ezeaka Nwosu, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) until his death had defended the environment not minding whose gut is involved. **Blessing Ibunge** writes that the legal luminary was recently given accolades at a memorial lecture held in Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Legal luminaries and well-meaning Nigerians gathered at the premises of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) in Port Harcourt, at the weekend, for an inaugural memorial lecture in honour of an erudite and formidable legal practitioner, Lucius Ezeaka Nwosu of blessed memory. As a specialist on Environmental Law, Nwosu received accolades for ensuing that not only was his defense protected the environment, but polluters of the environment were also punished for their offences.

In his remarks at the lecture held at the NBA House, Port Harcourt, the Rivers State Chief Judge, Justice Simeon C. Amadi expressed the need for lawyers to be specialised in their legal defense, noting the committed efforts by the late SAN in ensuring that those who through their activities polluted the environment were properly punished.

The Chief Judge speaking on the topic for the inaugural lecture "The Use of Court Room Advocacy in Addressing Environmental Issues", said is apt with the fact that the world is submerged in the mess of environmental problems and its consequential effects.

He said "The international communities troubled by various types of environmental issues and there is a call for all hands to be on deck to tackle this problem. It is against this backdrop and had become imperative that we the legal profession also use advocacy as a tool to tackle the environmental issues".

According to Justice Amadi, the law and chief regulator of the society plays very important role in checkmating actions of individual, corporation and government agencies in all issues including environmental issues, therefore "Core true advocacy can only give the legal practice the teeth to clampdown on violators".

"With this, we call on individuals, corporations and government agencies to hold accountable for injuries to the environment and human beings dependent on the environment". He noted that Nwosu fought against environmental degradation and which his representation awarded communities compensation by environmental violators.

In his lecture, Ejembi Eko, a retired Justice of the Supreme Court, described Nwosu, a native of Mbaize in Imo State as an eminent legal luminary. He said the late SAN practiced law, in the top brass, from Port Harcourt and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja to the Niger Delta creeks. "He was a cynosure and a notable personage in his own right. He was not physically a giant, in the caliber of Goliath. He had passion for philanthropy and was ever ready to help a friend and those in need".

Narrating the lifestyle that gave him the feat in legal practice, Eko explained that as a cheerful man who was always ready to assist his less privileged colleagues and others who were either sick or in dire need, Nwosu took the challenge of lifting the lives of young lawyers who could not afford a better life, especially during distress.

He gave an instance that "When an exuberant Governor of Rivers closed the High Courts, under the pretext of "renovation"; his ulterior purpose being actually to frustrate the filing of likely actions challenging his unpopular policies, L.E went out on his own to pay certain categories of junior lawyers stipends for the several months the Governor's malady lasted.

"Beneath his not-too-large a physique, he had the compassion of an elephant with the heart of a lion. Turning his back at a fight was not in his character. His advocacy was always bold and courageous. He had that gift of humorous repartee, adorned with rustic folk proverbs, to adumbrate on any issue.



Late Lucius Ezeaka Nwosu (SAN)

With these attributes he ruled the jungle of jurisprudence and litigation".

How Lucius Nwosu specialisation attracted him prominence

The retired justice of the Supreme Court explained that Nwosu was not an 'all roads' legal practitioner, that he selected his area of practice and specialised in it.

Eko explained that "His chosen area was generally environmental laws with more emphasis on oil and gas, and related issues. His clients were largely communities ravaged by oil spillage. I never came across an instance or occasion where and when L.E. Nwosu, SAN, ever represented an oil company, in the upstream sector, against individuals or communities. He had disdain for political cases, particularly election and electoral jurisprudence. He made his marks predominantly in the fields of oil and gas, and related matters, within the terrain of environmental laws.

"In June 1998 L.E, as his colleagues fondly called him, was barely 15 years at the Bar when he filed the case: MONOKPO v. 1.MOBIL PRODUCTION (NIG) UNLIMITED, 2. MOBIL INCORPORATED OF U.S.A., claiming against the two Defendants jointly and severally a total of N5billion on behalf of two communities for ecological damages".

After years of deliberations on the matter, the court thereafter proceeded to entering judgment in favour of the plaintiffs (Nwosu's client) in the sums claimed. "The defendants

appealed. The Court of Appeal, finding no merits in their appeal, dismissed it. In the further appeal to the Supreme Court: MOBIL PRODUCTION (NIG) UNLIMITED & ANOR v. MONOKPO (2003) LPELR-1886 SC, the apex court, after resolving most of the issues against the Appellants, held that the failure or refusal of the trial judge to consider the pending motion for extension of time within which the second defendant would file his statement of defence amounted to denying him fair hearing, the right to which was his fundamental right under the Constitution".

With the judgement, the MONOKPO Case became a locus classicus. To the credit of the young advocate (Nwosu). "The MONOKPO case includes the incisive and expensive investigations undertaken by L.E, prior to his filing the suits, to establish the links and nexus between Mobil Production (Nig) Unlimited and its overseas parent company, Mobil Incorporated of U.S.A.

Similarly, he committed handsome expenditure to get experts and professional valuers to undertake field assessments of the ecological damages for the purpose of their subsequent evidence. This, in salute to his astute enterprise, had become his proclivity in all other similar cases".

Eko further expressed the believe that "His (Nwosu) enterprise and contributions to the body of environmental laws and jurisprudence did not go unnoticed. The Supreme Court, acknowledging L.E's POLLUTION WATCH v. NNPC (2018) LPELR-50830 SC. His contributions assisted the court deciding, inter alia, that the rights to life, as well as, clean environment, air, water, land and forest, being rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Africa Charter on People's and Human Rights (Ratification

and Enforcement) Act for the development and safeguard of human communities, vest locus standi on either an individual or the community and even a Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), to challenge any nuisance by way of oil pollution or seepage into the river, stream or the underground water providing the community's source of livelihood and drinking water.

"Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd (SPDC) had been a major player in oil and gas exploration in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta area. The company entered into lease agreements with the communities that held customary rights of occupancy over parcels of land for the purposes of their business. In SPDC v. AMADI & ORS (2011) LPELR-3204CA, the SPDC, while remaining as a tenant of Okporo community or family, had subsequently, albeit surreptitiously, obtained a statutory right of occupancy wherein the customary right of occupancy of their landlords were purportedly extinguished in favour of the SPDC, who now armed with the statutory right of occupancy was no longer obligated to pay agreed rents to their landlords.

"L.E., briefed by the customary landowners undertook a thorough pre-litigation forensic investigations that exposed the fact of the SPDC haven SPDC which resulted in both orders of forfeiture against the SPDC and the nullification of the statutory right of occupancy."

Concluding his lecture, Eko added that "Nwosu was a good man, a very literate and learned gentleman, a quintessential jurist, a shrewd and astute advocate; and a philanthropist per excellence. The body of the enigmatic Lucius Ezeaka Nwosu, may be lying in the grave; he still lives eternally with us".

Accolades by Colleagues and Friends

A prominent Senior Advocate of Nigeria, and a discussant at the event, Tuduru Ede, described Nwosu as a man who gave his all to humanity, defending the environment, especially the Niger Delta degraded environment.

"Lucius Nwosu was a nice man, a rugged litigator, he fought for the right of oil producing communities who were ravaged by pollution and environmental degradation occasion by oil companies. He gave it his all and it was good enough".

He urged the upcoming layers to learn from Nwosu's experience, his hardwork and what he has left behind.

Another discussant, Prof Victor Akujuru, a professor of environmental violation and land administration with the Rivers State University, said "The late SAN was my friend and I practiced violation with him. He always got me and other scientists together to advise him before he went to litigate. I remembered his intelligence, his generosity, his friendship and care for the poor, especially those who suffered environmental damages.

Mrs Mary Odili, a retired justice of the Supreme Court said "De Lucius was quite kind to all that came across him. Today, we are having the inaugural lecture and I wish it will continue."

She urged the organisers to make the memorial lecture an annual event "because of the quality contributions of Lucius Nwosu in the legal profession. His style of generosity and human relationship".

On his part, a former governor of old Rivers State, King Alfred Diets-Spiff, who disclosed that Nwosu was his personal lawyer, said "He stood by me after I left office. He was a courageous man, virtually most of his legal representation were pro-bono".

The late SAN practiced law, in the top brass, from Port Harcourt and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja to the Niger Delta creeks. "He was a cynosure and a notable personage in his own right. He was not physically a giant, in the caliber of Goliath. He had passion for philanthropy and was ever ready to help a friend and those in need"



TOWARDS AN EFFICIENT URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN LAGOS...

Special Adviser eGIS and Urban Development to the Lagos State Governor, Dr Olajide Abiodun Babatunde (left) and Professor of Urban Management and Governance at the University of Lagos, Prof Taibat Lawanson, who was appointed to head the newly reconstituted Technical Committee on Lagos State Urban Development Policy for better performance and operational efficiency, during the inauguration of the committee. .. recently

PSC Releases List of Successful Applicants as IGP Clarifies Position on State Police

Ikechukwu Aleke in Abuja

The leadership of the Police Service Commission (PSC), said it has approved and released the list of 10,000 successful applicants for recruitment into the constable cadre of the Nigeria Police Force.

The commission, also noted that merit, gender sensitivity, and federal character were its guiding principles, in the selection of the 10,000 successful applicants for recruitment into the constable cadre of the Nigeria Police Force.

The commission, also noted that it has received the report of the Police Recruitment Board, which revealed that 9,000 applicants were approved for recruitment for General Duty, while, 1,000 applicants were recruited for the Specialists cadre".

Dr. Solomon Arase, Chairman, Police Service Commission (PSC), in a statement, signed by Head,

Press and Public Relations Unit, Mr. Ikechukwu Ani, said, the Commission worked with guidance from relevant stakeholders including the Nigeria Police Force, the National Assembly and the Federal Character Commission, to ensure fairness and justice in the recruitment process.

He noted that the collaboration with major stakeholders, ensured equity in the spread of successful candidates across the 774 local government areas of the country.

This is as, the top echelon of the Nigerian Police Force, said that the force will abide by whatever decision the federal government will take on the issue of state police.

Mr. Olukayode Egbetokun, the Inspector General of Police, said this while on a working visit to Lagos State.

Represented by Deputy Inspector General of Police, South West, Mr. Abiodun Alabi, the IGP, said, the

force decided to explain its position on state police, in view of many opinions and views the matter had generated.

Mr. Egbetokun, charged officers and men to continue in their job as stipulated by the Nigerian Constitution.

He also tasked them to be disciplined, hardworking, respect human rights, and carry out their duties in the best professional ways.

Meanwhile, the statement by Police Service Commission (PSC), read in part: "The Police Service Commission has approved and released the list of 10,000 successful applicants for recruitment into the Constable cadre of the Nigeria Police Force. The Commission today, Tuesday, June 4th, 2024 received the report of the Police Recruitment Board. 9,000 applicants were approved for recruitment for General Duty while 1,000 applicants were recruited for

the Specialists cadre.

"To ensure fairness and justice in the recruitment process, the commission worked with guidance from relevant stakeholders including the Nigeria Police Force, the National Assembly and the Federal Character Commission. The commission had earlier inaugurated a Recruitment Board - a broad-based stakeholders body populated by representatives from the Commission, the Nigeria Police Force, the Ministry of Police Affairs, Federal Character Commission, Police Colleges and the Police Trust Fund to Superintendent over the recruitment process and report back to the Commission.

"Interested Nigerian youths were invited to apply online for consideration for the subsequent stages of the exercise through paid advertisements in several national media. Interested applicants were given six weeks to conclude the

online applications (15th October to 26th November 2023) in line with the Federal Character requirements.

"A total of 609,886 applications were received while 416,323 applicants who met the advertised requirements were shortlisted for the second stage of the exercise which was physical and document screening. This stage held in the 36 states of the federation and Federal Capital Territory between Monday, 8th to Monday 29th January 2024.

"The Commission, after the physical and credentials screening, shortlisted 171,956 applicants who met the requirements for the Computer Based Tests (CBT) conducted by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board, JAMB an organisation renowned for its expertise in computer-based tests".

"15,447 General duty applicants who did well in the CBT, the Chairman said, were further invited for medical screening to determine their health status."

recruitment process was to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of the Nigeria Police Force and to reinforce its commitment to community rooted and service-oriented policing.

According to him, "I am filled with optimism because these young men and women represent the future of our nation's security and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that their journey begins on a foundation of integrity, transparency and excellence".

Speaking on the mental and physical health of the men, the IGP said, the officer in Charge of Police Medical had been given orders to carry out mental and psychological test on personnel for better performance.

He also warned the personnel against misuse of firearms, stressing that such should be used responsibly in strict accordance with the law.

Egbetokun, said, the force was already working with some consultants on befitting accommodation for the officers and men, adding that very soon, the personnel would access their own homes.

The IGP tasked personnel of the force to always work harmoniously with other security agencies, to provide good security for all Nigerians.

He further cautioned his officers and men against rivalry with other security agents, stressing that Nigeria Police alone cannot provide the needed security for Nigerians.

Meanwhile, the PSC Chairman, said, the entire process reflects a deliberate effort to build a Police Force that is competent, reliable and truly representative of the best that Nigeria has to offer.

Continues online

Fubara's Government a Sham, Says Rivers APC Chairman

●Dares governor to probe Wike's administration

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

The Caretaker Committee Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Rivers State, Tony Okocha, has described the Siminalayi Fubara's administration in the state as a sham, denying congratulating the governor for his developmental strides in the state as speculated in social media.

The APC chairman who spoke yesterday, while addressing journalists in Port Harcourt, dared Governor Fubara to probe the administration of ex-Governor Nyesom Wike.

Speaking on the achievements of Governor Fubara in the past one year, Okocha said he could not congratulate "a government that is in intensive care unit", saying that the report in the media space "was concocted by purveyors of wickedness whose intention is an attempt to malign my name by showing me off as one who speaks from both sides of my mouth".

He said he would not praise a government that allegedly expends public funds without a budget.

His words: "I want to say to you clearly that the administration of Rivers State

and had congratulated Fubara, querying - "How can I, Okocha, as a person or as leader of the APC ever congratulate such a governor?"

Okocha alleged that under Governor Fubara, companies are leaving in droves, industries are closing down because of the fear of the unknown in the state.

According to him, "The achievements of Governor Fubara known to me is the fact that he has traversed the 23 local councils of Rivers State in what he dubbed, "Thanksgiving for Supreme Court Victory", that's his own achievement and it amounts to nothing other than profligacy and throwing away of Rivers fund".

Speaking on the plan to probe the past administration, Okocha said that the governor should first drop his immunity before starting a probe because if Wike mentioned him as a witness, the law may not allow him to appear because of immunity clause.

He also laughed off the probe talk, saying Fubara was yet to vacate the court order that prevented state governors and former governors of the state from being probed.

The APC chieftain said Fubara was targeting Wike as he said Chibuike Amaechi targeted his predecessor (Peter Odili) while Wike targeted Amaechi.

Okocha, who had earlier called for the Fubara's impeachment, said the governor's huge projects amounted to zero so long as the budget from which he spends is considered

illegitimate for not being tabled before the defected members of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

He insisted that all projects commissioned by Fubara were Wike's, his anger being that Fubara did not credit Wike as initiator. He called it project plagiarism.

"If any media man or government official can show the world any single project Fubara started and finished in his first year, I would

apologise to him and congratulate him for one year in office".

Okocha who could not claim that the defected lawmakers were his APC members now as he used claim openly said only membership card and name in a party's register would prove the party the one belonged, thus lending credence that the APC has vomited the defected lawmakers back to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Bulanulin Diyabe and Government Day Secondary School, Gonifamgari.

The Borno State Government as part of its "Build Back Better Strategy" has also launched the distribution of school items for 100,000 students who will be enrolled in public schools across the state for the 2024/2025 academic session.

The governor revealed that all the projects executed by his administration are owned and funded by the Borno State Government.

According to him at the inauguration of the new project on Tuesday, "Before I go on, I want to clarify certain things that are not well understood by many in Borno State; all those projects you are seeing, some with the inscription

Zulum Opens 6 New Schools, Clarifies Borno State Ownership of Projects

Michael Olugbode in Maiduguri

Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum, Tuesday, inaugurated six new secondary schools constructed by his administration.

The governor also unveiled a "Build Back Better Strategy" aimed at increasing enrollment of new students. The new schools were equipped with modern teaching facilities and sporting complexes.

They are Government Day Secondary School, Maiduguri; Government Day Secondary School, 777 Housing Estate; Government Day Secondary School, 1000 Housing Estate; Government Junior Day Secondary School, Wulari; Government Day Secondary School,

of World Bank project, the African Development Bank project, and so on, are not their projects.

"The projects are funded by the Borno State Government. When I came in, I asked the Adolescent Girl-Child Education, AGILE, why do you completely take ownership of the projects, writing (AGILE) in all the spaces. I don't have any problem with that, But I think our people need to understand that all these projects belong to the Government of Borno State.

"We borrowed the money, and we are going to pay it back; even federal government-funded projects are those that the federal government borrowed from the World Bank. But repayment is made from the

federation account, of which Borno State is part.

"This AGILE project, for example, is a 60-million-dollar project, am I right? The Borno State Government borrowed it, which will be paid back within 25 years with a moratorium of five years.

"The World Bank provides some guidance, especially in procurement and safeguarding, both environmental and social safeguards. And most especially, monitoring and evaluation, among others. This is to ensure that projects are implemented according to the component designed and agreed by the sub-national governments and duly signed under a subsidiary loan agreement by the Government of Borno State.



GRAND RECEPTION AND HONOURS EVENT HOSTED BY ODA...

L-R: Vice Chairman, Osun Development Association (ODA), Dr. Tunji Olugbodi; Members, Board of Trustees, ODA, Chief Inaolaji Aboaba; Prof. Olu Aina; Chairman, ODA, Dr. Segun Aina; Ooni of Ife, HIM Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi; Chairman of the Occasion, Prince Julius Adelusi-Adeluyi; Eburu of Iba, HRH Oba Adekunle Oyedeki and Member, Board of Trustees, ODA, at the Grand Reception and Honours Event hosted by ODA in honour of its founding members in Lagos...recently

Ningi Resumes from Suspension amidst Rousing Welcome from Colleagues

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja

The Peoples Democratic Party federal lawmaker representing Bauchi Central Senatorial District in the National Assembly, Senator Abdul Ningi, has resumed legislative duties in the upper chamber after serving an 11-week suspension. Ningi was suspended on March 12th, 2024 for three months over budget padding claims.

The lawmaker was recalled on May 28, after the Deputy Minority Leader, Senator Abba Moro, expressed regret on behalf of Sen. Ningi and pledged to assume full responsibility for his actions, acknowledging the gravity of the suspension. Ningi who resumed plenary on Tuesday, thanked his colleagues, the government of Bauchi State and Nigerians for their support

during his suspension. The Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, in his remarks welcomed Ningi and described him as a valuable member of the Senate. The Senate had on Tuesday last week on the strength of a motion sponsored by the minority leader, Senator Abba Moro, on behalf of minority caucus, recalled Senator Ningi from the three-month suspension.

Apparently elated to be back in the Senate, Ningi was among the first set of Senators and House of Representatives members to arrive the National Assembly for plenary on Tuesday. Ningi, along with some few other senators like Suleiman Kawu (NNPP Kano South), Aminu Waziri Tambuwal (PDP Sokoto South), among others, came into the National Assembly through the

Villa Gate. They arrived exactly at 10: 40am, 20 minutes to 11:00am fixed for commencement of plenary which even started at about 12:10 pm. As a result of his suspension,

Ningi lost his Chairmanship position of the Senate Committee on National Identity and Population, which was allocated to Senator Mustapha Musa (APC Yobe East), two days after the now lifted suspension

NEW WAGE: TINUBU DIRECTS EDUN TO COME UP WITH COST IMPLICATIONS IN 48 HOURS

retrenchment of workers will occur. "I think they will take comparative analysis to know that the last minimum wage, which was fixed by this parliament as an Act, of N30,000.00, how many states were able to pay, how many local governments were able to pay, how many employers were able to pay?" He added, "One of the excesses by labour was the shutting down of the national grid, which is more of an economic sabotage than agitation for a new minimum wage. "Also, disruption or prevention of students from writing their West African School Certificate Examination by some labour unionists during the strike was bad because the examination is not organised by Nigeria but by West African countries."

suffering of ordinary citizens. "It is necessary, therefore, to state that while industrial actions and dissent are fundamental rights within our democratic space that must be protected, the manner in which labour conducted itself during the just-suspended strike, largely, shows a lack of empathy for Nigerians. "Is the objective of the leadership of the unions to compel the government to implement a living wage or to inflict pain on Nigerians?" The House stressed that it was important to address persistent misinformation and disinformation propagated by the leadership of organised labour regarding the earnings of lawmakers. It alleged that organised labour had for years contributed to false narratives about the remuneration of members of the National Assembly, exaggerating figures to stoke public resentment and undermine the credibility of the legislature. It said this tactic diverted attention from the core issues at stake and unfairly vilified the institution of the legislature. The House stressed that It was crucial for all parties to engage in an honest and transparent dialogue rather than resorting to the spread of inaccuracies for political leverage. It explained that contrary to the insinuations of the labour leadership through its social media platforms, the legislature was on the side of Nigerians and would continue to act in the best interest of its constituents, and giving meaning to its mandate.

House Cautions FG Against Increasing Minimum Wage Beyond Country's Economy

The House of Representatives warned against increasing the minimum wage beyond what the economy could withstand. The spokesman of the House said in a statement Tuesday that the call became necessary to avoid inadvertent consequences, like inflation, redundancies, and other adverse economic costs. Rotimi stated, "While the Green Chamber is in full support of the call for improved wages and working conditions, there is great need to exercise caution in increasing the minimum wage beyond what our economy can sustain, to avoid unintended outcomes, such as inflation, layoffs, and other adverse economic consequences. "Thus, we restate the importance of approaching this issue from a balanced perspective to ensure long-term stability and prosperity for all Nigerians."

Orji Kalu Proposes N90,000 Minimum Wage

Chairman, Senate Committee on Privatisation, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, yesterday, proposed a new national monthly minimum wage of N90,000 for Nigerian workers. Kalu stated this on the floor of the senate during plenary yesterday. He said the amount, if paid, would resolve the lingering minimum wage impasse between the federal government and organised labour. Warning about the inherent dangers of the industrial action, the Abia North senator urged the senate to engage separately with the federal government and the labour unions to agree on the proposed sum of N90,000. He was contributing to a debate on a motion moved by Chairman, Senate Committee on Labour and Employment, Senator Diket Plang.

INEC Extends CVR Exercise in Edo, Ondo States

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), yesterday, approved extension of the ongoing Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise from Thursday 6th to Sunday 9th June 2024, in Edo and Ondo States to enable more eligible persons register. The commission in a statement signed by its National Commissioner and Chairman, Information Voter Education Committee, Sam Olumekun, and made available to journalists in Benin City, said the extension followed appeals by

stakeholders. He said: "The duration of the exercise is extended from 9.00am - 5.00 pm daily. "Furthermore, the number of centres has been increased beyond the 397 wards and the two state offices in Benin City and Akure to include all the 36 local government area offices of the commission in the two states. "More machines will also be deployed to areas identified to have peculiar needs such as difficult terrain or communal issues. "Like the ward registration centers, detailed information on

the names and location addresses of the LGA offices have also been uploaded to our website and social media platforms for the guidance of registrants in the two states. The exercise is progressing well in the two states. "As at yesterday, Monday 3rd June 2024, eight days after the commencement of the CVR, a cumulative total of 120,458 new voters have registered. Of this figure, 55,861 (46.4%) are male while 64,597 (53.6%) are female. Majority of the registered voters (82,003 or 68.8%) are youths (18-34 years). "In terms of occupation, 43,419 or

36.8%) are students while 812 (0.67%) are Persons with Disability (PWDs). The public should please note that these are preliminary figures. The final figures will be published on a state-by-state basis and for all categories of registrants at the end of the exercise and after data clean-up using the Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS)". The commission appealed to eligible voters to seize the opportunity of the extension to register, transfer or correct personal information on their PVCs as provided by law, stressing that no further extension will be granted by the Commission.

Mutfwang Charges Church Leaders in Plateau on Unity

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos

Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has charged church leaders in the state to unite the people, noting that the Church has been one of the leading platforms which has fostered peace in the state through its teachings and policies. The governor made the remark in Jos, Plateau State, at the installation of Dr. Job Ayuba Mallam as the 13th President of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), and Dr. Sunday Congo, as Assistant General Secretary of the church.

He urged the newly installed president to follow the footsteps of Christ and of those who have laid down the policies of the church, and also remember always to emphasize the need for peace and unity amongst worshippers and the church as well, assuring that the state will continue to work with the leadership of the church to develop policies that will continue to bind all religions in the state and beyond. He said: "In the spirit of unity and shared purpose, Jesus fervently prayed for the oneness of his fol-

lowers emphasizing the spirit of complete unity as a testament to the authenticity of his mission, our unity is rooted in our common goals, values, heritage and ultimately our connection with the father and union with Christ." Also speaking, the outgoing President of ECWA, Dr. Stephen Panya, who performed the installation and consecration charged the new president to be a strong uniting force that will bind the church of God and its congregation, and to always remember to lead the church in love to prosperity and

advancement of Christ's kingdom, adding that without unity in the church, God's work cannot be made manifest. Admonishing the congregation on the topic 'Stepping Aside in His Grace' President of Church of God in Nations (COCIN), Rev. Amos Mohzo said leadership is timely in the life of a leader, noting that many leaders forget that they have been given the opportunity to lead for a particular time, and get carried away by the mantle of leadership given to them or due to pressure from external forces.

Gov Radda: Cattle Rustling, Kidnapping are Multi-billion Naira Criminal Enterprises

Francis Sardauna in Katsina

Governor Dikko Umaru Radda of Katsina State has revealed that cattle rustling and kidnappings are multi-billion-naira criminal enterprises that prey on our most vulnerable youth and women to perpetuate unimaginable atrocities on rural communities in the state. Radda, in a state-wide broadcast to mark his one-year anniversary in office, lamented that insecurity has become a business that negatively affected the socio-economic development of the state and its citizenry. He said: "Insecurity has become a business, and I am afraid it means

more must be done to fight it. Cattle rustling and kidnappings are multi-billion-naira criminal enterprises that prey on our most vulnerable youth and women to perpetuate unimaginable atrocities on rural communities." He added that the people of the state have suffered injustice and indignity for too long at the hands of the hoodlums, adding that his government will not relent in its drive to combat the security challenges in order to restore normalcy in the state. He called on terrorists and other criminal elements to sheath their swords and embrace peaceful

coexistence in their communities, warning that those who refused to embrace peace will not leave to witness next year. Governor Radda said his administration has expended the sum of N1.5 billion on procurement of tactical combat equipment for the Katsina State Community Watch Corp and sustained monthly payment of security operations allowances to security personnel to the tune of N208 million. He said the state government also purchased 10 units of armoured personnel carriers, 65 Hilux vehicles, 700 motorcycles, surveillance drones, communication

network, trackers and other security gadgets worth N11 billion. Radda explained that his administration has engaged 918 local government security committee members and 9,747 ward security committee members in accordance with its strategy for community participation in the ongoing war against insecurity. He said the state government had inaugurated a committee on encroached cattle routes and grazing reserves to checkmate farmers-herders conflict and a joint security operations communication centre to improve intelligence gathering.



DIG ALABI VISITS ABIODUN...

L-R: Deputy Police Commissioner (Ogun State), Bolanle Muritala; Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG), Criminal Investigation Department in charge of the South West geo-political zone, Abiodun Alabi; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG), Zone 2, Olatoye Durosinmi and the representative of the Ogun State Commissioner of Police, DCP Bode Ojajuni, during a courtesy visit by DIG Alabi to the Governor's Office, Oke-Mosan, Abeokuta, on Tuesday.

Emir Sanusi at NBA Annual Conference, Says No Society Develops without Justice

Ahmad Sorondinki in Kano

The 16th Emir of Kano Alhaji Muhammadu Sanusi 11, has expressed deep regret over the state of Nigeria, 64 years after gaining independence, adding that, no society develops without

justice. Sanusi 11, who spoke at the NBA-SLP conference through his representative, Mahe Bashir Wali (the Walin Kano) told the participants that Kano has a long enviable history as a cultural and

commercial nerve centre of the northern region. He said: "No society can develop without justice, so the theme of this conference is significant because it is justice that paves way for peace, fairness progress and which are

paramount in any society." The Emir challenged the NBA to make sure that, progress (reform) is made in the administration of justice in the country, in order to meet the demands of the society. In his speech, the Kano State

Governor, Abba Yusuf, lamented that, the administration of justice is being faced by significant challenges that tend to erode public trust and hinder the nation's progress. The governor, who was represented by the Secretary to

the State General (SSG) Alhaji Baffa Bichi, described the justice system as the cornerstone of any functioning society. "Yet, as we all know, the Nigerian administration of justice faces significant challenges. These challenges, which are in various forms, tend to erode public trust and hinder our nation's progress.

"They create a system where the wheels of justice turn slowly, if at all, leaving many, feeling unheard and unseen.

"The state of Justice administration in Nigeria today is so pitiable that ordinary Nigerians are losing faith in the judiciary," he added.

He noted further that, "We believe in the power of reform. We believe in building a justice system that is efficient, equitable, and accessible to all Nigerians.

"Some of the necessary measures to be taken to address these challenges include upholding the rule of law - the supremacy of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria must be upheld and respected by all.

"There is urgent need for all principal actors in advancing the rule of law, to integrate the peoples' interest; reflecting their wishes and aspiration, protecting their rights, and improving their wellbeing into the entire process of our law-based government," he stated.

The conference, had in attendance the President of National Industrial Court of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Benedict Bakwaph Kanyip, NBA President, Yakubu Maikyau, SAN, Chief Judge of Kano State, Justice Dije Aboki and other legal luminaries, was the first NBA's annual conference for the entire Northern region.

Methodist Bishop: Nigeria Has Declined 64 Years After Independence

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Bishop Ibrahim Chindo of the Methodist Diocese of Kano has expressed deep regret over the state of Nigeria, 64 years after gaining independence.

In his address at the Diocesan

conference, themed "Arise and Build," Bishop Chindo highlighted the deterioration that has occurred over the years.

"Our founding fathers had great hopes and aspirations for Nigeria," he stated.

According to the Methodist

church cleric, "They believed that our nation with its vast human and natural resources would become a shining example in Africa and the world. However, since gaining independence, we have experienced a significant decline."

Bishop Chindo expressed concern

that many leaders have deviated from the principles of integrity and righteousness. He pointed out that after gaining independence, Nigeria faced various challenges such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism, and religious favoritism. Unfortunately, these issues have persisted and worsened over the past 64 years.

Further according to him, "Today, our citizens live in fear and uncertainty. Criminal elements such as terrorists, kidnappers, bandits, and herdsmen have become a constant threat. The security forces seem overwhelmed, and innocent lives are being lost."

The bishop shared a distressing incident where a father had to resort to crowdfunding to pay ransom for his kidnapped daughters, with one of them tragically losing her life.

He also highlighted the plight of farmers who are forced to pay levies and taxes to criminals in order to access their own lands.

It is evident that the government has failed in its duty to protect its citizens, leaving them vulnerable to lawlessness, he said.

He noted that "Nigeria is currently facing severe economic challenges. Inflation is at an all-time high, pushing many citizens below

the poverty line. The devaluation of the Naira against the US Dollar has led to skyrocketing prices of essential goods, making them unaffordable for most people.

"These are just a few examples of the deteriorating living conditions in our country. We are on the brink of a crisis, yet the political elite seem indifferent to the suffering of the people. They continue to enjoy wealth while the majority endure poverty."

Bishop Chindo believes that the root cause of these problems lies in the absence of God in the hearts of Nigeria's leaders. He called upon them to repent and reorient their governance around God's teachings.

By embracing God as the foundation of their leadership, Bishop Chindo believes Nigeria can experience transformation and upliftment for its people.

"This is a wake-up call for our leaders," Bishop Chindo concluded. "They must prioritize God and lead with love and compassion. Only then can we overcome our challenges and bring about the prosperity and well-being that Nigerians deserve," the senior cleric stated.

Boko Haram: Borno Communities Recount Ordeal, Stress Citizens' Engagement

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

Communities in Borno State have narrated their ordeal at the hands of Boko Haram terrorists while calling for more engagement of the affected citizens in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts in North East Nigeria.

This was the outcome of consultative meeting and recent engagements led by Neem Foundation and The Truth Alliance, a group of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) committed to unmasking the atrocities of terrorist groups like Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

In a statement, Tuesday, The Truth Alliance Spokesperson, Mr. Ahmed Mustapha, said this was the outcome of the group discussions with community leaders, youth groups, and residents from six communities in Maiduguri, Borno state.

He said the community members from Baga Road, Bulumkutu, Muna, Shikari, Gamboru, and Hausari, in local fora gathered to discuss the impact of the conflict and explore sustainable solutions to the long-term effects it has had on their lives.

Members of the Truth Alliance led recovery discussions as the Boko Haram crisis recedes in Borno. The Northeast State, for a decade, has suffered from insurgency attacks, destruction, and catastrophic displacements of persons.

During the consultative meeting, Mustapha said, one of the participants and a stakeholder from Gamboru, Mallam Goni, emphasised the importance of community involvement in the recovery process. "Our people have endured unimaginable hardships. It is through these discus-

sions that we can begin to heal and rebuild our society," he was quoted to have said.

"Despite the devastation, our spirit remains unbroken. These forums provide a platform for us to share our experiences and contribute to the development of lasting solutions," Zarah, another participant remarked.

According to the statement, the community discussions were focused on various aspects of the impact of the conflict, including economic disruption, psychological trauma, and the displacement of thousands of residents.

It noted that participants also explored strategies for enhancing security, promoting education, and revitalizing local economies. One of the critical issues raised is the need for comprehensive mental health support for those affected by the violence, suggesting significant levels of trauma caused by violent extremist groups activities across the northeast region of Nigeria.

Part of the statement read: "Community leaders have called for increased access to counseling services and trauma care to address the psychological scars left by years of conflict.

"Economic recovery was featured, with suggestions ranging from vocational training programs to microfinance initiatives aimed at empowering local entrepreneurs and rebuilding livelihoods. The suggestions and recommendations highlight the devastating scale of atrocities caused by groups such as Boko Haram ISWAP.

"As the Boko Haram crisis shows signs of abating, the Truth Alliance has taken steps towards fostering

recovery of lives that were destroyed. The Truth Alliance, a network of civil society organizations across both Nigeria and Niger that have come together to expose the truth behind how violent and extremist groups draw young people into their ranks, has been instrumental in initiating these dialogues through their Time to Tell the Truth Campaign.

"The groups want to highlight the significant scale of hardship caused by insurgent groups on innocent communities. This hardship includes killings, kidnappings, looting of properties and the propagation of false narratives which seek to divide the society."

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

The Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, yesterday, said Nigeria must combat the pervasive culture of corruption, strengthen governance institutions, promote inclusion, and enhance regional cooperation to achieve sustainable peace and stability.

He spoke at the first distinguished personality lecture of the TETFUND Centre of Excellence in Multidisciplinary Studies, University of Ibadan.

According to him, a significant factor contributing to the exacerbation of the crises facing Nigeria is the pervasive culture of corruption and impunity within Nigeria's governance

structures.

The police boss stated that political interference in police operations can compromise the impartiality and effectiveness of law enforcement during crises, adding that it is essential to ensure the independence of the police force from political influence to maintain public trust and confidence.

IGP Egbetokun disclosed that based on the approval of President Bola Tinubu, the force will soon start recruitment of 30,000 Police officers after ending the ongoing recruitment of 10,000 personnel into the force.

He said, "In contemporary times, the Nigeria Police Force has undertaken numerous initiatives to enhance

its effectiveness in managing internal security challenges. These efforts include the creation of specialised units, improvements in training and equipment, and community engagement programs aimed at addressing various forms of crime and insecurity."

The police boss stated further that he is investing in security technology, particularly drone technologies, which can improve the fight against terrorism and banditry.

He said this is materialising in the fight against cybercriminals, stating that the Nigeria Police Cyber Crime Center "has continued to clamp down on cybercriminals with the recovery of over 36 billion naira and

dismantled a major online fraud syndicate, arresting 15 suspects and recovering millions of naira in stolen funds".

He called for increased funding of the police as the lead agency in internal operation to address equipment needs, improve infrastructure and enhance training programs

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan, Prof. Kayode Adebawale, the Acting Director of the TETFUND Center of Excellence in Multidisciplinary Studies, Dr. Benjamin Aluko and a lead scholar, Prof. Isaac Olawale Albert, in their remarks, stressed the importance of improving internal security and managing crises in country.

NEWS



CELEBRATING WITH KEMENANABO...

L-R: Member, House of Representatives, Sagbama/Ekeremor Constituency, Bayelsa State, Hon. Frederick Yeitiemone Agbedi; Managing Director/CEO, Bayelsa State Electricity Company Limited, Olice Kemenanabo; former Senior Special Adviser on Domestic Affairs to former President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, Hon. Waripamo-Owei Dudafa, and the Commander, Nigeria Army Signal Operations Command, Mile 2, Lagos, Brigadier General Preye Zipele, shortly after the baptism of Kemenanabo's grandson, Odum Uche, at All Souls Anglican Church, Lekki, Lagos...recently

One Killed, 30 Trapped in Mine Collapse in Niger

Bandits kidnap 26 in Niger communities

LaleyeDipo inMinna

One person has been confirmed dead in a Mine collapse in Galkogo village in the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State.

Thirty others, including the Mine Manager whose name was given as Alhaji Ibrahim Ishyaku, are still

trapped in the collapsed Mine as at Monday evening.

According to a report from the area, six other people were rescued with "serious injuries" sustained from the collapsed Mine.

The Director General of the Niger State Emergency Management Agency (NSEMA) Alhaji Abdullahi

Baba Arah, who confirmed this yesterday said the Mine belonged to "African Minirals and Logistics Limited" Arah attributed the collapse of the Mine to "Persistent rainfall

impacts that soften the soil," adding that rescuers had to run for their lives because the Mine " kept falling inside." Though Arah said an excavator had been sent to the

area to assist in rescue operation " the area is inaccessible because of the nature of the environment as a result of banditry".

Meanwhile NSEMA has

also confirmed the report of " persistent banditry activities in some communities in Shiroro and Mashegu local government areas in the last four days.

Police Arrest Four Suspected Kidnappers in Kaduna

JohnShiklam inKaduna

Operatives of the Kaduna State Police Command yesterday have arrested four suspected kidnappers responsible for several kidnapping incidents in the state.

In a statement yesterday, spokesperson of the command, Mansir Hassan, said an AK47 rifle, a locally made pistol, and three cartridges were recovered from the suspects.

He said three of the suspects were arrested in Lere Local

Government Area (LGA) of Kaduna state following a tip-off from concerned citizens, while one was arrested in Tudun Jukun in Zaria LGA.

"On 29th May 2024, acting on a tip-off from a concerned citizen, a joint patrol team comprising officers from the Saminaka Division and the Hunters Group in Lere Local Government Area (LGA) successfully arrested three suspects involved in kidnapping and cattle rustling", the statement reads.

Jonathan Inaugurates Delta High Court Complex, Commends Oborevwo's Strides

Governor gifts Delta judges 20 SUVs

Omon-Julius Onabu inAsaba

Former President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, yesterday inaugurated the Delta State High Court Complex in Asaba, commending the state Governor, Sheriff Oborevwo,

administration for its visibly credible performance within a relatively short space of time.

He also flagged off the presentation of 20 Toyota Prado Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs) to Judges in the state provided by the state government.

Jonathan described as commendable Governor Oborevwo's particular focus on the development of infrastructure across the state as well as his commitment to continuing with the execution of projects inherited from previous administrations in the

state. The former president said: "There are some projects that are very fundamental to the growth and development of the state and we expect anybody who takes over government to continue with them and you are doing exactly that.

Bayelsa Warns MOSIEND, IYC, Others to Desist from Illegal Tax Collection

Olusegun Samuel inYenagoa

Bayelsa State Government has issued a stern warning to individuals and groups parading themselves as proxies of the Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta (MOSIEND), its

sister body, the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), and similar groups to collect unauthorised levies and taxes, to desist forthwith or face the full weight of the law.

The government has also directed community leaders to promptly report persons using the name of the aforementioned

organisations to collect illegal fees in their domains to the police for immediate arrest, detention and prosecution at the court of law.

The state Deputy Governor, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo, gave the warning yesterday during a meeting at his office in Government House, Yenagoa,

with the clan and community leadership of Tungbo, Sagbama Local Government Area of the state.

Ewhrudjakpo expressed displeasure at the unwholesome activities of some persons in Tungbo community claiming to be agents of MOSIEND imposing and collecting illegal taxes from traders in the area.

Another Tanker Explosion Claims Lives in Rivers

Blessing Ibunge inPort Harcourt

Within less than two months, another tanker explosion has claimed the lives of three persons along the Obiri-Ikwerre Flyover in Obio/Akpor Local Government of Area of Rivers State.

On April 26, 2024, a tanker loaded with petrol in a collision with another trailer, exploded and killed so many persons along Eleme-Onne Expressway road in the state.

THISDAY gathered that the heavy-duty truck carrying about eight CNG cylinders fell on the

Obiri Ikwerre flyover yesterday morning, and burst into flames killing the victims who were within the area as at the time of incident.

It was gathered that the incident, which generated unusual sounds, caused many people within the neighborhood to mistaken it for dynamite or strong explosive causing some to run for safety.

Sources from the scene of incident said the truck overturned and exploded while attempting to navigate a roundabout at the said flyover along the East-West Road.

Nigerian Architects Pledge Commitment to Help Battle Climate Change

Sunday Okobi

As Nigeria joins others globally to mark the World Environment Day, the Nigerian Institute of Architects (NIA) has expressed commitment to firmly put cases of environmental challenges and climate change on the front burner of its programme.

While addressing journalists in Lagos yesterday, the President of the Institute, Mobolaji Adeniyi, noted that they have gathered majorly to address the pressing challenges facing the environment, adding that: "As architects, we have a critical role to play in shaping the built environment and promoting

sustainability.

"This year's theme: 'Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience', resonates deeply with our current environmental realities. Nigeria is facing severe land degradation, desertification, and drought, which have devastating impacts on our

ecosystems, biodiversity, and human well-being."

He stated that in Nigeria, "we face numerous environmental challenges, including pollution, deforestation, and climate change. Our cities are plagued by inadequate waste management, flooding, and poor air quality."

Amnesty Office Deploys More Aviation Industry Trainees to S' Africa

The Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP) has deployed four cadet pilot trainees for type-rating training at the SIM Aerotraining Limited in Johannesburg, South Africa, under the implementation of the vocational objectives

of the programme.

According to the PAP, it is in pursuit of its objectives to ensure that delegates and beneficiaries acquire the requisite skills for gainful employment in the aviation sector.

It said: "This is a continuation of the PAP's deployment of its delegates and beneficiaries to aviation training institutions locally and around the world to enable them to become useful to themselves and the society."

Speaking at the pre-departure

briefing in Lagos for the four cadet pilot trainees, the PAP Administrator, Dr Dennis Otuario noted that vocational training was a key component of the programme in the planned development of the Niger Delta manpower base.

Foundation Targets 200 Indigent Students for Scholarships

David-Chyddy Eleke inAwka

IG Aguowo Health and Academic Foundation has stated that application into its scholarship programme for 2024 has opened.

The foundation said that application opened on Monday, June 3, and would run through to Friday, June 28, 2024.

Officials of the foundation revealed this during a press conference at the secretariat of the Nigeria Union of Journalists

(NUJ) in Awka, Anambra State, yesterday.

The executive secretary of the foundation, Ms. Peace Chukwu, said that the scholarship program is aimed at supporting indigent and talented students across Nigeria.

Chukwu said: "IG Aguowo Health and Academic Foundation currently supports 350 beneficiaries and aims to add 200 more beneficiaries this year, to bring the total to 550 by the end of 2024.

Group Condemns Inauguration of Alleged 11 Years Old Bridge by NDDC in A'Ibom

Okon Bassey inUyo

An advocacy media group, Eket Federal Constituency Media Forum, has said that the inauguration of a bridge reportedly executed and completed 11 years was a sign that

the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) is still unwilling to execute another major project in Akwa Ibom State anytime soon. Recently, the commission, inaugurated the phase one of the 6km Iko-Atabrikang-Akata-Opukom-

Ikot Inwang-Okoroutip-Iwachang road and NDDC 600 metres Bridge, with President Bola Tinubu represented by Senate President Godwill Akpabio.

But the Eket Federal Constituency Media Forum wondered why a

project initiated in 2003 with phase one completed in 2013, was repainted in 2024 and inaugurated amidst fanfare as a new project when the people were actually expecting to hear the progress of work on the second phase of the project.

German Parliamentarian Felicitates Ojadah on Leadership Award

Onuminya Innocent

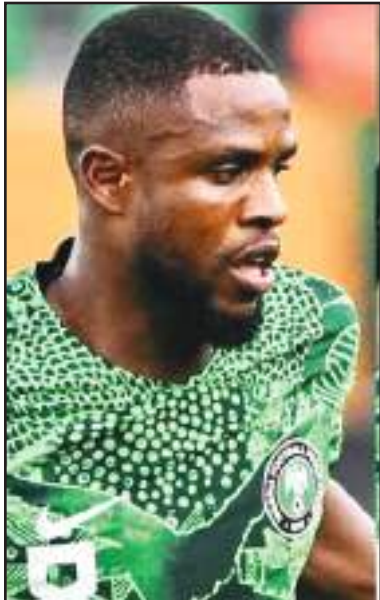
A member of the parliament of Germany and Deputy House Speaker on Integration, Kelvin Uguru, has felicitated Dr. Jonathan Ojadah, on his nomination for Lifetime

Leadership Achievement Award by the President of the United States of America, Joe Biden.

In his congratulatory letter, Uguru, described the proposed conferment of award on Ojadah as a well-deserved honour.

According to Uguru, "With an overwhelmingly conviction through my personal mentoring analysis of your selfless engagement in leadership across the borders in pursuance for global peace and good governance and the significant impact

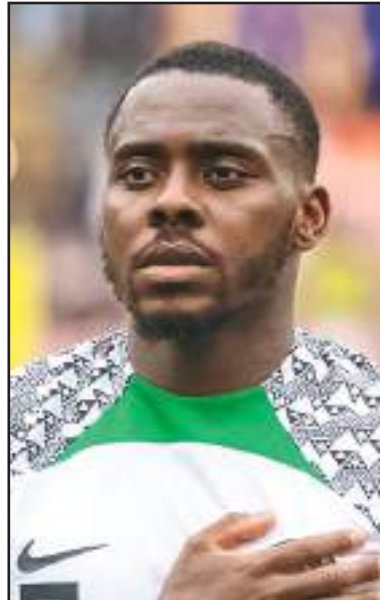
made in consequent to your work, I unapologetically hold that to self-evidence to declare your nomination to a Lifetime Leadership Achievement Award by the 47th President of the United states of America, Joe Biden, as well-deserved honour.



Frank Onyeka



Calvin Bassey



Bright Osayi-Samuel



Paul Onuachu



Semi Ajayi

Stranded Five Super Eagles Players Land in Uyo for South Africa

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

After missing the opening day activities at the Super Eagles camp in Uyo due to the nationwide strike called by the organised labour in the country, the stranded five national team players touched

down in the Akwa Ibom capital yesterday morning to increase the number to 20.

Defenders Semi Ajayi, Bright Osayi-Samuel and Calvin Bassey, alongside midfielder Frank Onyeka and forward Paul Onuachu landed at the Victor Attah International

Airport, Uyo just after noon aboard a private jet arranged by the Nigeria Football Federation, and were driven to the team's Ibom Hotel and Resorts to meet up with team mates in time for lunch.

According to newly appointed Media Officer of the team,

Promise Efoghe, the arrival of the quintet brought the tally of players in camp to 20, three days to 2026 World Cup qualifying Match-day 3 battle with South Africa's Bafana Bafana at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo.

Nigeria and South Africa

will go toe-to-toe in a rematch of this year's Africa Cup of Nations first semi-final, which the Super Eagles trumped 4-2 after penalty shootout at the Stade de la Paix in Bouake.

Three-time African champions Nigeria, who have reached the Round of 16 at the FIFA World

Cup on three occasions, missed out on the last houseparty in Qatar, and after a sluggish start to the qualifiers, need all three points on offer to be in strong contention for the only ticket from Group C as the campaign drags on.

Rwanda are surprise leaders of the pool after two matchdays, on four points, with South Africa on three and Nigeria on two.

The 10-match series will end in October next year, with winners of the nine groups qualifying automatically for the finals in Canada, USA and Mexico. The best four second-placed teams in all nine groups will contest a CAF Play-off Tournament, with the winner going ahead to contest a FIFA Play-off Tournament for another slot.

...We Are on Vendetta Mission against Nigeria, Says Hugo Broos

Femi Solaja

With the semi-final loss to Nigeria at the last AFCON tournament at the back of his mind, South Africa national team Head Coach Hugo Broos, has said that the Bafana Bafana are on a revenge mission when his team takes on Super Eagles on Friday in Uyo.

"We were the better side at our last meeting some months ago and my team is looking good to grind the result against Super Eagles this weekend," the coach stated in an interview with a South African-based online outlet, Far Post.co.za yesterday ahead of the team's arrival in Uyo today.

Bafana Bafana, parading largely home-based players, created the better chances in that encounter before Nigeria's star-packed team triumphed via penalties.

Brooks is convinced South Africa would have reached the AFCON with a bit more luck on the back of their impressive

display.

Nigeria will be favourites on home soil but Broos is confident he can lead Bafana Bafana to secure a positive result before they face Zimbabwe on match-day four.

"Let's go to Nigeria and Zimbabwe, qualify for World Cup, everybody knows that every one of us wants to qualify for the FIFA

World Cup in 2026 but we are in front of two very tough games," Broos said, to far post.co.za.

"First of all, Nigeria AFCON finalists, have players playing in the best European competitions. On the other side, we saw what we can do against them at AFCON, if we had a little bit of luck against them, we would have made the

final and not Nigeria.

"I think we were the best team in the AFCON semifinals, we could have won that. So, we don't have to be afraid.

"The other game against Zimbabwe is different. It's a game between neighbours I think that Zimbabwe, after the ban, has another team with another

coach. So, from that side, it will be a difficult game.

"I don't want to lose any of those two games. I want to win one and maybe draw the other one.

"That means four or six and we stay in the race for qualifying for the World Cup. And that has to be our goal for the next two games," he remarked.

Nigeria's Macaulay-Razaq Joins Board of Propel Sports Africa

A Nigerian, Vincent Macaulay-Razaq, has been named on the Board of Directors of Propel Sports Africa, the United Kingdom-based broadcast streaming partner of the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL).

Macaulay-Razaq flew into the country with Basil Kabbani, the company's Executive Chairman, to attend the Troost Ekong Foundation charity match that held in Uyo

on Sunday, June 2. The charity match that featured some Super Eagles players and celebrities was produced by Propel Sports Africa and streamed live free of charges on the NPFL-Live app.

Presently based in Germany, Macaulay-Razaq who is a brother to Kwara State Governor, Abdul-Raman AbdulRazaq, grew up in Lagos and attended the famous St Finbarr's College, Akoka before

completing his studies in the UK as a graduate of the London International Film School.

He returned to Nigeria to begin a television production career, which included making TV commercials and documentaries for many years. He would later return to England to embark on a sporting career as a basketball coach, founding the London Lions Basketball Team as a legacy of

the 2012 Olympics.

Now, Coaching in Germany, Mr Macaulay-Razaq joins the Board of Directors of Propel Sports Africa as an Executive Director to bring his many years of experience to bear on an exciting project in partnership with the NPFL Live platform.

On his joining the Propel Sports Africa board, Macaulay-Razaq said, "Being able to give back to my

homeland has me fired up. I can't wait to create a truly global offering that will see Nigerian talents exposed at the highest level to the most amount of people worldwide in a game we all love."

Kabbani said the group is excited not just to have a Nigerian on its board, but one who is bringing lots of experience, value and the domestic business intelligence and networking.

Crown Polo, Mangal Cement Win Top Laurels

Two debutant teams, Crown Polo and Mangal Cement, displayed exceptional skills on Sunday during the 2024 Access Bank/UNICEF Charity Shield Polo Tournament.

The grand finale of this annual polo extravaganza will hold this weekend at the Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Resort in Kaduna.

In the first stage of this prestigious tournament, Crown Polo from Jos and Mangal Cement emerged as champions, securing the Access Bank Cup and the UNICEF Cup respectively. Both victories marked their first major triumphs in the event, following closely contested finals.

Katsina Mangal Cement clinched a narrow 6-5 win against the favored Kano MSR Bua team while defending champions, Access Bank Polo Team suffered a loss, falling 10-10½ to Crown Polo from Jos in an exciting final that concluded

ACCESS BANK/ UNICEF POLO

the first week of the tournament.

The prize presentation ceremony on Sunday was led by Adamu Atta, Founder of Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Resort. He was joined by Gift Onyinye Akunebuni, Relations Manager at Access Bank Kaduna, and Gerida Birukila, UNICEF Chief of Field Office in Kaduna, among other dignitaries.

Birukila praised Access Bank and Fifth Chukker Polo & Country Resort for their dedication to supporting vulnerable children and the less privileged.

She emphasised that the international polo tournament aims to raise funds to improve educational access for out-of-school children in Kaduna State.

"This initiative aligns with UNICEF's mandate to advocate

for children's rights, meet their basic needs, and expand their opportunities to reach their full potential," she said.

She also encouraged other partners to collaborate to ensure every child in the community has access to quality education.

The second stage and grand finale of the 2024 Access Bank/UNICEF Charity Shield Polo Tournament continues this week, featuring 10 teams with professional players from Europe, Argentina, and Nigeria. They will compete for the Usman Dantata Cup and the event's top prize, the Charity Shield.

A major highlight will be the Herbert Wigwe Memorial Cup, honoring the late Chairman/CEO of Access Corporation.

Additionally, the Ground Break ceremony for the second 60-classroom school complex, funded by Access Bank and its Charity Shield partners, will take place.

The Charity Shield began in 2003 as a platform to support local charities in Kaduna. Over the years, it has focused on UNICEF projects for orphans and vulnerable children in Kaduna State.

The tournament gained significant support with a multi-year sponsorship deal from Access Bank, making it one of the best-supported events in Nigerian sports. High-ranking government officials, corporate leaders, and traditional emirs frequently attend the event.

Proceeds from ticket sales and donations are directed to UNICEF to support healthcare and education for orphans and vulnerable children.



Players of Mangal Cement polo team lift the UNICEF Cup after defeating Kano MRS Bua team in the final of the ongoing Access Bank UNICEF Charity Shield Polo Tournament at Fifth Chukka Polo & Country Resort in Kaduna...on Sunday



Book Your

COVID-19 Tests & Vaccinations

TEXT 'COVID' TO 58123

PHARMACY SERVICES

COMMERCIAL SERVICES

TRAVEL SERVICES

EDUCATION SERVICES

HEALTH SERVICES

LEGAL SERVICES

FINANCIAL SERVICES

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Other services provided to individuals with additional service providers

THIS DAY



Wednesday, June 05, 2024

Price: N400

MISSILE

Varsity Don to Cigarette Smokers

“Despite a great deal of health education and awareness on this grave implications of Cigarette smoking, many people are still caught in the Web of the habit...1.3 million are non-smokers exposed to second-hand smoke...the need for all of us to arise and protect our children from tobacco industry interference...take a cue from other countries, such as New Zealand, UK, and Australia to effect this (tobacco production laws)” –University of Ilorin

Professor of Anatomy, Gabriel Omotoso, says eight million tobacco smokers die annually.

THIS DAY

29 years

OF ROBUST JOURNALISM

SINCE 1995

KAYODEKOMOLAFE

THE HORIZON

kayode.komolafe@thisdaylive.com

0805 500 1974



A man called Vote as Metaphor for South Africa

It was Freedom Day again in South Africa on April 27, a few weeks to the general elections held last week.

This year, South Africans actually celebrated a milestone: 30 years ago the first post-apartheid election was held and the heroic symbol of struggle for multi-racial democracy in the country, Nelson Mandela, was elected president. A new constitution was also introduced on that day.

It also happened that on that day of the first election in 1994, a child was born in the household of Mr. Ernesto Ubisi and Mrs. Mariama Ubisi, both Mozambicans immigrants in a poor village called Lillyade in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa.

The family of Ubisi elected to name the new arrival Vote. At 30, Vote now works as a waiter in the South African tourist industry.

Mr. Vote Ubisi spoke in a television interview on the Freedom Day as the campaigns were in full swing for the last week election. Vote was excited that he would vote in the election. Remarkably, Vote was hopeful about the future of South Africa.

On the one hand, Vote cherished the fact of being born into freedom. As he put it, he had no memory of the odious past of apartheid. On the other hand he commented that 30 years after apartheid potable water was not still available in the village. That was Vote's graphic way of making the point that the dream of an equitable society was yet to be fully realised. For joblessness, inequality, violent crimes and official corruption are still the



South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa

defining features of the South African society.

To be fair to the country's leadership in a statement to the nation on the Freedom Day, President Cyril Ramaphosa honestly put the problems mentioned in the foregoing into a sharp focus.

In many respects, Vote's views were representative of the electoral mood in the country. It was a mixture of a deep sense disappointment in many constituencies and flickers of optimism in

several others.

Little surprise then that this trend was amply reflected in the results of the elections announced at the weekend. The African National Congress (ANC), the party of Mandela, lost the electoral majority for the first time in 30 years. The party that was once clearly dominant will now be compelled to go into a coalition to govern. Although the ANC still has the highest percentage of the votes, it is now in its weakest position politically in three decades.

The party needs 50% of the votes to form a government alone. Unfortunately, it scored only 40.2% as against 21.8% of the Democratic Alliance (DA); 14.9% of the uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) party and the 9.5% of the youthful Economic Freedom Front (EFF). Both MK and EFF are breakaway political forces from the ANC. The MK is a political platform hurriedly put together for former President Jacob Zuma to return to power while the EFF is more ideologically opposed to the socio-economic policies of the ANC government. The DA has been a long-standing opposition with a liberal agenda. It has its provenance in the old National Party of the apartheid era.

Critics of ANC had long predicted this electoral decline of the great organisation which transformed most admirably from a liberation movement into a robust political party.

The failure of the ANC to tackle poverty decisively despite the party's past electoral fortunes is, perhaps, the major factor for the

downward trend in its popularity. The issues of the elections were the surging crime rates, poor power supply, official corruption and widening inequality. All these problems have persisted despite South Africa being rated as the economy with the largest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Africa for years. For some time, South Africa was the toast of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. As its economic managers embraced neo-liberal reforms, South Africa became a model of how to get things right in economic terms. Now, the lesson is that the application of market forces alone cannot solve the problems of poverty and inequality. If anything, neo-liberal excesses can only deepen poverty. The allies of ANC in the days of the struggle for freedom – the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) – warned against this trend, which came to a climax under Ramaphosa. Party leaders such as the late Winnie Mandela pointed to the huge numbers of black people still in poverty and the increasing alienation of the ANC from a segment of its base.

All told, the good news is that democracy has triumphed again in South Africa despite Zuma's criticisms of the results. The people's will has prevailed and the election was conclusive.

As the ANC ponders its coalition options, it may need to also look ahead to correct the errors that produced the electoral mood of which Mr. Vote Ubisi's commentary was a metaphor.

AHONSIUNUIGBE

GUEST COLUMNIST



Energy Future for Africa

Africa Day is an emblematic day that underscores our unity, cultural richness, and collective potential. On this year's annual observance of Africa Day, I found myself reflecting yet again on one of the most pressing challenges our continent faces today—energy poverty. Despite considerable strides towards technological advancement and economic development, a significant & unacceptable portion of Africa remains quite literally, in the dark.

This is why, even though I have participated in numerous boardroom discussions focused on 'the pressing need for Africa to transition,' my position remains unchanged. For me the word 'transition' implies a mastery and utilisation of a resource, allowing for a subsequent move beyond it. Unfortunately, this does not reflect Africa's current reality.

The continent has substantial reserves of oil and natural gas, yet a significant energy paradox exists. Whilst home to 15% of the world's population, Africa accounts for less than 5% of global energy use; a contradiction that becomes even more stark if you exclude North-Africa. Testament to this disparity is the fact that over 600 million Africans lack access to electricity, and around 900 million are without adequate cooking facilities. These critical shortages hinder economic growth and continue to deepen poverty and inequality across the continent.

So, while ongoing global discussions often focus on a linear energy transition which centres around renewable energy, for Africa, the reality is

fundamentally different. Our focus for now needs to be on the provision of basic access to reliable and affordable energy, full stop.

This provision is only possible if the continent continues to explore ALL available sources of energy, including traditional resources like oil and gas, which the continent has in abundance. These resources are not only pivotal for immediate, scalable energy access, but also for sustainable economic development.

Expanding energy access is a powerful catalyst for economic development, with far-reaching effects across multiple sectors; access to energy stimulates the expansion of local industries, from agriculture to manufacturing to technology, which are crucial for the economic independence and sustainability of a region. It also encourages entrepreneurship by lowering the barriers to entry for small businesses and startups, which are vital for innovation and competition.

Beyond economic implications, energy access is essential for enhancing our quality of life. It supports healthcare, education, and improves general living

conditions. Energy reliability reduces household burdens, freeing up time for productive endeavours, specifically benefiting women and children, which is especially relevant given our predominantly youthful population.

The stark reality is that Africa is resource rich but energy poor. But it does not mean that an energy transition is impossible, it does however mean that any transition must remain realistic and balanced, addressing the continent's immediate needs and reflecting its unique developmental stage.

At Petralon Energy, our vision for the coming decade is to contribute meaningfully to enhancing energy access across Africa. To achieve this ambitious goal, we aim to continue to establish robust partnerships both within the continent and globally. However, we must heed the lessons of the past and carefully manage our reliance on any support, regardless of origin to prevent the creation of dependencies that may inadvertently work against our needs.

To counter these risks, it is crucial to lay an emphasis on fostering intra-African partnerships

that enhance local capacity and leverage our own resources and capital. By prioritising strategies that strengthen local collaboration and resource utilisation, we can ensure that Africa shapes its own energy future, with careful support and learnings from well-meaning global partners.

Petralon Energy is proud to be part of a select group of indigenous oil and gas players, raising significant private capital on our own terms, strengthening our resources. By doing this, we ensure that our solutions are tailored to meet the specific needs and challenges of African communities, drawing on a deep understanding of the continent's realities. I am reminded here of an old African adage, "It is he who lives in the house that knows where the roof leaks", therefore, any solutions we develop must directly address our unique challenges to be truly effective.

Addressing energy poverty in Africa is not just about lighting homes; it's about igniting potential and powering dreams. Energy is the cornerstone of modern economies, and without it, there is no sustainable development, no advancement in healthcare, education, or industry. As we reflect on the unity and solidarity that Africa Day symbolises, it is imperative that we harness our collective efforts to transform this vision into reality.

•Ahonisi is an investment-banker by training and is the Founder & CEO of Petralon Energy. He is also Chairman of the Board of Nigeria Exchange Ltd.

‘Addressing energy poverty in Africa is not just about lighting homes; it’s about igniting potential and powering dreams. Energy is the cornerstone of modern economies, and without it, there is no sustainable development, no advancement in healthcare, education, or industry.’