

# Dangote: I have Paid \$2.4 Billion of \$5.5 Billion Borrowed to Build Refinery, Eyes Steel Production

●Says cartel in oil industry stronger than global drug mafia ●Lauds Afreximbank, Access Bank, AFC for support, argues foreign banks not interested in African debt ●Discloses own refinery to serve as Nigeria's strategic reserve

Emmanuel Adedeji in Abuja, Africa's richest person and founder

of the Dangote Group, Mr Aliko Dangote, yesterday disclosed that he had already offset about \$2.4 billion

of the \$5.5 billion he borrowed to build his \$19 billion refinery located near Lagos.

Speaking at the Afreximbank Annual Meetings (AAN) and AfriCaribbean Trade & Investment

Forum in Nassau, The Bahamas, the billionaire businessman further stated that several entities, both local and

foreign, did everything to sabotage

Continued on page 48

# THIS DAY

Thursday 13 June, 2024  
Vol 29. No 10655. Price: N400

www.thisdaylive.com



## Oxfam Urges G7 to Use Fraction of Military Spending to Fix Global Hunger, Debt Crises... Page 9

## NLC to Tinubu: No Deal with FG on N62,000 Minimum Wage Offer

●Tinubu: Nigeria will pay what it can afford, hints at possible change to final settlement  
●President not responsible for Nigeria's economic woes, say Bishops

Deji Elumye, Olawale Ajimotokan and Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) yesterday stressed that the organised labour had not reached any agreement

with the federal government and members of the organised private sector on the base figure for a National

Minimum Wage as well as its other components of the remuneration. However President Bola Ahmed

Tinubu has declared that Nigeria will only pay what it can afford as new minimum wage for workers,

but hinted at possible change to

Continued on page 48

# Tinubu's Dobale, Military Parade, Cultural Displays Highlight Democracy Day Celebration

●President: Democracy worth falling for ●Atiku, Obi sympathise with Nigeria's leader over his slip  
●Nigerians stage protests in Lagos, Abuja, other cities, police arrest 5

Story on page 48



## 25TH DEMOCRACY DAY CELEBRATION...

L-R: Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, George Akume; President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio; Wife of the Vice President, Hajia Nana Shettima; Vice President Kashim Shettima; President Bola Ahmed Tinubu; and his Wife, First Lady of Nigeria, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, during the 25th Years of Democracy Day Parade held at Eagles Square, Abuja.... yesterday

PHOTO: GODWIN OMOIGUI

Move into a prosperous future

Shape your future with our competitive and sustainable long-term returns.

Visit [www.accesspensions.ng](http://www.accesspensions.ng) and make your move today.

Access Pensions, Future Shaping



[www.accesspensions.ng](http://www.accesspensions.ng)





Guaranty Trust Holding Company plc  
RC 1690995

NOT FOR RELEASE, PUBLICATION OR DISTRIBUTION, IN WHOLE OR IN PART, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, IN OR INTO ANY JURISDICTION IN WHICH THE SAME WOULD BE UNLAWFUL

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED OFFERING

*This notice is issued in reliance on Rule 283 of the Rules & Regulations of the Securities & Exchange Commission, Nigeria.*

This notice does not constitute an offer to sell or the solicitation of an offer to buy any securities. Any offer, solicitation or offer to buy, or any sale of securities will be made only by a prospectus duly registered by the Securities and Exchange Commission, Nigeria (SEC) in accordance with the provisions of the Investments and Securities Act, No. 29, 2007 (the Act) and the rules and regulations of the SEC made pursuant to the Act (the SEC Rules).

Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc (the Issuer) has filed a preliminary "red herring" prospectus (Red Herring Prospectus) with the SEC in connection with a proposed offering for subscription of ordinary shares of 50 kobo each in its share capital (the Ordinary Shares) to raise gross proceeds of up to N500 Billion (the Proposed Offering). The number of Ordinary Shares to be offered and the price range for the Proposed Offering have not yet been determined.

PURPOSE	The net proceeds of the Proposed Offering will be used for (i) the growth and expansion of the GTCOPLC Group's businesses. Such planned growth and expansion will be effected through investments in technology infrastructure to fortify existing operations, the establishment of new subsidiaries and selective acquisitions of non-banking businesses; and (ii) the recapitalisation of Guaranty Trust Bank Limited (GTBank Nigeria).
TARGET INVESTORS	The Proposed Offering is structured as an institutional offering targeted at eligible investors and a retail offering within Nigeria (the Nigerian Tranche) and a private placing to persons reasonably believed to be qualified institutional buyers outside Nigeria (the International Tranche).
LISTING AND ADMISSION TO TRADING	The Issuer intends to file an application for the approval of the Board of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) with respect to the listing and admission to trading of the Ordinary Shares on the NGX Official List.
ANTICIPATED TIMING OF THE PROPOSED OFFERING	The Proposed Offering is anticipated to open by July, 2024.

The filing of the Red Herring Prospectus was undertaken with a concurrent filing of a preliminary universal shelf registration statement. The universal shelf registration will permit GTCOPLC to establish a multi-currency securities issuance programme (the Programme) to issue various types of securities, or any combination of such securities, in one or more offerings, from time to time, to raise proceeds in an aggregate amount of up to U.S.\$750 million (or equivalent amount in Nigerian Naira) in the Nigerian/international capital markets during the validity period of the Programme.

The Proposed Offering is expected to be the first issuance under the Programme.

This notice does not constitute an offer of securities for sale in the United States or to U.S. persons ("U.S. persons"), as such term is defined in Regulation S promulgated under the United States Securities Act of 1933, as amended, (the U.S. Securities Act). The Ordinary Shares being offered have not been, nor will be, registered under the U.S. Securities Act or any state securities laws, and may not be offered or sold in the

#### About the Issuer

Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc is the ultimate holding company of the GTCOPLC Group.

The GTCOPLC Group is one of the largest financial services organisations in Africa. Headquartered in Lagos, Nigeria, the Issuer maintains direct and indirect investments in a network of operating entities located in 10 countries across Africa and the United Kingdom. Within these regions, the operating entities provide a comprehensive range of commercial banking and related financial services to millions of retail, institutional, private banking and wealth management customers, in addition to asset management, pension fund administration and payment technology businesses.

**For further information, please contact:**

Investor Relations:

[ir@gtcoplc.com](mailto:ir@gtcoplc.com), +234 2012714580



# GROW YOUR BUSINESS *with* ZENITH BANK

## Benefits

- Customized business cards
- Swift sign up on Google Business Profile with a free website
- Access free webinars and expert training
- Access discounted business centric services – logistics, insurance
- Partner professionals on temp basis - tax, accounting, web development, digital marketing
- Business loans at competitive rates

Visit the **SME Grow my Biz ARENA**



SCAN ME

Bank the Eazy way with **\*966#** NO DATA REQUIRED  
EazyBanking



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](http://www.zenithbank.com)



# enjoy financial support through your health journey



Enjoy the support of **Access W-Health Loan** as your healthcare partner and access loans of up to **N10 million** for **fertility treatments, cancer treatment, child delivery, and other health needs.**

**email [wcares@accessbankplc.com](mailto:wcares@accessbankplc.com) for more information**

**More Information:**  
01-271-2005-7, 0700-300-0000  
[accessbankplc.com](http://accessbankplc.com)



[Facebook.com/accessbankplc](https://www.facebook.com/accessbankplc) | [Twitter.com/myaccessbank](https://twitter.com/myaccessbank)  
[Youtube.com/accessbankplc](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...) | [LinkedIn/accessbankplc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/accessbankplc)  
[Instagram/myaccessbank](https://www.instagram.com/myaccessbank)



more than banking



Group News Editor: Goddy Egene

Email: Goddy.egene@thisdaylive.com, 0803 350 6821, 0807 401 0580

# NEWS



## INAUGURATING EDO STATE SECRETARIAT COMPLEX...

L-R: Speaker, Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku; Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki; former President Goodluck Jonathan; Deputy Governor of Edo State, Engr. Marvellous Godwins Omobayo, and Edo State First Lady, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki, during the inauguration of the Edo State Secretariat Complex, on Sapele Road, Benin City... yesterday

# June 12 Democracy Day: Leaders Salute Nigeria's 25 Years Unbroken Democratic Experience

**Sylvester Iduwu** in Warri, **Wale Igbintade** in Lagos, **Chuks Okocha, Adebayo Akinwale, Sunday Aborisade** in Abuja and **James Sowole** in Abeokuta

Leaders and groups from across the country have continued to send messages of goodwill to celebrate Nigeria's 25 years of uninterrupted democracy, as the nation commemorated Democracy Day yesterday.

From words of commendation, to caution, and outright rebuke, it was a ceremony well marked in capital cities across the states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The two decades and a half democratic experience since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1999 followed a chequered history of interminable military interventions in politics.

In speeches and messages to mark Democracy Day, yesterday, many Nigerians believed their democratic journey was worth celebrating, despite hiccups along the way.

### Dafinone: Let Us Remember Sacrifices of Those Who Fought for Democracy

The senator for Delta Central Senatorial District, Senator Ede Dafinone, urged Nigerians to remember the sacrifices of those who fought valiantly for the democracy the country now enjoyed.

The renowned accountant, now a lawmaker, while congratulating President Bola Tinubu, the people

of Delta Central, and Nigerians, in a signed statement issued yesterday, said Nigeria's 25 years of unbroken democratic governance was a testament to the resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment of the citizens to the principles of democracy and freedom.

Dafinone called on Nigerians to embrace unity, love, and respect for one another. He encouraged citizens to deepen their engagement in participatory democracy, and guard against antidemocratic tendencies at all levels of society.

In the statement titled, "Celebrating 25 Years of Unbroken Democratic Rule in Nigeria," Dafinone said, "This significant milestone is a testament to the resilience, dedication, and unwavering commitment of the Nigerian people to the principles of democracy and freedom."

"As we celebrate this historic day, let us remember the sacrifices of those who fought valiantly for the democracy we now enjoy. June 12th is not just a date; it symbolises our collective struggle for justice, equity, and the rule of law. It is a reminder of the power of the people's voice and the strength of our democratic institutions."

Dafinone urged Nigerians to embrace unity, saying, "In our diversity lies our strength, and it is only through mutual understanding and cooperation that we can achieve the greatness we aspire to as a nation. Let us set aside our differences and work together towards a common goal: a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Nigeria."

He added, "As we celebrate this momentous occasion, let us renew our commitment to building a Nigeria where democracy thrives, where every citizen enjoys their fundamental rights, and where the future is bright for generations to come."

### Youth Party Tasks Tinubu on Cost of Living

Youth Party called on President Bola Tinubu to address the rising cost of living and minimum wage, as part of democracy dividends, with the same speed the old National Anthem was reintroduced and passed by both chambers of the National Assembly.

The party, in a statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Ayodele Adio, accused the federal government of lacking seriousness in its dialogue with labour on the minimum wage.

The party stated, "If the National Assembly can pass the national anthem into law within a short period of time, they should be able to pass the minimum wage act into law without further delay."

The party faulted the payment of N90 billion by the federal government to subsidise the cost of the 2024 hajj pilgrimage.

It said, "Federal Government should not only be concerned

about spending N344.85 billion on the National Assembly of less than 500 Nigerian legislators, with N180 million worth of Jeep for each legislator, or N90 billion to subsidise hajj or N15 billion to repair Vice President's office, but be serious about reducing the burden on Nigerian masses."

Youth Party stated, "We are celebrating Democracy Day, but how have we fared as a nation democratically?"

"Some states have not conducted local government elections in over 10 years. Cost of living is beyond the reach of the poor. Minimum wage is not a living wage and the government

is not serious in addressing all these challenges."

The party advised Tinubu to provide good governance and economically empower the middle class, adding that the challenges facing the country require immediate rebuilding of Nigeria's economic and socio-political institutions through good governance.

It feted democracy heroes, including Chief Moshood Abiola, Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, Alfred Rewane, Frank Kokori, Rear Admiral Ndubuisi Kalu, Wole Soyinka, Kunle Ajibade, and Col. Abubakar Umar.

Continues online

## Address Issues Concerning Poor People, Obi Tasks Politicians

● Says Tinubu has kept campaign promises of continuing where Buhari stopped

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Candidate of the Labour Party (LP) in the 2023 presidential election, Mr Peter Obi, has called on politicians to have a rethink and focus on addressing issues concerning the poor in the country.

Obi's challenge was predicated on his claim that Nigeria has not really achieved much in the last 25 years

of democratic governance.

The former presidential candidate and former governor of Anambra State, while speaking as guest on Arise News Prime Time programme yesterday night, blamed politicians for many of the hardships in the country.

According to him, the questions that ought to be asked as Nigeria commemorates 25 years of uninter-

rupted democratic governance are, "are we truly democratic? Democracy is government of the people, for the people and by the people, what we have today, is it government of the people?"

While lamenting that massive corruption, insecurity, hunger amongst others have swallowed whatever gains or dividends of democracy, Obi pointed out that, "what we are experiencing is state capture" because "all we are supposed to see in education, health etc have been captured by a few".

Besides he pointed out that the nation is at its lowest in all facets of life; something which he challenged the administration of President Bola Tinubu to urgently reverse.

"We are actually working in the wrong direction and we need to change it and it has to start with the number one person", he said.

"President Tinubu has kept his campaign promises, throughout his campaign he consistently maintained that he will continue from where Buhari stopped", he added.

He recalled that when Tinubu took over from Buhari last year the dollar exchange rate which today is N1,500 was N460; fuel rose from N200 to N700; diesel from N844 to N1,115. Stating further that basic food items like gari, tomatoes, rice as well as electricity tariffs experienced astronomical increase, the former

presidential candidate disclosed that "this year alone government through the CBN has issued and taking from the system over N16 trillion".

He said, "when he took over last year, we were still the largest economy in Africa, today we are 4th overtaken by South Africa, Egypt and Morocco".

He blamed the current ostentatious lifestyle of the current administration, stressing that the government cannot tell the people to bear the economic hardship and go ahead to spend over N21 billion for the accommodation of the Vice President, especially when millions of Nigerians are facing housing problem.

Obi argued that the president out to start by cutting cost and curbing corruption, adding that agencies of the government such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) should concentrate on issues like budget padding, undisclosed subsidy, oil theft and other economic crimes instead of chasing individuals like jailed Bob Risky (a cross dresser) recently jailed for naira abuse.

"It is time to have a rethink, we have to think of the poor people, we must refocus and address issues that concerns poor people" he said, adding that no serious government should allow the factors that led to the collapse of Heritage bank recently, where a lot of poor people lost their live savings.

## NEMA Partners NSCDC to Mitigate Impact of Flooding in 2024

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Director General of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Mrs. Zubaida Umar, has visited the Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Dr. Ahmed Audi, to strengthen partnership for emergency response to the expected floods this year.

In her remarks during the visit, Umar, who said her visit was in furtherance of an existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by NEMA and NSCDC said it had become imperative for the NSCDC to once more activate its emergency response teams.

She stated this was geared to working with NEMA in the onerous task of saving lives and livelihoods

and restoration of normalcy in the event of floods and associated secondary disasters as the rainy season intensifies.

While appreciating the NSCDC for being a reliable partner to NEMA, she said: "let me use this opportunity to draw attention to the impending floods in several communities this rainy season as predicted by the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET) and the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA).

"Specifically, 148 LGAs in 31 States of the Federation are predicted to be within the high flood risk areas while 249 LGAs in 35 States and the FCT are considered to fall within the moderate flood risk areas during the 2024 rainy season," a statement by the Head, NEMA Press Unit, Manzo Ezekiel, stated.

She said the visit was also aimed at appreciating the Commandant General of NSCDC for the consistent partnership which NSCDC staff afford her agency by being readily within reach in every community of Nigeria to lend a helping hand to NEMA staff on deployment to conduct damage and loss assessment and relief intervention across the nation.

"Not long ago, NEMA handed over assorted food items approved by President Bola Tinubu, for distribution to vulnerable persons in all the states of Nigeria and the FCT. That distribution could not have been a success without the NSCDC providing safety and security to NEMA staff, the beneficiaries and the relief items distributed.

"The NSCDC has provided safety

and protected the dignity of women, children and the elderly living in Internally Displaced Persons Camps and those forced to take refuge in host communities as a result of disaster situations," she added.

According to the NEMA boss, through the stakeholders' engagement, NEMA would ensure proper safety, security and dignity of Nigerians before, during and after sudden disasters and emergency situations.

Responding, the Commandant General of NSCDC, Audi, assured that his organisation will continue to uphold the existing partnership with NEMA. He however, requested that NEMA should facilitate specialised training for NSCDC staff in identified areas of support to the mandates of the agency.



# Your Next Uber Ride is On Us



Earn points to enable you enjoy an Uber ride on us when you transact on the **Fidelity Mobile App**, **\*770#** and use your **Fidelity credit** or **debit cards**.

SCAN TO SEE YOUR POINTS



Terms and Conditions Apply

We Are Fidelity. We Keep Our Word

Contact Us: [trueserve@fidelitybank.ng](mailto:trueserve@fidelitybank.ng)



Fidelity Bank Plc  
FOLLOW US:   
[www.fidelitybank.ng](http://www.fidelitybank.ng)

FirstAdvance FirstCredit



# Quick Loans with FirstBank?



Simply dial \*894\*11# now from any mobile phone to get:

**FirstAdvance:** Up to N1,000,000.00 or 50% of your net Salary when you have a salary account with us.

**FirstCredit:** Up to N300,000 from your other current or savings account if you are not a salary holder.

You can meet that urgent need today. Dial \*894\*11# now.

*Terms and Conditions apply.*

FIRSTBANK IS AN FBN HOLDINGS COMPANY



*-You First-*



## NEWS



## 51ST AGM OF FRIESLANDCAMPINA WAMCO...

L-R: Former Executive Director, Finance, FrieslandCampina WAMCO, Marc Galjaard; Non-Executive Director, Oyinkan Ade-Ajayi; Chairman, Board of Directors, Moyo Ajekigbe; Managing Director, Roger Adou; and Executive Director, Corporate Affairs, Ore Famurewa, during the 51st Annual General Meeting of FrieslandCampina WAMCO Nigeria PLC, held in Lagos... on Tuesday

# Jonathan Inaugurates Edo State Secretariat Complex, Hails Obaseki's Reforms

● *We planned for N70,000 minimum wage three years ago, says governor* ● *State to pay salaries on June 14 ahead of Salah*

Former President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan yesterday commissioned the Edo State Secretariat Complex on Sapele Road, Benin City, commending Governor Godwin Obaseki's commitment to the progress and development of the State.

Jonathan also laid the foundation stone for the 1,500-capacity Goodluck Ebele Jonathan Auditorium, which is being constructed at the Secretariat Complex.

Dignitaries at the commissioning ceremony included Obaseki and the First Lady of Edo State, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki; Deputy Governor of Edo State, Godwins Omobayo and his wife as well as the Chief Judge of

Edo State, Justice Daniel Okungbowa.

Also present were the candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2024 governorship election, Dr. Asue Ighodalo and his wife; the Deputy governorship candidate and Secretary to the Edo State Government, Osarodion Ogie, and the Head of Service (HoS), Dr. Anthony Okungbowa, among others.

Speaking on the new complex, Jonathan noted that the buildings were some of the best in Nigeria, commending the governor for his vision to complete the dream of late Dr. Samuel Ogbemudia, the then governor of Bendel State, who started the construction works.

He encouraged other governors to emulate Obaseki in investing in the public and civil service and recruiting first class graduates into the service through automatic employment.

"I want to join the civil servants to thank you for your visionary leadership and improving their welfare and paying them N70,000 minimum wage. That is a wage that will actually take them home.

"If you have a vision, certainly you will find a way to overcome all challenges before you. Edo State workers are happy for your transformative leadership which has changed their lives for the better," he said.

On his part, Obaseki said the com-

missioning of the Secretariat Complex will transform the landscape of Benin City, as it is not just an edifice but represents what the future of what city should look like.

He said: "It is not just an edifice, but represents how we want to run our affairs now and in the future by prioritizing what matters most which are productivity, efficiency and excellence.

"The structures are a reflection of the investment we have made over the last seven and half years to rebuild our institutions. This has been a painstaking process which includes a total overhaul of how the public and civil service in Edo

State operates.

"We have now built a workforce that will now drive change and advancement in pursuit of the core values of our democracy and good governance. After securing my mandate to govern the people of Edo State in November 2016, this complex, particularly Palm House, was the first place I visited.

"I started work and built this place, which was in bad shape as the civil servants were working in an uncomfortable environment. I made a pledge to them, myself and to God that I will rebuild the infrastructure of this Secretariat. Today, we are here to see for ourselves what we have done.

"The takeaways from the building of this Secretariat are that it tells us that we can achieve anything we set our minds to irrespective of the opinion of anybody. When we started the building process, many people didn't see the big picture, but today look at where we are.

"This building is one of the most advanced Secretariat buildings in Nigeria. It has 24 hours daily power supply and high internet connectivity. We have done all this because we believed that government bureaucracy must work if we must make progress as a State."

The governor noted that the concept of the Secretariat complex were replicated in other locations across the State, noting that they include the health hub, built environment hub, agricultural hub and the education hub.

Separately, Obaseki said that the

state government made plans for a N70,000 minimum wage three years ago when the signs began to show that the economy was going in the wrong direction.

The governor disclosed this when the editorial board of Tell Magazine presented him with the Award for Exceptional Courage in Leadership, at the Government House, Benin City, the State's capital.

He said that the state made the plans for the increase in minimum wage when he started raising the alarm on the excessive borrowings by the federal government to meet its statutory obligations.

He said: "We are able to pay the N70,000 minimum wage because we planned ahead in the last three years because we knew a day like this would come.

"Thank God that we have been vindicated today, as our sincerity has helped us prevail over every situation. We see prospects for a better economy and transparent government in Edo State because of the institutional reforms we have introduced to better manage the State."

He continued: "We have always prevailed because the majority of Edo people understand, appreciate and endorse what our government has done. This has been the reason for the courage with which we have tackled any problem we faced along the way."

Noting that the state was on a steady growth trajectory, he said that for the next few months that are left for the administration, it will finish strong.

## Dangiwa Charges Africa's Ministers on Tackling Continent's Housing Challenges

● *Harp on innovative housing financing to ensure affordability*

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Ahmed Dangiwa, has urged African housing ministers to work collaboratively to address the continent's pressing housing development challenges.

The call to action was made during his opening remarks at the opening ceremony of the 43rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Shelter Afrique Development (ShafDB), in Kigali, Rwanda, according to a statement from his spokesman, Mark Chieshe.

In attendance at the opening ceremony were the President of the Republic of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, represented by the Prime Minister, Dr. Edoard Ngirente, Ministers of Housing and Public Works from several African countries, organised sector and private sector players.

Stressing the importance of innovative financing, Dangiwa who is the 42nd AGM Bureau Chair of the bank, underscored the crucial role of ShafDB as Africa's premier housing finance institution.

"ShafDB is Africa's housing finance bank, the only such institution that we have. It is therefore important that we all continue to give the bank all the support that it requires to grow, scale in impact and deliver on its mandate," he said.

He highlighted the necessity for continued support to the bank to enable it to scale its impact and deliver on its mandate of provid-

ing affordable, decent, and quality housing across Africa.

As part of efforts to institutionalize partnerships, the minister unveiled plans to launch a Financial Caucus of African Ministers of Housing and Urban Development during the AGM.

The platform, he noted, aims to foster synergy, share experiences, and develop innovative measures to bolster housing development across African nations, emphasised.

"The African housing problem is for Africa to solve. And we as Ministers of Housing must recognise that we are the ones responsible for providing the solutions and driving the process towards fixing Africa's housing challenge," he said.

Dangiwa also highlighted the critical role of the housing industry in achieving climate ambition and sustainability targets in the face of climate change. He called for a commitment to upholding the laws and statutes governing ShafDB.

Yesterday, being the second day of the event, Dangiwa called on African Ministers of Housing to embrace innovative housing finance solutions to address Africa's growing housing affordability crisis affecting the 80 per cent of African population.

This he said is important given macroeconomic challenges and rising inflationary trends which have impacted incomes and raised the bar on housing affordability.

Dangiwa highlighted Africa's housing deficit and the housing

affordability crisis affecting over 80 per cent of Africa's population, driven by low incomes, challenging macroeconomic conditions, and escalating living costs.

He underscored the critical need for affordable housing solutions targeting low and medium-income households, who are most affected by the economic pressures.

"These factors make it increasingly difficult for our citizens to afford decent and quality housing. With

each passing year, the affordability bar keeps getting higher.

"Many households that could afford housing a year ago can no longer do so because of rising cost of building material and static incomes. I am worried about this because I believe that for us to make impact, we must find ways to design, build and facilitate delivery of affordable houses targeting the 80% of the low and medium income percentile of our population," he noted.

## Akinyemi Kicks Against Return to Parliamentary System

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi, kicked against any plan to return the country to parliamentary system of government.

Akinyemi said the claims that Nigeria's presidential system was prohibitively expensive were untrue. He said it was those voted into power that made the presidential system costly. He lamented the state of local governments in the country, saying the state governments have almost killed the local councils.

The former minister made the remarks in his keynote address at the Songs of Nigeria Festival (SONIFES) awards ceremony in Abuja on Tuesday night.

He said having federalism in Nigeria was not something to be

afraid of or apologetic about, adding that it is sheer laziness for Nigeria to be talking about copying what is done in America when it may not suit the country.

A bill seeking to return the country to the parliamentary system of government passed First Reading in the House of Representatives in February.

However, Akinyemi said if the salaries and allowances of the executive and National Assembly were cut by one third, it would be clear to all that the presidential system was not as expensive as politicians had made it.

He stated, "We also must not confuse structure with human personalities. We talk about the presidential system being so costly that we cannot afford it and, therefore, we must go back to parliamentary system. Seriously? Are we really

serious about that?

"Is it the presidential system that determines the salaries of our National Assembly members? No! It is the human beings who are operating the system and who decide to make the presidential system costly.

"It is the people who we voted into power, who decide exactly how much they are paid, who decide how much their allowances are.

"If we decide to cut the salaries and allowances of the executive and National Assembly by one third, we will find out that the presidential system is not as expensive as we have made it.

"It is just sheer laziness. We run away from the problem and then with an attempt to decide for the people, we come up with solutions and that solution is going to be put together by human beings who will

decide what the salaries of the prime minister and parliamentarians will be."

The former minister lamented that the state governments had "almost killed" the local governments.

He stated that the state governments were financially stifling and undermining local government authorities in clear contravention of democratic principles of governance.

Akinyemi said, "If we agree to be fair and truthful, the state governments have almost killed or if they haven't even killed local government establishments.

"I don't want to get into the debate as to whether it is the business of the state or what it does with the local government within the concept of true federalism that the federal government has no business with local governments. Let's leave that alone for now.



**INAUGURAL 3PL SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME HOSTED BY NBC...**

L-R: Indirect Procurement Manager, Nigerian Bottling Company (NBC) Limited, Mr. Aderenle Thompson; Supply Chain Director, NBC, Mr. Niel Spickett; Country Logistics Director, NBC, Mr. Ismaila Yusuf; General Manager, A.G. Leventis, Mr. Olufemi Akinbola; and Partner/ CEO, Medessy, Mr. Osamede Evbakhavbokon, at the inaugural 3PL Safety Partnership Program hosted by NBC to sensitise partners on the significance of upholding high safety standards across all operations held in Lagos...recently

**Oxfam Urges G7 to Use Fraction of Military Spending to Fix Global Hunger, Debt Crises**

● *Says 3% of G7's \$1.2tn military spending in 2023 enough to address hunger*

**Ndubuisi Francis** in Abuja

Oxfam International has urged the Group of Seven (G7) countries to redirect a fraction of their military spending toward solving world hunger and relieving poor countries' sovereign debts as the leaders prepare to meet in Italy.

The G7 nations include the United States of America, Japan, Germany, France, Italy, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Oxfam is a global organisation that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice.

In a new analysis, the non-profit organisation found that just three per cent of the seven countries' annual military spending in 2023 totalling \$1.2 trillion, would be enough to "help end world hunger and solve the debt crisis in the Global South".

Global South broadly comprises Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Israel, Japan, and South Korea), and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

According to the data, which Oxfam used, the US alone committed \$916 billion to military spending out of the \$1.2 trillion.

Oxfam, in a statement, quoted its International head of inequality, Max Lawson, as saying, "Governments are finding their pockets run deep to fund war today, but when it comes to stopping starvation, they are suddenly broke."

"We're talking about a small commitment with the potential for huge impact. Imagine a world where no one goes to bed hungry

and where countries in the Global South can put money into public schools and hospitals instead of debt interest payments.

"The G7 not only has the means, but the moral and strategic imperative to make this happen."

Oxfam found that eradicating world hunger, both acute and chronic, would cost \$31.7 billion per year – most of the proposed three per cent redirection in funds.

More than 281 million people face severe hunger and malnutrition globally, Oxfam said.

It cited Somalia, Guatemala, Yemen, and Kenya as places where hunger was on the rise, and added that G7 was complicit in the ongoing suffering and starvation in Gaza.

Oxfam stated, "The G7's collective failure has basically given the Israeli military a free pass to commit terrible atrocities against Palestinian people."

"G7 leaders must do everything in their power to make sure there is an immediate and permanent cease-fire to stop the death and destruction."

"They also need to ensure full and permanent access of humanitarian aid through all ground crossings, and the release of all hostages and unlawfully detained Palestinian prisoners."

"Low- and middle-income countries are now spending nearly a third of their budgets on servicing debts as much as on public education, healthcare, and social protection combined."

Oxfam also recommended redirecting a relatively small amount of military spending toward sovereign debt relief.

Currently, Global South countries collectively are asked to pay \$291 million a day in total debt payments, including interest.

The Oxfam statement said, "Low- and middle-income countries are now spending nearly a third of their budgets on servicing debts as much as on public education, healthcare,

and social protection combined." Poor countries currently owe about \$4 billion to G7 governments, based on World Bank and International Monetary Fund data.

But G7 countries do not pay what they owe in social and climate aid – \$15 trillion, according to Oxfam.

An Oxfam analysis last year found

the figure was above \$13 trillion.

Oxfam International's interim Executive Director, Amitabh Behar, told Al Jazeera last year, "It's really the G7, which owes a debt to the low- and middle-income countries. It's not the other way around. We need to shift that gaze."

Oxfam also called for G7 countries

to follow up on a recent G20 effort to tax the super-rich.

In April, top G20 ministers—from Brazil, Germany, Spain, and South Africa—called for a two per cent wealth tax on billionaires "to invest in public goods, such as health, education, the environment, and infrastructure".

**Otti, Obaseki Urge Nigerians to Sustain Democracy as Vehicle for Nation's Greatness**

● *Abiodun converts death sentences for 45 inmates, pardons 41 others*

● *We are on course to build resilient nation, says APC*

**Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo** in Umahia and **Adedayo Akinwale** in Abuja

Governors of Abia State Governor, Alex Otti and Edo State, Godwin Obaseki, yesterday congratulated Nigerians on the celebration of 25 years of uninterrupted democracy.

This was as Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun commuted the death sentence of 45 condemned prisoners to prison terms. He also granted pardon to 41 other inmates serving in different Correctional Centres across the state.

Also, the All Progressives Congress (APC) yesterday, said despite the imperfections associated with democracy it has set the country

on course to build a strong, vibrant and resilient nation.

In separate statements to celebrate June 12, Otti and Obaseki respectively hailed Nigerians for sustaining democracy.

According to Otti, Nigerians should not lose grip of democracy despite challenges, saying it remains the best mechanism for harnessing the nation's rich human and natural resources.

Otti stated this yesterday, in his statewide broadcast to mark this year's Democracy Day, saying the nation has every reason to celebrate 25 years of uninterrupted democratic governance.

Otti paid tribute to the heroes of democracy struggle like Chief M.

K. O Abiola; his wife, Kudirat; Pa Alfred Rewane and several other, "notable and unsung heroes of the democratic struggle."

He praised the late symbols of democracy, noting that they, "offered so much in sacrifice to the campaign for the simple reason that they believed in the promise of democracy."

Otti noted that though democracy, "is never about making the perfect leadership choice", this cherished system of government provides the opportunity for "a progressive push to find leaders with superior development propositions".

He acknowledged that the last 25 years since the inception of the 4th Republic "have been very challenging and many are understandably losing faith in the promises of democracy".

However, Abia's fifth democratically elected governor expressed optimism that things would continue to get better so long as democracy is sustained as a form of governance.

Using the Abia experience to illustrate the beauty of democratic choice, Otti said it took the state over two decades of unyielding belief and tenacious struggle to break free from the grip of "a tiny cabal" that held the state down.

"We made a great leap in 2023 to welcome a new party, and a new set of leaders whose philosophy of development resonated more with the common man in all parts of the State," he said.

According to him, the people of Abia are already reaping the benefits of their courageous break from the past as his administration was speedily transforming the state to the joy of Abians that had yearned for change.

He listed the fruits of Abia's democratic change of leadership as

the reconstruction of long-abandoned roads in different parts of the state, the rapid push to rid the city centres of mountains of refuse and make our urban centres more habitable."

Otti assured Abians that "our dear state, Abia, will be great in our lifetime", saying, "it is a dream we are entirely committed to achieving."

He said that every person in Abia should be involved in the progressive march because, "as citizens, we have been empowered to be central to the development process through constructive engagements with the authorities."

For his part, Obaseki commended Nigerians for upholding the core tenets of democracy over the 25 years, noting that efforts at democratic consolidation would engender sustainable development in the country.

In a statement, the governor also charged voters in the State to come out en masse to participate in the September 21 governorship election and to vote wisely so as to sustain the state's developmental trajectory.

According to him, "As we mark this year's democracy day, it is pertinent to applaud the tenacity, resilience and bravery of Nigerians in sustaining the core tenants of democracy over the past 25 years. It has remained one of our greatest legacies as a country that we are able to freely choose those who preside over our affairs and decide to either keep or change them every four years."

"We have come a long way in this journey. Though we might be where we wish to be as of today, we are better off for it as a nation. Democracy remains the most desirable form of government because of its core principles of freewill, free enterprise, civil liberties, fairness and justice."

Continues online

**Shettima to Resident Doctors: Resist 'Japa' Temptation, Stay Back to Salvage Nigeria**

**Deji Elumoye** in Abuja

Vice President Kashim Shettima has appealed to Nigerian doctors to remain in Nigeria and join hands with the President Bola Tinubu administration in its ongoing efforts to salvage the nation.

Apparently cautioning against the recent surge in a phenomenon colloquially referred to local parlance as "Japa Syndrome," Shettima did not just ask the doctors to remain in the country, but to resist the temptation of absconding without flashing a ray of hope.

He told them that President Tinubu has their interest at heart, saying he (Tinubu) has a lot of empathy for medical doctors who have chosen to stay back at home despite juicy offers abroad.

The Vice President spoke when the National Executive Committee of the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) led by its newly elected President, Prof. Bala Audu, paid him a courtesy visit at the State House, Abuja.

Urging the Nigerian doctors not to despair, Shettima specifically implored them to "remain steadfast" and resist the temptation of offering their services in foreign lands, noting that "in President Tinubu, you have an ally who will stand by you at all times."

According to him: "President Bola Tinubu has Nigerian doctors at heart. He has a lot of empathy for our medical doctors who have opted to stay put at home, not for lack of offers".

On the challenges facing them in

the country, the Vice President commended the giant strides of Nigerian doctors and their sacrifices in the service of the nation, especially in repositioning healthcare delivery.

He said: "Let us stay back and salvage this nation together, this is our country and the greatest black nation on earth, and a promising nation that we need to invest in."

"The NMA is one of the most prestigious, preeminent associations in this country. We must commend you for the sacrifices you are making and for staying put in this nation."

"All hope is not lost because Nigerian doctors are making giant strides, recording milestones in the profession and, most importantly, making tremendous sacrifices to serve this nation."

Shettima further asked the NMA

to encourage young doctors to specialise in key disciplines of medical practice and also check the activities of quacks in the profession.

Earlier in his speech, Audu, said the executive members were at the Presidential Villa to solidarise the Tinubu administration, particularly on account of its laudable policies for the health sector.

His words: "The NMA has come here today as a partner to your government and a patriotic group of Nigerians dedicated to the success of the Renewed Hope Agenda of this government and to ensure that this government delivers quality healthcare to all Nigerians."

Continues online

*4th Year Remembrance*

**THOSE WHO TOUCH OUR LIVES,  
STAY IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.**

**Pastor Mrs. Ibidunni Olajumoke Ighodalo**

We miss you dearly and will always love you.

From all of us at TH





# Celebrating A Legendary Icon

@



Happy Birthday to our Founder,  
**Dr. Ngozi  
Okonjo-Iweala,**  
Director- General, WTO

On this historic anniversary of your platinum jubilee, we commemorate and celebrate your remarkable journey and countless accomplishments. Your unwavering dedication, and inspiring leadership have created an indelible impact in the world. Your vision and guidance are instrumental to our continued growth.

May you continue to lead and inspire with the vigour and compassion that have always distinguished you. We wish you happiness, good health, and beautiful memories as you mark this milestone.

**SIGNED, DR CHUKWUKA ONYEKWENA**

Executive Director, on behalf of the Management and Staff of the  
Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA)

In loving Memory of

**JOHN OLUBUNMI KOSEBINU  
AGBAJE**

August 29, 1982 – May 27, 2024

His love, warmth and generosity will be sorely missed by Bioye his beloved wife, Ore his darling son, parents, siblings, grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

**Requiem Mass**

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church,  
Musa Yar'Adua Street, Victoria Island, Lagos  
Friday, June 14 at 11am.

FAMILY OF JK AGBAJE



# DISCLAIMER



The management of **Julius Berger Nigeria Plc** wishes to inform the general public, its clients and all government Ministries, Departments and Agencies that

**MR. UCHENNA UZOEWULU**

whose photograph is herein shown, and who was the Sales Manager at the company's **Abuja Furniture Production (AFP)**, is no longer in the employment or services of the company.

The Management of **Julius Berger Nigeria Plc (AFP)**, hereby, notify the General Public that anyone that transacts or purports to transact any business with Uchenna Uzoewulu on behalf of, or in respect of **Julius Berger Nigeria Plc (AFP)**, does so absolutely at their own liability.

Signed:  
**Management**



# *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](http://www.polarisbanklimited.com)





# PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC PARTY

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZING SECRETARY (ONOS)

## *Congratulations!* TO TWO FINE OFFICERS OF OUR GREAT PARTY

Former National Organizing Secretaries on your One Year Anniversary of the

# 10<sup>TH</sup> SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA



**Sen. Abdul Ahmed Ningi CON**  
(Bauchi Central Senatorial District, 10th Senate)



**Sen. Col. Augustine Okwudiri Akobundu (Rtd)**  
(Abia Central Senatorial District, 10th Senate)

The 10th Senate of our Dear Country will certainly have need of both of your expertise at this challenging moment. On behalf of myself, my Office and Department; which you both have commandeer in the past, and our Great Party, the PDP, I wish you a gallant celebration and a successful tenure in the senate.

designed by freepik.com

Courtesy: ►

**Hon. Capt. Umar Mohammed Bature**  
National Organizing Secretary (NOS)



The management of West African Ventures Limited (WAV) led by the Group Managing Director, Michael Dumbi Amaeshike, paid a courtesy visit to the Executive Secretary of Nigeria Content Development Monitoring Board (NCDMB), Engr. Felix Ogbe, FNSE, at The NCDMB TOWERS in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.



**Nigerian companies have a lot to benefit, from regulatory compliance with the Financial Reporting Council roadmap and listing requirements from NGX Regulation to competitive advantage in a myriad of global options that seek to attract foreign direct investment or local investors' capital.**

**Rubicola Consulting** in partnership with **ACCA** and **NGX Regulation Ltd** present a  
**FULL-DAY IMMERSION WORKSHOP FOR NIGERIAN COMPANIES**

On

## SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE-RELATED FINANCIAL REPORTING: ISSB, Nigerian Roadmap for Adoption, ESRS/CSRD and much more...

This intensive workshop is targeted at accountants, internal auditors, investor analysts, risk experts, strategy consultants, external auditors, sustainability and other finance professionals who will be charged with preparing climate disclosures under ISSB IFRS S1 and S2.

The pool of participants should be drawn from middle and senior management and C-level officers and directors who are charged with oversight functions on financial and nonfinancial reporting.

This workshop will provide the opportunity for full immersion required to equip accountants, risk experts, sustainability and other finance professionals with the ability to identify, assess and report on climate risks, and more importantly implement

strategies to elucidate climate related opportunities that will drive competitive advantages for their respective organisations.

Participants will take away deep understanding of environmental, social and governance issues; impact of sustainability and climate related risks and opportunities on their respective company's business model and value chain and practical skills on reporting disclosures for the ISSB IFRS S1 and S2 standards.

Participants will also garner the enthusiasm to engage with senior leadership and Board of their organisations as well as investor groups on transition strategies and climate resilient scenarios that will protect shareholder value and mitigate climate or transition risks on their organisation's financial position, performance and cash flows.

### WELCOME ADDRESS:



**Titi Oshodi**  
- Special Advisor on Climate Change and Circular Economy to the Governor of Lagos State

### OPENING REMARKS:



**Olufemi Shobanjo,**  
CEO, NGX Regulation Ltd



**Tom Isibor**  
- Market Head, ACCA Nigeria

### FACILITATORS:



**Joseph Owolabi**  
- founder, Rubicola Consulting & Immediate Past Global President, ACCA



**Evelyn Isioye**  
- ACCA, Regional Lead, Policy & Insight - India & Africa

**Venue:** Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos.

**Date:** 25th June 2024

**Duration:** Full Day: 8:00am - 5:00pm (8 hours)  
The training also qualifies participants to earn 6 CPD points.

**Cost:** **₦400,000.00**  
(10% discount for NGX or ACCA members, or corporates with five (5) or more delegates).

Virtual (join by link):  
**₦300,000.00** (flat fee)



Scan bar code to Register

OR go to

<https://bit.ly/IFR5SustainabilityTraining>



# HEROES OF DEMOCRACY

# Tinubu Lists Heroes of Democracy

President in his broadcast to mark 25 years of nation's democratic governance listed heroes of our democratic struggle. They didn't set out to pay the supreme price. But they knew what they were up against. Not one of them was oblivious to the consequences of their decision to confront an unfeeling, brutal, nasty, soulless and disoriented military leadership. Quite expectedly, some survived the onslaught by the junta. Several others didn't. The battlefield was lethal and total, because too much was at stake. But, taken together, it wasn't a failed adventure, at the end of the day.

With 25 years of unbroken democracy, the risk was worth it. Although it is not yet uhuru for a tottering 64-year-old giant, especially with the cycle of her existential fault lines, hope is not far away either.

It was, therefore, a moment of deep emotion and reflection worth celebrating, when President Bola Tinubu, yesterday, remembered these heroes and heroines of the nation's democracy at a fitting occasion of her 25 years of returning to station.

**Deji Elumoye** provides short but pungent profiles of those on the shortlist of the President. Although THISDAY was not on the president's list, was a major player in the struggle to end military rule and return the country to democratic order.



**Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola**

Chief Moshood Abiola was a political behemoth, who rode on the nation's horizon in his prime. Politician, businessman, accountant, and philanthropist, he ran for presidential election on the ticket of the Social Democratic Party against Alhaji Ibrahim Tofa of the National Republican Convention on June 12, 1993, and was on the cusp of victory when the unexpected happened.

His election, adjudged the freest in the country and Africa at the time, was annulled by the military regime of President Ibrahim Babangida. No valid reasons. But Abiola's campaign to reclaim his electoral victory led to his incarceration by the General Sani Abacha-led government, which later took over, before he eventually died on July 7, 1998.

Abiola then became a symbol of democracy when former President Muhammadu Buhari on June 6, 2018, declared June 12 as the new Democracy Day and gave posthumous award of the highest honour in the land – the Grand Commander of the Federal Republic – to him.

This year makes it the seventh time that June 12 would be celebrated as Nigeria's Democracy Day as against May 29, when the nation transitioned from military to civilian rule, from 1999 to 2017.

**Kudirat Abiola**

Second wife of the late Chief Abiola and the potential first lady, Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, was very active, both during the campaigns of her husband's election and the struggle to actualise the June 12 mandate.

The arrest of her husband by the Abacha junta in 1994, made her a tireless advocate for Abiola's freedom and the return of his mandate. This doting



mother and wife soon became one of the most dreaded foes of the Abacha regime.

On Tuesday, June 4, 1996, around 3:05 pm, one of the most senseless murders in Nigeria was carried out and life was snuffed out of Kudirat Abiola.

Aside cutting her life short at 44, a new chapter was opened in Nigeria's chequered political history, as she became one of the prominent matyrs in the struggle for a truly democratic nation.

**Shehu Musa Yar'Adua**

Retired two-star Army General, businessman and politician, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, served as second-



in-command to General Olusegun Obasanjo, when he was military Head of State from 1976 to 1979.

After retiring from service, he went into business and shortly after, full time politics. He participated actively in the politics of the ill-fated Third Republic midwifed by the regime of Babangida. When IBB as he is famously called, banned old politicians including Yar'Adua, the retired General used his political group, the Peoples Democratic Movement (PDM) to mobilise support for MKO Abiola to win the primaries of the SDP at the second ballot in Jos, Plateau State, ahead of the June 12 presidential poll.

Yar'Adua died in controversial circumstances in Abakaliki prisons in 1997, where he was being detained by the Abacha-led government over alleged reasonable felony charges.

**Alfred Rewane**

A successful businessman, activist and politician, Pa Alfred Rewane, was a key member of the Action Group and an associate of the late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in the First Republic.



In the 1990s, Rewane's residence in Ikeja, Lagos, became the unofficial venue of political meetings, which led to the birth of NADECO.

He was known as a major financier of the group, which was vocal in its opposition to the military regime of Abacha. Pa Rewane was felled by suspected Abacha hit men on Friday, October 6, 1995, at his Ikeja GRA residence. He was 79.

**Anthony Enahoro**

A patriot, nationalist and politician, Chief Anthony Enahoro was renowned for moving the motion for Nigeria's independence in 1953. He was a key figure



in the struggle against British colonial rule and later in opposing military dictatorship in Nigeria. He was a major player in the struggle to actualise June and survived several antics of the junta to take him out being a menace to the government. But he died in 2010 at the ripe age of 87.

**Abraham Adesanya**

Generally considered an enemy of state by the Abacha junta, Senator Abraham Adesanya, a lawyer, activist, and politician, was a leading figure in the



Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, where he was the supreme head. He also led the famous NADECO, which made him a target of the regime. He was, however, among the lucky few who survived assassination plots by the Abacha regime. He later died at 66 years old on April 27, 2008.



**Dan Suleiman**

A retired Nigerian Air Force officer and politician, Captain Dan Suleiman, was one of the active NADECO members from the north, the part of the country, where Abacha also came from. He served as the Military Governor of Plateau State. He, however, aligned with his compatriots from other parts of the country to advocate the restoration of democracy in Nigeria, by actualising June 12. He survived the Abacha bullets, and stood his grounds for one Nigeria. He died on February 1 at 80.

**Frank Kokori**

A principled labour leader and activist, Chief Frank Kokori, was the General Secretary of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers



(NUPENG) during the hey days of the struggle for the validation of the June 12, 1993 presidential poll. He used his platform to torment the junta and was imprisoned for his role in advancing democracy. While he survived Abacha's wickedness, he lived the rest of his life in poor health condition as a price paid for challenging the junta. He even came out in the twilight of his days to alleged abandonment by his compatriots in the trenches. It was, perhaps, too late as he died in 2023 at the age of 79.

## HEROES OF DEMOCRACY

## Tinubu Lists Heroes of Democracy

**Arthur Nwankwo**

Author, publisher, and political activist, chief Arthur Nwankwo, was as important as any other key figure in the fight for democracy in Nigeria, albeit from the South East part of Nigeria. He co-founded the Eastern Mandate Union and was a vocal critic of military regimes. Another lucky patriot, who later died in 2020 at the age of 78.

**Chukwuemeka Ezeife**

An economist and prominent politician from the South East, Chief Chukwuemeka Ezeife, served as the Governor of Anambra State. He was involved



in various movements, advocating the restoration of democracy and the actualisation of the June 12 struggle. He lived many years after the struggle ended, not without surviving Abacha and his criminal gang. He eventually passed away on December 14, 2023, at 86.

**Ndubuisi Kanu**

A retired naval officer and politician, Admiral Ndubuisi Kanu, lived up to billing as a military officer, when he sided with NADECO and actively



opposed military rule. Fearless and outspoken, Kanu, who served as the Military Governor of Imo and Lagos States, was not an easy prey for the Abacha junta and therefore survived their treachery. His experience and skills came to play. He, however, died on January 13, 2021 at the age of 77.

**Adekunle Ajasin**

Chief Michael Adekunle Ajasin, a statesman and educator, was the Governor of old Ondo State in the Second Republic and the leader of Afenifere



and NADECO combined. He fought and lived for democracy, although an advocate of regional autonomy. While he didn't live to see democracy crystallise, his principles and worldview didn't change till he breathed his last. He died on October 3, 1997 at the age of 89.

**Bola Ige**

The Cicero of Esa-Oke as he was fondly called, Chief Bola Ige, was lawyer, politician, and writer, who served as the Governor of old Oyo State in the



Second Republic. He was a prominent member of the Action Group, led by Awolowo. He was also a member of the Yoruba socio-political group, Afenifere, and was involved in the pro-democracy movement before accepting to serve as the Minister of Justice under President Olusegun Obasanjo. Unfortunately, for a man, who survived Abacha and his men, he was felled by the bullets of the vestiges of military leadership in a democracy at his Ibadan home in December, 2001. He was 71 years at the time.

**Ganiyu Dawodu**

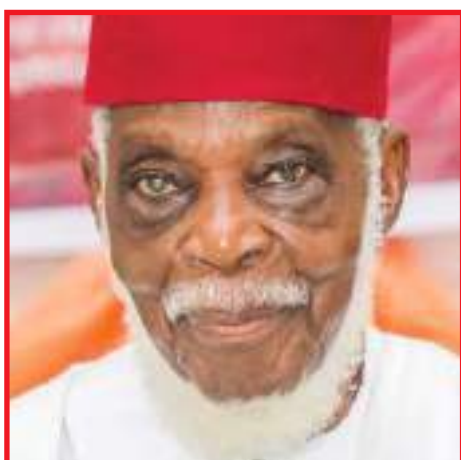
A prominent Lagos-based politician and activist, Chief Ganiyu Olawale Dawodu, was a key member of the NADECO movement and Afenifere. He



not only fought military dictatorship and pushed vehemently for democracy, he was one of those who made President Bola Tinubu's governorship dream come to life. Although the fell out soon after Tinubu stabilised in office, as he did with other Afenifere members, the president still recognised the principles that the old man stood for. He died in 2006 at the age of 71.

**Ayo Fasanmi**

Chief Ayo Fasanmi, a high-up member of the Action Group and later Afenifere, was a pharmacist, politician, and activist, who naturally belonged to



NADECO by virtue of his association with Afenifere. He played his part in advocating for democracy in the country. A survivor of the military dictatorship, he was one of the few who lived long enough. He died on July 29, 2020 at the age of 95.

**Bolaji Akinyemi**

Professor of political science, the former Minister of External Affairs, Bolaji Akinyemi, deployed his area of strength and influence to the Jun 12 cause.

**Olabiye Durojaiye**

An Ogun State-born politician, Senator Olabiye Durojaiye, was a lawyer and economist. He was elected senator in 1999, but not before playing an active role in the NADECO movement. He didn't relent in his quest for good governance and constitutional democracy, when as a senator in 2002, he recommended a life jail-term for anyone who perpetrated electoral fraud. He died on August 24, 2021 at the age of 88 years old.

**Beko Ransome-Kuti**

He was not the regular medical doctor. With radical and intellectual stamina to boot, Dr. Bekolari Ransome-Kuti, took his practice and activism a notch



up. Coming from a family of activists, confronting inept leadership was a sport for him. A key figure in the Campaign for Democracy, a group that partnered NADECO to oppose military rule, he didn't flinch a second despite all the threats and persecution he faced. Curiously, he too survived military dictatorship but died on February 10, 2006 at 66 years old.

**Chima Ubani**

In every of his disposition, Chima Ubani was naturally a rights and democracy activist. He led several pro-democracy movements, including the



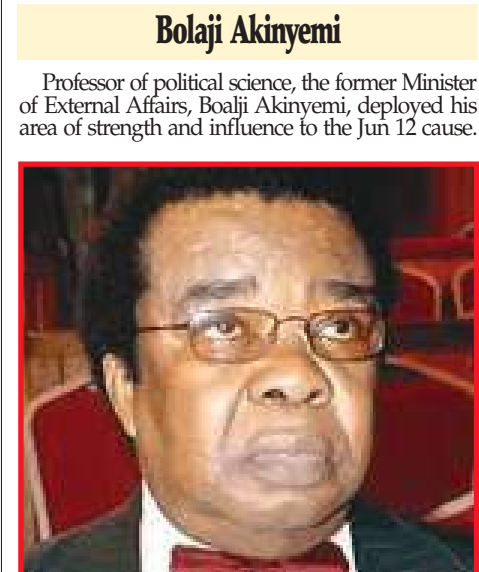
Civil Liberties Organisation and the Campaign for Democracy. Although a young man, Ubani partnered older compatriots to fight for democracy and June 12. He made his name and earned his stripes for championing several anti-military campaigns. He died in September 2005 at the age of 42.

**Alani Akinrinade**

A decorated three-star army general and politician, Lieutenant-General Ipoola Alani Akinrinade, was one of the tacticians in the NADECO movement, who



guided the pan-Nigerian movement in their activities against the junta. Equally an advocate for an end to military rule and enthronement of democracy, Akinrinade, too, survived the Abacha goons and today, this Afenifere chieftain is savouring the good of democracy in retirement at 84.



Adept in foreign policy, his contributions to snatching the nation from the claws of military rule centred more on leveraging his friendship with foreign allies for the good of the nation. The involvement of the 82-year-old in various pro-democracy initiatives and activities is therefore not quantifiable.

**Gani Fawehinmi**

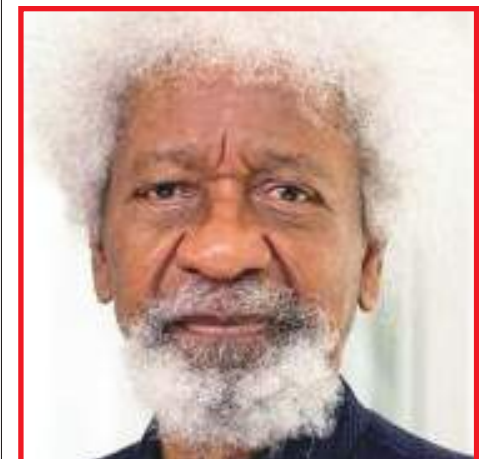
Arguably one of Nigeria's most feared lawyers in his days, Chief Gani Fawehinmi was also an author, and activist. He was renowned for his tireless and timeless fights for human rights, social justice, and



democracy. He was a thorn in the flesh of military dictatorships and also resented persons with untoward characters. He spared no efforts in going after and reprimanding President Bola Tinubu, when he faced various allegations of fraud during his time as the governor of Lagos State. He attempted to run for the presidency and set up National Conscience Party (NCP). But Nigerians seemed not ready for him at the time. While some of those he raised in the path of patriotism had moved on and in some cases, committed class suicide, his ideals remain immutable. He died on September 5, 2009 at the age of 71.

**Wole Soyinka**

A radical from his prime, history is replete with how the first African Nobel Laureate, Professor Wole Soyinka, damned consequences of his choices at different times in the nation's political life and stood



by Nigeria. Curiously, not even age could stop him. Vocal, confident, daring and cerebral, Soyinka is one of the intellectual bulwark of the struggle to enthrone democracy by validating June 12. For a man, who always thought he had nothing to lose dying for his country, Soyinka has paid his dues, both as a young and aged man, after being locked up a few

# Tinubu Lists Heroes of Democracy

times for nation's sake. At 89, today, nothing has changed with this renowned playwright, poet, and essayist. Although age appears to have slowed him down a bit from being a vocal critic of oppressions, he still dishes out from the old plates whenever time demands.

## Cornelius Adebayo

Popularly called C.O Adebayo, Chief Cornelius Olatunji Adebayo, 83, was at different times a senator, former governor of the old Kwara State in



the Second Republic, and also served as Minister of Communications. A kitchen member of the Afenifere group, he was equally an active member of the NADECO movement and gave as much as others in the struggle to actualise the June 12 election. He has paid his dues and posterity is evidently siding with him.

## Olisa Agbakoba

Brewed differently with class and finesse, human rights lawyer and activist, Chief Olisa Agbakoba co-founded the Civil Liberties Organisation, one of



the groups that deployed professionals to the June 12 struggle. Although he has not stopped advocating for legal reforms and democratic ideals, his roles, in collaboration with others for the enthronement of democracy were incalculable. He deserves as much recognition as he is getting. He, too, has paid his dues.

## Abdul Oroh

Journalist, lawyer, and politician, Hon. Abdul Oroh, was the executive director of the Civil Liberties



Organisation (CLO). He was arrested on July 27, 1995, by plain clothes men in connection with the June 12 struggle. But he survived. He was later elected into the House of Representatives in 2003 and also appointed commissioner in Edo State during the days of Adams Oshiomhole as governor. He has continued to be active in human rights advocacy and the pro-democracy movement in Nigeria.

## Ralph Obioha

Businessman and politician, Chief Ralph Obioha, was a key member of the NADECO movement, who led the group's activities from Canada and



the Unites States. A former member of the House of Representatives in the Second Republic, Obioha was also chairman of the Ohanaeze Ndigbo and former national chairman of the Justice Party. For a man, who had paid his dues in politics, he tells whoever cares to listen that the June 12 struggle was a tough one. After losing a bank (First African Trust Bank), a brewery (Safari Brewery), cement bagging plant in Port Harcourt (Castle Cement), and vegetable oil company – all to the struggle – no one tells the story better than this patriot. But in spite of his losses, he is consoled by the fact that democracy is still in play.

## Femi Falana

Here's another constitutional lawyer and rights activist, Mr. Femi Falana, who was a key ally to the late Fawehinmi. He went all out for June 12



to come alive, and got democracy instead. He has continued to tread in the same path since Nigeria returned to civil rule. Falana has been involved in several legal battles for the protection of rights and democracy in Nigeria. He is one of the survivors that the younger generation still looks up to for guidance.



## Shehu Sani

President of the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria and Chairman of Hand-in-Hand Africa, Senator Shehu Sani, was a leading light in the struggle for the restoration of democracy in Nigeria. He was arrested and jailed by successive military regimes as a result. He was, however, released from life imprisonment when the nation returned to civil rule. The 56-year-old has paid his dues and it was no wonder that the people honoured him with his election into the senate in 2015.

## Oluyemisi Falae

A former Secretary to the Government of the Federation during the military regime of President Ibrahim Babangida, Oluyemisi Falae, is the current



and first crowned king of Ilu-Abo in Ondo State. As a key figure in the pro-democracy movement, through his strong affiliation with Afenifere, Falae and like-minds played significant role in the struggle for June 12 and he, like others, gave his all to the cause. Banker, administrator and politician, Falae was at a brief period, the Minister of Finance. He also ran for president in the third and fourth republics.

## Ayo Adebajo

Elder statesman, Chief Ayo Adebajo is a co-founder of Afenifere, a foremost pan-Yoruba socio-political group. A lawyer, and politician, he was one of the



major drivers of the pro-democracy struggle. An ally of Awolowo, Adebajo's days in politics are as old as his age – 96. As one of the chieftains of NADECO, Adebajo joined protests, stood at the barricades and made his voice heard in the June 12 struggle. Apparently used to the dangers of a political life, Adebajo's resolve remained unshaken, even when members of the democratic coalition and other groups in civil society were shot at, harassed, humiliated and killed. As one of the oldest survivors of the gory, dark days, Adebajo is an encyclopedia in the nation's politics.

## Uba Sani

Currently the Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Uba Sani, has a solid background in activism and has worked on various initiatives for development



and governance. Sani protested against military authoritarianism in Nigeria, and left behind a footprint of bravery and patriotism. Riding on his organisation and networking skills, he created a strategic base for the pro-democracy movement in Northern Nigeria, using his civil society organisation, the Movement for Freedom and Justice. He further deployed it to champion the rights of the underprivileged and offered them unfettered access to justice. At different times, he was the National Vice Chairman (North) of Campaign for Democracy (CD) and Deputy National Chairman (North) of the Joint Action Committee (JACON) led by Fawehinmi.

## Ayo Opadokun

As the secretary-general of NADECO, Chief Ayo Opadokun, from Kwara State, was one of the most important persons in the struggle for



the actualisation of June 12. The convener of the Coalition of Democrats for Electoral Reform (CODER), was and is still prominent in the activities of Afenifere, being the group's former national publicity secretary. Journalist, politician, and activist, Opadokun went all out and gave his all to what remains the mother of all struggles ever witnessed in Nigeria's body polity. That democracy is alive and kicking today is because patriots like him stood up to be counted.

# After June 12: How THISDAY Changed the Game

James Emejo in Abuja

The infamous crackdown by the late dictator, Gen. Sani Abacha, started fully on August 18, 1994. He had responded to workers' strike at the time and sacked the Executive Council of NUPENG, PENGASSAN, and the NLC.

In further breathing down on the nation, he also closed down three newspapers: the Punch, Concord group (owned by Abiola) and The Guardian. In another twist, the government announced a partial lifting of the ban on politics, allowing individuals to 'canvass political ideas' but not to 'form political parties for now'.

But on January 22, 1995, reprieve came the way of lovers of democracy, when the THISDAY newspapers birthed, not just to fill the vacuum created by the proscribed

tabloids, but change the game in totality.

Thus, THISDAY coming on stream three years after the annulment of June 12 presidential election, took the fight to the Abacha junta, with the sole aim of rescuing the country from military misrule. Its constant reportage, of heavily sensitive cover stories rattled the junta and gave it sleepless nights.

The THISDAY platform also allowed some of the members of staff of the proscribed newspapers, who were challenged to continue their antagonism in the new medium against the disreputable Abacha regime.

For Abacha, however, that came quite too soon. Therefore, for creating another "monster" against his regime, the Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of THISDAY, Prince Nduka Obaigbena, was serially harassed and

detained by the Directorate of Military Intelligence, DMI, under then Colonel Frank Omenka, for defending democracy.

Obaigbena was later to go on exile for a few years, only returning back to the country after the death of Abacha.

Through the newspaper's array of brilliant journalists including Waziri Adio, Eniola Bello, Segun Adeniyi, Kayode Komolafe, Ezechi Ubani, Yusuph Olaniyonu, Tunji Bello, Louis Odion and Victor Ifijeh, among others, the paper devoted to the advocacy for democratic ideals, and called on the military dictatorship to return the country to civil rule.

Unfortunately, following their unrelenting roles, many of these reporters were either serially harassed

or locked up by Abacha.

Several other writers seized advantage of THISDAY's reach and growing influence to intensify their pro-democracy campaigns against the military regimes until victory was achieved, albeit after the late Chief Moshood Abiola who was robbed of his election victory.

In addition, with regular major cover stories on its Saturday and Sunday titles, THISDAY constantly promoted democratic ethos, which led to the hunting down of these great writers.

The democracy and freedom we all enjoy today is the product of sacrifice of so many who in their own little way took great risk for their country to be free. Some were lost, others suffered losses of various kinds for this democracy, 25 years on...



**PAMO UNIVERSITY**  
**MEDICAL SCIENCES**  
*Excellence for the good of all*

# HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS, OUR CHANCELLOR

Your Excellency

**General Abdulsalami  
 Abubakar, GCFR,**

*Former Head of State, Federal Republic of Nigeria  
 Chancellor, PAMO University of Medical Sciences, Port Harcourt*

We extend our warmest wishes to you on the occasion of your 82nd birthday celebration.

Sir, we appreciate your immense contributions to our institution right from inception till date.

Under your leadership, our institution has matured and has graduated students from all the departments, including the pioneer class of medical students who are now undergoing their internship in hospitals across the country in just six years.

We also commend the critical roles you are playing in various capacities in the development of our dear nation.

May God continue to grant you happiness in good health in the years ahead.

*Happy Birthday Your Excellency.*

**Dr. Peter Odili**  
*Pro-Chancellor*

On Behalf of the Board of Trustees, Governing Council, Management, Staff and Students

# Hurray, Our Chairman is

# 82!

The Board,  
Management and  
Staff of African Circle  
Pollution Management  
Limited wish to  
congratulate our dear  
Chairman, General  
A.A. Abubakar, GCFR  
on the occasion of his  
82nd birthday  
this day, being  
13th June, 2024.

*Happy Birthday  
your Excellency*

## General A.A. Abubakar, GCFR

Signed:

Rear Admiral F.B.I. Porbeni, mni, CFR

Vice Chairman



● Lagos ● Port Harcourt ● Onne ● Warri ● Calabar

5, Dipo Orepitan Crescent, Abacha Estate, Ikoyi, Lagos

Tel: +234 12121340, 2121341

## Like Iroko, Ugochinyere Stands Tall in Legislative Activism

**Udora Orizu** writes that the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Petroleum Resources, Downstream, Hon. Ikenga Ugochinyere, really knows his onions and strives to make a difference as a first timer in the Green Chamber.

In his book, 'No longer at ease', literary giant, Prof. Chinua Achebe says, "Who ever planted an Iroko tree - the greatest tree in the forest? You may collect all the Iroko seeds in the world, open the soil and put them there. It will be in vain. The great tree chooses where to grow and we find it there," so it is with greatness in men".

Like the Iroko that he is, Hon. Ikeagwuonu Ugochinyere (Ikenga Imo) stands tall and strong on the Nigeria's legislative turf within his one year in the House of Representatives.

Young, vibrant, charismatic, fearless and patriotic, he has been around the Nigerian sociopolitical cycle as a students' leader, youth leader, human rights activist, anti-corruption crusader, legal battle fighter, lawyer, just to name a few.

He had been President of all Nigerian Youths (NYCN), Secretary General, African Youths Council (AYC), Founding member, International Youth Council, New York USA, Founder and Chairman of Action Peoples Party (APP), Executive Assistant to a Governor, Senior Special Assistant to Senate President of Nigeria, Spokesperson, Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP).

He was the founder and first National Director of PDP Youth Movement during the Chairmanship of Ahmadu Ali and Ojo Maduekwe as Secretary. Ugochinyere in each of these positions stood with the people, becoming a towering voice against tyrannical forces in the land.

Armed with his legal background, Ugochinyere has never been deterred to speak truth to power even at his own peril. The young lawyer turned lawmaker is using the current position to advance the causes he has always believed in and attracting development to his immediate constituency



**Ugochinyere**

and making laws for the peace, unity and progress of Nigeria.

Before and after his swearing in as a member of the 10th House of Representatives, Ojezi Ideato (People's messenger) as he's popularly called has been in a political and legal battle which was draining, heart wrenching and bloody. The battle claimed lives of some of his family members and supporters, following a deadly attack on his residence on

January 7, 2023 shortly before the February 25, 2023 National Assembly poll.

The horrible incident would have made anyone to give up, but as the people's messenger that he is, Ojezi stood his ground, focused and fought like a warrior.

He eventually emerged victorious, defeating other candidates, and after their inauguration on June 13, 2023, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, appointed Ugochinyere as Deputy Chairman of

the Special Committee on Media and Public Affairs of the House.

On July 27, 2023, Speaker Abass and Deputy Speaker, Hon. Benjamin Kalu, appointed Ugochinyere as the chairman, house committee on Petroleum Resources, Downstream.

As he assumed duty as a lawmaker, he faced yet another legal tussle when Imo State National/State Assembly Election Petitions Tribunal removed him as the member representing Ideato North/South federal constituency of Imo State in the House of Representatives and declared a supplementary election in 55 polling units of the constituency with the exception of Ugochinyere.

But, in November 2023, the Court of Appeal, sitting in Lagos, unanimously affirmed his election, as the validly elected member of the House of Representatives.

In a unanimous judgment, the panel headed by Justice Abubakar Gumel overruled the judgment of the Imo State National/State Assembly Election Petitions Tribunal, which had disqualified Ikenga and nullified his election on a pre-election matter of the primary election of the PDP despite plethora of authorities by the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal to the effect that Election Tribunals do not have jurisdiction over pre-election matters. As news of the judgment reached Ideato, there was instant jubilation, with markets and streets instantly turning into carnivals for the celebration of the legal victory.

*-Orizu writes from Abuja*

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

## Orajiaka: Parties' Structures Designed to Sideline Good Candidates in Nigeria

Havard University-trained Business Executive and Chieftain of the Labour Party in Anambra state, Paul Orajiaka, in this interview shares his thoughts on the challenges of vying for elective office as a young businessman, insecurity in the country, the clamour for creation of state police and assesses President Bola Tinubu's one year in office. **Folalumi Alaran** brings excerpts:

**You were a governor aspirant in Anambra State under the All Progressives Congress in 2021. What vital lessons did you learn from that trial?**

One of the lessons I learned from running for elective office is that you may be passionate about serving, but the political structures in place have a way of determining your fate. You can have all the zeal but when the guys at the top of the party hierarchy step in, you will find out that your whole effort and desire comes to naught. So, what it tells you is that, it's not just about you having the will, it's about you being able to fight a system that is perpetually, wanting to keep the best of the candidates out of the race.

The system we have in place is such that neglects rightful candidates and chooses the worst of the candidates as against the people who have taken their time to prepare. I realized soon enough that the APC in Anambra State didn't want the best of us to run for elective offices or be the flag bearers of the party. What happened during the APC governorship primaries was a big scam.

After the charade, they offered to compensate me with several political appointments if the party wins the governorship election but I called their bluff because my desire was not about what I was going to gain, but what I was going to give. Having seen the fraud they called primaries, I just stayed away and later went back to my business.

**But the problem you just described is not peculiar to the APC...**

Unfortunately, our political system has been seriously compromised. I agree that the problem cuts across the entire major political parties in



**Orajiaka**

the country. It is now about the money bags taking the day.

Meanwhile, politics, as it should be, has moved beyond the depth of your pocket to the depth of your knowledge and what you're bringing on board. But what we're still playing today in Nigeria is money politics. This is why during most primaries, you hear that the EFCC is looking for those sharing dollars. What has dollars got to do with party primaries? We should be able to bring the candidates before the party members and ask them to choose among

the best candidates.

So I think on the national and state level, there's been too much money influence in the system.

**Why did you move to the Labour Party?**

I decided to move to the Labour Party because it's a platform that has a sense of purpose and more desire for genuine change. It's a movement that is trying to bring out the best of Nigerians to run for elective offices so that when we have a critical mass of good people, we can change the system.

My philosophy is that if a system isn't working, you move to another system that works and

propels you to achieve your desire to engineer positive change in society.

**Why LP and not the Peoples Democratic Party, or the All Progressives Grand Alliance, which is the ruling party in Anambra State?**

I didn't want to be tied in any way to anything that has to do with a regional arrangement. That is why I didn't choose APGA. Then, the other parties have so much in similarity with what I experienced in APC; how connected and how much money you have. LP is a peoples' movement that has revived the consciousness of the masses that together we can do better and dislodge the old order.

Besides, Peter Obi who is the symbol of the party has also become a symbol of value, integrity, morals, and love for people.

I want to identify with such good traits. What he did in his eight years of administration in Anambra is still a benchmark for good governance in the country.

**But the LP is also battling an internal crisis that is presently threatening its unity.**

I can assure you that the problems in the party will soon be addressed permanently. Our leader, Peter Obi is trying everything to see that the party is normal. So, yes, it might be tough at the moment, but I'm sure at the right time we're going to fix it. There may be little issues with the party now, but that is not enough to make us jump ship because after all what other alternatives do we have considering the fact that the two dominant parties have failed us?

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



**JAMES HOPE  
UNIVERSITY**

MEMBER OF



# Be A Part of the Solution!

Take your career to the  
next level with our  
Full-time MBA and M.Sc.  
programmes today!



**APPLY NOW**

- Full-Time MBA
- M.Sc. Economic Development & Policy Analysis
- M.Sc. Employment Relations & Human Resources Management
- M.Sc. Finance
- M.Sc. Fintech & Analytics
- M.Sc. Innovation, Intrapreneurship & Entrepreneurship
- PGD Management



James Hope University, Twin Lakes Estate, Chevron Junction, Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lagos.



Enquiries@jhu.edu.ng



02015150401



www.jhu.edu.ng

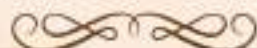
# OPUDA ALABO DUMO LULU-BRIGGS

at **60**

We the Lulu-Briggs family are immensely proud and honored to celebrate the 60th birthday of our beloved

## **OPUDA (ALABO) DUMO LULU-BRIGGS,**

Iniikeiroari VI of Kalabari Kingdom and  
Paramount Ruler, Oruwari Briggs War Canoe  
Chieftaincy House of Abonnema.



Your journey thus far has been marked by a steadfast commitment to selflessness, a passion for uplifting others, and a dedication to preserving and advancing the legacy of our family.

As we mark this significant milestone, we celebrate you with boundless love and admiration. Your leadership has been a guiding light, and your family stands by you with unwavering support and affection..

With deepest affection  
and fondest regards,



Signed: **Chief Senibo O.B Lulu-Briggs**  
For The Lulu-Briggs Family

# HAPPY DIAMOND

## Jubilee

### IROKO OF ORUWARI HOUSE.

The Oruwari Briggs Chieftaincy House expresses profound gratitude to God for the 60th birthday of our esteemed Paramount Ruler, a wonderful man, exceptional father and extraordinary leader Opuda Oruwari,

## ***Alabo Dumo Lulu Briggs.***

A diamond jubilee is indeed a momentous and historic occasion.

We commend your courage and unwavering dedication in unifying the diverse interests of the Oruwari House and transforming it into a strong, peaceful, and cohesive War Canoe Group.

We appreciate your contributions, generosity, and wisdom in elevating the house to new, admirable heights.

On this special day of your 60th birthday, the chiefs and people of the Oruwari Briggs house wish you long life, good health, and all the happiness your heart desires.

Let this day be filled with much joy, gladness and success as you have always bestowed on the Oruwari house, Abonnema and humanity everyday.

We appreciate your incredible leadership and pray the Almighty God to grant you his abundant grace, guide and protect you in all your endeavours.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY EBUYE LULU II.

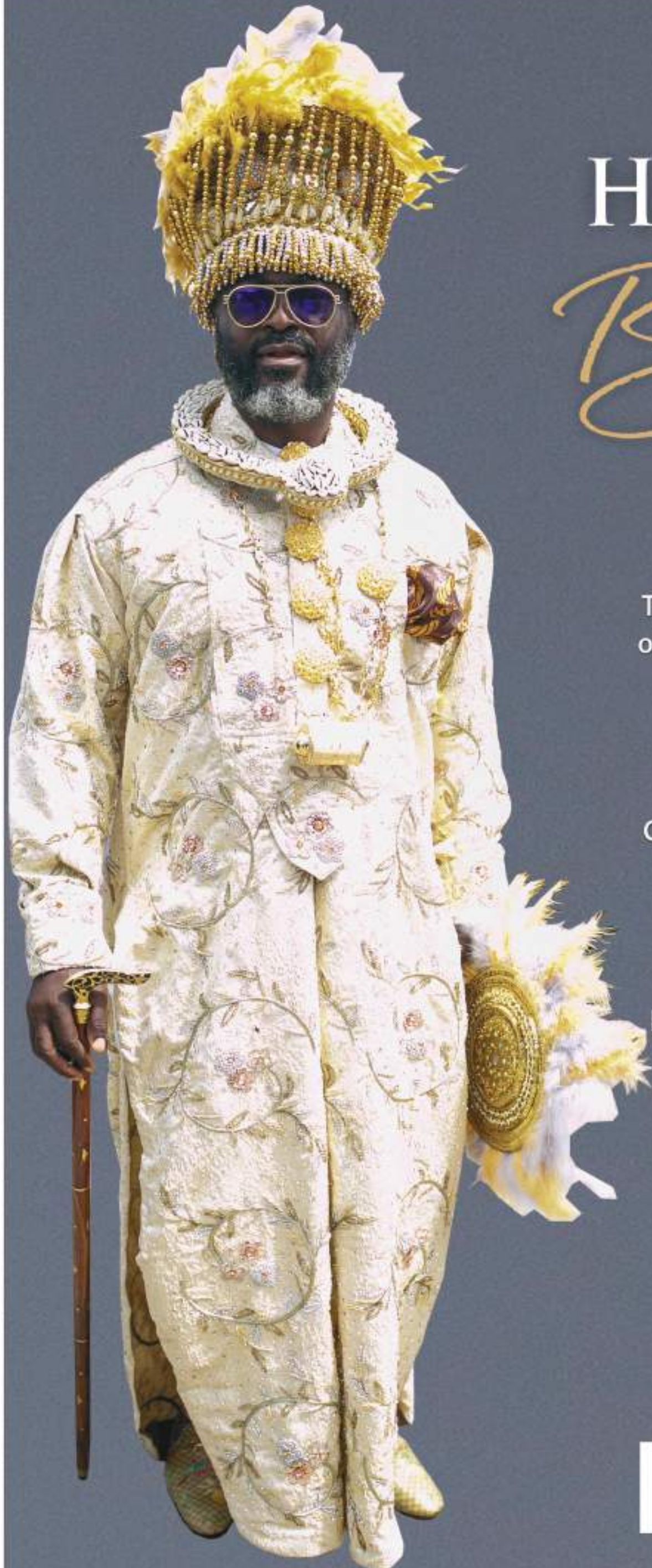
HAPPY BIRTHDAY DA INIKEIROARI VI.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY OPUDA ORUWARI.

*Signed:*

**Alabo Amonia Olulu Briggs, Ph.D, FIBD.**  
**Secretary Oruwari Briggs House.**





# HAPPY 60<sup>TH</sup> Birthday

The Board, Management, and Staff  
of AA Holdings Limited rejoice with

## Chief Dumo Lulu-Briggs

Chairman, Platform Petroleum Ltd.  
on the occasion of his  
Birthday celebration.

May this day and years ahead  
be filled with lot's of good success.

May God continue to grant you  
immense joy, good health and  
moments of happiness.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

*Signed:*

Austin Avuru  
Executive Chairman

# *Birthday Wishes*



His Highness  
**ALABO DUMO -  
LULU BRIGGS**

*Poloyanabo of Briggs  
(Oruwari) Chieftaincy Group  
of war canoe houses,*

*Inikeiroari the IV of Kalabari,*

*and Paramount Head of  
Briggs Oruwari compound of  
Abonnema*

Happy 60th birthday , my  
dear Brother and friend **Chief  
Dumo Lulu-Briggs.**

**SIGNED:**  
**D.D.Dodo SAN, OFR**



60

HEARTY CHEERS  
to  
OUR DEAR OPUDA



The Board, Management and Staff of **Platform Petroleum Limited**, felicitate with our indefatigable Chairman and leader par excellence on this remarkable occasion of his **60th birthday** today.

We are inspired by your unwavering commitment, dedication, and vision.

May God continue to guide and direct your every step, endow you with those valuable things you treasure – **joy, love, happiness** and **healthy living** as you continue in your commitment to the economic development of our dear nation.

**Congratulations!**

The Platform Petroleum Family.



**CHIEF DUMO  
LULU-BRIGGS**

CHAIRMAN, PLATFORM PETROLEUM LIMITED



PLATFORM PETROLUUM LTD

# Congratulations

## CHIEF DUMO LULU-BRIGGS!

*A good deed is never lost. He who sows courtesy, reaps friendship; he who plants kindness, gathers love; pleasure bestowed on a grateful mind was never sterile, but generally gratitude begets reward."*

*- Saint Basil the Great.*

*Dear Dumo,*

You are indeed a good friend, a rare icon, simply matchless in astuteness and humanity.

You are someone who knows the true spirit of friendship and brotherhood.

Today, if we choose to write about your uncommon feats as a businessman or decide to document your philanthropic acts in black and white, our hands may grow tired.

But as you celebrate this milestone today, we acknowledge and celebrate you, not only as a friend but also as one of the few successful individuals in the country who sees the need to give back to the society as a priority.

We celebrate You immensely,

*Happy 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

YOUR FRIENDS:

Adokiye Ikpoki (Sodangin Dutse)

Chief Johnbosco Ozigbu PHD

Engr. Obelema Isokariari

Bode Ayo

Bekwele Wami

Enyinda Orianwo



# Happy 60th Birthday Chief Barrister Dumo Lulu-Briggs

We heartily congratulate our brother and friend,  
the Iniikeiroari VI of Kalabari Kingdom,  
Paramount Head of Oruwari-Briggs  
Chieftaincy War Canoe House of Abonnema, Rivers State,  
Chief Barrister Dumo Lulu-Briggs,  
for successfully clocking 60 today Thursday June 13, 2024.  
May the good Lord grant you your heart desires in the  
years ahead in Jesus name!

*Signed:*

Ambassador Idaere Gogo Ogan  
Tambere Ibisiki  
Sodienye Peterside  
Eugene Abels  
Teinbo Briggs  
Sotonye Oju  
Mrs. Lolo Harry Phillips

Engr. Adokiye Tombomieye  
Figbene Briggs  
Bar. Omubo Frank Briggs  
Benibo Ngogo-Tobin Briggs  
George Iwobi  
Ms Lizzy Finecountry  
Dr Paul Wakama

H.E Timipri Sylva  
Soki Graham Douglas  
Dr. Victor Tulutu Briggs  
Bob Fubara-Manuel  
Mrs. Amie Georgewill  
Adokiye Ikpoki  
Engr. Obelema Isokariari



**PRESS RELEASE**

Royal Iwere Foundation 

6 June 2024

# Empowering Dreams:

## Riverine Children Receive Scholarships from Ogiame Atuwatse III and Olori Atuwatse III's Royal Iwere Foundation

In a remarkable effort to advance access to education opportunities for children in underserved communities within the Warri Kingdom, Ogiame Atuwatse III, Olu of Warri, and Olori Atuwatse III's Royal Iwere Foundation (RIF), have partnered with Valley Stream British Academy (VAB), Sapele to provide children of primary and secondary school enrollment age with 3-6-year scholarships. This partnership exemplifies a strong commitment from RIF and VAB to cultivate future leaders who will contribute to the socio-economic advancement of the Warri Kingdom and impact the global landscape.

Speaking on the importance of the RIF Scholarship Fund, Olori Atuwatse III stated "The agency to transform our country and continent is education. We understand how critical it is for our children to access quality developmental education. This is why we invest robustly in education at the Royal Iwere Foundation to ensure the potentials of marginalised communities, especially the riverine, are not sidelined. I also applaud the management and staff of the Valley Stream British Academy, Sapele, for supporting this vision to nurture great minds regardless of their backgrounds. I also use this opportunity to encourage more education institutions across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels to partner with us, as over 20 million children are out of school according to the UNESCO Global Education Report and we have many more lives to impact. RIF is resolute in its mission to empower and nurture great minds in the Warri Kingdom because these children are the leaders of tomorrow, and tomorrow is almost here. Let's equip them for it."

The RIF Scholarship Fund is an initiative under the Education Project pillar of the Royal Iwere Foundation, the humanitarian arm of the Warri Kingdom Monarchy. The pillar has been described as a catalyst for positive change, and has created educational pathways through pipeline projects such as the Teachers Training Programme, Teach For RIF, Love Gardens, STEM Hub Boot Camp, Story Time with Mama Iwere, and Raising Royalty Academy for riverine children and youths in underprivileged communities of the Warri Kingdom to achieve their academic goals and contribute to the socio-economic advancement of Warri Kingdom, Delta State and Nigeria at large.

The RIF Scholarship Fund works closely with community leaders, parents, and partner schools to provide comprehensive support across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. Since its inception, it has impacted on many beneficiaries at the primary, secondary and University level. The beneficiaries, ranging in age from 9 to 25, including females across 15 communities in Warri.

The primary and secondary levels of the RIF Scholarship Fund provide 3-6 years of quality education to underprivileged children aged 9-13 in reputable South-South Nigerian schools. The multi-layered program identifies underserved communities, invites pupils for assessment tests, and offers a 6-8 week boarding program with dedicated teachers, a custom curriculum, and support from child therapists and medical practitioners.

The fund wraps up with scholarship exams and onboarding for successful pupils who undergo medicals and complete



documentation before starting their new schools. Beneficiaries also join RIF's Raising Royalty Academy, gaining access to summer camps, leadership coaching, and development programs for global opportunities.

The Royal Iwere Foundation (RIF) is a non-profit organisation is a strategic rethink for the people of the Warri Kingdom and works to educate, and empower for a brighter future.

RIF is dedicated to effectively tackling obstacles and vulnerabilities that could hinder the Kingdom's continuous development and its capacity to compete internationally through targeted SDG-oriented initiatives. For inquiries about RIF's projects, visit [www.rif.ng](http://www.rif.ng). For partnership and enquiries kindly email: [operations@rif.ng](mailto:operations@rif.ng)

# Happy Birthday Sir.

We the members and staff of **Distinguished Senator Philip Taminu Aduda MFR CON** wish to congratulate you on the occasion of your 55th birthday.

Sir, your leadership style is a shining example to be emulated by millions across the nation. We are proud to be groomed under your mentorship, our able leader and boss.

Your purposeful achievements over the years from House of Representatives to the Senate, even as minority whip and minority leader of the 8th and 9th senate was felt by your people and we are super proud to have you as a trusted leader.

We pray that our Heavenly Father who sees beyond human comprehension grant all your heart desires.

**The beginning has just began!!**

*Once again!! Happy Birthday Sir.*

Distinguished Senator  
**Philip Taminu Aduda MFR, CON**  
*Talban Karu*

**Signed:**  
**All Staff**

# POLITY

## Grid Shutdown: Labour Goofed on SGF Akume

By Louis Achi

It's worth recalling here that Pope Paul VI, head of the Roman Catholic Church and sovereign of the Vatican City State from 21 June 1963 to his death on 6 August 1978 once shared his thoughts on labour unions. They were as enduring as they were empathetic and insightful.

Hear him: "The important role of union organizations must be admitted: their object is the representation of the various categories of workers, their lawful collaboration in the economic advance of society, and the development of the sense of their responsibility for the realization of the common good."

Labour unions' "lawful collaboration in the economic advance of society, and the development of the sense of their responsibility for the realization of the common good" are key to the stability and progression of any society, especially during particularly challenging periods.

Nigeria's labour failed the Pontif's simple but profound test and actually breached provisions of the Trade Disputes (Essential Services) Act 1975 No 23, when they abruptly shut down the national electricity grid, inter alia, on June 3, while embarking on a strike action in response to what it claimed was "the federal government's refusal to conclude the national minimum wage negotiations, reverse electricity tariff hike, and end discriminatory consumer classifications". The organised labour, comprising the NLC and Trade Union Congress (TUC), had embarked on the strike under reference.

The Secretary to the Government of the Federation, SGF, Senator George Akume had promptly and appropriately called out labour for crossing the line and directly accused it of treasonable felony and economic sabotage. According to Akume, who has deservedly earned the label of 'the stabilizer,' "No where in the world has labour ever tampered with the national grid. It is treason! Treasonable felony is economic sabotage; you don't do that."

To provide some critical context, the office of the SGF is considered the engine room of government because of the enormity of the functions and responsibilities associated with it, of the executive arm of the federal government. In effect, when President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, a consummate administrator and politician himself, picked Akume for the SGF's position, it clearly was not a lightly taken decision. Akume himself is certainly no rookie. He holds a Master's degree in Industrial and Labour Relations, amongst other qualifications and is both a seasoned politician and experienced civil servant.

Labour has actually violated the critical rights of millions of Nigerians by reaching for the national electricity grid. Could it be said that labour is very much unaware that today, Nigeria, Africa and the world stand on the brink of substantial disruptions - and of considerable opportunity - as new economic and political models challenge traditional playbooks.



NLC President, Ajaero

These scenarios have unquestionably impacted governance and a labour quick on the uptake ought to have fundamentally appreciated it before attempting to 'topple' a democratically elected administration.

A response from labour's top hierarchy suggested some level of blissful ignorance. In actuality, the SGF was correct in his assertion that the action of the NLC leadership was undistinguishable from treason and punishable by the provisions of the Trade Disputes (Essential Services) Act 1975 No 23. It was an act of integrity to call labour's attention to the existence of the law and its consequences.

The emerging consensus by informed observers is that the leadership of the NLC are surprisingly unaware of the Trade Disputes Act of 1975 or it wouldn't have issued their curious statement which further put in a bad light.

SGF Akume's position finds resonance in the section on penalties for acts calculated to disrupt the economy, especially sub-section (1)a which stops officials of the labour union from engaging in acts calculated at disrupting the economy. It reads: "Any employer or any official of an association of employers or any official of a trade union who is or has been engaged in acts calculated to disrupt the economy or acts calculated to obstruct or disrupt the smooth running of any essential service commits an offense that's punishable by a fine or imprisonment."

The Act under reference specifically forbids and empowers the president to proscribe any trade union whose members are employed in essential services who disrupt essential services like the switching off of the National Grid and locking up

of government offices to enforce the strike. It reads "An Act to empower the President to proscribe any trade union or association the members of which are employed in any essential service if such union or association has been engaged in industrial unrest or acts calculated to disrupt the smooth running of any essential service".

Significantly, should the federal government opt for proscription of the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, the unassuming SGF will be the funeral director by virtue of the referenced Act.

It could not be disputed that SGF Akume expressed the position of millions of Nigeria who willy-nilly are bruised victims of the inconsiderate act of the NLC and TUC. He certainly deserves to be feted for his patriotism. Not surprisingly, Akume finds soul mates in cautioning labour in the Senate President Godswill Akpabio, Dr. Doyin Okupe and Comrade Isa Tijjani, Interim Chairman, Labour Veterans and Trade Unionists' Assembly, a former National Vice President of the NLC, and former National Deputy President, National Union of Petroleum Workers (NUPENG).

Not surprisingly, Comrade Tijjani was not only livid by the shutting down of the National Grid but by the "apes obey" manner labour choreographed the entire strike which he described as being in gross contravention of the International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions specifically aimed at protecting essential service sectors from such disruption. Considering the various positions Comrade Tijjani had held in the labour movement, he surely knows what he is saying.

It could be recalled that in an open letter to the NLC, Tijjani wrote: "Once again, we write

to express our anger and grave dissatisfaction with the way the recent strike was conducted by the Nigeria Labour Congress. In particular, we are miffed by the apparent treasonable felony committed by the striking labour leaders in bringing down the national grid, stopping citizens from going about their legitimate businesses, forceful eviction of law-abiding citizens from their offices and employment of force and arm-twisting tactics on people to abide by the strike".

Surprisingly, the NLC, rather than humbly concede it crossed the line and actually carefreely strolled into the courtyard of treason, it continued with its hocus-pocus and embarked on a campaign of calumny targeting SGF Akume. It also threw insulting jabs at Senator Akpabio for his informed concurrence with Akume that labour committed high treason by shutting down the national grid, which threw the entire country into darkness and inflicted severe hardship on innocent Nigerians.

Many Nigerians may not have forgotten that President Ibrahim Babangida administration jailed 11 workers of the defunct National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), for switching off the national grid during one of their numerous strikes. Shutting down a nation's national electricity grid is akin to a declaration of war.

But it was a sensible thing that labour heeded the plea of President Tinubu, because this will help both sides to smoke the peace pipe and pull back from the needless brink labour was pushing for. Ignorance of the law is often seen as no excuse for thoughtless actions.

Defined by his sheer kinetic energy and depth, Akume revels in pushing new frontiers. These ingrained traits remain the central portrayal of an adept political stabiliser; Benue State, North-central zone and Nigeria's inimitable administrative and governance guru.

Incidentally, beyond the algorithmic calculations that go into farming out appointments in the Nigerian political space, certain appointive positions demand utmost circumspection because its occupants represent key drivers of the appointer, in this case, the President's broad governance vision.

Instead of the Ajaero-led labour confronting and curiously insulting Akume, they should rather get off their high horse and rather partner the informed SGF and the administration he serves for the progress of the nation. While labour often struts around with the pretention of unearned sainthood, the current administration has not been heard to claim candidacy for sainthood.

Meanwhile, the leadership of the National Assembly which was equally insulted by labour should reflect on amending the 1999 Constitution to move the issue of minimum wage from exclusive list to the concurrent list. The country craves a functional federation and not a unitary system. States should determine what they can pay to its workers. President Tinubu who is an advocate of restructuring must accelerate bequeathing Nigerians with a true federal system that works.

The Pontif captured this decades ago: lawful collaboration and responsibility are key. Cut to the bone, labour goofed on Akume.

## NEWS

### FG to Complete Rehabilitation of 250m Ijora-Causeway Road in Lagos By August

Peter Uzoho and Oluchi Chibuzor

The federal government has stated that rehabilitation of the 250-metre critically-failed section of the Ijora-Causeway Road in Lagos State would be completed in August 2024 to ease traffic congestion on the road.

Managing Director of the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), Mr. Chukwuemeka Agbasi, stated this yesterday in Lagos during an inspection tour of ongoing road maintenance projects in the state.

Agbasi, who has been on inspection

of some projects in the southwest to assess the progress and quality of work being done, also pointed out that deepening collaboration among stakeholders was critical to keeping the major roads across the country motorable.

Some of the projects for inspection

include reinstatement of critically failed sections, access slab and desilting of drain along Ijora Causeway Road within FERMA Lagos 1, East in Southwest II Zone, and reinstatement of critically failed section at Ile-Epo Market Junction, Katangora Market and Dump Site Abeokuta

Dual Carriageway in Lagos II, West in Lagos State.

He stressed the need to safeguard and maintain the durability of the road infrastructure in the country.

The FERMA boss, who started off on arrival with an on-the-spot assessment of drainage problems in Moshalashi Bus Stop, Agege Motor Road, Mushin, Lagos, stressed the need for people to stop dumping refuse into drainage across the country.

He stated that the main problems was blocked drainage, saying the agency had been able to proffer solutions where it felt that closer collaboration would be needed with the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA).

According to Agbasi, "The immediate priority is to start. We've already started doing that - desilting existing drains to allow water to flow. Water is the worst enemy for our roads, so people must stop dumping refuse into drainages. Once the drainage system starts overflowing, obviously, it affects the pavement. So, the desilting work is ongoing, and we'll continue to do that."

"The time scale (for completion of the project) is in the next two months. The work here will be completed, and the road will be open to traffic."

"For me, it has been good; it has been excellent because without quality work, you are not getting value for your money. In fact, we insist on quality work being done for us to get value for taxpayers' money."

He added: "Today, we are back here. You can see the recovery, the extent of work that has been done. This is a critical section of the Ijora Causeway. The work is ongoing, but by the time we finish, we are now increasing the capacity or recovering the existing capacity of this section of the causeway."

Engaging some stakeholders along Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway at Ilepo Dump Sites, he stressed the need for the community to take ownership of projects.

He expressed hope of completing the remaining section of the road as soon as possible because of the importance of the infrastructure to the communities along the area.

### It's Possible to Mitigate Climate Change Impact, Says Gov Oborewori

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

Delta State Governor, Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, has called for improved capacity building to mitigate the impact of the climate change in the country.

Oborewori made the call, Tuesday, in Warri, during the launch of the "Network Launch of Advancing Community Capacity to Mitigate Climate Change Impacts and Develop Green and Blue Economy in the Niger Delta".

"Advancing Community Capacity to Mitigate Climate Change Impacts and Develop Green and Blue Economy in the Niger Delta" was to address the challenges facing by the

region, known for its biodiversity and natural resources but also vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and sustainable development practices.

The project is being funded by the Danish government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and the Danish Embassy in Nigeria and implemented by Academic Associates PeaceWorks (AAPW) a Non-governmental Organization (NGO) which has been working in the Niger Delta for over 30 years.

While inaugurating the project network, Governor Oborewori, who was represented by his Chief Economic Adviser, Dr. Barry Gbe, said that climate change was an

unavoidable risk stressing that the citizens should endeavor to mitigate in view of its global consequences.

According to him, "The risk avoidance in climate change is impossible but the risk mitigation is possible. When you are faced with realities, you tackle it headlong. A gathering like this where the focus is to educate, improve the skill of the citizenry or local communities is very important."

"We are faced with the realities of climate change; we must build capacity on how everyone can be knowledgeable enough to mitigate the impact of climate change in the society."

The Danish Ambassador to

Nigeria, Mr. Sune Krogstrup, said that the inaugurated network would empower and create opportunities in the Niger Delta region.

Krogstrup, who spoke through visual, added that the network would enhance feasibility of the Niger Delta protection for sustainable development and urged stakeholders, including international bodies to support the network to enable them to maximise its impacts and reach in the Niger Delta.

He noted that the green and blue economy network introduces innovative sustainable economic practices that were environmentally friendly and economically beneficial to the Niger Delta.

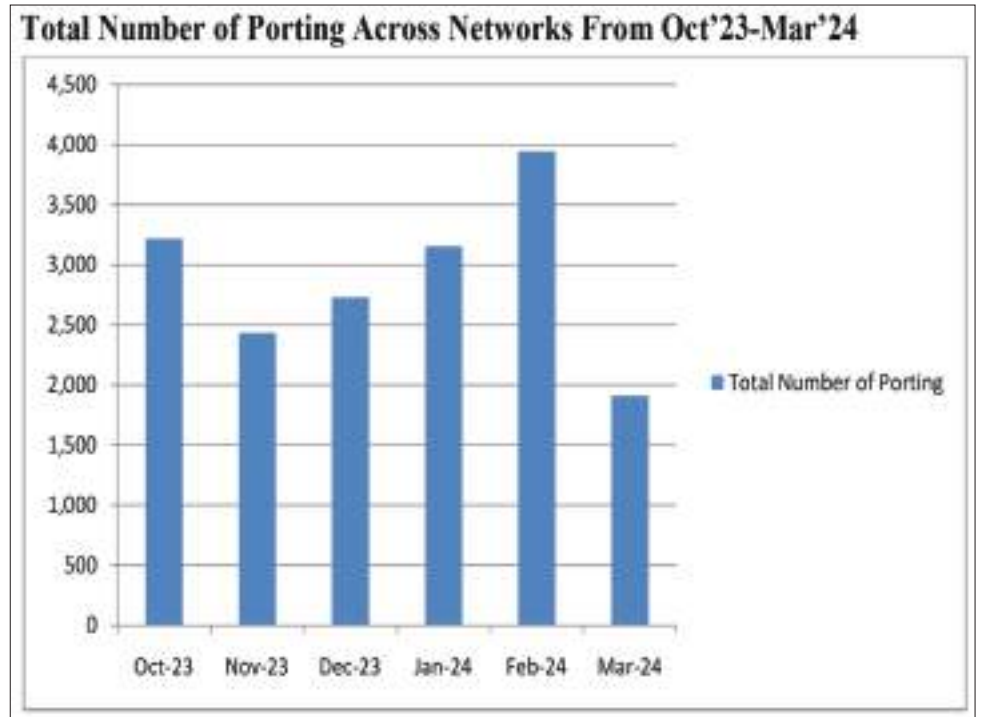
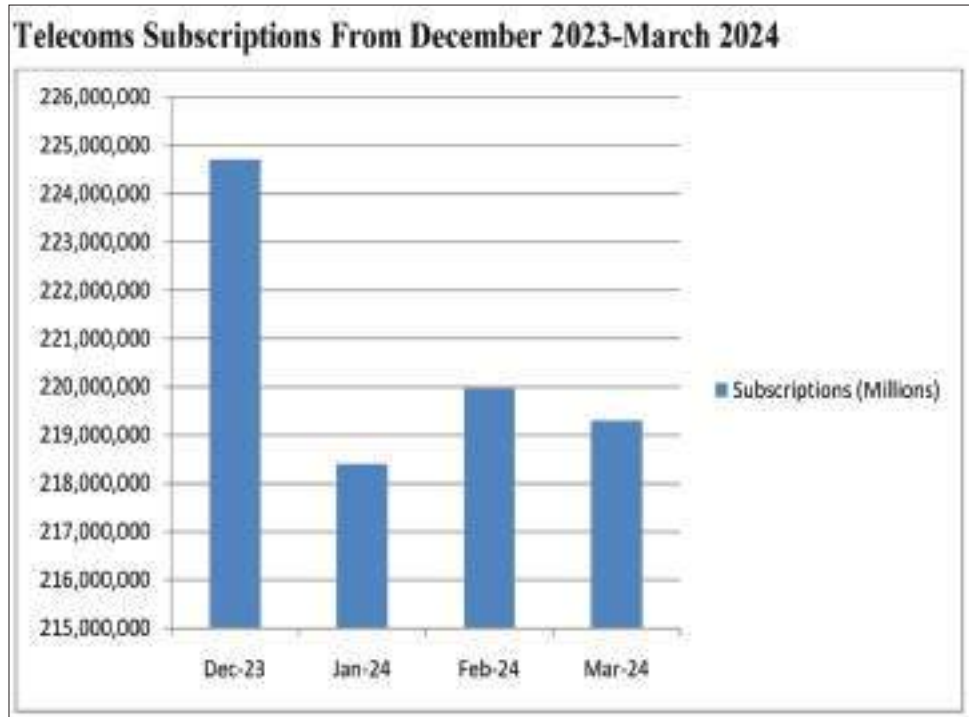
# BUSINESSWORLD

Group Business Editor Eromosele Abiodun  
 Email [oriarehu.eromosele@thisdaylive.com](mailto:oriarehu.eromosele@thisdaylive.com)  
 08056356325

RATES AS AT JUNE 12, 2024

MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX		EXCHANGE RATE
OPR	25.34%	CALL	23.25%	INDEX LEVEL	595.26	1/4 TO DATE	0.24%	N1,262.85/1 US DOLLAR*
OVERNIGHT	25.18%	1-MONTH	21.37%	1-DAY	0.10%	YEAR TO DATE	-10.99%	*AS AT WED., APRIL 17, 2024
		3-MONTH	22.41%	MONTH-TO-DATE	0.24%			

## Despite Drop in Telecoms Subscriptions, Telcos Gain New Subscribers through Number Porting



Emma Okonji

The latest statistics released by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), has revealed a slight drop in telecoms subscriptions across networks, from 224,713,710 subscriptions in December last year to 219,304,281 subscriptions in March this year.

Telecoms operators have blamed the development on the weak purchasing power, occasioned by the harsh economic situation in the country that also prevented network expansion in the first quarter of this year.

Despite the setback, telecoms operators still gained new subscribers through mobile number porting within the same period.

Analysis of the NCC numbers showed that MTN led in in-coming porting with a total subscriber number of 81,799,666 on its network, and a market share of 37.35 per cent as at March 2024.

According to the statistics, which THISDAY obtained from NCC's website, telecoms subscriptions across networks, reached 224,713,710 in December last year, but dropped to 218,400,965 in January this year, before rising slightly to 219,970,312 in February, and dropped again to 219,304,281 in March this year.

The statistics however showed that telecoms operators gained new subscribers through mobile number porting between October last year and March this year.

According to the statistics, MTN

alone had 1,925 new subscribers in October last year that ported from other networks to its network, and in November and December last year, 1,470 and 1,661 subscribers ported to the MTN network respectively. From January, February and March this year, MTN also received as much as 2,270; 2,989; and 1,296 new subscribers respectively that ported to its network.

The statistics also showed that Airtel had 1,034 new subscribers that ported from other networks to its network in October last year, 668 and 795 subscribers ported to the Airtel network in November and December last year respectively. From January, February and March this year, Airtel also received 541, 682, and 343 new subscribers respectively.

Globacom also had 132 new subscribers that ported to its network in October last year, and another 211 and 196 new subscribers that ported to its network in November and December 2023 respectively. In January this year, 187 new subscribers ported from other networks to the Globacom network, while another 198 and 210 new subscribers ported to the Globacom network in February and March this year respectively.

According to the statistics, 9mobile, the last entrant into the telecoms market in 2008, also gained new subscribers through mobile number porting within the same period. The company had 126 new subscribers that ported to its network in October last year, and in November and December last year, 84 and 77 new

subscribers ported to the network respectively. In January this year, 156 new subscribers left other networks to join the 9mobile network, while in February and March this year, 75 and 62 new subscribers ported to 9mobile network respectively.

Further analysis showed that a total of 3,217 subscribers ported to various networks in October last year, while a total of 2,433 and 2,729 subscribers ported to other networks in the months of November and December respectively last year. A total of 3,154 subscribers ported to various networks in January this year, while a total of 3,944 subscribers ported in February this year. The total number of porting subscribers however dropped across networks to as low as 1,911 in March this year.

Giving reasons for the drop in telecoms subscriptions in the first quarter of this year, the Chairman, Association of Licensed Telecoms Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), Gbenga Adebayo, who is the spokesperson for telecoms operators, told THISDAY in a telephone interview that the drop in telecoms subscriptions was as a result of the weak purchasing power of telecoms subscribers, which he blamed on the harsh Nigerian economy.

According to Adebayo, some subscribers are struggling to maintain their existing lines and some have to turn off their mobile data when not in use, just to save cost.

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

## Okoja: Nigeria May Lose \$27.29bn Foreign Investment for ESIC Project

Eromosele Abiodun

The Chairman of Mercury Maritime Concession Company (MMCC), Rear Admiral Andrew Okoja (rtd) has warned that Nigeria is at the verge of missing the sum of \$27.29 billion funding for the Escravos Seaport Industrial Complex (ESIC) project in Delta State and related seven beneficiaries states by the end of June 2024.

This, he said, is because of the prolonged delay of the federal and the Delta State governments in giving a final approval for the project's take off.

Okoja whose firm is the concept developer and lead promoter

of ESIC project stated that the investors are ready to commit funds for the commencement of the project.

Okoja noted that the slow pace in the federal and Delta State governments providing the necessary approvals might see Nigeria missing out of the desired creation of job opportunities for the citizens. This is apart from boosting the nation's economy from its present distress state.

EDIB International of Hong Kong had early this year expressed its willingness to invest \$27.29 billion to develop the ESIC project whose deep seaport will be located in Escravos (Gbaramatu Island/Omadino) Warri South-

West Local Government Area of Delta State; a development to be effected through Joint Venture Partnership (JVP) with a Nigerian firm Mercury Maritime Concession Company Limited (MMCC).

In its first commitment letter dated 19/01/2024 communicated to MMCC through Chief Kwame Springer, the Chairman of EDIB International Limited, the financing company and their consultancy Blue Dot Wealth Limited, outlined EDIB International group's risk assessment and requirements for successful funding to be granted demanded the securing and protection of their investment

by a guarantee of the federal government to control the proliferation of Free Trade Zone in the country.

It will be recalled that the development of Escravos Seaport Industrial Complex (ESIC) project commenced in 2019 and aims to develop 31,000 hectares of Delta State land into a Deep Seaport, Crude oil refinery, Gas Complex, Independent Power Plant (IPP), Airport, Nature Park, etc.

According to Okoja, the project is a development that promises to massively open up Delta State and seven other states including FCT - Abuja to international investment in trade, commerce and industry.

He stated, "ESIC will transform Delta State economy and those of ESIC beneficiary states from a rural-driven economy with sprinklings of urban development to a metropolis driven economy of international dimension. ESIC project is a Non - Solicited Public - Private Partnership (PPP) driven project regulated by Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) Laws of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

"It is modeled after the Lekki Deep Seaport/Free Trade Zone (FTZ) to serve the marine/economic interest of the Niger Delta, Eastern and some Northern States of the Country specifically

to solve the perennial port congestion problems in Nigeria." He further noted that the ESIC project is complimentary to the ongoing Lagos - Calabar coastal road in the country.

"The protection sought is a 50 year renewable concession lease (which must be extended to 99 years for all other infrastructure and land) to Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT) of ESIC deep seaport - Free Trade Zone project, which the Federal Government (FG) provisional approval was granted to MMCC in November 2020.

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

### MARKET DATA AS AT WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12, 2024

BONDS					BILLS					CPS					OTC FX FUTURES			
DESCRIPTION	Price	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	CONTRACT TENOR (MONTH)	Contract	Current Rate (\$/N)	Updated Time
^13.53 23-MAR-2025	95.66	19.55	0.02	June 12, 2024 ▲	NTB 11-Jul-24	18.75	19.10	-0.01	June 12, 2024 ▼	UNCP CP VI 20-JUN-24	23.20	23.42	0.00	June 12, 2024 ↔	13M	NGUS JUN 25 2025	-	June 12, 2024
^12.50 22-JAN-2026	92.23	18.18	0.01	June 12, 2024 ▲	NTB 8-Aug-24	18.15	18.75	-0.01	June 12, 2024 ▼	DUFIL CP III 25-JUL-24	22.55	23.27	0.00	June 12, 2024 ↔	14M	NGUS JUL 30 2025	-	June 12, 2024
^16.2884 17-MAR-2027	104.31	18.01	0.00	June 12, 2024 ↔	NTB 5-Sep-24	18.62	19.53	-0.01	June 12, 2024 ▼	FDHC CP VI 2-AUG-24	20.24	20.91	-0.01	June 12, 2024 ▼	15M	NGUS AUG 27 2025	-	June 12, 2024
^16.2884 17-MAR-2027	95.28	18.49	0.00	June 12, 2024 ↔	NTB 24-Oct-24	20.30	22.03	-0.01	June 12, 2024 ▼	GZIL CP II 13-AUG-24	22.39	23.38	0.00	June 12, 2024 ↔	16M	NGUS SEP 24 2025	-	June 12, 2024
^19.94 20-MAR-2027	100.46	19.66	0.00	June 12, 2024 ↔	NTB 7-Nov-24	18.44	20.01	-0.01	June 12, 2024 ▼	DANC CP XII 27-AUG-24	22.46	23.66	-0.07	June 12, 2024 ▼	17M	NGUS OCT 29 2025	-	June 12, 2024



## BUSINESS FORUM...

L-R: Head, Sales and Business, IT Horizons, Stephen Asishana; Solutions Engineer at Cisco, Chidinma Iwe; Chief Business Officer, IT Horizons, Joseph Oloyede and Head of VCs, MDR Investments LLC, Caesar Keluro, during the ITH and Cisco Business Roundtable, held in Cisco's office, Victoria Island, Lagos... recently

# Maritime Sector Stakeholders Fault New Ports Bill, Says Legislation Driven by Personal Gain

Eromosele Abiodun

The Nigerian Shipping and Port Economic Regulatory Agency Bill 2023 currently before the House of Representatives may suffer the failure of previous versions due to its disjointed articulation, an advocacy group has predicted.

According to the Nigerian Maritime Renaissance Network (NMRN), the Bill, which has passed second reading in the House of Representatives, is filled with ambiguities that can only precipitate confusion and duplications in the functions of the maritime regulatory agencies.

A statement by the Lagos-based organisation said numerous areas of the Bill lack the clarity that is essential in addressing its core purpose and to add value to port operations in the country.

President of the group, Temple Isomah, said the group watched with discomfort as the one-day hearing by the House of Representatives Committee on Shipping Services and

Related Matters deviated from achievement of the presidential policy on reduction of the cost of governance to overloading the new agency emerging from the Bill with functions of other agencies and more.

According to him: "The first fallout of the Bill is the evolution of a mega-agency which will be enmeshed in agency capture in view of the powers given to it to oversight the operations of other agencies in the sector. This situation will engender dirty competition and politicking that will undermine growth of the industry.

"In its present form, the Bill will produce a Port Economic Regulator that would be more powerful than even the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, in the same way that we have a state oil company that is richer and stronger than its mother ministry and industry regulator. This should be avoided"

It also noted that the Orosanye Report, which the federal government has cleared for implementation, specifically

recommended the mergers of agencies and parastatals whose functions overlap and constitute duplications.

The Bill, the group said, should strike a delicate balance between reforms and creating a level playing field that ensures competitiveness that will unlock substantial opportunities for the country.

According to NMRN, the way forward is to explore further dialogue among the agencies in the industry in an unhindered atmosphere to provide clearer guidance on the appropriate articulation of their roles, which would be embedded in the Bill before its passage by the national assembly.

"The speed with which sponsors of the Bill are pushing for passage suggests a quest by some individuals and groups to put their interests ahead of that of the nation, it added.

Similarly, the president of the National Council of Managing Director of Licensed Customs

Agents (NCMDLCA), the umbrella body of customs agents in Nigeria, Mr. Lucky Amiwero, said the bill would fuel conflict and create obstacle on implementation, adding that existing legislation should not be duplicated or overridden by provision.

He said: "The bill contains clauses that conflicts with other agency especially NPA 42-(a) usurping the powers of Licensing of port Service and facilities, is that of the Landlord, who is the owner of the Land, who lease/ the Land, that is Nigerian Port Authority and partial owner of the Leased/ concession facilities, Clause 2(d)(e)(g) 4-(h),(o)(p)4-(2) Clause 28-(c)(d)(e) Clause 38-(1) (a) (b)(c)(d).

"Usurping powers and conflict will create obstacle on implementation, existing legislation should not be duplicated or override by provision. Under Clause 70 contains the interpretation of various terms Prescribed Service, means a Person, body or Agencies which is prescribed by this bill

as such; or Providing prescribed Service in Nigeria within the Meaning of Section 38 of this bill and includes: Nigerian Railways Corporation; Nigerian

Ports Authority; National Inland Waterways Authority and other agencies providing regulated service of any nature in the regulated sector in Nigeria."

## NIMC Reaffirms Commitment to Secure Identity Services

Stories by Agnes Ekebuike

The National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), has assured Nigerians of its commitments to offer secure identity services, designed to protect citizens' data, as Nigeria's foundational identity provider.

Head, Corporate Communications at NIMC, Mr. Kayode Adegoke, who gave the assurance in a statement, said in order to achieve the feat, NIMC implemented enhanced measures to safeguard the information stored in its National Identity Database.

"These steps reflect the commitment made by the Director-General/CEO of NIMC, Abisoye Coker-Odusote, upon assuming office in August 2023.

Coker-Odusote emphasised that the NIMC collaborates with relevant security agencies to uphold the utmost data security standards and regulatory compliance.

"As part of these new security protocols, all Licensed Verification Agents, Front End Partners (FEPs), and Diaspora FEPs will undergo rigorous security vetting to ensure adherence to global best practices in identity management. Any FEPs in violation will face sanctions by established regulations and the nation's laws.

Furthermore, NIMC affirms that law enforcement authorities have been authorised to crack down on and apprehend individuals involved in online phishing schemes targeting citizens' data from other sources," the statement said.

## Experts Raise Concern over Telecoms Sector's Decline

Stories by Emma Okonji

Experts in Nigeria's financial sector and stakeholders in the telecoms industry have raised concern over the declining state of the country's telecoms sector, warning that the decline could have far-reaching consequences for the country's economic growth and development.

They raised the concern at a recent breakfast session hosted by the Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, while discussing the theme: "Telecoms Sector: The

Fulcrum for Economic Dynamism in Nigeria."

CEO of Financial Derivatives Company, and keynote speaker at the forum, Bismarck Rewane, emphasised the telecoms sector's critical role in driving economic growth, innovation, and productivity across various industries.

Rewane, in his presentation titled, "Nigerian Economy on the Brink, Adapt or Collapse", highlighted the sector's challenges, including rising inflation, high operating costs, limited access

to foreign exchange, regulatory burdens, multiple taxations, and state and local government extortion. He stressed that the challenges were threatening the sector's growth and development, while citing MTN's reported loss in the 2023 financial year

His comments align with telecoms operators' push for cost-reflective tariffs, which they said was necessary due to adverse economic headwinds.

According to Rewane, the current situation is having a detrimental

impact on the sector's growth and development, warning that the revenue potential from telecoms may start falling, leading to a ripple effect on other sectors.

Other notable speakers, including Prof. Ali Bongo, that echoed Rewane's sentiments, stressed the need for government support and deregulation to ensure the sector's survival. They highlighted the sector's growth potential, citing its eight per cent outperformance of GDP growth rate between 2019 and 2023.

## Zoho to Enhance Business Efficiency with Early Access to CRM

Zoho, a global technology company has introduced a new set of industry capabilities that will enable businesses interact with customers and address customers' challenges in real time from a single platform, using the Zoho CRM.

The company also unveiled significant enhancements to its offerings for professional developers and app development teams, which include early access to new services within catalyst, the company's pro-code full-stack development platform and the general availability of Zoho Apptics, an application analytics solution that enables

developers to track the in-app usage and performance of applications built on iOS, Android and other platforms.

Giving details of B2B customer journey and how the Zoho solutions will enhance business efficiency, the Country Head, Zoho Nigeria, Kehinde Ogundare, said: "Businesses are looking for unified solutions that will help them maximise their competitive advantages and tap into new market opportunities amid tough economic conditions. At Zoho, we are focused on continuously deepening our current offerings

and expanding others to serve business needs."

Zoho CRM for everyone for instance, is the first true democratisation of the CRM paradigm and helps unify all customer operations teams onto the CRM to deliver better customer experiences. Likewise, the upgraded catalyst and the privacy-focused Apptics solution work hand-in-hand to deliver an unmatched developer experience from concept to code and deployment to analytics, Ogundare further said.

The Zoho CRM for Everyone allows sales teams, the

primary custodian of customer relationships, to communicate and coordinate with other customer-facing teams from a single platform, where customers can relate with the complete team members and get instant response to any issues raised on the platform by the customer. With Zoho CRM, the tendency for customers to hold fragmented discussions with different team members, is completely eliminated as different team members can attend to the customer needs and proffer solutions to the customer in real time.

## IT Horizons, Cisco Meraki to Boost Cybersecurity for Businesses

IT Horizons, a leading technology solutions provider, has partnered with Cisco Meraki to deliver advanced and integrated security solutions tailored for businesses in West Africa.

The collaboration aims to safeguard digital assets, ensuring a secure and seamless experience for any workload, anywhere.

IT Horizons' partnership with Cisco Meraki combines over 10 years of cloud infrastructure expertise with Meraki's success in over 500,000 global customers and 20,000 locations. As remote work and IoT usage expand, so does the attack surface, increasing vulnerability to threats like phishing, ransomware, and advanced persistent threats.

According to industry estimates, cybercrime costs the global economy over \$6 trillion annually.

Speaking about the partnership, Managing Director of IT Horizons, Mr. Olusegun Enitan Dada, said: "Our mission at IT Horizons is to empower West African businesses with cutting-edge technology to solve complex problems and drive growth. Through our partnership

with Cisco Meraki, we can offer comprehensive and robust security solutions that not only mitigate risks but also support continuous business operations."

Solutions Engineer at Cisco, Mr. Chidinma Iwe, said: "Our integrated approach simplifies security management, allowing businesses to focus on growth without compromising security. Cisco Meraki's robust solutions effectively protect digital assets against evolving threats. The Meraki dashboard offers an intuitive interface for easy network management and supports rapid deployment with minimal on-site configuration."

Lead, Security Solutions Engineer at IT Horizons, Mr. Arinze Eguzozie, said: "The solutions are scalable and flexible, covering wireless, switching, security, SD-WAN, mobile device management, sensors, smart cameras, and cellular gateways.

"They are designed to adapt to dynamic work environments, supporting both on-premises and remote operations."

# The Untapped Potential of Renewable Energy

**Agnes Ekebuike** examines the importance of renewable energy and the need for government to tap into its potential for economic growth.

A recent report has revealed that apart from fossil fuels, Nigeria has abundant potential for renewable energy production, such as solar, hydropower, biomass and wind. The report remarked that while much of the clean energy potential has gone untapped, present realities provide an ideal opportunity to change its energy mix, and deliver more reliable power to its citizenry.

Nigeria and most sub-Saharan African countries are vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

As a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other frameworks, Nigeria participated in the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) and committed to achieve net-zero by 2060.

Achieving this will require a shift away from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources like wind and solar, as well as the provision of clean, affordable and reliable energy for the nearly 90 million Nigerians currently living without it.

The Director of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Francesco La Camera, said: "Nigeria can provide sustainable energy for all its citizens in a cost-effective manner by using its abundant, untapped renewables. Nigeria has a unique opportunity to develop a sustainable energy system based on renewables that support socioeconomic recovery and development, while addressing climate challenges and accomplishing energy security."

Nigeria's march to renewable energy requires the commitment of the private and public participants. Both players are crucial players in this sector. Stakeholders in the sector have recognised the fact that Nigeria's energy sector faces numerous challenges, from inadequate infrastructure to policy inconsistencies, and solar power is no exception. Despite the abundance of sunshine, there is need to face the hurdles in harnessing this renewable energy source.

As part of scaling the efforts of the private sector, a colloquium with the theme: "Solar Power in Nigeria-Matters Arising" was organised by Kon-X Limited.

Earlier in his remarks, the Managing Director, Kon-X Limited, Deric Legogio, stated that the adoption of renewable energy in Nigeria was at its infancy stage, but growing rapidly.

He also disclosed that the level of adoption

**"At the level of REAN, we are trying to attract some international development finance institutions. We are also working to get some form of instrument that will help de-risk and provide some demand side subsidies to make it easier and affordable for consumers to purchase."**

also varies across states and cities, adding that solar power has been much more adopted compared to wind, hydro or biomass.

On his part, the President of the Renewable Energy Association of Nigeria, (REAN), Ayo Ademilua, said there had been a surge in the adoption of renewable energy in Nigeria.

## DOMESTIC PRODUCTION

As part of efforts to drive local production in Nigeria, the Nigeria Sovereign Insurance Authority (NSIA), in January 2023, completed the development and construction of a 10mw solar farm in the Kumbotso Local Government Area (LGA) of Kano State on behalf of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

The \$16 million photovoltaic (PV) solar power plant, which sits on a 24

hectare parcel of land, and associated 12km energy evacuation infrastructure is the largest utility-scale solar farm in Nigeria.

The inauguration of the project was a remarkable feat delivered under a very tight timeline despite significant supply chain challenges in the aftermath of COVID-19.

In Nigeria there are top five solar PV plants in developments, and they include; the Argungu Solar PV Park, a 5,600MW Solar PV power project located in Kebbi, Nigeria. The project is currently in announced stage. The project is expected to enter commercial operation in 2027.

The 360MW Gezhouba Lagos Solar PV Park is located in Lagos, Nigeria. It is owned by Falcore Power and Energy.

The Jigawa Solar PV Park is a 1,000MW Solar PV power project in Jigawa, Nigeria. The project is expected to come online by 2025. The project is currently in announced stage.

The Lafia Solar PV Park is a 350MW Solar PV power project. It is planned in Nasarawa, Nigeria. The project is currently in permitting stage.

The 270MW Solar PV project, Gombe Solar PV Park is expected to get commissioned by 2026. It is being developed by Sun Africa; Sterling and Wilson. The project is currently in permitting stage.

## ENERGY TRANSITION PLAN

The Energy Transition Plan (ETP) seeks to promote a fair, inclusive and equitable energy transition (which posits gas as a "transitional fuel") and ensure that Nigeria's poverty eradication and economic development strategies are configured around energy transition initiatives.

The ETP is anchored on poverty eradication through an increase in the standard of living for over 100 million people. ETP is aimed at driving sustainable economic growth in key domestic commercial sectors. It will also provide universal electricity access to

the population.

Speaking on the importance of ETP, Legogio said renewable energy would continue to play a very vital role in the energy transition plan, adding that it is the future and it is one of the few sectors in which stakeholders are gainfully exploring the gift of nature rather than exploiting nature.

He remarked that with the right policies and business environment, the renewable energy space would continue to grow.

He added: "We must engage research to ensure that renewal energy is locally adapted beyond residential use and effectively deployed in healthcare, manufacturing and agriculture."

## ADOPTABILITY AND PRICING

The REAN President revealed that the renewable energy sector is an economical driven project, noting that the current economic conditions of the country especially the macroeconomic policies which drives activities of the business men, has not been favourable for doing business in the country.

"At the level of REAN, we are trying to attract some international development finance institutions. We are also working to get some form of instrument that will help de-risk and provide some demand side subsidies to make it easier and affordable for consumers to purchase," he stated.

## ENERGY FINANCING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Ademilua reiterated that the essence of the Nigeria transition Energy Plan is to get the country to net zero by the year 2060, pointing out that the government is putting in all efforts to drive Nigeria to net zero carbon emission by 2060 particularly in transportation and domestic usage.

Continuing, he added: "In terms of climate financing in Nigeria, we are beginning to witness interesting times. Before now, we didn't have the commercial banks and other investors really interested in climate financing. But in the last one to two years, we are beginning to see a lot of interest arising from the banks towards climate financing."

## Experts Raise Concern over Telecoms Sector's Decline

Stories by Emma Okonji

Experts in Nigeria's financial sector and stakeholders in the telecoms industry have raised concern over the declining state of the country's telecoms sector, warning that the decline could have far-reaching consequences for the country's economic growth and development.

They raised the concern at a recent breakfast session hosted by the Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, while discussing the theme: "Telecoms Sector: The

Fulcrum for Economic Dynamism in Nigeria."

CEO of Financial Derivatives Company, and keynote speaker at the forum, Bismarck Rewane, emphasised the telecoms sector's critical role in driving economic growth, innovation, and productivity across various industries.

Rewane, in his presentation titled, "Nigerian Economy on the Brink, Adapt or Collapse", highlighted the sector's challenges, including rising inflation, high operating costs, limited access

to foreign exchange, regulatory burdens, multiple taxations, and state and local government extortion. He stressed that the challenges were threatening the sector's growth and development, while citing MTN's reported loss in the 2023 financial year.

His comments align with telecoms operators' push for cost-reflective tariffs, which they said was necessary due to adverse economic headwinds.

According to Rewane, the current situation is having a detrimental

impact on the sector's growth and development, warning that the revenue potential from telecoms may start falling, leading to a ripple effect on other sectors.

Other notable speakers, including Prof. Ali Bongo, that echoed Rewane's sentiments, stressed the need for government support and deregulation to ensure the sector's survival. They highlighted the sector's growth potential, citing its eight per cent outperformance of GDP growth rate between 2019 and 2023.

## Vesti Set to Invest \$250,000 in Youths

Committed to Africa's future, Vesti, a leading migration Fintech company, has announced a five-year investment plan on talented young Africans worth \$250,000, through its Vista for Africans Initiative.

Kicking off the initiative, Vesti partnered The Future Awards Africa (TFAA), dubbed as the 'Nobel Prize for Young Africans'.

This partnership marks a shared vision between Vesti and TFAA – a future where young Africans can pursue their dreams and showcase their talents on a global scale.

Recognising the ambitions of TFAA nominees, many of whom envision expanding to new countries, Vesti offers N100 million worth of its services to support their global aspirations. The 18th edition of the prestigious

Future Awards Africa (TFAA) organised by The Future Project is themed 'Celebrating the Great and Daring.' The leading migration Fintech company joins TFAA in its mission to celebrate and empower young, exceptional Africans.

Co-founder and CEO at Vesti, Olusola Amusan, emphasised the importance of empowering young leaders, adding: "At Vesti, we

understand the challenges faced by ambitious Africans seeking global opportunities. This partnership allows us to directly support the TFAA nominees, many of whom envision expanding their horizons. We are excited to equip them with the tools and resources they need to seamlessly navigate their journeys."

Group CEO at RED, Ayodeji

Razaq, said: "We at RED are thrilled to see Vesti join forces with The Future Awards Africa. This partnership is a powerful testament to the importance of investing in Africa's young talent. By providing them with the resources and support they need, we can empower them to achieve their dreams and make a lasting impact on the continent."

## Mebic Organic Wins First Prize at Entrepreneurship Competition

Mebic Organic, a startup that provides chemical-free foods and spices for both households and industrial purposes using an eco-friendly process to ensure maximum nourishment, has clinched the first prize at the national finals of the

Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) competition. The event was held recently in Lagos.

The keynote speaker, Founder/CEO of Promoprint Ventures Ltd, Mrs. Patricia Ojora, encouraged the guests and shared

her experiences. The evening featured games, music, networking, and pitching, offering the perfect opportunity for entrepreneurs to connect with like-minded individuals, share ideas, and gain valuable insights.

## We are hiring!!!

All applications should be forwarded to the email provided by the 12th July, 2024

Email: [hr.recruitment.dpt100@gmail.com](mailto:hr.recruitment.dpt100@gmail.com)

### General Manager Position:

- 5 + years of experience as a manager
- Leadership Skills
- Strategic planning skills
- Technical Skills
- Operational skills & efficiency
- Administrative and accounting knowledge
- Human relations management skills

### Processing Manager:

- 3 + years of experience in the food and water/drinks processing Department.
- Leadership skills.
- Corporate hygiene standards and quality adherence knowledge.
- Problem solving skills
- Time Management skills

*Congratulations to the*  
**UNCOMMON  
 SENATE  
 PRESIDENT,  
 ONE YEAR IN OFFICE**



On behalf of myself, my family, and the good people of Cross River Central Senatorial District, congratulate His Excellency **Distinguished Sen. Godswill Akpabio, GCON** The President of the 10th Senate on your amazing one year anniversary in office.

Your leadership style, characterized by foresight and nuos, has inspired us all. As a benefactor, your guidance has been invaluable, and we cherish the impact of your benevolence.

These uncommon traits have served you well over the years and singled you out as a trail blazer.

May the Almighty God continue to guide and protect you in all your endeavors.

Once again, congratulations, to the uncommon Leader!



**DISTINGUISHED SEN.  
 GODSWILL AKPABIO, GCON**  
 10TH SENATE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.

Signed:  
**Distinguished Sen. Eteng Jonah Williams**  
 Chairman Senate Committee on Petroleum upstream  
 Cross River Central Senatorial District

# VERITAS CAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC



## UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR FIRST QUARTER ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Statement of Financial Position  
As at 31 March 2024

	2024 Group N'000	2023 Group N'000	2024 Company N'000	2023 Company N'000
<b>Assets</b>				
Cash and cash equivalents	9,138,322	6,584,867	8,343,887	4,718,745
Investment Securities:				
Fair value through profit or loss	144,653	113,615	144,653	113,615
Amortised cost	10,169,791	7,472,060	4,736,820	3,161,220
Fair value through OCI	114,665	433,485	114,665	433,485
Premium Receivables	3,023,722	1,029,780	3,023,722	1,029,780
Reinsurance contract assets	2,918,506	1,647,856	2,918,506	1,647,856
Other receivables and prepayments	737,808	826,508	184,044	352,853
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	4,026,300	4,026,300
Investment properties	-	-	-	-
Property, plant and equipment	5,454,907	5,438,390	4,428,378	4,391,555
Goodwill	316,884	316,884	-	-
Intangible assets - Software	377,656	422,753	356,444	401,541
Statutory deposits	355,000	355,000	355,000	355,000
Deferred tax asset	21,745	21,745	21,745	21,745
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>32,773,669</b>	<b>24,640,733</b>	<b>28,653,865</b>	<b>20,653,791</b>
<b>Liabilities:</b>				
Insurance contract liabilities	4,901,752	4,539,202	4,901,752	4,539,202
Other contract liabilities	19,986	15,539	-	-
Trade Payables	3,700,962	2,105,972	3,700,962	2,105,972
Employees retirement benefit obligations	23,933	23,933	-	-
Provision and other payables	1,275,404	1,147,744	759,310	597,587
Income tax liabilities	559,676	187,033	439,910	60,876
Deferred Tax Liabilities	252,507	252,507	157,143	157,143
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>16,734,219</b>	<b>8,271,930</b>	<b>9,959,076</b>	<b>7,480,780</b>
<b>Share capital &amp; reserves:</b>				
Share capital	6,933,333	6,933,333	6,933,333	6,933,333
Share premium	683,600	683,600	683,600	683,600
Statutory contingency reserves	3,004,829	1,900,456	3,004,829	1,900,456
Retained earnings	5,400,896	1,008,862	4,487,168	39,874
Component of Equity:				
Asset revaluation reserve	3,634,971	3,634,971	3,398,185	3,398,185
Fair value reserve	235,984	235,984	239,673	238,673
<b>Equity attributable to equity holders of the parent</b>	<b>19,873,612</b>	<b>14,377,206</b>	<b>18,694,789</b>	<b>13,172,925</b>
Non Controlling Interest(NCI)	2,155,829	1,991,597	-	-
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>22,029,441</b>	<b>16,368,802</b>	<b>18,694,789</b>	<b>13,172,921</b>
<b>Total Equity &amp; Liabilities</b>	<b>32,773,669</b>	<b>24,640,733</b>	<b>28,653,865</b>	<b>20,653,701</b>

These financial statements were approved by the Board on 24th May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Mojeed Somorin  
Chief Financial Officer  
FRC/2017/PRO/CAN/001/0000016849

Dr. Adaobi Nwakuche  
Managing Director  
FRC/2021/003/00000023865

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income  
For the period ended March 31, 2024

	Jan-Mar 2024 Group N'000	Jan-Mar 2023 Group N'000	Jan-Mar 2024 Company N'000	Jan-Mar 2023 Company N'000
Insurance revenue	8,372,979	1,677,921	6,372,979	1,677,921
Insurance service expenses	(2,667,874)	(1,062,587)	(2,667,874)	(1,062,587)
<b>Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held</b>	<b>3,685,105</b>	<b>615,334</b>	<b>3,685,105</b>	<b>615,334</b>
Net expenses from reinsurance contracts held	(1,559,635)	(354,915)	(1,559,635)	(354,915)
<b>Insurance service result</b>	<b>2,125,470</b>	<b>260,419</b>	<b>2,125,470</b>	<b>260,419</b>
Interest income calculated using the effective interest method	243,674	122,690	103,735	9,411
Net fair value gains/(losses) on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	31,030	8,814	31,030	8,814
Net foreign exchange gain	4,044,240	2,085	4,044,240	2,085
Credit impairment (losses)/reversed	-	(1,101)	-	(1,101)
Finance cost	-	-	-	-
Other investment income	557,539	268,675	145,960	48,610
<b>Net investment income</b>	<b>4,876,790</b>	<b>491,363</b>	<b>4,324,573</b>	<b>67,819</b>
Finance expenses from insurance contracts issued	(117,243)	(46,349)	(117,243)	(46,349)
Finance income from reinsurance contracts held	70,949	16,173	70,949	16,173
<b>Net insurance finance income</b>	<b>(46,294)</b>	<b>(30,177)</b>	<b>(46,294)</b>	<b>(30,177)</b>
<b>Net insurance and investment result</b>	<b>6,955,965</b>	<b>631,605</b>	<b>6,403,749</b>	<b>296,061</b>
Other operating income	300,263	494,233	7,944	9,193
Other operating expenses	(1,042,534)	(742,703)	(485,045)	(297,619)
Share of profit of associates and joint ventures accounted for using the equity method	-	-	-	-
<b>Profit before income tax</b>	<b>6,213,795</b>	<b>383,135</b>	<b>5,928,548</b>	<b>9,435</b>
Tax expense	(543,157)	(6,955)	(606,680)	(5,954)
<b>Profit for the period</b>	<b>5,670,639</b>	<b>376,181</b>	<b>5,321,868</b>	<b>2,481</b>
<b>Other comprehensive income:</b>				
Items that will not be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss (net of tax):				
Net actuarial gains/(loss) on retirement benefit obligation	-	-	-	-
Gain on revaluation of property, plant and equipment (net of tax)	-	-	-	-
Fair value gain on financial asset at FVOCI (net of tax)	-	-	-	-
<b>Other comprehensive income, Net of tax</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>5,670,639</b>	<b>376,181</b>	<b>5,321,868</b>	<b>2,481</b>
<b>Profit for the period, attributable to:</b>				
* Non-controlling interests	174,232	11,925	-	-
* Owners of the Parent	5,496,407	364,256	-	-
<b>5,670,639</b>	<b>376,181</b>	<b>5,321,868</b>	<b>2,481</b>	
<b>Total Comprehensive Income, attributable to:</b>				
* Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-
* Owners of the Parent	-	-	-	-
<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
Basic Earnings per Share	0.82	0.25	0.80	0.00

HEAD OFFICE ADDRESS: Plot 497, Abogo Largema Street, Off Constitution Avenue, Central Business District, P.M.B 13233 Wuse, Abuja, FCT Nigeria 900211.  
Phone: +234(09) 461 9900, Customer Interaction Centre- 0700-1000-500, [cic@veritaskapital.com](mailto:cic@veritaskapital.com) | Email: [info@veritaskapital.com](mailto:info@veritaskapital.com), [www.veritaskapital.com](http://www.veritaskapital.com)  
Authorised and Regulated by National Insurance Commission. RIC-022



## FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

FCDA NEW CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS, AREA 11, P.M.B, 24, GARKI ABUJA-NIGERIA.

TEL: 09-6727278, FAX:09-6727289, [www.fcda.gov.ng](http://www.fcda.gov.ng)



# DISCLAIMER NOTICE

The attention of the Management of the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) has been drawn to the existence of a syndicate of scammers running a racket of fake appointment letters purported to have emanated from the Authority.

The Authority therefore wishes to inform the public that it is not carrying out any employment nor replacement exercise as being peddled and also warns the general public not to fall to the antics of such scammers as the Authority will not be liable for any such action. Anyone who does, will be doing so at his or her own risk.

Signed  
Management.

*RICHARD OLUMAKAIYE argues the need for states and the private sector to take advantage of the recent Electricity Act*

## TOWARDS SEAMLESS TRANSMISSION OF ELECTRICITY



Anyone paying attention to the electricity sector in Nigeria would recognise the dire need for infrastructural upgrade and improvement of the transmission network nationwide.

Traditionally, infrastructure has always been a governmental responsibility - especially in sectors like roads, airports, affordable housing, and utilities. As public finances are currently being stretched, private capital via Public-Private Partnership needs to spring up and close the gap in funding to rescue the transmission infrastructure by constructing new transmission lines, upgrading, and installing new substations with the potential to increase electricity reliability.

Nigeria has 23 power-generating plants connected to the national grid with the capacity to generate 11,165.4 MW of electricity. It's being widely suggested that the current state of the transmission network in the country often limits the Generating companies (GenCos) from supplying electricity at their full capacity, due to the inability of the network to sufficiently deliver what should be evacuated to the national grid, leading to an inefficient use of the GenCos resources.

The infrastructure refers to all the components notably 330kV, 138kV transmission lines, substations and towers needed to convey electricity usually over long distances from various power plants to electricity distribution networks connecting customers and suppliers.

Governments have often been reluctant to open this subsector for private participation. The Nigeria Electricity Act 2023 signed by President Bola Tinubu repealing the Electricity and Power Sector Reform Act of 2005 introduces a range of key features including granting access to states, companies, and individuals to generate, transmit and distribute electricity.

Currently, the Transmission Company of Nigeria owned by the federal government is the sole custodian of the transmission ecosystem, which often comes with its lapses, for instance, high levels of network losses, low productivity, inadequate maintenance and recently strike inspired National Grid shutdown. The liberalization of the sector showcases the opportunity for private capital to be involved. The sector is, however, attractive to investors who are looking for long-term, inflation proof investments with a reliable return profile due to the essential nature of these assets.

The growth of private capital in transmission infrastructure is springing up in Nigeria. On July 11, 2023, the chairman of Geregu Power Plc Mr. Femi Otedola after a meeting with the Lagos State Governor Mr Babajide

Sanwo-Olu and the President of the African Development Bank Group Dr Akinwumi Adesina hinted on plans to develop a power transmission project in partnership with the Lagos State government, Nigeria's first-ever PSP power transmission project. Although the full scope of the project remains unknown, we could generally infer the project aims to boost electricity reliability within the state by augmenting the transmission network, either by greenfield or brownfield transmission expansion investments.

Other state governments need to be proactive to take advantage of the Nigeria Electricity Act 2023, to complement existing infrastructure provided by the federal government. This can be done by engaging stakeholders, stimulating discourse to identify infrastructure intervention areas within their territories where electricity transmission can be improved, usually through a Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT) model and pitching their plans to the private sector.

An interstate collegial arrangement with the private sector would be ideal to fix this problem, collectively positioning Nigeria as a desirable destination for global infrastructure capital, drawing the attention of prominent foreign investments firms such as Actis, BlackRock, Brookfield, and Macquaire, participating in the golden age of infrastructure investment. There is a global competition for these sorts of private capital, and to be involved Nigeria's leadership must be hands-on.

The experience from other developed economies demonstrate that multiple transmission owners can coexist without compromising efficiency or security of the transmission system. This has worked well because the National System Operator provides ongoing coordination from the design phase through system operations, while concessionaires are required to comply with the decisions of the sector regulator.

Transmission expansion projects take a long time to plan, approve and build, and their value depends on the quality of the intervention areas between the power plants and electricity demand on the other end of the line.

Hence, Nigeria and its subnational entities need to be intentional about its electricity sustainability and while we focus on accommodating other sources of renewable energy, for instance, waste to power systems and solar energy, the state of our transmission network should be excellent. ■

*Olumakaiye*

*writes from Warwick, United Kingdom*

*NNPCL is committed to ensuring that gas becomes an engine room for economic growth and development, writes ADAMS MURITALA*

## WALKING THE TALK

He is a man on a mission to restore the confidence of Nigerians, stakeholders and the investors in the oil and gas sector of Nigeria's economy. Oil and gas, and allied products which are the mainstay of the country's economy had been a source of concern to many people until the unbundling of the nation's petroleum corporation. The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), which is one of the entities that came out of the behemoth NNPC has been impressing Nigerians and investors, due to the effective management style of Mele Kyari. The promises he made to Nigerians on the stability of petroleum products distribution, among others, are being fulfilled.

Since he got into the saddle, the perennial fuel scarcity has become a thing of the past. Even when there were hitches in the supply system of petroleum products, the leadership of the NNPCL was always prompt in allaying the fears of Nigerians, articulating the solutions, and putting a timeline to when normalcy will be restored. This pragmatic approach to crisis management has boosted the confidence of the people.



So, it was not surprising when the NNPCL boss delivered on the mandate to make available Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations, as an affordable alternative to petrol that has become very expensive globally. In furtherance of this goal, Mele Kyari was in Lagos recently to commission the company's 5.2MMscf CNG plant in Ilasamaja area of Lagos State. He disclosed that plans were underway to roll out six more CNG plants.

These proposed CNG stations, with 5.2mmscfd capacity each, will be located in selected locations across the country to ease access to bulk CNG.

Speaking at the event, Mr. Kyari said the national oil firm has taken a Final Investment Decision (FID) with Axxela Limited to deliver the projects.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), as of January, put the nation's natural gas reserves at 209.26 Trillion Cubic Feet (TCF). Buttressing the country's enormous gas reserves, Kyari said: "We're a gas country with associated oil. But we haven't taken advantage of this gas for a very long period of time."

He noted that NNPC's investments in gas are not just market-driven, but also as mandated by the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) to drive domestic utilisation of gas.

The NNPCL boss asserted that in the last year, there have been vigorous activities by the government to ensure that gas becomes an engine room for economic growth and development in the country.

"We're building massive infrastructure in-country to ensure that gas reaches every corner of our country, but more than anything bring the volume that we require for the economic growth that this country truly deserves," he said. "NNPC will continue to deliver more strategic projects for the benefit of our country. We shall utilise our gas resources for industrialisation, power generation

and economic prosperity for all."

He highlighted the significant role the Obiafu-Obrinkon-Oben (OB3), Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) and Escravos Lagos Pipeline Systems (ELPS) gas pipelines will play in deepening domestic utilisation of gas in-country.

"I'll like to inform you that many of these backbone infrastructure projects - the OB3, the AKK and also the expansion of ELPS - will automatically connect our gas sources, encourage gas producers to see the opportunity to grow gas into our pipeline networks," Kyari said.

He expressed optimism that CNG will soon become the fuel of choice for many motorists in Nigeria.

President Tinubu's minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekperikpe Ekpo, who has expressed the confidence of the President in the capacity of Mr. Kyari, in turning around the nation's oil corporation, said the NNPCL, under Kyari, has been advancing the agenda of the administration to make CNG available to all Nigerians.

He described the feat as a critical turning point in the development of affordable, sustainable, and securing energy sources in the country.

The minister described 2024 as a historic year for Nigerians, stressing that through his courageous decision to eliminate fuel subsidies and promote the acceptability and broader use of LPG, President Bola Tinubu has brought about several fresh beginnings to the lives of Nigerians.

"Although the elimination of the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) subsidy has brought difficulties, it has also given us a once-in-a-lifetime chance to invent and adopt more economical, efficient, and sustainable energy alternatives," he stated.

The CNG station can serve vehicles and also supply gas to industries and other companies. The facility utilises state-of-the-art 95Mscf/hour compressors and has dispensing points for filling of gas-powered vehicles, utilising CNG as a primary or alternate fuel.

It would deliver CNG at 250 bar into specialised tube trailers for onward delivery to customers beyond the pipeline gas areas, approximately within a 250km radius of the facility. With an average tank capacity of 40SCM for Autogas cars and 250SCM for Buses/Trucks, the 150,000SCM capacity plant can fill about 3,700 cars or 600 trucks/buses daily.

Nigeria has adopted gas as its transition fuel and is committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. NNPC Limited is leading the vanguard of powering Nigeria's greener future

It will be recalled that before the partnership with TGNL, in August 2023, in order to deepen domestic utilisation of gas, NNPCL entered into a strategic partnership with NIPCO Gas Limited, with the plan to deploy CNG stations across the country. Under the partnership, 35 CNG stations will be set up in Lagos and other parts of the country.

The Secretary to the Federal Government, George Akume had also recently disclosed that the plan of President Tinubu to provide CNG buses to ease the pains of vulnerable Nigerians will soon become a reality.

In all this, Kyari has proven to be capable of delivering on the CNG revolution that will forever alter the energy landscape of Nigeria. ■

*Muritala*

*writes from Abuja*

Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**

Email [peter.ishaka@thisdaylive.com](mailto:peter.ishaka@thisdaylive.com)

# EDITORIAL

## TACKLING MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

The health authorities must do more to contain the health emergency

A professor of psychiatry at the University of Jos, and President of the Association of Psychiatrists in Nigeria, Taiwo Obindo, said recently that the socio-economic challenges being experienced by many Nigerians have serious implications on their mental health. "These challenges go beyond the regular stresses that people are meant to go through and would surely impact people's mental health," said Obindo after highlighting some of the problems in the country. "It's a stressful experience for virtually every Nigerian irrespective of their status." Despite a recent report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that one in four Nigerians suffer from some sort of mental illnesses, there is nothing to suggest that there are efforts to tackle this health challenge.

Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of. Like diabetes and heart disease, it is a medical condition which is treatable.

Many people with mental health illness return to a productive and fulfilling life after promptly seeking help. But the country is not doing enough to tackle this public health emergency and it is responsible for the growing cases of depression and suicides. Stemming the tide requires a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach involving various government ministries, agencies, and departments especially that of health, labour and employment, and social services.

Early outward signs of mental illness include eating or sleeping too much or too little; pulling away from people and usual activities; having low or no energy; feeling numb or behaving as if nothing matters any longer. Others include unusual aches and pains; feeling helpless or hopeless; smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual. Confused thinking, severe mood swings, hearing voices or believing things that are not true; inability to perform daily tasks could



**Mental health includes the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of people and they affect the way such individuals think, feel and behave**

### 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

THISDAYNEWSPAPERSLIMITED  
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 EIMIJI  
CONTROLLERS ABIMBOLA TAIWO, UCHENNA DIBIAGWU, NDUKA MOSERI  
DIRECTOR, PRINTING PRODUCTION CHUKS ONWUDINJO  
TO SEND EMAIL: [firstname.surname@thisdaylive.com](mailto:firstname.surname@thisdaylive.com)

### 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](mailto:opinion@thisdaylive.com). We also welcome comments and opinions on topical local, national and international issues provided they are well-written and should also not be longer than (750- 1000 words). They should be sent to [opinion@thisdaylive.com](mailto:opinion@thisdaylive.com) along with photograph, email address and phone numbers of the writer.

## LETTERS

### WHO WILL BAIL OUT OGWASHI-UKWU?

How did Ogwashi-Ukwu become so unfortunate to have docile community and political leaders who are not bothered about the development of the community? What can we boast of as capital of Aniocha South Local Govt Area of Delta State when we lack the basic necessities of life - electricity, potable water, employment and a decent wage for our youths; lack of youth empowerment, security of lives and properties? On a daily basis motorcycles that many use for farming and moving around are being stolen. The roads are unmotorable. Many small scale enterprises lack financial support. It is really disappointing that a community that has prominent sons and daughters, who are making positive impacts all over the world has nothing to show. It has remained abandoned. Who will bail out Ogwashi-Ukwu?

*Feyisetan Akeeb Kareem,  
Ogwashi-Ukwu*

### ABANDONED HOMELANDS

What's the idea abandoning a sovereign country, your home-land and country of birth, and migrating to a foreign clime where the creed is just the exact opposite of your own? You think you'd change the ways of your hosts so they see the "beauty" of your faith steeped in fiery gore and tribulation? A man who runs away from his home and wouldn't make effort to secure and improve this clime cannot be taken seriously. Today, natives over there at Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, Bosnia, Yemen, Iraq, Iran, the list is long indeed, think they must abandon home and go live in the Christian West. They tout "multiculturalism" to confound and confuse the ficklest Westerners. But they are digging down for eventual civil war and takeover. The world of tomorrow (2050 to 2120) will be one of great strife à la what Hamas experimented at Israel.

*Sunday Adole Jonah,  
Department of Physics, Federal University of Technology, Minna,  
Niger State*

### WHAT IS THE REAL COST?

Following the recent flight SQ321 severe turbulence event, Singapore airlines has offered \$US10,000 in compensation for minor injuries and \$US25,000 for serious injuries but is enough? There are also refunds for their trips.

Turbulence is hard to detect beforehand so is it their fault? The legal points will be decided by others but it is similar to driving where some unforeseen event causes a driver to run into the back of a car and almost always the following driver is responsible.

From a cynical viewpoint, the offer of a small compensation will satisfy most passengers and court cases will be avoided. The real cost of an injury over the following years are hard to determine.

The best offer would be for any current costs and an ongoing commitment for any future costs, including loss of wages.

*Dennis Fitzgerald,  
Melbourne, Australia*

# FEATURES

Group Features Editor: Chiemelie Ezeobi  
Email [chiemelie.ezeobi@thisdaylive.com](mailto:chiemelie.ezeobi@thisdaylive.com), Tel: 07010510430

## Promoting Rich Cultural Diversity through the 2024 Africa Day

Olam Agri in Nigeria, a leading agribusiness in food, feed and fibre, recently set the pace in promoting the African continent's rich cultural diversity when they marked Africa Day 2024 with vibrant festivities across its location's headquarters in Nigeria, **Victoria Ojiako** reports

**A**frica Day is celebrated on May 25th annually. It is dedicated to celebrating the continent's vast cultural heritage. It also focuses on highlighting the continent's economic potential while stimulating assertive actions towards achieving wider prosperity and unity across countries.

This year's theme which emphasised education as a critical lever for spurring growth on the continent was complemented by Olam Agri's unique driving focus, "Embrace Africa's Richness, Diversity, and Spirit".

Led by its Country Head, Anil Nair, the agribusiness hosted its staff members to a celebration that showcased its African origin, diverse workforce, hospitality and commitment to promoting the unique cultural heritage of its host markets. The celebration featured dance troupes performing to the rhythm of African drums, cultural dances, convivial exchanges and local games.

Employees clad in different local attires from the famous Babban Riga and Juanni to the hand-woven Aso-Oke and Agbada, Isiagu, Akwette and various other traditional styles extending to the wider African culture. The staff members participated in sessions targeted at fostering team bonding, received exciting gifts, danced to popular local songs and were treated to tasty local cuisine.

Anil said, "As a business that was founded in Nigeria over 30 years ago, we are proud of our African origin. This continent is fertile. Our driving focus continues to include promoting the rich cultural heritage on the continent, creating an inclusive workforce and channelling investment towards actualizing the economic potential across the market through massive employment generation and development of the agricultural value chain."

"We are proud of the cultural diversity on the continent and the unique giftedness of the population who represent a dynamic force on the global scene. We believe this continent offers greater hope. Hence, we will continue to collaborate with stakeholders across the continent to feed the visions of achieving a well-nourished and prosperous Africa."



Olam Agri staff during the 2024 Africa Day

Olam Agri's African operations are spread across Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Chad, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Senegal and South Africa. Earlier in the year, the Top Employers Institute a global authority on recognising excellence in People Practices certified Olam Agri as a Top Employer for a 4th consecutive year in eight countries, including Australia, Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, and South Africa.

Olam Agri is a market leading, differentiated food, feed and fibre agri-business with a global origination footprint, processing capabilities and deep understanding of market needs built over 33 years.

With a strong presence in high-growth emerging markets and products across grains & oilseeds, integrated feed & protein, rice, edible oils, specialty grains & seeds, cotton, wood products, rubber and commodity

financial services, Olam Agri is at the heart of global food and agri-trade flows with 38.3 million MT in volume traded in 2022.

Focused on transforming food, feed, and fibre for a more sustainable future, it aims at creating value for customers, enable farming communities to prosper sustainably and strive for a food-secure future. Olam Agri is a fully owned subsidiary of Olam Group.

Olam Group on the other hand is a leading food and agri-business supplying food, ingredients, feed, and fibre to 20,200 customers worldwide.

Their value chain spans over 60 countries and includes farming, processing, and distribution operations, as well as a global network of farmers. Through their purpose to 'Re-imagine Global Agriculture and Food Systems', Olam

Group aims to address the many challenges involved in meeting the needs of a growing global population, while achieving positive impact for farming communities, the planet and all their stakeholders.

Headquartered and listed in Singapore, Olam Group currently ranks among the top 30 largest primary listed companies in terms of market capitalization on SGX-ST.

Since June 2020, Olam Group has been included in the FTSE4Good Index Series, a global sustainable investment index series developed by FTSE Russell, following a rigorous assessment of Olam's supply chain activities, impact on the environment and governance transparency. The FTSE4Good Index Series identifies companies that demonstrate strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices and is used by a variety of market participants to create and assess responsible investment funds.

## How Airtel Partnership Birthed a Digital Product that is Boosting Exam Success

Victoria Ojiako

Recognising the increasing demand for digital access to education, Airtel Nigeria recently partnered with Roducate, one of Nigeria's fastest growing edtech startups, to productize digital access via the Airtel Roducate Exam Success bundle, which Roducate CEO Femisola Awosika has now said is delivering exciting results among students across Nigeria.

Femisola Awosika, in a recent interview, highlighted the success of the Bundle in delivering quality education to all students and also emphasized the crucial role of telecommunications infrastructure in making education accessible to everyone.

According to him, "Since the launch of the Airtel-Roducate Exam Success Bundle, we have received great feedback from students, teachers and parents on how resourceful exam success bundle has been and the impact it has had on students' performance. Numerous success stories have sprung up, highlighting the profound impact of this joint initiative ranging from stories of young nursing students achieving unprecedented success in their exams to determined learners triumphing in tests like JAMB, GCE, BECE and the likes."

The partnership between Airtel Nigeria and Roducate stands out as a prime example of leveraging technology and collective expertise to redefine how students prepare for their examinations.

Since its inception, the 'Roducate-Airtel Exam Success' partnership has swiftly become synonymous with transformative education solutions empowering learners across Nigeria. It has exceeded expectations, yielding remarkable outcomes for students, educators, and parents.

Beyond establishing partnerships, it is also



Roducate CEO, Femisola Awosika (extreme left), with the team

important to witness and measure its impact, and one of the means to measure this is through testimonials by beneficiaries. In this context, it can be said that the Airtel-Roducate Exam Success Bundle is making impact, gathering from the testimonials shared by Mr. Awosika in the interview.

"We received a remarkable story of an elderly man who gave the study pack to his driver's son and returned shortly after JAMB exams filled with thanks and praises to his boss for helping his son finally pass JAMB after two prior unsuccessful attempts. We also have a user who described Airtel Exam Success as having his whole academic life in his pocket. That's the whole idea of the Airtel-Roducate partnership; making educational success a reality for Students," he recalled.

He also added that the feedback from students, teachers, and parents have been overwhelmingly positive, reflecting the heartening testimonials

that attest to the efficacy of Exam Success and these stories speak volumes about the transforming power of accessible education.

Through a combination of accessible study materials, personalized support, and the removal of traditional barriers to education, the partnership between Airtel Nigeria and Roducate has begun heralding a new era of academic empowerment. Central to the success of the Roducate-Airtel Exam Success initiative is the strategic utilization of technology and Airtel's extensive network to provide students from diverse backgrounds with access to high-quality educational resources. By harnessing the power of digital platforms and mobile connectivity, the partnership transcends geographical

constraints, reaching learners in even the most remote areas of Nigeria.

This partnership has been instrumental in making quality education accessible to every student and as the initiative gears up for upcoming exams each year, the goal remains fixed to equip students with the tools needed to succeed academically and unlock their full potential.

By equipping students with the requisite knowledge and skills to excel in their examinations, the partnership is laying the foundation for a generation of resilient, empowered learners poised to shape a brighter future for themselves and their communities. Students, parents, educators and stakeholders in the educational spectrum have further been advised to leverage this tested and proven solution for excelling in national examinations including Common Entrance, GCE, BECE, JAMB and others.

He concluded by saying "the Airtel-Roducate Partnership is a game changer for candidates sitting for National Examinations in Nigeria. With the module, students gain access to a structured 7-day exam study plan individually curated by certified examiners for each national examination which has proven to yield exceptional results. As long as an examination candidate follows their Exam Success plan diligently, the candidate is guaranteed comprehensive readiness for their exams. With this, we are not only contributing to decreasing failure rates but, more importantly, removing the barriers to higher education."

Together, Airtel Nigeria and Roducate are not merely transforming the educational landscape; they are shaping the destinies of countless students, empowering them to realize their aspirations and chart a course toward academic excellence and beyond.

## HEALTH &amp; LIFESTYLE

Group Features Editor: Chiemelie Ezeobi  
Email [chiemelie.ezeobi@thisdaylive.com](mailto:chiemelie.ezeobi@thisdaylive.com),  
Tel: 07010510430

# Urgent Need to Tackle Shortage of Doctors at DASH through Improved Welfare

Shortage of doctors is the major challenge facing the Nasarawa State government owned 'Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital (DASH)', Lafia, as another set of 24 medical doctors had left the hospital recently due to poor welfare, reports **Igbawase Ukumba**

The rate at which medical doctors are leaving the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital (DASH), Lafia in recent times is alarming, hence the Nasarawa State Houses of Assembly had to call on the state government to intervene towards halting the mass exodus of doctors from the tertiary health institution. Probably in Nasarawa State, medical doctors are being demotivated, hence they do not want to come to the state. Hitherto, in the past six months, several medical doctors had resigned from the services of the Nasarawa State government. It is pertinent to state that the federal government had this year reviewed the Consolidated Medical Salaries Scale for doctors and other health workers. The implementation started in February, and the arrears ought to be paid in the month of March. This has not been allegedly implemented in Nasarawa State.

Nevertheless, in 2022, Governor Abdullahi Sule was reportedly said to have promised Resident Doctors that hazard allowance was going to be implemented whenever the federal government implements the reviewed hazard allowance in the country, but investigation revealed that up till this moment, it was yet to be implemented in Nasarawa State.

No doubt, this has created a wide salary disparity between doctors working with the Nasarawa State government and those of the Federal Teaching Hospitals or the Federal Medical Centres.

Explaining the rationale behind the mass exodus of doctors from DASH, President of the National Association of Resident Doctors in Nasarawa State, Dr. Yakubu Adeleke, said the mass resignation of medical doctors operating in hospitals across the 13 Local Government Areas of the state, was due to the non-implementation of promotion for eight years and the poor welfare package of the state government.

Speaking with journalists in Lafia recently, the state's NARD President, Adeleke narrated that for over two years, they (doctors) had been reaching out to the state government to take steps towards addressing their demands bordering on welfare, but all their efforts proved abortive.

He lamented that despite the several promises of the state governor, Abdullahi Sule, to address the plights of the medical practitioners in the state, nothing had been done about their demands.

He said: "Doctors in Nasarawa State have



Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital

been stagnated-no promotion. Some doctors have been working for eight years without promotion. Non-implementation of the National Minimum Wage and consequential adjustment of our salaries as well as non-payment of hazard allowance.

"Recently, the federal government reviewed the Consolidated Medical Salaries Scale for doctors and other health workers. The implementation started in February, and the arrears ought to be paid in the month of March. This has not also been implemented here in Nasarawa State.

"In year 2022, Governor Abdullahi Sule promised the Resident Doctors that hazard allowance is going to be implemented whenever the federal government implements the reviewed hazard allowance in the country, but up till this moment, it is yet to be implemented in Nasarawa State.

"This has created a wide salary disparity between doctors working with the Nasarawa State government and those of the Federal Teaching Hospitals or the Federal Medical Centres. Adeleke continued that apart from these challenges, the Resident Doctors were short-staffed in all ramifications, so there was work overload.

"This is demotivating, and it is not encouraging doctors to come to Nasarawa State. Therefore, I am calling on the state government to urgently look into these issues and proffer a lasting solution to them", the Nasarawa NARD President appealed.

Meanwhile, investigations by THISDAY

indicated that in the past six months, no fewer than 59 medical doctors had resigned from the services of the Nasarawa state Government. Out of the figure, 20 medical doctors left in the quest for greener pasture, while 39 resigned on account of poor condition of service.

Also, in the last two years, the Nasarawa State Government-owned General and Specialist Hospitals have been characterised by unstable industrial harmony, strikes, protests, and resignations of health workers, especially doctors due to inadequate working conditions.

Further findings showed that the impact of the mass resignation by the medic was presently being felt at the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital, Lafia, especially at the Surgical, Gynecology, and Outpatient Units of the facility as a large number of patients were seen waiting for long hours to access care.

Speaking on the development, a senior official in the administrative unit of the DASH, who pleaded to speak under the condition of anonymity, said they received over 25 resignation letters from doctors within two days.

In an interview, one of the female doctors said she had run out of patience after working with the state government for many years without any improvements, hence she was left with the only option of throwing in

the towel.

"I need to go somewhere that will prioritise me. If the Nasarawa State government really wants doctors to stay in the state, they need to do something about it in terms of welfare and the workload. Now, as doctors are resigning, they are going to start searching for doctors, but there are no sufficient doctors in the country.

"I had been called for job employments in several institutions without even applying, but I declined with the hope that the Nasarawa State government will do the needful, but after spending years here without any progress, I had no choice but to take a decision," she declared.

Reacting, the State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Gaza Gwamna, explained that the state government had commenced the implementation of welfare packages for the doctors in the state.

Therefore, Dr. Gwamna appealed to the remaining doctors working with the state government to remain calm, adding that the state government had also begun the process of employment to fill the vacant positions.

He said, "It is just unfortunate that it (mass resignation) is happening. There have been issues of promotion and also the issues of hazard allowance that have been pending for a long time. However, implementation has already started."

Ironically, when the management of DASH appeared before the Nasarawa State House of Assembly committee on health on May 31, 2024 to defend its 2024 budget performance, the Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr. Ikrama Hassan, however, still identified shortage of doctors, as a major challenge facing the hospital, stressing that 24 medical doctors have recently left the hospital.

In a swift reaction, the House Committee chairman on health, Larry Ven-Bawa, tasked the state government to initiate deliberate policies that will reduce increase in brain drain at the Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital, Lafia.

Ven-Bawa lamented that the rate at which medical doctors were leaving the DASH in recent times has been a source of concern, hence the need for the House to call on the government to do the needful. He noted that from the information gathered from the CMD of the hospital, 24 medical doctors have left the hospital.

# Egbin Power, Sahara Foundation Donate ICU to Boost Critical Care in Lagos

Victoria Ojiako

To reinforce their commitment to the advancement of healthcare services in Nigeria, Egbin Power Plc and Sahara Group Foundation have donated a fully equipped Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to the General Hospital Ijeda, Lagos.

The newly built 5-bed ICU is to further increase capacity for critical patient care and advance emergency response capabilities in the state and even beyond.

While inauguration of the facility, Egbin Power and Sahara Group Foundation emphasised that the initiative underscored their commitment to promoting access to quality critical healthcare services, in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 which aims to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for people of all ages".

Dignitaries at the occasion

included Commissioner II, Lagos State Health Service Commission, Dr. Mobolaji Olukoya; Director, Medical Services, Lagos State Health Service Commission, Dr. Adebite Olawale; Director of Nursing Services, Lagos State Health Service Commission, Dr. Adebukola Cole; and Medical Director, General Hospital Ikorodu, Dr. Taiwo Hassan.

Others include Medical Director, General Hospital Agbowo, Dr. Femi Aletan; immediate past Chief Medical Director, General Hospital Ijeda, Dr. Abimbola Okudero; Baale of Ipan, High Chief Mustapha Lasisi; Prince Yussuf Bello, representing Egbin Kingdom as well as the Community Liaison Officers representing Ijeda.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, the CEO of Egbin Power, Mokhtar Bounour, reiterated that the donation was a testament to



L-R: Commissioner II, Lagos State Health Service Commission (HSC), Dr. Mobolaji Olukoya; Director of Nursing Services, Lagos State HSC, Dr. Adebukola Cole; CEO, Egbin Power, Mokhtar Bounour; Director, Governance and Sustainability, Sahara Group Foundation, Ejiro Gray; Ag. Chief Medical Director, General Hospital Ijeda, Dr. Olumuyiwa Balogun-Oluwa and Director, Medical Services, Health Service Commission, Dr. Adebite Olawale, during the inauguration and handover of fully-equipped ICU donated by Egbin Power and Sahara Group Foundation to General Hospital Ijeda, Lagos

the company's enduring commitment to the development of the host communities.

He further noted that the ICU would significantly enhance the hospital's capacity to provide critical care

to those who need it most. "At Egbin Power Plc, we believe that the strength of a community is reflected in the well-being of its people. As one of the largest power generation companies in

Nigeria, we have always been committed to not only powering homes and industries but also to empowering lives.

"The impact of this donation will be far-reaching, improving emergency response, and strengthening overall healthcare delivery in the state.

"To the healthcare professionals who will be working in this ICU, we entrust this facility into your capable hands. Your dedication and expertise are the bedrock of the healthcare system.

"We are confident that you will provide exceptional care and restore hope to countless patients and their families.

"Our commitment to community development does not end here. At Egbin Power Plc, we will continue to seek out opportunities to contribute meaningfully to the society in which we operate.

"Whether through health, education, or environmental

sustainability initiatives, our mission is to make a positive impact that resonates for generations to come," Bounour said.

Director of Governance and Sustainability, Sahara Group Foundation, Ejiro Gray, noted that hitherto, access to critical healthcare services was not easily accessible to patients in the community due to the distance of the available ICU, thereby causing several avoidable loss of lives.

She said: "We don't have a lot of this facility in Lagos State, and even in Nigeria. One can only imagine how many lives that must have been lost because we didn't have this sort of facility for critical cases.

"The time and logistics it took to get critically ill patients to a healthcare facility that has an ICU was a challenge. "We took a step further in establishing the ICU facility, equipping it with quality infrastructure and equipment to create a fully-fledged ICU in this part of the state.

## RE: MULTICHOICE NIGERIA; A LEGACY OF MONOPOLY AND NON-TRANSPARENCY

Our attention has been drawn to an advertorial published on page 27 of Vanguard Newspaper of Thursday, 6 June, 2024. It is our intention to review the said advertorial, signed by one Suleman Saki, allegedly a "public affairs analyst based in Abuja", against the true position of things in the broadcast industry in Nigeria so we can confirm if he is operating from an altruistic purpose or he is promoting a particular private narrative.

It is not in doubt that MultiChoice Nigeria is the biggest investor in the entertainment industry in Nigeria, given its diverse and rich range of content offering. The question Suleman Sarki struggles answer is whether MultiChoice's massive investments in the Nigerian entertainment industry gives it the leverage to distort competition in the broadcast industry or abuse consumer rights. His advertorial is erected on two broad planks; it accused MultiChoice of "disregard for regulatory compliance"/lack of transparency and "monopolistic practices that threaten the integrity of the Nigerian media sector".

The accusations are a call to Nigerians to hate MultiChoice. For the first, the advertorial stated that between 2014 and 2023, MultiChoice Nigeria failed to comply with a provision of the National Broadcasting (NBC) Act requiring broadcasters to remit 2.5 per cent of their gross annual income to the NBC. This, he claimed, has robbed the Federal Government of N30 billion in revenue. He equally alleged that MultiChoice, in disregard for the NBC Code, has repeatedly prevented "regulatory oversight" and concealed its financial position by denying the NBC access to its accounts.

For these infractions, Sarki wants MultiChoice Nigeria investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for economic sabotage, penalised by the NBC for refusal to hand its financial, tax and accounting information over; compelled by the NBC to submit its financial information for regulatory assessment and break the presumed monopoly.

One does not need to be a sleuth to locate the source of the calumny against MultiChoice Nigeria. Interests, for whom Sarki is fronting, we can confidently state, are those who run pay television services, with government encouragement, on content pirated from MultiChoice, StarTimes and Qatari broadcasters, BeIN among others. They are the ones whose business plans contain just one tactic: stealing content produced or paid for by others.

It is pertinent to ask what computational method was used in arriving at the N30 billion MultiChoice is alleged to be owing the NBC. While it is public knowledge that MultiChoice instituted an action at the Federal High Court to challenge the NBC audit of its annual levy remittances and its *ex parte* motion for an order to stop the audit was declined. However, the Court directed all parties to maintain status quo pending the determination of MultiChoice interlocutory application. The effect of this is that NBC is restrained from taking further steps in the matter until the interlocutory application is argued and ruling given.

The sponsors of the cheap work of calumny masquerading as advocacy are claiming that MultiChoice is owing for nine years. Whereas, we are aware MultiChoice has never defaulted either in submitting its audited accounts or payment of the levy to the NBC.

As industry stakeholders and a major voice of opposition to the extant NBC Code at the time it was issued, we are aware that Section 2 2 (10) (d) of the Code requires broadcasters to submit the Certified True Copies (CTCs) of their annual audited accounts to the NBC for the purpose of computing their annual levy on income at the rate of 2.5 per cent. It is curious that the NBC, which has not stated that MultiChoice has defaulted in payment or submission of audited accounts, is demanding documents other than what the NBC Code provides for. The NBC Act (2004) has no provision empowering the commission to audit licensees' accounts. Bizarrely, the NBC says it is investigating the pay television company for years 2014-2023. However, the 6th NBC Code, to which the regulator is alleging non-compliance only become operational, in 2020. What was in operation prior to 2020 was the 5th Edition of the NBC Code, issued in 2012 and replaced by the current one in 2020.

According to both editions of the Code, the NBC's request for documents not listed in its code as requirements for the computation of annual income levy is an overreach of NBC power and an attempt by NBC to unlawfully assume the powers of the Federal Inland Revenue Service. What the NBC requires are annual audited accounts. No more. No less. The audited accounts have been submitted yearly to the NBC, as evidenced by the commission's reticence on that. In any language, NBC's demand for documents the law does not empower it to demand, spells abuse of power.

It is common knowledge that most broadcasters do not pay the annual levy and that NBC has threatened at various occasions (to no avail) to revoke their licences. So, it is rather strange that NBC is chasing after the only operator that duly pays its annual levy, which far outstrips the totality of annual levies paid by the entire broadcast industry. It is therefore pertinent to ask Sarki and his sponsors what computational method was used in arriving at the N30 billion MultiChoice is alleged to be owing the NBC. It is equally important to point out that neither the 5th or 6th NBC Code provided its intended definition of "income", leaving room for contestations over whether it is turnover or revenue minus cost of production, which puts a bold question mark on the fidelity of the N30 billion quoted by the advertorial.

The second plank of the position of the interests Sarki represents contains their real agenda: to continuously parasitize MultiChoice. This is obvious in the unfounded claims that

MultiChoice stifles competition, is a monopoly and determines tariffs payable because of its dominant position—all cumbersome euphemisms for "we want to keep pirating content". This is framed as concern for the consumer and the pay television ecosystem. Pricing is determined by various inputs, including domestic economic dynamics and everyone knows the shape of the economy over the last nine years.

At the heart of the second allegation are the exclusive rights to certain content and channels held by MultiChoice. Evidence declines to support the claim that MultiChoice is a monopoly or stifles competition. We recall that in 2022, the Competition and Consumer Protection Tribunal (CCPT) ruled that there was no evidence that MultiChoice had abused its dominant position. Also, importantly, we are aware that other pay television service providers operate, with some holding or having once held exclusive rights to content. StarTimes, we are aware, once had exclusive rights to the matches of the Italian football league, better known as Serie A. It currently has exclusive rights to the matches of the German football league (Bundesliga) and the Nigeria Professional Football League. For the first two, it outbid MultiChoice for the rights. The service provider is still in existence and does not pirate content to run its operations.

Before StarTimes, there was HiTv, which wrested the rights to matches of the English Premier League from MultiChoice and held them for three years until it was, as the founder, Toyin Subair, stated "collapsed essentially because of a clause in our original Shareholders Agreement, which allowed a group of founding shareholders to block the company raising money or selling off a subsidiary". The collapse had nothing to do with MultiChoice.

After HiTv came Kwese, which operated for a little over two years until it was undone by its inability to meet multiple payments to third party partners because it could not quickly gain subscribers and the necessary cashflow. Its unfortunate collapse had nothing to do with MultiChoice. Neither did it pirate other operators' content.

The campaign of calumny against MultiChoice did not just start. It manifests in a number of ways, with the issue of exclusivity a major one. Those casting covetous glances at MultiChoice's success have been strident in falsely depicting content exclusivity as a crime and are emboldened to pirate content with encouragement from formal and informal quarters. Their hand was revealed in the now judicially-annulled amendment to the 6th edition of NBC Code, which sought to prohibit content exclusivity and compel sub-licensing to competitors on terms determined by the NBC and in flagrant indifference to the Copyright Act.

Some elements within the government of the time, cheered on by freebooters in the pay television ecosystem, promoted a variety of misguided beliefs about exclusivity. Notable among these were views that acquisition of broadcasting rights are anomalous; that some broadcasters are just handed exclusive rights; that the content market is closed off to Nigerian broadcasters; and that exclusivity stifles competition.

The truth about content exclusivity is that it is a widely accepted commercial practice required for a viable pay television ecosystem. Given that it is usually for a short time, three or four years in many cases, it cannot be considered anti-competitive, as other operators are at liberty to bid when the holder's right to it expires. The grant of exclusive broadcasting licenses falls within the lawful exercise of copyright and it is widely accepted that, as far as the Copyright Law is concerned, a right owner has the right to refuse to license other users/firms, and to restrict exploitation of its intellectual property either to itself or to a licensee of its own choice. In the United Kingdom and the United States of America, there is no statutory prohibition of exclusive rights acquisition. There is equally no statutory requirement to sub-license sports or news content to competition or at rates determined by the regulator.

It is common knowledge that the sale of broadcasting rights is a competitive process, with rights owners seeking to extract maximum value from the property. As such, it is open to any broadcaster with the desire and means to acquire such rights. The proof of this, if any is needed, is StarTimes, which outbid MultiChoice for live broadcast of Germany's Bundesliga. Other operators had, at one time or the other, acquired exclusive rights to matches of the French elite football division (Ligue Un) Copa del Rey and the Portuguese League, for instance. There are also numerous broadcast properties on the international content market for operators to bid for and acquire in addition to producing their own exclusive content.

Unfortunately, the desire of many operators is to wait for another operator to acquire the rights and/or finance production, invest in marketing and promotion, only for them to demand the property to be sold at prices that are close to derisory. It is akin to demanding subsidies. If the Federal Government is removing subsidies on various items and services, it is irrational to expect a private business to subsidize competition or anybody for that matter. It stands to reason that there will be no incentive to acquire or produce exciting broadcast properties if the only thing operators need to do is to leech on the one with more imagination backed by investment. To have such a system is to open the industry to hypocrites and parasites. Both have no place in the industry ecosystem.



**Jacob Agunbiade**  
For: Association for the Defence of the Nigerian Economy  
(ADNE)

A large, three-dimensional golden '50' is centered in the upper left. The numbers are thick and have a metallic sheen. A laurel wreath is draped around the base of the '0'. The background is white with a shower of colorful confetti in shades of red, blue, yellow, and green.

## Hearty Cheers

You are an outstanding leader, and a beacon of manhood, an amazing pathfinder, and the best friend any person can wish for. We rejoice with you today as you celebrate your 50th birthday.

Your determination and dedication towards service are inspiring, and your quintessential drive towards a better society endears you to all. We are glad to be part of your continuing success story, which is worthy of emulation.

Powered by the noble soul you possess, may God guide and protect you. God Almighty will continue to grant you unparalleled wisdom, sound health, and a successful business endeavors, in service to humanity.

Once again, Happy Birthday.

With love from your friends.

Mr. David Atolabgbe  
Dr. Abu Abdullah  
Otunba Kehinde

A portrait of Rowland Adewumi, a man with a dark complexion and a short beard, wearing a black turban and a light purple traditional Nigerian agbada with a white beaded necklace. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a light blue gradient.

**Rowland Adewumi**

# GAMINGWEEK

Edited by NSEOBONG OKON-EKONG | gamingweek1117@gmail.com | Tel: 08114495324



## How Nigeria Measures Up to Global Sports Betting Trends



Zephaniah Jisalo



Lanre Gbajabamila



Bello Maigari

**Iyke Bede** writes that strides have been made in localising the sports betting sphere, with an increasing number of operators infusing indigenous elements to evoke player sentiments

Two decades ago, the organised sports betting and lottery sector in Nigeria was practically non-existent. Although activities were recorded in brick-and-mortar stores as pools, they were not regulated by an official body recognised at a state or federal level, making assessment of the sector almost impossible.

Fast-forward to the present, and that story has shifted to one in which regulatory

bodies, operators, and stakeholders hold various conferences, such as the Africa Gaming Expo, Sports Betting West Africa (SBWA) Summit, and various summits organised by state regulatory bodies, to assess the sports betting landscape and foster collaboration for growth and development.

This expansion of the sports betting sector was not a self-made effort. It was propelled by collaborations with other sectors, notably technology and financial

institutions. These factors, alongside a rapidly growing population, disposable income, burgeoning interest in a diverse range of sporting events beyond football, and heightened awareness of the sports betting sector through a rising number of operators leveraging both traditional media and social platforms, contributed significantly to its growth.

Revenue generation is a primary metric for evaluating sectoral growth. However, an aspect often poorly

highlighted is the sector's alignment with prevailing global trends. Such alignment is crucial for sustained expansion and increased investor interest.

Amid contemporary trends, mobile betting has garnered more interest from bookmakers and wide acceptance from punters over the past decade, owing to its convenient accessibility via walk-in stores, websites, and mobile apps. By comparison, in the US, Drive Research reported that three out of

four bettors prefer making wagers online or via mobile apps. Conversely, 36.8 per cent of bettors in Nigeria (via TGM Research) prefer the online/mobile app route.

The remaining 25 per cent of bettors in the US cite in-person sports betting as a means to control finance better. The appeal of interacting with a physical person also accounts for this in-person preference; however, in the local sector, in-person betting has become a means to bypass providing KYC information and has encouraged underage betting.

Another entrenched facet of the online betting trend is the in-play betting option, which allows punters to place bets on live events as they happen. In-play betting has garnered favour among novice bettors who depend on social betting for nearly accurate predictions shared via social betting platforms prevalent on Telegram channels. The local sector has a full grasp of this concept.

On the regulatory side, the National Lottery Regulatory Commission and its state-level counterparts adopt regulatory frameworks similar to those of international bodies like the Malta Gaming Authority. However, they have failed to distinguish the blurred lines between federal and state regulatory bodies' jurisdiction, resulting in the double taxation model that weighs heavily on operators.

For data collection, the NLRC relies on operators to provide the necessary information (compliance and reporting obligations). Regardless of whether the figures accurately reflect the current situation, the Commission may never ascertain the true state of affairs until it initiates the Central Monitoring System, enabling direct access to each operator's database in real-time to plug the gaps in its knowledge and gain a comprehensive understanding of the industry's dynamics.

Regarding the operators' responsibilities, many, through an ambassadorial deal, have been able to elevate the status of local players, mostly veterans of the game. It has also embarked on the entertainment route to recognise entertainers, leaning


towards this demographic to attract and retain a customer base. Unlike global trends, where the primary focus is on clubs or national teams, local operators, including foreign ones with licences in Nigeria, show little to no interest.

"If Nigerian football clubs, the Nigerian Football Federation probably does its homework and ensures that the essence of partnership with football clubs is that there is a proper viewing, right? I don't think that there is proper viewing for the Nigerian football leagues. Nothing is cast in stone. Well, let's be sincere, Bet9ja tried it and pulled out, and BetKing tried it and pulled out. Nigerian football is not even shown on DSTV. You have Kenyan football shown on DSTV. So, it is a big problem in the Nigerian football league. It needs to be sorted out," former Country Manager of Parimatch International, Oyindamola Michaels, in a chat with GAMING WEEK, nuanced why the trend of sponsoring local clubs has yet to be a staple in the sector.

The sector still grapples with underage and irresponsible gambling. The NLRC, various operators, and independent bodies have launched several initiatives to address these issues, but a comprehensive solution remains elusive due to a gap in data and analytics. The launch of the Central Monitoring System is likely to tackle this issue effectively.


While the adoption of eSports is on the rise, the sector itself lags in tailoring gaming experiences to resonate with local audiences. Particularly within the realm of casino software, there remains a dearth of African-centric games presented in electronic formats to stimulate interest. Aspiring participants are compelled to familiarise themselves with the rules of Western games to engage.

However, strides have been made in localising the sports betting sphere, with an increasing number of operators infusing indigenous elements to evoke player sentiments. Hammer Games recently incorporated traditional visual




### NATIONAL LOTTERY TRUST FUND

**Key Performance Indicators (Renewed – Hope Impact)**




**Hon. Zephaniah Bitrus Jisalo, MFR**  
Minister for Special Duties & Inter-Governmental Affairs



**Chart Showing Revenue Performance 22 Billion in 17 Years**


**REVENUE**



**Dr. Bello Maigari, OON**  
Executive Secretary, National Lottery Trust Fund

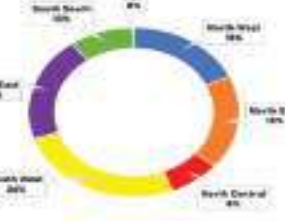
### GOOD CAUSES PROJECTS

**SPORTS**



- North West: 22%
- North East: 18%
- South West: 15%
- South East: 12%
- North Central: 10%
- South South: 8%

**HEALTH**



- North West: 18%
- North East: 15%
- South West: 12%
- South East: 10%
- North Central: 8%
- South South: 6%

- 3,000+** Primary schools benefitted in sport distribution across the Federation.
- 13** Federal universities benefitted from soccer kits and equipment across the 6 geopolitical zones and FCT.
- Provision of kits and sponsorship of Para-Powerlifting world cup 2022 chaired by First Lady Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- 347** Public secondary schools benefitted in First Aid Intervention Programmes.
- 48** Primary healthcare centers benefitted from upgrade, supply of vital medical equipment and ambulances.
- 13** Hospitals benefitted from Covid 19 Test kits and PPE's and ambulance.
- 1** Intensive Care Unit launched to cater for covid 19 patients.

**WATER & SANITATION**

- 15** Communities in Benue state were provided with solar-powered boreholes to improve access to portable and clean water.
- 14** Solar-powered boreholes are currently under construction in Port-harcourt, River State and Tarka Iga in Benue State.

**EDUCATION**

- Strengthening access to learning in public schools in Surulere, Lagos State through counterpart funding with Jump Start Initiative Phase I & II.
- Strengthening entrepreneurship and vocational training through construction and equipping of a block of skills acquisition Centre at Federal Polytechnic Daura, Katsina State.

GAMINGWEEK

# 1xBet Named 'Digital Sports Betting Operator of the Year' at Global Gaming Awards

**G**lobal bookmaker 1xBet has been named 'Digital Sports Betting Operator of the Year' at the Global Gaming Awards Asia-Pacific 2024, which the company described as "one of the most prestigious international awards" in the betting industry.

The awards ceremony took place on June 4 at the SiGMA Asia 2024 exhibition, held at SMX, Manila's largest exhibition centre. The winners were determined by an authoritative jury of 30 leading industry experts.

"The potential of the Asia-Pacific market is enormous, and it is very important for us to be among the industry leaders here. We are glad that leading professional community representatives highly appreciated our product. Interest in sports betting in the region is growing steadily. We will continue to consider player preferences and carefully monitor



local events to offer our customers the best gaming conditions," 1xBet representatives said.

The global bookmaker recalled that it has already won several prestigious

trophies in the iGaming industry this year. The brand previously won the Affiliate Company of the Year award at the International Gaming Awards 2024, the Best Sportsbook Operator

of the Year at the SiGMA Africa Awards 2024, and was recognized as the Best Esports Operator 2024 in Latin America at the SiGMA Americas Awards 2024.

"Follow 1xAffiliates on social networks to stay up to date with all the latest news about SEO, arbitrage, and traffic conversion," the company said in a statement. "A reliable partner will help you always be one step ahead of your competitors and achieve maximum results. Take advantage of all the opportunities to grow your business with 1xAffiliates!"

The company was also among the sponsors of the SiGMA Asia event this year. The event featured 3,000 operators, over 350 speakers, and about 20,000 delegates, who met with colleagues and established business contacts during SiGMA Asia's networking opportunities.

## Digitain Expands to Nigeria with BetJara

**S**portsbook and iGaming solutions provider Digitain expanded its reach in Africa by signing a new deal with BetJara, a Nigerian-based operator. The company will provide its turnkey solution to BetJara.

As part of the agreement, BetJara will be provided with Digitain's GLI-certified turnkey solution, which includes a proprietary sportsbook, esports, virtual sports, and casino.

Digitain noted that the sportsbook delivers 100+ sports, 130,000+ Live and 80,000 pre-match events monthly, 15,000+ Leagues, and 3,000+ Betting Markets. It also includes 20,000 daily virtual events with 150+ betting markets.

Yogonet reports that the turnkey solution combines a Casino, Payment Gateway, Sports Data and Statistics, and enterprise tools for all operational channels for

BetJara's players.

Ani Mkrtychyan, Digitain's Chief Sales Officer, said: "We are delighted that BetJara, regulated by the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) of Nigeria, has selected Digitain as their sportsbook and casino technology platform provider. The BetJara brand is known to provide the best gaming and trading experience for all users and reward their customers with innovations, product offerings, and the best betting odds, betting bonuses, and the fastest paying-out platform in the industry."

Mkrtychyan added, "With Digitain's turnkey solution, BetJara will have access to our Gamification tool, which is built for mobile and desktop usage, so that operators can create promotional campaigns for acquisition, retention, and revenue growth, combined with our sportsbook features such as Autobet, Betbuilder, Sports Jackpots, Instant



Cashback, Push Notifications. We are positive BetJara's players shall enjoy them."

Owoseni Abiodun Dada, CEO of BetJara, commented: "We aim to offer our players in Nigeria one of the best gaming and trading

experiences in the marketplace. Digitain has proven itself to be a leader in B2B turnkey sportsbook and casino solutions, and with that, we can scale and ensure the best features and experience for our players."

### HOW NIGERIA MEASURES UP TO GLOBAL SPORTS BETTING TRENDS

motifs such as cowries and characters adorned in customary attire, signalling a shift towards greater cultural resonance.

With a shift to online platforms, the ease of transaction, security and consumer data protection have been at an all-time high. This advancement in fintech solutions is slowly heralding the use of cryptocurrency, providing additional flexibility and anonymity. This has not been the case in Nigeria following the crackdown on cryptocurrency platforms.

Unfortunately, even the government, through the CBN, does not recognise Bitcoin as having monetary value. They, in fact, disallow it. Because as far as the government is concerned, Bitcoin does not have a particular value behind it, like, let's say, gold reserves. It is just a value that is driven by the markets. And so, it's so volatile. Also, it is easier for people that want to launder money through Bitcoin, and you find it very difficult to track. In fact, some companies that accepted it before are

beginning to clamp down on it now. In Nigeria, Bitcoin is not accepted," Managing Director of Sax Innovative Network Limited, Yomi Oketope, explained.

Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies gradually converge within sports betting and casinos, offering players an immersive gaming experience using avatars, seamlessly blending physical and digital interactions. However, the sophistication of this technology at its current stage highlights

the inadequacies in infrastructure, compelling operators to refrain from widespread adoption due to its high costs and limited scalability.

Nigeria's sports betting landscape has experienced remarkable growth and transformation over the past two decades. It has evolved into a thriving industry from virtually non-existent sectors, propelled by technological advancements, a burgeoning population, and increased interest in diverse sporting events. However, challenges

such as underaged and irresponsible gambling persist, requiring concerted efforts from regulatory bodies and operators. Despite strides in localising the sector and embracing online platforms, issues such as the lack of recognition for cryptocurrency and infrastructure inadequacies hinder its full potential. Nonetheless, with continued innovation and collaboration, Nigeria's sports betting industry promises further expansion and cultural resonance in the future.

### GAMINGWEEK TEAM

**Nseobong Okon-Ekong**  
gamingweek1117@gmail.com | 08114495324

**Iyke Bede**  
ikennabede@gmail.com | 0703 044 7714

**Akeem Lasisi**  
lasaisai@yahoo.com | 08023687884

**Vanessa Obioha**  
vaysylver@gmail.com | 08069838305

**Davidson Abraham**  
davisiano.adm@gmail.com | +971 56 744 6013

**ADVISORY: +18 PERSONS UNDER 18 MUST NOT PARTICIPATE IN BETTING, GAMING OR LOTTERY ACTIVITY**

## FORTY-EIGHT

# OPEC's Secondary Data Shows Nigeria's Oil Production Rose 2.29m Barrels in May

● **IEA projects structural decline in developing oil-producing nations' output**

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

Secondary data newly released by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has indicated that Nigeria's crude oil production in May rose by 74,000 barrels per day, translating to 2.29 million barrels for the entire month.

However, considering Nigeria's direct communication, it stated that the average daily crude oil production dropped to 1.25 million bpd in May, according to its Monthly Oil Market Report (MOMR).

While the international oil production group collates information from energy intelligence platforms as well as oil research firms that track ship movements (secondary), member countries can also self-report their output (direct communication).

According to the organisation, the

country drilled 1.419 million bpd during the month under review as distinct from 1.34 million bpd the previous month. But primary communication, it said, indicated that the month's output declined by 2.34 per cent from the 1.28 million bpd recorded in April.

"According to secondary sources, total OPEC-12 crude oil production averaged 26.63 million bpd in May 2024, 29,000 bpd higher, m-o-m. Crude oil output increased mainly in Nigeria, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, while production in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya and Congo decreased," it stated.

At the same time, it stressed that total non-OPEC crude oil production averaged 14.29 million bpd in May 2024, 152,000 bpd lower, month-on-month, with crude oil output increasing mainly in Mexico, while

production in Russia and Kazakhstan decreased.

Although Nigeria has said it has the potential to produce over 2 million bpd of oil per day, however its efforts have been hobbled by oil theft, pipeline vandalism as well as prolonged years of lack of investment in the upstream sector.

Also yesterday, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said that the world was facing a major oil capacity glut in the current decade that could trigger lower prices and test OPEC's market control as global oil demand peaks.

Global oil demand, including biofuels, it said, will likely level off near 106 million bpd toward the end of this decade, up from just over 102 million bpd in 2023, due to the boom in electric vehicles, renewable energy and fuel efficiencies, the IEA

said in its latest annual mid-term outlook, "Oil 2024."

Total oil demand is still forecast to rise by 3.2 million bpd between 2023 and 2030, supported by increased use of jet fuel and feedstock from the petrochemical sector.

As in recent years, oil demand growth will be underpinned by Asia's biggest economies, with growth in China driven by the petrochemical sector, while in India, transport fuels will see significant gains, the IEA said.

By contrast, oil demand in developed economies is expected to continue a structural decline, falling from around 46 million bpd in 2023 to less than 43 million bpd by 2030, the lowest since 1991.

A year ago, the IEA had predicted that global oil demand would peak by the end of the decade after

rising 6 per cent to 105.7 million bpd through the 2022-2028 period.

S&P Global Commodity Insights forecast that global oil demand, including biofuels, peaking at around 109 million bpd in 2034, with a gradual decline in the following years and only falling below 100 million bpd in 2050. Commodity Insights forecasts demand averaging 104.8 million bpd in 2024.

Separately, the IEA cut its 2024 global oil demand growth forecast for a third consecutive month, trimming 100,000 bpd from the estimate, S&P Global said.

Helped by an upward revision to its 2023 demand estimates, the IEA now sees world oil demand growing by just 960,000 bpd this year to average 103.2 million bpd.

"Oils subdued outlook is expected to carry forward into 2025, with a



President Bola Tinubu

modest increase of 1 million bpd reflecting lacklustre economic growth, an expanding EV fleet and vehicle efficiency gains," the IEA said in its latest monthly oil market report.

## TINUBU'S DOBALE, MILITARY PARADE, CULTURAL DISPLAYS HIGHLIGHT DEMOCRACY DAY CELEBRATION

Olawale Ajimotokan, Chuks Okocha, Deji Elumoye in Abuja and Sunday Ehigior in Lagos

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's slip as he was mounting the parade vehicle was the centre of attention during yesterday's Democracy Day ceremony at Eagle Square, Abuja.

Tinubu was set for the traditional inspection of guards of honour, when a clumsy step led to a tumble in the parade vehicle.

However, the President while commenting on his fall at the parade ground made light humour of the incident where he missed his steps while making his way into the parade inspection vehicle.

He spoke yesterday night at the State House Conference Centre, at the 25th Democracy Day Anniversary Dinner, an event that paraded not just the crème of the nation's political class, but also those who participated in the democracy struggle in the 1990s during the military regimes of Generals

Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha.

Commenting on the social media reaction after he missed his step and fell while climbing into the vehicle earlier in the day, the President described the incident as a move of obeisance to democracy, saying it was a day worth falling for.

According to him, as a traditional Yoruba 'boy' he was doing do bale (Yoruba word for prostrating to greet elders) at the Eagle Square, saying democracy was worth falling for.

He said: "June 12 represents the heart and soul of our democratic struggle in the country. Early this morning, I had a swagger and it's on the social media. They are confused whether I was doing Buga or doing Babaringa but it is a day to celebrate democracy while doing 'dobale' for today.

"I am a traditional Yoruba boy, I did my do bale. Democracy is a day that is worth falling for. It is a thing of joy to see all of you here."

Earlier in his reaction to the slip, the

presidency, in a statement, pointed out that the president was just a human being like others.

Posting on his X handle, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, noted that Tinubu was not a superman.

Onanuga wrote: "President Tinubu is not a Superman. He is human, like all of us. President Biden has had several slips in the last three years. Even the younger Barack Obama slipped while President. Political leaders are human. Slipping should not detract from the import of Democracy Day celebration."

Former Vice President Atiku Abubakar as well as the presidential candidate of Labour Party (LP) in the 2023 election, Peter Obi, also yesterday, sympathised with Tinubu over the incident.

But as commemoration of the 25th anniversary of democracy in Nigeria went on yesterday, some Nigerians took to the streets in Lagos, Abuja, and Ibadan to protest the current

economic hardship in the country.

Five protesters, who wore "Revolution Now" T-shirts, were arrested in Ibadan by men of the Nigeria Police.

Tinubu's slip, reminiscent of similar falls at state functions by Biden, former US President George W. Bush, and Russian President Vladimir Putin, did not take the shine off the celebration organised to mark 25 years of unbroken democracy in Nigeria.

Members of the Armed Forces and Police caught the eye with their impressive colour party, march-past in quick time and silent drill, and a combo between the national troupe and the armed forces.

Several dignitaries, including Vice President Kashim Shettima; Senate President Godswill Akpabio; Speaker, House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; Chairman, All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr Abdullahi Ganduje; service chiefs; ministers; and members of the diplomatic corps graced the occasion.

The arrival of the president's

motorcade about 10.02am was greeted with fanfare, with the outriders leading the convoy, encircling the arena while atop their bikes mounted with sirens and national flags.

About 10.10am, the Parade Commander, Lt. Col. M.A Yusuf, invited the president to inspect the Guards of Honour.

That was followed by the filing out of the guards made up of officers from Nigeria Army, Nigeria Air Force, and Nigeria Police, who thrilled the guest of honour and other guests to a slow march-past before transiting to quick march past 30 minutes later.

There was also a silent display by the Guards Brigade. The silent drill squad displayed complex drill and concurrent movement of hands and formations.

The cultural collaboration by resplendent troupes from the six geo-political zones with the armed forces was coordinated by Opeyemi Alabi.

Another moment was the unveiling of the world's largest portrait on canvas of Tinubu by the National Council for Arts and Culture (NCAC) and the signing of the national register.

About 11.47am, the parade commander, Yusuf, approached and got the President's permission to call off the parade.

Atiku sympathised with Tinubu after the President slipped at Eagle Square during the Democracy Day celebration.

Atiku wrote on X: "I sincerely sympathise with President Bola Tinubu, @officialABAT, over this unfortunate incident as he was set to review the parade on Democracy Day. I do hope that all is well with him."

Similarly, Obi wrote on his X handle, "I was saddened to learn of President Tinubu's unfortunate fall today. I wish him well. We achieve nothing by gloating about an accident that could well happen to any of us."

However, Obi, in a separate statement on the country's Democracy Day celebration, said democracy had not benefited Nigerians. According to

Obi, the country has descended into "a classical state capture".

Obi stated: "An unexamined life is not worth living, so it is now time to re-examine what we have been doing over this quarter of a century. Democracy, as we know, is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people."

The LP presidential candidate explained: "While we may say that in 1999 we started in earnest in the right direction, today, we have deteriorated into what can be classified as classical state capture. Instead of benefiting all, it has become a deprivation to all.

"The consequences of not being a true democracy have led to leadership failures that have resulted in uncontrolled systemic corruption, high levels of insecurity, lack of freedom of speech, increasing poverty rates, and unprecedented levels of hunger and hardship, which remain unsolved and are growing geometrically.

"True democracy should be people-oriented, where the rights of citizens are respected, the laws are obeyed, the leaders remain accountable to the people, and people's welfare and care, especially for the poor, become paramount and high priorities," he stressed.

He urged Nigerians to use the commemoration of June 12 as an occasion to return to a truly democratic nation and stand in defence of Nigeria's democracy.

"I urge everyone to respect and protect the institutions of the democratic state, obey the governing laws of the state, be accountable to the people, and fulfil the responsibilities of responsible governance as contained in the constitution."

"As we build a New Nigeria, these tenets shall be the pillars of our true democracy. It is possible," Obi said.

However, some Nigerians took to the streets in Lagos, Abuja, and Ibadan to protest the current economic hardship in the country.

In Lagos, amid tight security

Continued on page 51

## DANGOTE: I HAVE PAID \$2.4BN OF \$5.5BN BORROWED TO BUILD REFINERY, EYES STEEL PRODUCTION

the 650,000 barrels per day facility.

Stressing that many persons thought that the project was going to fail, he lauded the Afreximbank and Nigeria's Access Bank for supporting the project, noting that the vision would have died without them.

He noted that without banks like African Finance Corporation (AFC), AfreximBank and others, it would be difficult to industrialise the African continent, because they are the financial institutions that understand the challenges and the issues peculiar to the continent.

Without mentioning names, the businessman stated that foreign banks are not interested in helping Africa grow, explaining that indeed some of them clandestinely attempted to push the company into loan default during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Describing the situation as very scary, he stated if he had raised the idea of international project financing with some of them, the international banks would have shut it down because they would "Ask for my great-grandmother's certificate of birth."

"We borrowed the money based on our own balance sheet. I think we borrowed just over \$5.5 billion. But we paid also a lot of interest as we went along, because the project was delayed because of lack of land, also the sand-filling took a long time. Almost five years or so we didn't do anything.

"We actually started in 2018. We borrowed that much. We have actually, of course, paid interest and some principal, about \$2.4 billion. We've done very well. We now have only about \$2.7 billion left to be paid. So we've done very well for a project of that magnitude," he said.

On whether he was receiving enough crude oil as feedstock for his refinery from the International Oil Companies (IOCs), Dangote said that those who had access to cool money for decades would not want the opportunity to slip and would always fight back.

"In a system where for 35 years people are used to counting good money, and all of a sudden they see that the days of counting that money have come to an end, you don't expect them to pray for you. Of course you expect them to fight back.

"And I think that is the process that we're now really going through. But the truth is that, yes, the country, the sub-region, and also the continent, sub-Saharan Africa, need this refinery. So, you expect them to fight through non-supply of crude, non-purchase of the product, but I think it's all temporary. We'll get there," he added.

Stressing that he knew there would always be a pushback, Dangote pointed out that what he did not envisage was that it would be so vicious.

"Well, I knew that there would be a fight. But I didn't know that the mafia in oil, they are stronger than the mafia in drugs. I can tell you

that. Yes, it's a fact," he mentioned, stressing that the local and foreign mafia tried several times to sabotage the refinery from coming to fruition.

Describing himself as someone who has fought all his life, Dangote posited that the mafias 'tried all sorts' to stop him. "But I'm a person that has been fighting all my life. You know, so I think it's part of my life to fight," he stated.

Dangote said that although the fight was still on, he was very sure he would end up winning "Because the population and the government will be on our side".

He pointed out that Africa must produce what it consumes, noting that there's currently no support coming from the West to the continent.

"As a matter of fact during the COVID period, some of the international banks really were looking forward to making sure that they

push us into default of our loans so that the project will just be dead. And that didn't happen with the help of banks like Afreximbank," he added.

He also disclosed that 25 per cent of the Dangote fertiliser currently goes to the US, stressing that it can also fully satisfy the needs of the Caribbean countries in terms of urea.

He added that currently, Nigeria does not have a strategic oil reserves, describing that situation as dangerous, but said with the Dangote refinery, the country can now be assured of one.

"So, we are not living from hand to mouth anymore. And the country doesn't have strategic reserves in terms of petrol, which is very dangerous. It is. But in our own plant now, when you came, we had only 4.78 billion litres of various tankage capacity. But right now we're adding another 600 million.

## NLC TO TINUBU: NO DEAL WITH FG ON N62,000 MINIMUM WAGE OFFER

final figure.

The President spoke yesterday night at the State House Conference Centre, at the 25th Democracy Day Anniversary Dinner. He urged the National Assembly to expect his memorandum.

Speaking specifically to the leadership of the National Assembly, represented by the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio on the national minimum wage issue, Tinubu said the government would do what is expected, but would also pay what it can afford.

His words: "Senate President, Deputy Senate President, you'll get a notice from me if I've changed my mind on minimum wage. We're going to do what Nigeria can afford, what you can afford, what I can afford. They ask you to cut your coat according to your size."

Also yesterday the Minister of Information and National Orientation Mohammed Idris, emphasised the need for a realistic and sustainable

wage system that balances workers' needs with the country's economic realities.

At the last sitting of the Tripartite Committee on minimum wage in Abuja, both the government side and representatives of the private sector had made a final offer of N62,000 while organised labour represented by NLC and Trade Union Congress (TUC) came down from their earlier demand of N594,000 to N250,000.

But in a statement by the NLC, the trade union said it expected the president to have harmonised the two proposals and announce a fitting minimum wage for Nigerian workers.

"We attentively listened to the Democracy Day Presidential address delivered by President Tinubu, especially concerning the ongoing National Minimum Wage negotiations. While the President may have accurately recounted parts of our democratic journey's history, it is evident that he has been misinformed regarding the outcome of the wage negotiation

process.

"The NLC would have expected that the advisers of the President would have told him that we neither reached any agreement with the federal government and the employers on the base figure for a National Minimum Wage nor on its other components.

"Our demand still remains N250,000 only and we have not been given any compelling reasons to change this position which we consider a great concession by Nigerian workers during the tripartite negotiation process.

"We are therefore surprised at the submission of Mr. President over a supposed agreement," it stated.

The NLC said it appreciated the President's commitment to the fine democratic ideals which allowed the work of the Tripartite National Minimum Wage Negotiation Committee to proceed unhindered despite some hiccups.

"However, we had expected Mr.

President to have used this understanding as one of those who was in the vanguard of the struggle with us around the nation to rescue Nigeria from the hands of the military to harmonise the two figures submitted to him by the Tripartite Committee in favour of workers and masses. It would have been a fitting Democracy Day gift.

"We believe that he may have been misled into believing that there was an agreement with the NLC and TUC.

"There was none and it is important that we let the President, Nigerians and other national stakeholders understand this immediately to avoid a mix-up in the ongoing conversation around the national minimum wage.

"We have also not seen a copy of the document submitted to him and will not accept any doctored document. However, we want to reaffirm our belief that the President on whose table the Tripartite Committee's report presently resides

would prepare an Executive Bill which content will reflect the true demand of Nigerian workers.

"We think that this is an opportunity for him to demonstrate his love for Nigerian workers and masses by shunning the pieces of advice that may be coming from those whose intentions are continuously focused on hurting the poor and struggling workers of Nigeria.

"Mr. President should not allow these individuals and groups to sabotage his promise of lifting Nigerian workers out of poverty," the NLC added.

However, in his address at the Conference of Charismatic Bishops, which he declared open, the minister urged the organised labour to be realistic by settling for a national minimum wage that would not undermine the national economy and lead to mass retrenchment of workers.

Continues online



## SIGNING OF FCMB-TLG PRIVATE DEBT FUND'S TRANSACTION DOCUMENTS...

L-R: Debt Fund Portfolio Manager, FCMB Asset Management Limited, Mr. Ndukaku Offiah; representative of TLG Capital in Nigeria, Mr. Aletor Adoghe; the CEO, FCMB Asset Management Limited, Mr. James Ilori; and Partner, Aluko and Oyebo Law Firm, Dr. Ajibola Asolo, during the signing of FCMB-TLG Private Debt Fund's transaction documents in Lagos ....recently

PHOTO: SUNDAY ADIGUN

# One Week After Repairs, Terrorists Destroy TCN Towers Again, Throw Parts of North-east into Darkness

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

For the umpteenth time, the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) yesterday announced

another attack on its electricity transmission lines in the North-east, throwing parts of the region into darkness. It is coming barely a week after

the wholly government-controlled organisation fixed the lines, which earlier elicited the concerns of the region's state governors in the area due to the prolonged blackout.

"The Transmission Company of Nigeria hereby states that two of its towers, T193 and T194, along the Damaturu-Maiduguri 330kV Single Circuit Transmission Line

have again been destroyed by vandals.

"The incident, TCN believes happened at about 10:15pm, yesterday (Tuesday) night, when the 150MVA power transformer at Molai Substation tripped at the same time as the 330kV transmission line supplying bulk power to Maiduguri from Damaturu Transmission Substation.

"After the line tripping, efforts were made by TCN engineers to close the Mulai-Damaturu line to enable bulk transmission of electricity, which failed repeatedly.

"Early Today, however, TCN lines engineers along with security operatives patrolled the line and discovered that towers 193 and 194 along the 330kV transmission line were brought down using an explosive device, whose fragments are scattered at the site of the incident. The area affected by this incident is Maiduguri and its environs," it stated.

Many of the power assets in the North-east region have for long come under attacks by terrorists who blow them up randomly, thereby throwing the zone into incessant darkness.

In May, TCN reported the vandalism of three electricity towers in Maiduguri, Borno State, thereby delaying the restoration of electricity supply to the North-east region.

In a statement at the time by the TCN signed by its Public Affairs Manager, Ndidi Mbah, the company noted that it had encountered some delays in its effort to restore power supply to

the North-east due to the collapse of one of its towers during the "cabling process."

It stated that while the TCN was working on reconstructing and restringing the four vandalised towers, three towers along the Biu-Dambua 132kV transmission line, were also vandalised with 16 spans of conductors stolen. The towers, which collapsed, it said, included towers T1690, T1691, and T1692.

Lamenting the latest incident, the TCN recalled that on the December 28, 2023, towers T193, T194 and T195, were destroyed, using similar explosive devices like the previous ones.

"Recall that on the 28 of December, 2023, towers T193, T194 and T195, were destroyed, using similar Improvised Explosives (IEDs). Two out of the towers in question are the towers affected by yesterday's vandalism attack, which were rebuilt after that incident.

"TCN is currently assessing the situation with the view to deciding on the best approach to ensuring the temporary restoration of the power supply while a contractor is mobilised to rebuild the two transmission towers," the statement added.

TCN stated that it will continue to do everything possible with the assistance of security operatives to protect the transmission towers.

"We are also calling upon the government and well-meaning Nigerians to join in the fight against the destruction of our collective national assets," it stated.

## FG Launches High-yielding Tela Maize Varieties to Boost Food Security

- Says crop safe for consumption, profitable to farmers
- To save N2 billion in annual production costs

James Emejo in Abuja

Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Sabi Abdullahi, has officially unveiled the Tela maize varieties – a high yielding transgenic varieties that confers resistance to major pests including as stem borers and fall army worm, and have moderate drought tolerance.

The new maize varieties would also save Nigerian farmers about N2 billion annually in production costs through the reduction in chemical insecticide sprays as well as ensure sustainable food security in the country and across the West African sub-region.

The minister assured Nigerians of the safety of the bio-crop, adding that the federal government would not venture into anything that will jeopardise their health, safety and security – allaying concerns in some quarters over the safety of genetically altered food crops.

He said the country has adequate safeguard measures to ensure that no harm emanates from the new technology, adding that Tinubu understood the place of seeds in achieving the food security mandate.

He said the launch Tela maize remained a major feat for President Bola Tinubu's administration amid the current food security challenges.

He said the innovation would triple current yields, thus resolving current food challenges as well as alleviate poverty by economically empowering farmers.

Abdullahi further describe the Tela maize launch as a game-changer towards achieving the Renewed Hope agenda of the present administration.

Stakeholders including the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) and seed companies have all welcomed the new maize variety.

The minister said the minister remained committed to supporting

scientific innovation that will revolutionise agriculture in the country, adding that the new maize varieties would guarantee food security for Nigeria and Africa at large, and commended African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF), the Institute of Agricultural Research (IAR) Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and other partners for the scientific breakthrough.

Executive Director, IAR, Prof. Ado Adamu Yusuf, said the Tela maize release was a testament to the commitment of the federal government towards ensuring not only safety of lives and property, but food security, and the future of the country.

He said the institute was doing everything possible to support government's effort through research that is people and environment friendly by adhering strictly to the protocol for such research mandate.

Yusuf said the maize varieties will save Nigerian farmers about N2 billion annually in production costs through the reduction in chemical insecticide sprays as well as ensure sustainable food security in the country and across the West African sub-region.

He said, "I dare to say, if Nigeria is food secured, the entire West Africa region will be free from the challenges of insecurity."

He said the Tela maize project started over five years ago, when Nigeria joined the TELA Maize Project Public-Private Partnership in 2019 to address the major challenges confronting farmers across the African continent drought and insect pests such as the fall armyworm and stemborers.

According to him, "The SAMMAZ-T series of maize hybrids were therefore, developed to address these challenges headlong. They offer three in one protection to maize which include drought tolerance, resistance to fall armyworm, and resistance to stemborer insect pests.

"This triple protection assures the farmer of yield advantage and reduces the use of chemical pesticides, saving farmers money and reducing the environmental and health hazards associated with the use of these pesticides."

He further disclosed that the IAR was currently working assiduously to introduce flood tolerant crop varieties that will mitigate the current challenges of floods devastating farmers' fields in the country due to climate change occasioned by global warming, thus leading to enormous losses.

The IAR boss said when such varieties are ready in no distant time, "our farmers will breathe a sigh of relief from perennial floods".

Chairman, AATF, Prof. Aggrey Ambali, said the launch marked a milestone not only for Nigerian agriculture but for the entire African continent, and congratulated the

federal government for its visionary leadership and commitment to agricultural innovation.

He said, "Nigeria has consistently demonstrated a forward-thinking approach to agriculture, recognizing the critical role that innovative technologies play in transforming the sector."

"The approval and introduction of TELA Maize and other biotech crops are clear indicators of this progressive mindset. By embracing these advancements, Nigeria is not only enhancing its own food security but also setting a powerful example for other African nations to follow."

He said the Tela maize variety has a remarkable yield potential of up to 10 tons per hectare compared to the current average of 3 tons per hectare, representing a groundbreaking development in "our collective efforts to boost Nigeria's agricultural productivity."

## Women Farmer Group Severs Ties with AFAN over Alleged Non-inclusion, Leadership Tussle

James Emejo in Abuja

The Nigeria Women for Agricultural Progressive and Development Initiative (NWAPDI), hitherto under the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), has pulled out of the association citing poor gender inclusion in the latter's activities.

The women group also attributed their exit to the lingering leadership tussles within AFAN.

Addressing journalists at a media briefing in Abuja, President/National Coordinator, NWAPDI, Omolara Svensson, said, "After careful consideration and deliberation, the Nigeria Women for Agricultural Progressive and Development Initiative (NWAPDI) has decided to

dissociate from AFAN."

She said, "This decision has not been taken lightly but is necessary due to two primary concerns: The poor inclusion of women in AFAN's activities and the ongoing leadership tussles within the organisation, which I tried to address during my tenure as Head of Women in Agriculture for the Oyo State AFAN Chapter.

"Despite numerous efforts to resolve these complicated issues, we have found it necessary to redirect our energy and resources to NWAPDI."

She told THISDAY that the non-inclusion of women in the affairs of AFAN had resulted in the setbacks currently witnessed in the country's agricultural sector, particularly in

the area of food security.

She noted that despite efforts by the women to rescue the situation, "we have observed a persistent lack of meaningful inclusion and recognition of women within AFAN, undermining our core objectives and the progress we strive to achieve."

Svensson also pointed out that continuous leadership disputes within AFAN had created an unstable and counterproductive environment, adding that these internal conflicts have hampered effective collaboration and progress, making it increasingly challenging for the women to fulfil their mandate under such circumstances.

However, she said NWAPDI was established as the first and

foremost Nigerian organisation exclusively for women involved in the agricultural sector, spanning production, processing, trade, and commerce.

She said, "Unlike AFAN and similar organizations, NWAPDI is uniquely focused on empowering and supporting women in agriculture across Nigeria. Our mission is to ensure that women have a significant and influential role in shaping the agricultural landscape of our country."

"As of today, NWAPDI stands as the only registered and authorised women-only agricultural initiative in Nigeria. This position underscores our commitment to creating a focused, inclusive, and progressive platform for women in agriculture.

## NEWS



## 2024 DEMOCRACY DAY CELEBRATION...

L-R: The Olu of Ilaro and Paramount Ruler of Yewaland, who is also the Chairman, Ogun State Council of Obas, Oba Kehinde Olugbenle; Ogun State Deputy Governor, Engr. Noimot Salako-Oyedele; Prince Dapo Abiodun; First Lady of Ogun State, Mrs. Barnidele Abiodun and the Speaker of the Ogun State House Assembly, Rt. Hon. Oludaisi Elemide, at the 2024 Democracy Day celebration, held at the June 12 Cultural Centre, Kuto, Abeokuta... yesterday

## Restructuring: Nwodo, Wabara Lead 20-man Ohaneze Committee to Articulate Ndigbo's Position

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Former Enugu State Governor, Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo, and former Senate President Adolphus Wabara have been appointed by the Ohaneze Ndigbo to lead a 20-man committee

to articulate a position for Ndigbo in the proposed restructuring of Nigeria.

Other notable members of the committee include: former Imo State governor, Ikedi Ohakim, Chief Onyema Ugochukwu, Senator Ben Obi, Senator Julius Ucha, Barrister

Dan Nwanyanwu, Prof. Epiphany Azinge, Prof. Charles Nwekeaku, Prof. Onyebuchi Chukwu and Chief Osita Chidoka, among others.

While inaugurating the committee in Abuja, Wednesday, the President General of Ohaneze

Ndigbo Worldwide, Chief Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, urged members to give the assignment the seriousness it deserved.

He said: "I'm therefore of very strong belief that restructuring of Nigeria is a social, economic and

cultural imperative. Many other groups in Nigeria have continued to make demands for secession from the country.

"Such demands have come from the Northern, Western and of course, Eastern part of Nigeria.

"Once the structure of Nigeria is right, all these demands and agitations will stop and Nigeria by God's grace will be one of the greatest countries in the world.

"Today, I have therefore, a great pleasure and honour to inaugurate a committee comprising a very distinguished and illustrious Igbo sons and daughters under the leadership of His Excellency, Dr. Okwesilieze Nwodo, the former Governor of Enugu State to review past discussions, make wide contacts with Igbos as Igbo position on a restructured Nigeria.

"The duty you are carrying out

is a very sublime one and critical to the future of Igbo in Nigeria.

"I pray the Almighty God who had led our people through past perilous times guide you as you carry out this sublime duty of producing a structure that will make the Federal Republic of Nigeria a happy country for all of us."

Earlier, Iwuanyanwu went down memory lane to recall past agitations before and after the civil war.

He dispelled long held wrong notions about the position of the defunct Eastern Region during the Aburi Conference.

According to him, the late Dim Chukwuemeka Ojukwu who led the delegation to the Aburi conference with General Yakubu Gowon, never asked for secession from Nigeria but for restructuring to give component parts of the federation greater autonomy.

## CDS Orders Military Personnel to Safeguard Citizens' Rights, Troops Kill Three Terrorists In Zamfara

Ikechukwu Aleke in Abuja

The Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), General Christopher Gwabin Musa, has urged military personnel to uphold the tenets of democracy, safeguard citizens' rights, and ensure a peaceful and secure environment for all.

General Musa also appealed to citizens to remain positive towards the challenges being faced and support the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN), in the fight against all acts of terrorism and criminality, stressing that victory is insight.

General Musa, gave this order in a statement signed by Acting Director, Defence Information, Brigadier General Tiukur Gusau. The Defence Chief, on behalf of the officers and men of the Armed Forces of Nigeria (AFN), extended warm felicitations to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, on the occasion of democracy day

celebration.

The CDS, reaffirmed the unwavering commitment and loyalty of the Armed Forces of Nigeria to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the President, Commander-in-Chief.

He noted that, the AFN remains dedicated to supporting and strengthening democracy for the benefit of all Nigerians.

He also pledged that, "the Nigerian military shall continue to collaborate with national and sub-national institutions to entrench constitutional governance".

The CDS equally acknowledged the sacrifices made by members of the Armed Forces in various theaters of operation across the country, which is evidence of their commitment to the unity and growth of Nigeria.

He wished President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and all Nigerians a happy and peaceful Democracy Day celebration.

Also, troops of the Nigerian Army, in collaboration with Zamfara State Community Protection Guards, have killed no fewer than three hundred terrorists and recovered several rustled sheep in multiple operations in Zamfara State.

A statement by the Nigerian Army on Wednesday, said that troops launched an offensive operation targeting the hideout of notorious terrorist kingpin, Gwaska Dan Karami, at Rukudawa Village, located in Zumfi Local Government Area (LGA) of the state.

"In the encounter, troops eliminated two terrorists and uncovered a terrorists' warehouse stocked with looted food supplies. The warehouse has been destroyed in situ.

"In another operation in Mayanchi general area of Maru Local Government Area, troops on fighting patrol intercepted and engaged marauding terrorists who had rustled a flock

of sheep. The troops neutralized one terrorist in the overwhelming firefight compelling the rest of the terrorists to flee abandoning one AK-47 rifle, a magazine with three rounds of 7.62 x 39 mm ammunition, two motorcycles, and 410 rustled sheep; which have been recovered by the troops.

"Other items recovered include a pair of military camouflage and a Mobile Police uniform," the statement further disclosed.

The Service, also disclosed that the rescued sheep have been handed over to the Committee on Recovery of Rustled Animals in Gusau.

The statement concluded that, "troops also intercepted terrorists on a mission to carry out their nefarious activities along Kairu road in Gummi Local Government Area and recovered one AK-47 rifle from the terrorists, after thwarting their mission".

## Military Siege: Traders Protest as Market, Shops Remain Shut at Ngwa Road, Aba

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

Traders from one of the several markets in Aba Tuesday staged a protest at the Government House, Umuahia, over "military siege" that has grounded business activities at Ngwa Road Market.

The traders under the umbrella of Ngwa Road Traders Association came with placards to express their grievances to Governor Alex Otti, seeking his intervention to save them and their families from hunger.

Some of the inscriptions on the placards read: 'We are Hungry, Our Shops Have Been Locked Up by Soldiers'; 'We are Tired of Staying

at Home, We Need Your Help'; 'We are Under Military Siege at Ngwa Road'.

Spokesman of the association, Ikenna Ohanaba, said that commercial activities had been grounded at the Ngwa Road market area of Aba since May 30 when five soldiers were killed by gunmen at Obikabia junction.

He said that traders doing business at Ngwa Road and its environs had nothing to do with the ugly incident that occurred at Obikabia junction in Obingwa Local Government Area which is far from Ngwa Road.

"We are traders and we have families. If we don't engage in our businesses, we will starve,"

he lamented.

According to Ohanaba, who is also the secretary of the traders association, over fifty shops, two shopping plazas and business premises, were affected in the military siege.

Special Adviser to the Abia State Governor on Trade, Commerce and Industry, Chief Nwaka Inem, who addressed the traders thanked them for registering their grievances in a peaceful manner.

He said that the "increased military alertness" has become necessary following the killing of five soldiers on May 30, adding that, "we're in an abnormal situation".

Inem assured the frustrated traders that the security situation would be

reviewed in due course and things would return to normalcy.

He said that security of lives and properties should not be left only in the hands of security agencies, adding that everybody was expected to contribute and even make sacrifices for security to reign.

The SA on trade gave assurance that government was doing everything possible to ensure that the criminal elements behind the killing of soldiers were caught and made to face the music.

He urged traders and all Abia residents to join in efforts "to get criminals out of the system" by providing credible information to government and security agencies.

## Court Nullifies Amendment Section Seeking to Strip Fubara Power over RSHA Service Commission

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

A Rivers State High Court, sitting in Port Harcourt, has nullified the amendment of Section 3 of the Rivers State House of Assembly Service Commission Law by the Martin Amaewhule-led Assembly.

The presiding Judge, Justice Kariba Dagogo Jack, yesterday, nullified the section of the law which sought to strip the State Governor of the constitutional power to appoint the Chairman and Members of the Rivers State House of Assembly Service Commission.

Delivering her ruling on the matter filed by a Non-Governmental Organization, Association of Legal Legislative Drafting and Advocacy Practitioners, Justice Jack said the amendment Law No. 3, 2024, was inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution, and as such null and void.

She said the Constitution clearly states that the governor should constitute the board of the House of Assembly Service Commission, and some other commissions, boards and Institutes, but based on the confirmation of the Assembly.

Justice Jack also declared that the amendment which shifted the power to constitute the House of Assembly

Service Commission to the Speaker, contravene the doctrine of separation of powers which guarantees the right of the various arms of government to operate independently of each other.

She further stated that the State House of Assembly is not authorised by law to exercise executive powers which includes the constitution of the Rivers State House of Assembly Service Commission, which is among bodies described in Part Two of the Third Schedule of the Constitution whose membership are to be constituted by the governor.

Speaking with journalists shortly after the judgement, lead counsel for the NGO, Mr. Boma Owunabo, explained that the suit was instituted in public interest to challenge the usurpation of executive powers by the Amaewhule-led Rivers State Assembly through the amendment.

Owunabo said the group was dedicated to ensuring that every legislation in the country is in tandem with the provisions of the Constitution.

He commended the presiding Judge for her due assessment and evaluation of evidence before delivering the judgement, stating that the judgement was a victory for good governance and the rule of law.



## MEETING BETWEEN SEC AND ACMAN ON IMPROVEMENT OF CAPITAL MARKET...

L-R: First Vice President, Association of Capital Market Academics of Nigeria (ACMAN), Prof. Seth Akutson; ACMAN Second Vice President, Dr. Hussein Mohammed; Director General, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Dr. Emomotimi Agama; and ACMAN President, Prof. Uche Uwaleke, during a meeting between the SEC and ACMAN on the improvement of Capital Market in Nigeria held in Abuja ...recently PHOTO: ENOCK REUBEN

# Ex-APC NWC Member, Lukman Quits, Says Ruling Party Can't Win 2027 Polls

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

A former National Vice Chairman, North-west of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr. Salihu Lukman has resigned his membership of the party.

Lukman said his decision to quit the ruling party was because President Bola Tinubu was not ready to allow internal reforms in the party to return it to its founding vision.

To this end, Lukman said his membership of the party had been rendered useless and there was no need for him to continue to impose

himself.

Lukman in a letter to selected party leaders titled: "APC and The Future of Nigerian Democracy", made available to journalists in Abuja yesterday, decried Tinubu's intolerance to criticisms and anti-people policies which he said were completely contradictory to his campaign document, 'Renewed Hope'.

The former director general of Progressives Governors Forum (PGF) lamented that Tinubu had become inaccessible to many party leaders.

He noted: "The policies of his government are clearly anti-people

and completely contradictory to even his campaign document 'Renewed Hope'. Sadly, the way things are, there is a prevailing atmosphere of being intolerant to criticism.

"From all indications, even high-ranking members of his cabinet have limited access to him. Consequently, here we are with a government, which is supposedly ours but treating us as recluses, if not enemies. We are anything but stakeholders

"Given all these, it is possible to remain in APC if at all President Bola Tinubu will allow internal reform in the party to return it to

its founding vision, which as it is, is very remote. But my reality now in the party is that my membership has been rendered useless and there is no need for me to continue to impose myself.

"It doesn't require any investigation, at this rate, there is no way we can win elections except through rigging. The popular saying in the country now is that Tinubu is a one-term president. The hard truth is that the country will be lucky to get to 2027 without witnessing upheavals."

Lukman added that the pain of admitting it was beyond description,

stressing that Tinubu reduced them to what he described as the despicable reality.

According to him, It is far more painful, given that party leaders had

been cowed to silence. "No one wants to take the risk of being on the wrong side of the president. I have spent the last one year advocating for internal reform," he said.

## Group Commends Abass, Yalleman Over Police Act Amendment Bill

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

National Democratic Front (NDF) has commended the House of Representatives and its Speaker, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, for considering the bill for an Act to amend the Nigeria Police Act.

The Police Act Amendment Bill recently passed Second Reading in the House of Representatives.

The bill seeks to review the service years of police personnel to improve the experience and expertise of the police workforce, retain experienced personnel, reduce the cost of training and recruiting new officers, improve morale performance and job satisfaction, and address the shortage of experienced police personnel.

Secretary General of NDF, Dr. Abdulkadir Musa, in a statement issued Wednesday, also commended Chairman of the House Committee on Police Affairs, Hon. Abubakar Yalleman, for his dedication to addressing security challenges in the country at all levels.

The group described the legislation as timely in the quest for a more robust, responsive, and people-friendly policing system.

It said, "We wish to express

our heartfelt appreciation and commendation to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, and the Chairman of the Committee on Police Affairs, Hon. Abubakar Yalleman, for their landmark consideration of the Bill for an Act to amend the Nigeria Police Act 2020.

"This amendment bill, which seeks to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Nigerian Police Force, is a significant milestone in the quest for a more robust, responsive, and people-friendly policing system in Nigeria.

"The bill's provisions, which include the extension of police officers' retirement age and service years, will undoubtedly lead to improved morale, retention of experienced personnel, and enhanced overall performance of the force."

The group added that the bill would not only improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Nigerian Police, but also lead to enhanced overall performance of personnel.

It urged the Senate to concur with the House and for President Bola Tinubu to assent to the bill without delay.

# CSOs: Removal of PSC Chairman Violates Extant Laws

Sunday Ehigior in Lagos and Ikechukwu Aleke in Abuja

A Coalition of civil society organisations has faulted the removal of the Chairman of Police Service Commission (PSC), Dr. Solomon Arase, insisting that his sudden removal by President Bola Tinubu on June 10, 2024, violated the established legal procedure for the removal of the chairman.

Tinubu had in a statement signed by his media aide, Ajuri Ngelale, on June 10, announced the approval of the appointment of Hashimu Argungu (Rtd) as the new chairman of the PSC, thereby bringing to an abrupt end, the tenure of Arase.

Responding to the removal, a coalition of civil society organisations, in a statement jointly signed by Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Centre (RULAAC), and 28 others, expressed worries, that such a decision by the president further undermines the independence, effectiveness, and confidence of the commission to discharge its mandate without undue interference as stipulated by the Police Service Commission Act.

They further expressed sadness that this is coming at a time when they are investing a lot of resources in support of the federal government towards police reform, which can be seen through various trainings supported by local and international partners and the recent recruitment of 10,000 police personnel.

While calling on the president to reverse his removal of the chairman of the PSC and fully constitute the Board of the Commission, the CSOs tasked the National Assembly to maximise its powers of checks and balances over actions of the executive.

"We, the undersigned civil society organisations in Nigeria, received with serious concern the decision by President Bola Tinubu to remove the Chairman of the PSC, Dr. Solomon Arase.

"We note that the State House Press Release dated June 10, 2024 through which the removal was announced did not disclose any reason for the said removal. We are also concerned that this removal appears to have violated the established legal procedure for the removal of the PSC Chairman," they said.

The CSOs noted that Section 5, subsection 1 of the PSC Act provides: "Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 4 of this Act, the Chairman and any other member, may at any time be removed from office by the President acting on an address supported by a two-thirds majority of the Senate praying that he be removed for inability to discharge the functions of the Office (whether arising from infirmity of mind or body or any other cause of misconduct)."

The group continued: "While we welcome this recruitment, we are worried about the renewed and needless controversy associated with the power games around police recruitment, despite the Supreme Court's judgment of July 11, 2023, which affirmed the power of the commission under the Police Service Commission (Establishment) Act, 2001 to handle police recruitment functions."

The CSOs further, noted that Section 6 (2) of the PSC Act stipulates that the Commission shall not be subject to the direction, control or supervision of any other authority or person in the performance of its functions other than as is prescribed in the Act.

The coalition said it believed that the controversy does not serve the interest of the NPF as an institution or the interest of the country.

"Today, Nigerians are celebrating Democracy Day. One of the fundamental attributes of a democratic system is respect for the rule of law and due process, thus Mr President should holistically address this issue.

"We therefore call on the president to reverse this purported removal of the Chairman of the PSC and fully constitute the Board of the Commission. We also call for a conclusion of the police recruitment process, including training and deployment, considering that even the IGP stated recently that more than 20,000 police personnel needed to be recruited annually to

boost police manpower requirements. The numbers for recruitment can also be boosted through the Cadet ASP short course.

"We will use this opportunity to also call on the National Assembly to maximise its powers of checks and balances over actions by the executive. The total disregard for the rule of law in this instance further fuels the fears of the Nigerian people about the vulnerability of the operations of the Nigeria Police by the political class.

"This is not good for our democracy and standing in the comity of nations. We are looking forward to a quick and positive resolution of the situation for the good of a thriving democracy and the good of the country," they added.

## TINUBU'S DOBALE, MILITARY PARADE, CULTURAL DISPLAYS HIGHLIGHT DEMOCRACY DAY CELEBRATION

yesterday morning, protesters in large numbers stormed the Ikeja Under Bridge demanding good governance and a turnaround of the country's economic situation.

They chanted solidarity songs as they wielded placards and banners. Some of the placards had inscriptions like, "President Tinubu, let the poor breathe", "For another general strike with mass protest now", and "Payment of living wage to all Nigerian workers now".

The protest was led by some civil society groups, including the Take It Back Movement, Education Rights Campaign, Coalition for Revolution, and Socialist Workers League.

In Ibadan, the protesters demanded an end to hardship in the country, insecurity, police brutality, and kidnapping, reversal of electricity tariff hike, and an end to attacks on press freedom, among others.

Five protesters wearing "Revolution Now" shirts were arrested at Mokola Roundabout in Ibadan by officers of the Nigeria Police. They were among protesters who gathered to demonstrate under the aegis of Take It Back Movement, in collaboration with Concerned Nigerians, another advocacy and human rights group.

The protesters gathered for a peaceful protest on the state of the nation. One of the protesters said they had planned the protest to coincide with the Democracy Day celebration.

They began protesting around 9.15am, singing songs, displaying a long banner and placards with inscriptions, like "We are hungry", "Justice cannot be silenced", "The power of people is greater than the people in power", "United we stand, divided we fall".

But around 9:30am, security operatives, led by Oyo State Com-

missioner of Police, Adebola Hamzat, accosted and dragged some of the demonstrators into a white Hilux bus.

The arrest was done amid heavy presence of police operatives, with Hilux buses and an armoured tank on standby.

Wearing a black T-shirt and jeans, Hamzat stepped out of one of the Hilux buses in his entourage and ordered the protesters' arrest. He queried the officers present at the scene, berating them for allowing the protesters to carry on with the protest despite his repeated warnings and public statements.

In Abuja, scores of Nigerians also came out in the early hours of Wednesday to protest over the country's economic hardship, as they pressed their demand for change from the government.

The protesters, led by activist, Deji Adeyanju, defied heavy security

presence to converge on the Julius Berger roundabout by 8am. They were seen carrying placards with bold inscriptions, such as "We are hungry", and "June 12: A day of action against hunger & hardship", while chanting slogans.

The protesters accused the government of implementing anti-people policies that had led to widespread poverty and suffering.

They demanded that the government takes immediate steps to address the issues facing Nigerians, including corruption and impunity, and prioritisation of citizens' welfare.

Speaking to journalists during the demonstration, Adeyanju said: "We have gathered here because we believe that the DSS should not intimidate Nigerians. The DSS should not be the ones telling Nigerians when to protest and when not to protest."

## NEWS



## A VISIT TO DEEPEN MUTUAL SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION...

L-R: Director, Planning Research and Forecasting, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Dr Bandele Abdullahi Onimode; Commandant General, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Dr Ahmed Audi; Director General, NEMA, Mrs Zubaida Umar; and Director, Legal Services, NSCDC, Alhaji Umaru Aliyu, during a visit by NEMA DG to deepen mutual support and collaboration between the two agencies at the NSCDC Headquarters in Abuja... yesterday

# Labour Party Democracy Day: Speakers Task NASS to Probe INEC over N400bn, 2023 Expenditure

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The 10th National Assembly has been urged to urgently commence investigation into the role played by the Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) in the 2023 general election and establish why the outcome failed to meet the expectations of Nigerians and the international community.

Also, speakers at Labour Democracy Day colloquium want INEC investigated on how it expended over four hundred-billion-naira N400bn tax payers' money.

Citing South Africa which used less than 20 percent of the total money spent by INEC to conduct a successful election only last week, all the speakers also compared the June 12, 1993 presidential election and February 14, 2023 election, insisted that both suffered annulment fate.

According to the guest lecturer, Prof. Sam Amadi, the National Assembly probing INEC should be part of its oversight functions and obligations to Nigerians, stressing that it should be able to explain to Nigerians why its results were not collated and declared electronically as provided in the INEC electoral Act as amended.

His words: "Nigerians and indeed the National Assembly should be courageous enough to probe INEC expenditure during the 2023 general elections against the backdrop of the failure of the INEC server during the presidential election with all the money given to them."

"It is appalling that no one spoke about the huge amount of money given Mahmood Yakubu and all the INEC commissioners to prosecute a failed election; failed because the Supreme Court has to step in to

determine the result of elections".

Furthermore, Dr. Amadi insisted that the ongoing electoral reform must reject the inconsistency of allowing the presidency to appoint an INEC chairman, stressing that such gives room for election rigging before the votes are cast.

According to him, "What is imminent here is that they have already positioned party members as INEC commissioners against 2027 where they would work and declare the results in favour of the presidency that appointed them."

"To this end, opposition parties should work together to win the war on electoral reform. It is time for you to decide whether to be the vanguard of change or not and set up a system that can win elections, this is because politics is not a game of possible, 'if we are determined, we will win'."

Further admonishing the Labour Party members during Democracy Day, he said that in preparation for 2027, the Labour Party should study the Nigerian political terrain to determine how to go about it next election.

"I think it is an error for any political party to go into any election without strengthening its process. You must take a review of your past, your mistakes and opportunities and weigh options with training of staff and support for the electoral reform. Things will positively work out", he said.

While welcoming members during the occasion, the National Chairman of the Labour Party, Barrister Julius Abure, reminded of the similarity between the military regime of 1993 that annulled the general elections and 2023 election which

was mismanaged by INEC.

Abure said that one of the cardinal strong points to prepare the Labour Party again for the 2027 general elections, is to ensure a holistic approach to electoral reform, to ensure that the party followers are well-educated.

Hear him: "We are to ensure that people themselves are not

involved in betraying the parties. We have a situation where even INEC commissioners and party officials take bribes. Party agents also do the same".

Labour Party National Assembly members who spoke at the occasion, appealed to members to shun internal crises and to eschew division in the

party.

Hon. Victor Ogene, leader of the Labour Party Reps caucus, while speaking promised that electoral reform which has passed the second reading at the lower chamber would ensure that the reform is passed into law early enough for the 2027 general elections.

On his part, the chairman of the Political Commission of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Mr. Martins Egbanubi, corroborated that there is no division in the Labour Party as rumoured. "We don't have two factional leadership and there can never be so the Labour Party remains united and strong".

## Group to Tinubu: Honour Humphrey Nwosu, Story of June 12 Incomplete without Him

David-Chyddy Eleka in Awka

A pro-Igbo youth group, Coalition of South East Youth Leaders (COSEYL) has urged President Bola Tinubu to honour erstwhile chairman of National Electoral Commission (NEC), Prof Humphrey Nwosu.

The group said as Nigeria celebrates Democracy Day, it must also remember that the story is incomplete without Nwosu who played a vital role in the 1993 election.

In a press statement by its President General, Mr. Goodluck Iben, the group said: "A team that wins a match scored by one of the players was not made possible only by the player who scored the goal. The winning came as a result of the input of other players."

"That a free and fair election was conducted by National Electoral Commission, NEC, on June 12, 1993 was made possible because a man who believed in transparency and integrity was at the helm of affairs of the electoral body at that time. "We must tell ourselves the

truth that, if not for the impeccable integrity of Professor Humphrey Nwosu who conducted a free and fair election where Nigerians from all works of life, tribe and religion spoke their minds through the ballot box, there won't be any Democracy Day to celebrate today."

The group said Nwosu conducted

a free and fair election where political freedoms and fair processes led to the acceptance of election results by all parties.

It said 12 June, 1993 election met international standards for a free and fair election.

"Nigerians are celebrating today because of Humphrey Nwosu and

it will be totally unjust and unfair to forget to giving honour to whom honour is due.

"We therefore urge President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to honour Professor Humphrey Nwosu who made Nigerians proud by conducting the freest election ever in the history of the nation," the statement read.

## Gombe Signs Landmark MoU with OCP Africa to Transform Agric Sector, Enhance Economic Growth

Segun Awofadeji in Gombe

The Gombe State Government has signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with OCP Africa, a subsidiary of the OCP Group, Morocco, in a strategic move towards enhancing agricultural productivity, sustainability, and economic growth in the state.

The MoU was signed during a ceremony at the Mohammed VI

Polytechnic University (UM6P), located in the Green City of Benguerir.

This is contained in a Press release issued by Ismaila Uba Misilli,

Director-General (Press Affairs), Government House, Gombe which was made available to journalists, Wednesday, in Gombe.

Gombe State Commissioner for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry, Dr. Bamabas Malle, signed on behalf of the state government, while Mr. Akintunde Akinwande, Head of Digital, signed for OCP Africa in the presence of Governor Inuwa Yahaya and the Chief Operating Officer of OCP Africa, Mohammed Hettiti.

The governor expressed optimism about the partnership, saying it holds the potential to deliver substantial benefits to smallholder farmers and the broader agricultural community in Gombe State.

He added that it also aligns with Gombe's vision of becoming a regional hub for agribusiness, commerce, trade, and industry, emphasizing the importance of leveraging the technical expertise of OCP Nigeria in engineering, manufacturing, technology and resources to position Gombe State at the forefront of agricultural development in Nigeria.

The partnership between Gombe State and OCP Africa covers a comprehensive development project addressing productivity and sustainability challenges across the entire agricultural value chain.

The collaboration will encompass a range of activities, including, supporting small-scale farmers to have access to necessary resources; recruiting and training of youth as agricultural extension agents to support agricultural development, providing fertilizers, seeds, and agrochemicals to enhance farm productivity, facilitating access to credit to support to participating farmers.

It also includes annual establishment of five Farm & Fortune Hubs in rural communities with high agricultural potential to address challenges in farm input availability and accessibility, providing a comprehensive solution under one roof, as well as the implementation of More Food Initiative (MFI) project in selected secondary schools in Gombe State to foster agricultural education among students.

Prior to the signing ceremony, Governor Inuwa Yahaya and his team toured facilities at the Moroccan non-profit private research university, particularly the Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

## FG Approves N25bn for Tertiary Institutions Labs, Workshops Upgrade

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

The federal government has approved the sum of N25 billion to upgrade laboratories and workshops in public universities, polytechnics and colleges of education (Technical).

The Executive Secretary, Tertiary Education Trust Fund, Sonny Echono, made this known during the inauguration of a 55-member committee of TETFund National Research Fund and Screening in Abuja.

The event also featured the inauguration of 48 committee members of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) of the Fund.

Echono said the NRF Screening and Monitoring Committee charged

with implementing and administering the intervention was set up by the Board of Trustees of the Fund.

He said in 2020, the committee carried out a review of the three thematic areas of the NRF research spectrum and incorporated emerging issues of national developmental challenges requiring innovative solutions.

He said, "We undertook an assessment of what the requirements are to meet the change. And one of the things we discovered was that we have been addressing the issue around accessing and providing infrastructure to facilitate admissions of Nigerians who undertake programmes in our tertiary institutions."

"Over time, due to our poor

maintenance culture, we tend to neglect the issue of quality in terms of the equipment that we have in our laboratories, whether they are functional in terms of the workshop."

Echono revealed further that another N5 billion was also approved for skills-related equipment in the polytechnics.

He called on the Polytechnics to identify between three and five skills areas and use the opportunity to mop up Nigerians from the streets

Speaking on the benefits, he said through the teaching of basic skills, people would be able to fend for themselves and as well contribute to the economy.

Earlier, the Minister of Education,

Tahir Mamman while inaugurating the committees, urged the academia to get involved in contributing to the development of the nation through their cutting-edge research.

Mamman said there had been a major shift by the present government to ensure tertiary institutions played their role in research, innovation and teaching, adding that "Universities and scholars have so much to do to make sure their research contributes to their personal growth and growth of the nation."

He reiterated the commitment of the administration to reskilling the education sector from primary to tertiary institutions in order to equip the youths with the required skills.

# IMAGES

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



L-R: Spiritual Adviser of the Light Bearers, Wesley Cathedral, Olowogbowo, Lagos, Very Revd. Olusola Makindipe; the Society President Emeritus, Sir Aramide Tola Noibi; President of the Society, Pastor Ayodeji George; and Secretary of the Society, Prince Adesegun Akitoye, during the Society 33rd anniversary celebrations Thanksgiving Service at the church premises in Lagos...recently



L-R: Founder, Dee Prime Land Group (DPLG), Mr. Ekundayo Oduntan; his wife, Funmilayo Oduntan; a beneficiary, Mrs. Kehinde Lamina; and Public Relations Officer, DPLG, Mr. Yomi Philips, during the presentation of food and cash gifts to 100 aged people and widows by a Foundation, at Rhema Christian Church, Sango Ota, Ogun State...recently



L-R: Immediate-past Chief of Defence Staff, General Lucky Irabor (rtd); Chairman, American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS), Chapter 206, Lagos, Mrs. Joko Olanitori; and Assistant Regional Vice President, ASIS International Region 11A, Mr. Peter Okoloh, at the opening of ASIS 2024 Leadership Retreat of Lagos Chapter 206, held in Abeokuta, Ogun State...recently



L-R: Chief Executive Officer, Jumia Nigeria, Mr. Sunil Natraj; Chief Supply Chain Officer, Jumia Nigeria, Mr. Richmond Otu; Regent of Isolo Kingdom, High Chief Saliu Wasiu; and Lagos State Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment, Mrs. Folashade Ambrose-Medebem, during the grand opening of the new Jumia Integrated Warehouse in Isolo, Lagos...recently

PHOTO:ETOP UKUTT



L-R: Chief Executive Officer, Open Access Data Centres, Dr. Ayo Coker; CEO, Novare Fund, Hein Du Plessis; CEO, Stanbic IBTC Holdings, Dr. Demola Sogunle; Co-author and Senior Partner, Kenna Partners, Prof Fabian Ajogwu (SAN); President, Society for Corporate Governance, Mallam MK Ahmad; Co-author/CEO, Tobams Group, Dr. Onajite Newton; General Counsel, Seplat, Edith Onwuchekwa; Vice Chairman and Regional General Counsel, ExxonMobil, Adesua Dozie; Corporate Relations Director, Guinness Nigeria Plc, Rotimi Odusola; and Chief Corporate Service Officer, MTN Nigeria, Tobechukwu Okigbo, during the launch of the book 'Sustainability and COP28: What It Means for Boards', held in Lagos...recently



L-R: Partner, Phillips Consulting Limited (PCL), Dele Phillips; Head of Human Resources, PCL, Oredolapo Adedayo; Managing Director, PCL, Rob Taiwo; Partner, Business Solutions and Training PCL, Modupe Thomas-Owoseni; and Partner, People Transformation, Olawanle Moronkeji, during the transformative talent management workshop for competitive advantage in Lagos...recently

## NEWS



## SUCCESSFUL RESCUE MISSION TO GHANA...

L-R: Deputy Speaker, Imo State House of Assembly, who represented the Imo State Governor, Hon Amara Iwuanyanwu; Acting Nigerian High Commissioner to Ghana, Amb Ifedayo Adeoye; Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Hon Abike Dabiro Erewa; Commissioner for Women Affairs, Imo State, IkeChinyere Ugwu; Eze Ndigbo of Ghana, Chukwudi Ijenetu, and President, Nigerians in Diaspora (NIDO), Ghana, Chief Calistus Elozieuwa, during a visit to Accra to rescue Nigerian girls trafficked to Ghana...recently

# Political Interference Stalling Fight against Terrorism, Says Zamfara Gov

## ● Boko Haram terrorists kill 3, sack Niger village

**Ikechukwu Aleke** in Abuja and **Laleye Dipoin** in Minna

The Governor of Zamfara State, Dauda Lawal, has blamed the lingering fight against terrorism, banditry, kidnapping for ransom and other emerging security threats across the federation on political interference. Governor Lawal said this yesterday, while responding to

questions on the Channels TV Town Hall Meeting on security.

While the governor was speaking, there were reports that terrorists suspected to be of the Boko Haram sect last Tuesday killed three villagers in Lantan village in the Shiroro Local Government Area of Niger State. The terrorists also sacked the village and ordered the villagers never to return

there.

Governor Lawal also posited that the police are doing their best but the reality is that they are not taken care of, adding that "we need to restructure, because there are issues that need to

be clearly defined."

According to him, "The military and other security agencies have the capability to take care of these security threats if there is no political interference. It will just be a matter of time and we

would have solved the problem of insecurity in the country."

When asked to unmask the political actors interfering on security issues, he said: "He who wears the shoe knows where it hurts, and that is why I am

telling you this. There is so much political interference, these guys should be allowed to do their job, they are professionals, they have the capability and they can do it. Let us allow them to work, let us allow them to function.

## Makurdi Courts Jail 32 for Internet Fraud

**George Okoh** in Makurdi

Justice MS. Abubakar and A. Onoja of the Federal High Court Makurdi and M.I. Ikpambese of the Benue State High Court, Makurdi have convicted and sentenced 32 internet fraudsters to various jail terms.

The convicts were jailed after pleading guilty to one-count separate charges bordering on internet fraud upon their arraignment by the Makurdi Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC).

The convicts are Eruka Vandefan Ephraim, Chukwudi Daniel

Ifeanyi, Akahar Andrew Tsumga, Ugochukwu Stephen Ikenna, Atu Sunday, Nyior Benjamin Saakula, Atsaregh Terkuma Benedict, Kaun Jeremiah, Ochigbo Cletus, Tule Bemba Joseph, Jude Terhamba, Paul MerabaTorkuma, Mathias Ebute, Terungwa Tema Rapheal, Shaahu Abraham Atuur, Justine Usar Idyekaa, Solomon Adejo, John Kator Wanger, Abubakar Sadiq Adejo, Mohammed Habib Adejo, Ule Francis Terlumun, Nyior David, Cynic Isaac, Adadu Samson Ogaba, Abraham Ombugadu Luka, Onah Oboh Joseph and Joseph Ulayi Akagiabobe,

## Kwara PDP Tackles AbdulRazaq over Comment on Local Govt Autonomy

**Hammed Shittu** in Ilorin

The Kwara State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has condemned the recent attempt by the state Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, to "deceive and confuse the people of the state over his contradictory positions on local government

autonomy."

Governor AbdulRazaq had recently in Ilorin said that he believed in giving autonomy to the third tier of the government. He said that such development would reduce burden on the states in the country.

However, the PDP in a statement issued in Ilorin yesterday,

which was signed by the party's state Publicity Secretary, Mr. Olusegun Olusola Adewara, said: "The Kwara people will recall that our party last week praised the federal government's decision to drag Governor AbdulRazaq to the Supreme Court in a bid to rescue the 16 local government areas from his wicked manipulation

and strangulation.

"We also cautioned the governor against filing an objection to the federal government's processes in the Supreme Court, as this would undermine the federal government's people-friendly intention to make local government autonomous and work for the people.

## Senator Ngwu Restates Commitment to Quality Education

**Gideon Arinze** in Enugu

The Senator representing Enugu West senatorial district, Osita Ngwu, has affirmed his commitment to support the delivery of quality education to young people in Enugu State.

This is even as he awarded

scholarships worth N81 million to 19 exceptional students from his constituency.

Speaking yesterday during the award and unveiling of the Kit the Kids Initiative, which will see him provide 20,000 primary and secondary students across 200 schools in Enugu West with

uniforms, bags, sandals, socks and books, Ngwu said that the initiatives represent his unrelenting commitment to making education accessible to young people.

According to him, "Education remains the bedrock of development of any nation and we must make it attractive

for everyone," adding that the award was in fulfilment of one of his promises to the people who allowed him to serve.

"We also have plans to also launch an initiative that will award excellence among teachers to encourage them to deliver quality education to children," he said.

## Five Storey Mission School Building Collapses in Onitsha

**David-Chyddy Eleke** in Awka

A five storey building under construction in Onitsha, which belongs to Dennis Memorial Grammar School, collapsed on yesterday's morning.

A source said that the building collapsed around 4 a.m. with a heavy thud that shook the entire area. "I think the incident happened at around 4 a.m. this morning. The entire building came down in rubbles, and the impact of the collapse shook the entire area.

"I don't think there were casualties in the building because work was not ongoing as it was too early for

workers to have arrived. The school is a boarding school, so if not for the public holiday, students may have been caught in the incident.

"The cause of the collapse has not been ascertained, but many bystanders who watched from across the road suspected that it may be as a result of use of substandard materials," the source said.

THISDAY gathered that the collapsed building, which is named Centenary Building, is being sponsored by the school's Old Boys Association, with the target of unveiling the building during the forthcoming centenary celebration of the school.

## Fubara's Wife Gifts Women Farmers N10m to Boost Agric Yields

**Blessing Ibunge** in Port Harcourt

In a bid to boost agricultural yields, the Wife of Rivers State Governor, Mrs. Valerie Siminalayi Fubara, yesterday, presented cheques of N10 million to 20 female farmers in the state.

The 20 women were the first batch

of beneficiaries of the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) Women Agricultural Support Programme.

The wife of the governor explained that the exercise was to flag-off another critical phase of the RHI in the state, which is a pet project of the First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,

Senator Oluremi Tinubu.

She said: "I bring you the felicitations of the founder of this initiative, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, who is working assiduously to bring smiles to the faces of families in our dear nation".

Mrs. Fubara recalled that recently,

the Renewed Hope Initiative, through its Rivers State Office, had flagged-off its support for the elderly; presented exercise books to school children, through the Ministry of Education and State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB); and some measures of support to ease the burden of families

## Fashola Ex-Appointees Appeal to Sanwo-Olu, Tinubu to Pay their Severance Benefits

**Sunday Okobi**

Some political appointees in Lagos State who served in the government of former Governor of the state, Babatunde Fashola have appealed to President Bola

Tinubu and the incumbent Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, to help facilitate the payment of their severance package owed them nine years after service.

The appointees, under the umbrella of Forum of Lagos SSAs

and SAs (2007-2015), lamented that for many years now, they have continued to plead with the previous governments to show mercy and pay them their due compensation after serving the state meritoriously, but to no avail.

They said: "As government is a continuum, we believe that the people-loving Governor Sanwo-Olu and the father of the nation, President Tinubu, will hear our cries and console us with our due payment."

## Ekiti to Patronise Local Cattle, Ram Sellers for Muslim Festival

**Gbenga Sodeinde** in Ado Ekiti

In furtherance of his administration's commitment to the state government's local content policy aimed at empowering local businesses in Ekiti State, Governor Biodun Oyebanji has again directed that cattle sellers in the state should be the sole suppliers of rams for the oncoming Eid-el-Kabir festival.

The Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Habibat Adubiari, disclosed the government's position during a meeting with cattle sellers at the Adere cattle market in Ado

Ekiti on Wednesday.

Adubiari said that the directive was in line with the administration's policy of patronising local businesses, adding that the effort is aimed at boosting the state's economy through support for local entrepreneurs.

She said: "We are here this morning as directed by His Excellency, Governor Biodun Oyebanji, who believes that the re-engineering of the economy of Ekiti should go round the people and that is why he said this year again that our people should be the sole suppliers of the rams.

## Kano Deputy Gov Reaffirms Gov's Commitment to Good Governance

Kano State Deputy Governor, Comrade Aminu Abdussalam Gwarzo, has praised the people of Kano for their dedication to democratic values, promising that the Governor Abba administration will continue to uphold its

promise of good governance and transparency.

This was contained in a statement to mark the occasion of Democracy Day.

The deputy governor commended the residents for their

commitment to the growth and development of the state, saying the government will continue to work tirelessly to deliver dividends of democracy to all citizens.

Gwarzo, who also serves as Commissioner of Local Government

and Chieftaincy Affairs, reaffirmed the administration's commitment to transparency, accountability, and inclusive leadership, promising that Kano will remain a beacon of democracy and progress in the country.

## Essay Competition on Parliamentary System Entry to Close July 31

Following the overwhelming interest of Nigerian students across the globe in the National Essay Competition on Parliamentary System, the organiser of the competition, Home-Grown Parliamentary System Support Group (PSSG), has announced the extension of the submission deadline to July 31, 2024.

A statement by PSSG said the National Discussion, where distinguished guests and the public, will deliberate on the essay topic has been scheduled for Monday September 9 in Abuja.

The National Essay Competition is open to all Nigerian students in tertiary institutions across the globe.

The statement said there had been overwhelming interest of Nigerian students around the world in the essay competition, since it began last month. It noted that many entries had been received on the essay portal but there were appeals from a cross section of students for extension of the submission deadline.

"The national essay competition was sequel to the presentation of bills by a group of members of the House of Representatives in February seeking to alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 for a transition from the current presidential system to parliamentary system at all levels of government."

## Leaders Rangers Crash in Ibadan, Ikorodu City, Beyond Limit Gain Promotion to NPFL

Femi Solaja

League leaders, Enugu Rangers, were on the losing side yesterday evening as old rivals, Shooting Stars of Ibadan, picked the maximum points right in front of their home crowd. Dumte Christian Pyagbara's header in the 12th minute earned the Oluyole Warriors

three points and consolidated their quest for continental football next season.

In the other matches, defending champion, Enyimba of Aba dropped to third position following a disappointing 1-1 scoreline with visiting Bayelsa United.

Alade Balogun puts the home side in front in the 20th minute

but relegation threatening Bayelsa side restores parity in the 35th minute through EkesonOkorie.

The result pushed Enyimba to the third position following Remo Stars' comprehensive 4-1 win against Heartland of Owerri at the Remo Stars Stadium in Ikenne.

Kwara United won 2-0 at

home against Kano Pillars while Niger Tornadoes won 3-2 against Lobi stars and Plateau United compounded Sporting Lagos' relegation battle with a 2-1 win away in Lagos.

While Bendel Insurance were 2-1 better against Rivers United at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin, Akwa United enjoyed a 3-1 win over Katsina

United and Abia Warriors won 3-1 away at Gombe United.

Meanwhile, Ikorodu City FC of Lagos and Beyond Limit FC of Ikenne have secured promotion into the elite division at the ongoing Play-off tournament in Enugu.

They are joined by Nasarawa United and El-Kanemi Warriors. The four teams secured

promotion to the NPFL from the Nigeria National League (NNL) play-offs in Enugu. Nasarawa United and El-Kanemi Warriors are returning to the top division.

The teams clinched the top two spots in the Northern and Southern Conferences of the NNL.

In the Northern Conference, Nasarawa United of Lafia beat Sporting Supreme 2-1, finishing first with nine points while El-Kanemi Warriors defeated Sokoto United 4-1 to take second place with six points.

Both Nasarawa United and El-Kanemi Warriors were relegated from the NPFL last year after finishing bottom of the league's Group A but they have bounced back impressively at the first time of asking.

In the Southern Conference, Beyond Limits topped the group with seven points after a 1-0 win over Inter Lagos. Ikorodu City beat Madiba FC 2-0, securing the second promotion spot with five points.

Beyond Limits, Football Academy etched its name in the history books after becoming the first African team to win the prestigious Viareggio Cup in Italy.

Each team in the playoffs played three matches, with the top two teams from each conference earning promotion to the NPFL.

Ikorodu City were established just two years ago, and Beyond Limits will be playing in the NPFL for the first time.



Shooting Stars players celebrating their 1-0 victory over Enugu Rangers in Ibadan in a midweek NPFL clash

### RESULTS

Shooting	1-0	Rangers
Akwa Utd	3-1	Katsina
Insurance	2-1	Rivers Utd
Enyimba	1-1	Bayelsa
Gombe	1-3	Abia War
Kwara	2-0	K'Pillars
Tornadoes	3-2	Lobi
Remo	4-1	Heartland
Sporting	1-2	Plateau

## Gumel Charges Sports Administrators in Nigeria on Capacity Building

Sports Administrators in the country have been urged to always avail themselves of opportunities to enhance their knowledge in various aspects of their sports.

President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee (NOC), Engr. Habu GUMEL gave this charge during the closing ceremony of the just concluded NOC Sports Administration Course in partnership with the National

Association for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance (NAPHER-SD)), held between June 5 and June 7, 2024 at the boardroom of the NOC, National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos.

While pulling curtains on the three-day course, Gumel appealed to the officials to go back to their domain and start putting what they have learnt into practice.

According to him, the Sports

Administration Course and the Advanced Management Course are the initiatives of International Olympic Committee (IOC) towards enhancing skills through the various their Sports Solidarity programmes.

He added that such programmes are aimed at enhancing skills and effective management of sports

Over 22 Sports Administrators from various professions ranging

from Lawyers, Doctors, Journalists and secretaries of sports Federations attended the programme that had Prof. Abiodun Moronfolu, Prof. Patrick Oyeniyi, Dr. Toyin Aluko and Dr. Akin Amao as facilitators.

Programme Co-ordinator, Mrs Deborah Chidobi thanked the participants who came from various parts of the country for being part of the success story

## Juventus Name Former Bologna Boss, Thiago Motta, as Manager

Italian club Juventus have appointed former Bologna boss Thiago Motta as their new manager.

The 41-year-old, who played for Italy and Juve's Serie A rivals Inter Milan as a midfielder, has signed a three-year deal until June 2027.

He replaces Massimiliano

### TRANSFER NEWS

Allegri, who was sacked two days after he led the side to the Italian Cup.

Motta oversaw Bologna's qualification for the Champions League last season, finishing fifth in the table.

"I am really happy to begin a new chapter at the helm of a great club like Juventus," said Motta.

"I thank the owners and the management, who can be sure of my ambition to keep the Juventus flag flying high and to please the fans."

Motta also played for Barcelona, Atletico Madrid, Genoa and Paris St-Germain, where he ended his career before moving into coaching with the club's youth side.

He then moved into the backroom staff at Genoa before becoming head coach at Spezia, then taking charge of Bologna.

## Indian Sensation, Thakkar, Eyes WTT Contender Lagos Glory

When Manav Thakkar competed at the 2023 edition of the WTT Contender Lagos, he never envisaged what would happen and despite his round of 16 exit: the tournament marked the beginning of his rise in the world rating!

Already listed for the 2024 edition of the first WTT Series in Sub-Saharan Africa, the 24-year-old is eagerly looking for another fortune to smile on him in the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria,

when the tournament serves off on June 19 to 23 at the Molade Okoya-Thomas Hall of Teslim Balogun Stadium.

"As of today, I'm ranked 59 in the world but last year I was 140 before the 2023 WTT Contender Lagos and Lagos was the first event where I reached the last 16 after winning against higher-ranked players. Apart from my ranking, my level improved....so this year I'm also very hopeful that I will

do well," he said.

The former U-21 World No. 1 star described his maiden experience in Lagos as one of the best moments in his career particularly in terms of the massive support from the Lagos fans. "The experience compared to other tournaments was very good for me. I enjoyed the food in Lagos. There were many varieties and I also got a lot of support from the people when I was playing the matches. These were the major

things that helped me to do well in the event last year.

"The unique thing about the event in Lagos is the food and the people. There is a bit of traffic in Lagos and there is also traffic in India as well, so I am used to it. People cheered every player during the matches and we players enjoyed playing it compared to other events and the food in terms of breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I could remember that the hotel

used to give us one special Indian dish every day and the people were very friendly and helpful in Lagos," Thakkar added.

For this year, Thakkar is optimistic about exceeding his 2023 round of 16 feat. "My expectation this year is to win a medal in singles and doubles as well as in mixed doubles. I am really excited and looking forward to playing at the event in Lagos," the right-handed shakehand grip star said.

Book Your  
COVID-19 Tests & Vaccinations  
TEXT 'COVID' TO 58123

Logos for various service providers: TRAVEL, ANSOGEN, WAZAL, LUMINAL, etc.

**MISSILE**  
**President Tinubu to Nigerians**  
*Given the diversity and variety of the human experience, there must be diverse perspectives and viewpoints. What democracy demands is that we do not resolve differences through force and repression. But we make allowance for the legitimacy of views that differ from our own. Where other forms of government impose against the will of the people, democracy aims to make leaders sufficiently humble that they conduct themselves as servants of the common good, not as viceroys of the narrow interests of the mighty.*

## OLUSEGUN ADENIYI

THE VERDICT

olusegun.adeniyi@thisdaylive.com



# Democracy on a Ventilator?

(The 2024 edition of the Pastor Poju Oyemade-inspired 'Platform Nigeria' conversation held yesterday in Lagos with the theme, 'Democracy and the Free Market Economy'. Speakers included Governor Chukwuma Soludo of Anambra State, Hon. Yakubu Dogara, a former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN, a former Lagos State Governor, Bishop Matthew Kukah of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, Mr Kola Oyeneyin, CEO of Opportunik Global Fund, Mrs Titi Oshodi, Special Advisor on Climate Change and Circular Economy to the Lagos Governor and Mr. Oluseun Onigbinde, co-founder and Director of BudgIT. I was also a speaker. Below is the text of my presentation.)



Pastor Poju Oyemade

Role of Godfather:  
Godfatherism comes in different variants. The common variant today is that by outgoing

political office holders foisting on the people their handpicked successors. There are of course other variants. But there is no substantial difference between the power merchants of old who sought no office themselves and the current ones who seek to plant surrogates after their terms have ended. Stripped of all pretensions, godfatherism is the pursuit of private interest at public expense and it is not about the good of the people as we have seen over the years in our country. Effective state capacity ensures that institutions function optimally. But we cannot develop such capacity if all we have to offer is godfatherism which hinders genuine democratic representation. Meanwhile, a ventilator is a life-support machine that provides oxygen to the lungs for those who can no longer breathe on their own. During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, it was a life-or-death situation for many who were placed on a ventilator. That precisely is where we are with our democracy in Nigeria today.

It may be important to state here that godfatherism is not peculiar to Nigeria. It is a global challenge in varying degrees. The Philippines has a history of political dynasties and godfathers. Powerful families control local politics, perpetuating their influence across

generations. Italian politics has also seen its fair share of godfathers, particularly in regions such as Sicily where the influence of Mafia families in elections has been well-documented. The politics of Kenya is also replete with influential figures who shape electoral outcomes. These 'kingpins' control party nominations and funding. The consequences, of course, include compromised governance and limited accountability.

In 2007, Human Rights Watch, an international non-governmental organization headquartered in New York City, United States, produced an in-depth report titled, 'Corruption, Godfatherism and the Funding of Political Violence,' with a focus on Nigeria. "These godfathers are not mere financiers of political campaigns. Rather they are individuals whose power stems not just from wealth but from their ability to deploy violence and corruption to manipulate national, state or local political systems in support of the politicians they sponsor," the HRW wrote. "In return, they demand a substantial degree of control over the governments they help bring into being—not to shape government policy, but to exact direct financial 'returns' ..."

NOTE: Piece concluded online

A phrase popularized by politicians in the last 25 years is 'democracy dividends.' But whatever it means, it is evident that most Nigerians have not been availed their fair share. For all its human and material resources, Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) remains among the lowest in the world. Food inflation, currently above 40 percent, is not only frightening but breeds the risk of social, economic and security turbulence. So, while periodic elections are important, when most of our citizens find it difficult to put food on their table, we have a problem. In any case, a country's democratic election is only as good as the country itself.

From the United States to Europe and Asia, the rise of Donald Trump and fellow travellers has led to a consensus that liberal democracy is under threat. But the real challenge in Nigeria and most countries across Africa, is existential as people worry about where their next meal will come from. In Abuja a few weeks ago to speak at a programme organized by the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, Afrobarometer co-founder, Prof Gyimah Boadi said that in survey after survey, people on the continent have been consistent in their pro-democratic aspirations. But he also warned that lack of accountable governance relative to citizen expectations is driving many to lose faith in democracy. "Policy actors and advocates must focus on accountable governance, in order to sustain and deepen citizens' faith in democracy," Boadi admonished.

In his 2022 piece, 'Democracy on a ventilator?' Andrew Sheng, a former chair of the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission, argued that "electoral promises are meaningless if there are no deliverables in an accountable manner." In the case of Nigeria, a democracy that can neither advance the welfare of the people nor protect them from dying cheaply and needlessly in the hands of a cocktail of violent vagrants is endangered.

This morning, I am borrowing from my coming book on 25 issues that have defined the last 25 years of the current democratic dispensation. I started the book early last year but despite my best efforts, it's still in the works. Hopefully, it will be ready by December. I am looking at the salient issues that have most impacted our polity since 1999: The good, the bad and the ugly. I am also exploring potential pathways for addressing some of them with a view to strengthening our democracy. One of the issues interrogated in the book is the futility of godfatherism. That should be no surprise. It is an issue I believe we need to deal with if our democracy is to deliver the public good. I have therefore titled my presentation, 'Democracy on Ventilator: The

## The Essential Ferdinand Agu

Last Saturday, my wife and I went to condole the family of Mr Ferdinand Agu who had died 24 hours earlier. Seated beside his distraught widow, I stared blankly at family portraits on the wall, lost in my own little world. Until my wife's elbow roused me to consciousness. "What are you looking at?" For the sake of other visitors in the room who witnessed the drama, I had to explain what appeared a moment of insanity. It was reassuring that despite her anguish, Mrs Vivian Agu understood what fired my interest in the portraits.

A few weeks earlier, I had been in the same house while her late husband rearranged those same photographs on the wall. Agu and his wife have four adult children (all male) who reside abroad and are successful in their own right. But it turned out that the frame of one of the photographs was smaller than that of others. In placing the photographs, the architect in Agu sought to balance the aesthetics of the space with family positioning. Typically, he sought my view. Such was the attention to detail reflected in the life of one of the most profound thinkers I ever encountered.

When the news of Agu's passing broke last Friday morning, I embarrassed not a few young ladies at the Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Centre who saw me break down in tears. But that is because they had no idea of my relationship with the late Agu and what he meant to my wife and I: A reliable brother and friend. In the case of my wife, a mentor too. Ever since I introduced her to Agu in 2004, he took on the role of professional counsellor. When the Not Forgotten Initiative (NFI) School started six years ago, Agu shared with my wife his own story to illustrate the importance of the idea, having attended the Starehe Boys Centre and School, Nairobi, Kenya on a scholarship from the Nigerian government. The famous school, which started in 1959 to assist children displaced during the 'Mau Mau Uprising' in colonial Kenya, offers education to "children from diverse backgrounds, many of whom are poor."

A profound mind, Agu and I enjoyed numerous conversations about Nigeria spanning more than



Late Ferdinand Agu

two decades. On several occasions in recent years, he would call and come over to my office just to chat. But our last conversation occurred two weeks ago, and it was virtual. Precisely on Thursday, 30 May. It began with a response to my column of that day, 'Fixing Nigeria with an Anthem'. At 7.46am, the late Agu sent me a message which I now consider a fitting epitaph to a genuine patriot and an extraordinary man. After the usual greetings, he wrote this as a response to my take on the re-introduction of the old national anthem:

"Permit me to share with you my views as expressed in a family forum. As children, my generation sang this old anthem with much fondness and plenty of gusto. Then, in 1978, the (General Olusegun) Obasanjo-led army regime discarded it for the current anthem, which

wordings were more reflective of their triumphalist sense of mission after the preceding and terribly sanguinary decade of 1966-76. The beat and musical arrangement of the new anthem lacked the sombre solemnity of the old. Some described the sound of the new as 'disco' which was then becoming the trend. But the regime brushed all that aside. After all, the musical score was closer to the martial background of the decision-makers of the day - the Supreme Military Council. For them, solemnity could wait for other things, times, and climes.

"Indeed, about a year earlier, the same government introduced the Pledge. It was to be recited every morning in schools, etc. and to proceed or conclude every official event. That, too, was supposed to symbolise national consciousness and patriotic commitment. Critics warned of a predilection for pseudo-nationalism and signs of neo-fascism. But the regime was breezy. They were the avatars, the incarnations of new ideas, manifestation of fresh idealism, and heroes of the new Nigeria. They knew what was best.

"I often ponder this period. I often reflect on our two anthems - the new and the old. I find both the times and anthems to be equally aspirational and inspirational. In a good society, either should conjure deep feelings of national pride and pathos and set us on the course of things right and noble. Alas, what I find worrisome, and why I make this intervention, is that the younger generation - without the benefits of history - must juxtapose the lofty visions and claims of either anthem, side by side with the realities of today's Nigeria. Then, the words lose weight. They almost pale into insignificance. With every passing day, the anthems seem superficial, naive, and almost immature; farcical and jejune.

"Yet, the challenge of authentic national leadership - for this generation and all time - is to give substance and meaning to whichever of these two anthems we sing. I trust that from this group, in the years ahead, such leaders abound and will emerge."

May God comfort the family the late Ferdinand Agu left behind.