NNPC E&P Targets $20bn Investment to Grow Oil, Gas Output in 5 Years

Raises oil production by 30% in 12 months

Seplat reiterates plan to unlock 400 additional oil wells

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

NNPC Exploration and Production Limited (NEPL), a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), has said it requires about $4 billion investment annually to boost Nigeria's crude oil and gas production in the next five years.

A quick computation of the figure announced by the NEPL showed that by 2030, the company will need a funding of circa $20 billion in capital and operating expenditures to effectively carry out its activities.

The company also stated that aside from its over 370,000 bpd drilling target for 2025, it intends to raise this figure to 550,000 bpd by the end of 2027, a period of about three years.

Speaking on a panel in Abuja at

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Alake: Cultural, Political Sensitivities Hindering FG's Control of Gold Mining... **Page 27**

THISDAY

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Fubara to Rivers People: Brace Up, What's Ahead is More Than What Has Just Passed

Vows to defend state's interest even at the risk of his office

Assembly gives governor 48hrs to re-present 2025 appropriation bill

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, yesterday, told the people of the state to brace up and take their destiny in their own hands, because what laid ahead was more than what they had been through in the recent past.

Fubara promised never to deviate from putting the interest of Rivers State and the people first in the face of forces desperate to pull him down, even at the risk of his office.

That was as the Rivers State Assembly, which had been at

Continued on page 9

Peace Returns to Lagos, Obasa in Dramatic Return to Speakership

Meranda resigns, back in office as Deputy Speaker

Lawmakers emotional, cry as they accept ex-female leader's resignation

How Tinubu stood his ground against Obasa's removal

President's choice thanks party leaders who intervened in his favour

Segun James

Peace returned to the Lagos House of Assembly yesterday, as Mr. Mudashiru Obasa resumed as Speaker in a dramatic turn of events, allegedly, directed by President Bola Tinubu, who is also national leader of All Progressives Congress (APC), bringing the Assembly crisis to an unexpected end.

The lawmakers, who had orchestrated Obasa's removal on January 13, reluctantly, amid tears, accepted the resignation of their preferred speaker, Hon. Mojisola Meranda, who was also returned to her former position as Deputy Speaker.

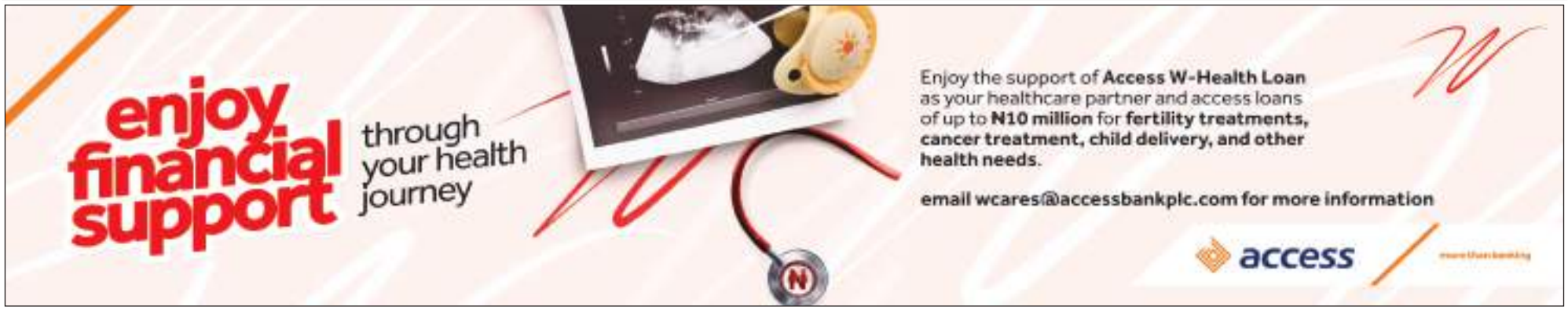
Hon. Sanni Okanlawon equally resigned as Deputy Chief Whip, while Hon. Setonji David resigned

Continued on page 9



WELCOME TO THE VILLA...

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu (right), welcoming the visiting President of Sierra Leone, Julius Maada Wonie Bio, to the Presidential Villa Abuja, yesterday



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OPENING CEREMONY OF PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR OF ECOWAS PARLIAMENT...

L-R: Second Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Hon. Adjaratou Traore Coulibaly; First Deputy Speaker, Senator Jibrin Barau; Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Speaker of the Parliament, Hon. Memounatou Ibrahima; Third Deputy Speaker, Hon. Alexander Afenyo-Markin; and the fourth Deputy Speaker, Hon. Billay Tunkara, during the opening ceremony of the parliamentary seminar of ECOWAS Parliament themed "ECOWAS at 50, Parliament at 25: reflections of the community parliament towards attaining regional integration achievements", at Lagos House, yesterday

ECOWAS Canvasses Unity, Continued Bilateral Relationship with Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso

Barau hails Tinubu's commitment to W'Africa stability, economic integration

Sanwo-Olu: Lagos remains committed to supporting regional body to improve lives

Sunday Aborisade in Abuja and **Sunday Ehigiator** in Lagos

The Speaker of the Economic Community of West African State (ECOWAS) Parliament, Hon. Hadja Memounatou Ibrahim, has canvassed more regional unity amongst member states as well as continued bilateral relationship between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso following their departure from the regional body in January, 2024.

She made this call while speaking at the '1st Parliamentary Seminar on ECOWAS @50 & Parliament @25', held yesterday in Lagos, with the theme: 'Reflections of the Community Parliament Towards Attaining Regional Integration.'

Also yesterday, the Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Jibrin Barau, commended President Bola Tinubu, for his exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication to the advancement of the West African region.

Barau, according to a statement by his media aide, Ismail Mudashir, described Tinubu, who is the Chairman of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government, as a beacon of inspiration to all in the sub-region.

Likewise, Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, charged member states of ECOWAS to recommit themselves to the ideals of regional integration and the vision of a prosperous, peaceful, and united West Africa.

Speaking further, the Speaker of ECOWAS, Ibrahim, noted that, "ECOWAS, whose founding treaty was signed in this same city of Lagos on 28 May 1975, is celebrating its golden jubilee this year, while the Community Parliament, established by the revised Treaty of 1993 and inaugurated in November 2000, will celebrate its silver jubilee."

According to her, "After 50 years, it seems to us that the time has come to pause and take stock, to question our choices, our objectives, our governance and our functioning.

"I would like to address a question of capital importance for our region and our common future. That of the official departure of our organisation from Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger on 29 January.

"Despite the fact that this withdrawal could slow down the process of community integration, it is important that we understand the root causes of this decision.

"The political and security context in these countries has changed radically in recent years, with security challenges and internal tensions that have led to a strategic repositioning of their governments.

"Instability and the challenges related to the fight against terrorism, good governance and the management of national resources are essential factors in this dynamic.

"We must also take into account the fact that the withdrawal of these three states does not mean a rejection of the common values that we share as West Africa."

She pointed out that, "rather, this withdrawal must be an opportunity to strengthen our capacity to dialogue and to understand each other, without giving up the principles of solidarity and cooperation that unite us.

"To this end, I would like to welcome the decision taken on 15 December, 2024 by the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS granting a transition period from 29 January to 29 July 2025 for the definitive exit of the three brother countries.

"We hope that this transition period will allow for continued mediation so that this departure does not weaken the Community's achievements.

"I therefore launch a solemn appeal to the brother countries of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso so that we continue to seek bilateral and multilateral ways of cooperation that will benefit our populations.

"Dear fellow Members of Parliament, on the withdrawal of the three brother countries, it is essential that Parliament continues to work for a strong, united and inclusive ECOWAS. We must therefore remember that these events are part of the changes of history.

"ECOWAS, after half a century of existence, must change by carrying out substantial reforms worthy of the challenges it faces and the prospects it faces. Today, more than ever, we must demonstrate resilience."

Meanwhile, Barau has commended Tinubu for his exemplary leadership and unwavering dedication to the advancement of the West African region.

The Deputy President of the Senate, spoke at the opening ceremony of the 2025 first Extraordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament in Lagos.

Barau acknowledged the ECOWAS parliament's deep appreciation of Tinubu for his strategic vision and commitment to regional stability, economic integration and democratic governance.

He described the President as a, "beacon of inspiration" and a "pillar of progress and cooperation," whose leadership has strengthened regional solidarity and instilled confidence in the collective aspirations of West Africa.

"His leadership has paved the way for a more prosperous and resilient West Africa. The ECOWAS Parliament remains deeply grateful for his continued support and guidance," he said.

House of Reps Committee Decries Importation of Electric Meters, Other Products into Nigeria

Okon Bassey in Uyo

The House of Representatives has expressed dissatisfaction over the domination of China and other parts of the world in the importation of electric meters and other finished products into Nigeria.

The lower Chamber of the National Assembly pointed out that the items can be manufactured in the country saying such is not helping local investors, growth of the economy, job creation and foreign exchange earnings

Accordingly, the House proposed measures to halt the importation of electricity meters and other finished products that can be manufactured in the country.

It called for imposition of special tariffs and removal of waivers for imported meters and other items as some of the strategies to stop the practice and boost local production.

Chairman House of Representatives Committee on Power, Victor Nwokolo, disclosed this yesterday during the committee's visit to the Metering Solutions Manufacturing Services Limited (MSMSL), Onna, in Akwa Ibom State.

Nwokolo decried the importation of meters from China and other parts of the world as it was not helping local investors, growth of the economy, job creation and foreign exchange earnings.

He stressed that the administration of President Bola Tinubu has achieved giant strides in the power sector, adding that the Presidential Metering Initiative (PMI) was doing well in its assignment.

He said: "The new agenda of the President Bola Tinubu administration is to encourage local investors. To achieve this, we must conserve our foreign exchange, increase the value of the Naira by patronizing local manufacturers.

"The Nigerian Local Content Law must be considered. It is not going to be business as usual by allowing the Chinese bring in finished products. The negative effect of bringing in meters and other finished products is that how do our teeming youths get employment?

"When those imported meters get bad who repairs them for you? Let's patronize our local manufacturers. When they get bad, we can return them to the Discos. All they need to do is put them through their computers, get them repaired and returned to you.

"There is no point giving waivers to the Chinese to import metres or whoever brings the products. There are usually tariffs and penalties issued to people who import cars into the country".

Earlier, the Managing Director of Metering Solutions Manufacturing Services Limited, Tolulope Ogunkolade, had lamented the non-patronage of locally manufactured metres.

Tunji-Ojo Makes Case for Better Civil Defence

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The Minister of Interior, Hon. Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, has stressed the need for collective action, international cooperation, and community engagement in promoting Civil Defence and disaster risk reduction.

The minister made the call on Monday as the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) commemorates the 2025 International Civil Defence Day Organisation (ICDO), in a keynote address.

He rued the fact that the world has witnessed an increase in the frequency and severity of threats, thus, highlighting the importance of civil defence in protecting human lives, promoting sustainable development and protection of critical national assets and infrastructure.

Represented at the national headquarters of the Corps by the Secretary of Civil Defence, Correctional, Fire and Immigration Services Board (CDCFIB), Major General Abdulmalik Jibrin, the minister explained that the situation underscores the imperative of Civil Defence.

He said it is imperative that we continue to prioritize civil defence and their efforts, and work together to promote culture of prevention, preparedness and response and support the development of resilient communities that can withstand the current security threats, the minister stated.

Corroborating the minister's position while delivering the ICDO 2025 message with the theme: "Civil Defence, Guarantee of Security for the Population, Commandant General of NSCDC," Dr. Ahmed Audi, emphasized the need for collaboration and synergy among agencies and other critical stakeholders to make the world safer and more secured.

He assured that NSCDC will continue to strive for effective protection of critical national assets and infrastructure (CNAI), and will not relent in strengthening physical security, and sensitisation of the general public in order to guarantee security and well-being of the citizenry.

The CG disclosed that the establishment of the Special Intelligence Squad, Mining Marshall, Agro Rangers and Special Female Squad has led to steady successes and achievements by Corps.

LIRS Urges Taxpayers to Meet March 31 Deadline for Annual Tax Return Submission

The Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) yesterday reminded all individual taxpayers, including self-employed individuals, those in the informal sector, and employees under the Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) scheme, to submit their Annual Tax Returns on or before March 31, 2025.

This directive was in accordance with the Personal Income Tax Act (PITA) 2004 as amended.

According to a statement, the Executive Chairman of LIRS, Mr. Ayodele Subair, emphasised that under Section 41 of the Act, all taxable persons must submit a comprehensive return detailing their total income from all sources for the previous fiscal year (January 1st to December 31st 2024, in this case) to the relevant state tax authority within 90 days of the commencement of the new assessment year.

Subair reiterated the importance of adhering to the deadline, urging taxpayers to fulfill their statutory obligations promptly to avoid penalties and other legal consequences.

He also highlighted that tax returns must be submitted exclusively through the dedicated LIRS eTax portal, adding that the portal was designed to offer taxpayers convenience, security, and ease of compliance.

"In line with our commitment to simplifying the tax filing process, dedicated tax officers are available at our various tax offices to assist individuals with online registration and tax return submissions via the eTax portal," Subair stated.

NEWS



INAUGURATION OF NEWLY RECONSTITUTED ENUGU STATE LG SERVICE COMMISSION...

L-R: Member I, Enugu State Local Government Service Commission, Hon. Peter Nnaji; Member II, Mrs. Florence Igboji; Chairman of the Commission, Barr. Nana Ogbodo; Governor of Enugu State, Dr. Peter Mbah; Commission Secretary, Osondu Nnaji; Member IV, Amaka Nweke; and Member III, Dr. Batholomew Ezugwu, during the inauguration of the newly reconstituted Commission at the Government House, Enugu, yesterday

FG Okays 11 New Private Universities in Nigeria

●*Embargoes processing of additional private varsities* ●*Approves N733bn for 4 road infrastructure projects*

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The Federal Government has granted provisional licenses for 11 new private universities to operate in Nigeria.

Minister of Education, Dr. Tunji Alausa, who made this public following the Federal Executive Council's meeting, which was chaired by President Bola Tinubu at the State House, Abuja, explained that the newly approved universities successfully completed the National Universities Commission's (NUC) rigorous 13-step assessment process before being granted their licenses.

He listed the newly approved universities to include New City University, Ayetoro, Ogun State; University of Fortune, Igbotako, Ondo State; Eranova University, Mabushi, Abuja; Minaret University, Ikirun, Osun State; Abubakar Toyin University, Oke-Agba, Kwara State and Southern Atlantic University, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Others are Lens University, Ilemona, Kwara State; Monarch University, Iyesi-Ota, Ogun State; Tonnie Iredia University of Communication, Benin City, Edo State; Isaac Balami University of Aeronautics and Management, Lagos State and Kevin Eze University, Mgbowo, Enugu State.

The Minister further clarified that a moratorium has now been placed on the approval of additional private universities, meaning no new applications will be considered for the time being.

According to him: "These 11 universities have met all the necessary requirements of the NUC and have been awarded provisional licenses to commence operations.

"While we have approved these institutions, we have also placed a moratorium on the establishment of new private universities. This means that only those that have reached the final stages of approval, like the ones announced today, will be considered."

Alausa added that the government would continue to review pending applications from institutions that have advanced in the approval process.

"For those that have progressed beyond step four and have undergone a second visit, we will assess them, and if they meet all the requirements, they will be approved," he explained.

Despite the moratorium, the Minister noted that additional applications for private university licenses may still be presented to the FEC for approval if they meet the necessary standards.

He reaffirmed President Tinubu's commitment to expanding access to higher education and improving educational infrastructure across the country.

"President Tinubu remains committed to expanding educational opportunities and improving infrastructure in the sector," Alausa further said.

FEC also on Monday approved four major infrastructure projects across the country, amounting to a total of N733 billion.

These projects include section two area of the outstanding Abuja-kaduna-Zaria-Kano roads covering 164kilometres, for the sum of N507 billion and the flyover at Abakpa bordering 82 division area of Enugu State at the cost of N24 billion to address traffic jam around the area.

Minister of Works, David Umahi made this known to newsmen while briefing on approvals and considerations made by the Federal Ececutive Council meeting.

According to him: "You have another one approval for the completion of outstanding of Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano roads this time is section two, that's 82 kilometer by two, that's 164 kilometers.

"And it's awarded for N507 billion. And then the last one is the construction of a flyover at Abakpa bordering 82 division Enugu. A flyover is to be constructed to relief traffic jam there. And then the contractor is CCECC and the amount is N24 billion.

"The Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano section two, the contractor that is doing section one and the three, competitively won the session two. And that is infoWest Nigeria limited. That's what we have."

Umahi also revealed that FEC considered the award of contract for the dualisation of Odukpani Itu-Ideden Item in Iko Ekpene road Cross River and Akwa Ibom States for approval at the cost of N55billion.

"The first one was the approval for the award of contract for the dualization of Odupani-Itu-Idedem Item in Ikot Ekepene road in Cross River and Alwa Ibom states and the total amount is N55 billion in favour of Decon construction Nigeria limited.

The Minister further clarified that the administration of Presidenr Tinubu inherited three sections of the project, "one is CCECC, that's the first one coming from Akwa Ibom the second one is Berger, Berger had about 27 kilometers there, and then, they now went onto Cross River, and then had about 17 kilometers, and then you had the last one, which is samatech. So when we came on board, there was a need to review all the projects. And so whereas the two other contractors, CCECC and someatec"

"So when we came on board, there was a need to review all the projects. And so whereas the two other contractors, CCECC and someatec accepted the review, Berger insisted that the project should be reviewed up to 100 and something billion naira, and that warranted at terminating it, that project is being reprocured through selective competitive bidding. And this record won it N55 billion, as against N190 billion", the Minister added.

PenCom Seeks to Boost Governance, Regulatory, Supervisory Framework for Non-interest Pension Funds' Administration

●*Oloworaran inaugurates advisory committee*

James Emejo in Abuja

The Director-General, National Pension Commission (PenCom), Ms. Omolola Oloworaran, yesterday inaugurated the Pension Industry Non-interest Advisory Committee (PINAC), a think tank that would provide recommendations on best practices, governance structures, product development, and compliance with non-interest finance principles, among others.

Oloworaran, said the inauguration marked a significant milestone in collective efforts to deepen financial inclusion and expand the frontiers of non-interest pension products within the Nigerian pension industry.

Speaking at the inauguration of PINAC, chaired by Mr. Muhammad Adamu Lere, in Abuja, she said PenCom remained committed to fostering innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability in pension administration.

She said the advisory committee was a testament to the commission's resolve to ensuring that the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) caters to all segments of society, including those who prefer financial solutions that align with their ethical and religious principles.

According to the PenCom boss, the country had witnessed increasing demand for non-interest financial products, driven by a growing awareness of ethical finance principles and the need for alternative investment avenues in recent years.

She explained that the introduction of Non-Interest Pension Funds (Fund VI) was a groundbreaking step in the provision of non-interest financial products, providing an investment option that is free from interest-based instruments while still ensuring competitive returns for contributors.

Oloworaran, however, noted that the development of the segment required structured guidance, expert insights, and collaborative strategies to navigate regulatory, operational, and market challenges, thus the relevance of the advisory committee.

She pointed out that the successful implementation of non-interest pension offerings will not only enhance financial inclusion but also attract a significant portion of the unserved and underserved population into the pension system.

She said, "This aligns with Mr. President's broader agenda for financial sector deepening, economic diversification, and social security enhancement.

"Moreover, by embracing non-interest financial principles, we are positioning Nigeria as a leader in ethical pension fund management, fostering investor confidence, and promoting sustainable economic growth."

She tasked the committee to approach the task with dedication, foresight, and an unwavering commitment to excellence, adding that members' collective expertise and insights will shape the future of non-interest pension funds in the country, ensuring that "we build a system that is not only inclusive but also resilient and globally competitive."

She further assured that PenCom would provide all necessary support to ensure the success of the initiative.

She said, "We are confident that through your efforts, the pension industry will experience a new era of innovation and inclusivity.

"I implore you to embrace this opportunity to make a lasting impact. Together, we will build a pension system that serves all Nigerians, regardless of their financial preferences, and secure a dignified retirement for all."

Nonetheless, Oloworaran expressed confidence that the committee will lay a strong foundation for the sustainable growth of non-interest pension funds.

The PINAC's terms of reference are to enhance regulatory and supervisory frameworks, ensuring that non-interest pension products remained transparent, secure, and aligned with global best practices.

It is also expected to proffer measures to boost market development and awareness by driving financial literacy and public education on the benefits of non-interest pension funds, thereby increasing participation in the CPS.

The committee will further identify and recommend viable non-interest investment opportunities that ensure sustainable growth and competitive returns for contributors, as well as foster partnerships with financial institutions, industry experts, and regulatory bodies to develop a robust and thriving non-interest pension fund ecosystem.

However, responding on behalf of the committee, Lere, vowed to work closely with the secretariat to ensure that PFAs invest Fund VI assets in the instruments that are both ethical and non-interest bearing, as provided by Section 4 of the Investment Regulation of the commission.

FRC Hosts Stakeholders' Engagement on Nigeria Public Sector Governance Code

Oluchi Chibuzor

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) of Nigeria will today organise a stakeholders' engagement on the Nigeria Public Sector Governance Code (NPSGC).

The event which holds at the Ladi Kwali Hall, Abuja, aims to foster collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders to enhance governance practices in Nigeria's public sector.

The event, which is to be hosted by the Executive Secretary/CEO, FRC, Dr. Rabiu Olowo, is free but participants are required to register via the Council's website.

Some distinguished guests expected at the event are the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation; Auditor-General for the Federation; Accountant-General of the Federation; Director-General, Nigerian Governors' Forum; Director-General, Bureau of Public Service Reforms; Director-General, Bureau of Public Procurement; Executive Secretary/CEO, Nigerian Shippers' Council; Chairman/CEO, Nigerian Electrical Regulatory Agency; Director General, Nigerian Content Development and Management Board; Director General, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria; Managing Director, Ministry of Finance Incorporated, amongst others.

According to a statement from the FRC, effective public sector governance was crucial for Nigeria's development as it promotes transparency, accountability, and efficient service delivery.

The NPSGC is a key initiative designed to improve governance standards across the public sector, ensuring that government institutions are more responsive to the needs of citizens.

"The stakeholder engagement will provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss the Draft Code, share valuable insights, and contribute to shaping a governance framework that meets the needs and aspirations of the public sector.

"The Council has developed this draft Code through a Technical Working Group (TWG), chaired by Barr. Danladi I. Kifasi, former Head of Service of the Federation, and comprised of renowned corporate governance practitioners and subject matter experts from the public, private, and non-profit sectors," the statement added.

The Keynote Speaker is Mr. M. K. Ahmad, a member, Technical Working Group (TWG) on the NPSGC and Chairman of the Technical Committee on the Nigerian Code of Corporate Governance 2018.

The NPSGC adopts a broad definition of corporate governance that embraces the rights and responsibilities of all parties with a stake in a public sector enterprise (PSE), including the environment in which the entity operates.

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NEWS



LAUNCH OF DLM SECURITIES TRADING PORTAL...

L-R : Head, Operations, DLM Securities, Oluwafemi Bakare ; Group Managing Director, DLM Global Markets, Babatunde Obaniyi; Managing Director, DLM Securities, Atanda Isiaka and Head, Research, DLM Securities, Olawale Alabi during the launch of DLM Securities Trading portal in Lagos...recently

Trump: 25% Tariffs on Goods from Canada, Mexico Take Effect Today

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

US President Donald Trump, said yesterday that 25 per cent tariffs on goods from Mexico and Canada will definitely take effect on Tuesday (today), raising fears of a trade war in North America and sending financial markets reeling.

"They're going to have to have a tariff. So what they have to do is build their car plants, frankly, and other things in the United States, in which case they have no tariffs," Trump said at the White House.

He said there was "no room left" for a deal that would avert the tariffs by curbing fentanyl flows into the United States, a Reuters report said.

Trump's comments sent US stocks down sharply in late afternoon trading. The dollar rose against the Mexican peso and the Canadian dollar following his remarks.

Trump also said reciprocal tariffs would take effect on April 2 on countries that impose duties on US products.

Chief executives and economists say the action, covering more than $900 billion worth of annual U.S. imports from its southern and northern neighbors, would deal a serious setback to the highly integrated North American economy, Reuters added.

The tariffs are scheduled to take effect at 12:01 a.m. on Tuesday. At that point Canada and Mexico face tariffs of 25 per cent, with 10 per cent for Canadian energy. Mexican officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly told reporters that Ottawa was ready to respond. "There's a level of unpredictability and chaos that comes out of the Oval Office, and we will be dealing with it," she said.

Automaker shares fell sharply, with General Motors, which has significant truck production in Mexico, down 4 per cent and Ford falling 1.7 per cent.

Speaking on CNN, U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said both countries had made progress on border security but needed to do more to curb fentanyl flows into the US. to reduce deaths from the opioid drug.

Trump was also expected on Tuesday to raise fentanyl-related tariffs on Chinese imports to 20 per cent from 10 per cent currently, unless Beijing ends fentanyl trafficking into the US. Lutnick did not mention any potential changes to these duties, which would affect about $439 billion worth of annual imports.

Mexico, after avoiding the first round of Trump's tariffs by striking a last-minute deal to send thousands of troops to its northern border, has stepped up anti-drug efforts and hinted at new measures on imported Chinese goods.

House C'ttee Gives 72-hour Ultimatum to Eight Oil Companies Over N9.4trn Unremitted Royalties

Juliet Akoje in Abuja

The House of Representatives Committee on Public Accounts has given a 72-hour ultimatum to eight oil companies to appear before it and address allegations of N9.4 trillion unremitted royalties to the federation account.

The companies were among nine summoned by a sub-committee investigating the non-remittance of royalties as identified in a report by the Office of the Auditor General for the Federation.

The eight companies that failed to appear were Addax Petroleum Exploration Nigeria Ltd, AITEO Group, All Grace Energy, Amalgamated Oil Company Nigeria Limited, Amni International Petroleum Development Company Limited, Bilton Energy Limited, Britannia-U, and Waltersmith Petroman Limited.

Only Belema Oil Producing Ltd was represented by its Managing Director, Ahmad H. Sambk yesterday, and the committee, however asked them to return today, due to a late submission of documents.

The investigation, which was based on the report of Auditor General for the Federation (OAuGF) alleged that the amounts were unpaid royalties, concession rentals, and gas flare penalties and other obligations arising from production sharing contracts, repayment agreements, and modified carry arrangements.

The report stated: "The Oil Royalty amounting to US$1,742,280,008.32 (One billion, seven hundred and forty-two million, two hundred and eighty thousand, eight dollar, thirty two cent) remained unpaid by some oil companies as at the end of December, 2021.

"The sum of US$13,805,135.46 (Thirteen million, eight hundred and five thousand, one hundred and thirty-five dollar, forty six cent) for revenue relating to Royalty on Gas Sales (Foreign) still remain outstanding as at December, 2021, while the sum of 848,218,163,192.67(Forty eight billion, two hundred and eighteen million, one hundred and sixty three thousand, one hundred and ninety two naira, sixty seven kobo) was in arrear for Gas Royalty (Local) for the same period.

"Twenty-three operators also failed to pay the sum of US$496,674,967.77 (Four hundred and ninety-six million, six hundred and seventy-four thousand, nine hundred and sixty-seven dollar, seventy seven cent) being outstanding Federation Account revenue relating to Gas Flare Penalty, while the sum of US$7,688,880.90(Seven million six hundred and eighty eight thousand eight hundred and eighty thousand ninety cents)."

The Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) represented by Balarabe Haruna, gave a breakdown of the various sums owed by the individual companies as contained in the Auditor General's office report.

The Chairman of the ad-hoc committee, Hon. Tunji Olawuyi, during his remark berated the companies for failure to appear before the Committee despite the invitation extended to them.

Olawuyi said "The Committee in the exercise of its constitutional mandate wrote letters to the defaulting companies on the 28th of January 2025 to cause appearance on February 19th, 2025, but they all failed to honour the invitation.

"Also, this Committee made a publication in five daily newspapers that said all companies should appear today, March 3rd, to defeat their indebtedness to the Federation but they refused to honour. Only one company honours the invitation.

"Honourable colleagues, we will recall that two weeks ago, the two chambers of the National Assembly passed the N54.9 trillion 2025 Budget and this was signed into law few days ago by Mr. President. And these are the kind of monies that we are expecting to get to fund this budget. How do we find the budget of all these companies are refusing to pay as at when due.

"The Committee resolved to give the above mentioned companies 72 hours to cause appearance to defend their liabilities, otherwise, the Committee will have no option but to rule against them and direct them to settle their debt within seven days."

House Committee Extends Deadline for Submission of Memoranda on State Creation, LGAs

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

The House of Representatives Committee on the Review of 1999 Constitution has announced extension of the deadline for submission of memoranda on the creation of additional states and local government areas in Nigeria.

According to a circular signed by the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the Review Committee, Hon. Benjamin Kalu, on Monday, the new deadline for submission is now March 26, 2025 and not March 5, 2025 as earlier announced.

Kalu said the extension was in response to public requests for additional time, adding the committee remains committed to supporting legitimate efforts that align with the constitutional provisions.

The committee also reminded proponents of state and local government creation that all submissions must strictly comply with the provisions of Section 8(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (As Amended).

It explained that Section 8(1) requires that a request, supported by at least a two-thirds majority of members representing the area demanding the creation of the new state, must be received by the National Assembly in each of the following: the Senate and the House of Representatives, the House of Assembly of the affected area, and the Local Government Councils of the affected area.

The committee also reminded advocates for the creation of additional Local Government Areas that Section 8 of the Constitution applies to this process.

It noted that specifically, in accordance with Section 8(3), the outcomes of votes by the State Houses of Assembly and the referendum must be forwarded to the National Assembly for further legislative action.

The committee stressed that submissions should be made in triplicate to the Secretariat of the Committee, Room H331, House of Representatives, White House, National Assembly Complex, Abuja.

It added that soft copies must also be sent electronically to info@hccr.gov.ng.

It also directed further enquiries to the Clerk of the Committee, Wali Shehu, stressing that it will only consider proposals that comply with the stipulated guidelines.

Aiyedatiwa Approves Employment of 1,000 Secondary School Teachers

Fidelis David in Akure

Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa of Ondo State has approved the employment of 1,010 (one thousand and ten) new teachers for secondary schools in the state.

The governor's approval came after completion of the recruitment process by the Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) which screened thousands of applicants last year.

A statement issued on Monday by the chief press secretary to the governor, Ebenezer Adeniyan, explained the list of successful candidates will be made public online and will be displayed at the premises of TESCOM headquarters and zonal offices across the State from tomorrow (Tuesday).

It noted that the successful candidates are to begin their documentation immediately.

The statement read: "The governor had given an approval for the recruitment of 1000 secondary school and 1000 primary school teachers last year, which signaled the start of the recruitment exercise by TESCOM and the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB).

"While the final list for the secondary school candidates was approved by the governor on Friday, that of the primary school candidates is currently undergoing its finishing touches.

"Governor Aiyedatiwa had expressed concern over teaching staff shortages in public schools, particularly in rural communities. This necessitated his directive that the recruitment must be based on the peculiar needs of the understaffed schools across the state."

It stressed that the recruitment of teachers in both primary and secondary schools is one of the efforts of the Aiyedatiwa administration in revamping the education sector in the State.

The governor had last Friday approved the payment of N633m for the registration of students for the West Africa Examination Council's Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

Petrol Retailers Say Gradual Price Reduction by Dangote, NNPC Will Tame Inflation

●OPEC's oil output rises to one-year high



Dangote

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Petroleum Retailers Outlet Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN) yesterday said the recent petrol price reduction by the Dangote refinery as well as yesterday's cut by NNPC filling stations will help tame inflation.

The group led by Dr Billy Gillis-Harry, commended the NNPC for reducing its price from N920 to N875 per litre. However, in Lagos, it was learnt that the national oil company cut its price at its filling stations to N860 per litre.

The move by the national oil company further deepened the price war between the mega Dangote refinery and the NNPC's facility in Warri, which is still operating far below its installed capacity.

Nigerians see the ongoing competition as a win for the downstream market which has been under the NNPC monopoly for a long time. NNPC had been the sole importer of products for years in the absence of local refining.

Consumers also fear that if the Dangote refinery eventually runs NNPC out of the retail segment, another monopoly would have emerged in the country.

NNPC's decision to cut prices comes after the Dangote refinery announced three filling stations, namely MRS, AP and Heyden as its off-takers, which it said will help the company control the reduced prices nationwide.

But describing the price cuts as a bold move, PETROAN said the move is expected to alleviate the financial burden on Nigerians amid rising inflation and praised NNPC for taking proactive steps to support the Nigerian people.

"This price reduction will be a huge relief to many Nigerians struggling to make ends meet," Gillis-Harry stated.

The reduction in petrol price, he said, is expected to positively impact Nigerians in terms of decreased transportation costs, making it easier for people to commute and transport goods.

"Lower transportation costs will lead to reduced food prices, making it easier for Nigerians to access affordable food," he added.

Besides, the PETROAN president applauded Dangote refinery for agreeing to refund N65 to retail outlet owners affected by the price reduction.

"This refund initiative follows Dangote Refinery's recent reduction of its gantry price from N890 per litre to N825 per litre. According to the refinery, customers who purchased PMS at higher rates than the advertised prices from Dangote's key partners are eligible for a refund.

"The refund amount is N65 per litre on over 200,000 metric tonnes of PMS purchased by marketers at the old gantry price. Dangote has absorbed a N16 billion loss to implement these refunds, demonstrating its commitment to fair pricing and consumer welfare.

"The refund initiative will also positively impact retail outlet owners, who will benefit from reduced prices and refunds. Many retail outlet owners purchased PMS at the higher rate before the price reduction, and the refund will help mitigate their losses.

"We commend Dangote Refinery for this initiative, which will help reduce the financial burden on our members," said Gillis-Harry, urging Nigerians to be optimistic as government reforms are already yielding results.

Meanwhile, crude production by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) rose to the highest level in more than a year ahead of the group's planned supply revival, driven by gains in Iraq, Venezuela and the United Arab Emirates, Bloomberg reported yesterday.

Output increased by 240,000 barrels a day last month to a daily average of 27.35 million barrels, the most since December 2023, according to a Bloomberg survey. Iraqi supply recovered after a fire at its biggest oil field, while Venezuela bolstered exports ahead of tighter US restrictions and the UAE boosted shipments.

The increases mark a relapse for OPEC, whose discipline had improved in recent months as the group and its allies persevered with output curbs aimed at shoring up crude prices.

Led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, the OPEC+ coalition is planning to start a series of modest monthly production increases in April, to gradually bring back supplies shuttered since 2022. But delegates say they're once again considering delaying the restart, which has already been postponed three times as prices struggle.

Brent futures have retreated more than 10 per cent since mid-January to trade near $73 a barrel in London, as faltering consumption in China and brimming output from the US, Guyana and Canada threaten to create a supply surplus.

With the latest supply gains, OPEC nations are once again collectively pumping several hundred thousand barrels per day above quotas set last year.

Iraq's production rose by 100,000 barrels a day to 4.16 million per day, as it restored production halted during a fire at the Rumaila oil field in late January, according to the survey.

Also, the UAE raised output by 70,000 barrels a day to 3.3 million a day as its exports reached a three-month high on increased shipments to Japan and China, while Venezuela, which is exempt from OPEC+ quotas, raised production by 80,000 barrels a day to 980,000 — the highest in six years.

PEACE RETURNS TO LAGOS, OBASA IN DRAMATIC RETURN TO SPEAKERSHIP

as Chief Whip.

David was re-elected as Deputy Chief Whip after his nomination by Hon. Kehinde Joseph, while Hon. Richard Kasunmu retuned as Deputy Majority Leader. Hon. Adewale Temitope retained the position of Majority Leader.

Similarly, the former Deputy Speaker, Hon. Mojeed Fatai, resigned and was elected as Chief Whip.

With this development, Meranda served as Speaker for 49 days before bowing to the supremacy of the ruling APC.

Obasa had in a successful counter-push upturned the election of Meranda, the first female Speaker of the Lagos Assembly, albeit with the support of Tinubu, who deployed security and other institutions of state in his support.

The Assembly had been engulfed in a leadership crisis since January 13, when Obasa was removed as Speaker, a move that did not have the support of Tinubu.

The latest development followed a strategic meeting of the Governor's Advisory Council (GAC), the powerful group of political leaders and elders of APC in the state, with members of the Assembly on Sunday.

It was gathered that after the marathon meeting, Obasa had to beg for his return and promised to turn over a new leaf.

But in all the meetings, the interest of the president, who was said to have insisted on Obasa as Speaker, no matter what anyone thought or what the law stipulated, remained the key consideration.

Sources claimed that the president considered the removal of Obasa as a coup against him and had told the party leaders at some point that the punishment for coup was "death".

THISDAY gathered from reliable sources that the president took the issue so personal that he refused to see Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu or talk to him, refusing to at least give the governor the privilege of fair hearing or the benefit of the doubt.

All Tinubu was interested in, one of the sources added, was an indictment of Sanwo-Olu, a situation that would give him the leeway to move in against the governor and do exactly what many believe he had always wanted to do to the second term governor.

Unfortunately, a source stated, a major damage had been done across the board to all parties, including the president, the governor and the party itself, and things could never be the same again.

The source, a member of the GAC, was disappointed in Tinubu's arrogance with power

The president was alleged to have squealed that Obasa would never resign, adding that the inherent animosity between him and other lawmakers, as well as the governor, would ultimately undo the party in the state.

However, at plenary yesterday, the lawmakers took turns to eulogise Meranda's good qualities.

Moving the motion under Matters of Public Importance, Hon. Aro Moshood said, "Today, I stand in the house with a deep respect of leadership. Rt. Hon. Mojisola Meranda, I want to appreciate your leadership style since you have started piloting the affairs of the house.

"Madam Speaker, under your leadership, we have witnessed a new focus, presiding with passion. You have been a source of inspiration to us. Thank you, may God bless you."

Obasa, expressed his gratitude to Chief Bisi Akande, Chief Olusegun Osoba, and the leaders of GAC for their support in facilitating his return.

The Assembly immediately after adjourned sine die.

FUBARA TO RIVERS PEOPLE: BRACE UP, WHAT'S AHEAD IS MORE THAN WHAT HAS JUST PASSED

loggerheads with the governor, gave Fubara a 48-hour deadline to re-present the 2025 Appropriation Bill to the legislature presided by Speaker Martin Amaewhule.

Speaking while inaugurating the State Government House Staff Quarters, in Port Harcourt, reconstructed by his administration, Fubara declared that despite the unceasing antagonism against his administration, the course of governance was irreversible, and victory was assured for the state.

The governor noted how the news of the judgement of the Supreme Court dampened the spirit of most Rivers people, and charged them to brace up for the challenge.

He stated that as humans, they might have felt disturbed by the apex court's pronouncements, but advised them to realise that God, who had their back, would accomplish His purpose.

He said, "Our back is not on anybody; it is on God. I want to thank you for your support, and assure you that, if there is one person on this planet Earth that will continue to stand by you, I will be that person.

"I assure you that I will lead you with honour, I will lead you with respect, and I will lead you with integrity, knowing that when I leave here, I would have questions to answer, if I am called upon 20-30 years from today.

"I want to be proud to defend my position. So, I thank you and assure you that I will not disappoint you."

Fubara emphasised that no matter how much the adversaries tried to fool the state, the time had fully come for Rivers people to take their destiny in their own hands.

The governor said he had never subscribed to violence or asked people to indulge in lawless acts. But he warned that his administration will not look away when haters of the state struggled to unleash violence on the state.

He stated, "No matter how we've been fooled in this state, it has gotten to a point when the people have to decide to take their destinies in their hands.

"In as much as I don't subscribe to violence, when the time comes for us to take a decision, I will lead the course for that decision. Let me say it again: I am not scared of anything, the worse that will happen is for me to leave the office. Am I leaving the earth? Is it going to stop me from existing?

"So, I am not even bothered about that. But the right thing must be done, and must be said when the opportunity is given to us. Let me thank everyone, more especially our youths. Be strong, don't be perturbed. I assure you, at the right time, you will hear from us."

Fubara explained that he wanted it to be on record and be known to everyone that the interest of Rivers State remained his top priority. He emphasised that he would not hesitate to pay the supreme price, if need be.

The governor stressed that his strength was in God and all Rivers people, who loved the state, and were interested in its progress and peace. He said there was honour and glory in fighting gallantly on the side of truth.

Fubara stated, "Knowing that and having that in mind, it spurs us, it forces me, as a person, to stand on the side of right, to do good, to stand on the side of truth that even if anybody calls me tomorrow, I should be bold to defend my actions.

"I want you to be in your highest spirit. It is not about who wins, it is about the glory and the honour of fighting gallantly. Being on the side of truth, not on the side of lies, because of cheap favour."

However, from the Assembly Amaewhule issued the ultimatum, yesterday, in a letter addressed to Fubara and copied to the deputy governor, Professor Ngozi Odu; Rivers State Accountant-General; and Chairman, Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC).

Amaewhule, in the letter, said the resolutions of the House of Assembly were pursuant to the Supreme Court judgement of Friday, February 28, 2025.

He stated that the re-presentation of the appropriation bill was among other matters deliberated on judgements of the Supreme Court in Suits number SC/CV/1174/2024 and SC/CV/1105/2024 delivered on February 28.

The speaker stated that the resolutions of the Assembly were geared towards a quick solution to a current financial quagmire, allegedly, occasioned by the absence of an appropriation law for Rivers State.

He added that the Assembly would proceed on a 12-week recess from March 7, adding that standing committees would be expected to continue their statutory functions.

NNPC E&P TARGETS $20BN INVESTMENT TO GROW OIL, GAS OUTPUT IN 5 YEARS

the just concluded Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES), the Managing Director of NEPL, Nicolas Foucart, noted that during the same period the NNPC E&P company will raise gas production to 3 billion cubic feet (bcf).

However, in terms of oil production, the activities of NEPL in the upstream differ from those of the NNPC Upstream Investment Management Services (NUIMS), which supervises the national oil company's Joint Ventures (JVs), Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), and Service Contracts (SCs) alongside operating partners in the industry.

For years, Nigeria has struggled to meet its Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) quota, but this has recently hit the 1.5 million bpd allocation as things begin to gradually pick up in the sector.

But Foucart argued that funding still remains a key issue to grow production of both existing and new set of assets, but said the NNPC subsidiary has a clear strategy on this in terms of sustainable production, cost optimisation, decarbonisation and people.

"So our plan is, from this year's target, that we have 373,000 barrels average production for the year. That's our target in 2025. To grow that to 550,000 barrels per day, that's oil and condensate in the next three, four years. And from that production, we operate 65 per cent of that production.

"If I go to gas, today we are producing 1.4 BCF per day. And our strategic plan is showing that we should achieve close to 3 BCF over the next three, four years. Again, we operate 50 per cent of that production as NEPL.

"So you can imagine behind that plan, there's a lot of activities and a lot of investment. If we look at our strategic plan, we are talking about $4 billion per year. That's NEPL's equity. Over the next five years, that's the money we need to invest between OPEX and CapEx.

"So definitely, where is that fund coming from? And how can we make sure it's going to be there? So of course, as a company, the fund will come from profit that we are generating. So it's that's the self-funding aspect, but also we've got external funding.

"So the way we've done that in NEPL, we've got financing entities, also providing some technical services in certain assets. So we operate those assets, and then there's a joint team executing the activities. But it's just to secure those funds from the shareholders, because that's what it is when it's self-funded," he added.

Foucart pointed out that instead of sharing dividends, the NEPL could deploy the fund for financing its activities, explaining that either from shareholders or external entities, it wants to make sure that there is a business case and value behind all the projects.

He maintained that investors were looking for sustainability of projects, noting that at the NEPL, the company has looked back at historical performance and identified the root causes of underperformance over the years.

"And we looked then at the enablers that we need, and we have identified around 15 enablers that will help us to achieve those targets. And we built that under a transformation programme.

"So we've got a transformation office that has been set up in NEPL, helping us to implement all those initiatives that we have identified. And when I talk about initiatives and enablers, we are talking about sustainability, it's all about focusing on maintenance integrity.

"So, we make sure that we've got the right level of maintenance of the rotating equipment to increase uptime, integrity of pipelines, we are doing sectional replacement, we're starting to replace floor lines. We are looking at well intervention, which is cheaper. So we did a lot of that last year. So we're looking at anything, processes, organisation, operating model across the assets," the NEPL chief executive said.

Stressing that this requires long-term planning, he observed that the E&P company was gradually moving from short-term thinking to a long-term vision of how things should be done.

"So we're working on those five-year plans. The idea is, if I bring a rig, let's keep it, making sure it's going to work for the next five years. And then we have the option, because we've got a big portfolio, to move those rigs across the different assets.

"That's what we've been doing, I think, in the last 18, 24 months. And what have we seen? Well, last year, the average production of NEPL was 244,000 barrels. Today, we're at 310,000, working towards the 370,000 barrels average for the year.

"So that's a 30 per cent increase that we achieved, basically, in 12 months. That's our strategy, giving confidence, and then we've got those finance, technical service agreements and assets on the gas," he added.

In his intervention on one of the panels, Seplat's Chief Executive, Roger Brown, reiterated that of the company's recently acquired assets from Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU), only about one-third was currently being operated.

After buying MPNU, he stated that over 1,000 workers from the company have since joined Seplat, but stated that they were already well trained and focused, given that they were the same human resources that helped ExxonMobil produce 700,000 barrels a day in the past.

He also lauded the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) for handling up to five divestment applications simultaneously and creditably.

"So when I looked at it, I mean we predicted this back in 2010, I mean it was when Seplat started, we saw the divestments coming. But no one predicted five in the last year of the scale that we've seen.

"... Particularly, if I look at what we've bought from Mobil Producing, we're only producing one-third of the wells. So two-thirds of the wells are locked in. We have over 400 wells locked in. So we're going to get those wells, that makes a lot of sense. We're working through our infill drilling campaign and when I say it's a campaign, it's lots of wells," Brown added.

Also speaking, President of the Nigerian Gas Association (NGA), Akachukwu Nwokedi, argued that the industry requires a measure of sustained transparency, confidence, and interdependencies between investors and stakeholders, such that investments in the upstream, midstream, and downstream are synchronised.

"However, to drive and encourage more investments, we must sustain the efforts to keep enacting investor-friendly policies, laws, and regulations that drive investments harmoniously across the gas value chain.

"That said, I must state that despite the welcome stability provided by the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), we are still seeing laws and regulations that overlap and significantly increase the cost of doing business in Nigeria, which is not good for the gas sector. So it is important that we do not erode the visible gains witnessed by the sector. It is therefore time at this midway point to take stock and address these issues," he maintained.

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY,

Casmir Maduafokwa



At Acropolis, we celebrate you today as an exceptional guest whose presence always brings warmth and joy. Your grace, kindness, and distinguished personality make every moment with you memorable.

May this new year bring you more success, happiness, and countless reasons to celebrate. Cheers to another fantastic year ahead!

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Happy Birthday
TO A GOOD MAN



Mr. Casimir
Maduafokwa
Tecon Oil Services, Lagos.

We celebrate with you on this occasion of your birthday. You have been an amazing brother, friend and partner in progress.

A loving husband and a devoted father, your life serves as a shining example for us all.

Your influence extends beyond our generation, blessing those yet to come.

May God continue to strengthen your faith and grant your heart's desires as you grow in wisdom and spirit.

Happy Birthday to a Worthy and Dependable Friend

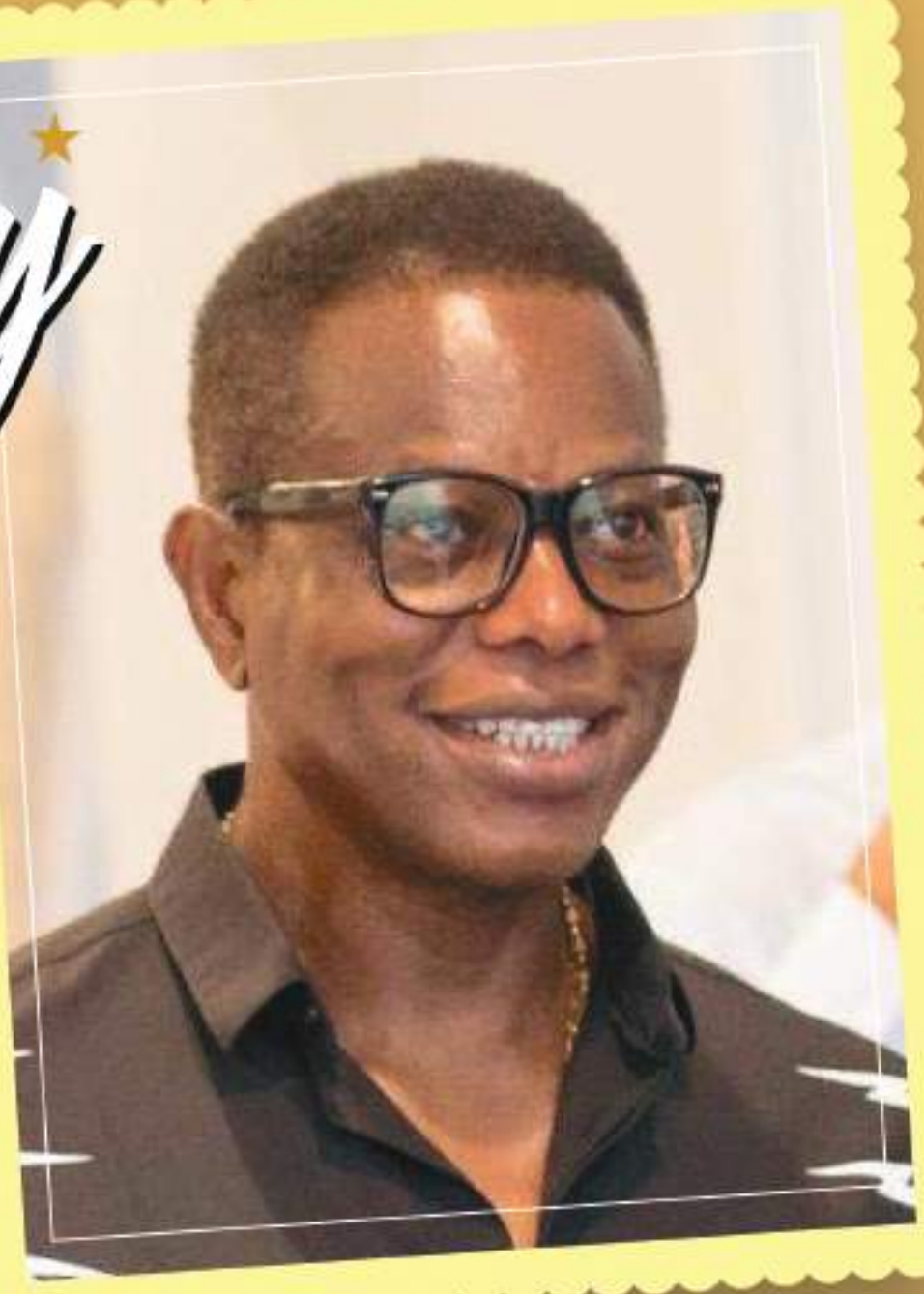
SIGNED:

Richard Arigbodi
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Nnamdi Ilechukwu
Kingsley Anegbode

Happy Birthday

to our C.E.O

Mr. Casimir Maduafokwa



On this special day, we, the employees of Tecon / Niger Blossom Group, come together to celebrate not just your birthday, but the incredible legacy you have built and the profound impact you have made in the world.

Your unwavering dedication to excellence and your remarkable ability to turn dreams into reality have been nothing short of inspiring to all of us.

As you celebrate your birthday, we hope you take immense pride in the milestones you have achieved and look forward to the bright future that lies ahead.

Your leadership has been a guiding light, and we are grateful for the opportunities to learn and grow under your guidance.

May this year bring you new opportunities, continued prosperity, and abundant joy. We are excited to be part of the journey ahead and look forward to achieving even greater heights together.

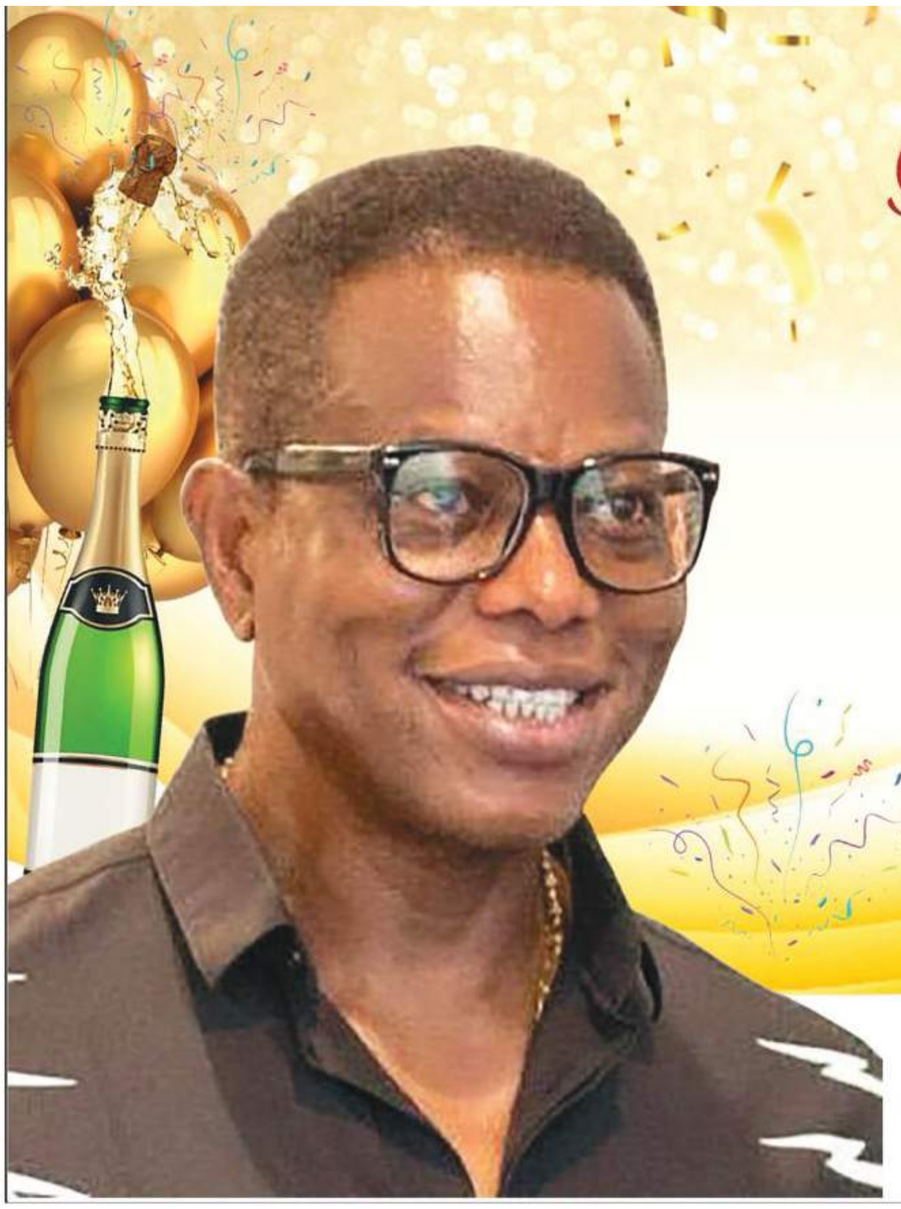
Happy Birthday, Sir!

From all of us @

TECON OIL SERVICES LTD.

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Birthday GREETINGS

Mr. Casimir Maduafokwa

Tecon Oil Services, Lagos.

Congratulations on your New Age.

The management and staff of Specialty Drilling Fluids Limited extend our immense congratulations to you on your special day.

You have been a dependable business partner and have exhibited high integrity in all business transactions with our Company.

We wish you many more fruitful years and pray that this day will be filled with love laughter and all the warmth that your heart deserves for being such an amiable person.

Happy Birthday to a Jolly Good Fellow!!!

SIGNED

Dr. Tony Eze

Managing Director/CEO

Specialty Drilling Fluids Limited

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Happy Birthday

To a Gentleman Par Excellence!!!



Mr. Casimir Maduafokwa

Tecon Oil Services, Lagos.

It is with great pleasure that my family and I felicitate with you as you march gallantly to your new age. Casimo, you are indeed a good and close friend turned brother. This supports the Igbo adage that says "Nwanne di na mba".

You are a man of multiple talents and in business, you have made uncommon and tremendous achievements.

Most admirable is your humility and compassion. These attributes have contributed to your accomplishments and distinguished you among equals.

Casimo, we love you and wish you a long purposeful life, peace, joy, unending prosperity in all your endeavours, good health of mind and body.

Almighty God bless your new age.

SIGNED:

Dr. & Mrs. Tony Eze & Family

MR. CASIMIR MADUAFOKWA

Happy Birthday

to our Beloved Trailblazer Husband and Father!



Happy Birthday to the most incredible husband and father! Your life is a testament to the power of perseverance, innovation, and relentless pursuit of excellence.
You have shown us, your family, that with passion and determination, anything is possible.

On this special day, we hope you are surrounded by loved ones who appreciates and admire all that you have accomplished. Your unwavering dedication and love inspire us everyday, and we are so grateful to have you as the guiding light of our family.

May the year ahead be filled with continued success, personal growth, and endless happiness.

Thank you for leading the way and for being a shining example of what it means to achieve greatness. We are so proud of you and look forward to celebrating many more wonderful years together.

MR. CASIMIR MADUAFOKWA

Happy Birthday, with all our love!

Dr. Mrs Blossom Maduafokwa | Nodebem Maduafokwa
Jasmine Maduafokwa | Daluchi Maduafokwa | Tobe Maduafokwa

POLITICS

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As Soludo Tackles Insecurity with Launch of *Agunechemba* in Anambra...

David-Chyddy Eleke in this piece highlights the role of community leaders in helping Governor Charles Soludo stem the tide of insecurity with the recent launch of *Agunechemba* security outfit in Anambra state.

During the Yuletide, several incidents of armed robbery, killings and kidnapping for ransom occured in Anambra State.

Rising up to the occasion, the government of Prof Chukwuma Soludo in January, 2025 signed into law the Homeland Security Act; a wide range of laws that seek to tackle the root cause of insecurity in the state.

The law, among other things, criminalizes native doctors who prepare protective charms for kidnappers, or get-rich-quick charms, also known as Oke Ite. The law provides that any property found to have been used for harbouring kidnap suspects, or housing kidnappers without the owner revealing same to security agencies will be forfeited to the state government and demolished.

There are also provisions of the law which holds community leaders, traditional rulers, landlords and neighbours to account if they failed to disclose to government or security agencies the identity of people who live within their vicinity, who are involved in criminal acts. Hotels and other hospitality facilities are also advised to send the identity of lodgers to the state government as a compulsory daily routine.

The law also brought into life a new security outfit, Agunechemba, and a new security arrangement, Operation Udo Ga Achi, which comprises of circular security agencies including Police, Army, Navy, Civil Defence, DSS and of course, operatives of Agunechemba.

Since the law came into operation, there have been a level of upheavals in many communities, with community leaders striving to sit up to avoid indictment. Videos circulating on social media from many communities have shown the employment of towncriers to announce the mandatory registration of non-indigenes staying there. There have also been the announcement of registration for all native doctors practicing in communities. Currently, among native doctors, the fear of Soludo has become real, and many have started relocating out of their areas, while few have already been arrested.

Among native doctors who have been arrested and interrogated are: popular millionaire native doctor from Oba, Idemili South Local Government Area, Mr Chidozie Nwangwu, popularly known as Akwa Okuko Tiwara Aki, Eke Hit, a native doctor from Okija in Ihiala Local Government Area and Mr Onyebuchi, who prides himself as a prophet, and popularly known as Onye Eze Jesus.

All have been interrogated in the state capital, Awka, and taken to their shrines to ascertain the extent of their involvement in crime.

What is however more worrisome is the role of community leaders in the insecurity in the state. Before the creation of Agunechemba, the Anambra Vigilante Group (AVG) used to be a community based security outfit, employed by the leadership of communities, which majorly include the traditional rulers and presidents-general. This leadership oversee the recruitment, arming and payment of the operatives.

With heightened insecurity in many places in the state, communities funded the procurement of pump action rifles, ammunition and others for them to operate. But recent developments have shown that in most communities, the wrong people were recruited in the AVG, or lack of wherewithal to fund their operations, leading the operatives to use the opportunity of the arms at their disposal to fend for themselves. A clear case of such are those of Enugwu-Agidi and Ukwulu communities in Njikoka Local Government Area.

In Enugwu-Agidi, the recent arrest of a notorious suspected kidnapper, Mr Chukwudi Tansi has upset the community. The arrest has pitched the president general of the community, Mr Ebuka Onuorah, against his traditional ruler, HRH Michael Okekeuche, as they accuse each other of being collaborators of the suspect, who is said to be a member of the community's vigilante outfit. Onuorah who is known not to be in good terms with the monarch of his community had first raised the alarm about his opposition to the recruitment of the suspected bandit leader into the community's vigilante, but expressed surprise that the monarch took him in, and even made him the head of palace security. A cache of arms had been discovered in the suspect's house when he was taken for a search.

Reacting to the development, the traditional ruler of Enugwu-Agidi community in Njikoka Local Government Area of Anambra State, HRH Michael Okekeuche, has disowned the suspect. The monarch denied the suspect, insisting that he is a member of the private security group of the president general, and has severally been used for various nefarious jobs.

Members of the Enugwu-Agidi traditional council, Mr Ifeanyi Ndulue, press secretary to the traditional ruler and Mr Victor Okeke, the cabinet secretary, who briefed journalists in Awka on behalf of the monarch, said there was need to put the record straight. "His Royal Highness Igwe Michael Chidozie Okekeuche (Okpalariam 111 of Enugwu-Agidi) is happy with the arrest of the alleged kidnapper, Mr Chukwudi Tansi in our community. The traditional ruler is calling for a thorough investigation into his arrest, so as to unveil those he is working for. The Igwe is particularly happy that operatives have risen to the mandate of ensuring zero tolerance for crimes in the state and Enugwu-Agidi in particular. He thanked Prof. Chukwuma Soludo for his wonderful security framework in the state."

In the same vein, same accusations reared it's head in Ukwulu Community in Dunukofia Local Government Area last week. A kidnap kingpin, one of those who reportedly kidnapped a priest and collected ransom for his release, Mr Oliver Nweke, an indigene of Ebonyi State, turned out to be a suspected kidnapper. Oliver who was arrested in the deep forest of Ukwulu, who has also taken operatives of Udo Ga Achi where his large cache of armed and ammunition was recovered, was also said to have been recruited into the vigilante of the community, before he veered off with his boys when funding from the president general ceased coming.

In his confession, which was watched on a video circulating on the internet, Nweze said: "I and my boy were employed by the president general of Ukwulu community. We were doing our job very well, until the president general stopped paying us. I and my boys did not know what to do, so we decided to use the arm given to us to help ourselves. At first, we stopped the work since they were no longer paying, and when bad boys returned to the community, they called us back to come and start work, and when we came, all those boys ran away. So when they stopped paying us again, we decided to go into kidnapping."

Though there have been no official response from the leadership of Ukwulu community over the confessions, there are however arguments about how the inability of community leaders have aided insecurity in the state. Some indigenes of the state have applauded Governor Soludo for his proactiveness in the area of security, and also called for communities to take charge of their safety, without every blame dumped on the doorstep of the governor.

A Rights activist, Comrade Echezona Okoli said: "I'm very happy for the new security architecture in Anambra State, but what is particularly heartwarming is the confessions from some kidnap kingpins who have been arrested recently. I think it is not just about giving arms to street urchins to work as security men, it is about being able to earn their loyalty. Any day they cease to be loyal to you, they may use the guns to fend for themselves. That is why we must always scrutinize the people we recruit into the security. That brings us to even this Agunechemba operatives that we see today, the governor must set a mechanism in place that will deter them from moving from being people who secure the people, to being those who terrorize the people."

Also, a lawyer and manufacturer, Mr Chris Chinedu Enemuo in his remarks noted that the law recently launched by the governor has given responsibility to the people, including communities, to participate in the safety of their localities.

According to him: "The newly introduced Participatory Security Initiative, which includes various transactional components, has effectively integrated ordinary citizens into the broader community policing framework. The government has made considerable progress by involving the community in sustaining this policy model.

"Governor Chukwuma Soludo's approach to security in Anambra State appears to have rigorously identified the root causes of security challenges and the local factors contributing to them. This has enabled the effective deployment of human resources through initiatives such as bounty hunting and loyalty programs, positioning Anambra's homeland security legislation as a community empowerment tool, the people's stick. The traditional policing system, is not left out, it plays a significant role in the initiative to foster a crime-free community through a monthly loyalty incentive of 10 million.

"If from the left end, a community opts to undermine this initiative by aligning with opposing parties to orchestrate a façade of failure or exploit any unfortunate situation, such community would be revealing it's irresponsibility, unproductiveness, and potential complicity in the broader insecurity challenges faced," Enemuo said.



Soludo

Governor Chukwuma Soludo's approach to security in Anambra State appears to have rigorously identified the root causes of security challenges and the local factors contributing to them. This has enabled the effective deployment of human resources through initiatives such as bounty hunting and loyalty programs, positioning Anambra's homeland security legislation as a community empowerment tool, the people's stick.

STATUTORY NOTICE

OIL PIPELINE ACT (CAP 07) 1965
APPLICATION FOR A GAS PIPELINE LICENCE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN in accordance with Section 8 of the Oil Pipeline Act, (CAP. 07) (as amended), that Apani Energy Limited whose registered office is at 4, Ademola Street, off Awolowo Road Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria, has applied to the **Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC)** for the License to enter upon, take possession, and use for transportation of Hydrocarbon Petroleum Products for 20 (twenty) years, strip of land for operating the gas Pipeline, (7.5km Apani - Omerelu Gas Pipeline)

DESCRIPTION
The Pipeline (NPS – 6"), starts from Apani-01ST facility.

The Apani / Omerelu (Indorama) Pipeline Right Of Way (ROW) has a total length of 7.5km, width of 20m and runs from the Apani-01ST facility to the Indorama Gas Pipeline, traversing through the Apani community, Omerelu Community and roads. The terrain is relatively flat, and the vegetation farmland are mostly palm tree plantations.

Starting from the Apani-01ST location (493705.23mE and 133023.32mN), the route proceeds on bearing of 198o25' for 479.48 meters to the point marked IP-01 (493520.73mE and 132467.69mN). Thence on the bearing of 212o17' for a distance of 315.18 meters to a point marked IP-02 (493351.73mE and 132201.65mN). Thence on the bearing of 188o49' for a distance of 450.34 meters to a point marked IP-03 (493283.04mE and 131756.38mN). Thence on the bearing of 198o26' for a distance of 744 meters to a point marked IP-04 (493283.04mE and 131050.73mN). Thence on the bearing of 262o06' to cross the Omerelu to Ubima Road. Thence on the bearing of 262o06' for a distance of 3471 meters to a point marked IP-05 (489663.38mE and 130581.39mN). Thence on the bearing of 196o15' to cross the Siat Asphalt Road. Thence on a bearing of 196o15' for a distance of 346 meters to a point marked IP-06 (489551.38mE and 130197.29mN). Thence on a bearing of 235o33' for a distance of 1391.64 meters to the metering facility before joining the Indorama Pipeline (488400.49mE and 129407.11mN).

All bearing and distances are approximate, and all bearings refer to Grid North.

The gas pipeline will have a minimum soil cover of 1.5 meters.

A copy of a plan of the pipeline route identifying the land affected can be inspected during all normal working hours at the Ministry of Lands and Survey, Portharcourt, Rivers State, and **Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, Abuja**, or the offices of the aforesaid Company.

Any person who considers that the land or interest is injuriously affected by the grant of the license should lodge orally or in writing not less than seven days before the hearing date in paragraph 6, with the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Lands and Survey, Portharcourt, notice of objection stating the interest of the objection and the grounds of the objection.

Any public officer who receives a verbal objection in the course of his duty shall record the name and address, interest and grounds of objection and shall forward such details to the Permanent Secretary Ministry of Lands and Survey, Portharcourt, Rivers State.

Matters relating to the amount of compensation payable by the aforesaid Company for its use of the Land affected shall not be material grounds to include in a notice of objection.

Permanent Secretary Ministry of Lands and Survey, Portharcourt, Rivers State, shall enquire into the objection (if any) duly lodged in accordance with paragraphs 3 and 4 above at his office at Portharcourt at 10 am on the 15th day of April 2025, at the Rivers State Ministry of Lands and Survey, Port Harcourt, giving all parties an opportunity to be heard.

Compensation (if any) payable by the aforesaid Company for its use of the land affected shall be determined by negotiation between the Company and the landowners and/or occupiers.

Dated this 23rd day of January 2025
Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC)

Lagos: 4, Ademola Street, Off Awolowo Road, Ikoyi, Lagos State.
Telephone: +234-1-453 7847, +234 1 4537848

Abuja: No. 9 Volta Street, Off Thames Street, Maitama, Abuja. FCT.
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Zaria: Km. 3, Dumbin Dutse, Kaduna-Zaria Road, Zaria, Kaduna State.
Telephone: +234 703 055 2009, +234 812 582 5826

Ghana: Steel Works Road, Tema Industrial Area, Tema Greater, Accra, Ghana.
Telephone: +233 302 951 763

Delta: Km 5, New Ode Itsekiri Road, Ifiekporo, Warri South LGA, Warri, Delta State.
Telephone: +234 53 291 026, +234 704 329 4090, +234 704 617 4223

LAWYER

TUESDAY, MARCH 4, 2025

A THISDAY WEEKLY PULLOUT

TRUTH & REASON



Executive Director, Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), Dr Uju Agomoh

'Large Percentage of Inmates are Awaiting Trial'

IN THIS EDITION





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Stakeholders Renew Plans to Sustain Late Deji Sasegbon's Legacy via vLex

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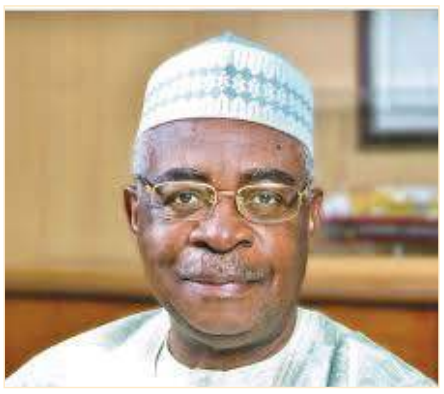
QUOTABLES



'I think he's still a member of the House of Assembly, so, he has every right to come; but, invasion and breaking into my office, that is really a big one.' - ***Rt. Honourable Mojisola Lasbat Meranda, Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly***



'An attempt was made by the retired General to recall events; but, perhaps, in an attempt to tell a story, he engaged in what I would call a careless distortion of history, because there are gaps that he was unable to fill….I think he also may have forgotten that not all the dramatis personae have passed away. History has already taken care of the Babangida tenure. Any attempt by him now to rewrite history, failed woefully.' - ***Femi Falana, SAN***



Court to Hear 9Mobile Ownership Tussle on March 19

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COLUMNIST



PROF MIKE OZEKHOME, CON, SAN, FCIArb, PH.D. LLD

Constitutional Democracy, means a system of government, in which political and governmental power, is defined, limited and shared by a grundnorm called the Constitution, which provides inbuilt checks and balances.

This column seeks to fiercely discuss constitutional, legal and political issues, with a view to strengthening, deepening and widening the plenitude and amplitude of democracy and good governance, without fear or favour.

The writer of this column, Prof Mike Ozekhome, SAN, is a Constitutional Lawyer, Human Rights Activist, Pro-Democracy Campaigner, Notary Public and Motivational Speaker. He co-founded the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Nigeria's pioneer human rights league, on October 15, 1987, the Universal defenders of Democracy (UDD), in 1992, and with Chief Gani Fawehinmi and others in 1998, the Joint Action Committee of Nigeria (JACON), to push out the military. In his early days, he lectured at the University of Ife. Prof Ozekhome is an author of many books. He is also a Special Counsel at the International Criminal Court (ICC), at The Hague.



19 Life Benchers, 21 New Benchers Inducted into Prestigious Assembly

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THISDAY
LAWYER

ONIKEPO BRAITHWAITE: EDITOR, JUDE IGBANOI: DEPUTY EDITOR,
PETER TAIWO, STEVE AYA: REPORTERS

Legislative Crises: Keeping (A)breast of Matters

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The Advocate



"….is there a conspiracy against women in governance in Nigeria, particularly in the Legislature? It appears so… the Senate feels that their female members should be ..denigrated and threatened with being dragged out of the Chamber by security?…Rt Hon. Meranda….Would she have faced these difficulties, had she been a man? I think not….. was Rt Hon. Meranda pushed or did she jump?!… Obviously, there are those pushing the buttons behind the scene, whose wishes appear to override the tenets of democracy"

Introduction

Lately, the Nigerian Legislature, both Federal and State, have been a beehive of activities - from allegations of sexual harassment and victimisation by Senator Natasha Akpoti against Senate President Godswill Akpabio, to the ousting of Rt. Hon. Mojisola Meranda as the Lagos Speaker, and the Rivers State House of Assembly Supreme Court decision.

Senate

But, first, is there a conspiracy against women in governance in Nigeria, particularly in the Legislature? It appears so. As there are only 4 women in a Senate of 109, why should the women not be seated in a conspicuous part of the Chamber? Is it not shameful that in 2025, the Nigerian Senate resembles a glorified Boys Club? It's bad enough that the ratio is as low as 4 women to 105 men, the Senate then feels that their female members should be hidden, relegated, denigrated and threatened with being dragged out of the Chamber by security? So shameful. See Section 42(1)(a) of the **1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)(the Constitution)** on the the right to freedom from discrimination on the basis of sex. See the case of **Lafia Local Govt v Govt of Nasarawa State & Ors (2012) LPELR-20602(SC) per Olufunlola Oyelola Adekeye, JSC.** Of course, we know that, at the end of the day, it's not about where you seat that is most important, but, about the contributions of a Senator to good law making, nation building, and the betterment of the lives of their constituents, and this can be achieved, sitting anywhere in the Chamber.

At least one thing I can say is that, the spouses of the Distinguished Senators appear to be rather supportive, because, in 2019, just as the wife of Senator Elisha Abbo came out to defend him when he was accused of shamelessly assaulting two ladies at a sex shop located at Banex Plaza, Abuja, so also has the wife of the Senate President not only promptly denied any allegations of sexual harassment against her husband, confirming that he is disciplined, she is reported to have even instituted a defamation suit against Senator Akpoti! Senator Akpoti's husband has also backed her. I saw the front page of This Day of 2/3/25, where it was reported that Senator Akpoti's husband had stated that "his wife had confided in him about her interactions with" SP Akpabio, and that he had had cause to intervene and request that his wife be treated with the dignity and respect she deserves. I concur.

Though it is trite that he who alleges must prove, and it is also true that, so far, Senator Akpoti hasn't adduced any evidence to substantiate her sexual harassment allegation against SP Akpabio, another allegation previously levelled against him in the same regard by Ms Joi Nunieh, a past Managing Director of NDDC, doesn't help matters - it is one allegation too many. Nevertheless, so far, it's their word against SP Akpabio's, maybe that's why Senator Akpoti may have chosen to do the next best thing - embarrass SP Akpabio publicly, knowing fully well that institution of legal proceedings for sexual harassment based on the facts she has shared so far alone, without more, may not succeed. And, while I cannot confirm or deny Senator Akpoti's sexual harassment allegations against SP Akpabio since I wasn't present with them, just as Ms Nunieh's allegation supports that of Senator Akpoti, a news statement that I read at the weekend, credited to Reno Omokri, may also support the Senate President. Mr Omokri alleged that Senator Akpoti once accused him of sexual harassment at an event held at Aso Villa Abuja, an event he didn't attend because he was actually in the USA. He stated that he backed his absence with proof. While I have zero tolerance for sexual harassment, I am not a misandrist who is quick to rule in favour of all women without the requisite information for judgement, simply because I'm also a woman. As a Lawyer, I do not jump to conclusions before all the facts and evidence are in. The allegations against SP Akpabio, should be thoroughly investigated.

Sexual harassment, which women have suffered in the workplace from time immemorial, and is also popular in educational institutions (sex for grades), takes on various forms like unwelcome sexual attention; touching of someone's private areas; lewd unwelcome remarks; express and implied promises of rewards in exchange for sexual favours, or reprisals for refusal of such advances. Harassers may give better employment opportunities to women who succumb to their sexual overtures, while making the work environment hostile for those who refuse. This is Senator Akpoti's allegation against SP Akpabio - that her refusal to capitulate, is responsible for her travails in the Senate.

Unlike the USA (see for example, Article 130 of the **New York Penal Law**), Nigeria doesn't seem to have adequate laws to punish sexual harassment in the workplace, apart from incidents that occur in tertiary institutions. See Section 4 of the Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Education Institutions Prohibition Act 2016 aka Sexual Harassment Act (SHA), which defines sexual harassment in tertiary institutions.

Sexual harassment is, many a time, difficult to prove, particularly if it hasn't culminated in a physical attack, unless women are able to do what Obafemi Awolowo University Student, Monica Osagie, did. She was able to record Professor Richard Akindele who sexually harassed her, by demanding five rounds of sex from her to change her mark from 33% to a pass mark. Unknown to Ms Osagie, she had actually scored 45% which is apparently a pass mark. Professor Akindele counter-alleged that Ms Osagie knew that she had scored 45%, but desired an A grade, and therefore, sexually harassed him in order to get it. His counter-allegations remained unsubstantiated and unproven, and he was found guilty and convicted on four counts. By virtue of Section 8 of the SHA, punishments prescribed for Section 4 offences carry penalties of 2-5 years imprisonment.

Judging from the punishments prescribed by the SHA, sexual harassment is not just a little indiscretion that should be overlooked as one of those things; it is quite a serious offence. But, be that as it may, allegations of the commission of a criminal offence must be proven beyond reasonable doubt. In **Egwumi v State (2013) LPELR-20091(SC) per Olabode Rhodes-Vivour, JSC**, the Supreme Court held inter alia that *proof beyond reasonable doubt means the prosecution establishing the guilt of the accused person with compelling and conclusive evidence.*

LSHA

Sometimes, Legislators do not seem to grasp or understand the Constitution and the laws they have enacted. The question is, why such an important arm of government, is somewhat populated with those who lack the capacity to be there? When I watched a television interview of the reinstated Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly (LSHA), Hon. Mudashiru Obasa on Channels TV's Politics Today last Thursday, I found the baseless arrogance and contempt he displayed in that outing, over and above the provisions of the Constitution and the resolution of his colleagues in the LSHA, rather off putting. I don't remember reading anywhere in Section 92 of the Constitution, that being the Speaker of a House of Assembly is the birthright or exclusive right of a particular person.

Exactly three weeks ago, I discussed briefly the removal of Obasa by a resolution of over a two-thirds majority of the LSHA in accordance to Section 92(2)(c) of the Constitution. Immediately upon Obasa's removal, first Female Speaker of LSHA, Rt Hon. Mojisola Lasbat Meranda, previously the Deputy Speaker, was elected by a majority of her peers, by virtue of Section 92(1) of the Constitution. We were happily anticipating a breath of fresh air and crisp initiatives in Lagos; many believed that Lagos State, being the Centre of Excellence and a trend setter, would be happy to showcase this positive development - an indigenous female Speaker, and that Rt Hon. Meranda would be left to preside over the LSHA in peace and not in pieces, after 10 long years of Obasa. Alas! This was not to be. The young lady wasn't given any respite from 'wahala', from the minute she assumed office! Would she have faced these difficulties, had she been a man? I think not. Rt Hon. Meranda announced her resignation yesterday, and is back to her former position of Deputy Speaker.

In the aforementioned interview, Obasa emphatically stated that no allegations had been proven against him. Is he not aware that no allegations of wrongdoing have to be proven against him, for him to be removed as Speaker, nor is his physical presence required for the process of removal, because Section 92(2)(c) of the Constitution clearly doesn't set out any conditions for removal? The process simply requires a two-thirds majority of members to remove a Speaker - for LSHA that has 40 members, 26.66 approximated to the nearest whole number, 27. It was reported that Obasa was removed by 35 members; unlike a Governor or Deputy that is removed via impeachment proceedings, based on allegations of gross misconduct. See Section 188 of the Constitution and **Inakoju & Ors v Adeleke & Ors (2007) LPELR-1510(SC) per Niki Tobi, JSC.**



Senator Natasha Akpoti



Former Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Mojisola Meranda

RSHA

It therefore, seemed almost delusional for Obasa to have claimed that he still remained the Speaker of LSHA last week, purporting to sit as such with only 4 other members. He had obviously emulated the warped Rivers State House of Assembly (RSHA) model, which had claimed to be the legitimate House with only 3 members! Section 91 of the Constitution provides that a State House of Assembly 'shall' have not less than 24 and not more than 40 members. In **Tabik Investment Ltd & Anor v GTB (2011)/ LPELR-3131(SC) per Aloma Mariam Mukhtar, JSC (later CJN)**, the Supreme Court held inter alia that *when the word shall is used in respect of a provision of the law, that requirement must be met.* With the foregoing in mind, how then could a 3-member House have been properly constituted and constitutional? They failed to form a quorum, which with 30 members presently would be 10 members. For the sake of argument, if 29 members instead of the 27 were alleged to have defected from PDP to APC, would the 30th member have run RSHA, and passed the State budget alone?

Section 109(1)(g) of the Constitution, was the basis upon which Governor Fubara and the 3 member RSHA declared the 27 seats vacant. They claimed that the 27 members defected from PDP which sponsored their candidature and on whose platform they won the election, and joined APC before the expiration of the period for which they were elected. See the case of **Abegunde v Ondo State House of Assembly & Ors (2015) LPELR-24588(SC).**

The pertinent question to ask here would be, what does it entail to join another party, in this case the APC, which is the party the 27 members were alleged to have joined? A community reading of Section 109(1)(g) of the Constitution and Article 9 of the APC Constitution, evinces the fact that stating on the floor of the House of Assembly that an individual has defected to another party, does not and cannot constitute the joining of another party. Article 9.1(ii) of the **APC Constitution** provides that a prospective member must fill an application form from the Ward the Applicant was born, resides, works or originates, and this application must be cleared by Ward Executives. Online applications are also allowed, but they must be cleared by the National Working Committee of the Party. Once Applicants are cleared, they are enrolled as members, pay prescribed fees and are issued with membership and dues cards. Did the 27 Lawmakers completed this process? Chapter II Part 1 of the PDP Constitution, also provides for a similar admission process for prospective members.

Additionally, before joining another party, there must be resignation from the former one (see Article 9.1(i) of the APC Constitution). It is logical that resignation from a political party, would be by way of written correspondence to the Ward where the individual joined the party, informing them of the resignation, and if possible, returning the party card and property in such former member's possession. See the case of J**ime v Hembe & Ors (2023) LPELR-60334 (SC) per Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju, JSC** where the 1st Respondent's letter of resignation from APC addressed to the Chairman of his Ward, was accepted as proof of his resignation from the party. Is addressing the Speaker who is not a Ward Executive, or maybe not even a member of the resigning member's old political party, on the floor of the House, the way in which resignation is properly be done? I don't think so. Perhaps, it's time for the Constitution to state unequivocally, the actions that must be taken to complete the process of either joining another party or resignation from a previous one, for the purpose of defection.

Conclusion

While Nigerians expect the Senate to spend its time more gainfully instead of bickering, discrimination against women cannot be tolerated. Senator Akpoti's matter is said to have been referred to the Senate Committee on Ethics & Discipline, for further action. I hope her allegations against SP Akpabio, will equally be investigated. Let them bear in mind that, even though Section 60 of the Constitution allows the National Assembly to regulate their own procedures, they are subject to the Constitution.

As for the LSHA, as a woman, I am pained. The question is, was Rt Hon. Meranda pushed or did she jump?! One doesn't have to be Nostradamus to answer that question - she didn't jump, she must have been forced to resign; neither does one have to be Einstein to see that only 5 members, including Obasa himself really want Obasa to remain as Speaker; the other 35 had voluntarily removed him. Obviously, there are those pushing the buttons behind the scene, whose wishes appear to override the tenets of democracy. So much for internal democracy!

The RSHA saga appears to have been finally laid to rest, now that the 27 Legislators have been restored. It's time for serious governance in Rivers State to start. Too much time, has already been wasted.

LAW REPORT

Admissibility of Extrajudicial Statement Not Tendered through the Recorder

Facts
On 21st October, 2012, a family of 3 consisting of Esther Omaka (PW1), Fred Omaka (PW2) and Enima Omaka (the son of PW1 and PW2), was abducted by armed men while at their building construction site. The abductors seized different items such as phones and jewellery from them, and drove them far into a forest. Subsequently, they released PW1 and her son, but, held on to PW2 with a demand for ransom of N20 million from PW1.

On 26th October, 2012, PW1 paid the sum of N10 million to the abductors, and they released PW2. The matter was reported to the State Security Service (SSS), and in the course of the investigation, the SSS Investigating Team recovered PW2's Blackberry phone and the sum of N1 million from the Appellant. The Appellant and another person were consequently charged before the High Court of Edo State, on a 7-count information of conspiracy to commit armed robbery, armed robbery and kidnapping. The prosecution called PW1, PW2 and PW3 (a member of the SSS Investigating Team) as witnesses and tendered several exhibits which included PW2's Blackberry phone and the sum of N1million recovered from the Appellant (Exhibit A and Exhibit D), the search warrant executed on the Appellant's room (Exhibit C), and the Appellant's confessional statement (Exhibit E).

PW3 testified that the Appellant confessed that one "Papa" recruited him for a kidnapping job, which was to drive the kidnapped victims. PW3 also testified that the Appellant was asked to call the said "Papa" on the phone and they agreed to meet at a bar, and while at the bar, Papa noticed the presence of security operatives and tried to escape but was shot, and he died from the injuries he sustained. PW1 on her part, identified the Appellant as the person who drove the bus that took her and her son out of the forest, where the kidnappers took them.

The Appellant denied making or signing Exhibit E. He also denied being a member of an armed robbery or kidnapping gang, or participating in the kidnap of PW1 and her family.

After considering the evidence led by the witnesses as well as the addresses of Counsel, the trial court delivered its judgement wherein it convicted the Appellant for conspiracy to commit armed robbery, armed robbery and kidnapping, and sentenced him to death. The 2nd accused person was however, discharged and acquitted on the ground that the evidence led did not establish his guilt. Dissatisfied, the Appellant appealed to the Court of Appeal; however, the appeal was dismissed. The Appellant then filed a further appeal at the Supreme Court.

Issue for Determination
After a consideration of the respective issues submitted by the parties, the Supreme Court formulated a sole issue for determination as follows:

Whether, having regard to the evidence on record, the two lower courts were right in their concurrent decision that the Appellant was guilty of the offences for which he was charged.

Arguments
Counsel for the Appellant argued that the Appellant was not properly identified through an identification parade, and PW1 who presumably had enough time to observe his features having testified that the Appellant drove her and her son out of the forest, did not mention any features she observed on the Appellant in her statement to the prosecution. He submitted that since the Appellant was not arrested at the scene of the crime, it was imperative to conduct a proper identification parade to avoid a case of mistaken identity. He cited **ADEYEMI v STATE (2011) 5 NWLR (PT. 1329) 1.**

Counsel also argued that the circumstantial evidence adduced against the Appellant was inadequate to sustain his conviction, and it created a situation of doubt as to whether the Appellant was guilty of the offences he was charged with.



Honourable Adamu Jauro, JSC

In the Supreme Court of Nigeria
Holden at Abuja
On Friday, the 12th day of July, 2024

Before Their Lordships
Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun
Adamu Jauro
Chidiebere Nwaoma Uwa
Obande Festus Ogbuinya
Mohammed Baba Idris
Justices, Supreme Court

SC. 1056C/2019

Between

PETER OMOREGBE — APPELLANT

And

THE STATE — RESPONDENT

(Lead Judgement delivered by Honourable Adamu Jauro, JSC)

He submitted that the doubt should have been resolved in favour of the Appellant. He also contended that the SSS officer who recorded Exhibit E was a vital witness as he would have been able to testify as to whether the Appellant made the statement, and the Respondent's failure to call him as a witness was fatal to the case. He also argued that the acquittal of the 2nd accused person, ought to have led to the Appellant's acquittal

In response, the learned Attorney-General of Edo State submitted on behalf of the Respondent, that the doctrine of recent possession operated against the Appellant as Exhibit A and Exhibit D were found with him a few days after the payment of the ransom, and he was unable to offer any credible explanation on how they came into his possession. He cited Section 167 of the Evidence Act, 2011, and submitted that the two lower courts rightly invoked the doctrine of recent possession in convicting Appellant.

It was also argued on behalf of the Respondent that there was overwhelming circumstantial evidence against the Appellant showing that he participated in the kidnap of the victims. The learned AG referred to the fact of the recovery of Exhibit D and PW2's phone from the Appellant, and the invitation of Papa to the bar before he was shot and killed while trying to escape. The AG argued further that the failure to call the Officer who recorded Exhibit E cannot water down the evidence available against the Appellant, and that it is only when an interpreter is used in recording a statement that it is mandatory to call the interpreter before the statement is tendered. He submitted that, as this was not the case, it was not mandatory to call the recorder. He also submitted that Exhibit E was direct, positive and unequivocal and thus, sufficient to ground the conviction of the Appellant. The Learned AG also submitted that there was no need for an identification parade as the evidence of PW1 and PW2 who were eyewitnesses and victims, showed that the Appellant was properly identified.

Court's Judgement and Rationale
The Supreme Court held that ***a court can convict an accused person on the basis of circumstantial evidence which is strong, cogent and leads to the irresistible conclusion that the accused person committed the crime(s) he is accused of.*** The Apex Court held further that ***it is not in every case that an identification parade would be necessary, particularly where there are other pieces of evidence that lead conclusively to the conclusion that the suspect as one of the perpetrators of the offence.*** The Court referred to its decision in **KUSHIMO v STATE (2021) LPELR-54999 (SC) (PP 23 -24) PARAS F-C)** that ***where the victim of the crime promptly identifies the suspect there would be no need for an identification parade, and where there is good and cogent evidence linking the Defendant to the crime on the day of the incident, then a formal identification becomes unnecessary.*** The Court also held further that once an accused person identifies himself in a free, voluntary and unequivocal confession, the conduct of an identification parade becomes unnecessary.

The Court held that contrary to the contention of the Appellant's, that the Appellant was not properly identified and that an identification parade ought to have been conducted; there was ample evidence through the prompt identification of the Appellant by PW1 and PW2, as well as the Appellant's unequivocal confession, of the identification of the Appellant and his linkage to the offences he was charged with.

Going further to consider whether the totality of the evidence led at the trial court established the Appellant's guilt beyond reasonable doubt, the Apex Court held that ***despite the availability of both eyewitness evidence and a confessional statement, there was sufficient circumstantial evidence to ground a conviction of the Appellant. The Court held that the discovery of PW2's Blackberry phone and the sum of N1 million in the Appellant's room, and the Appellant's inability to extricate himself from the phone and the money constituted strong, credible and cogent circumstantial evidence pointing directly to his guilt as one of the kidnappers and armed robbers who kidnapped PW2 and robbed PW1, PW2 and their son.***

On the Appellant's complaint on the Respondent's failure to call the recorder of Exhibit E as a witness, the Court held that ***it is not the correct position of the law that only the recorder of an extrajudicial statement can tender same in evidence, and where there is another investigating officer who can sufficiently respond to the questions surrounding the statement sought to be tendered, such an officer can tender the statement in court.*** The Court held that ***the fact that the statement was tendered through a person other than the recorder, does not ipso facto render it admissible and in this case where there was no interpreter involved and where the officer who tendered the statement in evidence was present when it was recorded, the statement was properly received in evidence and rightly relied on.*** The Court referred to its decision in **OLOYE v STATE (2011) 18 NWLR (PT. 1278) 353.** The Court found that in the instant case, the evidence led at the trial court clearly revealed that Exhibit E was recorded in DW3's presence; hence, he was in a good position to tender same and answer questions thereon. Thus, the argument that only the officer who recorded the statement could have tendered it, is misconceived.

On the contention of the Appellant's Counsel that the acquittal of the 2nd accused person by the trial court ought to have led to the Appellant's acquittal, the Apex Court held that ***a court is only bound to reach the same verdict in respect of two or more accused persons, where the evidence against them is the same.*** The Court found that in the instant case, the evidence against the Appellant and his co-accused person were neither the same nor interwoven; the 2nd accused person did not also make a confessional statement, and was able to testify unchallenged that Papa was his step brother and he had asked him to keep some monies for him, which the Respondent was unable to prove for certain that the monies with him formed part of the ransom. The Apex Court held that the trial court was thus, under no duty to return the same verdict of discharge and acquittal for the Appellant.

Appeal Dismissed.

Representation
Audu Augustine with others for the Appellant.
Oluwole Osaze-Uzzi, Hon. Attorney General of Edo State with another for the Respondent.

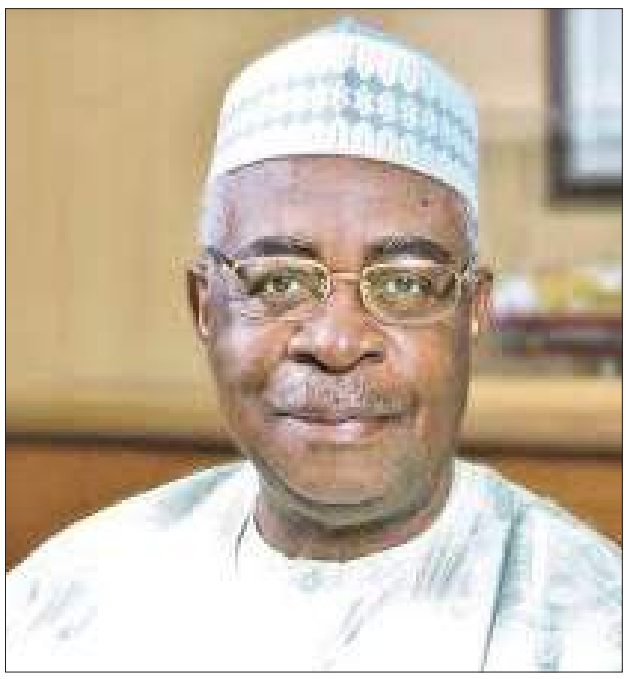
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"…. it is not the correct position of the law that only the recorder of an extrajudicial statement can tender same in evidence, and where there is another investigating officer who can sufficiently respond to the questions surrounding the statement sought to be tendered, such an officer can tender the statement in court"

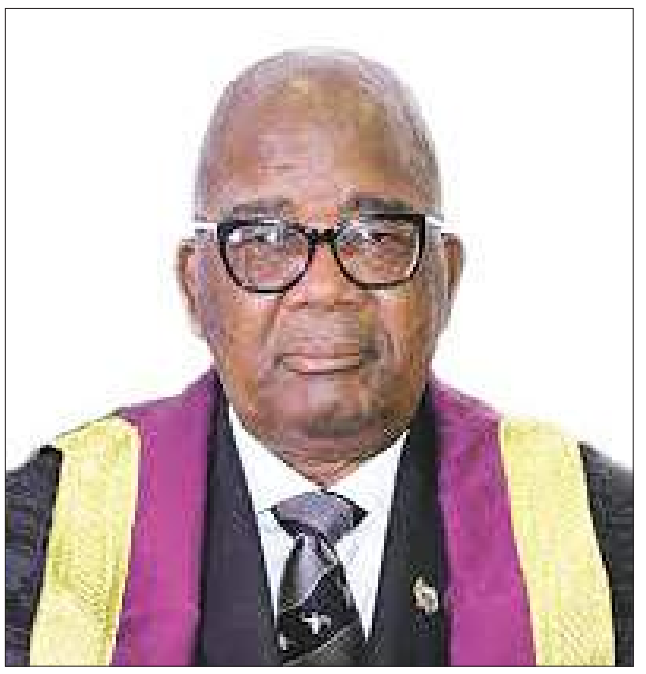
NEWS



L-R: Prof Abiola Sanni, SAN, Mrs Oge Sasegbon and Prof Oludayo Amokaye, SAN



Lt Gen Theophilus Danjuma (Rtd)



Outgoing Chairman, Body of Benchers, Asiwaju Adegboyega Awomolo, SAN

Stakeholders Renew Plans to Sustain Late Deji Sasegbon's Legacy via vLex

Stories by Steve Aya

Legal professionals and academics are committed to preserving the legacy of Deji Sasegbon, SAN, by expanding access to his legal publications both physically and digitally. At a recent meeting at the University of Lagos (UNILAG), key stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring legal practitioners and students benefit from Sasegbon's vast legal resources.

The meeting was attended by Professor Abiola Sanni, SAN (Dean, Faculty of Law, UNILAG), Professor Oludayo Amokaye, SAN (Department of Private and Property Law, UNILAG), and Mrs Oge Sasegbon (Team Lead, DSC Publications). Professor John Akintayo, President of the Nigerian Law Teachers Association and Dean of Law at University of Ibadan, also joined online.

Stakeholders stressed the need for easy and fast access to legal resources and pledged their support for an upcoming Zoom demonstration on vLex, a global legal database platform. vLex provides digital access to Sasegbon's Judicial Dictionary of Nigerian Law (SJD), Sasegbon's Laws of Nigeria (update to 2024 currently being uploaded), and Nigeria's Supreme Court Cases, among other resources.

UNILAG's Commitment to the vLex Initiative

Professor Sanni, SAN gave assurances that UNILAG would support the initiative and encourage law students and Lawyers nationwide, to subscribe to vLex.

Earlier, Mrs Oge Sasegbon donated five sets of Sasegbon's Judicial Dictionary of Nigerian Law (SJD) to UNILAG. The donation was made possible by an anonymous alumnus sponsor in honour of Deji Sasegbon, SAN. The Dictionary, which Sasegbon had worked on before his passing in 2016, was eventually published in 2019. Described as the first of its kind in Nigeria, SJD comprises seven volumes that interpret legal terms using Nigerian statutes and case law. It aims to rival Black's Law Dictionary, and is regarded as Nigeria's most comprehensive legal dictionary.

Mrs Sasegbon reaffirmed her commitment to making the Dictionary widely accessible, and highlighted the financial challenges universities face in acquiring legal publications. She called on philanthropists, to fund vLex subscriptions for universities.

"The Nigerian economy has changed, and universities struggle with funding. Digital access is the most efficient solution. I hope that all universities can subscribe to vLex, as part of their curriculum." She also urged legal professionals and Deans of Law Faculties across Nigeria, to participate in the upcoming Zoom demonstration. Discussions are ongoing with the Nigerian Law School and other stakeholders, to expand adoption.

Tributes to Deji Sasegbon, SAN

During the meeting, Professor Akintayo praised Sasegbon's contributions to legal education. Professor Sanni, SAN emphasised his enduring impact, stating:

"Deji Sasegbon's contributions to legal education will never be forgotten. He was an icon in his own right. His work must continue."

Professor Amokaye, SAN also ordered a copy of SJD, noting its immense educational value.

Sasegbon's Contributions to Nigerian Law

An alumnus of Obafemi Awolowo University (formerly University of Ife), Deji Sasegbon, SAN was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1980. In 1986, he founded Deji Sasegbon & Co. and later established DSC Publications, a pioneering law publishing firm. His firm became a leader in Nigerian legal publishing, producing 84 volumes covering various aspects of law. He introduced electronic publishing, making Nigerian legal information more accessible.

Recognised for his contributions, Deji Sasegbon was appointed a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in 2004. He passed away in 2016 after a prolonged illness.

Conclusion

Stakeholders remain dedicated to sustaining Sasegbon's legacy, by expanding access to his works via vLex. The upcoming Zoom demonstration will showcase vLex's capabilities, encouraging universities and Lawyers to embrace digital legal research. This initiative ensures that Deji Sasegbon's invaluable contributions to Nigerian legal education and practice, remain accessible for future generations.

Court to Hear 9Mobile Ownership Tussle on March 19

A Federal High Court sitting in Abuja, will on March 19, 2025, hear an ongoing dispute over the ownership and control of Emerging Markets Telecommunication Service (EMTS) which is the holder and operator of 9Mobile Telecommunication licence.

The Plaintiff, Abubakar Isa Funtua had dragged General Theophilus Yakubu Danjuma (Rtd) and his company LH Telecommunication Limited, as well as the other Defendants to court, over the ownership and control of Emerging Markets Telecommunications Limited trading under the name of 9Mobile.

The other Defendants are: Seltrix Limited (sued as the 1st Defendant); The Corporate Affairs Commission; Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC); Hayatu Hassan Hadeija; Teleology Nigerian Limited and one Mohammed Edewor, a Director in Teleology Nigeria Limited.

In his Statement of Claim, the Plaintiff seeks amongst other reliefs: "A Declaration that he is the beneficial owner of the 43,000,000 (Forty-three Million) ordinary shares held in trust for him by the 1st Defendant (Seltrix Limited) in the capital of the 3rd Defendant (Teleology Nigeria Limited)". "A declaration that the acquisition of the 43,000,000 (Forty-three Million) ordinary shares purportedly transferred or surrendered to the 3rd Defendant (Teleology Nigeria Limited) in breach of the 1st Defendant's (Seltrix Limited) duty as Trustee of the Plaintiff and in contravention of Clause 48 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the 1st Defendant (Seltrix Limited) is null, void and of no effect.""That the purported registration of the transfer by way of surrender/gift of Forty-three Million (43,000,000) ordinary shares held by 1st Defendant (Seltrix Limited) in the capital of the 3rd Defendant (Teleology Nigeria Limited) is unlawful, null and void."

"An Order setting aside the purported registration by the 6th Defendant (Corporate Affairs Commission) of the increase in the share capital and the allotment of the newly created One Billion, Nine Hundred Ten Million (1,910,000,000) ordinary shares of the 5th Defendant (Emerging Markets Telecommunications Services Limited) in contravention of Section 127 of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 2020."

The Plaintiff also seeks the sum of N100 billion, as general damages from the Defendants, jointly and severally, amongst other reliefs.

19 Life Benchers, 21 New Benchers Inducted into Prestigious Assembly

In a historic moment for Nigeria's legal community, the Chairman of the Body of Benchers, Asiwaju Adegboyega S. Awomolo, SAN, on Thursday, inducted a retired Justice of the Supreme Court and Emir of Lafia, HM Hon. Justice Sidi Bage, JSC. another ex-Justice of the Supreme Court, Hon. Justice Ejembi Eko, JSC, Leader of the Senate, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele; Human Rights Lawyer, Prof Mike Ozekhome, SAN, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking persons in Africa, Prof Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, SAN and other prominent legal practitioners as life members of the prestigious body.

A total of 21 new Benchers were inducted, while eight new Life Benchers were added, bringing the total number of Life Benchers in Nigeria to 170.

Addressing the newly inducted Life Benchers and Benchers at the Benchers Complex, Abuja, Asiwaju Awomolo, SAN, charged them with the words: "To whom much is given, much is expected. You must set the right values for young Lawyers, in and out of court".

Asiwaju Awomolo described the ceremony as a monumental event, marking the first of its kind in the Body's history. He reminded the inductees that their prestigious new roles carried heavy responsibilities, particularly in setting the right example for younger Lawyers, both in and out of the courtroom.

He also recounted the Body's origins, highlighting that it was established with 16 members, with Chief Ambassador C. D. Orike being the only surviving founding member. He explained that the Body of Benchers is the highest regulatory authority for the legal profession in Nigeria, tasked with determining who is fit and proper to be admitted as a legal practitioner. The Chairman emphasised the Body's role in collaborating with the Nigerian Law School, to ensure the quality of legal education and its responsibility in disciplinary matters, including the power to strike off erring legal practitioners from the roll.

Asiwaju Awomolo outlined the privileges of being a Bencher, including the right to sponsor aspirants to the Bar, attend Call to Bar ceremonies, and participate in Traditional Law Dinners. Life Benchers, he noted, enjoy the exclusive right to sit in the Inner Bar or front row in court, and mention motions out of turn.

He also stressed the importance of seniority, proper conduct, and adherence to the Body's regulations, warning against exposing internal matters to social media, which he described as misconduct punishable by the Body.

The Chairman charged the new inductees to live up to the expectations of their exalted positions, reminding them that "to whom much is given, much is expected." He urged them to actively participate in the Body's activities, and to set the right values for young Lawyers.

Among the distinguished guests was Hon. Justice Alfa Belgore, former Chief Justice of Nigeria, who delivered a Keynote Speech, emphasising the critical importance of maintaining high ethical standards in the legal profession.

In his address, Kanu Agabi, SAN, expressed concern over the growing influence of wealth on societal values, and urged the new Benchers to prioritise morality, justice, and fairness in their work.

A former Administrator of the National Judicial Institute (NJI) and Ex-Chief Judge of Delta State, Hon. Justice Rosaline Bozimo also addressed the assemblage, stressing the importance of instilling decorum and ethical values in law students from the outset. She called for a renewed focus on mentorship and guidance, for the next generation of legal practitioners.

As part of the ceremony, certificates were presented to the new inductees, with Umaru Abdullahi awarding those confirmed as Life Benchers and Justice Belgore presenting certificates to the new Benchers.

The following distinguished legal practitioners were inducted as Life Benchers and Benchers during the ceremony:

Life Benchers

Hon. Justice Adama Iyayi-Lamikanra; Hon. Justice Ngozi P. Emehelu; Hon. Justice Mosunmola Dipeolu; Chief Offiong E.B. Offiong, SAN; Olori Olufunmi Oluyede; Prof Isa Hayatu Chiroma, SAN; Razak Osayande Isenalumhe; Lady Gloria Umoren; Prof Mike Ozekhome, SAN; Prof Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, SAN; Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara; Mr Solomon Umoh, SAN; Senator Opeyemi Bamidele; Senator Michael Idele; A. K. Jingi; Hon. Justice John T. Tsoho; Hon. Justice Ejembi Eko, JSC (Rtd); HM Hon. Justice Sidi Bage, JSC (Rtd) and Hon. Justice Fatima Ommi Akinbami

Benchers

Dr Muhammed Alimi AbdulRazaq; Chief Chris Uche, SAN; Hon. Eberechi Adele, SAN; Mr Jude Nnodum, SAN; Dr. Livy Uzoukwu, SAN; Mr Tunde Oyewole; Mr Mohammed Bello Adoke, SAN; Hon. Justice Nwaigwe A. Anselm; Senator Ibn Na'Allah; Mr Mahmud Abubakar Magaji, SAN; Mr. Y. C. Maikyau, SAN; Mr Faruk Sani; Prof Sani Muhammad Adam; Mr Ebunolu Adegboruwa, SAN; Chief (Mrs) Victoria O. Awomolo, SAN; Mr Emeka Obegolu, SAN; Marvel E. Akpoyibo; Dr Solomon Arase; Kehinde O. Ogunwumiju, SAN and Hon. Onofiok Akpan Luke.



Dr Uju Agomoh

'Large Percentage of Inmates are Awaiting Trial'

Challenges in the Nigerian correctional system are complex, and appear to have defied every possible solution so far. Even the change of name from Nigerian Prisons to Nigerian Correctional Centre, doesn't seem to have made any positive impact, either in its functioning as such, or in the perception of the public. The way it is run, also hasn't helped matters, and things seem to have gone from worse to deplorable and shocking. **Dr Uju Agomoh, the Executive Director of Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA)** in this engaging interview with **Onikepo Braithwaite and Jude Igbanoi** gave a holistic view of the Nigerian system of detention of inmates, most of whom are awaiting trial detainees. She proffers a panacea to ameliorating some of these challenges, but concludes that the system is in dire need of total reform, including the need to improve the conditions of service of the staff of the Correctional Service

As Executive Director of Prisoners Rehabilitation and Welfare Action (PRAWA), your NGO has been the arrowhead of reforms in Nigeria's correctional system. Today, the state of our Correctional Centres is said to be not only appalling, but inhumane, more or less unfit for human habitation, being compared to the worst prisons in the world like Black Beach Prison, Equatorial Guinea and Antanimora Prison in Madagascar. Kindly, tell us about the conditions in the Nigerian prisons and how they have been able to deteriorate so badly. It appears that the authorities do not consider that inmates have any fundamental rights

The state of Nigerian Correctional Centres is indeed, deeply concerning. Many of the correctional facilities suffer from overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of adequate medical care, and substandard living conditions, making them inhumane and unfit for rehabilitation. Cells meant for a few inmates house dozens, sometimes hundreds, leading to poor ventilation, disease outbreaks, and heightened violence among inmates.

The primary factors contributing to this decline include:

i. Overuse of pretrial detention: Over 67% of inmates in the country's custodial centres are not convicted (including awaiting trials), exacerbating overcrowding. In some custodial centres, non-convicted inmates constitute up to 87%, 92% and more. Most overcrowded custodial centres are in cosmopolitan cities, and there are about 30 of these where this is really high.

ii. Underfunding and neglect: Many Facilities lack adequate Government funding and sustainable processes for maintenance, food, healthcare, and rehabilitation programmes.

iii. Poor implementation of relevant legal framework: Despite the passage of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019, enforcement of inmate rights and humane treatment remains weak, likewise lack of adequate implementation and/or utilisation of non-custodial sanctions. There seems to be an obsession of the Judiciary with the use of imprisonment. Imprisonment should be a measure of last resort, but, in most instances, it is used as a measure of first resort.

iv. Corruption and administrative inefficiencies across the entire justice system: Mismanagement of resources and poor oversight further degrade conditions.

As a follow up to the first question,

"Many of the correctional facilities suffer from overcrowding, poor sanitation, lack of adequate medical care, and substandard living conditions, making them inhumane and unfit for rehabilitation….Over 67% of inmates in the country's custodial centres are not convicted (including awaiting trials), exacerbating overcrowding. In some custodial centres, non-convicted inmates constitute up to 87%, 92% and more"

'Large Percentage of Inmates are Awaiting Trial'

what, in your view, can be done to ameliorate these challenges, so that the conditions in Nigerian Correctional Facilities can at least meet the basic UN Standards for prison conditions which include decent facilities and humane treatment of inmates, with a view to rehabilitating them

To bring Nigerian correctional facilities up to UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), the following must be prioritised:

The simple answer to this is, let the laws be implemented effectively. The Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 needs to be fully and effectively implemented. Example, this will include the following:

i. Advancement/effective utilisation of non-custodial sentencing, parole, probation, suspended sentencing and community service.

ii. Adequate funding and the allocation of sufficient budgetary support for facility maintenance, food, medical care, effective implementation of non-custodial measures and rehabilitation programmes.

iii. Mechanisms towards expedited trials, improving case management, and ensuring legal representation, especially legal aid support for all inmates.

iv. Capacity building for correctional officers: Officers should receive training in human rights, rehabilitation, and mental health.

v. Partnerships with NGOs and private sector: Organisations like PRAWA continue to provide legal aid, psychological support, and skills training to inmates, but, these efforts need more collaboration and Government support. Partnerships with professional associations is also key.

vi. The placement of correctional service on the concurrent legislative list should take effect. States should adopt the State Model Correctional Law recently developed, or amend to their taste. At the very least, States should take up the responsibility of feeding and rehabilitation of inmates charged with State offences. I strongly believe that if this is done, especially with respect to the feeding, we will have a reduction in the use (overuse) of imprisonment. This will certainly translate to reduction in the use of pre-trial detention, reduction in overcrowding of custodial centres, reduction in cost, increase in the use of non-custodial measures, etc.

Many wonder why our Prisons were renamed Correctional Centres, when in most cases incarceration in Nigerian prisons appears to exacerbate criminal behaviour instead of rehabilitation. Why is this so? What is the rate of recidivism? Are there even enough Rehabilitation Programmes in the Correctional Centres?

Yes, despite the renaming to Correctional Centres, many Facilities still function primarily as punitive institutions, rather than genuine rehabilitation centres. There is something in a name. The name correctional centres is to



Dr Uju Agomoh

enable all envision and live to the new transformative function of corrections, rather than a punitive stance. It is important to note that the renaming was not merely a change in nomenclature. There were clear provisions of the 2019 Act, that are aimed at ensuring that these Facilities become truly correctional Facilities. This is why I emphasised the need to fully and effectively implement the provisions of the 2019 Act. The enactment of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act of 2019 transformed the former Nigerian Prison Service into the Nigerian Correctional Service (NCoS), with two distinct mandates:

The Custodial Service, which manages inmates in detention facilities, ensuring humane treatment, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

The Non-Custodial Service, which oversees alternatives to imprisonment such as parole, probation, suspended sentences, restorative justice, and community service.

This legislative shift, was intended to move the system from a punitive model to a correctional and rehabilitative approach. However, implementation challenges persist, preventing the full realisation of this vision. The following are the Challenges Affecting Rehabilitation in Correctional Centres:

i. Many correctional facilities lack comprehensive rehabilitation programmes that address the root causes of criminal behaviour.

ii. There are insufficient support systems to help ex-inmates reintegrate into society, leading to a high likelihood of reoffending.

iii. Overcrowding, poor hygiene, and inadequate mental health care contribute to psychological damage and learned criminal behaviour, making rehabilitation difficult.

Regarding the Rate of Recidivism in Nigeria, Studies indicate that recidivism in Nigeria remains high, often exceeding 60%, due to a combination of factors namely: economic marginalisation, societal stigma, and ineffective reintegration programmes. Many former inmates struggle to secure employment or social acceptance, increasing their likelihood of reoffending.

Are There Enough Rehabilitation Programmes? While some rehabilitation initiatives exist, such as vocational training and educational programmes, these are not widespread and often underfunded. A well-functioning correctional system requires structured rehabilitation programmes, mental health services, and stronger collaboration with community-based reintegration initiatives, to ensure that inmates leave the system better equipped to contribute positively to society.

How is it that Juvenile suspects/offenders end up in adult prisons? Is this not contrary to the Child's Rights Act and Administration of Criminal Justice Act?

The presence of juvenile offenders in adult correctional facilities, is a direct violation of the Child's Rights Act (2003) and the Nigerian Correctional Service Act of 2019, both of which mandate separate facilities and special protections for children in conflict with the law. However, enforcement remains weak, due to several systemic challenges.

The Child's Rights Act 2003 (CRA), along with equivalent Child Rights Laws (CRL) in States that have domesticated it, provides robust provisions for the establishment of approved children's institutions to house, rehabilitate, and reform different categories of child offenders. Notably, Lagos State, in its Child Rights Law, went a step further by not only providing for approved children's institutions, but also young adult institutions for individuals above 18 years but below 21 years.

Challenges Leading to Juvenile Offenders in Adult Facilities are as follows:

i. Currently, only three functional Borstal Institutions exist in Nigeria, which are grossly inadequate to serve the entire country. These Borstal institutions are located in Kaduna (North West), Abeokuta (South West), and Ilorin (North Central).

ii. Many States lack operational remand homes, leaving child offenders with no alternative but to be housed in adult correctional facilities.

iii. Also, some States have neither Borstal Institutions nor Remand Homes, meaning that juveniles in conflict with the law are routinely detained in adult facilities, exposing them to abuse and criminal influences.

iv. There is also the issue of Lack of Proper Age Verification Mechanisms, where in the absence of birth registration or reliable documentation, many juveniles are wrongly classified as adults and detained accordingly.

v. Insufficient collaboration between courts, relevant stakeholders and correctional authorities, results in poor case management and failure to divert children from the adult system.

To address this issue, there is a need for stronger collaboration between the Judiciary, correctional services, and child welfare agencies, to ensure that children are properly identified and placed in appropriate rehabilitation facilities. Additionally, State Governments must prioritise the establishment and operationalisation of Remand Homes, Approved Children Institutions and Borstal Institutions, to prevent further violations of children's rights.

Statistics show that out of 79,863 inmates in Nigerian Correctional Centres, there are only 26,571 convicts. Why do we have an overwhelming number of 53,292 awaiting trail inmates? Where can we place the problem, the Police, the Prosecutors/Ministries of Justice, Interior, or the Judiciary?

cont'd on page VIII

"While some argue that private-sector involvement could lead to better infrastructure, efficiency, and reduced Government expenditure, there are serious concerns about human rights abuses, profit-driven motives, and lack of oversight. Some of the reports we have received in some of the countries where some of this has been piloted such South Africa and the UK, do not excite us"

'Large Percentage of Inmates are Awaiting Trial'

cont'd from page VII

This high rate of pretrial detention clearly underscores the urgent need for criminal justice reforms. The issue is systemic, with multiple contributing factors linked to the police, prosecuting agencies, the Judiciary, and correctional authorities.

Key factors resulting in the High number of Awaiting Trial Population include -

1. Slow Judicial Processes and Case Backlogs

The judicial system in Nigeria is heavily congested, with courts overwhelmed by an excessive number of cases. Many trials take years due to inefficiencies, inadequate manpower, and procedural delays. The lack of strict adherence to timelines for case disposal under the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 (ACJA) results in prolonged detentions.

2. Frequent Adjournments and Limited Legal Representation

Frequent adjournments are common due to absenteeism by prosecutors, defence counsel, or Judges. The high cost of legal representation prevents many indigent Defendants from securing Lawyers, leaving them without proper defence. The Legal Aid Council of Nigeria (LACON) is underfunded, and unable to provide sufficient pro bono legal representation to indigent inmates.

3. Poor Case Management by Law Enforcement and Prosecuting Agencies

The Police often arrest individuals without proper investigation, leading to prolonged detention without trial. Lack of coordination between law enforcement and the prosecutorial departments, means that many cases do not progress in a timely manner. The Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP) sometimes delays issuing legal advice, leaving suspects in detention for extended periods.

4. Limited Access to Bail for Indigent Defendants

Many detainees qualify for bail, but remain incarcerated due to their inability to meet bail conditions, which often require financial sureties or property ownership. Magistrates and Judges are often reluctant to grant bail, particularly in capital offences, even when suspects have spent excessive time in detention. Enforcement of non-custodial measures, as provided under the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 and the ACJA 2015, remains weak.

5. Weak Oversight and Lack of Coordination Among Key Stakeholders

The Judiciary, Ministry of Interior and Nigerian Correctional Service that can facilitate the decongestion of correctional centres, have limited mechanisms to ensure detainees are not held beyond reasonable time. There is also insufficient data-sharing between correctional facilities, courts, and law enforcement agencies, further contributing to case stagnation.

6. Non implementation of Section 12(4-12) of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 which requires the In-charge correctional centres and the State Controllers to trigger an early warning signal by notifying the State Chief Judge, State Attorney-General, State Prerogative of Mercy etc whenever the correctional centre population has exceeded (or about to exceed) the centre's designated capacity, and provides mechanisms to reduce the population and thus, prevent overcrowding.

With regard who is responsible, the problem of prolonged pretrial detention is systemic, and can be attributed to multiple institutions in Nigeria's criminal justice system:

All players within the justice sector are responsible. The Police, for instance, contribute in the role they play in arresting and detaining individuals without proper investigation or strong evidence. Failing to conclude investigations in a timely manner.

The Prosecutors and Ministries of Justice contribute theirs, in the delays encountered in filing charges, issuing legal advice, and prosecuting cases. Poor case management also leads to prolonged detentions.

On the part of the Judiciary, you see issues around Case backlogs, frequent adjournments, and failure to grant bail or enforce speedy trial provisions of the ACJA 2015.

On the part of the Ministry of Interior and Nigerian Correctional Service, there are issues around lack of enforcement of non-custodial measures and ineffective custodial centre decongestion strategies and the non-implementation of the Section 12(4-12) of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019.

To reduce the high population of awaiting trial inmates, a multi-pronged approach is required:

1. Fast-Tracking Cases and Reducing Court Delays; Enforce strict timelines for case disposal, in line with ACJA provisions; Introduce special courts to handle pretrial detention cases expeditiously; Establish Judiciary Monitoring Committees to track case progress.

2. Strengthening Legal Aid Services; Increase funding and capacity for the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria (LACON) to provide more pro bono legal representation.

3. Improving Police Investigation and Prosecutorial Efficiency - Train Police Officers and prosecutors on proper case management; Enforce stricter guidelines on arrests and pretrial detentions, ensuring cases proceed to trial faster.

4. Expanding Non-Custodial Measures: Increase the use of bail, electronic tagging, probation, and community service instead of detaining non-violent offenders. Establish monitoring mechanisms, to ensure non-custodial measures are effectively implemented.

5. Strengthening Oversight Mechanisms: Make Magistrates' visits to detention facilities (as provided for in Section 34 of the ACJA 2015) more effective, by ensuring cases of prolonged detention are reviewed. Enhance data-sharing mechanisms among law enforcement agencies, courts, and correctional facilities for better case tracking.

The overwhelming number of awaiting trial inmates in Nigeria's correctional facilities is a clear failure of multiple institutions, including the Police, Judiciary, and prosecutorial agencies. Without urgent reforms, pretrial detention will continue to drive overcrowding and human rights violations. A holistic approach that includes legal reforms, judicial efficiency, better Police investigations, and non-custodial sentencing is essential to addressing this crisis.



Dr Uju Agomoh

"…. the Honourable Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, set up a 5-Member Investigative Panel on Alleged Corruption and Other Violations Against the Nigerian Correctional Service….I am the Secretary of the Investigative Panel. We investigated the allegation about the cross-dresser, and found no evidence supporting the allegation. We saw a lot of evidence indicating that he stayed in the Correctional Centre, but that he was availed several privileges"

The Correctional Centres are seriously overcrowded and many inmates are reported to be HIV positive, as well as having other debilitating and contagious diseases. They are also seriously malnourished. What kind of medical facilities are available to inmates? Are the any mental health services for inmates who may require mental health support? What is the suicide rate in Nigerian prisons? What do NGOs like PRAWA do to assist in the address of these medical issues?

Nigerian Correctional Centres lack adequate medical facilities, drugs and health personnel. Some are reported to be suffering from HIV, tuberculosis, malnutrition, and mental illnesses. We do not have data on Suicide rates in Correctional Centres. Recently, PRAWA in partnership with the Nigerian Correctional Service, and National Association of Clinical Psychologists with the support of International IDEA held a capacity building workshop in Benin City, Edo State in November 2024 on Mental Health and Justice, including enhancing Mental Health in Correctional Centre. The Association of Psychiatrists in Nigeria, also attended. We are working on expanding this, as well as the full implementation of Section 24 of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019 which, amongst other things, provides for the establishment of State Mental Health Board for correctional service. Members of the State Mental Health Board have been appointed, and Mental Health Guidelines/Protocols already developed. There are also more ongoing and planned interventions on this, to ensure they achieve the needed impact. Also, PRAWA, with the support of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), has since 1998 been providing interventions on rehabilitation of torture victims including inmates, ex-inmates and youths at risks. We are also working to encourage other health professionals to support the Nigerian Correctional Service in whatever way they can. There are also some other NGOs and Faith Based Organisations that provide some medical support to the Nigerian Correctional Service. What will be most helpful, will be a more comprehensive and sustainable

cont'd on page IX

'Large Percentage of Inmates are Awaiting Trial'

cont'd from page VIII

strategy regarding this. This is what we are currently advocating.

Do you agree with the suggestion that private companies and individual business people be licensed to build and operate Correctional Centres?

The privatisation of correctional facilities remains a highly controversial topic, with both advantages and significant risks. While some argue that private-sector involvement could lead to better infrastructure, efficiency, and reduced Government expenditure, there are serious concerns about human rights abuses, profit-driven motives, and lack of oversight. Some of the reports we have received in some of the countries where some of these has been piloted such South Africa and the UK do not excite us.

Arguments for privatisation of Correctional Facilities include the fact that, Private investment could lead to better-equipped correctional centres with modern facilities. And also, the benefit that Governments could reduce financial burdens by outsourcing prison management, while focusing on policy and oversight. And, that the private sector might introduce better rehabilitation, vocational training, and reintegration programmes for inmates.

Arguments Against Privatisation of Correctional Centres, buttress the issue of Profit over rehabilitation that private companies may prioritise profit over inmate welfare, leading to cost-cutting on healthcare, nutrition, and security. Issues around Human rights concerns, that without strong regulation and oversight, there could be severe human rights violations due to forced labour, poor treatment, and lack of rehabilitation focus.

Accountability and corruption risks: Increased risk of corruption, where profit motives lead to overcrowding (keeping more inmates for financial gain), or abuse of power by private operators.

Issues around Ethical concerns: The fact that the justice system should be focused on rehabilitation, not profit-making, which may create perverse incentives to maintain high incarceration rates.

Lately, there have been different scandals concerning Nigerian Correctional Centres. First, one in which cross-dresser Bobrisky was alleged to have claimed that he stayed 'off-campus' in an apartment instead of within Kirikiri Correctional Centre, and the recent appalling news report that inmates in Warri Correctional Centre, Delta State, find a way of coming out to commit robberies in Edo State, have placed many in a state of shock and worry. Obviously, both scenarios cannot be achieved without the connivance of Prison Officials. Can this be true? Kindly, comment on this

You may be aware that the Honourable Minister of Interior, Dr Olubunmi Tunji-Ojo, set up a 5-Member Investigative Panel on Alleged Corruption and Other Violations Against the Nigerian Correctional Service. The Chairperson of the Investigative Panel is Dr Magdalene Ajani (the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Interior). I am the Secretary of the Investigative Panel. We investigated the allegation about the cross-dresser, and found no evidence supporting the allegation. We saw a lot of evidence indicating that he stayed in Correctional Centre, but that he was availed several privileges. In our first phase report, we stated clearly our findings, and the fact that the second phase of the Panel's work we are looking into these privileges and other other issues to identify and investigate issues of systemic corruption, and make appropriate recommendations.



Dr Uju Agomoh

I read a communication from the Nigeria Police Force, denying the news about the alleged robberies by some inmates in Warri. These and other allegations, need to be thoroughly investigated. If it is found that they are fake news intentionally perpetrated by some persons, they should be duly prosecuted to deter others. Someone told me that fake sensational news, helps drive social media follower-ship.

There is also the allegation that a good number of Correctional Centre Officials are corrupt, and allow inmates all sorts of privileges including conjugal visits, all for a price. Is there any truth in this allegation? How decent are the conditions of service of Correctional Facility Officers?

There have been allegations that point to the prevalence of corruption in the Nigerian correctional centres, such as:

i. Bribery for privileges such that Inmates with financial means can pay for - better living conditions, access to mobile phones, better food, or even unauthorised movement outside the facility.

ii. Illegal conjugal visits – While Nigeria does not officially allow conjugal visits, there are allegations reporting that some inmates gain access to such privileges through bribes.

iii. Smuggling of contraband – Corrupt officials enable the entry of drugs, mobile phones, and weapons into correctional facilities, compromising security and discipline.

All of the above and others, are part of the focus of the Investigative Panel. Let's wait to have the Panel conclude its investigations to have a clearer view of the actual situation on ground and ensure that swift and effective actions are taken to address any observed violations.

Conditions of Service for Correctional Officers?

The low wages and poor working conditions of correctional officers contribute to corruption. Key challenges faced by officers include:

i. Low salaries that are insufficient, compared to the risks and responsibilities of the job

II. Inadequate training and resources, making it difficult to effectively manage security and rehabilitation programmes.

iii. Poor working conditions with overcrowded facilities, high-stress environments, and lack of mental health support for officers.

To reduce corruption there should be:

a. Better remuneration and incentives for correctional officers, to reduce vulnerability to bribery.

b. Improved training and professionalisation, to instil ethical standards and security awareness.

c. Regular security audits and surprise inspections, to detect and eliminate corrupt practices.

d. Strict penalties and prosecution for officers found guilty of misconduct. In fact, effective oversight is needed, which increases the certainty of detection of most (if not all) corrupt practices.

What can you say about the almost frequent prison breaks, which have become a recurrent decimal in Nigeria? Is it that the Facilities are no longer secure?

There is a lot that can be done to prevent this, including the urgent and effective implementation of Section 28 of the Nigerian Correctional Service Act 2019. This includes the provision of adequate security gadgets, and fortification of correctional centres. Key on this, is also the proper risks and needs assessments of all inmates upon admission into custodial centres, and the proper designation of correctional centres and application of appropriate correctional regimes according to the risk level of the inmates and the security designation of the correctional centres.

You just attended a meeting of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture in Geneva, Switzerland. What were the highlights of the meeting? How good or bad is Nigeria's record regarding torturing of suspects, detainees and inmates by law enforcement agencies?

This is the 55th Session of the United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT). I am a member of the subcommittee. The subcommittee is made up of 25 experts elected by the UN (Member countries that have signed the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture, Cruel, Inhumane, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment - OPCAT). The mandate of the subcommittee, amongst other things, is to visit all places of deprivation of liberty in all countries of the world - these include Police cells, prisons, migration centres, social care homes, psychiatric homes, etc.

During this recent meeting we prepared/reviewed our annual work-plan, engaged State parties and other relevant stakeholders; held regional training for national preventive mechanisms, received reports of country visits conducted by the SPT, etc.

Thank you.

"To reduce corruption there should be….Better remuneration and incentives for correctional officers, to reduce vulnerability to bribery….Improved training and professionalisation, to instil ethical standards and security awareness….Regular security audits and surprise inspections, to detect and eliminate corrupt practices….Strict penalties and prosecution for officers found guilty of misconduct"

TALKING CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY



PROF MIKE OZEKHOME, SAN

0809 889 8888 SMS ONLY

Should the Judiciary be the Final Arbiter of the People's Ballot (Part 3)

Introduction

The last episode of this treatise, we dealt with the sub-themes of the evils of protracted litigation; the effect of strict application of the provisions of Section 135 of the Evidence Act on proof beyond reasonable doubt and INEC's disobedience of court orders. Thereafter, we proffered certain solutions including addressing inadequate infrastructure. In today's piece, we shall review a number of case studies which illuminate judicial aberrations, both in Nigeria and beyond, starting with Kenya. Read on.

Case Studies Illustrating Judicial Aberrations Globally and in Nigeria

The judicial anomalies stemming from ***Bush v Gore*** **(2000).** In **Bush v Gore (2000) 531 U.S. 98 (2000) (per curiam), the** United States Supreme Court resolved the legal battle over the **2000 Presidential election,** effectively granting the Presidency to George W. Bush. In a per curiam opinion supported by five Justices, the Court overturned the ruling delivered on **8th December, 2000,** by the Florida Supreme Court that had mandated a **manual recount of all "undervoted"** ballots in the State. The Court found that the procedures for the manual recount failed to meet the fundamental standard for fair treatment of voters as required by the **Equal Protection Clause** of the **Fourteenth Amendment,** resulting in "unequal assessment of ballots" in different ways.

Specifically, the Florida Supreme Court had not established a consistent standard for determining "voter intent". This led to discrepancies, with some counties manually recounting both overvoted and "undervoted" ballots, while others focused solely on the "undervotes". Additionally, the certified vote total in at least one county, reflected the outcome of a partially completed manual count. The Court also ruled that under Florida law, no election contest proceedings could continue past December 12, which was six days before the Electoral College convened. Since the Supreme Court delivered its decision at 10 p.m. on December 12, Vice President Gore's challenge to the certified vote totals could not proceed further, resulting in **Florida's 25 electoral votes being awarded to Bush.**

While some commentators have supported the Court's reasoning, and a few others have backed the final ruling, the majority have criticised the decision as lacking in principles and even being unlawful. The critiques have varied, but many include accusations that the Court acted with hypocrisy. The per curiam opinion introduced an unprecedented use of the Equal Protection Clause to intervene in the established state responsibility of overseeing elections. Additionally, the remedy imposed by the Court—halting the election contest—was rooted in its interpretation of Florida election law, which seemingly overstepped the Florida Supreme Court's authority to interpret Florida statutes. Nonetheless, the five justices who signed onto that opinion had, in the past, emphasised the need to honour "the autonomy, the decision-making ability, and the sovereign capacity of the States;"**(Alden v Maine, 527 U.S. 706, 750 (1999)**. and had struck down various congressional acts on those grounds. Many critics argue that this election decision's interference in "functions essential to [the separate] and independent existence" **(National League of Cities v Usery, 426 U.S. 833, 845 (1976),** of the States conflicts with the principle that the Rehnquist Court had been built on the foundation of respecting states' rights, not undermining them.

The Court had rigorously enforced the Constitution's restrictions on state authority, especially through doctrines like pre-emption and the dormant Commerce Clause, often invalidating state actions within their traditional police powers due to conflicts with national interests. In cases concerning federalism where Congress's scope of authority wasn't in question, the Court had typically prioritised federal policy and the national economy over claims of state sovereignty, even while recognising the impact of these rulings on the federal-state dynamic. While the **Rehnquist Court's "federalism revolution"** had introduced new constraints on Congressional power and somewhat increased state autonomy, it had not broadly supported state political independence.



The case of **Bush v Gore** exemplifies this trend. It represents another instance where the Rehnquist Court asserted the Judiciary's role—or as it put it, its **"unsought responsibility"**—to address significant constitutional issues instead of deferring to political mechanisms. Had the Court not intervened to settle the election dispute, it seemed probable that Congress would have had to determine whether the manual recount of 'undervoted' ballots mandated by the Florida Supreme Court aligned with the Equal Protection Clause and the "Manner directed" Clause of Article II. If Vice President Gore had succeeded in the hand count, the Florida legislature would almost certainly have appointed an alternate set of electors for Bush, leading to both sets of electoral votes being sent to Congress. Congress would then have been tasked, under the procedures of the Electoral Count Act, with deciding which slate of electors was legally appointed. By taking on the case headlong and ruling as it did, the Court affirmed its role as the appropriate body to interpret these significant constitutional questions, by-passing the democratic process.

Kenya

The Groundbreaking Electoral Reforms in Kenya's Election Cycles

Kenya's highly contested 2022 Presidential election thrust the Judiciary's role in adjudicating significant political disputes into the spotlight. This was not an isolated incident of political turmoil in the nation, nor was it the first time the Supreme Court intervened to resolve such contentions. On **August 15, 2022,** the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) of Kenya declared Deputy President **William Ruto** the victor of the Presidential race, having secured 50.5% of the vote over his rival, **Raila Odinga.** This proclamation, however, was met with considerable controversy, as the IEBC's Vice-Chair and three other Commissioners publicly denounced the outcome. On **August 22, 2022,** Odinga formally lodged a petition with the Kenyan Supreme Court, challenging the election results proclaimed by the IEBC Chair. Given the escalating uncertainty and the potential for the Supreme Court to invalidate the election, which could precipitate significant instability in a nation with a history of election-related violence, the court dismissed the petition and affirmed Ruto's victory. This was not the inaugural instance in which the Kenyan Supreme Court had adjudicated a presidential election dispute, as it had addressed similar cases in 2013 and 2017. To fully comprehend the Supreme Court's role in safeguarding the legitimacy of presidential elections, it is imperative to reflect on the 2007–2008 Kenyan Crisis, a period of intense political, economic, and humanitarian turmoil that engulfed the nation following the announcement of former President Mwai Kibaki as the victor of the **December 27, 2007,** presidential election.

The Independent Review Commission (IREC), alternatively known as the **Kriegler Commission,** was constituted with the mandate to scrutinise, inter alia, the inadequacies within the constitutional and legal frameworks governing presidential elections in the nation. In **October, 2008,** the Kriegler Commission disseminated its findings. One key conclusion reached by the Commission was that "a material contributor to the tension …was the absence of an effective electoral dispute resolution (EDR) mechanism to resolve the mounting challenges to the integrity of the [presidential] results". The Independent Review and Evaluation Commission (IREC) proposed the enactment of a specific law establishing a dedicated **Electoral Dispute Resolution Court** to handle appeal cases stemming from initial dispute resolution stages conducted by the Electoral Commission of Kenya. Nevertheless, the framers of Kenya's 2010 Constitution declined this proposal, choosing instead to vest exclusive jurisdiction over presidential election disputes in the Supreme Court.The Supreme Court encountered its first significant test in 2013, when a challenge to the presidential election results was lodged by **Odinga** against the then-President-elect, **Uhuru Kenyatta.** The ruling was eagerly awaited by both Kenyan citizens and the international community, with a sense of considerable apprehension. On March 30, 2013, the Court issued a unanimous verdict, confirming that the administration of the presidential election complied with both constitutional and legal stipulations. This judgment marked an extraordinary achievement for the Court, as the candidates recognised its jurisdiction and accepted the ruling.

In August 2017, the Supreme Court of Kenya once again adjudicated a dispute arising from a presidential election. The officially declared results indicated that the incumbent, **President Kenyatta,** had secured re-election with **54% of the vote.** Initially, opposition leader, Raila Odinga, declined to initiate a legal challenge to the election's integrity. However, shortly before the filing deadline, Odinga submitted a petition contesting the veracity of the results. In a landmark ruling on **September 1, 2017,** the Supreme Court annulled the 2017 presidential election results, citing a failure of the electoral process to adhere to constitutional standards mandating elections to be "simple, secure, transparent, and verifiable". Nonetheless, contrary to Odinga's assertions, the Court found no corroborating evidence of fraud, hacking, or misconduct. Despite pervasive doubts regarding the credibility of a rerun, a fresh presidential election was conducted on **October 26, 2017,** in which President Kenyatta was re-elected with **98.3% of the votes.** The Supreme Court's unprecedented decision garnered significant international acclaim and support, with notable voices such as the head of the 2017 European Union Election Observation Mission in Kenya, commending the Court for its resilience in the face of substantial pressure, intimidation, and contestation surrounding the presidential election dispute. She noted that the ruling exemplified the Judiciary's capacity to act autonomously by delivering a judgement unfavourable to the ruling party."

This familiarity with the resolution of presidential election disputes enabled the Court to provide stability during the profound uncertainty following the 2022 elections. **Kenyan journalist Patrick Gathara** observed that "Kenya has gradually and deliberately been reshaping its identity and democratic framework". The willingness of candidates to address their political and legal disputes through legal channels, rather than resorting to violence, reflects the growing trust placed in the Judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court especially. Although "doubts over the independence of Kenya's Judiciary persist", recent Supreme Court decisions opposing government interests have significantly mitigated these concerns. For instance, the unanimous pronouncement in May, 2021, by a five-Judge Panel of the High Court in Nairobi that the Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Bill, 2020, was unconstitutional represents a pivotal judicial decision. Journalist and commentator, **Ferdinand Omondi,** contended that this ruling is "arguably the most consequential judgement by Kenyan courts since the nullification of President Uhuru Kenyatta's election victory in 2017." In an era when judicial independence across East Africa faces increasing challenges, Kenya's recent trajectory illustrates the critical role that judicial capacity-building plays in fostering democratic consolidation and mitigating the risk of future conflict. In the eyes of the populace, the Kenyan Supreme Court is a reliable final arbiter in dispensing justice in the determination of election petitions, as they have proven to be an independent body that adjudicates such sensitive cases based on their merits, especially electoral disputes. (To be continued)

"In the eyes of the populace, the Kenyan Supreme Court is a reliable final arbiter in dispensing justice in the determination of election petitions, as they have proven to be an independent body that adjudicates such sensitive cases based on their merits, especially electoral disputes"

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

"The rule of law and the independence of the judiciary underpin our democracy and lie at the heart of our way of life. They are the very cornerstone of our freedoms". **(David Lidington)**

TRIBUTE

Engineer Moses Idele: A Life of Dedication, Passion and Legacy

By Uwa Idele

Engineer Moses Omozuwa Idele's name is synonymous with dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to his family, profession, and community. As we commemorate the 15th anniversary of his passing, we celebrate the life of a remarkable man whose memory continues to inspire and uplift.

Early Years

Engineer Moses Omozuwa Idele was born on the 29th of September 1944, into the family of Mr. Idelegbabon Igbinoba and Madam Aharyare Idelegbagbon in Utekon Village, Ovia North East Local Government of Edo State. He was the third of four children. Tragically, he lost his father when he was merely four years old. Consequently, he moved to his mother's village at Iyowa, where he began his primary education at St. Anthony Catholic Primary School, Iyowa. Despite the absence of a paternal figure and a tangible memory of his father, Moses' resilience and determination shone through. He was forever in search of a photograph of his late father, offering a reward to anyone who could provide one—a testament to his longing for a connection with his roots.

Academics and Career

Moses' academic journey began at St. Anthony Catholic Primary School in Iyowa. His exceptional academic prowess earned him admission to Aquinas College Akure in 1960, where he excelled remarkably. Due to his outstanding performance, he received a double promotion from Form four and passed his West African School Certificate in 1964 with flying colors, completing his secondary education in just four years. During his secondary school years, he lived with his late brother, Professor S.I. Idele, whose influence and support were instrumental in shaping Moses' academic and professional future.

Continuing his academic journey, Moses attended the Federal School of Science in Lagos between 1965 and 1967, where he achieved his A' levels, enabling him to gain admission to the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife. In 1967, he began his studies in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, majoring in electrical power distribution. Moses graduated in 1970 with honors, marking the beginning of a distinguished engineering career.

In 1971, Moses commenced his professional journey as a Pupil Electrical Engineer with the Midwestern Region Civil Service, having been employed by the Civil Service Commission. In 1974, he was seconded to the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) as an Executive Engineer Grade 2. He returned to the Ministry of Works and Transport (M.W & T) in 1976, where he worked in various capacities, including the headquarters and out-station departments. Notably, he served as the zonal Chief Mechanic and Electrical Engineer at M.W & T Auchi from 1978 to 1979.



Late Engr. Idele

In pursuit of further professional development, Moses left M.W & T in October 1982 for an in-service training with the North West Electricity Board in the United Kingdom, sponsored by the British Electricity Board International. He completed a one-year intensive training program in distribution engineering for overseas graduate engineers. Upon his return to Nigeria, Moses was employed as an Assistant Chief Electrical Engineer in M.W & T in 1984 and served as a board member of the Edo State Rural Electrification Board until 1986.

In 1987, Moses was seconded to the Public Utilities Board (PUB) as Deputy General Manager (Electrical). By 1989, he had transferred his services to PUB, where he eventually acted as General Manager between 1993 and 1994. During this period, the PUB was split into the Rural Electrification Board and the Water Board, leading to Moses' appointment as General Manager of the Rural Electrification Board in 1994. He worked tirelessly in this role until his premature retirement in 1996. Throughout his career, Moses commissioned numerous electrical projects within Edo State and the old Bendel State.

Despite his retirement, Moses' passion for his work remained unwavering. He carried out several rural electrification projects as a private consultant/contractor for both Edo State and Delta State Governments in the capacity of Managing Director of Hyteck Limited.

Professional Academic Qualifications

- Aquinas College Akure (1960-1964)
- West African School Certificate (1964)
- Federal School of Science, Lagos (1965-1967)
- Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife (1967-1970)
- University of London GCE A' level (1967)
- Engineering Course at the Thompson Foundation, Manchester, England (1974)
- Certificate of Training: One-year intensive training program in distribution engineering for overseas graduate engineers (1983)
- Member Nigerian Society of Engineers (1982)
- Registered Engineer in the Council for the Regulation of Engineers in Nigeria (1984)
- Member Institute of Electrical Engineers, London (1984)
- Chartered Engineer registered by the Engineering Council of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (1985)
- Fellow Nigerian Society of Engineers (1993)
- Fellow Nigerian Institution of Electrical Engineers (1994)
- Merit Award presented by NSE (1994)
- Member of GDM (Social & Political Organizations) (1997)
- Nominated for Edo State Senatorial seat (GDM) (1997)
- Managing Director, Hyteck Limited (1996-2010)

Family and Social Life

Married to Elder Mrs Elizabeth Izegbuwa Idele nee Ogbeifun, Moses has 9 children, 2 girls and 7 boys, He was a loving and devoted father, deeply passionate about his children's education and career choices. His commitment extended beyond his immediate family, as he assisted many close friends and relatives in various aspects of their lives, including education and work. He maintained a close bond with his brothers (now late) and his only surviving sister.

His contributions to his village, Utekon, were profound, particularly his instrumental role in bringing electricity to the community—a gesture that continues to be remembered with immense gratitude.

Moses also enjoyed a vibrant social life, often spending time with friends after working hours at the Benin Club, where he was a member. In his middle age, he played squash, mostly during weekends in the Benin Club squash section, and he had a particular fondness for watching football and wrestling matches.

Last Days

In the twilight of his life, Moses became a dedicated Christian and was baptized in the Church of God Mission. He developed a close relationship with his pastor and church members, finding solace and community within the church. Tragically, on the last Sunday before his death, he was preparing to attend church when he suddenly fell ill.

Legacy

Fifteen years have passed since Engineer Moses Omozuwa Idele's departure, yet his legacy continues to shine brightly. His contributions to the field of electrical engineering, his unwavering dedication to his family and community, and his passion for education and development remain etched in the hearts of those who knew him. His life serves as a beacon of inspiration, a testament to the power of resilience, determination, and unwavering commitment to making a positive impact.

Today, as we commemorate the 15th anniversary of his passing, we celebrate the life of a remarkable man whose memory continues to inspire and uplift. Engineer Moses Omozuwa Idele's legacy is a testament to the profound difference one individual can make in the lives of many.

•By Uwa Idele on behalf of your children – Ameze, Abies, Efe, Osaro, Egbe, Nosa, Aibudefe, Ehiosu

NEWS

FEC Approves 1.09bn Insurance Cover For 16 Federal Airports

•Five insurance firms to underwrite the scheme •Govt okays policy to support women in local manufacturing

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved a ₦1.09 billion insurance package to cover critical assets and personnel across all the 16 federal airports in the country.

Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, who disclosed this on Monday while briefing newsmen after the FEC meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu at the State House, Abuja.

He explained that the approval aligns with a directive from the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), which directed Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to insure critical government assets.

Additionally, the move is essential for Nigeria's airports to secure International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) certification.

According to Keyamo: "This memo was prompted by Mr. President because we cannot continue to run our airports and critical assets, as precious and expensive as they are, without insurance cover".

He atressed that many airport assets had remained uninsured for a long time, putting them at risk.

The newly approved insurance scheme, he said, will protect both infrastructure and personnel of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

His words: "This approval ensures that not only are our critical airport assets covered, but also the personnel working in these environments. It is in line with global best labor practices to ensure workers in such sectors have insurance protection".

The ₦1,097,137,102.48 insurance contract, which includes 7.5% VAT, will be executed over a one-year period, beginning once FAAN completes the premium payment.

Keyamo revealed that following a rigorous selection process, five leading Nigerian insurance firms were chosen to handle the coverage.

Leadway Assurance Company Limited will serve as the lead underwriter, while Cornerstone Insurance Plc, Linkage Assurance Plc, NEM Insurance Company, and Anchor Insurance Plc will act as co-underwriters.

Keyamo reaffirmed that the approval underscores the Tinubu administration's commitment to improving aviation safety, infrastructure security, and worker welfare in the country.

The federal government has also approved a policy to support local manufacturing of leather goods and footwear, with an initial N500 million set aside to ensure women benefit significantly from the initiative.

Minister of Women Affairs, Hajia Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, told reporters after the FEC meeting that the approval gave the Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology the mandate to supply starter packs for leather and footwear manufacturing, a sector where women play a crucial role.

"This is exciting for us because it encourages women's participation in an industry with high potential for economic growth.

Delta Govt Replies Omo-Agege, Says Recent Criticism of Oborevwori at Variance with Reality

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

The Delta State Government yesterday reacted to a recent criticism of the Governor Sheriff Oborevwori administration by a former Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, labelling it as idle talk.

The State Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr Charles Aniagwu, gave the response in a media conference in Asaba.

Aniagwu, who was flanked by the Executive Assistant to the Governor on New Media, Mr Felix Ofou, said that some persons who had been in government before, because they do not have any appointment at the moment, are now in the habit of seeking to deceive unsuspecting Deltans.

Specifically reacting to comments made recently by Omo-Agege during a visit to Bomadi and Burutu Local government areas of the state, Aniagwu said that the opposition politicians should be able to exhibit some decorum and "element of patriotism in identifying what government is doing and not to tell lies that make them look uninformed".

He stressed that the state governor has continued to reply critics with verifiable projects in the health, education, road, agriculture sectors and many other areas including human capital development which cuts across the three senatorial districts.

Aniagwu said: "At the weekend, we saw the former deputy president of the Senate, a man Governor Oborevwori defeated roundly in the last election, accusing our government of neglecting the people of southern and northern senatorial districts.

"Starting from Delta South Senatorial District, in Isoko South we have a good number of roads that we are constructing and in Isoko North Local Government Area we have the Southern Delta University located in Ozoro; and, you can see the amount of structures we are building there.

KPMG: Africa's Game Industry Earns Less Than 1% of $187bn Global Revenue

Sunday Ehigiator

The 2025 Africa Games Industry Report, published by KPMG in collaboration with Maliyo Games, has revealed that Africa garnered less than one per cent of the global gaming revenue of $187 billion in 2024.

The report said only 3 per cent of the 66 sampled studios across 23 African countries were able to reach the $1 million revenue mark.

According to the report, the Asia-Pacific region leads the gaming market with a revenue base of $89.9 billion, with over 50 per cent, approximately $45 billion, generated by China alone in 2024.

North America followed closely, pulling in over $50 billion in revenue, with the United States alone accounting for $47 billion.

The report also revealed that only 66 active studios exist across Africa's 54 nations, highlighting a gap in gaming representation across the continent such that although the Middle East and Africa generated over $7.7 billion in revenue in the year 2024, most of it was accrued to foreign game studios, which dominate the industry.

Speaking on the need to develop Africa's gaming infrastructure to enhance its market share, the Founder of Maliyo Games, Mr. Hugo Obi, explained that the gaming industry is more than just entertainment; it is an avenue to showcase Africa's culture, norms, and rich heritage to the world, fostering knowledge and connection with Africa's diaspora and the global community.

According to Obi, a lack of government support, inadequate funding and technical infrastructure, poor power supply, and limited access to training are key factors hindering the growth of Africa's gaming industry.

"The way we consume and interact with content today is going to be driven by the games industry. Africa is an emerging market. The government of Morocco just announced a $2 billion fund for its gaming industry. Saudi Arabia has a $60 billion fund for gaming. People are recognizing this future opportunity."

The report highlighted the need for targeted collaboration among game studios across the continent to create more expansive and competitive titles, promote culturally relevant content that showcases Africa's unique narratives in global markets, support African studios in participating in international gaming events to amplify African innovation and voices, and invest in reliable digital infrastructure in high-growth markets such as Nigeria and Kenya.



L-R: Managing Director, Foremost Capital Limited, Mr. Emmanuel Akehomen; Chief Shari'ah Audit Executive of TAJBank, Mr Usama Saleh; His Royal Majesty Ooni of Ife, Oba Enitan Ogunwusi; Director, Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC) Kazakhstan, Yernar Zhanadil; Chief Risk Officer at TAJBank Limited, Kamoru Adeyemi; and Head, Corporate Development at Freedom Holding Corporation, Sergey Fomichev; during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between TAJBank and AIFC in Abuja... recently

U.S. Consulate Helps Create Economic Opportunities for 120 Emerging Technicians

Eromosele Abiodun

The U.S. Consulate General Lagos has said that it partnered with the Field of Skills and Dreams VTE Academy to launch the Emerging Technicians Conference, an initiative designed to equip young Nigerian technicians with the skills and knowledge needed to excel in their trades and build sustainable businesses.

"A diverse group of 120 emerging technicians from a range of technical fields such as plumbing, electrical work, automobile mechanics, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning), solar systems design and installation; data science and web development were selected for the six-month mentorship program.

"Designed to foster entrepreneurial know-how, the conference provided participants with insights into the evolving landscape of in-demand technical fields, the importance of continuous skills development, and the role of innovation in driving career success," it said in a statement.

Delivering opening remarks at the American Corner Ikeja, Acting U.S. Consul General JoEllen Gorg highlighted the U.S. Mission's longstanding commitment to fostering entrepreneurship and supporting small businesses in Nigeria.

Gorg noted that promoting economic resilience through technical training creates jobs and expands opportunities for young people; drives mutually beneficial innovation, trade, and investment; and builds a strong foundation for shared prosperity for both of our two countries.

"Technicians and artisans are vital to a thriving economy. "By providing entrepreneurship training, resources, and networking opportunities, we are championing high-quality craftsmanship and empowering the next generation of technicians to thrive in an ever-changing job market," Gorg said..

Executive Director of Field of Skills and Dreams VTE Academy, Omowale Ogunrinde underscored the significance of aligning technical workforce training with rapid technological advancements. "This initiative invests in one of Nigeria's most valuable resources—its youth," Ogunrinde said. "By nurturing local talent in key technical fields, we can accelerate innovation and economic growth."

DLM Securities e-Trade Platform Goes Live for Trading

Following digital transformation that continues to reshape global financial markets, DLM Securities has announced that its e-trade platform has gone live for trading.

DLM said it recognises the growing demand for real-time, accessible, and intuitive trading solutions that cater to the needs of modern investors

With e-Trade, DLM Securities reaffirms its commitment to democratizing access to capital markets and empowering investors with the tools they need to make informed decisions.

Speaking at the launch of the e-trade platform in Lagos, recently, the Managing Director of DLM Securities, Mr. Isiaka Atanda, said e-trade is more than just a trading platform.

Atanda said the platform offers a dynamic, technology-driven trading experience that provides users with real-time market insights to keep up with global and local trends, ensuring timely and informed trading decisions.

He explained that the platform helps facilitate fast and efficient execution for buying and selling shares, while enabling traders to independently manage their clients and benefiting from commission concessions on brokerage services.

According to him, "it is our commitment to democratizing access to investment opportunities, ensuring that both seasoned and first-time investors can navigate the capital markets with confidence and ease. With this platform, we are redefining how investors engage with the stock market by providing real-time insights, instant trade execution, and a more transparent trading process."

Nedcomoaks, Citadel Estates Partner to Boost Africa's Real Estate Market

Sunday Ehigiator

In a bid to unlock Africa's multi-million-dollar real estate market, Nedcomoaks Group, Nigeria, and Citadel Estates & Utilities, UK, have announced a strategic partnership.

The partnership comes ahead of the 'Invest in Africa Summit 2025', scheduled to be held in London on March 15 and Manchester on March 22, 2025. The summit, organised by Nedcomoaks, aims to attract diaspora investment, facilitate wealth creation, and promote sustainable development in Africa's booming property market. The summit is the second in the series of conferences organised to stimulate conversation on action towards growing Africa's real estate sector, with its first edition garnering over 450 delegates.

Speaking about the summit, Kennedy Okonkwo, Chief Executive Officer of the Nedcomoaks Group who is also the Convener of the Summit, highlighted the potential of Africa's real estate sector for immense growth, presenting lucrative opportunities for wealth creation.

According to him, "The Invest in Africa Summit is more than just an event; it's a movement towards economic empowerment and sustainable development. Africa's real estate sector is on an upward trajectory, presenting immense opportunities for wealth creation.

"By bridging the gap between the diaspora and investment opportunities back home, we are not just facilitating transactions; we are building legacies and reshaping the African investment narrative."

Commenting on the partnership, Group Deputy Managing Director, Nedcomoaks Group, Mrs Ichechi Okonkwo, noted that, "Our collaboration with Citadel Estates & Utilities demonstrates our shared commitment to bridging international capital with local market expertise. This summit will not only highlight Africa's abundant investment potential but also set the stage for a new era of innovation and strategic development in real estate."

MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)

Month	NOVEMBER
Money Supply (M3)	**108,966,480.44**
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	19,796.18
Money Supply (M2)	108,946,684.26
	72,672,756.90
-- Narrow Money (M1)	36,273,927.36
---- Currency Outside Banks	**4,652,527.74**
---- Demand Deposits	**31,621,399.62**
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	**17,347,112.78**
Net Domestic Assets(NDA)	**91,619,367.66**
-- Net Domestic Credit (NDC)	**115,576,757.67**
---- Credit to Government (Net)	**39,616,629.91**
---- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	**0.00**
---- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	**0.00**
---- Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	**75,960,127.77**
--Other Assets Net	**12,147,461.96**
Reserve Money (Base Money)	**30,871,571.25**
--Currency in Circulation	**4,878,125.22**
--Banks Reserves	**25,993,446.02**
--Special Intervention Reserves	**278,860.37**

• Source - CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)

Month	November
Inter-Bank Call Rate	28.88
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	27.50
Treasury Bill Rate	18.00
Savings Deposit Rate	6.56
1 Month Deposit Rate	8.48
3 Months Deposit Rate	9.53
6 Months Deposit Rate	12.13
12 Months Deposit Rate	14.22
Prime Lending rate	18.39
Maximum Lending Rate	31.06

NSE MARKET INDEX

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

• Monetary Policy Rate - 27.50%

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT 6TH JANUARY , 2025

The price of OPEC basket of twelve crudes stood at $76.18 a barrel on Monday, compared with $75.89 the previous Friday, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations.

The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basrah Medium (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela).

MARKET NEWS

Stock Market Drops by 0.34% to Commence March on Negative Note

Kayode Tokede

The stock market yesterday began March 2025 on a negative note as investors' profit-taking in NASCON Allied Industries Plc and 32 others dragged the major indicator downward by 0.34 per cent.

The Nigerian Exchange Limited All-Share Index (NGX ASI) shed 366.26 basis points, or 0.34 per cent to close at 107,455.13 basis points. Meanwhile, the market capitalisation rose by N95 billion or 0.14 per cent to close at N67.288 trillion, following the listing of additional 18.20 billion shares of Fidelity Bank at N17.20 per share.

The market breadth remained negative as 20 stocks gained relative to 33 losers. Learn Africa and Nigerian Exchange Group emerged the highest price gainer of 10 per cent each to close at N3.63 and N33.00 respectively, while Champion Breweries followed with a gain of 9.90 per cent to close at N4.33, per share.

ABC Transport rose by 9.86 per cent to close at N1.56, while Tantalizer appreciated by 9.47 per cent to close at N2.08, per share. On the other side, Ikeja Hotel led others on the losers' chart with 9.92 per cent to close at N10.90, per share. United Capital followed with a decline of 9.91 per cent to close at N20.00, while Cutix declined by 9.84 per cent to close at N2.29, per share.

Multiverse Mining & Exploration lost 9.74 per cent to close at N8.80, while Africa Prudential depreciated by 9.46 per cent to close at N32.05, per share.

The total volume traded declined by 32.77 per cent to 308.809 million units, valued at N7.232 billion, and exchanged in 15,474 deals. Transactions in the shares of Zenith Bank led the activity with 32.373 million shares worth N1.556 billion. Fidelity Bank followed with account of 19.730 million shares valued at N344.047 million, while Access Holdings traded 16.881 million shares valued at N430.846 million.

Nigerian Exchange Group traded 15.024 million shares worth N46.496 million, while Ellah Lakes traded 15.024 million shares worth N46.496 million.

On market performance, Afrinvest Limited said, "we anticipate the bearish mood to be sustained as market remains short of positive triggers."

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED ASOF MARCH/3/25

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
PRICES FOR PREMIUM BOARD SECURITIES				
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
1 UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	1,231,179.17	36.00	-2.17	613	9,233,354
2 ZENITH BANK PLC	1,971,351.84	48.00	-0.72	941	32,373,481
BANKING				1,554	41,606,835
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
3 ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	1,330,280.07	24.95	-2.54	727	16,881,013
4 FBN HOLDINGS PLC	1,017,631.55	28.35	-3.24	340	3,729,643
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				1,067	20,610,656
FINANCIAL SERVICES				2,621	62,217,491
ICT					
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
5 MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	5,647,026.68	264.20	-	622	1,097,378
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				622	1,097,378
ICT				622	1,097,378
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
6 DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	8,099,308.44	460.00	-	526	708,042
7 LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	1,208,084.66	75.00	-	172	1,734,050
BUILDING MATERIALS				698	2,442,092
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				698	2,442,092
OIL AND GAS					
S/N EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
8 SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	3,354,134.00	5,700.00	-	57	2,415
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION				57	2,415
OIL AND GAS				57	2,415
S/N CROP PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
9 ELLAH LAKES PLC.	8,261.36	3.00	-6.25	275	15,023,902
10 FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	6,864.00	1.76	-0.56	45	976,875
11 OKOMU OIL PALM PLC.	519,880.95	545.00	-	147	26,041
12 PRESCO PLC	795,000.00	735.00	-	149	74,896
CROP PRODUCTION				616	16,101,714
S/N LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
13 LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	22,530.00	7.51	1.08	280	5,362,297
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES				280	5,362,297
AGRICULTURE				896	21,464,011
CONGLOMERATES					
S/N DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
14 CUSTODIAN INVESTMENT PLC	112,049.51	19.05	-	50	223,388
15 JOHN HOLT PLC.	3,346.70	8.60	7.77	48	374,719
16 S C O A NIG. PLC.	2,235.40	3.44	-	31	176,049
17 TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	579,233.86	57.00	-	269	2,197,595
18 U A C N PLC.	103,148.14	35.25	-	52	168,616
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES				450	3,140,367
CONGLOMERATES				450	3,140,367
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
19 AVA INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	4,075.00	1,000,000.00	-	0	0
20 CHAPEL HILL DENHAM NIG. INFRAS DEBT FUND	117,676.12	111.70	-	18	22,853
21 JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC.	204,600.00	128.00	-	76	141,630
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION				94	164,483
S/N REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
22 HALDANE MCCALL PLC	18,326.14	5.87	-	12	109,102
23 UPDC PLC	54,009.51	2.91	-6.13	147	9,831,450
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT				159	9,940,552
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				253	10,105,035
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
24 DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	-	0	0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS				0	0
S/N BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
25 CHAMPION BREW. PLC.	36,885.74	4.12	0.24	69	671,041
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
26 GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC.	7,264.90	7.09	-	9	19,685
27 GUINNESS NIG PLC	162,088.33	74.00	-	75	209,328
28 INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	841,457.96	5.00	-5.66	55	2,411,756
29 NIGERIAN BREW. PLC.	1,053,422.92	34.00	-2.30	115	962,266
BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS				343	3,856,915
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
30 BUA FOODS PLC	7,524,000.00	418.00	-	85	33,684
31 DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	485,875.13	40.00	-	335	1,480,826
32 HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	103,092.57	13.00	-5.11	366	7,150,694
33 MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,624.01	0.36	-	0	0
34 N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC.	12,928.41	72.55	-	27	35,818
35 NASCON ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	110,799.51	41.00	-9.29	128	2,030,125
36 UNION DICON SALT PLC.	1,339.36	4.90	-9.26	20	233,028
FOOD PRODUCTS				961	10,964,175
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS--DIVERSIFIED	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
37 CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	59,971.49	26.30	-	114	787,647
38 NESTLE NIGERIA PLC.	772,839.85	975.00	-	68	21,815
FOOD PRODUCTS--DIVERSIFIED				182	809,462
S/N HOUSEHOLD DURABLES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
39 NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC.	1,763.94	23.20	-	4	4,159
40 VITAFOAM NIG PLC.	50,033.76	40.00	0.50	64	697,565
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES				68	701,724
S/N PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
41 P Z CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC.	147,304.70	37.10	4.80	146	1,803,006
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
42 UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	226,640.46	39.45	-	78	608,228
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS				224	2,411,234
CONSUMER GOODS				1,778	23,743,510
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
43 ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	609,030.32	32.70	7.57	71	554,551
44 FIDELITY BANK PLC	863,650.03	17.20	-3.37	514	19,730,384
45 GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	2,056,753.02	60.25	-1.55	326	1,617,299
46 JAIZ BANK PLC	162,751.35	3.65	4.29	202	6,213,338
47 STERLING FINANCIAL HOLDINGS COMPANY PLC	152,589.22	5.30	-3.64	239	10,211,742
48 UNITY BANK PLC	17,650.90	1.51	-	0	0
49 WEMA BANK PLC.	257,162.14	12.00	0.84	292	12,944,569
BANKING				1,644	51,271,883
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
50 AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	-	0	0
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
51 AIICO INSURANCE PLC.	61,862.92	1.69	-0.59	214	4,998,011
52 AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	81,000.00	9.00	-0.55	66	572,951
53 CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK HOLDINGS PLC	40,108.00	3.70	-5.13	43	1,282,499
54 CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	59,404.10	3.27	2.51	35	1,038,185
55 CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	62,378.37	2.60	-7.69	103	2,714,505
56 GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	-	0	0
57 GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	5,559.96	0.70	9.38	66	7,572,409
58 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	2,581.01	2.01	-	20	74,684
59 LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	32,142.40	2.90	-	31	437,523
60 LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	20,020.00	1.30	-	18	598,684
61 MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC.	12,237.59	0.61	-	0	0
62 NEM INSURANCE PLC	65,715.86	13.10	-	33	284,491
63 PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	14,577.82	1.10	6.36	51	4,238,822
64 REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	8,162.55	0.68	-1.45	19	3,650,651
65 SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	15,224.11	1.07	-6.14	52	3,511,472
66 STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,483.72	0.48	-	0	0
67 STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC.	2,582.21	0.20	-	0	0
68 SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC.	30,855.35	5.31	-	51	381,887
69 UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	9,920.00	0.62	-4.62	66	4,000,975
70 VERITAS KAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	16,085.33	1.16	-3.33	47	3,817,971
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				915	39,175,720
S/N MICRO-FINANCE BANKS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
71 NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	10,787.28	1.80	2.86	8	186,931
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS				8	186,931

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
72 ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	31,476.92	3.10	-	3	31,070
73 ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	-	0	0
74 INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	29,193.19	7.00	-	1	500
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				4	31,570
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
76 AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	0.00	23.35	-	89	981,050
77 DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	0.00	1.13	-	16	88,600
78 FCMB GROUP PLC.	0.00	10.20	-0.49	215	4,721,472
79 NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP	0.00	27.00	-	13	104,876
80 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC.	0.00	0.93	4.49	50	3,221,119
81 STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	0.00	59.50	-	90	187,124
82 UNITED CAPITAL PLC	0.00	22.45	-0.22	258	6,323,482
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				731	15,627,723
FINANCIAL SERVICES				3,141	1,117,763,098
HEALTHCARE					
S/N HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
83 EKOCORP PLC.	0.00	5.80	-	0	0
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS				0	0
S/N MEDICAL SUPPLIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
84 MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	0.00	4.01	-	4	2,166
MEDICAL SUPPLIES				4	2,166
S/N PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
85 FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	0.00	17.25	-	33	70,674
86 MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	0.00	9.40	-	52	928,182
87 NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	0.00	3.77	9.91	134	2,485,747
88 PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	0.00	1.83	-	0	0
PHARMACEUTICALS				219	3,484,603
HEALTHCARE				223	3,486,769
ICT					
S/N COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
88 QUATEK VENTURES PLC	2,471.10	0.84	1.20	35	1,415,149
COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS				35	1,415,149
S/N IT SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
89 CWG PLC	22,723.44	9.00	3.45	98	2,144,030
90 NCR (NIGERIA) PLC.	788.40	7.30	-	2	10
IT SERVICES				100	2,144,040
S/N PROCESSING SYSTEMS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
91 CHAMS HOLDING COMPANY PLC	10,753.98	2.29	-0.87	123	6,054,751
92 E-TRANZACT INTERNATIONAL PLC	59,800.00	6.50	-	12	36,152
PROCESSING SYSTEMS				135	6,090,903
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
93 AIRTEL AFRICA PLC	8,105,956.98	2,156.90	-	5	856
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				5	856
ICT				275	9,650,948
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
94 BERGER PAINTS PLC	6,086.29	21.00	-	24	41,975
95 BUA CEMENT PLC	3,149,384.93	93.00	-	278	1,548,158
96 CAP PLC	38,293.13	47.00	-	17	44,759
97 MEYER PLC.	4,913.95	9.25	-	6	13,580
98 PREMIER PAINTS PLC.	1,230.00	10.00	-	0	0
BUILDING MATERIALS				325	1,648,472
S/N ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
99 AUSTIN LAZ & COMPANY PLC	2,051.73	1.90	-	17	521,659
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
101 CUTIX PLC.	17,613.22	2.50	-6.72	73	5,505,437
ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS				74	5,505,537
S/N PACKAGING/CONTAINERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
102 BETA GLASS PLC.	29,368.30	48.95	-	11	9,322
103 GREIF NIGERIA PLC	232.39	5.45	-	0	0
104 TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	2,227.29	2.25	-9.84	59	1,986,405
PACKAGING/CONTAINERS				70	1,995,727
S/N AGRO-ALLIED & CHEMICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
105 NOTORE CHEMICAL IND PLC	251,885.34	62.50	-	0	0
AGRO-ALLIED & CHEMICALS				0	0
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				305	8,003,974
NATURAL RESOURCES					
S/N CHEMICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
106 INDUSTRIAL & MEDICAL GASES NIGERIA PLC	17,482.28	35.00	-	6	9,355
CHEMICALS				6	9,355
S/N METALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
107 ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION IND. PLC.	1,572.69	7.15	-	0	0
METALS				0	0
S/N MINING SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
108 MULTIVERSE MINING AND EXPLORATION PLC	3,750.51	8.80	-	46	541,270
MINING SERVICES				46	541,270
S/N PAPER/FOREST PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
109 THOMAS WYATT NIG. PLC.	724.68	1.83	-7.58	13	935,597
PAPER/FOREST PRODUCTS				13	935,597
NATURAL RESOURCES					
NATURAL RESOURCES				65	1,486,222
OIL AND GAS					
S/N ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
110 JAPAUL GOLD & VENTURES PLC	37,368.28	2.62	4.38	113	6,992,763
ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES				113	6,992,763
S/N INTEGRATED OIL AND GAS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
111 OANDO PLC	957,218.76	77.00	1.99	589	5,181,214
INTEGRATED OIL AND GAS SERVICES				589	5,181,214
S/N PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
112 CONOIL PLC	116,583.96	168.00	-	52	269,491
113 ETERNA PLC.	35,211.91	27.00	-6.48	185	1,863,603
114 MRS OIL NIGERIA PLC.	45,500.80	132.70	-	19	30,343
115 TOTALENERGIES MARKETING NIGERIA PLC	228,803.77	873.90	-	51	9,745
PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS				307	2,173,182
OIL AND GAS				1,009	14,347,159
SERVICES					
S/N ADVERTISING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
116 AFROMEDIA PLC	1,065.37	0.24	-	0	0
ADVERTISING				0	0
S/N AIRLINES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
117 MEDVIEW AIRLINE PLC	15,796.05	1.62	-	0	0
AIRLINES				0	0
S/N AUTOMOBILE/AUTO PART RETAILERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
118 R T BRISCOE PLC.	4,234.88	3.60	2.86	111	3,366,521

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IBB, ENGINEERING AND HUMANITY

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IS ANYONE STILL IN DOUBT?

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EDITORIAL

THE DEPLORABLE STATE OF REMAND HOMES



XVI

The core North needs to get its priorities right, argues ***TUNDE OLUSUNLE***



LESSONS IN SUSTAINABILITY FROM NIGERIA'S SOUTH, FOR THE NORTH

I was initially going to predicate this piece on notable developmental milestones I've followed in recent weeks and months, in some states in Nigeria's South. Indeed, in two separate treatises, I've interrogated the endeavours of Chukwuma Soludo, Alex Otti and Umaru Bago of Anambra, Abia and Niger States. I've been enamoured by reports of advancements in sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, investment and security among others, coming from the nation's global South. You often get this feeling of positive peer rivalry between some states especially those below the Niger and Benue rivers, as they strive to improve the lots of their constituents, while also etching their imprimatur on the sands of time. It became imperative, however, to restructure my thoughts in the wake of certain very contemporaneous happenings, especially in the North, and juxtapose them with news from the South.

In August 2024, I wrote a piece titled *The North of Nigeria after the Protests.* It was my reaction to the thoughtlessness and idiocy manifested in parts of the North during the 10-day "hunger protests." Internet videos and visuals are replete with the mindlessness which characterised youth outings those few days of insanity. Multibillion naira public properties and private investments were wilfully attacked, looted and vandalised. Road infrastructure including concrete pallets laid over public drainages were chiselled with axes just to steal the steel meshes binding and solidifying the platters. About a dozen fatalities were recorded between Borno and Niger States, as security personnel attempted the containment of the ensuing mayhem. Elsewhere, the Nigerian Police received plaudits for its demonstrated professionalism in the management of the fracas, mitigating injuries and minimising casualties, even as swarms of brigands held sway those days of utter madness. You watched these jarring scenes on national and global television and couldn't but ask yourself: What ends were such barbarity, such primitivity meant to serve?

The hunger protests were also observed in parts of the South. But there was greater circumspection and decorum than was witnessed in many theatres of bedlam in the North. Indeed, governments in many states in the South were proactive. Authorities cautioned before the dates scheduled for the protests, that lawlessness in the form of unruly and riotous protests and processions will not be condoned within their boundaries. The October 2020 *#EndSARS* protests which snowballed into shootings of the processions by the Nigerian Army, remain fresh in popular consciousness. *Amnesty International* reported at least a dozen deaths from that incident, despite rebuttals by the Lagos State Government and the military authorities.

The government of Kano State in its 2025 budget, has made provision for the conduct of mass weddings. The sum of



N2.5 Billion has been earmarked for the quarterly mass wedding programme across the 44 local government areas of the state. The administration of Governor Abba Kabir Yusuf, invested N854 million on the mass wedding of 1,800 couples in 2023. Kebbi State Governor, Nasir Idris, recently committed N54 million on the wedding of 300 couples in his state. Budget and Economic Planning Minister, Atiku Bagudu who attended the programme, availed each couple N50,000 as "startup." Mai Mala Buni, the governor of Yobe State, has also accommodated mass weddings as a major project in the 2025 budget of his state. Immediate past President of the Senate, Ahmed Lawan who is also from Yobe State is also reputed to have sponsored mass weddings in his catchment area, ostensibly as part of his "constituency projects."

Ahead of the Ramadan fast which began Saturday May 1, 2025, a number of state governments in the North, shut down educational institutions, especially primary and secondary schools. The closure is for a period of five weeks which is the duration of the fasting season. Beginning with Bauchi State in the North East, states in the North West including Kano, Katsina, Kebbi and Zamfara, have promptly followed suit. The various governments have proffered that the closures are to ensure focused and unimpeded observance of the Ramadan by the entire gamut of the peoples and populations of their various entities. These school closures have not taken into account the conveniences of non-Muslim students who are also students in these various states.

Before the wholesale mismanagement of Nigeria's sociocultural diversities by particular leaderships, especially the eight-year regime of former President Muhammadu Buhari, Nigerians had always been very adventurous. They quested socioeconomic opportunities beyond the perimeters of their traditional origins. This has been said to have accounted for the flattening of Bola Tinubu in his home state of Lagos during the 2023 presidential election which brought him into office. Indeed, a specific settler-ethnicity in Lagos, was fingered for that near electoral humbling of the President. The academic calendars of many of the northern states under discourse, have reportedly been tweaked to ensure the reopening of schools after the Ramadan-induced forced break.

While parts of the North are prioritising the observance of a religious obligation over and beyond every other consideration, the National Bureau of Statistics, (NBS), reminds us that the core North has the highest numbers of out-of-school children. Urchins, more famously known as *almajiris* in tens of thousands are permanently resident on the streets of several northern towns and cities, clutching begging bowls. The North is equally notorious for the high prevalence of child marriages, where clearly and visibly underage girls are married off to men old enough to be the age of their grandfathers. This accentuates the very high occurrence of Vesico-Vaginal Fistula, (VVF), among young northern females. Even if comprehensive health education were to be available for young girls, pervading illiteracy remains inimical to orientation and reorientation to stem the trend.

Nigeria's core North remains averse to the trade and consumption of beverages of certain brands. Yet they desire the perpetuation of the fiscal allocation status quo, which privileges them higher dividends from national Value Added Tax, (VAT), than southern states which actually generate the chunkier taxes. Members of the *Hisbah* corps which enforces the *Shariah* are videoed regularly destroying huge consignment of alcoholic drinks, crippling the businesses of traders in such beverages. This is just as Saudi Arabia the global exemplar of Islamic religion, has relaxed its laws on alcohol. Non-Muslim diplomats can now procure and savour alcohol stuff. This is a major shift from the total ban on alcohol, which has been in place since 1952. The original law against alcohol provided for the prosecution and incarceration of offenders, while foreigners were summarily deported.

Down South, many governors and governments are pursuing visionary projects to impact on the well-being of their people. Governors Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos and Seyi Makinde are investing massively in agricultural development to ensure sustainable food sufficiency and security. Surpluses will be warehoused in silos and storages, while overflows will be sold. Among other initiatives, Lagos State is partnering with the *Origin Tech Group,* to develop a five-year agricultural strategic plan. For starters, the partnership has initiated a *Food Logistics Hub* in Epe, Lagos State. Part of the plan is to gradually develop 4.2 million square metres of an agricultural village. A 60-kilometre network of roads are to be built in the settlement out of which about 30% is ready. It is a measure of the seriousness behind this plan, that a five-storey administrative block; a sprawling parking area capable of taking 1,500 trucks per day; a weighbridge, cold and dry storage areas, are already in place.

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Ibrahim Babangida's social engineering process was problematic, contends ***VICTOR C. ARIOLE***

IBB, ENGINEERING AND HUMANITY

(…) a fairer assessment of why the armed forces seized power was not to be found in their success or failure to deliver but in the various factors and events preceding the intervention … There exists a world of difference between engineering a nation and ruling it … My goal was to engineer it… (President) General I. B. Babangida in A Journey in Service.

In Singapore Lee Kuan Yew, a Chinese and their best known leader was said to have built Singapore by destroying the marshy surface of Singapore and transforming it to greatly beautiful scenery of great engineering infrastructure. He went further to destroying also the hegemonic Chinese presence and allowing diversity to thrive as Malays, Indians, mix freely with the non-homogeneous Chinese people; and, as well, Malay language is favoured as the national language.

Whether social engineering or infrastructure engineering, what is to be destroyed to be able to bring beauty to the landscape is always daunting. Unlike Lee Kuan Yew, IBB's destruction process never yielded beautiful site and ab initio he was never expecting to deliver success. He was just scheming for survival. He no doubt succeeded in line with his obedient fellow head of state, childhood friend who says that a Marabout had already pronounced IBB a president earlier.

His leadership was a destructive engineering site of the Nigerian State - the only military head of state as well as perpetual coups d'etat participant from 1966 to 1993, over three coups and he remained and survived till deciding to step-aside. Nigeria's wealth massively squandered as per Dr. Pius Okigbo's report; Nigeria's military, especially the middle level officers' cadre massively decimated in three coups and other orchestrated accidents or scheming that left Nigeria completely bruised.

Furthermore, he embarked on civilian transition that gulped money and time till it ended in cul-de-sac, and ended the life of the undeclared winner as President.With a hindsight, according to him, that must go beyond 20:20, he had already declared himself "President" in military uniform to emulate his hero, Abdul Nasser of Egypt. Like Nasser like turning those presumed unwanted, dispensable humans.

Humanity was greatly degraded and rendered engineering irredeemable in Nigeria all through his reign as Head of State. According to him various factors and events preceding his intervention make perpetual 'destructive' engineering inevitable. He even asserts that the balance sheet of his reign is yet to be seen as assets' growing facilitator, and has been more of capital and reserve depleting process till now. "The balance sheet may not be ready yet, but it will eventually manifest… part of the essential outcome of our approach and our method is that Nigeria has changed irrevocably, perhaps beyond recognition".

Indeed over $36 billion owed to foreign creditors regulated by IMF, partially settled by Obj government and over $12 billion spent on what Dr.Okigbo panel could not identify. Nigeria's humanity was largely painted as fraudulent as Nigerians turned pariah to other valued humans in the world with 419 activities multiplying; drug cartels blossoming; "Andrew emigration of Nigerians in agogo, culminating in brain drain, etc. In short, Nigeria became the kind of scavenging mining sites like the one we see in Zamfara State today. IBB administrative process was just bent on eliminating those he perceived as "non new breed" and as he put it: "We know those who will never succeed us".



His brain process, as one always refers as "Neuronal Disposition", could easily fit into what a University of California, Professor Ruth Feldman, terms the NeurobBiology of Love and Hatred. To the brain, prejudice is something it does not deem fit registering as long as it has encoded well those human behaviour patterns to bond with as support-group solidarity base and those seen as outgroup hostility ones.

IBB also cultured widely dialogues and conferences in which he isolated those to incorporate in his love group and was willing to protect them in all circumstances as seen in those who appeared for his book launch and in the military, the mostly young majors, who monitored very well the only image of threat for him – General Sani Abacha. Officers like Major Umar then seemed deceived. According to Colonel Abubakar Dangiwa Umar (Rtd), "with the prevailing political situation against the annulment, it was not difficult to imagine mass support of a coup by officers, but it was inconceivable that many officers would stake their lives in order to replace IBB with General Sani Abacha as Head of State… So why did I agree to join Abacha in a coup against IBB? Abacha swore in the name of God that he had no other motive but to restore the mandate of MKO Abiola".

General Sani Abacha was for IBB, the juggling brain process of fluidity of love and hatred and when it dawned on him that his brain process was no more capable of discerning how to handle Abacha, and that Abacha himself is not very well trackable in either accepting the winner of June 12 election or annulling the election, he gave up. And Col. Umar put it succinctly well – the support-group solidarity of IBB started disintegrating. General Ishola confirmed that also on Channel TV in an interview with Akande as he himself tendered his resignation from the Army thereto seeing how the young officers changed loyalty and were all looking forward for expected political appointments that come with new military dispensation.

In all, Nigeria was sacrificed on the altar of two Generals who never saw beyond their immediate self-sustaining enterprise; and that damage continues till now, contingently connected to northwest, northeast multifaceted troubles.

Like President Shagari was selfless till Buhari coup that jettisoned a bigger picture of well-being for all Nigeria like Obj government; and thereafter another Buhari that has gone on further to destroy the psyche of collective Nigerians and set Nigeria again on an engineering experiment. May 2023 renewed hope engineering experiment never be like that of IBB we beseech Thee O God! ■

Ariole
is a Professor of French and Francophone Studies



JOHN MAYAKI *argues that Okpebholo's record in 100 days has proved sceptics wrong*

IS ANYONE STILL IN DOUBT?

For those who doubted Governor Monday Okpebholo's capacity to govern Edo State efficiently and effectively - I mean those of us who questioned his ability to unite the people, enhance security, and position the state prominently in national politics during the electioneering, it is now abundantly clear that we were mistaken. We were not just mistaken, but damn wrong. Okpebholo has defied expectations, proving that he is not the weakling some of us assumed him to be. It is time to acknowledge this reality and, perhaps, even apologize.

The testimonies are piling up. The National Chairman of the APC and former Governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Ganduje, has acknowledged Okpebholo's remarkable achievements. Senator Adams Oshiomhole, a former governor of Edo State and the senator representing Edo North, has openly admitted that Okpebholo accomplished in 100 days what others, including himself, could not within the same period. Even Philip Shaibu, the former deputy governor also testified to this. These endorsements are not mere political niceties - they are admissions of undeniable progress.

Yet, if these testimonies were not enough, Okpebholo's recent interviews on Channels Television and Television Continental (TVC) should erase any lingering doubts. Those who once viewed him as hesitant or camera-shy were in for a shock. The man who supposedly avoided the spotlight during the electioneering, commanded it with confidence, fluency, and sharp wit. He not only articulated his vision with clarity but also took well-aimed jabs at his opponents, unsettling the camp of former Governor Godwin Obaseki.

The interviews, particularly with Seun Okinbaloye on Channels TV and Babajide Kolade-Otitoju on TVC, tells of a governor who is fully in control. He tackled every question head-on, without hesitation or evasion. This is not the sign of a leader who is weak or unprepared but the mark of a man who understands the weight of his office and the expectations upon him.

Now, we all can see that Okpebholo is not one to grandstand or seek empty applause. He lets his work speak for itself. Pessimists and skeptics who dismissed him must now reckon with the reality of his leadership.

In subsequent analyses, I will break down key takeaways from his interviews, but for now, let us reflect on the testimonies of Ganduje, Oshiomhole, and Shaibu. Their words carry weight. And if they have seen what some of us once refused to acknowledge, perhaps it is time to admit - Okpebholo is emerging as one of Nigeria's governors to watch, alongside Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State and Governor Babagana Zulum of Borno State.

For a state to develop, it cannot be isolated. Under Obaseki, Edo State functioned like a pariah and an orphan - completely disconnected from the federal government and missing out on crucial support. However, Governor Okpebholo has changed that narrative. Edo is no longer a pariah state; it is now attracting federal assistance, a shift acknowledged even by former Deputy Governor Philip Shaibu.

Shaibu, speaking on Channels Television's Sunrise Daily recently, praised Okpebholo for securing federal government support within his first 100 days in office - something he admitted was not possible under the previous administration. He said this engagement would free up state funds, allowing for more developmental projects.

His words, "The clever thing Governor Okpebholo has done, which I applaud him for and which we didn't do, is his ability to engage with the center and secure federal support.

"The support coming from the federal government will free up the state's resources for other



developments. That is what he is cleverly doing, and I think it will help him drive development more quickly."

He is not alone. Senator Adams Oshiomhole, speaking as the guest lecturer at the event of Governor Okpebholo's 100 days in office, praised the Governor for his remarkable achievements within his first 100 days in office, stating that Edo is truly rising under his leadership. He said Okpebholo's administration has demonstrated practical governance with tangible results, unlike previous governments that relied on signing MoUs and hiring consultants.

Oshiomhole admitted that Okpebholo had accomplished in 100 days what he himself could not achieve during the same period as governor. This acknowledgment alone underscores Okpebholo's efficiency and hands-on approach to governance, positioning him as a leader focused on action rather than rhetoric.

Besides, former Kano State Governor Abdullahi Ganduje praised Okpebholo's impressive performance within his first 100 days in office, stating that his achievements have garnered national attention.

Ganduje revealed that when he informed APC National Working Committee (NWC) members about Okpebholo's 100-day celebration, they all expressed interest in attending, having followed his progress on television and heard positive reports from recent visitors to Edo State.

He commended Okpebholo for laying a solid foundation for the state's development, confidently predicting that his performance could easily secure him a second term. Describing Okpebholo as a calculative leader, Ganduje noted that the governor ensures financial readiness before undertaking capital-intensive projects and maintains strict supervision to guarantee their success.

The testimonies of these respected leaders collectively dispel any doubts about Okpebholo's competence and ability to govern efficiently and effectively.

Initially, skeptics questioned whether Okpebholo was truly grounded and capable of delivering meaningful development in Edo State. However, the overwhelming praise from these figures, particularly Oshiomhole's admission that Okpebholo achieved in 100 days what he himself could not, proves otherwise.

It is clear - Okpebholo is not only grounded but has also demonstrated a results-driven approach to governance. Far from being a weak or unprepared leader, he has exceeded expectations, silenced critics, and laid a strong foundation for the future of Edo State. ■

Mayaki
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EDITORIAL

THE DEPLORABLE STATE OF REMAND HOMES

The country owes children in correctional institutions care and protection

Ordinarily, Remand homes serve as detention centres for children who are either awaiting trial or have been convicted of offenses. In other societies, vulnerable children who need protection and those beyond parental control are also commonly kept in remand homes while a social inquiry report is being prepared. But in Nigeria, these homes, according to a recent 'Policy Report on the State of Remand Homes in Nigeria' by LightRay Media, are plagued by overcrowding, poor living conditions, malnutrition, physical and emotional abuse, and inadequate access to education and healthcare.



The conditions at these remand homes largely reflect the national attitude towards children and the most vulnerable groups in Nigeria. The situation in this supposedly corrective home is not remarkably different from those of adults in conflict with the law. Like the prisons, the few remand homes in the country are oppressive institutions aimed at punishing offenders rather than rehabilitating them. The institutions are decrepit, ill-equipped and the inmates ill-fed. They are denied humane treatment and have no access to recreational and sporting activities. Even more, they also lack relevant educational and vocational training to equip them to live a sustainable life when they eventually return to the larger society.

The institutions are decrepit, ill-equipped and the inmates ill-fed. They are denied humane treatment and have no access to recreational and sporting activities

Indeed, a recent study at the Port Harcourt Remand Home in Rivers State revealed that the place was poorly configured to manage juvenile offenders. Besides, many of the personnel are not only ill-trained, but insufficient. More concerning, Nigeria lacks a dedicated helpline that street children can access to seek protection, redress, or shelter, leaving them even more vulnerable to abuse and neglect. That perhaps explains why we have a large army of youths roaming the streets begging for alms instead of being in schools. Without homes or any discernible means of survival except begging, these children are easily lured into all manner of crimes

Meanwhile, the attendant result of the poor, difficult and deprived environment in the custodial institutions is such that many of the young offenders are transformed to hardened criminals. They often plot their escapes and later constitute themselves into even greater burden and danger to the society. There is also a social factor to the problem. While there may be no reliable statistics on the issue, there is no doubt that many of the children in the remand homes across the country are from the poor in society - those in dire need of care and protection. Many of them live on the street and engage in any activities to scrape by before running afoul of the law.

Unfortunately, the prevailing depressed economy in the country is no doubt accentuating the problem of juvenile crimes as many families are increasingly becoming unable to live up to the challenge of parenthood. Yet, the country owes those children in correctional institutions care and protection. The poor living conditions at the remand homes are a violation of the children´s right to health, nutrition, education, and recreation. Nigeria is signatory to the Convention for the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the African Charter, and thus the treatment of the young offenders must conform to international standards.

There is therefore an urgent need to ensure that these institutions are well funded and provided with their basic needs. We urge the Attorney General of the Federation and Justice Minister to work with other relevant stakeholders to redress this deplorable conditions in remand homes across the country. The inmates must be equipped with the basic skills to fit easily into the larger society at the end of their reformation, and to fulfill their full potential.

Besides, the Nigerian society would be better off if parents could address the ills afflicting children before they form their character.

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LETTERS

AMERICA'S BULLISH TRUMP AND UKRAINE'S DEFIANT ZELENSKY

February 28, 2025, was supposed to be another day of diplomatic engagement for two nations. Instead, the Oval Office in Washington, United States of America, became an arena where President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky clashed in an unscripted, unfiltered war of words.

Trump and Zelensky were meant to discuss Ukraine's vast reserves of critical minerals and America's strategic interests. But minerals were merely the curtain behind which the real battle loomed. Aid, gratitude and power politics took center stage.

Trump entered the room with fire in his eyes. He wanted recognition, submission and a public display of gratitude for America's support. He saw Ukraine as a dependent nation, one that owed the U.S. more than just a handshake.

Zelensky, standing in the shadow of a brutal war, refused to play along. He had come for diplomacy, not servitude. The tension ignited instantly. The meeting that was supposed to strengthen ties turned into a full-blown confrontation.

For Zelensky, it was a defining moment. The world has often seen him as a war hero, a leader of resilience, a man who refused to surrender to Russia's aggression. But this time, he was not facing Putin.

He was staring into the eyes of a U.S. President who had no patience for sentiment. Zelensky pushed back against Trump's demands, asserting that Ukraine was not a beggar but a partner. His defiance sent a message that Ukraine would not trade its dignity for dollars.

Trump, ever the showman, did not take kindly to such resistance. The United States had poured billions into Ukraine's war effort, and Trump expected loyalty, unwavering and unquestioned. He reminded Zelensky of America's power, of the leverage that Washington held over Kyiv's survival.

In his eyes, Ukraine's gratitude was not just expected but mandatory. When it did not come in the form he desired, he erupted. The Oval Office turned into a verbal minefield where every word carried the weight of geopolitical consequences.

In the rawness of the exchange, the world saw both strength and recklessness. Zelensky stood his ground when many would have crumbled under the weight of American pressure. He showed courage, the same courage that has kept Ukraine fighting against all odds.

He reminded the world that nations, no matter how small, should not be bullied into submission. His resilience was admirable. But it was also dangerous. For Trump, the moment was a declaration of his America-first doctrine.

He had no interest in sentimental alliances. His foreign policy was transactional. Aid must be earned, and respect must be shown. He saw no reason to coddle Ukraine or shower it with unconditional support. His approach was brutal but effective.

It exposed the reality that America, under his leadership, would not tolerate perceived ingratitude. But the brutal nature of his approach came at a cost. Humiliating an ally in front of the world was not just undiplomatic, it was reckless.

America's strength has always been in its alliances, in the trust it builds with partners. By publicly berating a war-time leader, Trump sent a chilling message to other allies. American support is conditional, and deviation from his expectations could come with severe consequences. Zelensky, too, made a miscalculation. While defiance is admirable, strategy is paramount. Ukraine, no matter how strong, cannot afford to alienate its most powerful backer. His words, though principled, could cost Ukraine dearly in the long run. Wars are not won on courage alone.

Abdulsalam Mahmud,
Deputy Editor, PRNigeria

BUSINESSWORLD

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RATES AS AT MARCH 3, 2025

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%	N1,536.76/ 1 US DOLLAR*
OVERNIGHT	25.18%	1-MONTH	21.37%	1-DAY	0.10%	YEAR TO DATE	-10.99%	*AS AT MONDAY., MAR. 3, 2025
		3-MONTH	22.41%	MONTH-TO-DATE	0.24%			

Discos Post Historic Revenue of N515.68bn in Q4, Record N152bn Shortfall



Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

In a historic development in Nigeria's power sector, the 12 electricity Distribution Companies (Discos) operating in the country recorded N515.68 billion in revenue in Q4, 2024, a THISDAY analysis of data from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), has shown.

This would be the highest revenue raked in by the distribution companies in any quarter, spurred mainly by the movement of about 15 per cent of Nigeria's power consumers to the so-called Band 'A', where they now pay about N209.50 per kilowatt/hour of electricity, from about N63/kwh previously.

The Discos include: Benin, Kaduna, Kano, Yola, Jos, Abuja, Ibadan, Ikeja, Eko, Port Harcourt, Enugu and the most recent one, Aba Power Electric.

According to the review of the NERC data for the last three months of 2024, in October, the Discos posted a cumulative revenue of N163.07 billion from a projected N213.62 billion. In November, they raked in N174.65 billion from their revenue forecast of N216.72 billion and in December, the power distributors made N177.96 billion from supply of power to their customers.

In all, while the Discos recorded a total sum of N515.68 billion during the period under consideration, they posted a shortfall of N152 billion.

However, despite the massive improvement in their revenue, the Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu, last week said the electricity supply in the country was still being hindered by the continuous failure of the Discos to invest in the sector.

Adelabu, who spoke at the public presentation of the National Integrated Electricity Policy (NIEP) and Nigeria Integrated Resource Plan (NIRP) in Abuja, argued that with more investment in infrastructure by the Discos, additional progress would have been achieved by now.

Adelabu said the inflows attracted by the power sector last year were better than they were in 2023, explaining that their unwillingness to expand their distribution networks partly explains the low migration of more customers to Band 'A'.

However, THISDAY notes that the revenues collected by the Discos do not belong to their coffers alone. It is shared in an agreed ratio between the power distributors, the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) and the Generation Companies (Gencos), who in turn settle the gas suppliers.

Put side by side the revenues made by the Discos in other quarters of 2024, a further analysis of data from NERC, the industry regulator, indicated that the power distribution companies in the country made N291.62 billion in revenue in Q1, 2024, before the Band 'A' policy.

However, the N291.2 billion was out of the N368.65 billion billed to customers, translating to a collection efficiency of 79.11 per cent, and representing an increase of over 5.32 per cent when compared to 2023/Q4 of 73.79 per cent.

At the time, Aggregate Technical, Commercial and Collection (ATC&C) Loss was 36.36 per cent comprising technical and commercial loss (19.55 per cent) and collection loss (20.83 per cent), the report indicated.

In Q2, the Discos recorded the sum of N431. 16 billion as revenues from customers, reflecting a collection efficiency of 79.31 per cent, while in Q3, they collectively recorded a total of N466.69 billion in revenue. This was an 8 per cent increase from the previous quarter.

For that quarter, a total revenue of N626.02 billion billed to customers, translating to a collection efficiency of 74.55 per cent, which was a 4.76 per cent decrease from the previous quarter and a revenue shortfall of N159.3 billion.

Despite the rise in revenue of the Discos, the federal government has already hinted that aside from the Band 'A' customers, other Nigerians in other bands could begin to pay more soon for electricity consumed.

However, this has received a reaction from the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), which has vowed to proceed with a nationwide protest if the federal government proceeds to 'regularise' electricity tariffs for Nigerian customers for Bands 'A, B and C'. This was disclosed in a communique signed by NLC General Secretary Emmanuel Ugboaja last Sunday.

NOTE: The story continues online on **www.thisdaylive.com**

Non-oil Exports: FG Collaborates with MAN, NACCIMA, Others on Affordable Freight Charges' Framework

Dike Onwuamaeze

As part of the federal government's efforts to promote the competitiveness of Nigerian non-oil exports, the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, along with leading stakeholders in the Nigerian private and public sectors, is collaborating to develop a strategic framework that would make freight charges more affordable for Nigerian commodity exporters.

In his address during the stakeholders' workshop in Lagos with the theme, "Charting a Course for Competitive Freight Rates: Policy, Infrastructure and Private Sector Led Solutions," the Permanent Secretary, at the ministry, Ambassador Nura Abba Rimi, said the workshop is a platform to discuss and formulate a strategic framework that would balance the interests of all stakeholders.

Rimi, who was represented by Mr. Abdul Ahmed, said that the framework, "will provide a roadmap to implement key interventions that can reduce freight costs and promote a more competitive and efficient logistics industry. Ultimately, the goal is to foster a logistic environment that is both cost-effective and sustainable, contributing to economic growth, job creation and improved balances."

According to the Chairman of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), Export Group, Mrs. Odiri Erewa-Meggison, the workshop would address one of the most pressing challenges facing Nigeria non-oil export sector.

Erewa-Meggison, who was represented by the Executive Secretary, MAN Export Promotion Group, Dr. Benedict Oriosa, said that "affordable and efficient freight system remains critical to Nigerian economy as it directly impact on the ability of our exporters to compete in regional and global markets."

She observed, "reality today is that high freight charges continue to erode the competitiveness of Nigerian made goods. It has made it more expensive to do business and inhibits the growth of our non-oil sector.

"By fostering collaboration and aligning our efforts we can develop a strategic framework, export policy reforms and regulatory incentives that will make freight cost lower to ensure that Nigerian exporters are more competitive."

Speaking in the same vein, the Director General of Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, Mr. Olusola Obadimu, said that freight rates play a pivotal role in shaping trade competitiveness, influencing the ease of doing business, and determining the profitability of Nigerian enterprises and their exports products.

Obadimu said: "In Nigeria, logistics and transport costs account for 20 to 30 per cent of total business expenditures, compared to 8.0 to 10 per cent in more advanced economies. These high costs place Nigerian businesses, particularly Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at a disadvantage, limiting their ability to compete effectively within the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other international markets. Achieving competitive freight rates requires a holistic approach, integrating sound policy frameworks, efficient infrastructure, and proactive private sector participation."

Continued on page 22

FOOD COMMODITIES PRICE TODAY

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
RICE	50KG	ABUJA	N92,500
	50KG	LAGOS	N95,000
	50KG	PLATEAU (JOS)	N95,000 - N100,000
	50KG	OYO	N95,000 - N100,000
	50KG	RIVERS	N99,000
	100KG	SOKOTO	N99,000

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
SORGHUM	100KG	JIGAWA	N30,000
	100KG	BENUE	N32,000
	100KG	KADUNA	N32,000
	50KG	ENUGU	N24,000
	50KG	LAGOS	N26,000
	100KG	DELTA	N35,000
	100KG	ABIA	N36,000

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
BEANS	50KG BAG	ABUJA	N95,000 - N100,000
	100KG	LAGOS	N100,000
	100KG	OYO	N98,000 - N100,000
	100KG	ENUGU	N90,000 - N100,000
	100KG	DELTA	N95,000 - N100,000

FOOD COMMODITIES PRICE TODAY

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
PALM OIL	25CL	LAGOS	N20,000-N35,000
	25CL	PH	N24,000-N35,000
	25CL	OYO	N22,000—N35,000
	25CL	IMO	N24,000-N36,500
	25CL	EDO	N20,000-N35,000
	25CL	ABUJA	N25,500-N35,000

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
GROUNDNUT	100KG	KANO	N20,500
	100KG	BENUE	N27,000
	100KG	LAGOS	N32,000
	100KG	DELTA	N34,000
	100KG	ABIA	N27,000
	100KG	ENUGU	N23,000

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
ONIONS	100KG	IBADAN	₦60,000
	100KG	KANO	₦30,000
	100KG	BENUE	N250,000-₦270,000
	100KG	PLATEAU	N250,000-₦270,000
	100KG	DELTA	N250,000
	100KG	LAGOS	N250,000
	100KG	ENUGU	N250,000-₦270,000

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	LOCATION	PRICE
MAIZE	100KG	OYO	₦10,000
	100KG	ENUGU	N16,500
	100KG	DELTA	N14,000
	100KG	ABIA	₦11,000
	50KG	LAGOS	N9,000
	100KG	KANO	₦9,400
	50KG	BENUE	N6,000

TotalEnergies: Despite Energy Transition, Oil, Gas Will Remain Relevant

Stories by Emmanuel Addeh
in Abuja

The Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of TotalEnergies, Matthieu Bouyer has said that although the world is currently investing more in low-carbon energies, globally up to 80 per cent of fossil fuels still supply the needed energy supply.

Speaking in Abuja as a panelist during the just concluded Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES) on the topic: "Turning Resources into Revenue", the chief executive of TotalEnergies Companies in Nigeria, noted that the oil giant was the first to stop routine gas flaring in the country since 2023.

Besides, he stated that to ensure global energy security, there was a need to include all sources, including oil, nuclear, gas, renewables, among others.

"So it's still the vast majority of the energy we consume every day. So actually, while there is a transition, we still need oil and gas, and more oil and gas year after year. And it will be like that for a long time. If you look at the last 150 years, there has been more addition from oil, nuclear, gas, renewable, than removing energies along the way. So it is fueled by the growing energy demand, and we believe it will be like that for quite long," Bouyer posited.

He stressed that TotalEnergies, which was a platinum sponsor of the programme continues to abate methane emissions in its operations and supports the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) in identifying and blocking methane leaks.

"What we need, though, is to make sure that we produce energy that is clean, in the cleanest possible way, in order to valorise every molecule of gas in particular that we have on our asset. We've stopped routine flaring in 2023, end of 2023. We are the first operator in Nigeria to do it. And we are abating methane emissions on every of our assets, and supporting NNPC in its own assets in order to identify methane leaks and to reduce them eventually," Bouyer stressed.

He called for more investment in gas, since it is clean and more abundant in Nigeria, pointing out that it is already part of the present roadmap to significantly grow the country's energy production.

"So we believe that gas in Nigeria is well positioned with all these resources. It is also close to Europe, so if you want to export gas through LNG, it's a big competitive advantage. And you know that Europe today is diversifying its gas supply mix, so that's a formidable opportunity for a gas-rich country like Nigeria in terms of business," he argued.

Chemstar Promises Reward for Customers Amid Harsh Manufacturing Terrain

The Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of Chemstar Group, Dr Aderemi Awode, has reassured the customers and distributors that the company will continue to recognise and reward their sustained loyalty and patronage to the company despite the harsh terrain faced by the manufacturing sector.

Similarly, he restated the commitment of the management to prioritise the welfare and well-being of the workers through policies and robust measures put in place that have gone a long way in boosting their morale, equipping and encouraging them for enhanced performance and optimal productivity.

Awode disclosed this during the 2025 Customers' Forum, which was held in Lagos.

This year's Customers' Forum also served as part of activities commemorating the 30th anniversary of the paints company, which began from a humble beginning at Kayode Street, Ogba, Lagos in 1995.

According to him, the yearly reward and recognition system that was instituted over 25 years ago by the company to appreciate and celebrate its customers and distributors in the paints, chemicals and Matrag Foods categories, has become part of Chemstar Group's annual tradition, and as a demonstration of the priority the management placed on recognising its numerous distributors within and outside the country.

He said: "The 30 years of our company is that of celebrating and appreciating our esteemed customers for their loyalty to our products and in standing by the industry in the face of all odds and challenges posed by high level insecurity, poor road network and the recent economic hardship in the country that have made the ease of doing business more difficult and unbearable for manufacturers.

"Today, we want to appreciate and recognise all our esteemed customers that are best in the various zones (Abuja, North Central, North East/West, East, Lagos and West) because we cannot achieve whatever we have achieved as a company in the last 30 years that we have remained in business without you, our customers. If you, our customers, are not there, we cannot be here.

"As Oliver Twist, we are asking for more of your patronage and loyalty to our various products ranging from paints, chemicals and foods as our company forges ahead in the next dispensation."

NDPHC CEO Emerges in Africa's Top 100 Influential Voices

The Managing Director and Chief Executive of the Niger Delta Power Holding Company (NDPHC), Jennifer Adighije, an engineer, has been recognised as one of the Top 100 Influential Global Voices 2025 by Leaders Without Borders International Economic Development & Investment Business Summit.

The award ceremony took place at the weekend at the Palace of Westminster, House of Lords, United Kingdom, where Adighije also received two additional honours.

A statement in Abuja by the General Manager, Communication and Public Relations, NDPHC, Mrs Olufunke Nwankwo, explained that Leaders Without Borders Summit is a globally respected platform that brings together top leaders, visionaries, and changemakers.

This recognition, she said, underscores NDPHC's commitment to driving sustainable energy solutions and its impact on the power sector.

In addition to the Top 100 Influential Voices recognition, Adighije was awarded a Professional Doctorate in Leadership and Management by the City University of Paris. She was also admitted as a Fellow of The Chartered Institute of Management and Leadership, USA, the statement added.

According to the release, the event was graced by high-profile dignitaries from Nigeria and across Africa, including the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Dennis Idahosa from Nigeria; Prof. Mthuli Ncube, Minister of Finance, Economic Development & Investment Promotion from the Republic of Zimbabwe and Christopher Williams-Martin, CEO, FlyEliteJets, UK.

Speaking on her awards, Adighije stated: "It is truly an honour to be recognised for my contributions to the NDPHC's mandate, which aligns with the power sector's goal of ramping up generation and transmission capacity in Nigeria.

"This recognition reaffirms our commitment to ensuring sustainable access to quality and reliable electricity, in line with Mr. President's Renewed Hope Agenda."

Dangiwa: FG Upgraded over 100 Slums in Two Years

Housing and Urban Development Minister, Ahmed Dangiwa, has said that the ministry has successfully within two years executed over 100 slums upgrade and urban renewal projects within the country.

Speaking in Abuja during a meeting with the Minister of State for Regional Development, Uba Ahmadu, he said that these consist of water supply, drainages, roads, sanitation, street lighting, among other projects like intervention in schools and hospitals.

He noted that the meeting was meant to forge a common alliance that would see to the enhancement of their respective ministerial deliverables. The meeting was attended by Permanent Secretaries of the respective ministries; Dr Shuaib Belgore of Housing and Mrs Tinuke Watti of Regional Development.

Dangiwa emphasised that the meeting was part of the inter-ministerial collaboration that needs to be enhanced between ministries and agencies.

"With this type of collaboration, we can exchange ideas and leverage on certain privileges that one has, and find a way of enhancing our ministerial deliverables that we have sworn to deliver" he stated.

He expressed joy in the news that one of the development commissions of the regional development ministry was developing over 1000 housing units for their citizens.

He said more collaborations between the commissions and the housing ministry were necessary in order for the professionals in the ministry to adequately provide designs, costings and necessary advice for the projects.

Speaking earlier, Minister of State for Regional Development, Ahmadu, said the creation of a regional development ministry by President Bola Tinubu was intended to take developments to the grassroots.

Acknowledging housing as a cardinal objective of the regional development ministry, he conveyed their desire to align and collaborate with the housing ministry through the development commissions, so as to avoid duplication of projects.

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Nigeria, UN Agency Target $500m in Distributed Renewable Energy Fund

Nigeria and a United Nations-backed agency, Sustainable Energy For All organisation, known as SEforALL, have set a $500 million target for a fund to finance the roll out of so-called distributed renewable energy, such as solar home systems and mini-grids.

The fund backed by the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) will be managed by Africa50, an infrastructure investor established by the African Development Bank (AfDB), Bloomberg reported yesterday.

Nigerian pension funds will also invest, according to Damilola Ogunbiyi, SEforALL's Chief Executive Officer.

The aim is to put together a "fund that would be accessible and will be in local currency for local developers," she said in an interview in Cape Town on the sidelines of a global gathering of development finance institutions.

The fund is linked to the Mission 300 programme led by the World Bank and the AfDB to provide electricity to 300 million people in Africa by 2030. The initiative will provide tens of billions of dollars to countries that meet certain conditions including reforming power utilities and adapting regulations to encourage private investment, it said.

Africa50's CEO, Alain Ebobisse, said in an interview in January that the fund was being planned, but the size had yet to be decided.

Separately, Africa50 is setting up a $200 million fund to be known as the Africa Solar Facility, to invest in distributed renewable energy projects across the continent and sponsored by the International Solar Alliance.

Mini-grids and solar home systems are seen as a way of getting electricity to settlements and rural areas far away from national grids. More than 80 per cent of the people in the world without access to electricity, or 570 million people, live in sub-Saharan Africa, and 86 million of them are in Nigeria.

NON-OIL EXPORTS: FG COLLABORATES WITH MAN, NACCIMA, OTHERS ON AFFORDABLE FREIGHT CHARGES' FRAMEWORK

Similarly, the Deputy Director, Stakeholders Services, Nigeria Shippers' Council (NSC), Mrs. Hannah Adaba, said that the development of framework for affordable freight charges for non-oil exports is both timely and absolutely critical for the future of Nigeria's economy. Adaba said: "We relate with exporters and are deeply aware of the challenges they face. High freight charge is one of the impediments that affect their competitiveness in the global market. We believe that by focusing on transparent and competitive shipping environment, Nigeria can unlock the immense potential of our non-oil export."

The Director General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration (NAFDAC), Professor Mojisola Adeyeye, said that high freight rates high freight rate could have a devastating effect on Nigerian non-oil exports sector by increasing the cost of exporting goods and making them less competitive in the global market.

Adeyeye said: "We can unlock efficient, reliable and cost efficient freight system that will drive export growth, foster global productivity and enhance the livelihood of our communities."

Also the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) said that there is urgent need to address the challenge of high freight charges on Nigerian non-oil exports.

It said: "A well-structured freight system will not only be good for cost efficiency for exporters, but will also enhance global marketability of Nigerian made goods, boost foreign revenue earning and create employment opportunities. This is why we must work together to implement sustainable solutions that will lower logistic costs and enhance port efficiency and streamline regulatory processes."

Representing the Nigeria Customs Services (NCS)," an Assistant Comptroller, Mohammed Haruna, said that Nigeria witnessed significant increase in non-oil export in 2023, 2024 and into this year both in volume of exports and foreign exchange earnings.

Haruna said that the NCS is playing its mandate of facilitation of legitimate trade in line with its comptroller general's policy trust of consolidating successes that have already been made.

LOSS OF DOCUMENT

This is to inform the general public of the theft of sundry personal documents belonging to Christopher Ameshi, some of which are:
1. Marriage & Age declaration documents.
2. House title documents.
3. Sundry certificates viz: primary school; London GCE, City & Guilds of London; Mechanical Engineering from University of Science & Tech. PH; etc.

The general public is hereby advised to report anyone found with any of these documents to the Kala Police Station on Ikwerre Road, Port Harcourt.

CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED

R. C. 6135

OPERATOR OF THE NNPCL/CHEVRON JOINT VENTURE

TENDER OPPORTUNITY
PROVISION OF SLICKLINE SERVICES (JV)

NipeX Tender No – CNL.00000321

1. INTRODUCTION:
Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) Operator of NNPCL/CNL Joint Venture, invites interested and prequalified service providers for this tender opportunity for the Provision of Slickline Services at company's operational areas. The proposed award strategy is multiple contract of five (5) years term with an option of two (2) years extension.

2. SCOPE OF WORK:
The scope of Slickline shall include, but not limited to the following:

- Slickline zone switch & zone isolation
- Storm chokes & surface controlled sub-surface safety valves installation and retrieval.
- Communication checks & tubing patching with minimal ID restrictions
- Swabbing of wells
- Wax-Cutting and Hot-Oiling of Flow lines
- Gas lift valve & orifice valve installation
- Setting of bridge plugs
- Through-tubing perforating services
- Through-tubing plugback services using cement and plugs
- Tubing punching with multiple punches in one run
- Production logging (Memory & real-time)
- Gyro surveys
- Other Surveillance activities (Bottom Hole Pressure (BHP) Surveys etc)
- Real time logging & perforation
- Memory Transient testing – Static & Flowing bottom hole pressure surveys
- Other Special through-tubing services

3. MANDATORY TENDER REQUIREMENTS:

A. To be eligible for this tender exercise, interested bidders are required to be **pre-qualified and "live"** in the **3.04.20 (slickline services)** category of the NipeX Joint Qualification System (NJQS) database. All successfully **pre-qualified and 'live'** bidders in this category by the bid close date will receive Invitation to submit Technical and Commercial Tender (ITT).

B. To determine if you are pre-qualified and to view the product/service category you are listed for: Open www.vendors.nipex-ng.com and **access NJQS with your log in details. Click on Products/Services tab to view your status and product codes.**

C. If you are not listed in this product/service category, and you are registered with Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) to do business for this category, please contact NipeX office at 27b Oyinkan Abayomi Drive, Ikoyi, Lagos with your NUPRC certificate as evidence for verification and necessary update.

D. To initiate the JQS pre-qualification process, please access www.nipex-ng.com click on services tab followed by NJQS registration.

E. To be eligible, all bidders must comply with the Nigerian Content requirements in the NipeX system.

4. NIGERIAN CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

Chevron Nigeria Limited is committed to the development of the Nigerian Oil and Gas business in observance with the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010 (NOGICD Act) enacted by the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 2010.

Pursuant to enactment of the NOGICD Act, the minimum Nigerian Content in any project, service or product specification to be executed in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry shall be consistent with the level set in the schedule of the Act and any other target as may be directed by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB).

Contractors shall comply with the provisions of the NOGICD Act and all applicable regulations. Bidders that do not meet the Nigerian Content criterion will not be allowed to participate in next Tender Stage

The following are the Nigerian Content requirements bidders are expected to comply with in their technical bid submission.

- Demonstrate that entity is a Nigerian registered company. Tenderer shall provide evidence of company Ownership Structure form CO2 and CO7, registration on NOGIC JQS and NUPRC certificate.
- Provide evidence of what percentage of key management positions is held by Nigerians and what percentage of the total work force are Nigerians. Also, show overall percentage of work to be performed by Nigerian resources relative to total work volume.
- Detailed description of the location of in-country committed facilities & infrastructure (Administrative/Technical offices) in Nigeria to support this contract.
- The Tenderer shall provide evidence of Category 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 Services and Support (SS) demonstrating ownership of Slickline Units and capacity to deployed trained personnel to execute the work scope.
- Tenderer shall comply with the latest approved version of NCDMB HCD guideline by committing (via a letter of undertaking) to providing Project-Specific training, man-hour, budget, skill development and understudy plan for Nigerian personnel utilizing OGTAN registered trainer(s) or other approved NCDMB training institution(s).

5. CLOSE DATE:
Only bidders who are **pre-qualified and 'live'** with NJQS Product/Category **3.04.20 (Slickline Services)** by **16:00 Hours, March 17, 2025** being the advert close date shall be invited to submit technical and commercial bid.

Additional Information:

1. Suppliers eligible for this tender opportunity are expected to be **prequalified and "live"** in NJQS under the product/service category.
2. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) and any further progression of this tender shall be via NipeX.
3. All costs incurred in preparing and processing NJQS prequalification shall be to the contractor's accounts.
4. Meet the requirement of Static and Dynamic Reservoir Studies.
5. This advertisement shall neither be construed as any form of commitment on the part of Chevron Nigeria Limited to award any contract to any company and or associated companies, sub-contractors or agents, nor shall it entitle prequalified companies to make any claims whatsoever, and/or seek any indemnity from Chevron Nigeria Limited and or any of its partners by virtue of such companies having been prequalified in NJQS.
6. The tendering process shall be the NNPC Ltd contracting process requiring pre-qualified companies to submit technical tenders first. Following a technical review, only technically and financially qualified contractors will be requested to submit commercial tenders.
7. Chevron Nigeria Limited will communicate only with authorized officers of the pre-qualifying companies and NOT through individuals or Agents.

ES/NCDMB/CNL/ADV/UPD/13082024/ PROVISION OF OFFSHORE SLICKLINE SERVICES (JV)
Please visit NipeX portal at www.nipex-ng.com for this advert and other information.

CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED

R. C. 6135

OPERATOR OF THE NNPCL/CHEVRON JOINT VENTURE

TENDER OPPORTUNITY

PROVISION OF IT HARDWARE INFRASTRUCTURE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION SERVICES

NipeX Tender No – CNL.00000312

1. INTRODUCTION:

Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL), on behalf of its co-venturer (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)), invites interested and prequalified companies for this tender opportunity for the procurement, delivery and installation of IT Infrastructure asset types as listed below in all company locations in Nigeria for our IT Infrastructure assets upgrade and refresh (Life Cycle Management) program. The proposed contract term is five (5) years with an option of two (2) year extension.

The contracts are expected to commence in 4th quarter 2025 and remain active for five (5) years, with an option to extend the duration for another two (2) years.

2. SCOPE OF WORK:

The scope of work for the services includes, but is not limited to, the following:

A. Procurement of IT Infrastructure
B. Delivery and Documentation as Requirements
C. Technology Refresh and Future-Proofing
D. Procurement of Equipment-Related Licenses
E. Procurement and Maintenance of End-User Devices and Servers
F. Maintenance and Support Services
G. Service Level Agreement Compliance
H. Reporting and Documentation
I. Logistics and Installation Services
J. Environmental and Safety Compliance

3. MANDATORY TENDER REQUIREMENTS:

A. To be eligible for this tender exercise, interested Contractors are required to be **pre- qualified and 'live'** in the following Categories in NipeX Joint Qualification System (NJQS) database
3.11.01: Network Installation /Support Services
3.11.05: Hardware Installation Support Services
3.11.11: Public Address System Services
3.11.09: Telecommunication systems, integration Installation / Support Services
1.14.01 Computer Hardware – Work Stations (PCs and UNIX)
1.14.02: Computer Hardware – Servers (PCs UNIX)
1.14.03: Computer Hardware – Mainframe (CPUs, Storage and other Mainframe Equipment and Accessories).
1.14.04: Computer Peripherals (VDUs, Printers and other Peripherals)
1.14.05: Communication Equipment and Accessories (Routers, Modems, HUBs, cables etc.)
1.14.20: Telecommunication Equipment and Systems (PABXs, Telephone Equipment, Telex/Telefax, Accessories etc.)
1.14.21: Audio/Video Equipment and Accessories

All successfully **pre-qualified and 'live'** bidders in these categories by the bid close date will receive Invitation to Technical Tender (ITT).

B. To determine if you are pre-qualified and view the product/service category you are listed for: Open www.vendors.nipex-ng.com and access NJQS with your log in details. Click on Products/Services Status tab to view your status and product codes.

C. If you are not listed in a product/service category you are registered with NUPRC to do business, contact NipeX office at 27b Oyinkan Abayomi Drive, Ikoyi Lagos with your NUPRC certificate as evidence for verification and necessary update.

D. To initiate the JQS prequalification process, access www.nipex-ng.com, click on services tab followed by NJQS registration.

E. To be eligible, all tenders must comply with Nigerian Content requirements in the NipeX system.

4. NIGERIAN CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

Chevron Nigeria Limited is committed to the development of the Nigerian Oil and Gas business in observance with the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010 (NOGICD Act) enacted by the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 2010.

Pursuant to enactment of the NOGICD Act, the minimum Nigerian Content in any project, service or product specification to be executed in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry shall be consistent with the level set in the schedule of the Act and any other target as may be directed by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB). Contractors shall comply with the provisions of the NOGICD Act and all applicable regulations. Bidders that do not meet the Nigerian Content criterion will not be allowed to participate in the next Tender Stage

The following are the Nigerian Content requirements bidders are expected to comply with in their technical bid submission.

a. Tenderer shall demonstrate that entity is a Nigerian-registered company with greater than 51% Nigerian shareholding. Submit certified true copies of CAC forms 01, 02 & 07 (or its equivalent; CAC 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, etc.). Tenderer shall provide evidence of registration with the NCDMB NOGIC JQS and NUPRC.

b. Tenderer shall provide detailed description of the location of in-country committed facilities not limited to administrative office, technical office, and workshop for execution of the work scope.

c. Provide evidence of what percentage of your key management positions is held by Nigerians and what percentage of the total work force are Nigerians. Also, show overall percentage of work to be performed in Nigeria and those by Nigerian resources relative to total work volume.

d. Bidders shall provide any of the underlisted NCEC demonstrating capacity and capability to execute the work scope;
a. Category 1,2,3,4 or 5 Consultancy Services (CS) group NCEC
b. Category 1,2,3,4 or 5 Procurement and Supplies (PS) group NCEC

e. Tenderer shall comply with the latest approved version of NCDMB HCD guideline by committing (via a letter of undertaking) to providing Project-Specific training, man-hour, budget, skill development, and understudy plan for Nigerian personnel utilizing OGTAN registered trainer(s) or other approved NCDMB training institution(s)

5. CLOSE DATE

Only bidders who are **pre-qualified and 'live'** in either of the below listed NJQS Product/Category by **16:00 Hours March 17, 2025** being the advert close date shall be invited to submit technical bid.
3.11.01: Network Installation / Support Services
3.11.05: Hardware Installation Support Services
3.11.11: Public Address System Services
3.11.09: Telecommunication systems, integration Installation / Support Services
1.14.01 Computer Hardware – Work Stations (PCs and UNIX)
1.14.02: Computer Hardware – Servers (PCs UNIX)
1.14.03: Computer Hardware – Mainframe (CPUs, Storage and other Mainframe Equipment and Accessories).
1.14.04: Computer Peripherals (VDUs, Printers and other Peripherals)
1.14.05: Communication Equipment and Accessories (Routers, Modems, HUBs, cables etc.)
1.14.20: Telecommunication Equipment and Systems (PABXs, Telephone Equipment, Telex/Telefax, Accessories etc)
1.14.21: Audio/Video Equipment and Accessories

6. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

1. Suppliers eligible for this tender opportunity are expected to be **prequalified and 'live'** in NJQS under this product/service category.
2. The Invitation to Tender (ITT) and any further progression of this tender shall be via NipeX.
3. All costs incurred in preparing and processing NJQS prequalification shall be to the contractor's accounts.
4. Meet the requirement of Security Services.
5. This advertisement shall neither be construed as any form of commitment on the part of Chevron Nigeria Limited to award any contract to any company and or associated companies, sub- contractors or agents, nor shall it entitle prequalified companies to make any claims whatsoever, and/or seek any indemnity from Chevron Nigeria Limited and or any of its partners by virtue of such companies having been prequalified in NJQS.
6. The tendering process shall be the NNPC contracting process requiring pre-qualified companies on NipeX NJQS to submit together technical and commercial tenders. Following a technical review, only technically qualified contractors will progress to the commercial phase of the tender process for commercial evaluations and awards.
7. Chevron Nigeria Limited will communicate only with authorized officers of the pre-qualifying companies and NOT through individuals or Agents.

ES/NCDMB/CNL/ADV/UPD/14022025/ PROVISION OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE HARDWARE PROCUREMENT AND INSTALLATION SERVICES

Please visit NipeX portal at www.nipex-ng.com for this advert and other information.

CHEVRON NIGERIA LIMITED

R. C. 6135

OPERATOR OF THE NNPCL/CHEVRON JOINT VENTURE

TENDER OPPORTUNITY

PROVISION OF TUBING CONVEYED PERFORATION AND RELATED SERVICES

NipeX Tender No – CNL.00000323

1. INTRODUCTION:
Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) Operator of NNPCL/CNL Joint Venture, invites interested and prequalified companies for this tender opportunity for the Provision of Tubing Conveyed Perforation and Related Services to support JV Drilling and Completion Operations.

The contract is proposed to span a period of five (5) years with a possible optional term of two (2) year duration.

2. SCOPE OF WORK:
Interested Applicants must be able to provide the following as required for Tubing Conveyed Perforation services:

- Contractor must have proven capability to provide engineering, equipment and personnel for tubing conveyed perforating (TCP) services. Contractor shall provide TCP systems for casing sizes up to 13-3/8". TCP systems include but are not limited to shoot-and-pull, shoot-and-drop, single-trip perforate and squeeze, auto-release gun hanger systems, oriented perforations, multizone perforating, dual-well short-string deployed perforating and dual string Y-block deployed perforating.

- TCP equipment includes but is not limited to the gun carrier, deep penetrating and big-hole gravel pack charges, safety gun spacer, bull plug, swivel sub, mechanical and hydraulic firing systems, automatic gun/tubing release systems, fill disc/debris sub, underbalance sliding sleeve vent, mechanical set packer, pressure transfer sub, safety joint, hydraulic jars, annulus operated valve, reversing valve, radio-active marker, gauge carrier and P/T memory gauges, fast gauges, surface shot detection, master valves, flow tee, detonating bars with rollers and retrieving tool, circulation/test manifold, tool re-dress kits, and safety equipment.

- Contractor is required to maintain minimum explosive inventory of RDX, HMX and HNX required to meet Company's work scope on the rig schedule per year.

3. MANDATORY TENDER REQUIREMENTS:

- To be eligible for this tender exercise, interested bidders are required to be **pre-qualified and 'live'** in **3.04.27 (Perforation Services) category** in NipeX Joint Qualification System (NJQS) database. All successfully **pre-qualified and 'live'** suppliers in this category by the advert close date will receive invitation to submit Technical and Commercial Tender (ITT).

- To confirm if you are pre-qualified and view the product/service category you are listed for: Open http://vendors.nipex-ng.com and access NJQS with your company log in details. Click on Products/Services tab to view your status and product codes.

- If you are not listed in this product service category and you are registered with NUPRC to do business for this category, please contact NipeX office at 27B, Oyinkan Abayomi Drive, Ikoyi, Lagos with your NUPRC certificate as evidence for verification and necessary update.

- To initiate the JQS prequalification process, please access www.nipex-ng.com, click on services tab followed by NJQS registration.

- To be eligible, all tenders must comply with Nigerian Content requirements in the NipeX system.

4. NIGERIAN CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:
Chevron Nigeria Limited is committed to the development of the Nigerian Oil and Gas business in observance with the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act 2010 (NOGICD Act) enacted by the Federal Government of Nigeria in April 2010.

Pursuant to enactment of the NOGICD Act, the minimum Nigerian Content in any project, service or product specification to be executed in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry shall be consistent with the level set in the schedule of the Act and any other target as may be directed by the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB).

Contractors shall comply with the provisions of the NOGICD Act and all applicable regulations. Bidders that do not meet the Nigerian Content criterion will not be allowed to participate in next Tender Stage.

The following are the Nigerian Content requirements bidders are expected to comply with in their technical bid submission:

- Tenderer shall demonstrate that entity is a Nigerian-registered company with greater than 51% Nigerian shareholding. Submit certified true copies of CAC forms 10, 02 & 07 (or its equivalent; CAC 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, etc.). Tenderer shall provide evidence of registration with the NCDMB NOGIC JQS and NUPRC.
- Tenderer shall provide detailed description of the location of in-country committed facilities not limited to administrative office, technical office, and workshop for execution of the work scope.
- Provide a project-specific organogram showing Names and Nationalities of all key personnel that will execute the work scope for this service (not limited to Operations manager, Field Engineer, TCP Specialist, Field Assistants, etc.).
- Tenderer shall provide evidence of Category 1,2,3,4 or 5 Services and Support (SS) group NCEC demonstrating ownership of equipment (not limited to Perforating gun, Detonator, Explosives, Downhole Equipment, Pressure Control Equipment, Safety Equipment etc.) to execute the work scope.
- Tenderer shall comply with the latest approved version of NCDMB HCD guideline by committing (via a letter of undertaking) to providing Project-Specific training, man-hour, budget, skill development, and understudy plan for Nigerian personnel utilizing OGTAN registered trainer(s) or other approved NCDMB training institution(s)

Non-Compliance with Nigerian Content requirements is a Fatal Flaw.

5. CLOSE DATE:
Only tenderers who are **prequalified and 'live'** with NJQS Product/Category **3.04.27 (Perforation Services)** by **16:00 Hours, March 17, 2025** being the advert close date shall be invited to submit technical bid.

Additional Information:

- Suppliers eligible for this tender opportunity are expected to be prequalified in NJQS under this product/service catego ries.

- The Invitation to Tender (ITT) and any further progression of this tender shall be via NipeX.

- All costs incurred in preparing and processing NJQS prequalification shall be solely to the bidders' accounts.

- This advertisement shall neither be construed as any form of commitment on the part of CNL to award any contract to any company and or associated companies, sub-contractors or agents, nor shall it entitle prequalified companies to make any claims whatsoever, and/or seek any indemnity from CNL and or any of its partners or affiliates by virtue of such companies having been prequalified in NJQS.

- The tendering process shall be the NNPCL contracting process requiring pre-qualified companies to submit technical tenders first. Following a technical review, only technically and financially qualified bidders will be requested to submit commercial tenders.

- CNL will communicate only with authorized officers of the pre-qualifying companies and NOT through individuals or Agents.

ES/NCDMB/CNL/ADV/UPD/09082024/ PROVISION OF TUBING CONVEYED PERFORATION SERVICES TENDER (JV)

Please visit NipeX portal at www.nipex-ng.com for this advert and other information.

NEWS



COURTESY VISIT TO THE MINISTER OF WOMEN AFFAIRS...

L-R: Team Lead, Women Banking, Access Bank, Jennifer Jennifer Amu-Akojie; Group Head, Women Banking, Access Bank, Nene Kunle-Ogunlusi; Minister, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Hajiya Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim; Deputy Managing Director, Access Bank, Chizoma Okoli; and Head, Retail Bank- Nigerian Northern Directorate, Neka Adogu, during a courtesy visit to the office of the minister to discuss strategic collaborations aimed at driving financial inclusion, entrepreneurship, and economic empowerment for women in Nigeria, held in Abuja.....recently

IWD: UN Women Commends Nigeria for Implementing Beijing Platform for Action

- *UK advocates special seats for women in Nigeria's parliament*
- *UBA unveils month-long initiatives to empower women*
- *Stakeholders converge on Abuja, discuss vulnerable citizens*
- *As BIGIF advocates robust women participation in politics*

Michael Olugbode and **Sunday Aborisade** in Abuja, **Gbenga Sodeinde** in Ado Ekiti and **Nume Ekgehe** in Lagos

Ahead of the International Women's Day in March 8, 2025, UN Women has commended Nigeria for the significant progress it has made in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, especially in women's political participation, economic empowerment, education, and the fight against gender-based violence.

UN Women Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Beatrice Eyong, gave the commendation in Abuja on Monday at a high-level consultation on Nigeria's Beijing+30 Report Review in preparation for the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69).

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom Branch of the Commonwealth Parliament Association yesterday threw its weight behind the bill seeking special seats for women at the National and State Houses of Assembly.

This is coming just as constitution review exercise is at the advanced stage at both chambers of the National Assembly.

In another related development, the United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc has announced a series of targeted initiatives throughout March to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD), reinforcing its commitment to gender equality and financial empowerment across Africa.

The bank in a statement noted that this initiative is part of its ongoing commitment towards fostering gender equality and financial inclusion and that the bank has designed some impactful programs that will address key health, social, and economic challenges while offering tailored financial solutions to support women's growth and successes.

Also, worried by the low level of women, children and Persons With Disabilities, (PWD), inclusion in the national affairs, stakeholders on Monday converged in Abuja to strategize on way forward in advocating for the vulnerable citizens in Nigeria.

The stakeholders at the second annual conference of Commissioners of State Ministries of Women Affairs organized by the Ministry of Women Affairs with support of the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (ROLAC) Programme noted that achieving gender equality involved transforming social norms and power dynamics that supported the political, social and economic empowerment of the most marginalised and vulnerable, notably women, children and PWD.

Meanwhile, the Balm in Gilead Foundation for Sustainable Development has called on stakeholders across the country to support women participation in politics.

BIGIF in a one-day dialogue with Non-State Actors on Gender Quota and Women's Political Participation held at the All Saints Guest House in Ado Ekiti bemoaned the low statistics of women in politics despite having a larger percentage of the population.

On part of the UN Women, the organisation's Country Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ms. Beatrice Eyong, explained that despite the progress made, there are still emerging challenges that require collective action to drive transformative change, restating UN Women's commitment to support Nigeria in fast-tracking gender-responsive policies.

She said: "This consultation is a crucial step in ensuring that Nigeria's national report for CSW69 is inclusive, reflective of diverse perspectives, and aligned with the realities of women and girls across the country.

"Your participation today - whether from government, civil society, academia, or the development sector - demonstrates our shared commitment to reviewing our progress, identifying key priorities, and shaping strategic recommendations that will contribute to Nigeria's gender equality agenda beyond Beijing+30.

"At UN Women, we remain steadfast in our support to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and all stakeholders in accelerating gender-responsive policies, strengthening women's leadership, and ensuring sustained progress on the commitments made under the BPfA."

According to the UN Women Country Representative, Nigeria needs to assess its achievements, challenges, and emerging priorities in preparation for the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW69).

She noted that: "This consultation is an essential follow-up to the initial report drafted in November 2024, providing a platform to comprehensively enrich and refine the document through a participatory and inclusive approach.

"The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, in collaboration with UN Women and key stakeholders, has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that Nigeria's report is not only robust and reflective of our national realities but also aligned with global best practices.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA), adopted in 1995 at the Fourth World Conference on Women, remains one of the most comprehensive global policy frameworks for achieving gender equality."

She said that constitution identified 12 critical areas of concern that require urgent action, including Women and poverty, Education and training of women, Women and health, Violence against women, and Women and armed conflict.

Other areas she listed were Women and the economy, Women in power and decision-making, Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, Human rights of women, Women and the media, Women and the environment, as well as the girl child.

Also speaking Nigeria's Minister of Women Affairs, Mrs. Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, represented by the Director Women Development, Mrs. Friya Bulus, pointed out that the platform creates an avenue to celebrate the achievements being made by Nigeria, and the way forward as a country.

She said: "We are here today to recognize the progress we've made, Beijing plus 30, and to assess our performance, to look at the report we've been able to put together, to assess our areas of challenges, look at what we need to push out as best practices over the years, and also look at what has constituted major challenges to women economic empowerment and gender equality.

"Our strategic review today of Nigeria's progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action over the 30 years is very, very strategic."

PSN Will Help Check Menace of Unwholesome Drugs

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The Pharmacist Society of Nigeria (PSN) has expressed its readiness to contribute to efforts to rid the health sector in Nigeria of most of the negatives involving sale, consumption of substandard medical products in the country.

The pledge by PSN came just as the National Agency for Food Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) said it has handed over 40 merchants of fake, adulterated and substandard medical products to the security agencies for prosecution.

In his speech shortly after his inauguration as PSN President, Ayuba Ibrahim Tanko said he will work to develop functional capacity and requisite manpower so as to advance goals of Nigeria's healthcare sector.

Tanko said that one of strategies initiated to boost healthcare systems in Nigeria was the creation of consultant cadre in the pharmacy practice.

He regretted that despite the approval granted by the Head of Service, and the inherent benefits it offers to healthcare services, the chief executives of health institutions in the country appear bent on frustrating the noble initiative.

Tanko also said that state governments have not showed enough commitment to instituting the pharmacy cadre in their various health institutions.

His words: "It is regrettable that despite the immensity of the benefits the consultant cadre offers the health system, it has become crystal clear that the chief executives of federal health institutions are bent on frustrating the gains of cadre because over 15 months after all the hurdles have been crossed less than 15 of the federal health institutions have appointed consultant pharmacists in their institutions.

"This development is certainly not complimentary to the reform agenda of the current leadership of the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare."

Director General of NAFDAC, Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, also said that the agency has impounded over 87 truckloads of fake medical products during its raid of the drug markets in Lagos, Aba and Onitsha.

Speaking on the recent enforcement operations embarked upon by the agency in three major open drug markets in Idumota Lagos, Ariaria in Aba Abia State and Bridges Head Market in Onitsha Anambra State, Adeyeye described it as part of NAFDAC's national action plan 2023 - 2027aimed at mitigating substandard and falsified medicines and to protect public health.

She said the exercise was geared towards strengthening regulatory framework as well increasing consumer confidence in the medical product that they consume.

"So far the exercise has succeeded in removing from circulation 87 truckloads of banned, expired, unregistered, falsified and substandard medical products from these markets, while more than 40 arrests have been made which will be followed by prosecution.

Adeyeye said that NAFDAC and PSN has been working together throughout the enforcement operations because the issue of substandard medical products are key responsibilities of the two agencies.

NAFDAC DG said: "As the umbrella body of pharmacists the PSN has a unique role of maintaining a high standard of professional ethics and integrity amongst members as well as promoting legislations to improve the interest and image of the profession through advocacy."

Earlier, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, represented by a member from Oyo federal constituency, said: " "Over 70 percent of drugs in circulation in Nigeria are falsified and adulterated and local manufacturers are deeply involved."

Foundation Offers Free JAMB Registration for 1,000 Indigent Students

Tony Icheku in Owerri

A civil society organisation, Charles Obinna Foundation, COF, on Monday announced its Free JAMB registration support programme for 1,000 indigent students selected across the 27 local government areas, LGAs of Imo State.

The Foundation's Executive Director, Prof. Bongo Adi, in a statement described the JAMB support programme as one of the humanitarian gestures of COF's corporate social responsibility (CSR) for the members of the society.

Prof. Adi, in the statement, noted: "A ceremonial launch of the programme will hold on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri Auditorium Hall, with Governor Hope Uzodinma as the Special Guest of Honor.

"This is a groundbreaking initiative of COF aimed at bridging the gap in educational access and alleviating financial barriers to tertiary education for 40 academically promising students from each local government area of the state and resident in Imo.

"The management of Charles Obinna Foundation touched by the fact that the cost of JAMB registration often excludes talented students from low-income families intervenes to democratise access by covering full registration fees for beneficiaries selected from all 27 LGAs of Imo State.

"Moreso, this COF Education Support Programme reinforces the Foundation's commitment to advancing Governor Uzodinma's Shared Prosperity Agenda, which prioritises accessible education and inclusive socio-economic growth hence collaborating with the Imo State Ministry of Education and local educators to ensure transparency and reach."

Also, Adi applauded COF's efforts, noting: "The Charles Obinna Foundation has consistently been a pillar of support in the mission of the Shared Prosperity Agenda to expand educational opportunities", adding that "the programme will unlock doors for students who represent Imo's brightest future.

"Eligible students are encouraged to apply through the programme's LGA coordinators as identification and selection of eligible students is ongoing across the 27 LGAs of the State by COF's Higher Education Volunteer coordinators.

"Students who need support for JAMB registration should report at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri Auditorium by 9am on Tuesday.

"Applications will close on Friday, March 7, 2025. Community leaders, educators, and parents are urged to share this opportunity widely to ensure all deserving students are roundly captured.



UK PARLIAMENTARIAN VISITS NIGERIAN SENATE...

L-R: Senate Majority Whip, Tahir Monguno; Senate Leader, Opeyemi Bamidele; Leader of Delegation, Kate Osamor; President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio; MP David Mordell; Senator Saliu Mustapha; Deputy British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Gill Lever and Deputy Senate Leader Lola Ashiru, when members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, UK branch visited the Senate .... yesterday.

Alake: Cultural, Political Sensitivities Hindering FG's Control of Gold Mining

● Govt approves N2.5bn satellite surveillance to curb illegal mining ● Says Nigeria loses trillions to illegal mining ● 320 illegal miners arrested, 150 facing prosecution, four foreigners convicted

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The federal government's move to control gold mining across Nigeria is being thwarted by political, social, and cultural sensitivities despite its constitutional authority over the sector.

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, who made this disclosure yesterday, while speaking with newsmen after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu at the State House, Abuja, stressed that: "There is a sensitivity given the peculiarity of our environment – political, social, and cultural – which we recognise. I will not be the one to heat up the polity unnecessarily".

He also said government at the centre loses trillions of naira to unregulated and illegal mining activities across the country.

Already, FEC has approved N2.5 billion for the procurement of an integrated solution framework to combat illegal and unregulated mining activities across the country

The Minister acknowledged that while mineral resources are exclusively under the jurisdiction of the federal government, states continue to exert influence over mining activities, often leading to conflicts.

He disclosed that his ministry has opted for dialogue and collaboration with state governors rather than confrontation.

According to him, many governors were initially unaware of the constitutional framework governing mining, but have now been engaged through discussions facilitated by the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF).

"I have met the governors. I've had a meeting with 32 of them at their secretariat, organised by the chairman of the Governors' Forum, the Governor of Kwara. Some of them feigned ignorance of this constitutional separation of powers, even though they have attorney generals," Alake stated.

Despite the legal clarity that mineral resources belong to the federal government, the Minister explained that states still exercise some level of control due to their ownership of land under the Land Use Act.

Miners are required to obtain consent from host communities before being granted federal mining licences.

To ease tensions and encourage state participation, the federal government has offered states an alternative through Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) – state-owned companies that can apply for mining licences.

Alake said: "I announced to the governors that they could form an SPV to apply for a mining licence in their states, and I will approve it. This way, they feel a sense of belonging, and it is a win-win situation for the federal government, the states, and host communities."

According to him, several states have embraced this approach, and President Bola Tinubu has given him the go ahead to expedite approvals for state-owned mining operations.

On security concerns, Alake noted that states must collaborate with federal authorities in addressing illegal mining and related criminal activities.

He disclosed that the federal government has been working closely with the National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, and the Ministry of Defense to curb illegal mining operations.

"There have been cases of interference by states in mining activities. If there is an infraction in a state, the governor must consult us before taking action. We investigate and either act directly or authorise the state to act under federal cover," Alake further explained.

The Minister also highlighted recent efforts to combat illegal mining, stating that 320 illegal operators have been apprehended in recent months.

Out of these, about 150 are currently facing prosecution, while nine have been convicted, adding that four foreign nationals involved in illegal mining have been prosecuted and convicted.

Alake assured that the federal government remains committed to enforcing regulations while fostering cooperation with states to ensure the sustainable and lawful development of the mining sector.

The Minister also stated that FEC has approved N2.5 billion for the procurement of an integrated solution framework to combat illegal and unregulated mining activities across the country.

He said the approval would fund the deployment of satellite surveillance technology to monitor mining activities in real-time.

"We are procuring satellite equipment that will be installed in strategic locations nationwide. This will allow us to have a visual, real-time view of mining operations across the country, enabling us to track extraction volumes, monitor truck movements, and assess security situations at mining sites," he stated.

According to Alake, the move was part of broader efforts to tackle revenue leakages and curb the illegal extraction and exportation of mineral resources.

The Minister explained that the government has been implementing a two-pronged approach—persuasive and coercive — to address illegal mining.

Under the persuasive option, informal and artisanal miners have been encouraged to form cooperatives to legalise their operations.

"We have successfully persuaded over 300 illegal mining groups to form cooperative societies. Now, they are fully legalised, structured, and contributing meaningfully to the nation's revenue."

By formalising their activities, Alake explained that the miners could access financial support from banks and avoid clashes with security agencies.

However, for those who refuse to comply, the government has deployed coercive measures, including law enforcement through the Mines Marshals, a special unit created to tackle illegal mining.

"For those who are recalcitrant and refuse to comply, the Mines Marshals have been making arrests, prosecuting offenders, and securing convictions. Several illegal operators, including foreigners, have been apprehended," the Minister said.

Despite the success of these initiatives, Alake said government recognised the need to introduce advanced technology to strengthen monitoring and enforcement.

"The newly approved satellite surveillance system will provide a centralised operations center, including a monitoring screen in my office. With just a click of a button, we will be able to zoom in on any mining site in the country and observe activities in real time," he explained.

The N2.5 billion cost of the project, he noted, had already been reviewed downward to ensure cost efficiency.

Commenting on the level of losses in the sector, Alake disclosed that Nigeria has lost trillions of naira to unregulated and illegal mining activities.

He described the scale of losses as "mind-boggling," attributing them to under reporting, illegal operations, and the vastness of Nigeria's territory, which makes monitoring difficult.

"A very elementary, non-scientific estimate we conducted in 2023 immediately after we assumed office revealed trillions of naira lost through unregulated, under-reported, and unlicensed mining activities," he said.

The Minister lamented that gold, one of Nigeria's most valuable mineral resources, has been particularly affected by illegal mining, with the country losing far more than it has officially gained.

"You should not ask how much the nation has gotten from gold; you should ask how much the nation has lost in gold," Alake stated. "It is humongous, unheard of."

NYCP Commends Gombe Governor for Commitment to LG Financial Autonomy

Segun Awofadeji in Gombe

The Northern Christian Youth Professionals (NCYP) has commended the Governor Muhammadu Yahaya of Gombe State for his unwavering support for local government financial autonomy, in line with the Supreme Court's judgment of last year.

According to a press statement issued to journalists on Monday by Isaac Abrak, Chairman, Northern Christian Youth Professionals (NCYP), "This landmark ruling reaffirmed the constitutional authority of local government councils to manage their funds independently, free from state government interference.

The statement also stated that Governor Inuwa Yahaya's decision to grant local government chairmen in Gombe State full control over their funds without undue interference is a testament to his respect for the rule of law and commitment to grassroots development.

The statement read: "His actions not only demonstrate compliance with the Supreme Court's directive but also reflect his dedication to strengthening democracy and fostering sustainable development at the local level.

"This also shows his alignment with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's vision to combat poverty and insecurity by directly empowering the 774 local government councils across Nigeria."

The NCYP urged all Nigerians, particularly other state governors, to emulate Governor Inuwa Yahaya's exemplary leadership, saying he has displayed remarkable integrity by refusing to manipulate the Joint Account and Allocation Committee (JAAC) system, which in some states has been used to divert funds meant for local government councils.

The statement further added: "Rather than exploiting administrative loopholes, he has allowed local councils to directly manage and allocate resources for the benefit of their communities.

"We also recognize the crucial role of financial regulatory agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) in ensuring transparency and accountability in fund management.

"Notably, EFCC Chairman, Mr. Ola Olukoyede, has emphasized that local government chairmen do not enjoy immunity and that the commission is actively monitoring their activities through the newly established Fraud Risk Assessment and Control (FRAC) system.

"This initiative serves as a deterrent to mismanagement, ensuring that funds meant for grassroots development are utilized appropriately".

The Youths further urged the Chairmen of the 11 local government areas in Gombe State to uphold the trust placed in them by Governor Inuwa Yahaya and President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

They must ensure transparent and effective utilization of these funds to improve the lives of grassroots citizens, pointing out that, "By doing so, they will serve as role models for their counterparts across the country".

UN Climate Change Executive Secretary in Nigeria to Engage Govt, Private Bodies, CLOs

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

The UN Climate Change (UNFCCC) Executive Secretary, Simon Stiell, will be visiting Nigeria on a four-day trip to discuss the opportunities a strong climate plan can bring with government officials, business leaders, civil society, and other key stakeholders.

According to a statement on Monday by Director, UN Information Centre (UNIC), Ronald Kayanja, the Executive Secretary will first visit Abuja, from 4-5 March, where he will engage with Nigerian government officials and civil society.

The statement revealed that after meeting with key government officials in Abuja, he will attend a symposium on the "Intersecting Worlds of Climate Change, Mangrove, and Art" on 6 March, convened by Nigeria's National Council on Climate Change Secretariat (NCCCS) at the Lekki Conservation Centre, Km19 Lekki-Epe Expressway, Lekki Peninsula, in Lagos.

At approximately 10:05am (WAT), the Executive Secretary will deliver a speech on the opportunities of Nigeria's new climate plan (also known as their Nationally Determine Contribution or NDC), which will be open to media attending the event between 09:00 and 14:00.

The speech will focus on how Nigeria can realise new economic opportunities with a new national climate plan. and why bold action on climate change can lift people out of poverty, and secure energy access for all.

The Executive Secretary will emphasize that key sectors in Nigeria's economy are on the verge of take-off, and that bold climate plans are key to them taking flight, bringing significant benefits for households, businesses, and governments.

He will talk about how protecting the environment boosts Nigeria's resilience to extreme weather caused by climate change, saving lives and livelihoods.

NEWS



JCI VISITS SANWO-OLU...

L-R: (Front Row) The President JCI, Lagos State University (LASU), Ameenat Hamzat; National Vice President, JCI South-West (District 1), Lara Mohamed; Interim Executive Secretary, Sani Babatunde Ajani; National President, JCI Nigeria, Oluwatoyin Atanda; the Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; Executive Vice President South-West, Akinbode Abitogun; Chairman JCI Nigeria Senate Association, Dupe Ogunbiyi; Executive Vice President North-West, Ayodeji Akinwande; (Back Row L-R) Public Relations and Media Consultant, Bolaji Abimbola; 2015 President JCI Nigeria, Seun Osikalu; Board Chairman JCI Nigeria Training Institute - Kolawole Osinowo; and 2019 President JCI Nigeria, Adetola Akinola during a courtesy visit by JCI Nigeria to the governor last Friday

Bauchi Governor Tasks N'East PDP on 2027 Elections, Declares APC Must Be Voted Out

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

Bauchi State Governor, Senator Bala Mohammed, has tasked the newly elected officials of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the North-east to work out modalities for victory in the next general election.

Speaking at the inauguration of the North-east zonal officials of PDP at the zonal office in Bauchi, yesterday, Mohammed pointed out that the ruling party at the national level, All Progressives Congress (APC), had failed and must be voted out in 2027.

Represented by his deputy, Hon. Mohammed Jatau, Mohammed said under the APC leadership at the national level, Nigerians had experienced unprecedented decline in their standard of living.

He stated, "The APC, in its years of governance in this country, has failed to deliver on its promises. Rather than create jobs, the party is creating more hardship for the Nigerian people.

"Rather than lift Nigerians out of poverty, their government has deepened the suffering of families, leaving them to struggle with the ravages of hunger and poverty."

The governor said the inauguration of the North-east zonal officials of PDP marked the beginning of a new chapter for the party to collectively work towards reclaiming the hopes, dreams, and aspirations of the Nigerian people.

According to him, "Today is a day to celebrate our unity and our unwavering commitment to restoring Nigeria to the path of progress and prosperity. I urge all of you to recognise the enormous responsibility placed upon your shoulders.

"You are the vanguard of change in this region. You are the ones who will ensure that the voices of the people are heard and their hopes are revived.

"The next election is not just about political power, it is about the future of our children, the security of our people, and the well-being of every Nigerian.

"It is about creating a Nigeria where no one is left behind and where Nigerians can finally experience the kind of leadership that meets their needs and secures their future."

2027: We Won't Allow Idle Politicians Mislead Deltans with Lies, Says Aniagwu

Delta State Government yesterday said the Sheriff Oborevwori's administration would not allow idle politicians to continue to paint pictures that were at variance with the reality on ground.

The administration said it while it would continue reply critics with projects across the state, it would not also allow certain idle politicians to continue progressing in error by exposing their ignorance to the workings of government.

The state Commissioner for Works (Rural Roads) and Public Information, Mr. Charles Aniagwu, disclosed this during a press conference in Asaba on Monday.

Aniagwu who was flanked by the Executive Assistant to the Governor on New Media, Mr. Felix Ofou, said some persons who have been in government before either because they do not have appointment at the moment were continuously progressing in error by looking for who to deceive.

Aniagwu who was reacting to comments made by former Deputy President of the Senate, Senator Ovie Omo-Agege during a visit to Bomadi and Burutu Local Government Areas of the state, said the opposition should be able to show some element of patriotism in identifying what government is doing and not to tell lies that make them look uninformed.

According to him, "As part of keeping them busy we need to give them more information so that by the time they read at least they have a little thing to keep them engaged rather than spewing lies here and there.

"At the weekend we saw the former Deputy President of the Senate, a man Governor Oborevwori defeated roundly in the last election accusing our government of neglecting the people of Southern and Northern senatorial districts.

He said Governor Oborevwori has continued to reply critics with verifiable projects in the Health, education, road, agriculture sectors and many other areas including human capital development which cuts across the three senatorial districts.

He said, "Starting from the Southern Senatorial District, in Isoko South, we have a good number of roads that we are constructing and in Isoko North we have the Southern Delta University located in Ozoro and you can see the amount of structures we are building there.

We have also continued efforts to ensure that the Technical College in Irri is completed in good time. The College of Health Technology, Ovrode if you go there now you see the speed at which we are going on with that project.

"The Ughelli-Asaba road which cuts across the three senatorial districts is also receiving serious attention and in Patani, we are working on Uduophori road, Schools, Water projects are ongoing and if you move from there towards Bomadi, you will see that the Ohoror - Bomadi road which is about 47km is ongoing.

"In our last EXCO meeting we also approved the Bomadi-Gbaregolor road of 18.6km, in Burutu, we have the Okontu - Ogulaha Road 12.5km being reconstructed.

"In Warri South-West we have Benikrukru internal roads, Okerenkoko internal roads, Okerenkoko, Kokodiagbene pepeama road.

"If you proceed to Warri North, the Ogbudugbudu - Ogbeinbiri Road is being worked on. The Trans Warri - Ode-Itsekiri road and bridges are ongoing and we have put the contract under ISPO which means we will be paying the contractor over a billion naira every month to enable the contractor complete the project on time.

"We have also completed a number of roads in Warri South including the Upper and Lower Erejuwa Road, Esisi Road, the Omadino Technical College is also almost completed and we will soon admit students into the school."

Aniagwu further said Governor Oborevwori has taken actions to improve the landscape and the skyline of the capital territory, recalling efforts to rehabilitate the Ogbeogonogo Nnebisi road starting from Interbau Roundabout all the way to Abraka.

"Some of you were with us when we also had cause to inspect some of the projects within the capital territory i also mentioned the effort to give a facelift to the Summit road starting from the Summit junction through to the Government House.

"I also told you that we have also approved the reconstruction of the road starting from where you have the Leisure Park at the moment completion of the one from the government house to where you have the central bank estate and from the Central Bank Estate a new construction leading to Ugbolu so that you can easily navigate towards Akwukwu-Igbo.

"I also told you what we are doing with respect to reconstructing the major road that transverse the city center of Okpanam starting from the Alpha Beekis filling station through to the Catholic Church roundabout and proceeding back to the city gate.

"We also told you the effort to deal with the Umejei Road in Ibusa, you have had cause to accompany us to inspect the the road that leads to Ubulu-Okiti from Issele-Azagba-Otulu and we have also approved and awarded the construction of roads within the NYSC permanent rotation camp in Issele-Uku.

In the nine local government areas of Delta North, Governor Oborevwori has his footprints, he has been able to deal and complete the storm drainage in Owa-Alero to Owa-Ofie River, Idumu-Etiti Street is completed, Aliosimi- Owanta Road, among others are ongoing.

"In Ndokwa West, the Eweshi-Utagba - Uno Road, the Ndemili - Utagba-Uno Road, Construction of Inam-Abbi Access Road still in Ndokwa West LGA. In Ukwuani we have the Amai-Aragba Road already approved for construction in addition to what we are doing in the health and education sectors.

"Even when you come back to Ndokwa East, you know now that the people have, bid bye-bye to the use of pontoon to cross the Asse Creek. Now they take advantage of the Beneku Bridge and cross the bridge. That bridge is done and dusted.

"These projects i am mentioning you know, are very much verifiable. I am mentioning them as a way of seeing whether these people that are idle can engage a little in reading what the government is doing.

Why FAAN Temporarily Closed MMIA Runway 18R/36L After 11-month Maintenance Shutdown

Closure scheduled for March 3-4

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

Imperative rehabilitation work was the reason offered by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) for announcing temporary closure of Runway 18R/36L at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos.

The closure, scheduled for March 3 and 4, comes just two weeks after the runway was reopened following an 11-month maintenance shutdown.

In a memo dated February 28, FAAN's Head of Operations, J.U. Nwosu, cited safety concerns, stating that construction equipment at the A2 Taxiway-link could pose a hazard to landing and departing aircraft.

The memo addressed to the Airport Manager and the Regional General Manager for the Southwest Region stressed the necessity of the closure to prevent operational risks.

During the closure, the shorter domestic runway, 18L/36R, will handle all flight operations. While this runway is functional, its capacity constraints may lead to potential delays for both domestic and international flights.

FAAN has directed technical departments to enhance security, inspect facilities, and enforce 24-hour surveillance to ensure smooth operations.

Police Confirm Abduction of CSP Modestus Ojiebe in Abuja, Rescue Him in Nasarawa

Linus Aleke in Abuja

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Police Command has confirmed the abduction – and rescue – of Chief Superintendent of Police, Modestus Ojiebe, who was kidnapped along the Abuja-Kaduna Expressway in Abuja.

The police said Ojiebe was rescued at Garaku community in Nasarawa State following an operation.

In a statement, the command's spokesperson, Superintendent of Police (SP) Josephine Adeh, said, "Upon receiving the distress call, the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) Dawaki, acted swiftly, leading his patrol team while alerting all police checkpoints and key entry and exit points into the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

"This decisive response enabled the successful rescue of the officer and his reunion with his family on the same night."

Adeh stressed that efforts were ongoing to apprehend the suspects, who abandoned the victim and fled into the bush at Garaku.

Commissioner of Police, Olatunji Disu, urged residents of the FCT to remain vigilant and report any suspicious individuals or activities to the police or other security formations nearest to them.

Earlier, sources said the senior officer attached to the Kwara State Police Command was attacked while attempting to fix his vehicle, which had broken down near Dei-Dei Police Barracks in Abuja.

A counter-insurgency expert, Zagazola Makama, said about Ojiebe's abduction, "While he was attempting to fix the vehicle, an ash-colour Mercedes-Benz with four armed occupants stopped behind him.

"The assailants searched and robbed Ojiebe and his wife of their mobile phones and ATM cards. However, upon discovering his police identity card, they forced him into their vehicle and sped off, leaving his wife and their car at the scene."

Kidnapping incidents, once restricted to remote communities and satellite towns, are aggressively making a comeback into metropolitan areas in the FCT.

A disturbing aspect is the situation where armed criminals drive around town in search of victims, despite checkpoints at strategic locations and joint taskforce patrol teams.

Abuja residents now hardly sleep with their eyes closed, as stories of armed robbery attacks on homes and estates are becoming rampant.



IN SUPPORT OF SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE...

L-R: National Missioner, Ansar-u-deen Society of Nigeria, Sheikh Abdur-Rahman Ahmad; Chairman, Board of Trustees(BoT), Island Muslim Community (IMC) Alhaji Rafiu Ebiti; Chairman of the occasion, Alhaji Biodun Dabiri; Vice Chairman, BoT, IMC, Alhaji Tijjani Borodo, and Special Guest, Engr. Adeniyi Raji, during the N5 billion social infrastructure fund raising ceremony in Lagos…recently

Edo: Tribunal Reserves Judgement in PDP, Ighodalo Petitions against Okpebholo

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Edo State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal has reserved its judgement in the petition filed by Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and its governorship candidate, Mr Asue Ighodalo, challenging the election of Senator Monday Okpebholo of All Progressives Congress (APC) as governor.

The three-member panel led by Justice Wilfred Kpochi, yesterday, announced that judgement had been reserved to a date that would be communicated to parties in the suit, shortly after lawyers representing parties adopted and argued their final written addresses as their arguments for and against the petition.

PDP and Ighodalo had dragged the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to the tribunal for declaring Okpebholo winner of the September 21, 2024 governorship election in Edo State.

Among others, the petitioners asked the court to nullify Okpebholo's victory on the grounds of irregularities and non-compliance with the electoral laws.

Specifically, the petitioners anchored their claim on alleged over-voting and wrong computation of results during collation.

At Monday's proceedings, while all the respondents urged the tribunal to dismiss the petition for being incompetent and lacking in merit, the petitioners submitted that they had tendered uncontroverted evidence to prove the claim of alleged over-voting and wrong computation.

In defence of the election, INEC, through its lawyer, Chief Kanu Agabi, SAN, said the petitioners did not prove allegations of non-compliance and over-voting. Agabi added that the number of polling unit agents called as witnesses represented an insignificant or even negligible per cent of the number of polling units in Edo State.

Besides, Agabi pointed out that all the polling unit agents called as witnesses signed the result sheet and they could not distinguish between what they heard and what they saw.

He stated, "This is a clear indication that the election was conducted in compliance with the Electoral Act, 2022. The results were duly collated at all levels of collation.

"The petitioners have not pleaded any alternative results on the basis of which they can be declared as winners. The case of the petitioners is based on analysis undertaken by hired consultants."

The governor, through his lawyer, Mr Onyechi Ikpeazu, SAN, also argued in similar manner, urging the tribunal to dismiss the petition.

Speaking on the contentious Form EC25bB, where the petitioners claimed that the serial numbers of sensitive materials must be given, Ikpeazu said all that was required for the form was quantity of electoral materials received and quantity returned.

On his part, APC's counsel, Mr Emmanuel Ukala, argued that it was clear that the case of the petitioners was based virtually and entirely on non-compliance.

Ukala stated, "By the nature of the case they pleaded, the Supreme Court has over the years laid down that they need to prove this by polling unit to polling unit, ward to ward and local government by local government."

But the petitioners contended that PDP had successfully demonstrated electoral malpractices in 765 polling units out of 4,519 across the state.

Mr Ken Mozia, SAN, who argued the case of the petitioners, emphasised that the petition should be determined by the effect of irregularities, not just the percentage of affected polling units.

Mozia highlighted discrepancies at various collation levels, where figures on Form EC8A (polling unit results) were allegedly reduced at the ward and local government collation stages (EC8B).

He argued that the petition must be considered as a whole and not in parts, saying, "So the submission of isolating grounds and labelling them alone as academic is not well founded."

Bayelsa PDP Intact, Declares Governor Diri

Explains why party's S'South congress was shifted, kinsmen apologise for Turnah's action

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has allayed concerns of cracks in Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, saying the party is together, firmly on the ground, and remains the only platform for aspiring politicians to actualise their dreams. Diri stated this, yesterday, during the PDP State Executive Committee (SEC) meeting held at its secretariat in Yenagoa.

The governor said PDP had produced different political office holders from the state, including a former President of Nigeria, and it remained the party to beat in the state.

He enjoined members not to be distracted by rumours, but close ranks for the growth of the party. He said PDP was yet to conduct its South-south zonal congress.

Diri explained that zonal congresses were earlier scheduled for February 22 but the National Working Committee (NWC) of the party postponed that of the zone after its four governors in the South-south wrote to the national leadership to complain that the date was not convenient.

He said the report of the purported congress held in Calabar, the Cross River State capital, was equally rejected by the national leadership, disclosing that a new date would be fixed for the zonal congress.

Diri stated, "Our party is kicking very well in Bayelsa State. We remain the party to beat. PDP has never been beaten in Bayelsa. So, all those haggling for 2027, if you want anything meaningful, you better come to PDP.

"PDP in Bayelsa is one and can never go down. This is the party that has produced a president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from our state, governors, senators and House of Representatives members. This party is complete at the state level and will remain so.

"Let us not listen to rumours. Some intend to divide us.

"To set the records straight, there was no zonal congress held in the South-south zone. At the appropriate time, the national leadership will decide the date in conjunction with the zonal leadership."

Meanwhile, the people of Ogbia Local Government Area apologised to the governor and the party for the action of the suspended zonal legal adviser, George Turnah.

Speaking at the meeting, Chief Whip of the House of Assembly and member representing Ogbia Constituency 3, Hon. Gabriel Ogbara, stated that the apology became necessary as it was not in the character of the Ogbia people to betray their benefactors.

Ogbara said Turnah's action was regrettable and appealed for forgiveness. The state SEC also passed a vote of confidence on Diri and his deputy, Senator Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo.

FG to Sanction Transporters for Inflating Prices Despite Free CNG Conversion

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The federal government said yesterday that it was closely monitoring the activities of public transport vehicle owners who had been inflating their fares despite receiving free conversion of their vehicles to run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

The Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI) office which has been coordinating the activities of the programme to ensure the use of the alternative fuel, said it had been inundated with several petitions from the public on the activities of the transport owners.

The CNG initiative, a programme which the Bola Tinubu administration says is key to ensuring that Nigerians switch to cheaper alternative sources of energy for powering their vehicles, has gulped over $450 million, mostly in private funding.

According to the PCNGI, in a statement, the non-compliance with the agreed fare structures by some transport operators, remains a matter of concern which is being addressed appropriately.

"The introduction of CNG conversion incentives under the PCNGI was designed to alleviate the burden of high fuel costs by enabling commercial drivers to transition from petrol and diesel to compressed natural gas at no cost.

"It is therefore disappointing and unacceptable that certain stakeholders within the transport sector are acting against the initiative's goals by imposing fare structures that contradict its purpose. To support a smooth and affordable transition, PCNGI established a Conversion Incentive Programme, which registers authorised conversion centres under its supervision.

"These centres work closely with PCNGI to ensure that commercial vehicles benefit from the free conversion scheme for commercial vehicle operators. In addition, PCNGI, in collaboration with key stakeholders, has been engaging actively with transport unions to ensure that all commercial drivers can access these free conversions.

"In recent times and to further streamline the process, the initiative launched the '10 for 10' Initiative where field agents visit commercial transport parks in Abuja and Lagos to sign up vehicles for free conversions. This proactive approach ensures that more drivers can benefit from the program without facing unnecessary barriers when exclusively required to go through their unions.

"PCNGI is also intensifying its monitoring efforts to ensure strict adherence to the approved fare structures and ensure no union is charging members to access this palliative. Any operator or stakeholder found violating these terms will face appropriate sanctions," it stated.

It encouraged commercial drivers to report any challenges in accessing the free conversions via designated channels or by calling the PCNGI helpline at 07000000264.

The office added that new measures were also being introduced to strengthen oversight and ensure compliance, ensuring that the intended benefits reach drivers and the general public. It noted that PCNGI was working diligently with partners to expand refueling infrastructure and establish more conversion centres.

"This will increase accessibility for commercial drivers and improve gas supply availability, further promoting the adoption of CNG as a sustainable and affordable fuel alternative.

"As a transparent and accountable initiative, PCNGI welcomes continued engagement with the media, stakeholders, and the public to ensure accurate and balanced reporting of this groundbreaking initiative which is a fulfillment of President Bola Tinubu's promise to make the lives of all Nigerians better.

"We call on all partners to work together in good faith to uphold the principles of affordability, sustainability, and accountability," the PCNGI office added.



PATHWAY TO MALARIA PRE-ELIMINATION AND DIGITISATION PROGRAMME...

L-R: Permanent Secretary, Lagos Health District I, Dr. Olufunmilayo Bankole; Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Ministry of Health, Dr. Olusegun Ogboye; Lagos State Commissioner for Health, Prof. Akin Abayomi; Special Adviser to the Governor on Health, Dr. (Mrs.) Kemi Ogunyemi; Permanent Secretary, Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA), Dr. Emmanuella Zamba and the Permanent Secretary, Lagos Health District VI, Dr. Abimbola Mabogunge, at a press briefing ahead of the Pathway to Malaria Pre-Elimination and Digitisation Program in Lagos State held in Ikeja, Lagos, yesterday PHOTO: ETOP UKUTT

Kukah: N'West Now Massive Crime Scene

Catholic bishops kick against closure of schools in northern states during Ramadan

Tinubu solicits prayers for leaders, nation's stability, progress in holy month

Deji Elumoye, Onyebuchi Ezigbo and **Linus Aleke** in Abuja

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, Matthew Kukah, yesterday, said the North-west zone had become a massive crime scene.

Kukah stressed that over 20,000 people had lost their lives in 4,500 violent attacks in the North-west, according to available statistics.

He made the remarks while delivering a keynote address at the North-west Regional Conference on Women, Peace, and Security, organised by Global Rights, in collaboration with the UK Aid Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Kukah Centre, the Isa Wali Empowerment Initiative, and others.

Speaking on the theme, "Sustaining Inclusive Peace-building Processes in North-west, Nigeria," the Catholic clergy stated that the violence visited on the people of the North-west would not be resolved by military force or through political means alone.

He stated, "The indicators are not regular at all. We were told that in the North-west alone, 4,500 incidents of violent attacks were recorded, over 20,000 people lost their lives, and 76 per cent of the abductions that took place in northern Nigeria occurred in the North-west.

"The North-west has become a massive crime scene, and we cannot run away from that reality.

"As non-state actors or ordinary civilians, the truth is that it has become clear to us that the problems Nigeria faces now, and the violent extremism that has permeated our society, cannot be resolved by military force or through political means alone.

"Something different has to happen. I cannot prescribe what it is, but I think that a collective decision by ordinary men and women, children, and elders in communities can help build a wall of resilience.

"This resilience doesn't necessarily stop people from coming in, but it gives us inner strength. Our collective survival would have to depend on how willing we are to work and stand together."

He said there was no civilisation without a significant role and place for women in society, stressing, "In Africa, there are many horrible and bad cultural practices that have become predominant, which we must abandon."

Meanwhile, Catholic Bishops in Nigeria expressed concern over recent decisions by some governors in northern Nigeria to close schools for five weeks during the Ramadan period.

A statement by the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), signed by its President, Most Rev. Lucius IwejuruUgorji, and Secretary, Most Rev. Donatus A. Ogun, urged the federal government to intervene and ensure that the rights of all Nigerians, regardless of their faith or background, were protected.

They also urged the governors of the affected states to reconsider the decision and explore alternative arrangements that respected the rights and freedoms of all citizens.

Apart from violation of the country's constitution, the bishops said the closure of schools for an extended period would undermine the people's rights and jeopardise the education and future of millions of Nigerian children.

The statement said, "We, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), express deep concern over the recent declaration by some governors in northern Nigeria to close schools for five weeks during the Ramadan period.

"This decision, which affects not only Muslim students but also Christian students and Christian-owned schools, raises serious questions about the secular nature of our country and the rights of all citizens."

Tinubu Solicits Prayers for Leaders, Nation's Stability, Progress at Ramadan

President Bola Tinubu has solicited fervent prayers for the country's leaders and the peace, stability and progress of the country, in the spirit of the holy month of Ramadan.

Tinubu said that was critical, as "the country stands at a defining moment".

He pointed out that the responsibility of nation-building laid in the collective hands of all citizens.

Speaking at the State House Mosque during the opening Tafseer for the Month of Ramadan, the president, who was represented by Vice President Kashim Shettima, urged Nigerians to go beyond fasting and embrace the values of peace, kindness, and justice.

Urging the faithful to pray for leaders at all levels, he said, "Above all, let us lift our voices in prayer for our leader, President Bola Tinubu. May Almighty Allah continue to guide him, bless him, and grant him wisdom, strength, and foresight to pilot the affairs of our great nation.

"May He protect him from every harm and grant him the success to lead Nigeria toward greater peace, unity, and prosperity. May his leadership be a source of blessings for all Nigerians, and may his efforts be rewarded abundantly in this life and the Hereafter."

The president appealed to Nigerians to embrace compassion and unity during the period of fasting and prayer, describing it as "a journey of the soul" that can strengthen the country's social fabric.

Tinubu stated, "Ramadan is not merely a ritual of abstaining from food and drink; it is a journey of the soul. It is a time for deep reflection, for self-purification, and for embracing the true essence of Islam—peace, patience, sacrifice, and service to humanity.

"This is the month that demands from us not only personal piety but also collective compassion—the kind that softens hearts, mends broken bonds, and strengthens the fabric of our nation."

The president encouraged Nigerians to strengthen their bonds and reject forces that sought to divide the country. He reminded the citizens of the importance of national unity and collective responsibility in addressing the country's challenges.

The presidentsaid, "Our country stands at a defining moment, and the responsibility of nation-building lies in our collective hands. Let us not only feed the hungry but uplift the weary; not only give charity but extend kindness; not only pray for peace but work for justice."

He expressed gratitude for the moral guidance provided by religious leaders, and said they stood as the moral and spiritual compass of the country.

He added, "I want to take this moment to profoundly appreciate our religious leaders, who stand as the moral and spiritual compass of the nation, nurturing the consciousness of our society. Their role in shaping the ethical foundation of our nation is invaluable, and we remain indebted to their wisdom and leadership."

On the essence of Ramadan, the president urged the faithful to "embark on the days of fasting and sacrifice with a heart full of goodwill and brotherhood.

"Let us not only feed the hungry, but uplift the weary; not only give charity, but extend kindness; not only pray for peace, but work for justice."

Natasha Vs Akpabio: Those Seeking Probe Should Petition Senate, Says Spokesperson

Afenifere insists on investigation of allegation

Chuks Okocha and **Sunday Aborisade** in Abuja

Senate Spokesperson, Adeyemi Adaramodu, yesterday, challenged individuals and groups calling for an open investigation into the sexual harassment allegations against the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio by the Kogi Central Senator, Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan, to send in petitions to that effect.

He said there was no formal complaint on the matter before the Senate and that the red chamber would not discuss or probe any issue that was not officially communicated to it.

He said the upper chamber could only order an investigation into the matter if there was a petition properly documented and addressed to the President of the Senate.

Adaramodu made the clarification, when he appeared on "The Morning Show" aired by the Arise News Channel.

He said the only issue before the Senate Committee on Ethics, Privileges, Code of Conduct and Public Petitions was the case of Akpoti-Uduaghan who failed to observe the Senate Rules during plenary.

He said the current crisis would not have happened if the Kogi Central Senator had obeyed the rules of the Senate by raising her point of order, on the seat allocated to her.

"In the Senate, we have rules like any other organisation. Section 60 of the Constitution gave us that right to set our own internal rules that guide us.

"Also, Order 6, (1) and (2), explicitly stated that the Senate President shall allocate seats to each Senator. The second rider is that wherever you are allocated to, that is where you can be permitted or allowed to even contribute during plenary.

"Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan ought to have raised hat point of order when she is in order. So, if you are not in order, you cannot raise a point of order.

"If you raised a point of order. There is no Senate President that will not recognise you if you comply with the rules.

"If after complying with rules, you are now raising a point of order, and the Senate President is not recognising you, it is the whole Senate that are going to approach the Senate President that, please, we have to recognise her."

Adaramodu said the Senate could not probe Akpoti-Uduaghan's sexual harassment claims against the Senate President, because there was no formal petition before the chamber.

He said, "The policy position on the issue of harassment is that if there is any situation like that, and it is confirmed, the Ethics, Privileges and Public Petition Committee will be called upon to take it up.

"If it was investigated and confirmed to be true, then that Senator, whoever, that Senator may be, for that matter, will face the music. That is it.

"It is like any other misdemeanor in the Senate. It is not only sexual harassment. Any kind of harassment for that matter, not only sexual harassment."

Afenifere Insists on Probe

A pan-Yoruba socio-political organisation, Afenifere, has called on the Senate to investigate the allegation of sexual harassment against Akpabio, by Akpoti-Uduaghan.

In a statement by the National Organising Secretary of the Afenifere, Abagun Kole Omololu, the group advised that the allegation should be investigated by a Senate committee, saying the Senate president should not be sacrificed on account of uninvestigated accusations.

"We in Afenifere note and appreciate the political stability engendered by the calm, thoughtful and patriotic leadership of the National Assembly by the Senate President, Senator Godswill Akpabio, who has been most instrumental in engineering one of the few eras in the history of democratic governance in Nigeria where we have enjoyed Executive/Legislative synergy.

"We are hopeful that such a committed patriot will not be sacrificed on the altar of unproven allegations by an accuser. Of course, the allegations should be investigated by a Senate Committee. However, we cannot help but notice that they were made after the Senate President's act of just discipline against Senator Natasha Akpoti.

"Hopefully, this is not a knee-jerk reaction made in a highly emotional state by the disciplined party. That being the case, the nation has to be careful in assessing these allegations, as they may or may not result from animosity toward that disciplinary measure."

Senate Has No Business Probing Sexual Assault Claim against Akpabio, Says Group

A group, the Citizens Network for Peace and Development in Nigeria (CNPD), has asked the Senate not to waste its time and taxpayers' money probing allegations of sexual assault against Akpabio.

The civil society coalition in a statement in Abuja, said in the absence of a formal petition to its Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions committee, it would amount to a distraction to venture into a matter not before it.

Executive Director of the coalition, Francis Okereke Wainwei, urged the Senate to strictly abide by its rules, saying the sexual assault allegations made by Akpoti-Uduaghan should not derail the legislative body from probing the Kogi senator for disrupting its proceedings last Thursday.

NDLEA Arrests Global Watch-listed Baron with N1.4bn Illicit Drugs

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

After 17 years on the watch list of the anti-narcotics agency, a 59-year-old drug baron, Ogbonnaya Kevin, has been unearthed by the operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) from his hideout in Ojo area of Lagos State.

The notorious baron was said to have hatched numerous plans that led to the shipment of illicit drugs across the world, whose worth are put at billions of naira.

Addressing a press conference in Abuja yesterday, the Chairman/ Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa (rtd), detailed how operatives of its Special Operations Unit had been on the trail of Ogbonnaya following an Interpol red notice against him and information from the National Intelligence Service of South Korea.

According to Marwa, "The major development that warranted this special briefing pertains to the arrest of a drug lord who's wanted across the world as the leader of an international drug trafficking organisation. I am therefore pleased to announce this significant breakthrough in our efforts to dismantle drug trafficking syndicates operating within the country.

"As we have said four years ago when we began the reform of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), our prime targets are drug barons and other important figures that organise drug trafficking rings.

Youths Condemn Inauguration of Non-existing Abraka-Oben Road in Edo

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

A youth association known as Ugu Youths for Developmental Change (UYDC) yesterday strongly condemned what they describe as the fraudulent inauguration of a non-existing Abraka-Oben Road by the Minister for Regional Development, Abubakar Momoh.

Addressing the press on behalf of the group, the coordinator Osabueki-Omazenoghadue Osemwenkhae, stated that the road in question does not exist in their locality, labeling the act as a "calculated attempt" to cover up the long-standing neglect of their communities by the ministry and its affiliated agencies, including the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC).

According to the UYDC, their area, which consists of over 13 communities in Ugu Ward, has been overlooked for years despite being home to Oben Oil Field, which holds the largest gas deposit in West Africa.

They criticised the federal government's repeated use of the Oben name for financial and political gain while failing to deliver tangible development to the people.

"For emphasis, the real link roads to Oben are the Ugo-Obozogbe-Iguelaba Road and Umoghun-Nokhua-Oben Road."

Coalition Urges President Tinubu to Strengthen PAP, Condemns Attacks on Otuaro

A coalition of respected leaders and stakeholders from the Niger Delta, Oporoza House, has urged the federal government to disregard what they described as "spurious and baseless allegations" against the Administrator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), Dr. Dennis Otuaro.

The coalition, comprising influential figures such as pioneer President of the Ijaw Youths Council, Dr Felix Tuodolo, Mr. Kime Engozu, Elder Kennedy Orubebe, submitted a formal letter of appeal to President

In a strongly worded appeal to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, emphasising the transformative impact of PAP under Otuaro's leadership.

According to the letter, the recent allegations of financial impropriety were part of a "calculated campaign of calumny" orchestrated by disgruntled ex-agitators who were not appointed to leadership positions.

The signatories, who also included noted Niger Delta leaders like Hendricks Opukeme, Ari Sylvester Ari, and Elfrida Olungwe, hailed Otuaro's leadership for bringing transparency and accountability to PAP, asserting that his reforms have curtailed fraudulent practices, ensuring that funds are effectively utilized for the reintegration and empowerment of ex-agitators.

Makinde Harps on Peaceful Co-existence, Prayers at Ramadan Lecture

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

Oyo State governor, 'Seyi Makinde, yesterday called on the people of the state to imbibe the lessons of Ramadan by living in peace and oneness in order for the state to continue to witness progress and stability.

He stated this at the 11th Omituntun Annual Ramadan Public Lecture, held in Ibadan, stressing that it was only when residents were united that the state could achieve more.

He equally called on the Muslim Ummah to offer more prayers for the state, just as he declared that their support over the years enabled the government to achieve many things.

Governor Makinde appreciated the Islamic faithful in the state for their prayers, support and cooperation to his administration. He charged them to continually live in peace with others so that the state would continue to record more progress.

He called for the observance of a minute of silence for the deceased Sarkin Sasa, Alhaji Haruna Maiyasin Katsina, who passed on a few days ago, describing him as a strong supporter of his administration.

According to him, "I want to use this opportunity to thank our fathers, traditional heads, Grand Chief Imam of Ibadanland and Oyo State.

PDP Professionals: Our Party is Dangerously Hemorrhaging

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The Conference of Professionals in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), after an extensive review of the current state of affairs in the Party, submitted that the party is bleeding and is on the way to self destruction.

In a statement by the Chairman of the PDP Professionals, Barrister Obinna Nwachukwu, said that it was time for all leaders, stakeholders, members and supporters of the PDP across the country to stand up for the party at this moment and rescue it from imminent collapse.

According to him, PDP Professionals, "As professionals and patriotic members of the PDP, we can no longer continue to fold our hands while some professed members of our party, most of whom are known agents, including those who had taken up positions in the All Progressives Congress (APC) administration, are brazenly engaged in actions and utterances that are capable of crippling the PDP and enabling the APC foist a one-party state on our nation.

"These individuals are attempting to set themselves above the party, bare facedly denigrating all organs of the PDP, stoking disagreements in our structures, instituting damaging litigations, procuring injurious judicial pronouncements while boisterously making caustic and inciting utterances which breed confusion, undercut the fabrics of our great party and tend to destroy its capacity to contest elections.

"Today our party is dangerously hemorrhaging and being weakened from carrying out its role as a viable opposition party which Nigerians are relying on to rescue our nation from the predatory grip of the APC."

Jandor Quits PDP Amidst Crisis among Party Leaders in Lagos

Segun James

The Lagos State Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate in the 2023 election, Dr. AbdulAzeez Olajide Adediran, exited yesterday.

Although it could not be as retained which party Adediran who is popularly known as JANDOR is headed, he announced his surprise exit from the PDP himself.

He stressed that the decision followed deep reflection and extensive consultations with his family, political associates and supporters.

The PDP former governorship who announced his exit at a press conference, said he and his teeming supporters who were at the event were yet to decide which next party to move to.

According to him, he and the committed supporters would be engaging with stakeholders and well-meaning Nigerians to determine the next course of action that best served the interests of Lagosians.

Giving reasons for living the main opposition PDP, Dr. Adediran cited the conspiracy of party leaders to ensure he lost the 2023 poll, saying that some of them came out openly to campaign against him and the PDP presidential candidate in the same poll, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar.

'Technology Catalyst for Innovation in Delivering Varsity Education'

Yinka Kolawole in Osogbo

The Vice-Chancellor of the Osun State University, Professor Clement Odunayo Adebooye, has posited that technology has become an indispensable tool for innovation, saying GenAI has innumerable advantages in the delivery of university education.

Adebooye spoke at this year Osun State University College of Education 2025 Annual Lecture on GenAI and Inclusive Education Teaching in the Digital Age: with the theme: 'Enhancing Teacher Capacity and Inclusive Education through Generative Artificial (GenAI).'

The vice-chancellor, who was represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (ARIP), Professor Lawrence Adetunji Kehinde, noted that Osun State University has keyed into the innovative digital transformation world aimed at achieving its mission of creating a unique institution committed to the pursuit of academic innovative skill-based training and the tradition of excellence in teaching, research and community service.

Money Laundering: Court Grants P-Square's Ex-Manager, Jude Okoye, Bail

Wale Igbintade

Justice Alexander Owoeye of the Federal High Court in Lagos has granted a N100 million bail to Jude Okoye, the former manager of twin brothers Peter and Paul Okoye of the defunct hip-hop group P-Square.

Okoye is facing charges of alleged money laundering involving N1.38 billion, $1 million, and £34,537.59.

As part of the bail conditions, Justice Owoeye ordered Okoye to provide two sureties in like sum, one of whom must own a verifiable business and landed property.

The judge also ruled that Okoye cannot travel outside Nigeria during his trial and will remain at the Ikoyi Correctional Facility until he meets the bail conditions.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arraigned Okoye alongside his company, Northside Music Limited, on a seven-count charge of money laundering.

Emcel Garden Estate Residents Decry Unfair Charges

Homeowners and residents of Emcel Garden Estate, Orchid Road, Lagos, have voiced out the unfair charges and treatment allegedly meted on them by their developer.

The estate, which is located opposite Mega 1 Mall on Orchid Road, was officially launched in 2022 as units were presented for sale to respective owners. But in the last couple of months sequel to early 2025, residents have been complaining about a lot of unsettling situations they are forced to face.

Speaking about the developments which have called for a protest over the weekend, one of the residents disclosed that: "It's been kind of tough here because of the way the facility has been managed and the way we have been given bills without consulting us. Last January, they just came up with a N50,000 diesel deposit mandating everyone to pay.

BIGIF Advocates Robust Women Participation in Politics

Gbenga Sodeinde in Ado Ekiti

The Balm in Gilead Foundation (BIGIF) for Sustainable Development has called on stakeholders across the country to support women participation in politics.

BIGIF in a one-day dialogue with non-state actors on Gender Quota and Women's Political Participation held at the All Saints Guest House in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State, bemoaned the low statistics of women in politics despite having a larger percentage of the population.

According to Mr. Nelson Akerele, a facilitator of the organisation, women have a responsibility to contribute effectively to the growth of the country economically, socially and even emotionally.

He declared that BIGIF with the support of USAID and Canada is seeking to deepen understanding of the gender quota system and its impact on women's political participation in Nigeria as well as foster collaboration among non-state actors in advocating gender inclusive political reforms.





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MISSILE

SERAP to Tinubu, CBN

"Implementing the increased ATM fees while the lawsuit on the matter is pending before the Federal High Court would make a mockery of the judicial process and the rule of law. It is in the public interest for the CBN to suspend the increased ATM fees and await the outcome of the lawsuit on the matter. The CBN has the responsibilities to uphold the due process of law, protect the integrity of the judicial process..." *–SERAP Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, tells President Tinubu to direct the CBN to suspend the ATM fee hike, pending court verdict.*

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A World of Godfathers

"Have you been following the developments at the Lagos State House of Assembly?"

"High wire politics. Power Game. Man pass man. Man pass woman. Two Speakers in 50 days. Perfect material for a Nollywood film"

"Omo… as in …!"

"But I think the state lost the opportunity of having a female Speaker of the House for the first time in history."

"That has already been established. History has been made It is now on record that Mrs Mojisola Meranda once served, no matter how briefly, as Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly. She has broken the jinx. But the whole drama is not about gender balancing, or gender equity, it is about following due process and respecting the power calculus in the state."

"The Constitution is very clear. It says in Section 92 (2) that the members of the House shall choose their own Speaker and Deputy Speaker from among themselves. Which also means that they have the right to appoint and remove whoever they put in those two positions. The Speaker in particular is only first among equals, not the Babangida of the Assembly"

"I think we have to leave the Constitution out of this. This is about power and influence. Speaker Mudashiru Obasa has just shown that he is not anybody's mate in that House."

"What kind of talk is that? They are all colleagues. Even Obasa himself says the people who removed him as Speaker behind his back are his brothers and sisters"

"And you believe that? Did you not see all the drama? Brothers and sisters who voted against him, held press conferences to condemn him and openly humiliated him at every turn. Is that how a brother treats another brother?"

"It is part of the price anybody in a leadership position has to pay. Obasa has been Speaker for 10 years. I think the whole drama should be a wake-up call for him. He must have learnt some lessons about his environment and more lessons about politics."

"I understand now that he has been reinstated, he is also expected to resign in the days to come and another person from Lagos West will be chosen as Speaker"

"I don't think so. Nobody wins a battle and gives away the spoils of victory. I see him sitting firmly on that seat till 2027. He may even return as Speaker after the next House of Assembly elections. The people who have lost out are the people who opposed him."

"How? They are properly elected representatives of the people. They owe their constituency a responsibility to make laws for the good governance of the state."

"You are very sure they were elected by the people?"

"Yes, of course"

"In this Lagos state?"

"Elections were held. People trooped out to vote in the various constituencies. Other parties took part in the elections"

"I hear you. But go and write it down, most of those lawmakers who opposed Obasa and refused to listen to the directives of the Godfather, they and their Baba Sope sponsors, will be pushed out before the 2027 general elections."

"This is a democracy. They have the right to express themselves."

"Yes. Freedom of speech. But that will not guarantee their re-election. I imagine they will be on all fours now, begging, pleading for mercy."

"Mercy from whom? I thought you said the Speaker of the House is only first among equals."

"Yes. But this is a clear case of my Godfather is bigger than yours. What those 36 lawmakers in Lagos State did was to embarrass Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Godfather of Lagos politics, and the President of Nigeria. For a whole month, they portrayed Lagos State as a wild part of Western Nigeria. Very bad optics. All of a sudden, the President looked as if he had lost control of his own state. This is a man who has been called upon to look into the crisis in Rivers and Osun states. With his own political family, the APC in Lagos engaged in street fighting, what



Lagos State Speaker, Mudashiru Obasa

moral right does he have to provide leadership in the political crisis in other states?"

"It is democracy, though."

"It is not part of democracy for you to expose your leader, and the President of Nigeria to ridicule and not expect consequences."

"Okay. Okay. Obasa is back. Mojisola Meranda has also been returned to her former position as Deputy Speaker. The status quo ante bellum has been restored. Now, going forward, what the people of Lagos State need is peace, not in-fighting by their lawmakers. Obasa must find a way of working with other members of the House, particularly Deputy Speaker Meranda. He is a leader. He cannot afford to isolate himself. He has proved his point and his value. I understand he is the political leader of Alimosho political constituency. Nobody can become Governor of Lagos State without winning that Constituency. It is the largest political constituency in Lagos State, Nigeria and the whole of Africa!"

"Fine. But have you asked yourself why all of this will happen and the Governor of Lagos State did not nip the crisis in the bud? He allowed the crisis to fester."

"No, I disagree. What do you expect him to do? When it is convenient, we talk about separation of powers. When politics and expediency merge, we abandon principles and blame others. You do me, I do you, God no go vex. When Obasa publicly humiliated Governor Jide Sanwoolu, kept the man waiting for five hours when he went to present the Budget for 2025, and humiliated him further by saying he too could be Governor, that kind of behaviour has consequences too."

"So, this is all about ego then? Tinubu gets thoroughly embarrassed because of the ego of his own boys? I hope Sanwoolu knows that allowing Tinubu to be embarrassed under his watch could have consequences too. We may just not have seen the end of the tragi-comedy in Lagos state"

"What annoys me, to tell the truth, is that the fight is not about principles. I have read stories indicating that the Lagos lawmakers turned against Obasa because he was not giving them enough money. One of them even said the Speaker refused to pay his hospital bills when he took ill."

"Well, that is some useful information for the voters in Lagos. Their lawmakers just want to share money. It is about their personal pockets, not democracy. It is shameful. No. It is not shameful. It is worse than shameful. I said ego. You talk about money. In Igbo language, money is actually EGO. You see, we are actually saying the same thing."

"I just think that President Tinubu should watch it. There is trouble in Lagos State. There is tension in Osun State. Two states in the South West, his own region of the country. In both places, the President's party, APC, is the problem."

"APC again?

"Yes. APC. In July 2022, then Governor Gboyega Oyetola, Tinubu's cousin had conducted elections into Local councils without giving the mandatory one-year notice required by the Electoral Law of the state. He gave a 40-day notice. Adeleke, not yet elected Governor, went to court. The APP too. The Federal High Court, Akure declared the local council elections null and void. The elections held and of course the APC won every single seat. Adeleke, now Governor, refused to recognize that election. The APC local council chairmen who had been elected fought the matter all the way to the Court of Appeal sitting in Akure. The Court of Appeal recently ruled on two grounds (a) notice of election and (b) the time of filing the suit by the PDP, and dismissed all other prayers as academic. The Court gave no consequential orders, no reinstatement order, and did not upturn the judgment of the Federal High Court."

"I am listening"

"It was a 53-page judgment. On the basis of this, the Adeleke administration organized fresh local council elections on the order of a court. The APC council men claim they are the legitimate council officials. Local council officials are on strike in the state. Tension everywhere."

"I get it. I get it. The APC officials are misinterpreting the court ruling because they have a Godfather in Abuja "

"I have not said it is Tinubu pulling the strings in Osun oh"

"No. I get it. I read stories showing that the Attorney General of the Federation gave instructions to the Osun State Governor to recognize the APC agitators. The Inspector General of Police also supported the AGF's directive. AGF plus IGP on one matter equal to Tinubu when you do your calculations. Simple logic."

"I just know that peace should be allowed to reign in Osun. The APC National Chairman, Dr Abdullahi Ganduje, once boasted after the Ondo state governorship election in 2024, that the APC will take over Oyo and Osun states in the next elections. I hope this is not the sign that we are beginning to see: the grand plan by the APC to create a political homogeneity in the South West."

"Court rulings must be respected. The rule of law must prevail."

"I believe you will say the same about Rivers State where the Supreme Court has upheld the defection of the pro-Wike, anti-Fubara 27-man Amaewhule faction in the Rivers State House of Assembly from the PDP to the APC, and has also ruled that the state can no longer get Federal allocations until Governor Simi Fubara re-presents the state's 2025 budget to the Martins Amaewhule faction. The court also nullified the local government election conducted last year by Fubara. I see Governor Fubara has been putting up a bold face, commissioning one project after the other. The truth is that he has been thoroughly humiliated. Minister Nyesom Wike has won."

"I am more concerned about the people of Rivers State. It looks like it is the people of Rivers State who have lost out. But I really cannot comment on the judgment of their Lordships until I see the Certified True Copy (CTC) of their submissions. I am confused. What are they saying for example about the precedent in Abegunde v Ondo State House of Assembly which they decided in 2015, and what the Constitution says in Sections 68(2) and 109(1)(g) on the illegality of cross-carpeting? Those are the core issues."

"Hmm. The jungle has finally matured. Fubara is about to be taught a lesson for standing up to his Godfather. It is the same thing. Do you think he will now be impeached? "

"It depends on how he plays his game. He may just have to respect the unfavourable Supreme Court judgment and find a way to go and beg Wike in Abuja. He has already directed his own local council chairmen to hand over to the heads of administration in their councils, effective March 3. The former pro-Wike local council chairmen whose tenure was extended by six months are on their way back to office."

"But I hear members of the South-South Elders Forum are advising Fubara not to beg anybody, because they will not. I think those elders should just go and sit down somewhere. They are the same elders who pushed Fubara to this point of humiliation."

"Not a fair comment. The elders are saying that Wike is no longer Governor of Rivers State and he cannot continue to run riot over the state from Abuja. After the Supreme Court judgment, Wike held a thanksgiving session in his house. Please how can one man constitute himself into such a nuisance? He is a threat to democracy in Rivers."

"He has a big Godfather. It is President Tinubu who is indulging him. He knows he has the President behind him. The President himself praised him on live television. We all know that. Wike might as well do what he likes with Rivers state."

"Is that democracy? Godfathers everywhere. Even in the National Assembly."

"I have not seen the hands of any Godfather in the National Assembly, at least not in the recent salacious case of cuckoldry allegations by Senator Natasha Akpoti"

"That's another material for Nollywood. Except that it is not funny. We cannot afford to have a National Assembly that spends its time again and again having to deal with a House of Representatives member who beats up a woman at a sex toy shop, a Senate President who gets accused by Joy Nunieh, and now a married female Senator alleging that the Chairman of the National Assembly, the same Senator Godswill Akpabio was making sexual overtures to her and harassing her."

"I agree with the former Senate President, Senator Bukola Saraki in the matter. We should be more worried about the integrity of the institution. We must rescue that institution. Our National Assembly must not become a comedy house of errors. The matter should be referred to the Ethics Committee of the Senate and both parties must submit themselves to the authority of that Committee. Senator Natasha Akpoti says she has evidence. She who alleges must prove. Simple"

"Nothing will come out of it. You want to bet? This is the point. Senator Akpabio has a Godfather that is bigger."

"Who is that?"

"Who else? And as for Senator Akpoti, except she brings out that concrete evidence she claims she has, she should begin to prepare for worse humiliation in that Senate. I hear the other Senators are actually making jest of her. They are saying even if a mosquito, the male anopheles, hovers too closely around Senator Akpoti, she will scream that the mosquito is sexually harassing her, and go to court. She alone, Governor Yahaya Bello, then Reno Omokri, and now the Senate President. Next time she uses that trope, nobody will pay attention to her."

"You are taking sides."

"No. Just thinking aloud…I also heard that the male lawmakers in the National Assembly have all resolved that if Senator Akpoti smiles at them, they will never smile back!"

"Ha Ha. You kept making this point about Godfathers. It is not only in Nigeria though. Look at the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky. He went to the United States, looking for the Godfather's support against Russia. For merely expressing an opinion about Putin, he was openly humiliated by President Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance. I have never seen a thing like that. The President of a sovereign nation tongue-lashed like that? Even his dressing was questioned and he was ordered to leave the White House."

"Godfathers are not always nice. When you stand up to them. They crush you. I thought that was a diplomatic blunder by the way. Why conduct public policy and diplomacy on live television? I pitied Zelensky. He and his country were made to look small. And America first."

"He was humiliated. He learnt his lesson. Beware of the Godfather."

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