

CBN Orders Banks, IMTOs To Pay Diaspora Remittances In Naira

BAMIDELE OGUNWUSI
LAGOS

In a move aimed at smoothing the functioning of the foreign exchange market and enabling greater remittance flows through

formal channels, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has issued new measures to boost naira liquidity and raise diaspora remittances.

The CBN disclosed this in a circular dated June 24, 2024, and signed by CBN Acting Direc-

tor, Trade & Exchange Department, Dr. W. J. Him, which was addressed to all Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) and IMTOs.

Specifically, the central bank pointed out that it had implement-

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Atiku Wants Traditional Institutions Protected From Arbitrariness Of Govs

SAMUEL OGIDAN;
JOY ANIGBOGU

Following the crisis in Kano State over the tussle of who is truly the Emir of Kano, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar on Tuesday said traditional

institutions must be protected from the arbitrariness of governors that threaten their stability.

He appealed to state governors to accord necessary respect to traditional institutions.

The Peoples Democratic

Party's (PDP) presidential candidate in the 2023 general election also called for constitutional reform that will not just recognise traditional institutions in our body of laws but also define the responsibilities

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Tinubu Asks For More Time To Consult On National Minimum Wage

- Labour Says It Expects Negotiation On Wage To End By July
- Wants Governors To Brace Up For Uniform Implementation

INNOCENT OWEH
ABUJA

There are indications that controversies

surrounding a new national minimum wage for workers in the country may linger for a while as President Bola Tinubu has asked for more time to consult widely.

Although the president has received a

detailed report of the tripartite committee set up by the Federal Government to fashion out a new wage benchmark for workers, Tinubu said he believes more consultation would be needed, especially

to get the buy in of state governors who would also be obligated to pay a uniform amount that would be arrived at in the long run.

Amid speculations that Tinubu may

announce a new minimum wage on Tuesday, Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, seized the opportunity of a briefing ses-

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Labour Party:
Obi Champions
Apapa, Abure
Reconciliation,
Asks NLC To
Sheathe Sword **P29**

FEC Okays
N1.99bn
CNG-Powered
Vehicles To
Boost NDLEA
Operations **P7**

Pandemonium
In Rivers As
Dynamite
Explosion
Injures Pro-
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Cardoso Assures
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DMO Explains
Rise In Nigeria's
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From N97.34trn
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Cholera Outbreak:
Tinubu Raises
Presidential
C'ttee To Oversee
Emergency
Operations **P6**



Dame Adaora Umeoji, Group Managing Director/CEO, Zenith Bank Plc (left), and Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor, Lagos State, during the visit of Zenith Bank officials to the governor at Lagos House, Marina, Lagos, on Tuesday.

ASUU Threatens Fresh Strike In Two Weeks Over 2009 Agreement, Others

ATABOR JULIUS;
RAJI ADEBAYO;
ITODE AKARI

The Academic Staff Union of Univer-

sities (ASUU) on Tuesday threatened to shut down academic activities in public universities across the country over non-substantial implementation of the 2009 agreement with the Federal Govern-

ment, several months after it suspended the last strike.

ASUU said it is putting the public on notice of a possible strike in the next two weeks, noting that the union has

been sensitising the Nigerian people in the past two months so that they will not be surprised if it resorted to strike as the last resort.

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Climate Change Threat: FG Bans Single-Use Plastics In MDAs **P6**

News

Oyo Gov't Opens Job Portal For 7,000 Primary School Teachers

KAZEEM AWOJODU

The Oyo State Government has said the job portal for public primary school teachers in the State, will be opened by 6 p.m on Tuesday, June 25, 2024.

The Chairman, Oyo State Universal Basic Education Board, Dr. Nureni Aderemi Adeniran disclosed this while briefing newsmen at the Board headquarters in Ibadan.

Dr. Adeniran said the opening is part of the Oyo State government's bid to reduce unemployment amongst its citizenry.

The portal, according to Dr. Adeniran, would register each candidate with his/her email, phone number and National Identification Number (NIN), among other requirements, with a view to provide them jobs suitable for them, either as teachers or caregivers.

Adeniran gave the site address as subeb.jobportal.oyostate.gov.ng for the recruitment of 7,000 teachers and 100 caregivers.

Inner Wheel Seeks Partnership With Govts To Reach More Less Privileged

SEYI TAIWO-OGUNTUASE

IWM Magdalene Adegoke, Inner Wheel District 911 Chairman has called on the government at the various levels and well-to-do individuals in the country to partner with the non government organisation to reach out and give support to more Nigerians in need.

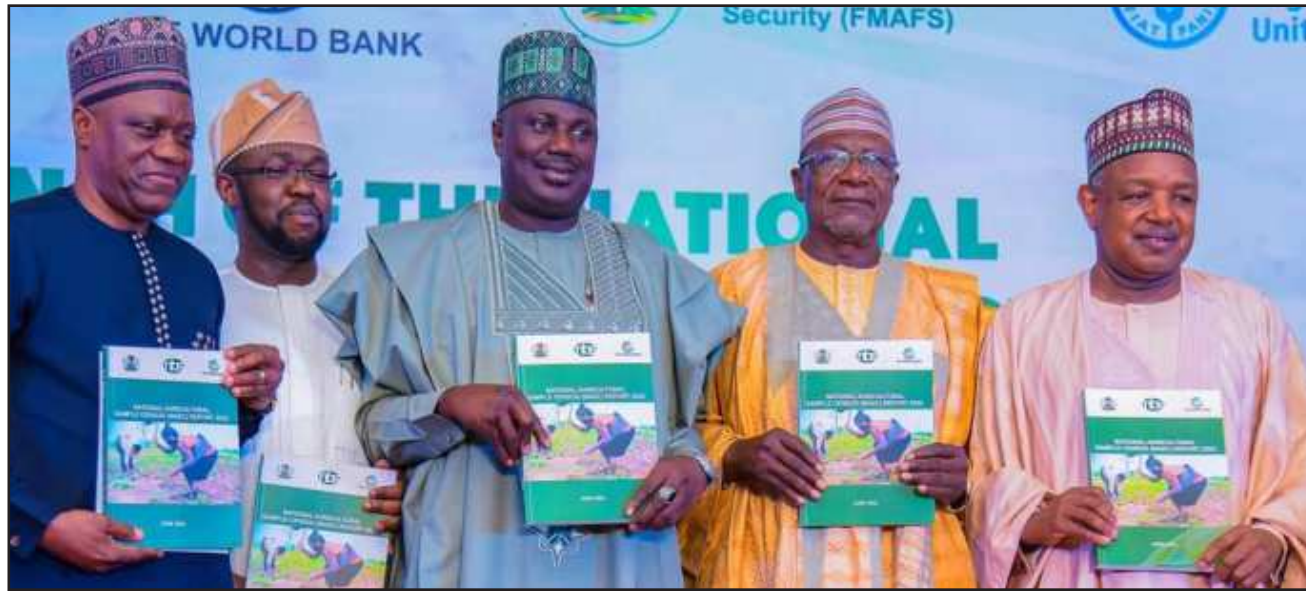
She made the call while speaking with Daily Independent at the Annual General Meeting of the District which comprised of 18 clubs in both Lagos and Ogun states.

The AGM was held at the premises of the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, LUTH, in Idi-Araba, where she gave an account of her stewardship within her service year.

Adegoke who is the centenary chairman said that the NGO does charitable acts and source for funding from within members', their families and friends.

"We do charitable act, we empower people, do medical outreach, pay school fees, pay medical bills and empower women, and we do things to make life better for people. We source for funds on our own from friends' and families to make sure that we put smiles on the faces of people. We call on the government to partner with us, they can give grants.

Adegoke lamented and identified finance as a major challenge due to the economic situation of the country.



Semiu Adeniran, Statistician-General of the Federation/CEO, National Bureau of Statistics (left); Temitope Fashedemi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (second left); Aliyu Abdullahi, Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Security (middle); Senator Yahaya Abdullahi, Chairman, Senate Committee on National Planning and Economic Affairs (second right), and Abubakar Bagudu, Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, during the official launch and dissemination of the National Agricultural Sample Census Report, in Abuja, on Monday.

Cholera Outbreak: Lagos Assembly Seeks Improved Enlightenment Campaign

CHIBUIKE CHUKWU

The Lagos State House of Assembly on Tuesday called on the relevant offices of the government to embark on massive enlightenment of the residents on the best ways to curtail the spread of cholera in the state.

This was as the House also called for the activation of some sections of the State health law to combat the health emergency which is

said to have spread across some local governments leading to the death of 29 people as at Monday.

A press statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the Lagos State House of Assembly, Mr. Eromosele Ebhomele, said the speaker, Rt. Hon. Mudashiru Obasa, who presided over the sitting, further called for investigation into the source of the bacteria disease outbreak to enable the government strategise better in its bid for a solution.

"We must encourage the government to continue to sensitise the people in every language that is spoken in Lagos," Dr. Obasa said while supporting the calls by his colleagues for the authorities to maintain drainages and canals and ensure proper sewage systems.

Raising a motion on the matter earlier, the chairman of the health committee of the House, Hon. Lawal Aina Musbau, moved that the government should urgently mobilise resources and per-

sonnel to combat the disease.

Among other demands, he said there was a need for the education of residents with emphasis on basic cleanliness while calling on sanitation officers to ensure they carry out their jobs effectively.

On their parts, Hon. Sa'ad Olumoh and Gbolahan Yishawu, urged that more attention should be on the provision of drinkable water to the residents of the state as this is one way to check the spread or reoccurrence of the disease.

Sanwo-Olu Promises To Complete Work On Abandoned Adiyen Water Project

VICTORIA OJUGBANA

The Lagos State government has promised to complete the 70 million-gallon per day Adiyen Water Project, which had been abandoned for years.

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu made the fresh promise to complete the project during the fifth edition of the Lagos International Water Conference in Lagos, on Tuesday, saying the years of rhetoric are over.

At the event themed: "Financing Water and Sanitation For A Greater Lagos",

Sanwo-Olu highlighted the crucial importance of financial resources in achieving the goals of water security, accessibility, and sustainability, noting that the project would have to be completed in the next one year.

According to Sanwo-Olu: "For us, it is not just about lip-service. We want to move away from rhetorics, we want action. Let it not be just a talk shop where we exchange ideas and nothing happens in the next one year."

"We have been training our officials and that has not given solutions. Let's stop this rhet-

oric. We want to build partnership, let us identify what needs to be done.

"Whatever that will take us, we are going to complete seven million gallons per day of the Adiyen Water treatment plant. If I'm making myself an example, I'm looking for partners. It has always been proposals, we need people that are committed

"Water does not have enemies but unfortunately, we are the enemies of water. I'm hoping the conversation we are having here today and tomorrow will be a convergent working solution. In the next

12 to 18 months, we want to change the narrative."

He declared that the State government is committed to fostering partnerships, while leveraging community engagement and international alliance to achieve water management, financing and sanitation efforts.

Governor Sanwo-Olu urged participants at the conference to partner the state government in its collective commitment to changing the narrative in ensuring access to water supply and the completion of the Adiyen Water Work project.

Air Force War College Participants Visit Morocco, Türkiye

JOY ANIGBOGU

The Air Force War College (AFWC) recently undertook an international study tour to Morocco and Türkiye as part of efforts to deepen understanding of global geopolitics and military-industrial dynamics.

A statement on Tuesday signed by Air Vice Marshal, Edward Gabkwet, the Director of Public Relations and Information, Nigeria Air Force (NAF) stated that the tour was majorly aimed at equip-

ping the participants with a deeper understanding of the complexities of international politics, security, and the interdependence of modern nation-states.

"The overarching theme for the tour was, 'Military Industrial Complex and National Development: Lessons for Nigeria,' with a focus on understanding the technological advancements and manufacturing capabilities of the armed forces in these countries.

"The participants also explored how these two nations have leveraged their military-industrial complexes to bolster their national development agendas.

"According to the Commandant of the College, Air Vice Marshal Gabriel Kehinde, "The goal of the study tour was to provide our participants with a comprehensive understanding of the linkages between military capabilities, technological innovation, and economic progress. By ex-

amining the models adopted by Türkiye and Morocco, we aim to draw valuable lessons that can inform Nigeria's own path towards strengthening its defense industry and fostering sustainable national development."

Upon their return to Nigeria, the participants presented their findings in both oral and written forms, highlighting the unique strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) observed in each country.

Activate Organized Noise To Address Nigeria's Challenges, Senator Umeh Tasks CSOs

CHIDI UGWU

The Senate Committee Chairman on the Civil Society Organizations, Distinguished Senator Victor Umeh, on Tuesday charged the civil society organizations in Nigeria to wake up to their responsibilities of keeping the political leaders on their toes, insisting that the country is heavily challenged, and so many things are going wrong.

The Senator, representing Anambra central in the upper legislative chamber, gave the charge at the opening ceremony of a two-day 3rd National Organizational Development Summit with the theme: 'Driving Change and Innovation for Resilience and Performance' holding in Abuja.

Umeh who declared that the civil society organizations operating in the country are not heard challenged them to make some organised noise to put the country on the path of sustainable future.

"This morning, I would to say that civil society organisations, aside from the organisational development which you need to empower yourself for the task ahead, I want to say here that the civil society organisations are not being heard effectively in Nigeria today. There are so many things going wrong here which I had thought that the civil society organisations should mobilise themselves and drive the proactive things we need to do to be able to hold the government accountable.

"All of things happen here and we gloss over them, the organized noise not just any type of noise, which we need to ask relevant questions and be able to put leaders on their toes, we are not hearing much of it.

Makinde Commiserates With Shettima Over Mother-In-Law's Death

RAJI ADEBAYO

Oyo State Governor, 'Seyi Makinde, has condoled with the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Senator Kashim Shettima, on the demise of his mother-in-law, Hajiya Maryam Albishir.

Makinde, in a statement on Tuesday, urged the Vice-President to take heart, praying to God to grant repose to the soul of the late Hajiya Albishir.

He said: "I condole with the Vice-President, Senator Kashim Shettima, on the death of Hajiya Maryam Albishir.

"While the death of loved ones always brings pain to the heart, we can only accept the will of God and pray for the fortitude to bear the loss occasioned by the demise.

"It is my prayer that Allah SWT will grant her Aljana Firdausi and console the family she left behind."



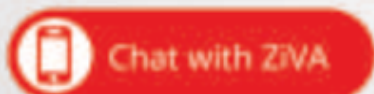
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News

Eschew Politics Of Bitterness To Save Economy – Gov Fubara

Rivers State Governor, Sir Siminalayi Fubara, has advised politicians to be circumspect with their politicking activities in order not to, either deliberately or otherwise, use them to undermine peace, economic growth prospects of the State and the nation at large.

Governor Fubara gave the advice when he received a delegation of the House of Representatives Committee on Ports and Harbours, led by its Chairman, Hon. Nnolim Nnaji, on a courtesy visit to Government House in Port Harcourt on Tuesday. The delegation was in Rivers State to perform familiarisation with and conduct oversight functions at the Port Harcourt, Onne Sea Ports, and Bonny channels, which are under their preview.

Governor Fubara said the Sea Ports are essential facilities that will contribute in harvesting the rich gains of the blue economy, adding that those who are delighted seeing them remain inactive and moribund do not mean well for the State and the country. The Governor stated: "about nine years ago, if you understand the calculation; somebody here was the senior Minister of Transport, nothing happened at our ports. Every progress that was supported to come to the Sea Ports here, because of bitter politics was stopped. That is why our ports are moribund today."

"Today, after another eight years, which this other person suffered, we have entered into another similar era. If you love this State, it is normal to support everything that will bring progress and development to this State."

Governor Fubara emphasised: "It is not about who is sitting here today. It is about the State. If the State continues to go down, what is the interest? The only reason why we are struggling is because of the allocation."

"The only reason why we are struggling is to make sure that you have control of the treasury. But the treasury will also get fat if the sea ports are working. Revenue will increase. Your plan for expansion will also become large with internal revenue."

Soludo Has Betrayed His Oath Of Office – Ozigbo

CHUKWUJEKWU ILOZUE
AWKA

The primary purpose of the government is to secure life and property and provide welfare to the people, according to former governorship candidate of Labour Party Mr. valentine Chineto Ozigbo.

However, Anambra State Governor Professor Chukwuma Soludo has failed woefully in this area as life and property of the people remain imperilled than in any other government that has ruled

Anambra State.

In his 'Wake Up Series' in which he analysed the state of affairs in Anambra State, Ozigbo said that "having critically analyzed the most pressing problem bedeviling Anambra State today and it is insecurity."

"It is utterly unacceptable that the lives of Ndi Anambra are not being secured, as this is the primary role of the government according to Section 14(2)(b) of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which states that "Security and welfare of the people shall be the

primary purpose of government."

Ozigbo said not only is security the Constitutional obligation of the Governor, but that he clearly stated it in his manifesto as one of the five Pillars of his governance module, which he tagged Social Contract With Ndi Anambra.

"So, why the breach of contract? Why is the safety of the lives and property of Ndi Anambra treated as a non-priority?", he queried.

According to Ozigbo, "Soludo has clearly broken the contract with Anambra people which are encapsulated in

his governing documents – Anambra Vision 2070—a 50-Year Development Plan, The Soludo Solution: and The Transition Committee (Combined) Report.

"Looking at his performance indices on his personally assigned goals, the governor has been very tall in rhetoric and very short in execution."

"In some cases, he is the direct cause of the disorder. What the governor has failed to realize is that when it comes to issues of security, certain truths are better left off the public domain"



Emmanuel Tutuba, Governor, Bank of Tanzania (right); Oluseyi Kumapayi, Executive Director, African Subsidiaries, Access Bank Plc (second right); Imani John, Managing Director, BancABC Tanzania (middle); Emma Mugisha, Executive, African Office, Access Bank Plc (second left), and Hassan Abdullahi, Deputy MD, BancABC Tanzania, during Access Bank's working visit to the Bank of Tanzania office, in Dar es Salaam, recently.

Akpabio Reveals Senate Never Proposed New Aircraft For President, VP

KINGSLEY BENNETH
ABUJA

The President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, on Tuesday dismissed report that the Upper Chamber is proposing that the federal government procures new aircraft for the President, Bola Tinubu and his Vice,

Senator Kashim Shettima.

Speaking to newsmen in Maiduguri shortly after leading a delegation to pay a condolence visit to Senator Tahir Monguno over the death of his father, Akpabio noted that the report is not true.

Last week, reports filtered in the media that the Senate President made a comment that the Senate would approve

the purchase of new aircraft for the President and Vice President irrespective of the fact that Nigerians are hungry.

The Senate President said the report was from propagandists and fifth columnists, stressing that the Senate was focused on delivering legislation that would support the actualisation of President Tinubu's Renewed

Hope Agenda.

Akpabio, who expressed satisfaction with the present security situation of Borno State, urged Nigerians to continue to pray for the present administration.

The Chairman of the National Assembly stated, "I want to dispell the rumour that you are hearing that the Senate President said he will buy a new plane for the President and his Vice, irrespective of the fact that Nigerians are hungry or whatever."

Johnvents Joins Federation Of Cocoa Commerce

BOLU-OLU ESHO

A leading industry in the cocoa production, processing and export in Nigeria, Johnvents Industries, has joined and became a voting member of Federation of Cocoa Commerce (FCC).

It joined the federation as a voting member under the Production and Exportation category towards a thriving and sustainable cocoa future.

Johnvents is a Nigerian indigenous agribusiness and manufacturing group committed to driving sustainable growth across the agricultural value chain from production, processing, manufacturing to distribution.

According to the Managing Director of the company, Caroline Omotosho, "This membership marks a major milestone for Johnvents Industries Limited, solidifying its commitment to upholding the highest standards of ethical and transparent trade practices – a principle that benefits all stakeholders within the cocoa industry."

"We are incredibly honoured to join the FCC's esteemed network of over 193 companies, representing every sector of the global cocoa industry."

Gov Abiodun Welcomes Ogun Pilgrims Back From Hajj

The Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun, has commended pilgrims from the State, who successfully completed this year's Hajj for making the state proud, describing them as worthy ambassadors.

The first batch of the State's 934 pilgrims to this year's annual pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia started arriving today, while others are expected on Wednesday, June 26.

Governor Abiodun, in a statement on Tuesday, described their stay in the Holy Land as worthwhile as it was in fulfilment of one of the five pillars of the Islamic religion.

He praised the pilgrims for their peaceful conduct, adding that Ogun State did not suffer any casualty, despite the huge number of deaths recorded this year.

Prince Abiodun called on the pilgrims to let the spiritual journey strengthen their faith and connection to the Islamic tenets.

"On behalf of the good people of Ogun State, I welcome our dear pilgrims back home. Your successful completion of the Hajj is a testament to your devotion and commitment to your faith. We are proud of you and grateful for your safe return."

"Our government is ready to continue providing logistics support to our pilgrims for seamless and spiritually enriching experiences during the Hajj," he said.

Rep Canvasses Return To Parliamentary System Of Govt To Reduce Cost

RAJI ADEBAYO

Member, House of Representatives, representing Ibadan North West/South West Federal Constituency, Hon. Adediji Stanley Olajide, has said that for poverty to be reduced in the country and economic challenges abated, Nigeria should return to parliamentary system of government.

He also said considering the hardship currently facing the masses, he is in support

of the agitation by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) for an increase in the minimum wage, saying the minimum wage for workers should not be less than N100,000 in Nigeria.

He made the call at a media briefing held in his Ibadan residence, the Oyo state capital.

The federal lawmaker maintained that the cost of operating a federalism system of government is too high considering the economic situation of the country.

According to him, "This is because the cost of federalism is almost unaffordable. The cost of running our government today is high. We can't afford it as a nation. We are just growing in debt, and if necessary, we should return to it."

"Minimum wage cannot be N60,000; anything less than N100,000 is unacceptable for me. If a bag of rice is N77,000, and that is our common food, everybody should be able to afford it. And if you want to eradicate corruption, we

have to do that because most people are not fed from their salaries anymore. This has brought corrupt practices into the system. So, we have to take it seriously and start to improve."

"And that was why I spoke on the floor of the House that we need to restore decency to our practice so that our girls will not have to become prostitutes. Our young boys will not have to become yahoo boys. Look at it, if a person graduates and I am ready to offer him about N100,000 and

he knows that if he runs within two or three days he can make N500,000, why will he not do yahoo? That is the issue which we need to address by making workers a bit."

The Chairman, House Committee on ICT & Cybersecurity, also supported the Attorney General for Federation and Justice Minister, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), on the suit seeking that INEC should be conducting local government council elections instead of the current practice wherein state electoral

AMAC Chairman Flags Off Construction Of Lugbe Township Roads, Chief's Palace

TOYIN ADEBAYO
ABUJA

Hon. Christopher Zakka Maikalu, the Executive Chairman of Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC), has reaffirmed his dedication to impactful governance, drawing parallels to a similar pledge made at the ground-breaking ceremony for Dnako community.

Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony for the construction and rehabilitation of Lugbe township roads, Maikalu emphasized the vital role of infrastructure in boosting the economic conditions of the residents.

"We are proud to have constructed over fifteen asphalt legacy roads across the three zones of the 12 political wards of the council, all ready for commissioning," he stated.

The ceremony, held at Lugbe Primary School and Lugbe Chief Palace, marked a significant step in the council's ongoing commitment to infrastructure development and enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

Maikalu highlighted the

council's achievements over the past two years. "We are here once again for another legacy project as part of our landmark achievements within two years in office," he announced. "Today's ceremony is a confirmation of my promises towards being responsive to the basic needs of our people."

The Chairman outlined the broader vision of the council, which includes not only road construction but also rural electrification, water supply, health services, women and youth empowerment, and educational development.

He appealed to residents to pay their taxes and levies to the government to facilitate these projects. "These projects wouldn't have been possible if residents failed to pay their taxes and levies to the government. I therefore appeal to all residents to please, pay their taxes and cooperate with AMAC in order to serve you better," he stated.

Hon. Maikalu credited the FCT development roadmap championed by the Hon. Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike, for inspiring the initiatives.

Oyo Speaker Mourns Justice Gbolagunte Of State High Court

KAZEEM AWOJODU
IBADAN

The Oyo Speaker, Adebo Ogundoyin, has expressed his condolences over the death of Justice Adegboye Ayinla Gbolagunte of the Oyo State High Court, who passed away at the age of 64 after a protracted illness.

Justice Gbolagunte's death occurred on Monday, 24th June, 2024.

The late Justice Gbolagunte was one of the sons of late Chief Davidson Mokolade Gbolagunte who was an elected UPN member for Ibarapa I Constituency in the Oyo State House of Assembly and later became the Speaker.

Hon. Adebo Ogundoyin described the demise of the legal luminary as a great loss to the judiciary, Oyo state and indeed Eruwaland.

"My heartfelt condolences go out to the entire family of late Justice Adegboye Ayinla Gbolagunte. Eruwaland has lost another illustrious son whose

family has continued to impact our community positively. He was an exceptional jurist, a pillar of justice, and a shining star in the legal profession."

"His dedication to upholding the law and serving the people of Oyo State will never be forgotten. May the fond memories of his life, legacy, and accomplishments bring comfort and peace to Gbolagunte's family and our community at large."

"May his soul rest in perfect peace, and may God grant you the strength and fortitude to bear this irreparable loss. Accept my sincerest sympathies and condolences." Oyo Speaker

While condoling with the family of the deceased, the Speaker praised Justice Gbolagunte's contributions to the development of the state's judiciary, saying that his death has left a huge vacuum in the state's judiciary.

He said the late judge was a fair and upright jurist who would be deeply missed.

Ajimobi's 4th Year Remembrance: He left A Vacuum Difficult To Fill — Adelabu

RAJI ADEBAYO

The Minister of Power, Chief Adebayo Adelabu, says four years after the transition of former Governor of Oyo State and Leader of All Progressives Congress (APC), Abiola Ajimobi, the vacuum he left behind is still difficult to fill.

The Minister spoke on Tuesday as family friends and political associates held a fourth year fidau prayer for the repose of the soul of the former Governor in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Adelabu described Ajimobi as an illustrious son of Ibadan who made a significant impact in governance of Oyo State through many innovations and ideas.

According to him, the late former Governor could best be

described as the architect of modern Oyo State as he left the office with outstanding legacies and great achievements.

Adelabu, while celebrating the life of the former Governor, also condoled with the Ajimobi family, especially his darling wife, Dr (Mrs) Florence Ajimobi, and the children, adding that Ajimobi lived an impactful life.

Adelabu said the APC family and Nigeria still remember the former Governor for his lofty contributions to the party and the development of Oyo State through his promotion of good governance.

"I pray the Almighty Allah continues to increase his mercy on Senator Ajimobi and forgive his shortcomings," Adelabu said.



Anele Mbuya, Managing Director, Tangerine Life (left); Babatunde Oguntade, President, The Nigerian Council of Insurance Brokers (NCRIB) (second left); Sakeenat Bakare, Executive Director/representative of Group CEO, Tangerine Africa (third left); Ademayowa Adeduro, Managing Director, Tangerine General (middle); Shola Tinubu, past President, NCRIB (third right); Toyin Deinde, Group Executive, Tangerine (second right), and Edwin Igbiti, President, Chartered Insurance Institute of Nigeria, during the NCRIB members evening sponsored by Tangerine at Brokers House, in Lagos on Tuesday. PHOTO: KINGSTON DANIEL

Alia's Claims Of N359bn Salary Arrears Owed Workers Unfounded — Akase

TOR VANDE-ACKA
MAKURDI

Traver Akase, a media aide to the immediate past Governor of Benue State, Chief Samuel Ortom, has described as unfounded claims by Governor Hyacinth Alia, that workers in the state were owed salary arrears of about N359 billion.

In a statement signed by Akase and made available to newsmen in Makurdi on Tuesday, the media aide to the former Governor, challenged the Governor to prove his claim by publishing the account of the state.

He also alleged that though the government of Governor Alia was quick to brandish figures against the past administrations, it recoils whenever questions are thrown to it on how the resources of the state are currently managed.

While the media aide to Ortom challenged the state government to publish figures of allocations received by the state so far, and how they were expended, he

also challenged the Governor to avail the people of the state the current wage bill of the state, since the removal of names of "ghost workers" from government payroll.

He said, "We read a media report attributed to Benue State Governor, Hyacinth Alia, in which he was quoted to have claimed that his administration inherited N359 billion in salary arrears from his predecessor, Chief Samuel Ortom."

"According to the report, Governor Alia made the allegation in Okpoga, the headquarters of Okpokwu Local Government Area of the state. We would have ignored the allegation but silence, as they say, is consent."

"The Alia administration appears to be obsessed with the name Samuel Ortom, as they miss no opportunity to throw darts at the immediate past Governor branding him with all manner of negative hues."

"Going by Governor Alia's claim that he inherited N359 billion in salary arrears, the unfounded impression created is

that the past administration of Governor Ortom did not pay salaries for five years (60 months)!"

"How possible is this? The narrative is not only ridiculously fictitious but is also a deliberate flimflam to mislead the people," he argued.

Akase who told the Alia administration that instead of using the name of Ortom as it is currently doing, it should come out and let the people know, if it has a hidden motive in announcing and connecting inflated figures and non-existent figures to his principal.

He observed that, "Governor Ortom also inherited debts in 2015, but he went on to pay seven months arrears and also implemented a 27% increase in teachers' salaries. He implemented N18,000 minimum wage for teachers as well, the same way he later implemented the N30,000 minimum wage for workers."

"All these were achieved by the Ortom administration despite the fact that Nigeria went into recession on two occasions,

not forgetting the COVID-19 pandemic that adversely affected the economy of the country and states.

"If the Alia administration has a hidden motive which is making it announce inflated and non-existent figures regarding the state resources, it is better that the government makes its intentions known rather than using the name of Ortom as it is currently doing."

"Curiously, the same government told the people via a statement by Governor Alia's Chief Press Secretary in June last year that Governor Ortom handed N187.56 billion to them as debt, which was the same amount the former Governor mentioned while presenting handover notes to his successor on May 28, 2023, to which the former Governor gave a detailed presentation in his handover notes on the efforts his administration had made to reduce the debt to the barest. What the present government is saying about the state debt now is contradictory and politically motivated."

AHMAD TIJJANI ABDUL
KANO

Vice President Kashim Shettima on Tuesday afternoon paid a condolence visit to the national Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Dr. Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, over the demise of his mother in law.

Shettima, who also lost his mother-in-law in the city, appeared

Vice President Pays Condolence Visit To Ganduje

to have cut short his private visit in the city to commiserate with Ganduje.

Shettima had arrived Ganduje's Nasarawa GRA home around 1:55 pm in company of aides and retinue of security detail.

He was received by the national chairman of the ruling party, Abdullahi Abbas, former House

Leader, Alhassan Ado Doguwa, the chief of staff to APC national Chairman, Mohammed Garba, senior legislative aide to the Speaker, Faizu Alfindiki, among several others.

A huge but orderly crowd of loyal party supporters, well wishers had massed at the residence of the Gandujes to commiserate

with the national chairman.

The Vice President prayed for the repose of the departed souls before making his way to the family wing to condole with Ganduje's wife, Professor Hafsat Ganduje.

Before he left, the Vice President acknowledged cheers of well wishers at Ganduje's residence.

MICHAEL DAVID
LAFIA

Recent report has shown that there was a massive exodus of medical doctors and health workers from Nasarawa State, who went in search of greener pastures abroad.

However, Dalhatu Araf Specialist Hospital (DASH), Lafia, has recruited about 28 new medical doctors into its ranks.

In a statement signed by the Chief Medical Director, Dr. Ikrama Hassan, and available to journalists in Lafia, the state capital, said that the initiative was to fill vacancies left by those who have departed in pursuit of opportunities abroad.

Dr. Ikrama acknowledged the

Exit Of Doctors: Nasarawa Govt. Recruits 28 Doctors To Fill Vacancies

challenges posed by brain drain syndrome in the medical profession, particularly in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period.

"The lapses in the medical world highlighted during the pandemic prompted developed nations to open their borders to healthcare givers, especially medical doctors," he explained.

He emphasized the dual challenge faced by states across Nigeria, where medical professionals often migrate either internationally or to federal health institutions and creating significant gaps in local health-

care delivery.

In spite of the challenges, Dr. Ikrama expressed optimism about addressing the personnel shortage. "The governor of Nasarawa State has prioritized the health sector, granting DASH express permission to swiftly replace departing staff to ensure uninterrupted patient care," he stated.

Dr. Ikrama highlighted the strategic importance of the new appointment, noting, "The addition of 28 doctors is a crucial step towards bolstering our capacity to meet the healthcare needs of

our community."

The influx of new medical personnel is expected to enhance DASH's capabilities across various specialties, thereby improving service delivery and patient outcomes.

Dr. Ikrama affirmed, "These doctors bring diverse skills and experiences that will enrich our healthcare services."

The CMD added that even though the 28 doctors employed are not enough, they still expect more doctors considering the number of patients the hospital attends to.

News

Cholera Outbreak: Tinubu Raises Presidential C'ttee To Oversee Emergency Operations

INNOCENT OWEH
ABUJA

President Bola Tinubu has directed the setting up of a presidential committee to oversee the cholera emergency operation centre, operated by the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Minister of Health, Ali Pate, made this known on Tuesday after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting chaired by President Tinubu at the State House, Abuja.

The minister also disclosed that the cabinet committee comprises members from the Federal Ministry of Health, Finance, Water Resources, Environment, Youth, Aviation, and Education.

He added that the committee's effort is in addition to state government support to ensure Nigeria makes progress in reducing open defecation.

"The Council then approved a cabinet committee comprising the Federal Ministries of Health, Ministry of Finance, Water Resources, Environment, Youth, Aviation, Education because some of our children will be returning to school. In addition to this, the state government we will co-opt so that Nigeria makes progress in reducing open defecation because cholera is a developmental issue that requires multi sectoral approach.

"The president directed that cabinet committee be set up to oversee what the emergency operation centre led by NCDC is doing and for the resources to be provided complemented by the state government."

Pate disclosed that at the moment 31 states have recorded 1,528 cases in Nigeria with 53 deaths.

"At the moment, about 31 states have recorded 1528 cases and 53 deaths in Nigeria that is what we



Olusola Saraki, former Senate President (left); Amb. Umar Iliya Damagun, Acting National Chairman, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) (middle), and Senator Adolphus Wabara, Chairman, PDP Board of Trustees, during a condolence visit by the party's National Working Committee to Senator Saraki over the death of his mother, Chief (Mrs.) Florence Morenike Saraki, in Lagos.

are working on through emergency operation centre that was activated by NCDC on Monday.

"Now, we have cholera outbreak and we discussed extensively in the Council in addition

to a new emergence of yellow fever specifically in Bayelsa State.

"On cholera, we are in the middle of 7th pandemic globally which is ...decades in the making in 2022 the world had almost

500,000 cases of cholera so it is not only peculiar to Nigeria. In 2023, almost 700,000 cases of cholera were reported by the World Health Organisation.

"This year, more than 200,000

cases have occurred in five regions of the world", the minister added.

He emphasised that multi sectoral approach is required to tackle the outbreak.

STELLA OMONA
ABUJA

The Federal Government has banned single-use plastics in all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government as part of efforts to curb the challenge of plastic pollution in the country.

The Minister of State for Environment, Izaq Salako, explained that the ban was approved on Tuesday during the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu.

Climate Change Threat: FG Bans Single-Use Plastics In MDAs

The minister stated that the ban aligns with President Bola Tinubu's administration's broader plastic waste management strategy.

He said the ban equality demonstrates the government's commitment to address the triple threat of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

He noted that the ban is also in tune with the 2022 national policy on plastic waste management.

Salako stressed that the gravity of plastic pollution in the

country "is a major issue in our country".

The minister bemoaned that plastic waste often clogs drains and thus contributes to flooding, while at the same time polluting the oceans and affecting human health and the environment.

He clarified that the ban is part of the government's efforts to promote responsible plastic waste management through refusing, reducing, reusing, repurposing, and recycling.

According to him, the ban serves as a leading example for the Nigerian populace to be environmentally responsible and use plastic waste judiciously.

"The Federal Ministry of Environment proposed and the Federal Executive Council approved the ban on the use of on-the-go plastics, what we know as single-use plastics, in all Ministries, Agencies, and Departments of the Federal Government," the minister said.

"This is in line with the 2022

national policy on gas-to-waste management.

"We must say that the discussion in Exco was very smooth because all members of Exco, including Mr. President, were very enthusiastic about this ban.

"As you know, plastic is one of the key challenges that we face when we go to our drains. And when we talk about the issue of flooding, we find out that plastic waste is heavily criminalised.

"So for us to adequately and properly use all five principles of

sustainability in terms of refusing, reducing, reusing, repurposing, and recycling, the council has approved that, with some framework being put in place, there will be no longer the use of single-use plastics in all Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of governments.

"Of course, this is to serve as a leading by example to the Nigerian populace so that we know that we have to be environmentally responsible and use plastic waste very very responsibly."

TORKWASE NYIEKAA
ABUJA

A senior officer of the Nigeria Customs Service, Deputy Comptroller Essien Etop Andrew, responsible for Finance Administration and Technical Service, has passed away at the National Assembly clinic in Abuja.

The deceased had appeared as a guest of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Representatives on Tuesday for questioning, as part of the ongoing

Senior Customs Officer Collapses, Dies During Reps Accountability Session

probe into revenue-generating agencies and government parastatals.

While addressing the committee on the remittance of levies into designated government accounts, Mr. Andrew paused and said, "Sir, I need to take a drink of water."

The Committee Chairman, Hon. Bamidele Salam, responded, "Do you need some water, sir? Yes, go ahead! Or perhaps you'd prefer tea? Do you need tea?"

"The Customs boss again said, 'I may need to take some water,' and then collapsed."

A statement signed by the House spokesman, Akin Rotimi, reads in part: "It is with deep sadness and regret that we confirm the passing of a distinguished official from the Nigeria Customs Service, who was present at the National Assembly for an engagement with a House Committee.

"During an engagement

around 1:00p.m on Tuesday, June 25, 2024, the official suddenly developed health complications. Despite the immediate and diligent efforts of first responders and medical personnel at the National Assembly Clinic, he unfortunately passed away.

"Out of respect for the family, we will not disclose the official's name at this time.

"The House of Representatives expresses its deepest con-

dolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of the deceased during this challenging time. We acknowledge his substantial contributions to the Nigeria Customs Service and to our nation.

"The House of Representatives is fully committed to understanding the circumstances surrounding the incident and is cooperating with all relevant authorities to ensure that all necessary protocols are followed.

"The Speaker of the House, Tajudeen Abbas, expressed his heartfelt condolences, stating, 'We are profoundly saddened by the sudden loss of such a dedicated public servant. Our thoughts are with his family during this difficult time.'

"Additional details will be shared as they become accessible. We kindly request patience and understanding for the family's privacy as they mourn."

PASCHAL NJOKU
ABUJA

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has opened its case at the Federal High Court, Abuja, against the immediate past governor of Anambra State, Chief Willie Obiano.

At the sitting on Tuesday, the EFCC called two witnesses before the matter was adjourned to Wednesday by the trial judge, In-

Alleged Money Laundering: EFCC Opens Case Against Obiano

yang Ekwo.

At the proceeding, Mr. Tochukwu Nnadi, a manager in one of Fidelity Bank's branches in Awka testified as the first prosecution witness.

Nnadi told the court that his official responsibilities are to manage customers' accounts, winning new relationships for banks and managing existing ones as well as interfacing with the police, DSS,

ICPC, EFCC etc in terms of enquiry on a customer's account.

The witness confirmed knowing Chief Obiano as the immediate past governor of Anambra State, adding that in April 2022, he was informed by bank's compliance unit that he was needed at EFCC in respect of activities of the past administration of Anambra State.

"I went there with two of my colleagues. The EFCC told me that

my invitation was in respect of an ongoing investigation.

"I was told that it was because I was the manager of the branch that handled most of the financial activities of the then state government.

"The state government maintains various accounts with our bank and one of such accounts was for security votes."

Nnadi informed the court that the security vote account was

mostly funded by the Office of the Accountant General of the state and bulk of the funds came from internally generated revenue of the state.

"Payments into the account was made on weekly basis and all transactions out of the account were always based on the advice of the account operators.

"The payments we made out of the account were to various enti-

ties and corporate organisations.

"We supplied documents containing names of all the beneficiaries to the EFCC," the witness added.

However, he declined request by the prosecution counsel, Mr. Sylvanus Tahir, SAN, to mention names of some of the beneficiaries in the open court, saying it would amount to a breach of his "oath of secrecy."

CONTINUED FROM P1

ed measures that will enable eligible IMTOs to access naira liquidity through the CBN.

According to its latest circular, the apex bank said eligible International Money Transfer Operators (IMTOs) will now have access to naira liquidity through the bank's window.

This initiative is designed to widen access to local currency liquidity, ensure smoother and more efficient settlement processes for remittances, the CBN said, noting that transactions executed before noon on a trading date will be set-

CBN Orders Banks, IMTOs To Pay Diaspora Remittances In Naira

tled on the same day

According to the circular, all participants are required to submit daily regulatory returns to the CBN. These returns must include all relevant information on the sources of funds.

The key participants in the segment include are IMTOs, authorised dealer banks, and the CBN.

Under the new guidelines, IMTO operators will be able to directly access the CBN window, or do so via their Authorised Dealer Banks (ADB) to execute

foreign exchange transactions in the market. The circular outlines specific compliance measures to ensure the effective operation of the initiative.

It also said pricing on the CBN portal will mirror the NAFEX traded rates, which are based on an acceptable market benchmark.

The operation of the segment will follow the existing arrangements in place for authorised dealers involved with foreign portfolio investment in primary market securities auctions.

The circular emphasised that these measures are effective immediately, highlighting the bank's commitment to maintaining the smooth functioning of the foreign exchange market and improving formal remittance channels.

The decision is expected to significantly improve the liquidity of local currency for diaspora remittances, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency and reliability of the foreign exchange market in the country.

Last month, the bank granted

14 IMTOs an approval-in-principle (AIP) in an effort to double foreign-currency remittance inflows through formal channels.

"This will spur liquidity in Nigeria's Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market (NAFEX), augmenting price discovery to enable a market-driven fair value for the naira," said Hakama Sidi Ali, CBN's Acting Director of Corporate Communications, while announcing the new plan in a statement.

The CBN governor, Olayemi

Cardoso, had recently disclosed the apex bank's target to double remittance flows into Nigeria within a year, which he firmly believed was possible.

He said, "We are wasting no time driving progress to remove any bottlenecks hindering flows through formal channels permanently. We have a determined pathway and a sequenced approach to tackling all challenges ahead, working hand in hand with key stakeholders in the remittance industry."

Pandemonium In Rivers As Dynamite Explosion Injures Pro-Wike Protester

ITODE AKARI
PORT HARCOURT

There was pandemonium in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, on Tuesday morning, as a detonated dynamite explosive injured a middle-aged pro-Wike protester in front of Hotel Presidential, Aba Road, about 9:45a.m.

Our correspondent learnt that the explosion occurred inside a moving vehicle being ridden by one of the protesters.

It was gathered that the protest was organised by some top pro-Wike politicians in the state, such as the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Kingsley Chinda; embattled Speaker of the Rivers State House of Assembly, Martins Amaewhule; former Obio-Akpor Council Chairman, Barr. George Ariolu and others.

The protesters were urging the Inspector General of Police, IGP Kayode Igbetokun, to sustain the police occupation of council secretariats until an appeal court sitting in Port Harcourt decides on the tenure elongation appeal concerning 21 council chairmen and the state government.

A source near the scene of the explosion, who preferred an-

onymity, stated that the protesters caused heavy traffic gridlock along Aba Road during the protest as they moved slowly.

Addressing the protests earlier, George Ariolu said they were in support of peace and order in the state.

He said, "As the governor said, there is no sacrifice too much for peace. But there is no peace without justice. You must govern by the rule of law. Therefore, we are in support of governance by law not by discretion, not by impunity. Rivers is a state that complies with law and order.

"We are in support of the position of the Nigeria police. The inspector general under President Tinubu, has the right to bring peace to Rivers State, even when there are provocative actions that could lead to the breakdown of law and order.

"And so for us, we want to encourage the inspector general and his men, to continue to bring peace and order to Rivers State. We want to call on all to abide by the rule of law. Let public office holders understand that they must obey the law and order. And as a people, we are taking a peaceful walk of the local government (area) this morning,



Prof. Charles Anosike, Director General/CEO, Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMet) (left), and Poston Kragmigr, Deputy Country Director, Save The Children, during the signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU) on early warning systems between both organisations in Abuja, on Tuesday.

Commissioner for Health, Dr. Adaeze Oreh, while condemning the explosion, called on members of the public to report anyone seen with serious upper bodily injuries to the police and the Ministry of Health for appropriate measures to be taken.

She, however, urged residents and visitors of the state to go about their lawful businesses, as the government is handling the situation.

to talk to the people, and to demonstrate our support for peace and order."

Reacting to the development, the Rivers State government had directed all public and private owned medical facilities to be on the alert and look out for a young man that may present traumatically dismembered upper body injuries at the facilities, adding that such patients may be the perpetrators of the ugly incident.

She said, "The Rivers State government has just received information about a failed attempt to detonate an explosive at the Hotel Presidential axis of Port Harcourt by mischievous and unscrupulous individuals.

"While condemning such malicious and failed attempt to disturb the peace in the state, the Rivers State Ministry of Health, hereby, call on all public and private owned medical facilities to be on the alert and look out for a young man with a traumatically dismembered upper body as this injury was sustained in the process of attempting to detonate the device.

"Such an individual and his accomplices if presented at any of the facilities should be immediately detained and reported to the Commissioner of Police, Rivers State and the Rivers State Ministry of Health."

CHIDI UGWU
ABUJA

The governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, has reiterated the determination of the bank's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to tame inflation through conventional methods.

Mr. Cardoso stated this in an interview with Bloomberg in London on Tuesday, while sharing key insights on the current state of the market, mainly focusing on the stability of the naira and inflation rates.

He noted a deceleration in

Cardoso Assures On Taming Inflation Through Conventional Methods

the month-on-month inflation rates, highlighting it as a positive development.

He assured that the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) members remained vigilant in monitoring inflation trends and ensuring a moderation of inflation numbers.

"MPC members will continue to monitor the trajectory and are determined to ensure that they put inflation under control," he asserted.

While highlighting a period of stability following previous

volatility in the foreign exchange market, he expressed optimism about the recent improvements in liquidity and return of confidence to the market.

He attributed the new development to increased liquidity and a calmer approach from market participants on both the buy and sell sides.

"In the past, people were panicking and front-loading their requests," he explained, stressing that "now, a lot of that has calmed down. There's

no inclination to do that because liquidity has returned to the market."

Mr. Cardoso also highlighted the significant achievement of merging disparate exchange rates into a more unified system.

"We had two different rates; right now, we more or less have one rate. And we believe that this is good. It allows companies to plan," he stated, emphasising the importance of a predictable exchange rate for economic planning and investment.

Furthermore, he expressed

confidence in the current market dynamics, where willing buyers and sellers operate freely, noting that it had contributed to the stability of the naira.

He, however, stressed the importance of continuous observation and management to ensure the market benefits all participants.

Governor Cardoso highlighted the crucial role of coordinated monetary and fiscal policies in achieving economic stability, adding that the collaboration was essential for managing the

macroeconomic fundamentals that influence the market, aiming to provide the best value for the naira.

It would be recalled that Nigeria's annual inflation rose to a 28-year high of 33.95% in May 2024, but recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics reveals that the month-on-month inflation rate had slowed for the third consecutive month, validating the effectiveness of the Central Bank of Nigeria's monetary policy tightening measures.

The Debt Management Office (DMO) said the rise in Nigeria's public debt stock from N97.34 trillion in December 2023 to N121.67 trillion in March was partly due to exchange rate fluctuations.

The Director-General of DMO, Patience Oniha, said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Tuesday in Abuja.

She clarified misconceptions about the recently released update of the country's total debt profile.

She said that the securitisation of N4.90 trillion as part of the se-

DMO Explains Rise In Nigeria's Public Debt From N97.34trn To N121.67trn

curitisation of the N7.3 trillion Ways and Means Advances approved by the National Assembly was also responsible for the N24.33 trillion increase in the debt stock.

According to her, there is also the interest rate and new borrowing of N2.81 trillion as part of the N6.06 trillion provided in the 2024 budget.

She, however, emphasised that the debt stock included the domestic and external debt stock of the thirty-six states and the Federal

Capital Territory (FCT).

"The total public debt as at March 31, showed that the total public debt in naira terms stood at N121.67 trillion compared to N97.34 trillion as at December 31, 2023.

"While detailed information was provided on the data such as the split between external and domestic debt as well as the fact that the debt stock includes the domestic and external debt stock of the 36 states and the FCT, it has be-

come imperative to provide some explanations.

"It is important to recognise the fact that Nigeria has undergone some major reforms which have impacted economic indices such as the dollar/naira exchange rate and interest rates.

"These two, in particular affect the debt stock and debt service," she said.

Oniha said that the increase in naira terms of N24.33 trillion between the fourth quarter of 2023,

and first quarter of 2024, did not strictly represent new borrowing.

She said that the total external debt stock was relatively flat at 42.50 billion dollars and 42.12 billion dollars in the fourth quarter of 2023, and first quarter of 2024 respectively.

"The naira values were significantly different at N38.22 trillion and N56.02 trillion, respectively, representing a difference of N17.8 trillion.

"This explains the perceived

sharp increase of N24.33 trillion in the total debt stock in the first quarter of 2024.

"The difference in the exchange rate for the two periods also explains why, in dollar terms, the total debt stock actually declined in the first quarter of 2024 to 91.46 billion dollars," Oniha said.

She said that the debt report was somewhat an improvement from the past, before the Bola Tinubu government.

INNOCENT OWEH
ABUJA

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu on Tuesday, approved the procurement

FEC Okays N1.99bn CNG-Powered Vehicles To Boost NDLEA Operations

of 33 units Mikano CNG-powered vehicles at N1.99 billion, to boost the operation of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA).

The approval was revealed by the Minister of Justice and the Attorney General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi, while briefing reporters at the end of the meeting.

According to the minister, "Procurement of 33 Mikano motor vehicles CNG powered is to boost the operation of NDLEA, Council considered and approved.

Fagbemi further disclosed that the Council also approved the procurement of firearms and ammunition to strengthen the counter-narcotic fight.

Fagbemi further revealed that procurement of 2 units of body scanners to be deployed for use both in Abuja and international airports at the sum of N985 million.

of their offices.

He noted that when the structure of ascension of traditional rulers is unstable, it will become equally difficult to maintain peace and orderliness in communities.

Atiku, in a statement, said: "Recent developments in the country has seen a growing tendency of state governments exerting influence in distorting

Atiku Wants Traditional Institutions Protected From Arbitrariness Of Govs

the modalities of enthroning traditional stools.

"It is a reality that stares us in the face from every corner of the country.

"While it is understandable that the institutions of traditional rulership is in the exclusive purview of the state government, although through the local government authorities, it

must be established that traditional institutions constitute a component of our governance structure.

"And thus, traditional institutions must be protected from the arbitrariness of state governments that threaten their stability.

"Although our constitution, in its current format, does not ascribe any recognition to tra-

ditional institutions, yet our experiences show clearly that they perform enormous roles in the economic life of their domains, as well as maintenance of peace and security in communities.

"I wish to remind that the traditional institutions formed the governance structures before the advent of the colonialists. And they governed well.

Consequently, they are institutions we must protect and preserve and not destroy.

"It is, therefore, on this basis that I lean towards the advocacy that calls for constitutional reform that will not just recognise traditional institutions in our body of laws but also define the responsibilities of their offices.

"This reform is even more

important in view of the collective drive to stem the ugly tide of terrorism and sundry security challenges at the local levels.

"I must also appeal to state governors to accord the necessary respect to the offices of traditional institutions. The customs that our traditional rulers represent is the totality of our heritage as a people."

Metro

Food Crises: Edo IDPs Plead For Succour From Governorship Candidates, Others

FRANCIS ONOIRIBHOLO
BENIN

Over 4,000 persons taking shelter at the Home for the Needy which play host to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Edo State face imminent starvation as operators of the facilities Tuesday cried out to spirited individuals, corporate bodies and the government to come to their aid as hunger bites harder among the inmates.

They specifically appealed to candidates of all political parties in the forthcoming

September 21st governorship election for support to enable them meet the daily need of the children at the camp and also assist to pay the fee of those in various higher institutions of learning across the country.

The Home for the needy which is located in Uhogua, Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State has produced first class graduates in various disciplines and other professionals.

The Coordinator of the camp, Pastor Solomon Folurunsho, however, thanked the member of the House of Representatives representing

Etsako Federal Constituency and former APC Governorship Aspirant, Hon. Dekiri Anemero, for enrolling 125 students for the WASC and noted that paucity of fund hampered the camp from registering other students for NECO.

He said, "The worsening food crisis in the country further compounds situation at the camp and that is why I am using the opportunity especially all the governorship candidates and other class of people to come to our rescue. As I speak to you, the children have not eaten today.

"We are in dire need of food

items such as rice, beans and yams, toiletries, and of course, resources to pay school fees of these displaced persons.

"I must at this point thank some persons who despite the difficult economic situation in the country still extend their milk of human kindness by reaching out to the needy in the camp."

He disclosed that the home took facilities from banks before it could enrol their students in the camp for the National Business and Technical Examination Board, NABTEB and the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board.

Naira Abuse: Cubana Chief Priest Forfeits N10m, As Court Strikes Out Charge

TITILOPE JOSEPH
LAGOS

A Federal High Court sitting in Lagos on Tuesday struck out the charge of naira abuse filed against celebrity bartender, Pascal Okechukwu, popularly known as Cubana Chief Priest, by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The presiding judge, Justice Kehinde Ogundare directed Okechukwu to forfeit the sum of N10 million to the Federal Government as part of an out-of-court deal the defendant agreed with the EFCC in lieu of the charge.

This was contained in the terms of settlement agreement with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) which was adopted before the trial judge.

At the proceedings, Counsel for the EFCC, Bilkisu Buhari-Bala, informed the court that parties in the charge entered into the out-of-court settlement and same was duly signed by both parties.

The defendant's counsel, Chikaosolu Ojukwu SAN, commended the reasonable action of the anti-graft agency in having the matter resolved. He said the defendant is equally remorseful and promises to turn over a new leaf going forward.

Ojukwu also said that the consequences of the settlement is for the court to dismiss the charge.

Justice Ogundare in his short ruling adopted the terms of settlement and consequently struck out the charge.

The terms of settlement agreement pursuant to Section 14 (2) of the EFCC Establishment Act, 2004, read:

"The agreement applies only to the findings relating to contraventions of the law contained in the pending charge preferred against the defendant.

"The defendant shall enter into a bond with the EFCC to be of good behaviour and never indulge in any economic and financial crime or related offences."

Finchglow Travels Celebrates 18yrs Of Service With Visit To Motherless Babies Home

OLUSEGUN KOIKI
LAGOS

Finchglow Travels, early this month celebrated its 18 years of service with numerous activities, culminating with a visit to the Motherless Babies Home in Lagos.

A statement by Mr. Ezekiel Ikotun, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Finchglow Travels, reiterated that the company was committed to excellence, innovation and dedication in the travel industry.

Ikotun explained that the visit to Motherless Babies Home was part of its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) to the immediate community of operation.

Established in 2006, Finchglow Travels has grown from a modest travel agency into the country's leading travel consolidator, providing cutting-edge solutions to its clients.

Ikotun stated that the company has consistently set industry standards since its establishment, leveraging technology and a customer-centric approach to meet the evolving needs of travellers both within Nigeria and interna-

tionally.

He said, "As we celebrate 18 years of success, it's important for us to remember our responsibility to the community.

"Visiting the Motherless Babies Home is just one way we can share our success and bring smiles to these children's faces. We are committed to continuing our support and making a positive impact in their lives."

Also speaking, Mr. Abdulrashied Abdulazeez, Head of School at the Motherless Babies Home, expressed his delight with the visit.

"We are deeply grateful for Finchglow Travels' visit and their generous contributions. Their support means a lot to us and the children. Such acts of kindness go a long way in making a difference in the lives of these young ones.

"Over the years, Finchglow Travels has garnered a reputation for reliability and excellence, serving a diverse clientele including corporate entities, individual travellers, and tour groups," he said.

The agency said it remained poised to continue its leadership role, setting new benchmarks in service quality and customer satisfaction.

various stakeholders within the steering committee, including civil defense, police, immigration, and both state and federal government agencies.

The Galilee Foundation continues its advocacy by conducting weekly school visits to educate students about child labour, trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

"We provide toll-free helplines for children facing these issues, empowering them to seek assistance," Dr. Egbadon said underscoring the foundation's commitment to protecting children's rights across Oyo State.



CP Tunji Disu, Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Command (fourth left), and Rear Admiral Istifanus Albara, Flag Officer Commanding (FOC) Naval Training Command (fourth right) flanked by other senior officers from both commands during the FOC's visit to the Police Command, in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, on Tuesday.

UMAR FARUK MOHAMMED
GUSAU

Zamfara State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Aisha Anka, has declared that 950,000 women in the state were at high risk of maternal deaths.

Anka made the statement in Gusau on during the opening ceremony of a five-day workshop on preventing maternal deaths for health workers in the state.

The workshop organised by the Health for Life and Development Foundation, an NGO, in collaboration with the state Ministry of Health and the Hospital Services Management Board, with support from the United Nations Population Fund.

She explained that statistics

Zamfara: 950 Women Risk Maternal Deaths

credits Nigeria as having recorded 14 per cent of the total maternal death globally.

The commissioner, however, noted that the Northern Nigeria including Zamfara had a record of 70 per cent of maternal deaths in Nigeria.

Anka explained that the 50 nurses and midwives attending the training were selected from different health facilities across the state.

"The workshop signifies government's commitment to improve maternal health in the state.

"This training is aimed at ensuring safe delivery of babies across all health facilities in the

state.

"The participants were carefully selected, they are nurses and midwives in charge of labour rooms in the health facilities across the state," she said.

According to her, based on the government concern for health sector, Governor Dauda Lawal declared a state of emergency on health sector and the state government embarked on total renovation of health facilities across the state.

"This training is part of the government's commitment to promote capacity, manpower and skills of our health workers across the state," she explained.

Earlier, the Executive Director

Health for Life and Development Foundation, Dr. Abubakar Danladi, said the training was organised based on the realisation of an increase in maternal mortality in the state.

"This training is to ensure that our health workers are well equipped to handle health cases related to maternal deaths.

"This is for capacity building of our nurses and midwives on management of direct and indirect causes of preventable maternal deaths.

"Part of the mandate of this training is for participants to cascade the skills they will acquire to their respective health facilities," he explained.

KAZEEM AWOJODU
IBADAN

In a proactive move against child labour, the Oyo State Steering Committee, in collaboration with various organisations and NGOs, orchestrated a pivotal one-day meeting at the Federal Secretariat Complex in Ikolaba, Ibadan.

The event, centred on disseminating a comprehensive compendium in observance of World Day Against Child Labour, aimed to tackle and minimise the pervasive cases.

Mr. Igbinosun Festus, State

Oyo Spearheads Efforts Against Child Labour With Comprehensive Compendium Dissemination

Controller of the Oyo State Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, emphasised the compendium's critical role in combatting child labour.

"Our primary goal is to significantly reduce the prevalence of child labour by rescuing children from the streets and engaging them meaningfully," he affirmed.

Mr. Festus highlighted the effective partnership between Oyo

State and collaborating entities, emphasising their concerted efforts in addressing challenges such as child prostitution.

"This compendium will have a profound impact as it reaches key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Women Affairs, Immigration authorities, NGOs, NABTEB, and NCDC," Mr. Festus added.

Dr. Gregory Egbadon, Executive Director of the Galilee Foun-

dation in Ibadan, outlined the extensive activities undertaken during the World Day Against Child Labour.

"We conducted media engagements, school awareness programmes, and community outreach initiatives, all orchestrated by the Oyo State Steering Committee on Child Labour," he explained.

Dr. Egbadon noted that the

efforts reached 32 schools and approximately 19,000 students, emphasising the importance of educating children about their rights and the dangers of child labour.

"Under child rights law, every child is entitled to education, and it is crucial to safeguard these rights," Dr. Egbadon stressed.

He further highlighted the collaborative approach involving

Our View

Financial Sleaze In The Public Sector: Matters Arising (3)

Within a space of 10 years (2010 to 2020), a whopping N10.3 trillion was reportedly expended on Turn Around Maintenance of the three state-owned refineries - Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna refineries - yet they remained moribund after the said rehabilitation...

11

Quote Of The Day

"As president of this nation, I am morally and constitutionally bound to preserve this precious form of governance. I vow to do my utmost best to protect your rights, freedoms, and liberties as citizens of Nigeria... Democracy demands that we do not resolve differences through force and repression. We make allowance for the legitimacy of views that differ from our own. There are those among us who will try to exploit current challenges to undermine, if not destroy, this democracy for which so much has already been given."

— President Bola Tinubu

One Year After Presidential Election, PDP Fails To Sanction Erring Members

SAMUEL OGIDAN

In the 2023 presidential election that produced Bola Ahmed Tinubu as the President of Nigeria, some key players in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) were accused of working for the All Progressives Congress (APC) to sabotage the party.

The accusation was so loud that the leadership of the party on the 27th of March, 2023, directed the chairmen of the 36 state chapters and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to identify their members involved in anti-party activities during the 2023 general elections.

Particularly, the National Organising Secretary (NOS) of the party, Umar Bature, during a meeting of the National Working Committee with state chairmen in Abuja, said such erring members should be identified so they could be sanctioned.

Bature during the meeting said: "After the elections, we expected the state chapters to give us their reports, that is the post-2023 election reports. A lot of the states have not submitted their reports and we need those reports to be compiled for the next National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting."

"A lot of agitations are coming from party members, suspend this, suspend that, you are the ones that are in charge of those states. You are to tell us who was involved in anti-party activities and who did not; and based on that, the NEC will take a decision. Write to us and tell us what transpired, no matter what happened."

One would have expected that the PDP would put its foot down, investigate the allegation seriously and apportion appropriate sanctions to erring members, who are found guilty. Several months down the line and even after its National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting, no member has been sanctioned, but appointments upon appointments of PDP members into the All Progressives Congress (APC) government appeared to be very loud in the political space.

While the former governor of Rivers state, Nyesom Wike was made the Minister of Federal Capital Territory (FCT), his loyalist, the National Vice Chairman of PDP, South-south, Dan Orbih, has been appointed by President Tinubu as the Chairman of the Governing Council of Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze, Anambra State.

Recall that Orbih, whose appointment was contained in the list of the newly reconstituted governing councils of tertiary education institutions in the country, had in April 2024, rejected his membership in the



Damagum

Edo PDP 2024 Governorship Campaign Council.

Orbih's name was featured on the 200-membership Campaign Council list of the PDP for the September 21, 2024 gubernatorial election. The council, which is championing the campaign of Asue Ighodalo – the PDP gubernatorial candidate, is headed by Governor Godwin Obaseki as Chairman, with his deputy, Marvellous Omobayo Godwins.

With all the glaring disobedience to the party, PDP has not taken any action against any member, who disregarded the party's Constitution, but what kept reverberating in the political space is the allegation and counter allegation of how monies were allegedly given to some people to maintain and watch over political interest in the party.

In December last year, the Acting National Chairman, Amb Umar Damagum, said Wike and other members involved in "anti-party" acts, will be sanctioned "at the right time."

The PDP chairman, who said no member is bigger than the party and that action will be taken against anyone involved in alleged anti-party activity, added, "Our stand about Wike

— I have always said this thing that as long as you are a member of the PDP — there is a time for everything.

"My duty is to stabilise this party and not to cause a crisis and I will continue to do that within the confines of reason."

"When things go out of hand, we will act. But meanwhile, we still see it within the ambit of the law. Mind you, we have other litigation going on in this party and we won't want to plunge our party into another crisis."

"And let me tell you something, it's not only Wike. There are other people who worked against this party."

"When we get to that level we will sanction everybody. If Wike believes he is above this party, we will be able to show him that he is not above this party."

Damagum said that the party has constituted a panel to probe those involved in the anti-party activities, adding that the panel would present a report and recommend appropriate sanctions to be taken against errant members.

More than one year after the 2023 presidential election, the leadership of PDP has not sanctioned anybody and the panel report, if there's any, has not been

made public. The silence in the party over this development is louder than that of the graveyard, a signal that left a sour taste in the mouths of political watchers and stakeholders.

Section 58 (1) of the PDP Constitution stated expressly the offences that should attract sanctions. Sub-section (e) of Section 58 (1), specifically mentioned engagement in anti-party activities. Section 59 (1) spelt out the seven penalties for those who contravened the party Constitution to include; Reprimand; Censure; Fine; Suspension with a fine; Debarment from holding any Party office; Removal from office and expulsion from the party.

Section 59 (5) went further to state that "subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the National Executive Committee shall have power to expel any member of the party for acts of indiscipline or misconduct which brings or is likely to bring, the party in disrepute."

With all the guidelines in the party Constitution and the power vested on the leadership of the party by the Constitution to discipline erring members,

Politics

Leadership Across Borders: Governor Soludo's Rising Impact

CHRISTIAN ABURIME

The strength and worth of true leadership are often tested and proven in challenging times. So it is in a complex context of governance like Nigeria where moments of genuine leadership do shine through far beyond their immediate impact. And such is the case with the recent appointment of Professor Charles Chukwuma Soludo, CFR, the Governor of Anambra State, as the Vice-Chairman of the Southern Governors Forum.

This new development is a profound reflection of the far-reaching leadership qualities and unique approach to governance that Governor Soludo embodies.

Held on Monday, June 24, 2024, the Southern Governors Forum meeting in Abeokuta marked a significant resurgence of regional cooperation after a three-year hiatus. This forum, crucial for championing the interests and aspirations of the southern states, saw the unanimous decision to entrust the helm to Ogun State Governor Dapo Abiodun as Chairman and Governor Soludo as Vice-Chairman.

Sixteen out of seventeen governors attended, which shows a united front and a collective commitment to reinvigorate the southern bloc's influence in national affairs.

Governor Soludo's rise to his new influential position makes a resounding affirmation of his colleagues' trust in his capabilities. It also signals a broader recognition of the transformative impact he has had in Anambra State since assuming office.

Soludo, a great thinker and proven leader with a sterling record of achievements, has always brought his wealth of experience to bear in state governance. Under his stewardship, Anambra is today charting a course towards economic rejuvenation, infrastructural development, and social harmony.

One cannot overstate the importance of Governor Soludo's technocratic background and his predilection for pragmatic solutions.

His tenure as Central Bank Governor saw the banking sector's revitalization, safeguarding Nigeria's economy during tumultuous times. This analytical rigour and forward-thinking approach are now



Soludo

being applied to the challenges of state governance in Anambra, positioning it as a leading light of progress in Nigeria's southeast.

As Vice-Chairman of the Southern Governors Forum, there is no doubt that Governor Soludo will extend his influence and insights beyond Anambra. His leadership style, marked by inclusivity, innovation, and a deep understanding of both local and global economic landscapes, promises to infuse the forum with fresh perspectives.

At a time when Nigeria faces multifaceted challenges, from economic instability to regional tensions, the forum's role in advocating for equitable development and national unity is more critical than ever.

Besides, Governor Soludo's elevation

within the Southern Governors Forum is also symbolic of a broader narrative. It reflects a rising expectation for governance that is both visionary and results-driven.

The Southern states, rich in cultural diversity and economic potential, require leadership that can harness these attributes for sustainable development. Soludo's track record suggests that he is well-equipped to contribute significantly to this mission.

Of course, his leadership can as well serve as an inspiration. In an era where political discourse often descends into partisanship and short-termism, Governor Soludo's example can offer a refreshing departure. He represents a blend of academic prowess, practical governance, and avid commitment to the public good.

His approach could inspire a generation of leaders who prioritise long-term benefits over transient gains.

Thus, Governor Charles Soludo's appointment as Vice-Chairman of the Southern Governors Forum is a significant milestone with far-reaching implications. It is a harbinger of the innovative, inclusive governance that he will undoubtedly advocate for in this new role.

As Anambra State continues to thrive under his guidance, the Southern Governors Forum, and indeed Nigeria, stand to gain immensely from the unique vision and steadfast dedication Governor Soludo brings to the table. At the end of the day, the forum's confidence in him will be more than justified.

CONTINUED FROM P9

impunity still have a field day in PDP, making political analysts to ask if PDP is an appendage of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and if that's the reason why it cannot penalize or sanction its members who moved to the ruling party and still having their foothold on PDP.

While denying the allegation that PDP is an appendage of APC, the Deputy National Youth Leader of PDP, Timothy Osadolor noted that the party has big wigs, who currently work with the APC and some who shamelessly bootlick.

"Well, as interesting as this line of thinking seems, you cannot fault those pushing this narrative 100%. Events past and perhaps present have made it seem so. However, this is not true and will never be true. Yes, we have lost big wigs to the APC, and we have bigwigs who currently work with the APC and some who shamelessly bootlick.

"This oftentimes is the fate of opposition party leaders, who are tired and hungry and indulge in hunger games. It has nothing to do with @official PDP leadership and membership base."

The PDP Deputy Youth Leader frowned at the damage anti-party activities have done to political parties and Nigeria in general, especially the

One Year After Presidential Election, PDP Fails To Sanction Erring Members

money bags sponsoring party activities, adding that the people must take it as a matter of priority going forward to own the parties, including the PDP, by paying monthly dues and contributing to running the party.

He disclosed that sanctioning of members is not on the table of PDP for now, but the leadership of the party is working hard through networking and bonding, to wrestle power from the government of the APC.

He said: "Truth be told, a lot happened to the PDP family during the last national elections circle. However, a lot more has happened to Nigeria and Nigerians because of this. PDP has no reason for not been in power today at the centre but for its inability to manage the diverse positions her leaders took, mostly for personal reasons rather than for the sake of the nation. Our projection before Nigerians was that of division rather than the 'Rescue and Rebuild team' that Nigerians were looking forward to.

"The Nigerian people must learn from

these party events were moneybags dictate or want to dictate who gets what, how and when, and why, only because they are the ones funding the parties. The people must take it as a matter of priority going forward to own the parties, including the PDP, by paying monthly dues and contributing to running the party.

"This way, no one man can play mini god in the affairs of the party as we have seen recently. Come to think of it, over one million members shirk responsibility for only one man or group and you expect the man playing the piper not to dictate the tune?

"Some brazen anti-party acts never seen in terms of brazenness and scale and perhaps shamelessness was exhibited by very senior stakeholders in the PDP at every strata of the party for one reason or the other.

However, the Acting Chairman of the PDP, Amb. Ilya Damagun in his deep wisdom has deemed it wise to call for forgiveness of one another and recommitment to the party ideals and

mission, believing that when we have healed internally, we will have the moral ground to preach healing of Nigeria to Nigerians.

"I do not envy him, but on a scale of 1-10, I give him an 8 for the job he has done so far in stabilising the party. Even those members who took our supporters to work for the opposition ruling party now and one of the major mushrooms party have realised the damage they did not only to themselves, the PDP, but to Nigerians and Nigeria and are consulting now on how to make it up.

"Sanctions are not exactly top on the table of to do list of this current NWC, but it's not off the table. We are talking, networking and bonding, so we can wrestle power from this draconian government of the APC. We call on Nigerians to not only pray for us but to work with us in our quest to rescue Nigeria from the leprous hands handling our economy and security, but to also together, rebuild Nigeria that we will all be proud of. It is possible and together with PDP we will make do it."

Our View

VISION

To be Nigeria's First Truly Independent National Quality Newspaper

OUR MISSION

To produce a quality, vibrant and viable newspaper that will inform and form the nation's present and aspiring political, business, economic and cultural leadership; challenge and inspire the nation's journalists to advance and defend the public good; and deliver superior value to all stakeholders.

EDITORIAL POLICY

We shall be independent on all matters, but shall never be neutral on any matter, especially those concerning the well-being of Nigerians.

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Financial Sleaze In The Public Sector: Matters Arising (3)

Within a space of 10 years (2010 to 2020), a whopping N10.3 trillion was reportedly expended on Turn Around Maintenance of the three state-owned refineries - Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna refineries - yet they remained moribund after the said rehabilitation. In 2021, the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) report alleged that between 2020 and 2021, the Nigeria National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) failed to remit \$15 billion in oil revenues to the Federation Account and could not account for the N200 billion budgeted for repair of refineries. The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) is currently in court on the alleged missing funds. In 2022, the Accountant General of the Federation, Ahmed Idris, was accused by EFCC of laundering a ginormous sum of N109 billion. His predecessor, Jonah Otunla, had been alleged to have misappropriated N2.5 billion.

SERAP has equally challenged the current government to probe the \$3.4 billion IMF loan obtained by the administration of Muhammadu Buhari in 2020. According to the report of the Auditor General of the Federation, released in January 2024, the \$3.4 billion facility is alleged to be "miss-

ing, diverted or unaccounted for."

On February 8, 2023, the Central Bank of Nigeria allegedly paid a colossal sum of \$6.2 million cash to one individual as fund for unnamed foreign election observers!

What manner of a porous public sector system permits such a brazen and stress-free diversion of public funds into private pockets?

We are persuaded that the monster of corruption could not be tamed because of impunity and abuse of power by public servants, especially political office holders. Invariably, nearly all high profile cases of corrupt practices investigated and established in the past were swept under the carpet.

The current putrid affairs should take us, albeit poignantly, further down the memory lane.

In our editorial in October 2010, titled "Halliburton: Julius Berger Should Face The Music," we submitted as follows:

"This newspaper frowns at the plea bargain of Julius Berger with the Federal Government, especially the 'confidentiality' clause contained in the said agreement. Given the stage of our democracy and the monumental havoc that corruption has wrecked on this nation, it is our opinion that

the terms of this deal is not in the interest of Nigeria.

The construction company, Julius Berger, is widely believed to have, over the years, served as a conduit pipe to drain the resources of Nigeria into private pockets. For instance, there was the recent scandal surrounding the second Abuja Airport runway, in which Julius Berger, which has no history of runway construction, billed the country N64 billion (sixty four billion naira) to construct a 4.5 km runway, in an existing airport! That transaction would have ripped off Nigeria to the tune of about N35 billion but for the intervention of the House of Representatives. It is worth noting that the outrageous bid by Julius Berger passed through the Ministry of Aviation and Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP) - the latter being the agency statutorily responsible for scrutiny of transactions that draw substantially from the public till. Indeed, Presidential Committee on Review of Federal Government Projects later shocked the nation when it claimed it reduced the contract sum by N13.5 billion without calling for the prosecution of Julius Berger and other public servants responsible for the odious affair.

We recall also the latest incident, where the construc-

tion company overbilled Nigeria to the tune of N2 billion, which it explained away as a 'mathematical error' before a committee of the federal legislature.

Why then should a private company that is notorious for collecting and distributing bribes on behalf of corrupt public office holders go into a confidential agreement with the government on the Halliburton case, which has inflicted serious injuries on the nation's image? Indeed, it boggles our mind why, in one breath, the Federal Government exacted repentance items from Julius Berger Nigeria Plc but, in the other, expressed fears of 'potential hurdle of the evidentiary burden of proof' in prosecuting the construction company for infractions of the laws of the land. And why would Julius Berger, on the one hand, accede to the demands of the Federal Government, including making 'an ex-grata payment to the Federal Government of Nigeria' while, on the other, deny 'liability, culpability or guilt'?

Whereas fraudulent organizations in other responsible jurisdictions are allowed to stew in their own juice, we lament the seeming protection offered to such unscrupulous companies in Nigeria by the government."

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Michael Imoudu Institute: Insulting Our Heroes Past (2)

TUNDE OLUSUNLE

Issa Obalolu Aremu, a trade unionist and labour leader himself, has been the director-general of the institute for about three years now. He was vice president of the Nigerian Labour Congress, (NLC), when Adams Oshiomhole was president, between 1999 and 2007, which coincided with the years Olusegun Obasanjo was President. Aremu initially attended the Ahmadu Bello University, (ABU), Zaria. Unfortunately, he was expelled from the institution in his final year because of activism. Respected scholars and social scientists, Claude Ake and Ikenna Ezimiro rescued Aremu's educational trajectory by getting him into the University of Port Harcourt, where he graduated in 1985 with a second class upper degree. He obtained a Master's in Labour and Development from the Institute of Social Studies, (ISS) in The Hague and was a labour delegate to the National Conference of 2014. He has also been privileged to attend the elite National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, (NIPSS), domiciled in Jos, Plateau State.

Unfortunately, these glossy credentials have not been manifest in Aremu's administration of MINILS thus far. Aremu, who in years as comrade, would rail at the wastefulness of bourgeois leaders, today reportedly drives around in Kwara State with a convoy of three or four cars. Not even the prevailing national economic crunch emblematised among others by spiralling fuel costs



Joe Ajaero, NLC President

has mitigated this penchant for unnecessary exhibitionism. He is said to have a detachment of security details from the Department of State Services, (DSS) and the Nigerian police, escorting him around and about.

On his trips to Kaduna where he has been primarily domiciled for most of his working life, or Abuja, he is received at the airport by two official vehicles complete with armed escorts. They typically depart Ilorin ahead of his flights. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Ilorin in the same city, Wahab Olasupo Egbewole, a professor and Senior Advocate of Nigeria, (SAN), who oversees a student community in excess of 50,000

The institute constitutes colossal disrespect, monumental insult to the name and legacies of the iconic Pa Imoudu

students, moves around innocuously in the same Ilorin. This city by the way is relatively peaceful, posting low crime indicators compared to many others.

If stories and innuendos are to be credited some believability, there is this insinuation that there seems to be no demarcation between the official and the personal in MINILS under Aremu. The institute, for instance, groans for lack of operational vehicles to run its affairs. Yet some of its healthier motorised assets are allegedly said to be in the custody of his family members in various locations across the country. The names of Aremu's relatives, who are non-staffers in MINILS, have been alleged to feature on the list of his delegations on foreign trips, their tickets and estacodes fully paid by the institution - allegedly. Fiscal

frugality is said to be nonexistent in the dictionary of Issa Aremu.

Staff training for job function and capacity building, which was usually undergone both externally and internally, is reported in the past tense. He was recently pressed by in-house unions to address staffers on issues around capacity training, which he is said to have completely ignored in his three years in office. He responded by reluctantly convening a general staff meeting to which, very oddly, he invited the press. He presented an inconclusive compendium containing things he claimed to have achieved in office thus far. He chronicled and appropriated virtually all the legacies of preceding administrations. Aremu listed the George Meany Computer Centre, two power generators, and a hostel block, where he set up a non-functional clinic, as his personal achievements. Long-serving civil servants in MINILS, note with deep nostalgia the pluri-dimensional innovations emplaced in the organisation under the watch of former chief executives like Jacob Jeminiwa, John Olanrewaju, Salu Ishaq Alabi, among achievers.

The institute is also hamstrung in convening tune-up programmes for external participants because of the quantum dilapidation of its facilities and unavailability of funds. This is as Aremu is reported to love the big life. He is said to fancy being adulated as "His Excellency, Comrade Issa Obalolu Aremu, mni, Director-General and Chief Executive of Michael Imoudu National

Institute for Labour Studies." Having contested for the governorship of Kwara State on the platform of Labour Party, (LP), in 2018, he has since coveted and adopted that fanciful referent. He also never fails to remind his audiences in the institute that having been deputy as a unionist to former governor Oshiomhole during his years in labour activism, he also qualifies to be referenced as a quasi-governor! He reportedly never fails to remind his officials how lucky they are to have a man with his accomplishments as helmsman.

The condition of the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies, (MINILS) today is a national embarrassment. The institute constitutes colossal disrespect, monumental insult to the name and legacies of Michael Athokhamien Omnibus Imoudu, the iconic Pa Imoudu. Supervising Minister of Labour and Employment, Nkeiruka Onyeagocha, needs to take immediate interest in the institute before it is wholly run aground. A physical visit to the institute for on-the-spot assessment will avail her better insights into the prostrate condition of the establishment. This will help in the articulation of a road map for the institute's comprehensive makeover. Such timely remediation will please the spirits of those who conceived of the institute and that of Pa Imoudu, to no end.

**Concluded*

**Dr Olusunle is a Fellow of the Association of Nigerian Authors, (FANA)*

NOSDRA And Nigeria's Oil Spills Experience (2)

GALADANCHI, NDUKWE ;
EJIKE-UMUNNABUIKE JR.

In the last 50 years, it is estimated that no fewer than 70,000 oil spill incidents had occurred in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria.

As a tie-back to history, it is recorded that the first ever OIL SPILLS, in the world, is said to have taken place between 1889 and 1890.

This happened while crude oil was being transported from an oil well within the geographical vicinity of LA South to North San Diego County in the United States of America, as reportedly caused by a massive oil slick. This is even as the source of the oil slick is largely unknown.

The National Oil Detection & Response Agency, under Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke, needs special intervention funding to enable him to contribute to the blue economy of the nation and by doing so increase the nation's GDP.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed Director-General / Chief Executive Officer of the National Oil Spill Detection & Response Agency, Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke, says working towards the successes of the RENEWED HOPE AGENDA, a development administrative blue-print of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-APC powered federal administration, will define his vision at the agency.

He also stated that his tenured engagement as the new Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of NOSDRA would bring about novel behaviour-modification processes, amongst the agency's workforce, through motivational incentives that would help amplify their individual and collective productivity profiles.

Specifically, the new DG/CEO, in a fatherly and open interactive session with the top management and staff, advised that every member of the NOSDRA

workforce should fully understand the entirety of the concept of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

This understanding, he explained, will enable each and every staff member to know what the concept means in relation to issues, values and norms of development administration, which is the core of every civil service structure the world over.

According to the new DG/CEO, fuller insight about the larger political vision of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, when cascaded down to the least civil servant in a workplace, will help all NOSDRA staffers to drive the successes.

This is even as he cautioned that anybody who would want to thwart the efforts of Mr. President's Renewed Hope Agenda would be shown the way out.

In his words, "My administrative concentration, as the new Director-General & Chief Executive Officer of NOSDRA, is to Refocus, Redirect and Revitalize, the agency, with a view to greatly impacting positively the quality of lives of rural communities affected by the environmental degradation as well as socio-economic problems of Oil Spills."

A highly experienced technocrat, bureaucrat and skilled electoral mobilizer, Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke gave the assurances recently while addressing the management and staff at the agency's Corporate Headquarters, housed on the fifth floor of NAIC Building, in the Garki Central Business District of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Engr. Woke's first day familiarization session at NOSDRA headquarters, evoked fits of euphoria, joy, excitement and happiness amongst the junior and senior staff of the agency.

Borrowing from his robust experience and lasting impressions in handling matters of group dynamics as a former Chief Of Staff, he told NOSDRA staffers that, his appointment as Direc-

tor-General / Chief Executive Officer of the downstream, midstream and upstream based quick-interventionist oil and gas organization is not to witch-hunt, harass, intimidate or victimize anybody.

At least, these assurances came as a great relief to almost everybody, who was gathered at the very compact Conference Hall, given the unspoken but imagined humanly degrading lines of difficulty they had witnessed in the hands of some tyrants that by accident rather than design were appointed into the headship of the agency.

He stated that as a political appointee of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, he was determined to maximize the positive gains of the 2023 electoral successes and additionally, translate same into cogent and verifiable democratic scorecard and credible milestones by deploying his vast professional knowledge-base, expertise, competences, skills and lasting impressions as a former staff of the NNPC group to deepen his primary assignment schedules.

The new Director-General, who for eight years, was the Chief Of Staff to the immediate Executive Governor of Rivers State and Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Barr Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, urged the NOSDRA workforce to re-dedicate themselves towards facing up to the challenges confronting the agency.

According to the environmental specialist and wisdom-imbued former staff of the NNPC Limited Group, diligence, dedication to duty as well as hard work should define and shape their individual and collective engagements towards maximum productivity goals.

To demonstrate his knack for administrative details within a workplace, at least, having experienced, first hand, how lack and total absence of alternative electrical energy sources at the miniature Conference Hall of the agen-

Woke's first day familiarization session at NOSDRA headquarters evoked fits of euphoria, joy, excitement and happiness

cy compelled him to sweat profusely, Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke, instantly promised addressing the animated direct-grid and off-grid electrical energy challenges, currently being faced by NOSDRA workforce.

Appreciating the reality principle that regular or constant electrical energy supply, just like the role of motivational incentives can amplify productivity amongst civil servants, the new DG/CEO said plans-on-action would be put in place to fix the power supply challenge.

Speaking while responding on behalf of the management and staff of the agency, to welcome the new DG/CEO of NOSDRA, the Director of Information Communication Technology / General Information Service, Mrs. Adesiba Margaret, who also doubled as the administrative head of the management team, used the instance of the occasion to pledge the cooperation of every staff towards the attainment of the successes of the new DG/CEO's tenure.

President Tinubu had first appoint-

ed Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke as the Managing Director / Chief Executive Officer of the Ogun-Osun River Basin development Authority (OORBA) before re-deploying him to head the National Oil Spill Detection & Response Agency (NOSDRA)

Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke brings on board a wide range of skills, competences, professionalism and experience to bear on his new role as Director-General of NOSDRA.

Engr. Woke has a rich background in engineering, environmental sciences, expertise, plus a robust historical pedigree in politics and political interests-aggregation and grassroots-mobilization, amongst other creative capacities.

He was the Chief of Staff to the immediate Executive Governor of Rivers State, now the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Chief Nyesom Ezenwo Wike.

While in that capacity, he demonstrated exceptional political and development administrative leadership competences desiring of an appointee.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, while announcing the appointment of Engr. Chukwuemeka Woke as the new DG/CEO of NOSDRA, had expressed interest in Engr. Woke's ability to leverage his extensive experience as both an engineer and administrator to effectively steer the operations at NOSDRA towards success.

Notably, Engr. Woke shares a close political alliance with Barr. Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, further underscoring his deep-rooted connections within the political landscape.

**Concluded*

**Hajia Asmau Galadanchi, Obiaruko Ndukwe and Prince Chidera Ejiike-Umun-nabuike Jr, seasoned journalists and communications specialists, write from Abuja*

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) says electricity distribution companies (DisCos) in Nigeria made a total of N291.62 billion in the first quarter (Q1) of 2024.

The revenue by DisCos rose by 17.91 percent compared to the N247.33 billion recorded in Q1 of 2023, the bureau said.

NBS, in its latest report on electricity for Q1 2024, also said there was a decline in electricity supply in the period reviewed.

According to the Bureau, power supply dropped from 6,432.22 giga-

DisCos' Revenue Rose By 17% To N291bn In Q1 2024 – NBS Report

watts per hour (Gwh) in Q4 2023 to 5,769.52 (Gwh) in Q1 2024.

However, on a year-on-year basis, electricity supply decreased by 1.41 percent compared to 5,851.87 (Gwh) reported in Q1 2023, NBS said.

“Revenue collected by the DisCos during the period was N291.62 billion from N294.95 billion in Q4 2023,

“it said

“On a year-on-year basis, revenue generated in the reference period rose by 17.91% from N247.33 billion recorded in Q1 2023.”

The NBS also said the total number of customers stood at 12.33 million in Q1 — up from 12.12 million in Q4 2023 — representing an increase

of 1.78 percent.

“On a year-on-year basis, customer numbers in Q1 2024 rose by 9.47% from 11.27 million reported in Q1 2023,” the bureau said.

“Similarly, metered customers stood at 5.91 million in Q1 2024, in-

CRUDE OIL Prices			
WTI CRUDE	57.15	-1.94	-3.28%
BRENT CRUDE	63.36	-1.70	-2.61%
MARS US	61.19	+0.82	+1.36%
OPEC BASKET	65.60	-0.01	-0.02%
URALS	62.80	+0.85	+1.37%
LOUISIANA LIGHT	62.82	-0.98	-1.54%
BONNY LIGHT	65.89	-0.88	-1.32%
MEXICAN BASKET	61.08	-0.13	-0.21%
NATURAL GAS	3.730	+0.202	+5.73%

DAILY INDEPENDENT Business

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024

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PFAs Register 89,061 New Employees Into CPS PenCom

Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) under the supervision of the National Pension Commission (PenCom) has registered 89,061 new employees into the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) in the first quarter of 2024.

The new employees and Retirement Savings Account (RSA) holders were from different sectors of the economy. This was contained in PenCom's first quarter 2024 report.

Analysis of the RSA registrations across PFAs in the report revealed that Stanbic IBTC Pension Managers Limited had the largest market share of 23.9 per cent of new registrations with 21,288 contributors registered, followed by Access Pensions Limited, which had 22.5 per cent with 20,042 new contributors registered.

ARM Pension Managers Ltd, Leadway Pensure PFA Ltd and Premium Pension Ltd followed with 8.4 per cent, 7.1 per cent and 7.0 per cent of the new registrations during the quarter respectively.

Consequently, the top five PFAs collectively held 68.8 per cent while the bottom five PFAs recorded an aggregate of 4.3 per cent of the 89,061 new RSAs registered in Q1, 2024.

Further analysis showed the gender and age distribution of the new employees.

The new registrations in Q1, 2024 by age and gender indicated that out of the 89,061 registrations, 83.60 per cent or 74,453 were active contributors below the age of 40 years. Out of this number, 10,997 or 12.35 per cent of the new registrations were between the age of 40-49 years.

PenCom stated that these points to the increasing sustainability of the CPS, as the younger generation are actively being enlisted into the scheme.

On the gender distribution, 51,903 or about 58 per cent of those that registered during the quarter were males, thus sustaining dominance over the female gender in terms of registration into the scheme.

COMMODITIES				CURRENCIES			RATES		MARKETS			
BRENT	US\$826.02	COFFEE	US\$237.1		CBN	Parallel Market	MPR	26.25 %	FMDQ – NIBOR			
GOLD	US\$2,344.7	SUGAR	US\$19.42	USD	1480	1490	INFLATION	33.95 %	0/N	26.5417	143	NSE
COCOA	US\$7,884.00	N. GAS	US\$2,757	POUND	1871	1905			1M	24.0000	0.29	
				EURO	1582	1603			3M	23.6429	-0.69	
									6M	23.3214	-0.72	CAP
												99.304.12
												N56.18trn

‘EU-Nigeria Business Forum To Promote Bilateral Trade, Investment In Digital, Agricultural Sectors, Others’

SYLVESTER ENOGHASE LAGOS

The Nigerian and European business leaders, policy makers and institutional stakeholders will facilitates trade, investment, and partnerships through networking and stimulate sustainable growth for both parties, the EU Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Samuela Isopi, has said

The Forum which will converge in Abuja on July 2, 2024 will identify and

explore investment opportunities along specific value chains during the 9th European Union-Nigeria Business Forum.

The Forum, is being organised by the EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, in close coordination with EU member states and the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment in the federal capital for the first time.

It will be organised under the theme “Investing in jobs and a sustainable future,” at Abuja’s Continental Hotel.

The EU Ambassador to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Samuela Isopi, said the Business Forum, aside from fostering engagement between businesses, policymakers, and stakeholders from Nigeria and the EU, will also facilitates trade, investment, and partnerships through networking, discussions, and policy shaping, to promote economic cooperation between the EU and Nigeria and stimulate sustainable growth for both parties.

“It is important to note that for the first time since its inception, the 2024 edition of the EU-Nigeria Business

Forum will be held in Abuja.

This will provide an opportunity for the EU, its Member States and the private sector from Europe and Nigeria to engage the new administration on their investment agendas in a transparent and inclusive manner, with a view to fostering confidence and commitment to a stronger and sustainable partnership.”

As part of the EU Global Gateway Strategy, she explained, EU-funded projects will complement private sec-

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Ubon Udoh, Managing Director/CEO, ASR Africa (left); Dame Olabisi Alokolaro, President, International Women Society (IWS) (second left); Banke Adeola, Chairperson, Widows Trust Fund (third left); Umoren Cecilia-Aqua (IWS Trustee), Mrs. Feyisola Abiri, Ex-Officio (second right), and Olande Atere, General Secretary, IWS during ASR Africa presentation of the N10 million widows' grant to International Women's Society, in commemoration of the 2024 International Widows' Day, in Lagos.

Business

Series 1 Of FCMB-TLG Private Debt Fund Opens For Investment

SYLVESTER ENOGHASE
LAGOS

FCMB Asset Management Limited (FCMBAM) recently held a signing ceremony for Nigeria's first Naira denominated Private Debt Fund, the FCMB-TLG Private Debt Fund.

The Fund, which has been approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission, is sponsored and managed by FCMB Asset Management Limited (FCMBAM) as the Fund Manager, with technical support from TLG Capital Investments Limited (TLG Capital), United Kingdom.

The Fund seeks to raise N10 billion under Series 1 of its N100 billion Programme size.

Following the fulfilment of

all regulatory requirements, the Fund's Series 1 Offer for subscription opens to Qualified Institutional Investors (QIIs) and High Networth Individuals (HNIs) from Monday 24 June 2024, and closes on Wednesday 31 July 2024.

The FCMB-TLG Private Debt Fund will focus on investing in commercially viable and impact-oriented activities in sectors of the Nigerian economy aligned with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), while providing investors with an opportunity to earn competitive risk-adjusted return on investment.

It will invest in the debt components of the capital structure of organisations and Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs) in sectors crucial to Nigeria's economic growth and development,

including Agriculture, Healthcare, Education, Clean Energy, Transportation/Logistics, and IT/Technology.

At the signing ceremony organised by FCMBAM, James Ilori, the company's Chief Executive Officer said: "The FCMB-TLG Private Debt Fund opens a new avenue for professional investors to participate in the growth of key sectors of the Nigerian economy while providing essential capital to organisations driving sustainable economic growth and development in Nigeria".

The FCMB-TLG Private Debt Fund is structured as a Closed-Ended Unit Trust Scheme with Series 1 tenor of 10 years.

The Fund is also expected to provide investors with periodic streams of income through regu-

lar payment of distribution while prioritising the preservation of invested capital.

FCMB Asset Management Limited (FCMBAM) is the asset management arm of FCMB Group Plc. Incorporated in 1997, the company provides portfolio management and investment advisory services to individual and institutional clients, globally.

FCMBAM is rated A- (IM) by Agosto & Co. and A- by GCR.

The company is one of Nigeria's leading Asset Management companies and has over N322 billion in Assets Under Management. FCMBAM has established itself as an innovative and competent Fund Manager that periodically develops investment management solutions to deliver competitive risk-adjusted returns to investors.

EU-Nigeria Business Forum To Promote Bilateral Trade, Investment In Digital, Agricultural Sectors, Others

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tor investment in areas, which bring about critical social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

In the case of Nigeria, particular attention is paid to the harnessing of local talent, particularly among youth and women, as well as economic, social, and environmental resilience.

Against this backdrop, she stated, the 9th EU Nigeria Business Forum will focus on current and prospective investment in the digital, health, and agricultural sectors.

According to Isopi, the Business Forum will discuss options and respective benefits towards establishing a bilateral legal framework between the EU and Nigeria, bringing certainty, stability, and sustainability to bilateral trade and investment relations.

Minister of Industry, Trade, and Investment, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, expressed her support, saying, "I commend the EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, as well as the EU Member States, for their dedication to promoting economic cooperation and stimulating sustainable growth. Let us seize this opportunity to pave the way for a prosperous future for both Nigeria and the EU."

The Forum will run in a hybrid format, targeting sectoral associations, business community, and entrepreneurs, and is expected to attract at least 400 in-person participants, excluding those who will join the event virtually.

It will also feature panels on a range of issues, including Confidence in the Nigerian Economy – sustainable solutions to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), Digitalisation Leapfrog, Healthy Economies Thrive, and From Agriculture to Agribusiness.

DisCos' Revenue Rose By 17% To N291bn In Q1 2024 – NBS Report

CONTINUED FROM 15

dicating a growth of 5.38% from 5.61 million recorded in the preceding quarter.

"On a year-on-year basis, this grew by 11.26% from the figure reported in Q1 2023 which was 5.31 million."

The NBS said the Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (IEDC) had the highest revenue of N57.87 billion in Q1 — down from N59.75 billion in Q4 last year.

The next highest revenue generated came from the Abuja Electricity Distribution Company (AEDC) at N48.60 billion, followed by Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKDC) which raked in N48.74 billion.

The bureau also said estimated billing customers during the quarter under review were 6.43 million, showing an increase of 10.22 percent compared to 5.83 million in Q4 2023.

Nigerian Multifaceted Artist Bamidele Brings Exhibition Home

Absa Africa is proud to announce that the exhibition "The Melodious Struggle of Souls and Consciousness" by multi-disciplinary and self-taught multifaceted Nigerian artist Raji Bamidele is finally coming home.

The exhibition forms part of the Absa L'Atelier, in collaboration with the South African National Association with the Visual Arts (SANAVA). Raji is the 2019 Absa L'Atelier Ambassador.

He aims to take local art enthusiasts on an immersive journey into the profound depths of human existence — some of which may be familiar to many — with his latest solo exhibition.

Bamidele draws inspiration from the Yoruba people and their belief system. The Yoruba people, which are a West African ethnic group who inhabit parts of Nigeria, Benin, and Togo, believe that the soul, consciousness, and spirit are intricately interconnected facets of the human experience.

His artwork encapsulates the concept that the soul embodies the mind, which reflects the heart, and the heart extends the soul and spirit. This interconnectedness forms the basis for a deeper understanding of oneself and the world.

Dr. Paul Bayliss, Absa's Senior Specialist: Art and Museum Curator, highlights the vital role played by the arts to society and support for the industry is pivotal, especially for young Africans.

"The arts sector in Africa is increasingly becoming an important economic sector, not only for the potential it holds for opportunities for young people, but for its ability to shape narrative for the future of the continent.

The UNDP recognises the need to support the arts for their potential to lift many Africans out of poverty and to help transform how the global community sees the continent", Bayliss said



Tijjani Borodo, President, Chartered Institute of Directors (IoD) Nigeria (left), and Prof. Tahir Mamman, Minister of Education, during the visit of the institute's Governing Council to the Minister, in Abuja recently.

Court Dismisses Base Stations Lawsuit Against ATC, MTN

JUSTUS ADEJUMOH
LAGOS

ATC Nigeria, a subsidiary of American Tower Corporation, and MTN Nigeria scored a major victory in court last week over constructing or operating base transceiver stations "within close proximity" to stations owned by IHS Towers Nigeria.

The lawsuit against the two had been filed by non-profit organisation, Human and Environmental Development Agenda

(HEDA) Resource Centre, in November 2023.

Additionally, HEDA also filed a contempt of court case against ATC Nigeria's CEO, Errol Ambler-Smith, seeking his arrest, which HEDA later withdrew.

Today, ATC Nigeria announced that on Friday, June 21, 2024, the court struck out HEDA's suit against ATC Nigeria and MTN Nigeria on the grounds that it was speculative and failed to disclose any reasonable cause of action.

American Tower said it has "always been and remains com-

mitted to upholding" the highest standards of legal compliance and operational integrity in all its activities.

"We are pleased that the court recognised the speculative nature of HEDA's lawsuit, and we are hopeful that this outcome will send a message to other similar potential speculative lawsuits. We appreciate the support and understanding of all our stakeholders as we continue to invest in, and provide critical infrastructure for, Nigeria's telecommunications industry," ATC Nigeria said in a statement.



Brands & Marketing

Publicis, Omnicom, Coca-Cola, Others Shine At 2024 Cannes Lions Grand Finale

ISAAC ASABOR

The grand final of the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity celebrated several brands across the globe for their outstanding performances and contributions to the creative industry within the review period.

The week-long annual event, saw Publicis being recognised as the year's agency and second place in Network of the Year.

Omnicom clinched the first place as the Media Network of the Year, and secured the second position as the Creative Company of the Year.

Coca-Cola also topped the creative brand of the year, followed by Heineken and Apple.

Simon Cook, CEO of LIONS, while speaking at the grand finale, said: "As we wrap up another year of the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, I hope everyone feels an extraordinary sense of pride and a rejuvenated sense of energy and inspiration in our industry."

"I'd like to congratulate every winner – as well as those shortlisted, on being recognised by your peers as demonstrating the greatest, most effective creativity our industry has to offer."

The grand final of the Awards Show also awarded the following Lions categories: Film, Glass: The Lion for Change, Sustainable Development Goals, The Grand Prix for Good and The Dan Wieden Ti-

tanium Lions.

In the Film Lions, celebrating the creativity of the moving image, 53 Lions were awarded: nine Gold, 16 Silver and 26 Bronze. The Jury chose to award two Grands Prix.

The first went to 'WoMen's Football' for Orange by Marcel, Paris, France, while the second Grand Prix was awarded to 'Play It Safe' for Sydney Opera House by The Monkeys, Accenture Song, Sydney.

Glass: The Lion for Change, which honours culture-shifting creativity, awarded seven Lions: one Gold, two Silver and three Bronze. The Grand Prix went to 'Transition Body Lotion' for Vaseline Proderma Transition Body

Lotion by Ogilvy, Singapore.

The Sustainable Development Goals Lions, which celebrate creative problem-solving, solutions or other initiatives that harness creativity and seek to positively impact the world, awarded 20 Lions: four Gold, five Silver and 10 Bronze.

The Grand Prix went to 'Renault – Cars To Work' for Renault by Publicis Conseil, Paris, France.

In The Dan Wieden Titanium Lions, honouring provocative, boundary-busting, envy-inspiring work that marks a new direction for the industry.

The Jury chose to award four Titanium Lions, and the Grand Prix went to 'DoorDash-All-The-Ads' for DoorDash by Wieden+Kenne-

dy, Portland and Superette, San Francisco.

The Cannes Lions Grand Prix for Good recognises and celebrates the use of creativity to positively impact not only businesses and brands but also the world at large.

The Jury chose to award this year's Grand Prix for Good to three ads, 'The First Speech. Russia', 'The First Speech. Turkey', and 'The First Speech. Venezuela' for Reporters Without Borders by Innocean, Berlin.

Special Awards were also announced at the event. To demonstrate the Cannes Lions' commitment to transparent and accurate results, the four-stage award process includes PwC as a Process Integrity Partner.

ARCON Moves To Bridge Gap Between Town, Gown With AIC 2.0

The Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON) is gearing up for a landmark event that promises to reshape the landscape of advertising education and professional practice in the country while bridging the widening divide between town and gown with the second edition of the Annual Advertising Industry Colloquium (AIC 2.0).

The event which is scheduled for June 27, 2024, at the Sheba Events Centre in Ikeja, Lagos, will bring together academics, industry professionals, and policymakers to explore the theme "Harnessing Emerging Technologies for Sustainable Advertising Education and Professional Excellence in Nigeria."

In his welcome address, Director General of ARCON, Dr. Olalekan Fadolapo explained that the AIC 2.0 is part of the efforts of the regulatory council in reforming and advancing the growth of the advertising industry.

"Recall some weeks ago, ARCON had in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and the NBC launched the Audience Measurement System. This was swiftly followed by the release of a report detailing the industry's multiplier effect on the Nigerian economy."

These initiatives, according to Dr. Fadolapo, set the stage for AIC 2.0, which he described as "an ongoing move that began with AIC 1.0, aimed at accelerating the growth of the advertising industry, bridging the gap between town and gown, and facilitating the integration of fresh talent into the industry."

The Second Annual Advertising Industry Colloquium is not an isolated event," Dr. Fadolapo emphasised.

"Rather, it is a crucial component of AR-

CON's comprehensive strategy to reform and advance the advertising industry in Nigeria."6

Professor Rotimi Olatunji, Chairman of the Advertising Industry Colloquium and Academic Journal Committee, unveiled the details of this highly anticipated event during a press briefing held today at the Protea Hotel in Alausa, Ikeja.

The colloquium, which will be declared open by Alhaji Mohammed Idris, the Honourable Minister of Information and National Orientation, is set to be a comprehensive one-day event featuring a keynote address, panel discussions, and an advertising pitch competition by the departments of Mass Communications in eight select tertiary institutions.

"The 21st century is experiencing the Fourth Industrial Revolution, defined by disruptive digital technologies and computational power," Professor Olatunji explained.

"These emerging technologies are significantly impacting communication and media, particularly in advertising and marketing communication education and professional practices. AIC 2.0 presents a unique opportunity for the fusion of town and gown to critically explore strategies for leveraging these technologies."

The event boasts an impressive lineup of dignitaries and speakers. ARC. Sonny S. T. Echono, Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Fund (TETFund), will chair the colloquium.

Other notable guests include Brigadier General Mohammed Buba Marwa, Chairman/CEO of the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and Professor Tahir



Fadolapo

Mamman, 000Minister of Education.

Dr. Bayo Adekanmbi, Founder of Data Science Nigeria, will deliver the keynote address, focusing on the colloquium's central theme. *0A panel of distinguished discussants, including Prof. Abigail Ogwezy from the University of Lagos and Mr. John Ugbe, MD/CEO of Multichoice Nigeria, will further explore the implications of emerging technologies for the advertising industry. Other panelists include Engr. Dozie Mbanefo, Managing Director, New Crystal Communications; Yinka Adebayo, Head, Procurement, OMD West Africa; Kelechi Nwosu, MD, TBWA/Concept and Tunji Adeyinka, GMD,

Republicom Group.

One of the most anticipated segments of AIC 2.0 is the creative advertising pitch competition. Eight tertiary institutions, representing each of Nigeria's six geo-political zones along with Lagos State and Abuja FCT, will compete for top honours.

These institutions, including the University of Ilorin, Covenant University, and Lagos State University, among others, emerged victorious from a rigorous pre-event competition.

The institutions will showcase their students' talents and compete for prizes.

The colloquium will also feature the public presentation of the maiden edition of the ARCON Journal of Advertising and Marketing Communications (AJAMC). This academic and professional publication aims to provide a platform for collaboration between academics and professionals in advancing education, research, and applications in advertising and related fields.

"The AJAMC promises to be the most authoritative advertising and marketing communications scholarship and industry journal on the African continent," Professor Olatunji stated.

The event organizers have emphasised that AIC 2.0 is a social responsibility programme, offered free of charge to participants.

It has already garnered support from numerous national and international corporate organizations, government institutions, and individual patriots. The committee continues to call for additional sponsorship and media partnerships to ensure the event's success.

NIPR Inducts 605 New Members Into The Institute

The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) has inducted 605 new members into the profession, with its President, Dr. Ike Neliaku, emphasising the need for qualified individuals to speak for organisations.

Speaking at the event in Abuja as part of NIPR's Diamond Anniversary Special Induction, the president noted that the induction aims to emphasise professionalism and end quackery in Public Relations.

A total of 605 members were inducted, with 353 joining online and 198 attending in person.

Inductees were largely drawn from the

media spectrum as a way of strengthening effective collaborative efforts between NIPR and members of the media in shaping public discourse.

They were charged to join efforts in creating a new narrative for Nigeria and guarding our nation's reputation.

On his part, The Minister of Information, Alhaji Mohammed Malagi, urged the inductees to collaborate with the Ministry to restore trust in public discourse.

The Minister, who was represented by the Director General of Voice of Nigeria (VON), Mr. Baba Ndace stressed the importance of speaking positively and forcefully about the country.



The Inductees

The Bellagio Lagos By Cavallid Comes To Life On Victoria Island

DADA JACKSON
LAGOS

Cavalli Group, a leading player in major sectors of the economy, including Real Estate, Consultancy, Facility Management, Construction, Infrastructure and Energy, recently performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of The Bellagio Lagos, a luxurious high-rise residential facility located on Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island, one of the prominent locations of Lagos.

A magnificent development made up of sophisticated designer apartments tastefully designed to redefine luxury living experience to the maximum with no details overlooked and no quality spared, The Bellagio has been described as a powerful statement that will soon grace the Lagos skyline.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Emmanuel Odemayowa, Group Managing Director of the Cavalli Group said that the project is divided into two phases.

"The first phase, for which the foundation was laid, include The Bellagio Lagos, the residence, also known as ADRAO Tower. It will be situated at the back and will consist of 9 suspended floors.

• As Groundbreaking Heralds Construction Work

The ground floor will be a recreation area, and the remaining floors will be residential apartments.

The second phase, the main Bellagio, comprising the hotel, apartments, and office spaces, will be situated in front, where our show office is being set up. We will commence that second part of the project soon", he said.

The Bellagio is made up of three iconic towers of 10 floors each, with each tower offering a seamless fusion of space, comfort, functionality and world class amenities including rooftop helipad, swimming pool, a spa, a 24/7 security surveillance, multi-sport court, fully equipped gym, and fully fitted kitchens.

Other amenities include a 5-star café and restaurant, interior designed by Roberto Cavalli, custom Italian bathroom design, as well as a panoramic view of the ocean and the city.

"The Bellagio Lagos is a one-of-a-kind development that guarantees its residents world-class amenities and a perfect balance between serenity and fast-paced urban living.

The apartment ranges from the luxury two, three bedrooms to five-bedroom maisonettes.

It will house 60 exclusive residences comprising 36 units of two-bedrooms, 18 units of three-bedroom apartments and 6 units of five-bedroom maisonettes, with each apartment offering grand living spaces that are strategically placed in the corners of the residences to maximise multiple panoramic ocean and citywide views", Odemayowa revealed.

According to Odemayowa, "The Bellagio Lagos is a home for those seeking a new standard of city living, a beautiful place you will love with incomparable views and designed to stand the test of time.

"The façade exterior of each tower allows for energy efficiency and adaptability to climate heat conditions. The Bellagio Lagos spares no expenses in the design and provision of topnotch services for occupants to relax and unwind, while having the city at their fingertips".

For the smart and discerning investor, The Bellagio presents the perfect investment opportunity, not only due to its prime location and loads of commercial activities within the same vicinity.

"We all understand what the Bellagio brand stands for; it is a prestigious name. Our goal in Nigeria is to represent this brand and see how much of an impact we can make in

our environment, providing value, delivering returns to our investors and partners, and ensuring the enjoyment of those who will live here. Bellagio Lagos, known globally for its hospitality, will feature apartments branded as a hotel.

"Our vision is to offer our investors and residents a permanent vacation experience in their apartments", he said.

Odemayowa listed some of the benefits of owning an apartment at The Bellagio Lagos to include high yield rental income that is much higher than traditional rental income in other areas, up to 100 percent occupancy rate due to the high commercial activities in that location and easy access to hot city spots.

In addition, he said, the investor is assured of consistent revenue and cash flow with Air BnB/short let income, as well as high gross capital appreciation and returns on investment.

He said the project, its latest in its long rich history of providing luxury living with meticulously designed apartments that redefine opulence, is part of its mission to set new standards for luxury living and investment opportunities in the real estate sector.

17 Miscreants Sentenced For Vandalising Polycarbonate Roofs On Pedestrian Bridges In Lagos

DADA JACKSON
LAGOS

The Lagos Environmental Sanitation Corps (LAGESC) popularly known as KAI on Tuesday revealed how 17 miscreants were apprehended and subsequently convicted by a Lagos Magistrate Court sitting at Bolade-Oshodi for converting pedestrian bridges in Lagos to sleeping areas and causing intentional damage to polycarbonate roofing sheets meant to protect pedestrians from sunshine and rain when using the bridges for their safety in the stead of crossing highways.

Corps Marshal of the Agency, Major Olaniyi Olatunbosun Cole (rtd) made this disclosure at the Agency's Command Headquarters, Bolade-Oshodi.

According to him, "While it is evident to extol the successes of our enforcement operation in recent weeks against criminal elements causing hindrance to pedestrians, we consolidated on our drive by arresting 17 miscreants who damaged polycarbonate roofing sheets meant to shield pedestrians from sunshine and rain thereby turning these materials into makeshift beds for sleeping which is a clear infraction on public utilities".

Cole further highlighted that the 17 suspects who have since been convicted, were arrested around the Dopemu, Onilekere, Airport road and Ikeja Along pedestrian bridges of the State. He revealed the names of the suspects as Kazeem Aliu, M, 36, Solomon Ikechukwu, M, 21, Babatunde Peter, M, 22, Ajayi Samuel, M, 21, Isa Ibrahim, M, 40, Useni Abdullahi, M, 52, Ayuba Rahman, M, 20, Emmanuel Samuel, M, 21, Sani Wasiu, M, 28, Uzoagba Chijioke, M, 26, Taofik Fabowale, M, 31, Ogbede Esther, F, 35, Precious Gabriel, F, 29, Akeredolu Femi, M, 35, Sodi Oladosu, M, 20, Sunday Oyeniran, M, 21, and Oyebo Imole, M, 21 who were arraigned before Senior Magistrate C.K Tunji Careena (Mrs.) of the Lagos State Special Offences (Mobile Court) sitting at Bolade-Oshodi on a single charge bordering on the destruction of government property as they were sentenced to a month imprisonment without the option of fine.

The KAI Boss expressed delight with the judgement as he added that it would serve as deterrents to others to desist from sabotaging government property for their frivolous gains which stands in defiance to the State's Criminal and Environmental Laws.

Underscoring the need for Lagosians to desist from street trading, Cole warned traders to refrain from displaying their wares for sale in traffic, on gutters, setbacks, road verges, medians, kerbs just as he implored Lagos residents to dispose refuse properly via approved PSP operators.

Cholera Outbreak: LAWMA Boss Tasks Residents On Personal, Domestic Hygiene

DADA JACKSON
LAGOS

The Managing Director/CEO of the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), Dr. Muyiwa Gbadegesin, has called on residents to observe the best personal and domestic hygiene, as well as proper waste management practices, to curb the spread of ram-paging cholera.

He gave the advice in his office, Ijora Olopa, against the recent outbreak of the disease, which has claimed some lives, leaving many hospitalised.

Cholera, a severe diarrheal illness caused by infection with the bacterium vibrio cholerae, spreads primarily through contaminated water and food, thriving rapidly in unsanitary conditions.

He said: "The outbreak of cholera in the state is a serious public health concern. It is imperative that every resident takes proactive measures to prevent further spread of the disease. Ensuring proper personal and domestic hygiene, including efficient waste management, will go a long way in curbing the spread of the fatal disease".

The LAWMA boss suggested several precautionary measures



Gbadegesin

including: proper waste disposal; ensuring safe drinking water; frequent hand-washing with soap; food safety practices and use of proper sanitation facilities among others.

He admonished residents

to shun indiscriminate refuse dumping and to imbibe the practice of bagging and disposing of their waste using covered bins, to prevent the spread of diseases by vectors, and to ensure seamless evacuation by assigned PSP

operators.

Gbadegesin said the Authority would continue to intensify efforts at making sure that waste generated across the state was promptly and efficiently managed, with service providers working around the clock to clean up black spots.

He further appealed to residents to always wash their hands when they come in contact with waste, either while bagging or putting in covered bins, urging them to align with the state government's environmental and health safety policies, by avoiding reckless waste dumping in drains, road medians, among other negative environmental practices.

"We are fully committed to the health and safety of every Lagosian. Our teams are on the ground, ensuring that waste is properly collected and disposed of to minimise health risks. However, we need the cooperation of all residents to maintain a clean and safe environment," he stressed.

It would be recalled that the agency had over the years championed the campaign on the importance of waste bagging and proper containerisation, through various programmes and initiatives.



Shipping & Logistics

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School Of Eloquence Collaborates With Customs, MWUN To Train Journalists

ANDREW UTULU

The School of Eloquence, Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN), collaboratively trained members of the Association of Maritime Journalists of Nigeria (AMJON), recently, on the operations of some of the Agencies in the sector.

The essence was to update the journalists on their activities for effective and accurate reporting of the sector.

The resource persons also engaged the journalists on the right terminology on their reportage and publications in line with ethics of the profession.

The training took place at the School of Eloquence, Osborne Road, Ikoyi, Lagos.

Resource persons were drawn from the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Maritime Workers' Union of Nigeria (MWUN) and School of Eloquence.

The resource persons include Dr. Ubong Essien, Dean, School of Eloquence, Comrade Harry Tonye, Deputy President General (MWUN), Comrade Oniha Odiagie, Deputy Secretary General MWUN, Head of Media MWUN, Comrade Kennedy Ikemefuna and Barrister ... the Legal Adviser, MWUN.

Others are the National Public Relations Officer (NPRO), Abdullahi Aliyu Maiwada, who was represented by the Customs Public Relations Officer, Lagos Free Zone, Abdullahi Lagos Abiola, a Superintendent of Customs (SC). Abiola delivered a paper titled: Understanding the new Customs Act 2023.

Also, among the resource persons also is Victor Ejezie, a computer guru, who lectured the journalists on various aspects of on-line reporting, including how to improve online traffic and efficiency, accurate reporting, compelling headlines and multi-media interpretation, among others.

Fielding questions on Special Economic Zones and Free Trade Zone, as outcome of the paper he presented, the Customs image maker harped on the need for stakeholders to leverage the benefits of Special Economic Zones (SECs) and Free Trade Zones (FTZs), saying they are viable avenues to attract more Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) into the country.

Abiola, who spoke on Understanding the New Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Act 2023 and how it would enhance economic growth, said public relations remained crucial to any organization, adding that the CGC Adele Bashir Adeniyi's rise to the Controller-General of Customs (CGC) remained a major source of motivation for serving junior Public Relations Officers of the



Dr. Ubong Essien, Dean, School of Eloquence (middle) flanked by maritime journalists during a training workshop in Lagos.

NCS.

Maintaining that economic growth depends largely on ease of doing business and adherence to the rule of law, among other factors, he said the NCS was generally shifting from over emphasis on maximum revenue generation and anti-smuggling to international best practices in customs operations.

"There is no need to be hostile in enforcing customs operational rules. More so, the Comptroller-General of Customs is aiming for civilized customs in Nigeria, by ensuring that officers move away from the old ways of doing things to international best practices and standards of doing things."

"The Nigeria Customs Service is also shifting from the outdated regulations and cumbersome operational models and encouraging businessmen and all stakeholders to be compliant traders. Sections 7, 14 (5) and 18, which set up a governing board, funding sources for sustainability for Customs operations, are meant to improve standards and align with international best practices," he stated.

He, however, disclosed that the NCS Act 2023 was facing some challenges including implementation huddles, expensive technology infrastructure, continuous comprehensive trainings for officers, vigilance against corruption and stakeholder engagement, among others, adding that in spite of the NCS' emphasis on adequate revenue generation, it aims at simplifying trade operations that align with global trends and best practices.

Abiola also urged stakeholders to leverage the Special Economic Zones and Free Trade Zones, as well as cooperation and collaboration for trade facilitation to

attract higher FDIs and grow the national economy for the greater good of all citizens.

Also speaking, Dean, School of Eloquence, Dr. Ubong Essien, urged them (journalists), to enhance their reportage of the Nigerian Marine and Blue Economy and take advantage of the economic benefits inherent in the sector.

Essien, who was a former Special Adviser on Media and Strategy to the immediate past Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Bashir Jamoh, called on the media practitioners to create wealth for themselves through effective and quality reportage about the Marine and Blue Economy, saying that the sector was under-reported by journalists.

He said it was important for

media practitioners to create wealth and prosper through effective and quality reporting of the Marine and Blue Economy, stressing that the maritime industry was not only about the sea and shipping and that the blue economy is vast to the extent that journalists could choose their areas of specialization to create wealth for themselves.

Essien maintained that journalists were as crucial to national development as their lawyers and oil workers counterparts and as such, they should be able to earn a decent living with regard to the basic provisions of life and being able to pay their bills comfortably, insisting that journalism and law professions remain sacrosanct in driving consciousness in the evolution of modern societies.

Describing "Knowledge as power", Essien stated that training and retraining of members of AMJON is a clear indication of wealth creation urging them not to relent in pursuit of academic abilities and upscaling of their knowledge base.

Speaking further on the multiple advantages of the sector, the media mogul reiterated that the maritime industry is not limited to the ocean or ships, maintaining that the blue economy is vast to the extent that a journalist can choose to specialise on a segment and get the desired relevancy to create wealth.

According to him, journalists can specialise on any given sub-sector within the industry, improve on it and create wealth from it.

While commending AMJON for the innovation, the Dean stressed that the school is open for partnership in the area of capacity building for members adding that journalists must equip themselves with modern day

technologies like use of social media, Artificial Intelligence, Google, among others to create the needed awareness for the Marine and Blue Economy growth.

He further described journalism and the legal practitioners as noble professions, which in turn has the capacity to enlighten the public about new innovations, thus the professionals must be strategic while engaging critical stakeholders for nation building and economic development.

He also appealed to members of the association to prioritize capacity building as a veritable tool to gain more knowledge.

Earlier in a welcome address, President of AMJON, Paul Ogbuokiri, commended the management of the School of Eloquence for providing the facilities for the training programme.

He charged maritime journalists to take advantage of the training to update and upgrade their reportorial skills.

Ogbuokiri, who restated the association's commitment to always ensure comprehensive reporting of the maritime industry, said members of the association have resolved to collectively pursue the School of Eloquence's Master class programme.

While fielding questions from the journalists following the paper presented, the MWUN, assured that the Federal Government was working towards payment of pensions to the retired/disengaged workers of the defunct Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL).

President General of MWUN, Prince Adewale Adeyanju disclosed this during question-and-answer session.

The disclosure was coming on the heels of the conclusion of verification of the disengaged seafarers of the NNSL, after 28-years of liquidation of the national carrier over their unpaid benefits.

Adeyanju, who was represented by the Deputy President General of MWUN, Comrade Tonye; vowed that the union would leave no stone unturned to ensure that the disengaged seafarers get their due pension.

He, however, did not give the exact date aged seafarers will receive their pensions.

Comrade Adeyanju, who took the journalists on the rudiments of the operations of the union, its duties to workers, noted that the Nigerian port industry had continued in a state of stability and peace because of the Collective Bargaining Agreement strategy put in place to ensure that workers are paid living wages. He disclosed that the agreement is reviewed every two years.

"The good thing about it is that if there is anything that was not captured in the agreement, one can patiently wait for the next two years for it to be addressed," he said.

There is no need to be hostile in enforcing customs operational rules. More so, the Comptroller-General of Customs is aiming for civilized customs in Nigeria, by ensuring that officers move away from the old ways of doing things to international best practices and standards of doing things

Companies & Markets

The Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) has announced the appointment of Ebehijie Momoh as managing director and chief executive officer (CEO) of AfriGOPay Financial Services Limited (AFSL).

The NIBSS in a statement, also announced the appointment of Ugo Obasi as chief operating officer (COO).

The organisation said the appointments mark a significant step forward in its mission to transform the payment landscape and improve the financial experience for businesses and consumers throughout Nigeria, Africa, and beyond.

"Mrs. Momoh brings an impressive breadth of experience and a forward-thinking vision to her pivotal role as MD/CEO," the state-

NIBSS Appoints Momoh CEO Of Afrigopay To Drive Domestic Card Scheme

ment reads.

"With over 30 years of extensive experience in the financial services industry; she began her career at Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB) and has held strategic leadership positions at Diamond Bank Plc (now Access Bank Plc), First City Monument Bank, Standard Chartered Bank and most recently, as Senior Vice President and Country Head, West Africa at Mastercard.

"Her extensive background is marked by a proven ability to drive

growth, foster innovation and implement strategic initiatives that align with the nation's financial objectives and values."

NIBSS said Momoh holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Lagos, and an MBA from the University of Benin and Bangor University.

In addition, she is a member of many financial bodies including the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Chartered Banker Scotland and Wales, Chartered Institute

of Directors, and a Fellow of the Institute of Credit Administration.

In her new role, Momoh is expected to lead the development, operations and acceptance of the AfriGOPay Card.

"The card scheme is designed to deliver a seamless, secure and efficient payment system that meets the diverse needs of our populace," NIBSS stated.

"By facilitating faster transactions, reducing costs and enhancing the overall user experience, AfriGO-

Pay card scheme aims to position Nigeria at the forefront of the digital payment revolution."

On his part as the COO of AfriGOPay, Obasi will also be instrumental in driving operational excellence and innovation, NIBSS said.

According to the firm, he will also oversee the development and implementation of strategic initiatives that aim to enhance the efficiency, security and user experience of AfriGOPay card.



Renee Park, Assistant, Appliances, LG Electronics (left); Brian Kang, General Manager, Home Appliances, LG Electronics (second left); Oktae Kim, General Manager, Home Appliances, LG Electronics (second right), and Hari Elluru, Head, Corporate Marketing, LG Electronics, during the unveiling of LG WashTower in Lagos, at the weekend.

FBN Holdings grew gross earnings by 181.43 per cent to N1.60tn in the first quarter of 2024.

The group in a statement, noted that the better-than-expected performance underscored its resilience amid challenging economic conditions.

FBN Holdings also improved its financial ratios, with interest income contributing 60 per cent of total earnings, while non-interest income grew by 153.67 per cent to N601.70bn.

The Holdco profit before tax also increased by 25.15 per cent to N350.59bn in Q1 2024.

"Nigeria's premier financial services group, FBN Holdings, further consolidated its top-tier ranking with a strong performance in the 2023 financial year and the first quarter of 2024, reporting significant growth in gross earnings and pre-tax profit of 95.7 per cent to N1.60trn and 126.86 per

FBN Holdings Gross Earnings Soared By 181% In Q1

cent to N350.59bn, respectively, for the 2023 financial year," it stated.

It added that the growth was achieved despite the headwinds of rising operating costs and foreign exchange impairments.

Analysts at Proshare Strategic Advisory Group highlighted that those results reflected FBN Holdings' ability to navigate internal and external challenges effectively.

The analysts attributed the sterling performance to the strategic leadership of its former Managing Director, Adesola Adeduntan, who led the executive management team for nine years before stepping down

in April.

"Insiders say that the bank's performance is a testament to the strong leadership provided by erstwhile group managing director, Dr Adesola Adeduntan-led executive management team, who resigned his position in April after serving a record nine years at the helm. A member of that team has since succeeded him, further affirming a transition that should lead to better outcomes," the statement read.

Customer deposits rose by 49.68 per cent to N10.66tn, and its shareholders' funds improved by 75.45 per cent to N1.75tn.

In 2023, the bank also reported a

126.8 per cent increase in profit before tax, reaching N350.59bn for the financial year.

Additionally, the group's digital banking initiatives yielded N66.34bn, marking a 20.41 per cent increase over the previous year, indicating enhanced digital penetration and product usage.

The Holdco disclosed plans to raise N300b in fresh capital to meet new regulatory requirements.

Looking ahead, analysts were optimistic about FBN Holdings' continued growth, particularly given its strengthened financial position and strategic initiatives.

Ethiopian Wins 'Best Entertainment,' 'Best Wi-Fi' In Africa At 2024 APEX Awards

OLUSEGUN KOIKI
LAGOS

Ethiopian Airlines Group has been crowned as the winner of the 'Best Entertainment in Africa' and 'Best Wi-Fi in Africa' awards for yet another year at the APEX Passenger Choice Awards 2024.

A statement by the media consultant to the airline in Nigeria, said that Ethiopian Airlines has collaborated with multiple service providers to cater to the diverse demographics and passenger tastes.

Ethiopian introduced onboard Wi-Fi connectivity using the latest state-of-the-art broadband satellite technology (Ka-band), allowing passengers to enjoy reliable connectivity for sending emails, shopping online, or even chatting on social media while flying over the clouds.

Speaking on the recognition, Mr. Mesfin Tasew, Group Chief Executive Officer, Ethiopian Airlines said elevating passenger experience was a top priority with the management of the airline.

"Offering a range of entertainment options, Ethiopian has always strived to create a more enjoyable and immersive inflight experience enabling passengers to relax during long flights.

"As we will continue to enhance the passenger experience and set new standards in the industry, I express my gratitude to our dedicated team for making this achievement possible," he said.

Tasew added that Ethiopian Airlines has consistently demonstrated excellence in both passenger and cargo services across its global network.

The Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX's) prestigious regional awards are voted by millions of global passengers to honor airlines from Africa, Europe, North and South America, and the Middle East for exceptional passenger experiences in Cabin Service, Entertainment, Food & Beverage, Seat Comfort, and Wi-Fi.

Ethiopian has previously received numerous prestigious industry awards from Business Traveler Awards to APEX and to SKYTRAX the latter for six years in a row.

Okitipupa Oil Palm Opens Shares To Investing Public

Okitipupa Oil Palm Plc has listed its shares on the NASD OTC Securities Exchange, paving the way for the investing public to buy into the agricultural company.

The latest listing on the NASD came after the company was delisted from the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) and several decades of instability and near liquidation.

Regulatory filing at the weekend indicated that a total of 115.32 million shares of Okitipupa Oil Palm was listed at N9.26 per share, indicating entry market capitalisation of N1.08 billion.

Okitipupa Oil Palm, founded in 1968, produces palm oil and kernels into various products including crude palm oil, technical oil, pharmaceutical sterin, palm wine, brooms, seedlings, ashes and brown soaps.

Okitipupa Oil Palm was established to serve oil palm estates scattered across the three local governments of Okitipupa, Irele and Ese-Odo in Ondo.

After nearly three decades of instability and near liquidation, Okitipupa Oil Palm had returned to profitability in recent years as the company con-

tinues to implement its recovery plan. Some N1 billion had been spent on balance sheet restructuring to clear outstanding debts while pursuing an ambitious plan to put the company on the path of profitability.

Outstanding liabilities of about N800 million owed as at March 2018 by the previous management, including land owners peppercorn rent for 31 years had been fully paid under a new cash management system introduced by the new board of the company.

Part of the company's growth plan included a five-stage full resuscita-

tion. These included full plantation re-possession and rehabilitation phase, development of its existing 5,800 hectares of a new green field, replanting of 9,000 of brownfield, upgrading of its 40 metric tonnes per hour mill at the company's headquarters and the 4.5 metric tonnes per hour mill at Ipoke as well as development of refining capacities.

The company's annual turnover increased from N260 million in 2017 to about N2 billion in 2023. Profit also rose from a modest N38.6 million in 2017 to about N1 billion in 2023.



ASUU: Another Long-Drawn Strike In The Making

APATA OYENIRAN
LAGOS

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) branches across 53 Federal universities are currently mobilising their members to prepare for another showdown with the Federal Government.

They have asked the Federal Government to address the lingering issues affecting universities to avoid another disruption of academic activities on campuses.

Recall that the warning is coming on the heels of the ongoing battle between FG and the labour unions over a new minimum wage.

ASUU's Demands

Prof. Adelaja Odukoya, the Zonal Coordinator, Lagos, during a press conference held by the zone of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, on Friday, June 21, 2024, listed the demands of the union:

A. Refusal To Sign And Implement Renegotiated Agreement

The deliberate refusal of the Tinubu-led Federal Government to sign and implement the concluded renegotiated 2009 ASUU-FGN agreement is a criminal violation of the Collective Bargaining principles as enshrined in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention.

The renegotiated agreement was concluded in 2021 after five years of renegotiation. Both the Government and ASUU committed massive resources, hoping to reverse the dwindling fortune of our universities as the apex agency for human capacity development. With the deliberate refusal of the Federal Government to sign and implement the renegotiated agreement, our members have been stretched beyond their elastic limit of patience and our union urges the Tinubu-led Federal Government to without further delay, set in motion machinery for the immediate signing and implementation of the renegotiated agreement.

B. Funding and proliferation of State and Federal Universities

For the umpteenth time, our union again calls the attention of the public to the insincere proliferation and mushrooming of universities by both the Federal Government and Visitors to State Universities. The most disturbing aspect of this anomaly is that while most governments at the Federal and state levels have not been adequately funding existing univer-



Tahir Mamman, Education Minister

sities (inadequate subventions; non-release of monthly subventions; irregular-payment of staff salaries; decayed and dilapidated infrastructures, non-payment/release of check-off and other third-party deductions etc.), visitors of Federal and State universities have turned establishment of universities to constituency projects.

This development is harmful, retrogressive and unacceptable. Our Union, hereby, calls for the review and strengthening of the NUC laws to arrest the negative trends.

C. Non-payment of Withheld Salaries and Arrears of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA)

Comrades and compatriots of the press, it is no longer news that the Federal Government is still holding on to three and a half months' salaries of our members in the face of the government intransigence which necessitated the last strike action on the one hand and the current excruciating economic challenges confronting the nation on the other. In addition, the arrears of Earned Academic Allowances (EAA) since 2020 are still outstanding.

"Our Union unequivocally condemns this callous, unprogressive, destructive, anti-labour and inhuman act and demands the unconditional payment of all withheld salaries and

arrears of EAA of our members.

D. Injurious Downside of the Discredited Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS)

"Our union's unequivocally rejection of the IPPIS as a monster and an ill wind that would blow the Nigerian university system no good has become part of our history. Our stance and foresight had since been vindicated. We still insist that IPPIS is a cesspit of centralised corruption by government officials forcefully imposed and foisted on the Nigerian State by Breton Woods institutions of IMF and World Bank.

"Even with Government pronouncement on the exit of the universities from IPPIS, the deliberate refusal of corrupt Government and Ministry officials to migrate the University Payroll System away from IPPIS is unfortunate, condemnable and a confirmation that Nigeria is a becoming lawless State. It confirms that certain beneficial elements within the government and their collaborators are bent on continuing to defraud our members and the universities. Rather than implement the decision of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) on the removal of Universities from IPPIS stranglehold as broadcasted to the nation, our members are still being paid by the same platform dubiously renamed "New IPPIS". ASUU would continue to patriotically oppose the corruption-ridden IPPIS in whatever form because of its affront to our university autonomy.

E. Emanating from this stranglehold, the arrears of promotion since 2018 remain unpaid; non-remittance of third-party deductions such as pension deductions, cooperative deductions and Union check-off dues are wickedly and arbitrarily withheld. Our Union demands that all withheld deductions; unpaid promotion arrears; unpaid salaries of staff on sabbatical, adjunct, etc. be paid in the interest of peace in the Nigerian University System.

Our Union therefore, once again as part of her intellectual contribution to national development offers the immediate adoption by the Federal Government of the more economical, robust and efficient University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) to replace the illegal, widely rejected and corruption-infested IPPIS.

ASUU Intensifies Mobilisation in Varities

At Federal University, Gashua branch in Yobe State, the union at the end of its meeting asked the Federal Government to address the lingering issues affecting universities to avoid

another disruption of academic activities on campuses.

The Chairman of the branch, Melemi Abatcha, and his members who addressed journalists at Damaturu the state capital outlined funding for the revitalisation of Nigerian public universities, and the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement among the major issues.

Melemi who also corroborated the issues above as the union's grouse with the Federal government said the backlog of Earned Academic Allowances amounted to N50 bn, and the withheld three and half months' salaries of its members across the country.

He also explained that the removal of fuel subsidies without credible alternatives has brought untold hardship on the people, adding that it would not want to compound it with yet another disruption of academic activities.

The union also called on the FG to show sensitivity to the plight of Nigerians by speedily agreeing and implementing an acceptable living wage for Nigerian workers to assuage their sufferings.

NANS Appeals To Lecturers, FG To Shift Ground

The apex body of students in Nigeria, the National Association of Nigeria Students (NANS) has appealed to the Federal Government and the Academic Staff Union of the University (ASUU) to reach common grounds to prevent disruption in the academic calendar.

The NANS Senate President, Mr. Henry Okunomo, the association is appealing to the Federal Government to take immediate and decisive action to prevent disruption in the educational sector by preventing any strike.

He also urged President Bola Tinubu to allocate sufficient resources to the educational sector to improve infrastructure, provide necessary teaching aids, and ensure timely payment of salaries and benefits to lecturers.

He said that establishing a continuous platform for dialogue between the government, university administrators and lecturers to address grievances before escalation was important to prevent academic disruption.

"We are all acutely aware of the recurring disruptions caused by strikes in our universities. These strikes, often as a result of unresolved issues between university lecturers and the government, have profound and far-reaching consequences on the educational journey of countless students.

"We appeal to our lecturers to also embrace dialogue and shift ground where necessary to avoid collapse of the education system," he said.

The National Association of Northern Nigerian Students (NANNS) has bestowed the association's highest honour on Dr. Belinda Amaze Faniyi in recognition of her diligent disposition to duty, professionalism, and commitment to youth and entrepreneurial development.

Dr. Faniyi retired from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) as the Ogun State Coordinator of the scheme where she transformed 4 Hectares of land hitherto occupied by dangerous animals into farmland for the training of corps members in Agric and Agro-Allied businesses.

At the presentation of the award to Princess Faniyi in Lagos, the National President of NANNS, Ambassador Abdulrahman Ibrahim, said the nomination committee found the recipient worthy in recognition of her inspiring roles in youth development and empowerment, saying some members of the association that served in Ogun State during her tenure paid glowing tributes for her leadership qualities.

NANNS Honours Ex-Ogun NYSC Coordinator

The delegation that presented the distinguished award travelled from Kano to Lagos and also comprised other leaders of the association including Nafiu Yushan Ibrahim, National Secretary, Jibril Saifullah, Director of Mobilisation and Ahmed Balarabe, also a director.

According to NANNS President, the association is dedicated to advancing society through its mandates in supporting education, girl child education, youth empowerment through skills acquisition, entrepreneurial development, and campaign against violence, insecurity, rape, promotion of peace and unity across Nigeria.

"We are here to recognise your exemplary professionalism and dedication as a public officer and in a private capacity.

"Our search by the nomination committee found you worthy of this

recognition of excellence as an advocate of youth development, empowerment and a patriotic Nigerian.

"Your commitment has given us hope, confidence and courage as witnessed during the service year by some of the members deployed to Ogun State," NANNS President added.

In her response, the award recipient, Dr. Faniyi commended the goals and aspirations of NANNS, saying it is national in outlook and tallies with her ideal.

She appreciated the association for the honour bestowed on her by the leadership and members of the association who monitored her tenure as the Ogun State Coordinator of the NYSC while on national service and assured never to rest in her advocacy for youth as job creators rather than job hunters.



Abdulrahman Ibrahim, National President, National Association of Northern Nigerian Students (NANNS) (left), and Belinda Faniyi, former Ogun State Coordinator, National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), during the presentation of the association's highest honour on Dr Faniyi in recognition of her diligent disposition to duty, professionalism, commitment to youth and entrepreneurial development, in Lagos



Niger Delta

MOUTH OF THE SOUTH

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As Ibori's Commitment To Devt In The Niger Delta Region Earns Him Chieftaincy Title From Amassoma Community

ISAAC ASABOR

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria has long been a hotbed of socio-economic and political challenges. Against this backdrop, James Onanefe Ibori, the former Governor of Delta State, has emerged as a prominent figure whose struggle towards bettering the region in all its ramifications is well known so much that honour for his efforts cannot be disputed as he rightly deserves it. Thus, recently, he was honored with the chieftaincy title of "Opu-Ekie of Ogboin clan" by the Amassoma community in Bayelsa State.

To not a few people in the region, the honour is no doubt befitting, particularly when appraised from the perspective of his knack for community-centered development, which has no doubt remained part of his legacies in the Niger Delta region.

To buttress the foregoing view in this context, the former Governor's chieftaincy title bestowed on him by the Amassoma community is no doubt a reward for his work on infrastructural development and peaceful co-existence in the region. It will be recalled that the Ijaw community bestowed this honor on him during the 20th coronation anniversary of Ebenanowi, His Royal Majesty Oweipa Jones-Ere III, which took place recently.

Against the foregoing backdrop, not a few throng of supporters, including members of the Ijaw National Congress and diverse groups in the region felicitated with the former governor during the bestowal of the chieftaincy title on him. Speaking at the occasion, Chief Ibori, who spearheaded the call for resource control and fiscal federalism for the people of the Niger Delta during his tenure as governor from 1999 to 2007, expressed his gratitude for the honour, and in the same vein, applauded the level of infrastructural development that the region has witnessed since he visited the state last in 2017. He extolled the efforts of the Bayelsa people in contributing to the well-being of the Niger Delta region and encouraged them to relentlessly continue their work.

He said, "I am glad to be home. I came here last in 2017 and coming in now, I am impressed with the level of development I saw. I thank you for all you are doing for our people, and we pray that God continues to guide you."

He further acknowledged the importance of Bayelsa as the heartland of the Niger Delta and recognised the state's contributions to the region. Ibori praised the current Bayelsa State Gov-



Dirir (left), and Ibori

ernor, Douye Dirir, for his performance and ability to unite the people, and noted, "You know how to unite people. You have the maturity and temperament to know when politics starts and ends. God will continue to give you more success."

In response to his remarks on the appreciable level of development in the state, Governor Dirir hailed him for his noteworthy role in the Niger Delta struggle, particularly his agitations for resource control by states in the region. Dirir expressed his delight that Ibori had continued to fight for the region's interests and noted that the former Delta governor had left lasting legacies in his state, and not a few communities in the region.

Dirir said, "We are so happy to host you, as we hold you in very high esteem. Your leadership is not only in Delta State but across our region. The bonding between you and Alamieyeseigha was second to none."

The Bayelsa governor also highlighted the injustices that Ibori had fought against during his tenure, which still prevail, and appealed to Ibori to continue joining forces with other stakeholders in the region to address the challenges and

restated the need for Nigeria to practice true federalism based on equity, fairness, and justice.

Dirir stated, "Looking at your contribution to the Niger Delta struggle, which you are still doing, makes us happy. When we had issues with the former governor of Rivers State, you were the first to call us to settle. That is what an elder does."

The governor also acknowledged Ibori's support during his election campaign and praised the former Delta governor's open-handed approach to leadership, and emphasised the need for Ibori's knowledge and experience in the ongoing struggle for justice in the Niger Delta region.

For the sake of clarity, the Ogboin clan is an integral part of the rich cultural tapestry in the Central Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Delving into its history and significance, it is expedient to note in this context that the clan is situated within Bayelsa State, specifically in the Central Niger Delta, and it is one of the communities that constitute this vibrant region.

Like their Ijaw counterparts in the area, the people of Amassoma (an autonomous community) hold their festivals in

high esteem. For instance, the Amassoma Seigbein festival, which is predominantly a fishing and feasting festival is a festival set aside by the Amassoma people to commemorate and honour Oboro the progenitor of Amassoma, and dates back to ancient times, even as it is highly revered.

Notably, Oboro is also venerated within the Ogboin clan and neighboring communities in the Central Niger Delta. The Amassoma Besides serving as a cultural pedestal for fishing, Siegbein festival involves various cultural practices, including feasting, dancing, and wrestling.

As gathered, festivals like Seigbein are essential aspects of Ijaw culture, reflecting the community's historical, religious, and traditional roots. These celebrations foster unity, love, and peace among the people.

In fact, the Ogboin Clan, with its rich heritage and cultural festivities, plays a vital role in connecting the present generation to their ancestors and progenitors.

Certainly! Ibori deserves the befitting chieftaincy award as it no doubt marks a significant moment within the kingdom, celebrating his contributions and achievements.

The Edo State government has concluded plans to begin electronic signing of Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O), as Governor Godwin Obaseki says the C-of-O is the only document he still signs manually as the state's chief executive.

Governor Obaseki, who disclosed this when he recently spoke with journalists in Benin City, the Edo State capital, reaffirmed his government's commitment to ensuring a completely paperless governance system.

He said the state has embraced technology through the e-governance system and has transitioned

Edo Recommits To 100% Paperless Governance With e-Signing Of C-of-Os

into a paperless government, leading to the archiving of 7 million government documents.

According to the governor, the new system has streamlined government operations and ensured accountability, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and quick service delivery to Edo people.

The governor, who stated that

the state has since commenced the issuance of computerised C-of-O to landed property owners in the state, said plans have been concluded to introduce electronic signing of C-of-Os as part of renewed efforts to enhance efficiency and transparency in land administration.

"We have focused on reducing

our cost of governance, leveraging technology. We have made significant progress in our land administration system through our nuanced reforms. Very soon, I will begin to sign our Certificates of Occupancy (C-of-Os) electronically. They are the only documents I sign now. Everything else is online; we're paperless," he said.

As gathered, the Obaseki-led administration has undertaken reforms to ease the process of land registration and improvement in land management, leveraging technology.

The governor's land reforms have led to the approval and issuance of over 30,000 C-of-Os in the last seven and a half years.

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LAGOS

PSN Seeks Full Implementation Of Consultant Pharmacist Cadre In Nigeria

- Tasks CMDs To Act Quickly On Health Ministry Directive
- Urges Immediate Action In Addressing FHIs Staffing Gaps

In response to a recent directive issued by the Ministry of Health, the Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria (PSN) has urged CMDs and MDs of Federal Health Institutions (FHIs) to swiftly and fully implement the consultant Pharmacist cadre.

Furthermore, PSN demanded quick action, urging that CMDs/MDs utilise the waiver clause in personnel recruitment to employ Pharmacist consultants in lieu of those who had left the service. This move is intended to address staffing gaps until official vacancies are established through the civil service.

In a letter directed to the Daju Kachollom, Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), on Monday, PSN called for a multilateral consultative meeting to address issues related to the implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in Nigeria.

The letter signed by Prof Cyril Osifoh, PSN President, urged for collaborative efforts involving representatives from the PSN, NUAHP/JOHESU, committee of Chief Medical Directors (CMDs) and Medical Directors (MDs) of Federal Health Institutions (FHIs).

The aim of this meeting is to strategise and resolve any existing challenges hindering the full implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in the country.

Usifoh decried the delays in implementation of the consultancy pharmacist cadre following approved circulars in 2020 and 2021, attributing the delays to the directives from Dr. Osagie Ehanire, former Health Minister.

The letter entitled: "Perfecting the implementation modes of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in our Health system," while chronicling the setbacks in the implementation of the cadre noted the present administration has offered a beam of hope.

The PSN boss restated PSN's appreciation of renewed efforts by the current leadership of the FMOH with fresh circulars to drive progress in implementing the consultant cadre.

According to him, previous circulars from the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation and the Federal Ministry of Health, under former Permanent Secretary Mr. Abdulaziz Mashi, laid the groundwork for this initiative. While some states have successfully implemented the consultant cadre in Pharmacy practice, challenges persist at the Federal level, the PSN helmsman lamented.

The letter reads, "We remain very grateful to your office for recent circulars to the CMDs /MDs of the FHIs directing them to commence full implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in view of the enabling circulars which back the same.

"In 2020 and 2021, official circulars were issued from the office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation (OHCSF) and the Federal Ministry of Health through a past permanent secretary Mr Abdulaziz Mashi who was perceived as one of the most seasoned bureaucrats of his generation to actualise the con-



Federal Teaching Hospital FHI

sultant cadre in Pharmacy practice in Nigeria.

"Despite this landmark development which has birthed the consultant cadre in states like Niger (it started in 2013), Edo, Ondo, Oyo, Ekiti, Bayelsa, and others, we are still stuttering at the Federal level.

"The setbacks in the totality of the implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre after the 2020 and 2021 approved circulars were issued were inspired by the unfortunate style of the immediate past Health Minister Dr Osagie Ehanire who gave directives to the CMDs/MDs not to comply with those establishment circulars tacitly.

"It is imperative to convey our gratitude to the contemporary leadership of the FMOH which generated fresh momentum on this subject matter with new circulars compelling the CMDs/MDs of the FHIs.

"At a recent consultation of the CMDs/MDs of the FHIs, we are well briefed that there is a paradigm shift to do the needful which is a step in the right direction.

"It is also noteworthy to put on record that a few of the Chief Executives of the FHIs have taken bold steps to appoint some eligible Pharmacists as consultants who are appropriately designated in their institutions. We at PSN seriously commend this seeming drift towards progress which will impact on the health system," it added.

Osifoh further encouraged the Permanent Secretary and all the structures of the FMOH to enhance the prospects and potentials of the entire value chain of the workforce in the health sector.

Task Shifting Model From Global Best Practices

Additionally, Osifoh highlighted to the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) the established principles

of task shifting observed in countries such as Canada, the UK, and Australia.

In these nations, challenges like inefficiency, reduced productivity, and prolonged wait times for physician care have necessitated the delegation of additional responsibilities to Pharmacists within the boundaries of their professional expertise, he noted.

The letter also reads, "The PSN wishes to draw the attention of the FMOH to the obvious principles of task shifting in climes like Canada, the UK, and Australia where inefficiency less productivity, and delayed waiting times to access care by physicians have compelled a need to empower Pharmacists with more responsibilities within the limits and scope of their professional calling.

"It is therefore important that the Federal Government must leverage on this same principle to bring about resourcefulness, fruitfulness and greater impact in the totality of the care process in our Health system."

Non-Uniformity In Implementation Approach

After conducting a thorough assessment and evaluation of the implementation process of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in Nigeria, PSN has identified two significant challenges, Usifoh noted.

Firstly, he said that there is a lack of consistency in the proposed approach for implementing the Pharmacist-consultant cadre in Federal Health Institutions (FHIs). Additionally, noted with dismay that some Chief Executives of FHIs have continued to cite delays in the release of vacancies for Pharmacist-consultants by the approved establishment template from the OHCSF as a reason for their non-compliance with FMOH circulars.

The letter reads, "Following our continuous assessment, monitoring, and critical evaluation of developments pertaining to the implementation mode of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in Nigeria, we observed that there are challenges in two major areas which are, a non-uniformity in the proposed approach for the implementation of the Pharmacist – consultant cadre in the FHIs.

Non-Compliance By Chief Executives

"Similarly, some Chief Executives of the FHIs are still hinging their non-compliance with circulars of the FMOH on the delays in releasing vacancies for Pharmacist – consultants by the approved establishment template which is the office of the Head of the civil service of the Federation."

Usifoh consequently highlighted the urgent necessity to implement the consultant Pharmacist cadre in accordance with the recent circular Ref: FDS/ 791/ 1/ 10 to all CMDs/MDs of FHI.

He stressed that CMDs/MDs should use the waiver clause granted in staff hiring to replace individuals who have left the service to appoint Pharmacist consultants until the establishment of vacancies obtained from the Federation's Head of Civil Service.

The PSN boss reiterated his society's call for the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) to organise a tripartite consultative meeting involving key stakeholders. The meeting would bring together representatives from the PSN, NUAHP/JOHESU, and the committee of Chief Medical Directors (CMDs) and Medical Directors (MDs) of Federal Health Institutions (FHIs) to collaboratively address any remaining challenges in the implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in Nigeria. The aim is to strategise and find solutions to ensure the successful and comprehensive rollout of the consultant Pharmacist cadre nationwide.

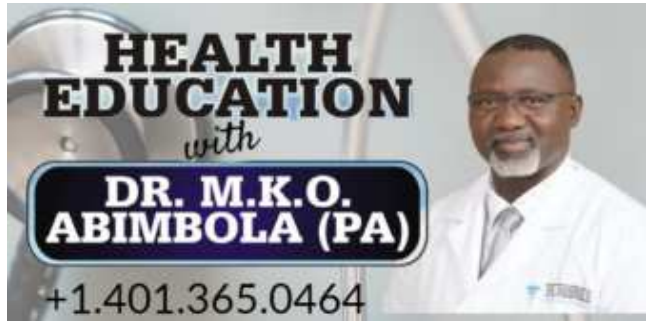
The letter concluded, "Flowing from above, we strongly clamour that the FMOH through the office of PS conveys a tripartite consultative meeting of representatives of the PSN, NUAHP/ JOHESU, and the committee of CMDs/MDs of FHIs to jointly strategise and resolve all grey areas in the quest for the full implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in Nigeria.

He said, "The PSN continues to encourage the Permanent Secretariat (PS) and indeed all the structures of the FMOH which have been rejigged to enhance the prospects and potentials of the entire value chain of the workforce in the Health sector.

"We assure you of our willingness to remain invaluable partners who add value to the team concept as we re-engineer the Health system in Nigeria," Usifoh stressed.

Flowing from above, we strongly clamour that the FMOH through the office of PS conveys a tripartite consultative meeting of representatives of the PSN, NUAHP/ JOHESU, and the committee of CMDs/MDs of FHIs to jointly strategise and resolve all grey areas in the quest for the full implementation of the consultant Pharmacist cadre in Nigeria

HealthCare



What is acid reflux?

— Acid reflux is when the acid that is normally in your stomach backs up into the esophagus, tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach. Another term for acid reflux is "gastroesophageal reflux disease," or GERD.

A prevalence of 26.34% among Nigerian medical students shown in a study suggests that GERD is actually common and not rare as previously thought.

What are the symptoms of acid reflux?

— The symptoms include:

- Burning in the chest, known as heartburn
- Burning in the throat or an acid taste in the throat
- Stomach or chest pain
- Trouble swallowing
- Having a raspy voice or a sore throat
- Unexplained cough

What are the 4 stages of GERD?

GERD is broken down into different stages based on how serious your symp-

toms are and how often they occur:

Stage 1: Mild GERD. Minimal acid reflux occurs once or twice a month. ...

Stage 2: Moderate GERD

Stage 3: Severe GERD

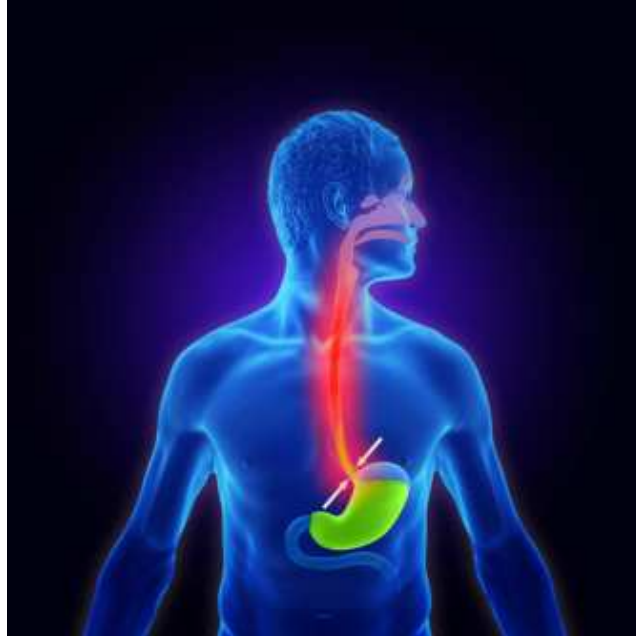
Stage 4: Precancer or cancer.

Is there anything I can do on my own to improve my symptoms?

— Yes. You might feel better if you:

- Lose weight (if you are overweight)
- Raise the head of your bed by 6 to 8 inches (for example, by putting blocks of wood or rubber under 2 legs of the bed or a Styrofoam wedge under the mattress)
- Avoid foods that make your symptoms worse (examples include coffee, chocolate, alcohol, peppermint, and fatty foods)
- Cut down on the amount of alcohol you drink
- Stop smoking, if you smoke

The Basics Of Acid Reflux (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease) In Adults



- Eat a bunch of small meals each day, rather than 2 or 3 big meals
- Avoid lying down for 3 hours after a meal

What treatments can help with my acid reflux?

— There are a few main types of medicines that can help with the symptoms of acid reflux: antacids, surface acting agents, histamine blockers, and proton pump inhibitors. All of these medicines work by reducing or blocking stomach acid. But they each do that in a different way. Antacids and surface

acting agents can relieve mild symptoms, but they work only for a short time. Histamine blockers are stronger and last longer than antacids and surface acting agents. You can buy antacids and most histamine blockers without a prescription.

Proton pump inhibitors are the most effective medicines in treating GERD. Some of these medicines are sold without a prescription. But there are other versions that your doctor or nurse can prescribe.

Sometimes acid reflux medicines are less expen-

sive if you get them with a prescription. Other times nonprescription medicines are less expensive. If cost is a concern for you, ask your pharmacist how you might reduce the cost of your medicines.

Should I see a healthcare provider about my acid reflux?

— Some people can manage their acid reflux on their own by changing their habits or taking nonprescription medicines. But you should see a healthcare provider if:

- Your symptoms are severe or last a long time
- You cannot seem to control your symptoms
- You have had symptoms for many years

You should also see a doctor or nurse right away if you:

- Have trouble swallowing, or feel as though food gets "stuck" on the way down
- Lose weight when you are not trying to
- Have chest pain
- Choke when you eat

- Vomit blood or have bowel movements that are red, black, or look like tar

How do you permanently cure GERD?

The most common surgical procedure for GERD is called fundoplication, which involves wrapping the top of the stomach around the lower esophagus to strengthen the LES and prevent acid reflux. This procedure can provide long-lasting relief from GERD symptoms for many patients.

What if my child or teenager has acid reflux?

— If your child or teenager has acid reflux, take him or her to see a healthcare provider. Do not give your child medicines to treat acid reflux without talking to a healthcare provider.

In children, acid reflux can be caused by a number of problems. It's important to have a healthcare provider check for these problems before trying any treatments.

MKO Abimbola holds a doctoral degree in physician associate studies from the United States of America. He is a Harvard Medical School scholar, affiliated with Parkland Memorial Hospital, Dallas, Texas. He specializes in Internal medicine, Acute care, Emergency Medicine, Geriatrics, Psychiatry, and Surgical services.

Infertility, frequent miscarriages, and irregular menstrual periods are all symptoms of poor egg quality, which refers to eggs that are unable to fertilise and develop into a healthy embryo. Poor egg quality is a major cause of female infertility and is frequently linked to age, genetics, hormonal imbalances, and environmental factors.

As women age, egg quality can decline, potentially resulting in chromosomal abnormalities that affect pregnancy success. Addressing poor egg quality involves lifestyle changes, supplements, advanced reproductive technologies like IVF with genetic testing, and sometimes egg donation.

Seeking expert medical guidance is essential to navigate this complex aspect of fertility.

It is important to seek medical help to navigate this complex aspect of fertility.

A developing egg is called an oocyte. It is important to define Oocytes before explaining how their quality relates to Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) and Assisted reproductive technology (ART). Specifically, an oocyte is an immature egg cell of the animal's ovary. The common name for an oocyte is egg cell. In humans, one oocyte matures during the menstrual cycle, becoming an ootid

Poor Egg Quality, Pregnancy And Assisted Reproductive Technology

and then an ovum, while several others partially mature and then disintegrate.

According to the American Center for Disease Control (CDC) Assisted reproductive technologies (ART) are any fertility-related treatments in which eggs or embryos are manipulated. Procedures where only sperm are manipulated, such as intrauterine inseminations, are not considered under this definition.

Polycystic ovary syndrome is a condition where you have few, unusual, or very long periods. Some experts define it as a hormonal disorder causing enlarged ovaries with small cysts on the outer edges.

It is noteworthy that Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) often results in having too much of a male hormone called androgen. Many small sacs of fluid develop on the ovaries. They may fail to regularly release eggs.

Does PCOS Affect The Quality Of Eggs?

The good news is, that women with PCOS produce a high number of healthy eggs. But, as with all women, with age comes a decrease in egg quality and quantity. Therefore, like all women, the timing of build-

ing a family is important, and a delay in time to pregnancy because of PCOS can interfere with future family plans.

Causes Of Poor Oocyte Quality

The most common cause of poor oocyte quality is natural aging, which is strongly tied to reduced oocyte mitochondrial efficiency and increased oxidative stress.

Oocyte Factors

Two important oocyte-secreted factors (OSFs) are growth-differentiation factor 9 and bone morphogenetic protein 15, which activate signaling pathways in CCs to regulate key genes and cellular processes required for CC differentiation and for CCs to maintain their distinctive phenotype.

Determining Oocyte Quality

Several studies have shown that the integrity, shape, or size of the polar body could be used to assess oocyte quality and even be predictive of post-ovulatory aging status. Fertilisation rates and embryo quality are higher when the polar body is intact, with a correct shape and a smooth surface.

Improves Oocyte Quality

Resveratrol has been demonstrated to improve the quality of aging oocytes owing to its antioxidant and anti-apoptotic effects in mammals. Increasing data have indicated its protective effects on oocytes from age-dependent deficits as a potent SIRT1 activator.

Difference Between PCOS Eggs And Normal Eggs

Normally, ovarian follicles contain egg cells, which are released during ovulation. In polycystic ovary syndrome, abnormal hormone levels prevent follicles from growing and maturing to release egg cells. Instead, these immature follicles accumulate in the ovaries. Affected women can have 12 or more of these follicles.

Improving Egg Quality With PCOS

There are some changes you can make to your lifestyle. Regular exercise – could help to improve fertility outcomes and reduce stress in PCOS ladies. Supplementing with Inofolic Alpha which contains myo-inositol, folic acid, and alpha-lactalbumin.

Causes Of Poor Egg Quality

Chemotherapy or radi-

THE ABC OF FERTILITY

with

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ation therapy- could affect egg quality and could even lead to early menopause. Autoimmune disorders could produce antibodies against their eggs and affect their quality. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)- could cause high levels of insulin which can affect egg quality.

Increasing Egg Quality

Exercising, reducing stress, improving your sleep patterns, and getting proper nutrition can all improve egg health.

Symptoms Of Poor Egg Quality

Some signs that may indicate a low egg reserve include experiencing irregular menstrual cycles, difficulty conceiving, unusually short menstrual cycles, or recurrent miscarriages.

What affects egg quality the most?

Age And Egg Quality
Several factors can impact the health of a person's eggs. But the dominant factor is one that no one can

control: age.

Improving Egg Quality After Age 40

These include The Fertility Diet; Quality Sleep; Avoidance of Smoking; Avoidance of Caffeine and Alcohol; managing stress; Light Exercise And Supplements.

Reversing Poor Egg Quality

Once an egg becomes low in quality, or genetically abnormal, there is no way to reverse the damage. Egg quality is affected by several factors, including Age. DNA damage is inevitable in older eggs.

Use Of Eggs For IVF Amid PCOS

For women with PCOS who want to become pregnant later, egg freezing – also known as oocyte preservation – is a method of fertility preservation. The eggs are extracted now and can be thawed and used for IVF or intrauterine insemination (IUI) when you're ready to start – or continue – growing your family.

Your Views

Articles/ Opinions should be a maximum of 750 words and sent to: opinion@independentngr.com and densityshow@yahoo.com

A Good Read On Transformational Leadership

C.DON ADINUBA

A critique of Ifeoma Chigbogwu's Transformational Leadership: A Guide for Empowering Executives, published by Ifeoma Speaks TV, Lagos, Nigeria, 2024.

Ever since Jim MacGregor Burns, the American presidential historian, used the term, transformational leadership, in 1978, and Bernard M. Bass, the academic, wrote well-received scholarly papers on it a few years later, the concept has seized the imagination of not just social science and business researchers, but also practitioners, politicians, and the general public. Whereas scholars and other experts view transformational leadership – which is differentiated from transactional, charismatic, authoritarian, authentic, situational, and servant leadership styles, among others – as technically the ability to inspire and motivate followers to attain unexpected levels because the followers see them as caring and working for the common good and as role models ethically and professionally, the public sees transformational leadership as the ability to bring about positive radical changes within a short period. Nigeria's former President Goodluck Jonathan pledged, on coming to office in 2010, to provide transformative leadership given the enormity of the development challenges paralyzing a nation that the revered former Vice Alex Ekwueme, a polyvalent intellectual, described as “a miracle waiting to happen”.

There is a list of leaders in private and public sectors who have provided undeniably transformative leadership in recent years. Ginni Rometty, the first woman to be the president, chief executive, and chairman of IBM, the iconic IT giant, transformed the firm founded in 1911 in every sense of the expression. She sold several legacy divisions and acquired new ones like Red Hat for \$3.5 billion, the biggest purchase in IBM's history. She transformed IBM, which became almost bankrupt in the late 1980s and early 1990s, into a software giant, specializing in cloud computing, security, data, and AI when she held the forte from 2012 to 2020. Thus Rometty prepared IBM for supercompetitiveness long before the IT industry became revolutionized by generative AI that OpenAI unleashed in November 2022. Nigerians always speak of the transformations of Singapore under Lee Yuan Yew, Malaysia under Mahathir Mohammed, and Dubai under the Maktoums.

Ifeoma Chigbogwu's Transformational Leadership: A Guide for Empowering Executives is an important contribution to the corpus of literature on transformative leadership which has naturally acquired an expanded meaning since Burns and Bass published their seminal works on it. This book examines with admirable knowledge and energy the importance and range of transformational leadership in today's organizational management marked by hypercompetition and laced with compelling examples and case studies.

Transformational leadership should not be associated with a particular individual leader or a particular point in the life of an organization like when a bank is seeking to meet new recapitalization requirements. Transformational leadership, Chigbogwu insists, should be the soul of an organization and define its culture or way of life. It is a “mindset that views change not as a disruptor but as a conduit for growth and innovation” (p. 13).

She is of the view that transformative leaders create an organizational culture to grapple with fast and far-reaching



Ifeoma Chigbogwu

changes; these changes run on adaptability, flexibility, and forward-looking. All organizational members, not just the leaders, must understand this way of thinking and behaviour and buy into it, otherwise, there will be a costly disconnect between the leaders and the followers in the transformation agenda implementation.

For all organizational members to be “architects of change”, as she puts it on page 14, there has to be a culture of openness, collaboration, shared purpose, and values. In other words, constant and robust communication must pervade the organization. Communication is not just about the use of traditional and social media but also about other communication modes and styles. When he was from 1981 to 2001 the CEO of General Electric, then the most capitalized company in the world and the world's biggest and oldest electricity equipment manufacturing firm, the late Jack Welch used to write every employee a personal letter yearly assessing the employee's performance, complete with areas for improvement. Each letter was handwritten. Indra Nooyi, the first foreigner to head the legendary PepsiCo where she made far-reaching reforms and consequently repositioned the company for global competitiveness, used to write commendation letters to parents and families of employees thanking them for the gift of their child to the firm. The letters from Welch and Nooyi had powerful impacts on the employees. Not to be forgotten is that Margaret Thatcher wrote 255 letters in her own handwriting to families of killed soldiers during the war between the UK and Argentina over Falklands in 1982.

Communication is also about holding regular retreats, seminars, symposiums, and conferences where new ideas are disseminated and shared and critical issues raised without fear of repercussions. Organizations that practise a kind of communication style where any person can learn from another regardless of status or designation are known as learning organizations. Experience and research have demonstrated that they outcompete their peers. It is one reason why hierarchy is being dismantled everywhere, and in its place, egalitarianism is being adopted. Egalitarianism drives continuous or lifelong learning. A lot of new ideas and concepts are appearing every day, quickly rendering received wisdom dangerous and popular knowledge obsolete.

Transformational leaders, writes Chigbogwu, a former banker who is now

a business coach, “highlight how leaders who inspire and motivate their teams to achieve higher levels of performance and exceed expectations contribute to the creation of adaptive, resilient, and thriving organizational cultures”.

Transformational leaders have a growth mindset, according to Chigbogwu, who contrasts it with a fixed mindset. A growth mindset makes a leader believe that there is nothing they can't achieve, unlike a fixed mindset that sees limitations everywhere and believes the limitations are imposed by nature or fate. Leaders with the growth mindset favour brainstorming which General David

Malaysia had its famous Vision 2020, a strategic plan to become a fully developed nation like South Korea or Singapore by 2020. Nigeria had Vision 2020...

Petraeus, a former Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director, described in an interview with David M. Rubenstein, founder of the Carly Group and a founding member of the Giving Pledge, as a surge of ideas.

Transformational leaders are driven by vision. The author refers to vision as “a clear, inspiring, and forward-looking idea of what an individual or organization aims to achieve in the future” (p. 60). A vision must always have a timeframe, contrary to the thinking of many well-educated individuals and organizations, and even universities. That's why the Saudis have Vision 2030 to make fossil fuels account for not more than 10% of their national revenues by 2030, in contrast to the present situation where they contribute to over 90%. Malaysia had its famous Vision 2020, a strategic plan to become a fully developed nation like South Korea or Singapore by 2020. Nigeria had Vision 2020, a strategic plan to become a medium economy by 2020.

A vision must be well crafted, clear,

and simple and play on the right emotions of the people, whether in the private or public sector. It must, of course, be realistic in the projection of human resources and their skills required, in the financial resources needed, in the sources of the supplies, and so on. Though coming from the leadership, the vision is implemented by leaders and followers alike; they are on the same page. The performance of each vision must be monitored and reviewed constantly, strictly, and honestly, and necessary adjustments must be made as soon as practicable.

This book touches on a lot of issues of great interest to contemporary leadership scholars and practitioners across the globe. They include the related issues of systems thinking and ecosystem which make us look at issues and phenomena holistically through their interactions and interconnectedness rather than siloically; that is, in parts as though the parts were unrelated.

Chigbogwu's treatment of remote work is interesting. She takes an unabashedly supportive position. This is a relatively new phenomenon, and it is still evolving. It gained serious attention during COVID-19 in 2020 when severe restrictions were imposed around the world in a desperate effort to curb the deadly and infectious virus. Individuals, teams, and organizations, including governments, resorted to videoconferencing to grapple with the prevailing crisis. The wide use of videoconferencing continued to grow even when the Covid restrictions were lifted and life returned to normal. Some observers even exuberantly declared traditional in-person work dead and remote work the sole future of work. Jack Dorsey, then the Twitter CEO, declared in May 2020 that organizational members could work from anywhere in perpetuity. Some other technology firms followed suit. But when Elon Musk took over Twitter in October 2022 for \$44b and changed the name to X, he directed all employees to start working from the office. Some companies now have a blend of both remote and in-person work. We are still examining the benefits and challenges of each approach.

Supply chain management became a major global issue after COVID-19 because China, the world's manufacturing headquarters and where the virus was first discovered, adopted very strict restrictions for a long time. Apple, for instance, turned to India, for the manufacture of its products; India made \$14b from the tech giant last year. Tim Cook, the Apple CEO, was in Vietnam in May 2024 in search of alternative production from China. The search for alternatives has in recent times been exacerbated by geopolitics as the relations between China and the United States deteriorate.

Chigbogwu doesn't overlook AI and the increasing digitization of the workplace and the implications. Samsung of South Korea was involved in a scandal in 2023 when reports emerged that it had published confidential information of its customers and distributors in the public domain. Elon Musk sued former X employees for security breaches, also in 2023. The security implications of the growing digitisation of business operations deserve more scrutiny.

A campaigner for cross-functional training experience – well practised in top firms like Shell where a geologist could be sent to head the public communications team—Chigbogwu counsels business leaders to see mistakes as no death sentences but as lessons to be learnt, consistent with the ideas of many business scholars and practitioners. She also advises organizational leaders to avoid attribution but rather accept responsibility when things go south.

They should also avoid tradition, that is, doing something simply because that's the way it was done in the past or now; the practice may no longer be effective today. Economists speak of the success trap, which superstitious learning encourages.

The author is an unrelenting advocate of inclusion and diversity. However, it would seem that she approaches these two related concepts purely from the American perspective, for we are not told what they mean in the Nigerian, nay African, context, especially concerning the private sector. Despite her unabashed embrace of the American system, she cleverly overlooks LGBT+ which is a major issue in America's endless culture wars. Her attitude is probably informed by her background as an evangelical pastor.

Still, her recommendation for cross-cultural training, a big issue in the multicultural United States, is of value to Nigerians. Nigerian firms like UBA and Dangote Cement are internationalizing into mostly African countries where they face such cultural challenges as a different lingua franca, a different legal system, a different work ethic, etc. Beyond the factor of internationalization, Nigeria is a good example of what Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard would call a cleft society. The North is Muslim-dominated and Arab-oriented while the South is Christian-dominated and Western-oriented. It is common for a man to peck the wife of a friend in public in Lagos, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Benin, or Uyo and hold hands with her in the streets, but haram (forbidden) to do so in Zamfara, Sokoto, Katsina, Kano, or Maiduguri where the people practise the conservative brand of Islam.

The book recommends what Ram Charam calls the leadership pipeline for organizations that want to remain transformational and outcompete peers. The leadership pipeline means identifying potential leaders early enough and grooming them with responsibilities and experience as well as through learning and development to realize their full potential. Through the leadership pipeline strategy, organizations will not lack at any point the best hands to drive them. Festus Odimegwu, the brilliant erstwhile CEO of Nigerian Breweries, the local operation of the Dutch giant Heineken, was trained in a postgraduate school in Scotland by the company and worked in different functions in Nigeria and Europe as part of the grooming effort to enable him to lead the company effectively. His leadership turned out transformational. Ginni Rometty was intentionally sent to different subsidiaries and teams before she assumed IBM's leadership in 2012. Her tenure was phenomenal. Observes Chigbogwu: “The stages of a leadership pipeline, from identifying high-potential individuals to providing targeted development opportunities, ensure a consistent supply of leaders equipped to navigate transformative challenges” (p. 273).

Ifeoma Chigbogwu's Transformational Leadership: A Guide for Empowering Executives is a good read. The author has both relevant practical experience and requisite theoretical knowledge. It's recommended for not just organizational leaders but everyone interested in seeing his or her country leapfrog in developmental terms, as Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Dubai, and others have done in recent times despite all odds. The book covers a wide range of topics and is truly engaging.

**Adinuba, Commissioner for Information and Public Enlightenment in Anambra State (2018-22), is a management and leadership researcher*

News



Chidinma Kalu, Marketing Assistant, Stanbic IBTC (left); Niyi Ajayi, Head, Customer Experience, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management (second left); Comfort O. Aiki-Raji, Deputy Dean, Student Affairs, University of Ibadan (UI) (middle); Onyinye Nwachukwu, Marketing Manager, Insurance and Asset Management, Stanbic IBTC (second right), and Mayowa Ogunnaike, Wealth Advisor, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management, during the Stanbic IBTC Asset Management InvestBeta Campus Play, held at UI in Ibadan, Oyo State, recently.

Afenifere Tasks Aiyedatiwa On Reacquisition Of Heritage Bank, Resuscitation Of Moribund Industries

BOLU-OLU ESHO
AKURE

Pan Yoruba socio-political group organization, Afenifere, has called on Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa to liaise with the Federal Government on how to reacquire the recently liquidated Heritage Bank.

Rising from its meeting on Tuesday, the Ondo State chapter of the group urged the governor to work towards resuscitating all industries established by the late Adekunle Ajasin-led administration which are currently moribund.

This was contained in a communique issued by the organization and signed by state Publicity Secretary of

the group, Eric Oluwole at the end of the meeting held at the residence of Pa Reuben Fasoranti in Akure, the state capital.

The communique reads: "The Ondo State Government should liaise with the Federal Government to revive all the economic legacies floated by the Adekunle Ajasin administration, the state should take necessary action towards the acquisition of Heritage Bank.

"The legacies include the licence of the Heritage Bank and we advise the Ondo State Government to reverse it to its original founding fathers, that is the Ondo State Government.

"Other industries include ceramic industry, Okitipupa Oil Mill, and others."

Among other resolutions of the organization, Governor

Aiyedatiwa was urged not to relent in his efforts to provide security for lives and property of the people.

Afenifere implored Governor Aiyedatiwa to continue fund the state Security Network otherwise known as Amotekun Corps for the better of the people of the state.

"Afenifere commended the state government for not relenting its effort on the security, especially the Amotekun outfit floated by the former Governor of Ondo State, Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Ak-eredolu.

"Afenifere also urged the state government to continue the funding of Amotekun and other security agencies in the state."

The organization also tasked the state government to include in the curricula

of primary and secondary schools and make compulsory the teaching and learning of History and Yoruba Language for conservation of the cultural heritage and language.

The communique reads further that "Afenifere advises the state government to adopt as part of its education policies, the Yoruba language and History as compulsory subjects to be taught at the primary and secondary schools."

Moreover, the organization called the people of the state to engage in agriculture to stem the impact of food scarcity.

The communique reads: "Afenifere urges the people of the state to massively return to the farm and embark on aggressive planting in order to address the high rate of food shortage facing the state."

Rivers: Anti-Corruption Groups Demand Probe Of Former LG Chairmen

PASCHAL NJOKU
ABUJA

No fewer than 1,000 anti-corruption crusaders drawn from across the 36 States of the Federation have demanded the probe of immediate past Local Government Chairmen in Rivers State.

The groups threatened to sue Governor Siminalayi Fubara to court if he fails to investigate the ousted local government chairmen.

In a statement signed by their convener, Comrade Johnson Turner, the groups accused the former chairmen of monumental corruption, high-handedness and fraud.

Turner said their insistence to remain in office despite the expiration of their tenure was not only a blatant affront to the rule of law and a slap in the face of democracy but engendered chaos in the state.

"We are compelled to issue this statement due to our deep concern over the

blatant refusal of Governor Siminalayi Fubara to investigate the immediate past Local Government Chairmen' the statement said.

The anti-corruption crusaders were dismayed that the Governor has not taken decisive action to investigate and prosecute the former LG council Chairmen.

"We urge him to initiate a comprehensive probe into their activities and ensure that they are held accountable for their actions.

"We categorically demand

that Governor Fubara probe the former chairmen, prosecute them for their alleged crimes and recover all looted funds and assets," he added.

"He must ensure that they are held accountable for their actions.

"Failure to do so will leave us no choice but to drag Governor Fubara to court. We will not hesitate to explore all legal avenues to ensure that justice is served.

"We urge Governor Fubara to heed our demand and take immediate action to investigate the former Chairmen.

"The people of Rivers State deserve nothing less, the anti corruption crusaders stated.

Gov Makinde Reshuffles Cabinet

KAZEEM AWOJODU
IBADAN

Oyo State Governor, 'Seyi Makinde, has approved a minor cabinet reshuffle.

The reshuffle saw the former

Commissioner for Trade, Industry, Investment and Cooperatives, Ademola Ojo, move to the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters.

Ojo is a former chairman of the Association of Local Governments of Nigeria, Oyo

State chapter.

Segun Olayiwola, who until the reshuffling was manning the Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Matters, has been moved to the Ministry of Establishment and Training.

The erstwhile Commissioner for Establishment and Training, Adeniyi Adebisi, will move to the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Investment and Cooperatives.

The reshuffling is with immediate effect.

Tinubu To Inaugurate Chuba Okadigbo International Airport

FELIX UKA
ABAKALIKI

President Bola Tinubu may soon inaugurate the rehabilitated Chuba Okadigbo International Airport.

In a bid to ensure speedy completion of the runway rehabilitation, control tower and putting the entire airport in a perfect use, Governor Francis Nwifuru, who has become regular in inspection of the project, moreso has made sure that all contractors handling various projects at the airport are paid up to 90 per cent of their contract sum.

everybody will be proud of'.

"And as the people of Ebonyi State, we made a serious promise to our people that we will punish our enemies with very gigantic projects," he stated.

"The contractor IDC handling the airport's runway rehabilitation has been doing wonderfully well, but the state government has been doing very exceptionally well. At the beginning, early July, we agreed to re-award the construction of this runway. We gave it to IDC because they have an asphalt plant close to Ebonyi State. And they agreed to build an asphalt plant here, which you can see there'.

"Due to the issue of fluctuation in our currency, this job was supposed to stop, if not the understanding, I personally talked to the contractor; I made serious promises. We called for an upward review. The runway was initially awarded for #13.735billion, at the time of the upward review, The balance left then was #4.7billion and we reviewed it upwards by 70 percent from the balance. And that's what made the contractor come back to site," he said.

"We have plans to have airport hangers (Aircraft mechanic workshop) for repair of aircrafts from across the Country'.

Meanwhile, the state Commissioner for Aviation and Transport Technology had said that the state has plans to purchase aircraft for the State, establish College of Aviation, create massive jobs for the youths and as well to boost the economy of the State by greater percentage.

According to the governor: "The airport is what we think that our money should go into, and it is for the benefit of all of us. Since our manifesto is centred on the 'Peoples' charter of needs,' we couldn't have spent so much money on this airport, but we have to because we shouldn't abandon it.

"We have about three projects ongoing in this airport; the runway, control tower and it is almost one hundred percent completed. Another one is the security control light in this airport, and it is almost completed too," he said.

Governor Nwifuru has declared to make their critics jealous with the construction of gigantic projects across the 13 local government areas of the state.

"When we assumed office, having campaigned on the same platform of Divine Mandate, Continuity and Consolidation, we were constrained and it became an obligation that we complete this airport, and put it to the standard that

Olawunmi To Deliver Chrisland University's Lecture On Thursday

Former Deputy Chief of Defence Administration, Commodore Kunle Olawumi (rtd) is set to deliver a lecture on the nexus between governance and societal wellbeing at Chrisland University, Abeokuta.

The lecture was held on Thursday 27th June, 2024 at 12 noon, at The Marquee at the University campus located along Ajebo Road, Abeokuta.

Olawunmi, who is an expert in the field of Global Counter-Terrorism, is currently Head of the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy in the University renowned for intellectual radiance.

The lecture is the maiden one for the College of Arts, Management and Social Sciences (CAMASS), which is headed by the Dean, Prof. Benjamin O. Olley.

The topic of discourse is: "The Nexus Between Governance and Societal Needs and Peace in Nigeria."

The academic event will be chaired by the University's Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Chine-

dum Peace Babalola in her capacity as chief host.

It would be recalled that Commodore Olawumi sometime in 2021, opened up in the media that the then Muhammadu Buhari government had full knowledge of those sponsoring the Boko Haram insurgency and banditry in Nigeria but failed to act.

Following this, the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) invited him for questioning for creating an upset within security circles, an invitation which he boldly honoured in company of his lawyer, Femi Falana.

Prior to retirement as Deputy Chief of Defence Administration at the DIA in 2016, Olawunmi once held sway as Defence Attache in France, as well as Commandant/Director of Studies: Defence Intelligence College.

It would be interesting to hear his thoughts on governance and societal expectations as the country currently groans under the current economic hardships.

News

PDP Candidate, Ighodalo, Engages Edo Diaspora Community In Europe

FRANCIS ONOIRIBHOLO
BENIN

Dr. Asue Ighodalo, the candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the September 21 governorship election in Edo State, shone brightly on Monday night at his first engagement with Edo Diaspora Community in Europe.

The meeting, which was held at the Reggio, Emilia Via Cherubino Forzani, Reggio Emilia, Italy, and monitored by our correspondent via a zoom link, recorded an impressive attendance.

Ighodalo, who was accompanied by his wife, Ifeyinwa Ighodalo, to the meeting, spoke extensively on his plan for Edo State to intermittent applause from the attendees.

The meeting, which coincided with the release of his widely acknowledged Manifesto, "The Pathway to Prosperity for All," saw him making copious references to the document, which enjoyed massive rave reviews on social media upon release.

Ighodalo appealed to his audience to support his dream to make Edo State a first world sub-national in Nigeria, just as he insisted that it was doable.

"Our idea of a pathway to prosperity for all is done with a view to plan and implement the next phase of our journey towards becoming a first world sub-national.

"We have to harness our God-given resources and the immense potentials of our people; and translate them into shared and inclusive prosperity for all.

"I believe it can be done. That's why I am running for the office of the governor," he declared to a loud applause.

The presentation was followed by a lengthy question and answer session. Ighodalo answered the questions ranging from security to infrastructure, economy, food, security, Diaspora Commission, health, agriculture and many more.

The PDP candidate was able to, time and again, reference his manifesto on how he intends to provide solution to all the questions if elected on September 21 as the governor of Edo State.

He highlighted some of the areas where the present government of Governor Godwin Obaseki has done marvelously well and pledged to build on them, saying that if there are any area that need adjustment, he would do that.

Ighodalo thanked those who were able to make it to the meeting for their time and show of love for Edo State and support for his aspirations. He assured them that he would not disappoint nor fail them as governor if he is elected.



Chidinma Kalu, Marketing Assistant, Stanbic IBTC (left); Niyi Ajayi, Head, Customer Experience, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management (second left); Comfort O. Aiki-Raji, Deputy Dean, Student Affairs, University of Ibadan (UI) (middle); Onyinye Nwachukwu, Marketing Manager, Insurance and Asset Management, Stanbic IBTC (second right), and Mayowa Ogunnaike, Wealth Advisor, Stanbic IBTC Asset Management, during the Stanbic IBTC Asset Management InvestBeta Campus Play, held at UI in Ibadan, Oyo State, recently.

House C'ttee Demands Accountability In Management Of Govt-Owned Properties

TORKWASE NYIEKAA
ABUJA

The House of Representatives has issued a warning to government agencies to assume responsibility for government properties nationwide.

Mr. Ademorin Kuye, Chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Public Assets, offered this advice during an investigative hearing held in Abuja.

He mentioned that the committee expressed dissatisfaction with the condition of government assets nationwide.

Hon. Kuye emphasized the importance of diligent management and maintenance of government assets.

He highlighted that meticulous documentation and secure physical custody are essential for safeguarding these properties.

"We requested documents pertaining to any joint ventures, but have not received a response indicating whether such ventures exist or not. Additionally, we requested a comprehensive list of assets with detailed descriptions and specifications, including rented apartments, acquisition dates, methods, and their current status and conditions. It cannot be confirmed that all these requests have been fully addressed. While some responses were provided, they were deemed inadequate."

Hon Kuye The hearing was attended by representatives from the National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT).

Mr. Lanre Onilu, the Director General of the National Orientation Agency, addressed the committee, highlighting that the NOA maintains offices across all seven hundred and seventy Local Government Areas of Nigeria."

He also told the committee that the NOA operates from eight hundred and twelve locations in the country.

He also said that most of the assets are in contention as communities have encroached on them.

He committed to presenting a more thorough list of the agency's assets at the upcoming hearing.

FCT Minister Urges Precautionary Measures Against Cholera Outbreak

TOYIN ADEBAYO
ABUJA

The Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister of State, Dr. Mariya Mahmoud, has called on the FCT Primary Health Care Board to implement precautionary measures to prevent a cholera outbreak in the nation's capital.

This call was made during a briefing from the Director of the FCT Primary Health Care Board at the 190th FCT Joint Account Allocation Committee (JAAC) meeting held in her office.

Dr. Mahmoud expressed satisfaction that no cases of the epidemic have been reported in any primary healthcare centres across the six area councils in the FCT.

However, she emphasized the importance of maintaining vigilance due to the FCT's status as the seat of government.

"I am indeed delighted that no case of the cholera epidemic has been reported in any of our primary healthcare centres across the six area councils in the FCT."

However, that does not give us room to relax because this is the seat of government. The FCT Primary Health Care Board should put in place measures to guard against any outbreak of the disease," Dr. Mahmoud stated.

She also urged the Board to begin radio jingles in major languages and sensitization programs in schools, markets, mosques, and churches.

"We should not give room for the outbreak before we start a fire brigade approach. That will not be acceptable," she warned.

Meanwhile, the Federal Capital Territory Administration has disbursed N3,624,968,091.61 to the six area councils and other stakeholders as the statutory allocation for May 2024.

Dr. Mahmoud, who presided over the JAAC meeting, noted that N1,138,534,925.64 was allocated to the six area councils, while N2,486,433,165.97 was distributed to other stakeholders.

Govt To Provide Hostels, Other Projects At Rehabilitation School In Benue

TOR VANDE-ACKA
MAKURDI

Benue State Governor, Rev. Fr Hyacinth Alia, has stated that his government would construct two hostel blocks, a classroom block and a dining hall at the State Rehabilitation School, Apir, Gwer-East Local Government Area (LGA), to address the challenges of accommodation and provide a suitable learning environment for the students.

The governor, who commended President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for placing Benue at the center of the 'Renewed Hope Agenda' of his administration, noted that he had the wherewithal to draw to the state the dividends of democracy to Benue.

Governor Alia disclosed these in separate statements signed by the Principal Special Assistant (PSA), on Media, Isaac Uzaan and the Chief Press Secretary (CPS) to the Governor, Kula Tersoo and made available to newsmen in Makurdi on Tuesday.

Governor Alia, who visited the school, expressed dismay with the condition of infrastructure there and promised to immediately transform the school and improve on the feeding of the students.

While he noted that the intervention would address the challenges of accommodation and provide a suitable learning environment for students at the institutions, the governor promised to transform the school and improve on the feeding of the students.

Governor Alia promised to drill two other boreholes and install solar light at the premises of the school to provide for water and also light up the school environment.

He pointed out that he was there for the students and that he would do everything possible to give them comfort.

Earlier, the Executive Secretary, Benue State Rehabilitation Board, Alexander Aondoaver Mbakindev, while presenting the school plan to the governor, submitted that the students of the school have no good accommodations.

Meanwhile, the statement signed by Tersoo, said Governor Alia commended the All Progressives Congress (APC), traditional rulers, among others, for the support he got from them during his "thank you tour."

Leadership Crisis Rocks Zaar Development Association

SUZAN EDEH

A coalition of not fewer than 15 out of 26 branches of Sayawa social cultural organisation, known as Zaar Development Association (ZDA), across the country has declared withdrawal of its support for Isuwa Galla as the National President of the association.

The announcement was made when the Coalition of ZDA branches convened a meeting in Bauch and unanimously decided to withdraw its support for Isuwa Galla as the National President of ZDA.

The coalition stated that the decision came after careful deliberations and considerations of the various issues impacting the unity and progress of the Zaar community.

According to the coalition led by the ZDA Chairman, Lagos State, Danny Luka Zarmi, who read the statement, reasons for the withdrawal of support included alleged promotion of division.

The Coalition stated that, "Isuwa Galla has repeatedly acted in ways that sow division within the Zaar Community, undermining efforts to foster unity and cooperation among members."

Another reason is disrespect for Gung Zaar select, he said, stating that, "He has refused to acknowledge Gung Zaar as our paramount ruler, displaying a lack of respect for our traditional leadership and cultural heritage."

NACHON Congratulates Ogun Pilgrims On Successful Hajj

As activities for Hajj 2024 grind to a halt for pilgrims from across the world, the Commissioner of Operations, National Hajj Commission of Nigeria (NAHCN), Anofi Olanrewaju Elegushi, has congratulated pilgrims from Ogun State on the successful completion of the 2024 Hajj rites.

Speaking during a brief visit to the Mina tent of Ogun pilgrims, Elegushi acknowledged the dedication and spiritual commitment demonstrated by Ogun pilgrims throughout the sacred journey, emphasising that their perseverance and devotion were truly commendable.

He admonished the pilgrims to avoid any actions that might invalidate their Hajj before Allah, stressing the importance of maintaining purity in their deeds and intentions to ensure that their pilgrimage remains accepted and blessed.

"This is a time to reflect on the lessons learned and to carry forward the spiritual upliftment gained during Hajj. Your prayers are powerful and necessary for the continued peace and progress of our nation. Let the purity and devotion you have shown during Hajj be a beacon in your everyday life," he advised.

News

APC Chieftain, Akinola, Hosts Party Leaders, Stakeholders, Urges Unity

KAZEEM AWOJODU
IBADAN

In the spirit of Ileya festival, a chieftain of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Oyo State, Hon. Akinjide Kazeem Akinola, has played host to leaders and stakeholders of the party.

Akinola, who hosted party members, loyalists, communities, religious and traditional leaders, business and political associates in his country home at Egbeda Local Government Area of Ibadan, explained that there was “a need to bring ourselves together in a time like this to chat and relate with one another and strengthen the progressive bonds that exist amongst us.”

Speaking through his media assistant, Akintunde Yusuf, Akinola said; “This is not the first of this kind of gathering. We have made it an annual ritual for us to set aside our differences, relate together and chart ways forward among ourselves.

“We can all see that our party leaders beyond Egbeda/Ona-Ara Federal Constituency are here. Also many stakeholders and members of the party are chatting and relating with one another. This is a sign that APC is under one roof as against what anybody may be saying outside that our party is not united.”

While speaking to newsmen, former Egbeda State Constituency lawmaker, Hon. Oluksunkammi Samson, hailed Akinola's commitment to further strengthen and unite the party leaders and members “as we move forward to the next political dispensation.”

In his words, Oluksunkammi said, “Akinola is a fantastic man that God blessed the federal constituency with. With him not in office, he has been doing fantastically good for the interest of the party.”

Corroborating Oluksunkammi's praises of Akinola, Hon. Aderemi Ogundele, a former chairman of Ona-Ara Local Government Area, also described Akinola's intervention in APC in all fronts as one the party needs most at this time.



Chinyere Almona, Director-General/CEO, Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) (left); Gabriel Idahosa, President, LCCI (second left); Bright Chimezie, Legendary Nigerian singer (second right), and Ngozi Omambala, Chairperson, Creative and Entertainment Group, LCCI, during the visit the legendary singer to the Creative and Entertainment Group of LCCI, in Lagos, on Monday.

Bauchi, Adamawa, Yobe Govs Study Pakistani Post-Insurgency, Disaster Management

MOHAMMED ABUBAKAR
DAMATURU

The governors of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states, Professor Babagana Umara Zulum, Mai Mala Buni and Alhaji Umaru Fintiri respectively, have visited Pakistan for a study of the country's experience in post-insurgency and disaster management.

The visit was organised by the Multi-Sectoral Crisis Recovery Project (MCRP), a World Bank project, and co-ordinated by the North East

Development Commission (NEDC) NERSP PMC Cell. It is a World Bank-funded initiative supporting recovery and peace-building in the North-east States of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe.

The tour is aimed at deepening understanding of best practices in crisis management, disaster resilience, urban development and co-ordination by drawing the Pakistani experiences.

The visit aims to understand best practices and solutions relevant to MCRP AF and NEDC/BAY mandates, strengthen institutional capacity for planning, recovery,

and stabilisation, as well as enhancing implementation of infrastructure, services and social cohesion.

Other reasons, according to the statement signed by Mamman Mohammed, Director General Press and Media Affairs, “Include improved planning for post-NEDC phases, increase MDAs’ capacity to design and implement sustainable projects.”

Governor Buni is accompanied by Yobe State MCRP PC, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Wealth Creation and Employment Generation, the Permanent Secretary of Liaison Services and the Ex-

ecutive Secretary of SEMA

The team from the three states visited Punjab Municipal Development Fund Corporation (PMDFC), LGCD and Punjab Planning and Development Board (PnD Board) in Punjab, a city with a population of over 120 million people.

“The team is expected to visit the Punjab Disaster Management Authority, visit PMDFC Municipal services projects, Islamabad Disaster Risk Management Portfolio, Khyber Project for Rural Investment and Institutional Support, Meeting With National Disaster Management Authority.

Plateau: Stakeholders Advocate Industrial Clusters To Boost Employment

ONOJA AUDU
JOS

The Plateau State Government has been charged to create investment incentives, create industrial clusters and standardised markets/artisan hubs to create jobs and to ensure an organised environment, and drive development for business community.

This charge was given in Jos by Akin Omoware, the Head of Component, Business Enabling Environment, BEE/Investments and Sustainable Infrastructure of

the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Development for Decent Employment in Nigeria, GIZ-SEDIN at Jos business community meeting held at Jos Business School.

Omoware said unemployment is a major social and economic problem facing not just Plateau State but Nigeria with multi-dimensional implications, hence the need to engage in reforms that would create jobs.

His words, “We have a very productive economy, we are trying to see how we can

close the gaps and stimulate production. We can work collectively to help the MSMEs because they are those who start businesses and create jobs.

“The government is very elastic to create jobs. I am not sure the jobs at the federal agencies here, the university, schools, the state government and local government are up to 100,000.

“The MSMEs are creating jobs in the formal and informal sectors but if we don't create the environment, there's no way they will be able to do what they need to do. Recently,

companies have been shutting down because of some economic issues.

“Government has a role to play and to ensure that the environment is conducive and that the investors can come in and the MSMEs can put their ideas into use and form something from them to create jobs for others.”

According to him, , “Everybody knows the economic potential of Plateau and Nigeria generally. We have the resources, it is important to add value to these resources wherever we have the comparative advantage and create jobs for the youths, we should have industrial clusters where people could support one another to create wealth.”

Bello Assumes Office As New Kebbi Police Commissioner

HARUNA USMAN

Following the elevation and redeployment of former Kebbi State Commissioner for Police, AIG Chris A., the Kebbi State Police Command has announced the posting of new Police Commissioner, CP Bello M. Sani, for the command.

The command's image maker, bSP Nafiu Abubakar, in a statement, said the assumption and deployment of the new CP to the command took effect immediately.

CP Sani who hails from Bakori Local Government Area of Katsina State was enlisted into the Nigerian Police Force as cadet officer in 1992; he served at various capacities before his deployment to Kebbi.

The new police chief, who seeks the support of the people of Kebbi State, stakeholders and traditional rulers, pledged to curb crimes in the state with cooperation of members of the society.

Yobe NYSC Coordinator Urges Staff To Mentor, Treat Corps Members With Respect

MOHAMMED ABUBAKAR

Hajiya Salamatu A. Muhammad, the Yobe State Coordinator of NYSC, has called upon the staff to mentor and treat corps members with the utmost care and respect as the 2024 Batch B Stream 1 Orientation Course approaches.

During a pre-orientation course meeting held at the NYSC Secretariat, Federal Secretariat Complex in Damaturu, Hajiya Salamatu emphasised the importance of extending a warm reception and demonstrating patience to the incoming corps members, who will be arriving from all over the country.

“First impressions always last,” she noted, underscoring the need for camp officials to create a welcoming atmosphere.

The state coordinator also highlighted the unique challenges of each orientation course. With recent cholera outbreaks in parts of the country, she stressed the necessity of maintaining a clean environment and prioritising personal hygiene.

Reflecting on insights from a recent pre-orientation course workshop in Kaduna, Salamatu underscored the importance of applying emotional intelligence in all interactions, particularly when dealing with corps members.

During the meeting, Mr. Ahmed Aliyu, Assistant Director of IPR, was introduced as the camp director for the 2024 Batch B Stream 1 orientation course. Mr. Aliyu solicited support and cooperation from the staff to effectively discharge his duties.

We're Determined To Create Platform For Traditional Rulers – AYDM

SEYI TAIWO-OGUNTUASE

The Alliance for Yoruba Democratic Movements, (AYDM), an alliance of 130 Pan Yoruba socio-cultural groups spread across the old Western Region has expressed its determination to have a platform for all traditional rulers who are descendants of Oduduwa.

Popoola Ajayi, AYDM General made this known at the end of a two day meeting which had over 100 representatives from across the South

West, Itsekiri, Edo, Kwara, Kogi also had representatives from across West African countries.

The group said it has began the campaign for Obas in the South West to have a regional body stating that it has set up a committee that would visit Yoruba traditional rulers in the six Southwest states plus Delta, Kogi and Kwara states towards establishing O'odu Council of Traditional Rulers and that the committee will also visit Togo, Benin Republic and Ghana.

lic and Ghana.

Ajayi said that at this critical moment, Yoruba Obas need to speak with one voice on common interests, that the traditional rulers are by age long convention, expected to defend the indigenous values of their people and protect their ancestral land physically and spiritually.

The group said there are small and big conflicts across Yoruba territories that could be easily resolved by the traditional rulers instead of waiting for

the Government to do so.

“As we speak, there is no forum that brings all Yoruba traditional rulers together to the extent that when three Yoruba traditional rulers were killed the Obas did not speak with one voice. This is not good. There are growing challenges that demand collective response.

The group said it was impressed by the response of traditional rulers that have been contacted on the issue while praising His Royal Highness

Oba Olusola Olatunde a first class Oba in Ekiti, Onikun of Ikun-Ekiti, who is one of those promoting the initiative for his forthrightness and his determination to ensure the platform of all descendants of Oduduwa traditional rulers emerges.

The group said it was aware of the differences between the Obas but that it is optimistic that it would be able to bring the traditional rulers together on the basis of the Lowest Common Factor, (LCM) of Yoruba interests.

News

SUZAN EDEH
BAUCHI

The Northern Youth Association of Nigeria has urged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to disregard any call for the sack of the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun, over allegations of corruption in recruitment exercise.

Speaking to journalists in Bauchi, president of the group, Comrade Godiya T Adams, stated that the call for the sack of the IGP was uncalled for and selfish.

Northern Group Urges Tinubu To Disregard Call For Sack Of IGP

"Permit me to thank you all, members of the press present at this briefing, I salute your sagacity at making sure the right information is passed to the public," he commended.

"Our attention has, in recent days, been drawn to news making rounds of a group of unpatriotic and disgruntled individuals asking President Tinubu to sack IGP.

"Here we want to state without equivocation, fear or

favour, that such actions are not only malicious but selfish and self-centered and we are hereby calling on our father, the President and Commander in Chief to disregard such action and to even call such individuals to order as their actions undermine the effort of the IGP to bring the Nigerian Police to global reckoning.

"We are very much aware of the irregularities and corruptions perpetrated by this

elements of retrogressive character in the conduct of the recruitment processes of citizens into the Nigerian Police and the only crime of the IGP was to reject such fouled processes and as Nigerians, we want to assure the IGP that we are solidly behind him on this as thing must be done in the proper way."

"There have been positives with the Nigerian Police under the stewardship of IGP

Kayode Egbetokun and Nigerians are very happy with the way the police have conducted themselves in the discharge of their duties.

"We urge the IGP to remain focused on giving Nigerians the best police/citizens relationship as these individuals might stop at nothing to tarnish his hard reputation as a police chief of impeccable antecedents."

Bauchi Chapter Of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association Elects New Officials

SUZAN EDEH

The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria (MACBAN), Bauchi State Chapter, has elected officials that would lead the association for the next four years.

National President of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria, Baba-Othman Ngelzarma, while addressing members of the association and the new executives in Bauchi, urged Fulani in Nigeria to embrace both western and Islamic education in order to become a people with respect in the face of ethnic profiling.

He was in Bauchi alongside other national officers to supervise the conduct of the state chapter election, charging them to be united and focused on issues that bring them together rather than divide them.

His words; "It is time for us to embrace education, enrol our children in schools so that they will get education and become our leaders in the future. Education is the key to development."

He lamented that Fulani, especially cattle breeders, have been given bad names in the country, saying the only way out for them is to be well educated in order to defend the race.

Alli Solicits Support For Widows, Vulnerable

KAZEEM AWOJODU
IBADAN

The senator representing Oyo South at the National Assembly, Sarafa Alli, has called on Nigerians to always support the widows and the vulnerable in the country.

The lawmaker, who chaired the first anniversary and Widow Empowerment ceremony of the Prince FM Ibadan, said there was the need for widows' empowerment across the country for a better socio-economic balance.

The event which featured raffle draw session, widow's empowerment and birthday ceremony, drew dignitaries from home and overseas, with plenty of gifts won, including a sum of N1million.

The lawmaker, who noted the importance of International Widow's Day, said any society that refused to empower its widows is failing, saying "empowering widows to support themselves and their families also means addressing social stigmas that create exclusion and discriminatory or harmful practices."

The lawmaker added; "When national laws exist to protect the rights of widows, weaknesses in the judicial systems of many states compromise how widows' rights are defended in practice and should be addressed," he added.

Senator Alli lauded the initiative of Prince FM's Chairman, Dr. Babatunde Balogun, which is behind protecting and empowering widows, despite the understandable economic challenges across the world, asserting that, "Lack of awareness and discrimination by judicial officials can cause widows to avoid turning to the justice system to seek reparations."

While supporting Prince FM with a sum of 250,000 for the widow's empowerment programme, Senator Alli promised to make legislation in promotion of the vulnerable, including the widows, orphans and special persons in Nigeria.



Lawal Adeyemi, President elect, Rotary Club of Onigbongbo (left); Yinka Adeosun, Assistant Governor, Rotary International 9110 (second left); Razaq Salau, host/President, Rotary Club of Onigbongbo (middle); Mayowa Alakija, Education Secretary, Local government Education Authority (LGEA), Oshodi-Isolo/Ejigbo (second right), and Aderemi Titilola Florence, Head of Section, Social Mobilization Oshodi-Isolo Local Government, during the commissioning of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Project (WASH) plus Modern Toilets facilities for Pupils of Oshodi Model Primary School, in Oshodi, Lagos.

Immunity Clause, Spinal Cord Of Corruption In Nigeria – Mohammed

PASCHAL NJOKU

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Mohammed Ndarani Mohammed, has advocated the removal of Section 308 from the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

Section 308 of the constitution states that no civil or criminal proceedings can be instituted against the President, Vice-President, Governor or Deputy Governor and they can't be arrested or imprisoned or a process of any court requiring or com-

PELLING their appearance can be issued against them.

Ndarani Mohammed stated that Section 308 of the Constitution, often referred to as Immunity Clause "is the spinal cord of corruption in Nigeria."

The senior lawyer attributed the hydra-headed socio-economic and political problems bedevilling the country's growth to the immunity being enjoyed by governors and their deputies while in office.

"Some of the problems in this country are caused by

governors and their deputies because some of them hide under Section 308 of the Constitution to perpetrate all manner of things.

"In view of this, I call on the National Assembly to look at Section 308, nullify it, water it down, strike it down or remove it to a level where we can have accountability and responsibility from governors.

In a chat with judiciary correspondents in Abuja, Ndarani insisted that corruption, which virtually has eaten deep into the fabrics

of the country's democratic governance, is traceable to the immunity clause.

He therefore urged the National Assembly to expunge the section from the constitution, if the fight against corruption must be won.

"I don't believe in Section 308 of the 1999 Constitution, which bestows immunity on the President, Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors of 36 States of the Federation.

"Globally, immunity clauses can be acceptable for the President and the Vice President, but honestly, I am not totally happy with it being applied to governors and deputy governors."

Rehabilitation Of Adeniji Falomo Bourdillon Road: Lagos To Divert Traffic For One Month

OLUSEGUN KOIKI

The Lagos State Government has said that it would divert traffic from Alfred Rewane and Osborne through Osborne Foreshore Estate axis to enable the Federal Ministry of Works carry out the first phase of the rehabilitation of the Asphaltic Sections.

The rehabilitation would start from Osborne Foreshore Estate to Sura Bridge Ramp

from Wednesday, June 26 to July 27, 2024.

A statement by Mr. Oluwaseun Osiyemi Lagos Commissioner for Transportation, said that a lane of the road to be rehabilitated would be closed to vehicular movement.

Consequently, he advised motorists to use the Alexander/Glover to Oba Adeyinka Oyekan Avenue inwards Ikoyi to connect Obalende/Ring Road and access 3rd Mainland Bridge to proceed

with their journeys as some of the alternative routes.

Also, motorists from Victoria Island are advised to go through Falomo Roundabout to link Awolowo Road and access 3rd Mainland Bridge to reach their desired destinations.

Also, motorists from Victoria Island could utilise Ozumba Mbadiwe Avenue to link Mekunwen Bridge and proceed to CMS/Apongbon Bridge inwards Eko Bridge

to access Funsho Williams Avenue to reach their desired destinations.

The commissioner added: "For this period, Motorists on the other side from Sura Bridge will have a through traffic inbound Osborne Foreshore Estate."

He however assured that traffic management personnel would be on ground to minimise inconveniences and ensure steady flow of traffic.

He urged motorists to be patient and comply with the officers and the aforementioned interventions put in place.

AFI Hits Anambra For Drug Abuse Sensitisation Campaign

CHUKWUJEKWU ILOZUE

The Adorable Foundation International (AFI), a foundation which devotes its energy in creating a drug-free society awareness especially among youths, has rolled out its programmes for this year's World Drug Free Day celebration which will be held on Wednesday, June 26.

Addressing the press in Awka, founder of the foundation, Princess Ada Amam, said youths were chosen as a focus because they are the foundation of every nation as acknowledged by the United Nations.

According to Amam, AFI was founded on the ideology of getting the 'Be Against Drug' Campaign to the nooks and crannies of Nigeria, with the support of late wife of the chairman of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Mrs. Zainab Maruwa, who as a member of Board of Trustees (BoT) helped to register the foundation.

On Wednesday (today), AFI will stage its third Miss ASACADA which is an abbreviation of (A Societal Awareness Against Drug Abuse) pageant in Awka to help in creating awareness and attracting interest of the youths in the fight against drug abuse.

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sion with State House correspondents to reveal what transpired at the meeting.

Tinubu was reported to have stepped down the memo when it came up for deliberations at the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting on Tuesday, pleading that all the tiers of government must be on the same page regarding a uniform wage benchmark.

Recall that the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) including the organised private sector and the Federal Government representatives have had disagreements over the idea of minimum wage.

While labour insists it will make do with N250,000 considering the prevailing economic realities, the Federal Government says it could afford N62,000 above the current N30,000, but some state governors have objected to the initial N60,000 proposal.

According to the Minister of Information and National Orientation, "A lot of people have been asking me questions pertaining to whether the new minimum wage would come up for deliberations today at FEC, especially whether government was going to have a position on the new wage.

"Recall that there was a report from the tripartite committee, comprising the Nigeria Labour Congress and Trade Union Congress, the organised private sector and the government representatives. These three make up the tripartite committee that discussed on the new minimum wage. They have forwarded a re-

Tinubu Asks For More Time To Consult On National Minimum Wage

port to the president which he has gone through.

"But consistent with the way it should be done, I want to inform Nigerians that FEC deliberated on that because the new national minimum wage is not just the decision of the Federal Government.

"That memo was stepped down to enable Mr. President consult further so that he can have an informed position on what to do. This decision was taken because it affects the states, LG and the Federal Government".

The decision of the president to consult the relevant stakeholders is coming on the heels of the statement by the President of the NLC, Comrade Joe Ajaero, where he said that the organised labour had expected the president to reach out to the members of the Tripartite Committee to harmonise the figure.

Comrade Ajaero had hinged his position on the fact that there was a stalemate at the end of the Tripartite Committee meeting.

But briefing State House correspondents, the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, said, "I want to inform Nigerians here that the Federal Executive Council deliberated on that (report of the Tripartite Committee on New National Minimum Wage) and the decision is that because the new national minimum wage is not just that of the Federal Government, it is an issue that involves the Federal Government, the state governments, local governments, and the organised private

sector and of course, including the organized labour.

"That memo was stepped down to enable Mr. President to consult further; especially with the state governors and the organised private sector, before he makes a presentation to the National Assembly, before an executive bill is presented to the National Assembly.

"So, I want to state that on the new national minimum wage, Mr. President is going to consult further so that he can have an informed position because the new national minimum wage, like I said, is not just an issue of the Federal Government.

"It affects the state governments, it affects the local governments, it also affects the organised private sector; and that is why it is called national minimum wage. It's not just an affair of the Federal Government.

"So, Mr. President has studied the report and he's going to consult wider before a final submission is made to the National Assembly."

Labour Says It Expects Negotiation On Wage To End By July

Meanwhile, President of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), Comrade Festus Osifo, on Tuesday, said state governments should brace up to pay whatever would be arrived at as new minimum wage as all negotiations would be rounded off by July 2024.

He said organised labour expects the president to assent to

the new wage once passed by the National Assembly before the end of July 2024.

According to Osifo, if assented to, it will ameliorate the harsh living conditions Nigerians are currently struggling with.

This comes as President Tinubu said he would need more time to consult on an appropriate minimum wage figure for the country.

Osifo, who made the disclosure when the Special Adviser on Labour Matter to the Kogi State Governor, Onuh Edoaka led a delegation to his office on Tuesday in Abuja, said there was need for the national tripartite negotiation committee made up of government, labour and organised labour, to find a common ground so that the bill would receive prompt attention by the president as well as the National Assembly.

He said: "What we are working on from both labour centres is that before the end of July, we should have a new minimum wage that must have passed through the processes, that must have been assented to by the president so that the plight of the workers will improve much more.

"So that the current economic challenges that we are facing as a country will be improved upon, so that an average worker will be able to go to market and buy one or two things to take care of his or her family because of this skyrocketing inflation that we have today in our country.

"As you are aware, we have submitted N250,000, the government and organised private sec-

tor, N62,000. Let both parties, let all parties come together, we resolve and have a common front so that the president will be able to send the bill to National Assembly and at the end of the day, we will have a new national minimum wage. This is key, this is a topic that is germane for all labour unions today in Nigeria."

While commending the current Kogi State government for clearing the backlog of payment of N30,000 minimum wage to workers in the state, he said, "State governments should begin to fashion out ways they can easily implement the new wage once it is signed into law.

"We are not at this moment even dwelling on the N30,000 again. I was listening to a state, I think Nasarawa State, that said they started setting aside some money to meet the new obligations when the new minimum wage is passed. So I wish to also appeal that in Kogi, let that be the top priority amidst this scarcity of income, amidst this scarcity of revenue.

"I wish to also use this opportunity to speak to all other states as well that they should be putting plans in place to implement the new minimum wage because in labour today, we are totally ready because when the new minimum wage Act is passed, we are going to follow it state by state to ensure that it is implemented.

"So let the workers heave a sigh of relief and we have the trust and the belief that with the high labour representation

in Kogi State government today, we believe that Kogi State government will do the needful. Let the state pay the new minimum wage when it is implemented and also manage the consequential adjustment so that at the end of the day, the workers will be better off for it."

Earlier, the Special Adviser on Labour Matter to the Kogi State Governor, Onuh Edoaka, noted that the current administration of Governor Ahmed Ododo has corrected all the shortcomings of the immediate past administration as far as workers welfare in the state was concerned.

While noting that the current governor has put some labour friendly interventions in place, the SA added that it was seeking the support of the TUC to ensure Kogi State comes back into good light, away from the negative narrative in the past.

"We are coming from where we were carrying placards before saying *we no go gree* on issues of labour but today this government has drawn us closer to see how we can add value to his government and see how we can speak for those workers we were fighting for before.

"Contrary to what NBS and Ministry of Finance have said, we are here to set the record straight that Kogi State is paying the minimum wage of N30,000 as it ought to be. We genuinely call on you and all the headquarters of the congresses to see that Kogi State is no longer put in the light of bad image."

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The union lamented that successive governments had refused to renegotiate the Federal Government and ASUU 2009 agreement, as well as provide funds for the revitalisation of public universities in the country, among other selfless demands.

Addressing a press conference, shortly after a special congress involving parents, students and lecturers at the union's secretariat in Port Harcourt on Tuesday, the Chairperson, ASUU, University of Port Harcourt, Comrade Uzomma Darlington Chima, expressed worry that the government had only paid lip service to the issues raised by the public tertiary institutions' lecturers.

Chima said, "It is sad to note that over twenty months after the suspension of the last strike, the Federal Government has only

ASUU Threatens Fresh Strike In Two Weeks Over 2009 Agreement, Others

paid lip-service towards addressing those core issues that led to the strike *ab initio* and others that emanated from the strike.

"The need for better remuneration for our members cannot be overemphasised. It may sound incredible to note that our conditions of service have not been reviewed since the past 15 years despite the galloping inflation and untold hardship that successive governments have caused the critical mass of the Nigerian citizenry.

"We are calling on all well-meaning Nigerians to prevail on the Federal Government led by President Ahmed Bola Tinubu to avoid another crisis that may disrupt industrial harmony and academic activities on our campuses. We are open to dialogue and negotiation towards the resolution of the pending issues

that are threatening the peace and harmony in our public universities."

The union also lamented that over N20 million deducted from salaries of lecturers at the University of Port Harcourt by the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) had not been remitted into the account of the union's cooperative society, adding that the anomaly had continued unabated.

Chima further stressed about 30 to 40 months promotion arrears of 325 professors were currently being withheld.

"Payments of promotion arrears, especially to our members promoted to the professorial cadre in the last five months. It is pertinent to note that for the University of Port Harcourt alone, we have 325 academic staff that are owed some of them up to 30 to 40

months arrears, that issue has not been addressed."

While fielding questions from journalists, the Chairman of the Federal University of Lokoja (FUL), ASUU branch in Lokoja, Kogi State, Dr. Joshua Silas, lamented the actions of the government which could not constitute governing councils for months.

While calling on the government to do the needful to avert the impending strike, he urged parents, well meaning Nigerians and the general public to prevail on the government to honour the agreement it freely entered into with the union since 2009.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education (EAUE) chapter called on President Bola Tinubu to rescue the Nigerian universities system

which it says is bleeding to death.

The ASUU Chairman of UAUE, Dr. Micheal Bamidele Ojo, stated this while speaking with the press on the pitiable situations in Nigerian public university education and the pathetic conditions of services which put lecturers in precarious states, stressing that of the ways to address the bleeding was for the president to rise up and sign a renegotiated agreement with the union.

He noted that "salary awards are no substitutes for a negotiated agreement. Each negotiated agreement between the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) and Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) is a comprehensive package that captures not just salary component but also a gamut of requirements for bench-marking a competitive university system designed for

addressing the developmental challenges of Nigeria.

"ASUU's demand for negotiated salary and other conditions of service is anchored on the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) convention No. 98 which underscores the principle of collective bargaining. The last FGN/ASUU agreement was in 2009."

Dr. Ojo, who also led members of UAUE congress to street protest, accused the Federal Government of unwillingness to decisively address the outstanding issues with the union.

The union called "on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led administration to immediately set in motion the process that will lead to the review and signing of the Nimi Briggs-led renegotiated draft agreement as a mark of goodwill and assured hope for Nigeria's public universities."

Labour Party: Obi Champions Apapa, Abure Reconciliation, Asks NLC To Sheathe Sword

KINGSLEY BENNETH
ABUJA

The national leader of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, on Tuesday in Abuja, preached the need for a reconciliation between the Julius Abure, and Lamidi Apapa factions of the party.

Obi, who was at the national secretariat of the party, also tasked the leadership of the party to continue in its efforts towards reconciling all aggrieved party members and supporters, even as he vowed to ensure that every discord within the party will be addressed in no distant

time.

He also pleaded with the NLPTC protesters led by Abdul Waheed Umar, who stormed the national headquarters of the party, to sheathe their swords and take the option of achieving their demands through legal means.

He noted that the reconciliation was for the greater good of LP, stressing that a family do not fight forever.

A statement by the National Publicity Secretary of the party, Obiorah Ifoh, disclosed that the former Anambra State governor said, "Let me tell you one thing, their reconciliation

is all about our party and I can assure you that everyone must reconcile with each other."

On why he attended the NWC, he explained that he was early at the party headquarters to initiate a peace and reconciliation process in the party, hence the brouhaha involving a faction of the Labour Party groups.

"During our meeting before we learnt that our people were outside, I told them that my first assignment was reconciliation, my second assignment was reconciliation and my third assignment, reconciliation

and I can tell you that what you witnessed earlier is a normal thing in our lives, I do the same thing.

"It is what I do every day even in our families. When we quarrel with our wives and children, we reconcile. Even today during the meeting, I made one instance which is that I have come to start the work of reconciling the family.

"So these people here are members of the family who we must reconcile with. We are going to sit down around a table and decide the future of our party. I am ready for a reconciliation meeting any day you

choose.

"And I like what happened here today. This means we have just started the reconciliation process and what we achieved today was so much, as I told you sometimes it happens in my house and I allow it because that is the only way I know how mature my children have become."

Earlier in his speech, Abure expressed satisfaction on the leadership roles Obi has been playing in the party in making sure that the party returns to a formidable entity capable enough to engender the new Nigeria hoped for.

He said, "Labour Party is happy with your reconciliation project and we will give you all the supports. We are not the aggressor here, we have always wanted peace because we can't go into future elections with a divided loyalty.

"We have said that we are focused on 2027, that is why we are the only party that has produced its candidate for the 2027 presidential election. We know where we are going and we have refused to be distracted. We will definitely get to our destination of giving Nigerians a better nation."

Sport

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CAF Continental Tickets: Nigerian Clubs Face Uphill Task Amidst Coefficient Woes

AYO BADA
LAGOS

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has announced the allocation of continental tickets for Nigerian clubs, with the Federation Cup winners, either Abia Warriors or Elkanemi Warriors, securing the first CAF Confederation Cup ticket. Enyimba FC of Aba, who finished third in the league, takes the second ticket.

However, the celebration is short-lived, as Nigeria's clubs face the stark reality of a dismal and systemic poor run in African competitions. The country is on the brink of being restricted to only two teams - one in the CAF Champions League and the other in the CAF Confederation Cup - due to its declining Coefficient ranking.

The affected clubs, Enugu Rangers and Remo Stars (Champions League), Enyimba (CAF Confederation Cup), and the eventual Federation Cup winners, have a daunting task ahead to improve Nigeria's Coefficient.

They must perform exceptionally well in their respective



Players and officials of StarTimes/NPFL 2023/24 champions, Rangers International of Enugu after winning the trophy with a 2-1 victory over Gombe United

continental campaigns to avoid the restriction.

To improve Nigeria's coefficient in CAF rankings, our representative clubs in the CAF Champions League and the CAF Confederation Cup must prepare thoroughly and strategize effectively for each match.

They must also invest in talented players and experienced coaches and develop a strong team spirit and discipline.

In addition, they must focus

on scoring goals and defending solidly as well as learn from past mistakes and adapt to African football's unique challenges.

Furthermore, they must utilize home advantage and energize their fans; stay focused and motivated throughout the tournament.

We also gathered that the teams must embrace continental football's intensity and competitiveness also leverage technology and data analysis to gain an edge and represent

Nigeria with pride and passion.

By following these tips, our clubs can excel in CAF competitions, enhance our coefficient, and restore Nigerian football's glory.

Nigerian football fans are anxious, hoping for a turnaround in fortunes and a return to the glory days of Nigerian football on the continent.

The clubs must rise to the challenge and make a positive impact to restore the country's reputation in African football.

Super Eagles Job: Musa Confirms NFF Not In Talks Wth Renard

Following the resignation of Finidi George as head coach of the Nigerian national football team, the Super Eagles, speculation has been rife about potential successors.

One prominent name emerging in discussions is that of flamboyant French manager Herve Renard, who is known for his success across African football.

Finidi, a former Super Eagles player himself, stepped down after the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) announced plans to appoint a technical adviser for the senior national team.

The decision came in the wake of disappointing results during the June qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup, where Nigeria

managed a 1-1 draw against South Africa and suffered a 2-1 defeat to Benin Republic.

The rumors linking former Cote d'Ivoire, Angola, Zambia and Morocco coach Renard to the Super Eagles coaching role have stirred considerable interest among football enthusiasts.

However, Alhaji Idris Abdullahi Musa, a Congress member of the NFF, has refuted these claims.

Musa clarified that the NFF have not engaged in any formal discussions with potential candidates, including Renard.

"I was with the Chairman of the NFF and Technical Committee of the Federation last week. I can tell you the Federation has not spoken to any coach," Musa said.

FCAAN Congratulates Illechukwu, Rangers For Winning 8th NPFL Title

RAJI ADEBAYO
IBADAN

The leadership of Football Coaches Association of African Nations (FCAAN) has congratulated two of its members Felis Illechukwu, head coach and Ekene Ikedilichukwu, Team scout for leading Rangers to a glorious and successful season which saw the team winning the 2023/2024 NPFL title and 8th in the series.

FCAAN President Dr Terry Eguaeje in a statement by Femi Amusan, FCAAN media head, said the NPFL this time around was highly competitive and challenging but commended Rangers' dodgedness which saw the team emerging champions of the N150m prize tagged league.

Eguaeje said Illechukwu

has remained consistent as top coach in the Nigerian league and was not surprised that he led Rangers to an outstanding season to emerge champions and also picked a ticket to represent Nigeria in the CAF money spinning league Next season.

Eguaeje noted that the entire FCAAN family felicitated with the team and urged the team to improve on its grey areas and bolster the team with quality players for the team to give Nigeria a good representation in the prestigious Champions League.

The victory for Rangers is the second for the team in 30 years after the team picked a total of 70 points to emerge as the champion of NPFL.

FCAAN family wishes the team and the entire team a more glorious outing in the future.

Sports Fraternity Mourns Former Minister Of Sports

Nigeria's sports circle was thrown into mourning mood on Monday with the news of the death of a former Minister of Youth and Sports, Air Vice Marshal Ade-bayo Hamed Lawal (rtd).

According to his daughter, Mrs. Yinka Enahoro, the late AVMLawal died in his sleep in the early hours of Sunday, June 23, 2024 at his home at the age of 83.

AVM was born on September 14, 1941 in Offa, Kwara State.

He attended Government College, Ibadan between 1955 and 1962 before joining the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in 1963 among the pioneer officers.

Lawal was trained as a Military Pilot in West Germany from where he graduated in 1964.

His postings included Commander, NAF Port Harcourt

(1969-1970), Commander, Enugu Air Force Base, 1970-72; NAF Kano twice; (1972-1973) and (1975-1977) and Air Officer Commanding HQ Tactical Air Command NAF Makurdi. (1977-1978).

AVMLawal was a very active and vibrant fighter pilot who was at a point the Commander, Nigerian Air Force Base, Makurdi, 1977-78, before his appointment as Military Governor of

Benue State in July 1978 until October 1979.

At one time, he was Director of Air Faculty Command and Staff College Jaji.

He was later appointed Federal Minister of Youth and Sports.

After retirement, he went into business and philanthropy.

He is survived by his wife, children and grandchildren.

WTT Series: Sanwo-Olu Happy With Grassroots Players Participation



Team Nigeria's Women 4 x 100m winning squad

"In the last three days we have seen table tennis being played at the highest level and the highest level that you can imagine.

"We are happy that there are few grassroots young players Nigeria's that have shown up from this competition. I wish all of them the very best.

Speaking further, "More

importantly, it's a proud the audience and fans that have come out here in the last three days and I see that the organisation has been extremely spectacular. I'm happy with the ambience that am seeing here".

"As a state that is committed to sports development, Governor Sanwo-Olu said the WTT Contender will

also trigger other sports to bring world top players to Lagos and rekindle all of the old glories in sports, but not only in football but across all disciplines.

Sanwo-Olu also reiterated that the state is working assiduously on the revamping of sports facilities across the state, adding that the introduction of sports in school is another form of engagement for the school children to participate in competition at the school level.

Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Gbenga Omosho; Director General, Lagos State Sports Commission, Lekan Fatodu, The vice President ITTF, Enitan Waheed Oshodi; Director of Event and Chief Operating Officer, ITTF-Africa, Dr. Kweku Tandoh were in attendance at the grand finals of the WTT Contender Lagos.

AYO BADA
LAGOS

Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Olusola Sanwo-Olu has expressed his satisfaction with the participation of the grassroots players at the first World Table Tennis (WTT) Series in Sub-Saharan Africa, which took place in Lagos.

He made the statement at the medals presentation of the five day epoch-making event held inside Molade Okoya-Thomas Indoor Sports Hall of Teslim Balogun Stadium Surulere Lagos.

The world tournament brought world top players together under intense competition for the coveted prizes and 400 International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), ranking points for the winners.

Governor Sanwo-Olu disclosed that sports has come to stay in Lagos as the World Table Tennis Federation (WTT) identified the state as one of the cities that is promoting table tennis.

AYO BADA
LAGOS

President of Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), Tono-bok Okowa was in cloud nine on Monday evening watching World Record Holder in women's 100m hurdles, Tobiloba

Amusan, as she Inspired Team Nigeria to 4x100m Relay Gold at the Japoma Stadium, venue of the 23rd African Senior Athletics championships.

Amusan was in her best elements as she 'fly' on the track to hand Nigeria its fourth gold medal, anchoring a race that had the quartet of Justina Eyakpobeyan, Tima Godbless and Olayinka Olajide.

Amusan missed her 100m hurdles event due to illness.

Speaking shortly after the event, Okowa said, "I was really worried on my arrival in Douala, and saw the condition of Amusan. I was at the airport when I heard the news. From the airport, I rushed down to the athletes hotel to see her. Then, she was really down, and I prayed to God to come to our rescue because the children are

under my custody. I am happy God answered our prayer."

Okowa continues; "I was so excited seeing Tobi fly on the track to give us gold. This can only come from an athlete, who is dedicated and loyal to her country. I salute her courage and sense of humour. I praise all the athletes and officials, who have contributed to our success story here in Douala. Our next bus stop will be in Paris for the Olympics Games, and I am optimistic that our athletes will give a good account of themselves."

Recall that Amusan arrived in Douala on Thursday morning alongside other members of the Nigerian contingent with no sign of illness. But she fell ill in the night, and Sports Ministry's medical personnel attached to the AFN team to Douala advised her to take a rest.

She took part in the 4x100m relay final because AFN Technical Director, Samuel Onikeku tendered a medical report on her; unlike the duo of Favour Ofili and Rosemary Chukwuma who pulled out from the 100m semifinal without the knowledge of the technical committee.



Concalo Ramos



Georges Mikautadze

Portugal To Rotate Team Against Georgia

Roberto Martinez is set to make changes as Portugal take on Georgia at Euro 2024.

Wins over Czech Republic and Turkey have ensured Portugal already have top spot in Group F wrapped up, and rotation is now expected before the focus shifts to a last-16 clash against one of the best third-placed teams.

"Securing first place is good because there are a lot of players in the dressing room who deserve to play, and we need to give them opportunities to show what they've got and create a competitive environment," Martinez said after the victory over Turkey.

Diogo Jota, Goncalo Ramos and Joao Felix could all start in a new-look front three, with Cristiano Ronaldo likely to be rested and Rafael Leao suspended after picking up his second booking of the tournament.

The likes of Joao Neves and Matheus Nunes will hope to get their chance to impress; while Nelson Semedo is an option to start at right-back should Joao Cancelo

drop out.

Fulham midfielder Joao Palhinha came into the side against Georgia but is a yellow card away from a suspension, and may not be risked here.

As for Georgia, a shock victory here would almost certainly earn them a place in the knockout stages in their first ever appearance at a major tournament.

Georges Mikautadze has scored in both matches so far and will again lead the front, alongside Napoli star Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

Watford's Giorgi Chakvetadze had to settle for a cameo off the bench last time out, as Zuriko Davitashvili was preferred, but the attacking midfielder did start the opening match and could return to the side here.

There are otherwise not expected to be many changes, even if Giorgi Gvelesiani, Guram Kashia, Giorgi Kochorashvili, Solomon Kverkvelia and Anzor Mekvabishvili are all facing a suspension if they are booked and Georgia progress.

Euro 2024! Euro 2024!! Euro 2024!!! Group E In The Balance Going Into Final Matchday



Leandro Trossard



Vitaliy Mykolenko

A fascinating finale to Group E at Euro 2024 could see either Ukraine or Belgium, the two favourites to qualify for the knockouts, sent home.

All four teams head into the final matchday level on three points with Slovakia and Romania facing off at the same time as this game in Stuttgart.

Ukraine hold the worst goal difference of the quartet, meaning they have to win to guarantee qualification while Belgium know a draw will be enough.

The Red Devils recovered from a shock loss to Slovakia by beating Romania on Sunday.

In similar fashion, Ukraine overcame Slovakia having been stunned by Romania to start their tournament.

Serhiy Rebrov will hope to have Everton left-back Vitaliy Mykolenko fit to start after missing their opening games with a foot injury.

His return could see Ukraine move to a three-man defence and Arsenal's Oleksandr Zinchenko's place in the line-up is at risk.

Roman Yaremchuk may also earn a recall after scoring the winner against Slovakia. Artem Dovbyk's underwhelming Euros could lead to him being dropped.

Dodi Lukebakio is suspended for Belgium which could lead to Leandro Trossard returning to the starting XI.

Both teams have recovered from shocks by winning their second game at the Euros but another defeat will likely send them home.

Belgium are the favourites but have not shown enough so far to suggest it will be an easy night.

This is the first meeting between these two nations.



Merih Demiral

Group F Decider To Send Either Czech Republic Or Turkey Home

The stakes will be high when Group F wraps up this evening with Czech Republic and Turkey facing off in their bids to qualify for the Euro 2024 knockouts.

Only a win will guarantee a spot in the last-16 for the Czechs after Georgia held them to a 1-1 draw last

time out.

Turkey were well beaten by Portugal to leave them at risk and another defeat in Hamburg would likely see them miss out on one of the four third-placed spots in the next round.

But they have a good recent record against Czech Republic and a fascinating finish to this group awaits.

The Czechs are sweating over an injury to Patrik Schick ahead of the game.

Merih Demiral could replace the suspended Abdulkadir Bardakci in the centre of the Turkish defence.

Real Madrid winger Arda Guler will hope for a recall with changes likely following their defeat to Portugal.

Both sides have looked shaky for much of this tournament which makes for a very difficult-to-predict finale, with so much on the line.

In head to head, Turkey have won their last three meetings with the Czechs, most recently in a November 2022 friendly.

Romania top Group E ahead of facing Slovakia at Euro 2024 this evening.

No group is as delicately balanced as this one, where each team has won one and lost one game.

Goal difference, goals scored, head-to-head record and maybe even fair play could figure in the equation and it is Romania who hold the narrow advantage going into this round of matches. Belgium play Ukraine at the same time in the other Group E game.

Slovakia couldn't follow up their upset of Belgium with another win on Sunday, as they lost to Ukraine despite taking a first-half lead.

Romania were beaten by the Belgians but created enough chances to have taken a point which would

have sealed their passage to the knockouts.

Francesco Calzona has named an unchanged team for both of Slovakia's games so far and will likely stick with the same players once again.

Romania welcomed veteran striker Denis Alibec back from injury off the bench against Belgium and he may be handed a start in this game.

This should be a fascinating rollercoaster of a group finale and this game in particular is hard to predict. Romania have produced the better displays so far and can continue a fine tournament by reaching the last-16.

Slovakia have not beaten Romania since 1942, with their last meeting a 1-1 friendly draw in 2013.

Slovakia, Romania In Survival Of The Fittest



Francesco Calzona



Denis Alibec

Education is the movement from darkness to light.

— Allan Bloom

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As at today, there are two emirs purportedly running the traditional affairs of the Kano emirate. On the one hand is Emir Aminu Bayero and on the other hand is Emir Sanusi Lamido, both laying claim to the throne as dictated by the respective forces lurking behind them and pulling the strings.

As things are now, the two cousins tussling for the throne are fully aware that their eventual staying in office depends on who comes tops amongst their respective human benefactors rather than it being due to some divine endorsements as they usually tell us. So, until we can definitely tell where the swinging pendulum rests, it is safe to say that, for now, the Kano emirate is saddled with two equally matched emirs at the helm, something which political scientists and constitutional analysts technically call a Diarchy.

One thing is however certain: whatever eventually happens to the two contenders, the Kano emirate has been substantially drained of its royal aura, having been turned into an item of political chess game which then puts it squarely at the mercy of the vicissitudes of Kano partisan politics.

When former Kano State Governor, Abdullahi Ganduje, summarily dethroned Emir Sanusi Lamido Sanusi from office as the Emir of Kano on the 9th of March, 2020, I wrote to express my surprise about the unnecessary attention that the removal was getting in the public place as if something big had happened. This is because it should have already been well-known to anyone with some knowledge of the legal and political processes through which an Emir emerges and indeed, every other traditional ruler in the country; everything, other things thereafter appertaining to the “royal” offices are wholly at the pleasure of whoever happens to be the governor of the state.

If there was any doubt about that, then, the recent “re-enthronement” of the previously dethroned Emir Sanusi by the new Governor of Kano State, Abba Yusuf, and the subsequent judicial circus that has dogged the “sacking and reinstatement” drama which has now led to the incongruous scenario in which two emirs, Sanusi and Bayero, are laying claims to the Kano traditional stool just like little kids fighting over toys, should have made it clear that under the present constitutional dispensation, traditional rulers are nothing more than robots acting at the mercy of their state governors, irrespective of the recent assurances offered by the Vice-President while addressing a regional summit Katsina.

As I explained in the piece published immediately after the initial dethronement of Emir Sanusi Lamido II, in 2020: “It remains a juridical and, indeed, a conceptual incongruity that, in one breath, a nation could be claiming some relationship with republicanism while at the same time professing monarchism, two political concepts that are mutually exclusive. It is therefore preposterous that we still make hypocritical allusions to the serviceability of an otiose system that we all know can no longer realistically coexist on equal terms with the modern governing constitutional order.

Historically, before the advent of colo-

Kano's 'Diarchy' And Paradox Of Monarchism In Republican Nigeria



Emir Sanusi



Emir Bayero

nialism and the subsequent evolution of the modern Nigerian State, the territories now comprising Nigeria were ruled by monarchs, (kings and princes) who sometimes claim divine right to rule. Excepting for the eastern parts of the country where some forms of “republican” governance existed, monarchism was the dominant governing machinery in most of the territories.

Because there cannot be two sovereigns within a single polity, the conquering imperialistic colonialists proceeded to subjugate the various traditional rulers and promptly subjected them to their own suzerainty by force or by guile. Those who attempted to resist the colonial usurpation were promptly executed or dethroned and banished to distant lands.

Eventually, the traditional governing institutions collapsed and the various

kingdoms were subjected to a humiliating debellatio and the erstwhile royal overlords suddenly became subjects or mere subordinates of the colonial authorities especially through the “Indirect Rule” arrangement and it was only those whom the new colonial authorities could determine their unflinching allegiance and pliability that were given “staffs of office,” a symbolic replica of their lost glory which was withdrawable whenever they misbehaved or manifested rebellious dispositions.

Hiding under the indirect rule system, the now institutionally castrated “monarchs” somehow managed to mislead their peoples about the reality of their helplessness, especially as they continued to answer their honorific titles of their “royal highnesses” or “royal majesties” which were now totally bereft of all the original incidents of royal sovereign powers. To make matters worse, the succeeding post-colonial native politicians are even more determined to give vent to the fact that their powers have long gone and they are now reduced to merely running government errands and making themselves available for ceremonial purposes.

Traditional rulers, devoid of any significant constitutional roles however continue to “enjoy” customary and cultural respects within their ancestral domains and, of course, the occasional lip-services about their relevance to communal security and peace. Those who dared to breach the political nonpartisan codes had their fingers burnt as they were promptly put in their places by their overzealous political paymasters through dethronement and/or banishment.

One insurmountable structural obstacle on the path of those who think that a return to monarchism in whatever form is still possible in Nigeria is the fact that the territorial boundaries of modern Nigeria have no bearing with the previous scope of powers

territorially exercised by the precolonial monarchs. For example, there was never the “King,” “Oba” or “Emir” of Nigeria to whom we can legitimately return the lost powers. Proper monarchism has become practically otiose and constitutionally unworkable in contemporary Nigeria because of the radically changed political and territorial landscapes.

The now deposed Emir Sanusi II is an integral part of the northern oligarchic establishment who also relishes his association with southern socialites and the Lagos corporate community. Being an educated personality, he certainly understands that what we gleefully eulogize as “royalty” in present day Nigeria is actually nothing but the relics of a once glorious institution which is now devoid of its spiritual and political essence. The continuous relative prominence of the Emirate system in northern Nigeria is essentially due to its historical entanglement with the Islamic religion especially following the Othman Dan Fodio's jihadist conquest.

There is however no doubt that Emir Sanusi II deeply relishes the opulence and grandeur of the throne, what with his large harem recently enlarged by the addition of an under-age damsel (now 18) with so many children in tow; his extremely glamorous regalia, the expensive ferrying of his Rolls-Royce to occasions outside of Kano and the retinue of palace praise-singers in his unusually large entourage – the same parasitic opulent lifestyle of the northern establishment which he so bluntly ridicule. A “Megxit” move such that saw the British royals, Harry and Meghan, walked away from the opulence of the monarchy would have better validated Sanusi's vaunted progressive credentials as his advertised uncomplimentary disposition towards the Northern oligarchy sounded hypocritical for which he has just paid a heavy price.

Curiously, there has been enormous outpouring of mischievously contrived sympathies, a false sense of an imminent risorgimento for a moribund monarchy since his dethronement, more like an opportunistic political weaponisation of a personal misfortune than a genuine expression of institutional solidarity.

That said, I completely disagree with his post-dethronement banishment which is clearly unconstitutional. Emir or not, every Nigerian is entitled to his fundamental human rights. The stark irony now, however, is that we are actively deploying the core republican values of egalitarianism in the defense of a monarchical edifice that is itself the very antithesis of liberal constitutionalism – a system inherently skewed against the dignity of the “commoners.” So, unless we are deceiving ourselves, there is not much left in the circumstantially otiose monarchical system beyond its aggrandizing histrionics – a scarecrow farcically projecting an ignoble past.”