

At Kukah's Birthday Celebration, Jonathan Urges Nigerians to Be Vigilant to Save Democracy

● *You're selfless, honest, courageous, northern governors tell Sokoto Bishop* ● *Tinubu, Fayemi, Tamburwal, Dogara celebrate cleric*

Seriki Adinoyi in Jos, Kuni Tyessi in Abuja, Victor Ogunje in Ado Ekiti and Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi
Former President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan has urged Nigerians not to lower their guard but use the forthcoming 2023 elections to save the country's democracy.
He made the call as special guest of honor in his message on the occasion of Bishop Matthew Kukah's 70th Birthday Celebration held in Abuja yesterday.
Governors Forum has described In the same vein, the Northern

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Okada Ban: Defaulting Riders, Passengers Risk Three Years Imprisonment, Lagos Warns... Page 41

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TRUTH & REASON

Ayu: Those Calling for My Sacking Are Children

● *Why chairman's exit won't solve alleged marginalisation, as party constitution mandates northern takeover*
● *PDP NWC in marathon meeting over NEC, national caucus* ● *Ortom speaks on relationship with Wike, says he's a good friend*

Chuks Okocha in Abuja
Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Iyorchia Ayu, yesterday, said those calling for his ouster were children, who were nowhere to be found when he and others struggled to form the party.
Ayu, who spoke in an interview with the BBC Hausa Service, said he was not bothered by the calls for his removal.
Ayu's comments came as indications emerged that his sacking might not address the concerns

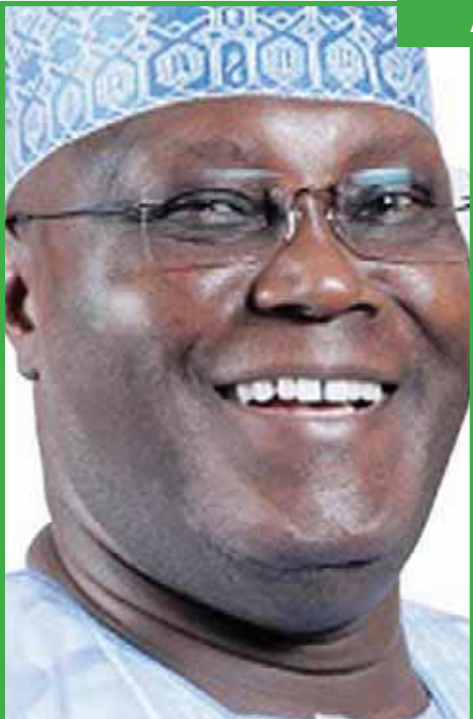
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THISDAY SPECIAL REPORT

With 177 Days to Presidential Poll, Race Still Too Close to Call

● *THISDAY defines path to victory for Atiku, Tinubu, Obi*

Continued on page 39



■ Atiku

ATIKU'S PATHWAY TO ASO ROCK

STATES HE MUST WIN OVER 60%	COMMENT
Adamawa	Likely
Taraba	Likely
Bauchi	Possible
Benue	Possible
Plateau	Possible
Sokoto	Likely
Jigawa	Possible
Katsina	Likely
Kebbi	Possible
Delta	Likely
Edo	Likely
Akwa Ibom	Likely
Bayelsa	Likely
Kaduna	Possible
STATES HE MUST WIN OVER 40%	COMMENT
Lagos	Possible
Ogun	Possible
Osun	Likely
Oyo	Likely
Kano	Possible
Rivers	Possible
Cross River	Possible
Kogi	Possible
Kwara	Possible
Nasarawa	Possible
Niger	Possible
FCT	Likely



■ Tinubu

TINUBU'S PATHWAY TO ASO ROCK

STATES HE MUST WIN OVER 60%	COMMENT
Lagos	Likely
Ogun	Likely
Ondo	Likely
Oyo	Possible
Osun	Possible
Ekiti	Likely
Kano	Possible
Kaduna	Possible
Katsina	Possible
Zamfara	Likely
Borno	Likely
Yobe	Likely
STATES HE MUST WIN OVER 40%	COMMENT
Sokoto	Likely
Kebbi	Likely
Jigawa	Possible
Benue	Possible
Kogi	Likely
Niger	Likely
Kwara	Possible
Plateau	Possible
FCT	Possible

See Peter Obi's Pathway... Page 39

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AT 70TH BIRTHDAY OF BISHOP MATTHEW KUKAH...
L-R: APC Presidential Candidate, Mr. Bola Tinubu; the celebrant and Bishop of Catholic Diocese of Sokoto, Bishop Matthew Kukah; former President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan and Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu, during a fundraising for the proposed Kukah Center Permanent Site in commemoration of the Bishop's 70th birthday in Sokoto ...yesterday

MTEF: Absence of Key MDAs at House Committee Presentation May Stall 2023 Budget Preparation

● *Agency spent N23m on stationery in one year*

Udora Orizu in Abuja

The 2023 budget preparation may suffer some setback as several agencies of the federal government continue to ignore summons by the House Committee on Finance to defend their 2023-2025 Medium Term Expenditure Framework and Fiscal Strategy Paper (MTEF/FSP) on which the fiscal document is predicated.

Agencies who were scheduled to appear before the lawmakers since the sitting started on Monday, have shunned the summons, while those that showed up failed to present the required documents.

Some of the agencies that have failed to appear before the Committee include the Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigeria Police Trust Fund and Nigeria College of Aviation Technology.

Others were: NNPC Limited, Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas, Oil and Gas Free Zone, Federal Ministry of Power, Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission, Nigeria Bulk Electricity Trading, Nigerian Content Development & Monitoring Board, Niger Delta Power Holding Company, Nigeria Electricity Management Services Agency, Transmission Company of Nigeria, Galaxy Backbone PLC, Nigerian Electricity Liability Management Company, Nigeria Export Import Bank, Nigeria Port Authority and Nigeria Shippers Council.

Out of 12 agencies that were scheduled to appear before the

committee yesterday, only four showed up, but were turned back for improper preparation.

The Committee particularly refused to take the submission of the Nigeria Export Processing Zone Authority for what it described as disjointed and unorganized presentation and asked them to go and repackage the document and reappear before them next Tuesday.

The Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Finance, Hon. Saidu Abdullahi who presided over the session said the National Assembly would not accept agencies of government ignoring invitations for them to come and tell Nigerians what they have done with revenue at their disposal and what they were bringing to the table in terms of revenue generation.

The lawmaker said, "we made this clear yesterday that ordinarily, we are supposed to be on recess, but because of the core importance of this exercise, we called off our recess to take up this national assignment."

"It is very unfortunate that while we are making this sacrifice, the agencies are not turning up as expected. The National Assembly will not take this lightly with the agencies. It is a call to national duty."

"We do not understand why they should shy away from responding to the responsibility imposed on them."

"It should be a point of note that all agencies that have been invited must have cause for

appearance. Otherwise, we will rely on the powers conferred on us by the constitution to make them responsible. This apathy is not something that should be acceptable to anybody and we will not accept it."

"We have agencies that are highly irresponsible. If this country is not working today, let it be out there so that Nigerians will know that it is on the shoulders of the MDAs. We have invited them for this all-important exercise, but unfortunately, most of them have shown apathy. We don't know what they are afraid of, but it is a matter of responsibility."

"If you have willingly accepted the call for service, I don't under-

stand why you should shy away from taking responsibility. So, let it be known that we have agencies that are highly irresponsible."

"The responsibility of making this country work rest on the National Assembly and the Executive. We are doing our part of it, but unfortunately, we are not getting what we expect from the agencies."

Meanwhile, the Committee discovered that the Nigeria Office of Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) spent a whopping N23 million on office stationery in 2021, while remitting only N124 million out of the N499 million it generated in 2021 to the Consolidated Revenue Fund of

the federation.

The Director General of the agency, Mohammed Muazu Ibrahim had in his presentation told the lawmakers that the agency generated about N499 million in 2021, but remitted only N124 million to the CRF, representing 25 percent of the IGR.

The lawmakers pointed out that as a fully funded agency of government, the law required them to remit 100 per cent of their IGR.

Commenting on the development, a member of the Committee, Hon. Olalekan Afolabi said the agency, like many others were only out to siphon government resources.

Afolabi said, "they know what

that they are not supposed to remit 25 per cent. Look at their presentation which clearly show that they know the right thing to do and are deliberately not doing it."

"If they are permitted under the law to spend that money, they should have budgeted for it. Look at under the budget column, they wrote there meaning they did not budget for it, but under the actual, they spent almost everything that they generated."

"Until we begin to use heavy hammer on these agencies, they will not comply. They knew the right thing to do, but they are not doing it. This their report clearly show that they knew what they are doing."

FG Woos CSOs in Bid to Sustain States' Fiscal Reforms

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The federal government has solicited the partnership of civil society organisations (CSOs) across the country in a bid to sustain the fiscal reforms which came with the \$1.5 billion World Bank-assisted States Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) Programme.

The initiative was designed to nudge states into imbuing fiscal transparency, accountability and sustainability.

The four-year (2018-2022) programme, which was anchored by the Federal Ministry of Finance,

Budget and National Planning seeks to deepen fiscal transparency and accountability in the public finance management (PFM) system as a way of bolstering good fiscal governance at the sub-national level is expected to wind down by end of the year.

As part of measures to perpetuate the ideals of the programme at the state level as it winds down, SFTAS National Programme Coordinator, Mr. Stephen Okon solicited the partnership of CSOs.

Speaking at a sensitisation workshop organised for CSOs in Lagos, Okon explained that as part of the strategies to ensure the

sustainability of fiscal reforms at the sub-national level, the SFTAS Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) decided to engage stakeholders on the demand side like the CSOs who could ensure that fiscal transparency and accountability were sustained in state PFM activities.

A statement issued by the SFTAS Communication Specialist, Mr. Ibrahim Mohammed, quoted Okon as saying that the workshop set to achieve many objectives, including deepening the understanding of CSOs on the major programme elements of the SFTAS Programme for Results, enhancing programme visibility and buy-in; creating and sustaining mutual lines of communication, as well as contact and understanding between the PCU and the CSOs.

Others were to enhance community mobilisation for programme ideals' sustainability and engendering ownership and participation by CSOs post-SFTAS.

He said: "At this juncture, I wish to stress that this programme now in its fourth and final year of implementation needs to be sustained if the full ideals are to be realised. I therefore call on CSOs and the media to continue to promote those ideals and take full ownership of the programme beyond its life span."

"Some of these ideals already entrenched in the states' PFM system include online publication of approved citizens' budget, audited financial statements, improved procurement practices for increased transparency and value for money; strengthened public debt management and fiscal responsibility framework; improved clearance/reduction of stock of domestic expenditure arrears, and improved debt sustainability."

The National Programme Coordinator emphasised that beyond the disbursements, states were expected to continue to uphold and sustain the values and ideals of fiscal reforms initiated through the SFTAS programme, even as he called on CSOs to use the provision of the SFTAS charter recently endorsed by the governors under the umbrella of Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) to hold governments accountable and promote good fiscal governance at sub-national level.

Okon explained that the federal government has so far disbursed the sum of N471.9 billion to the 36 states of the federation following the achievement of results in different Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLIs) in the Annual Performance Assessments (APAs) (2018, 2019 and 2020), carried out by the Office of the Auditor General for the Federation as the independent verification agent (IVA).

Committee Urges Courts to Prioritise SGBV Cases

● *Decries poor state of juvenile holding centers*

Alex Enumah in Abuja

The Administration of Criminal Justice Monitoring Committee (ACJMC) has made a case for the speedy trial of cases involving juveniles, illiterates, Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and children in conflict with the law and Persons Living with Disability (PLWD).

The Executive Secretary of the

ACJMC, Mr. Sulayman Dawodu, who made the call yesterday, also decried the poor state of juvenile holding centers in the country, which according to him was far below international best practices.

Dawodu was speaking at a one-day stakeholders' workshop on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in the Criminal Justice System, which held in Abuja.

The Executive Secretary observed that the vulnerable groups have their own unique peculiarities that must be taken into consideration while implementing the law and policies on the investigation, prosecution and adjudication of their interest within the criminal justice system.

He stated that the aim of the workshop was to raise stakeholders' awareness on

the issue and set out feasible plans and practices that would bring an improvement of these vulnerable groups.

While stating that the issue of juvenile holding centers was one issue which had plagued the juvenile system in Nigeria due to the absence of adequate facilities, Dawodu called for the provision of dedicated "Youth Courts" amongst others.

NEWS

**PROGRESSIVE GOVERNORS' VISIT TO OSINBAJO...**

L-R: Governors Abubakar Bello of Niger State; Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq of Kwara State; Simon Lalong of Plateau State; Badaru Abubakar of Jigawa State; Babajide Sanwo-Olu of Lagos State; Abubakar Bagudu of Kebbi State; Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo; Deputy governor of Ebonyi State; Governors Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State; Onuwa Yahaya of Gombe State; Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State and Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State, during a courtesy visit of the APC governors to the Vice president's office in Abuja... recently

PHOTO: GODWIN OMOIGUI

Jonathan Narrates How He Spent Whole Night to Resolve ASUU Strike

● *Call off industrial action, Diri tells NDU lecturers* ● *NANS wants varsity lecturers sacked* ● *CDHR condemns FG's alleged move to ban union*

Onyebuchi Ezigbo, Folalumi Alaran in Abuja, **Victor Ogunje** in Ado Ekiti and **Ugo Aliogo** in Lagos

Former Nigeria's President, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan has revealed how his administration resolved a four-month old industrial action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) in one night.

He stated this yesterday in Abuja, at the 70th birthday celebration of Matthew Hassan Kukah, the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese, organised by Kukah Centre.

Jonathan who described governance as a very complex job, said it took his intervention and determination to get the striking lecturers to agree to go back to the classroom.

He said after efforts of several committees set up to resolve the dispute failed, he had to take it upon himself to end the face-off working through the night.

"Now we are talking about ASUU strike, during my time too, ASUU had four months of strike, different committees were meeting and meeting and nothing

was working. I said how can our children stay out of school for four months. So I had to call a meeting of all the leadership of ASUU.

"I presided over the meeting with my vice president, the Attorney General was there, I said that that night we must solve the problem. The Attorney General was there, Secretary to the Government of the Federation was there, the Ministers of Education were there, the Labour and Finance Ministers, everybody that has to do with it were there.

"And I thought that my being there would help us to do things quickly. But we spent the whole night. It was 5:30 am before we concluded and the strike was called off," Jonathan said.

In a related development, Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has urged lecturers at the state-owned Niger Delta University (NDU) to end their seven-month-long sympathy strike with the national body of ASUU.

Diri insisted that the sympathy industrial action by lecturers of the university was no longer justifiable as they have been receiving their

salaries monthly without going to work.

He said although the institution's governing council had scheduled a meeting with the union, the lecturers ought to reciprocate the goodwill of the state government by returning to the classroom in the interest of the students.

A statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Daniel Alabrah, yesterday, quoted the governor to have said this on Tuesday night, at a dinner in honour of the victorious Bayelsa United Football Club in Yenagoa.

He said the state government had sorted out all the issues between it and the institution's ASUU.

Diri noted that lecturers in federal tertiary institutions might have issues with the federal government, but that was no longer the case with the state-owned institution's lecturers.

He said: "Let me use this opportunity to call on lecturers at the Niger Delta University to call off their strike. I have already given directives to the governing council, which represents the government in the management of that university. "For about seven months they

have been on strike. They call it a sympathy strike because the very local issues that they raised with our government have already been sorted out. So they have no problem with the state government.

"About two or three months ago, I met with the leadership at a meeting not to continue the sympathy strike. Yes, they are all unionists. However, in Nigeria, there are two layers of government that are totally different.

"The issues are with the federal universities and not the state institutions. State-owned institutions in our sister states like Rivers and Delta did not join the strike or have called off theirs. I would like the Niger Delta University to follow suit by calling off the strike.

"You all know that you cannot be receiving salaries and you do not go to work for seven months. Like I said, I have set up the machinery and I am very sure that reasoning will prevail. NDU will resume in the shortest possible time for our children to go back to school."

Meanwhile, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS),

has urged the federal government to apply its power to "hire and fire" any employee in dealing with the university lecturers over their declaration of an indefinite strike.

It accused the ASUU of advertently promoting the private universities, where many of them allegedly work currently and have their wards.

NANS said it considered the decision by ASUU to declare indefinite strike after six months of warning industrial action, as not only, "unpatriotic and unnecessary," but "wicked and definitely meant to collapse the public universities and promote private ones".

NANS' President, Sunday Asefon, said this in a statement while reacting to ASUU's declaration of indefinite strike.

Asefon stated that such a decision was easy for ASUU to take because many of their leaders don't have their wards in public universities and that many lecturers are employees of various private universities around the country.

He lamented the alleged destructive disposition of ASUU members to the growth of public universities, accusing them of not wary of the imminent collapse of the system by their conduct.

"Some of them are not on any way affected by their attempt to collapse the sector for their selfish and inconsiderate gains. ASUU had succeeded initially to masquerade their strike action as being in the interest of Nigeria and in the interest of the teeming Nigerian students. "Events of recent weeks have

therefore made it abundantly clear that ASUU has an ulterior motive, which is to collapse university education system in Nigeria and systematically promote private Universities where many of them have their children," the statement added.

"We call on State Government to forthwith liaise with Vice-Chancellors of state institutions to announce the resumption of academic activities and grant the Vice-Chancellors authority to enforce the resumption as state universities should never have joined the strike in the first place," it stated.

On the other hand, as reactions continue to trail the federal government's alleged move to proscribe ASUU, the Committee for the Defence of Human Right (CDHR) has said the move was not only unconstitutional but also hypocritical as negotiation is ongoing towards ending the lingering strike.

In a statement signed and made available to THISDAY, the National Publicity Secretary, CDHR Nigeria, Idris Afees Olayinka, described the proposed action as unreasonable, ill-thought out and impracticable, adding that it could further worsen the situation and deepen the crisis taking a cue from antecedents.

The statement maintained that ASUU had accused the federal government of violating the principles of collective bargaining by rejecting the recommendations of the Professor Nimi Briggs' Committee which was set up to renegotiate the 2009 agreement.

"The same government had equally abandoned the recommendations of its preceding Committee on the renegotiation of the 2009 Agreement. Till date, the federal government has been unable to respond to these serious allegations which signpost FG's dogma and despotism in this matter being current dominant features and characterisation of this government both in governance and industrial relations.

"The right ASUU has to exist as a union is guaranteed under Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution and Article 10 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act and would require fundamental constitutional amendments to contemplate the ill-fated idea of proscription," it added.

Emirates Airlines Restores Lagos Flight Operations

Chinedu Eze

Emirates Airlines has announced that it would restore its flight operations to Lagos from September 11, 2022.

The airline disclosed this in an email it sent to its customers and travel agencies yesterday.

Emirates issued the mail five days after the federal government released the sum of \$265 million to foreign airlines in the country to settle outstanding foreign airlines' trapped funds out of the \$464 million owed the airlines in Nigeria, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

"We are pleased to inform you that effective from 11th September 2022, we will reinstate operations of our flights," Emirates said.

"Inbound flights from Dubai to Lagos (EK783) and outbound flights from Lagos to Dubai (EK784) will recommence from Sunday, 11th September 2022.

"Lagos flights after 30th

September, 2022 will be advised in due course," the airline said.

Two weeks ago Emirates had announced that it would be suspending all its flights to and from Nigeria effective September 1.

It had disclosed that it had tried every avenue to address

its ongoing challenges in repatriating funds from Nigeria, and had made considerable efforts to initiate dialogue with the relevant authorities for their urgent intervention to help find a viable solution and regrettably there had been no progress.

"We remain keen to serve Nigeria, and our operations provide much needed connectivity for Nigerian travellers, providing access to trade and tourism opportunities to Dubai, and to our broader network of over 130 destinations," the airline had stated.

NCC Crashes International Termination Rate for Telecom Sector

Emma Okonji

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has issued an amended Determination of Mobile (Voice) International Termination Rate (ITR) for implementation in the Nigerian Telecommunications Industry effective from September 1, 2022.

The ITR for voice services paid for terminating international calls on local networks in Nigeria is now set at \$0.10, from the previous rate of \$0.045.

Under the amended determination, the international carrier market

has been classified into MNOs/International Carriers and Small/Nigerian Transit Carriers/IDA Operators to ensure a level playing field that recognises the unique disposition and characteristics of genuine market participants.

The Nigerian Transit Carriers/IDA Operators shall terminate inbound international calls in the network of domestic operators at a discount of 21 per cent on the \$0.10.

In a statement issued by the NCC, which was signed by its Director, Public Affairs, Mr. Reuben Muoka, the Commission said in determining the ITR, it carefully

considered information and insights provided by stakeholders at different meetings and fora, which reviewed the previous rate and the industry's operating environment.

This, it stated was in addition to the cost model results, the state of competition in the sector and the Nigerian macroeconomic environment.

The Commission reiterated that the process of arriving at the ITR was conducted transparently with a view to providing maximum clarity to all parties without compromising the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information.

It expressed confidence that the new ITR, the outcome of the various engagements, would make a significant contribution to the development of the telecoms sector in Nigeria and be beneficial to subscribers, operators, and the country at large.

Meanwhile, the Mobile Termination Rates of N3.90 (for Generic 2G/3G/4G Operators) and N4.70 (for new entrants (LTE)/Small Operators determined in 2018) would continue to apply for local call terminations until the Commission makes a new determination, the statement said.



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NEWS



THE ABEOKUTA DELIBERATION...

L-R: Acting Executive Secretary, Technical and Vocational Education Board, Mr. Olubori Akinleye; Special Adviser, Technical and Vocational Education Board, Prof. Joseph Odemuyiwa; Commissioner for Industry, Trade and Investment, Mrs. Kikelomo Longe; Ogun State Deputy Governor, Engr. Noimot Salako-Oyedele; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Education Intervention, Mr. Fela Bank-Olema; Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Area Manager, Mrs. Funmi Coker; and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Mr. Olu Ola Aikulola, shortly after a meeting in Abeokuta... yesterday

CSO Group Urges Lawmakers to Reject Three REC Nominees over Alleged Partisanship

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The Nigeria Civil Society Situation Room (Situation Room) has asked the Senate Committee on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to reject the nomination of Prof. Mohammed Lawal Bashir, Ugochi Pauline Onyeka and Queen Elizabeth Agu as Resident Electoral Commissioners (REC) on grounds of partisanship.

According to the Situation Room, the nominees sent by President Muhammadu Buhari to the legislature for approval have questionable credentials regarding their ability to be non-partisan.

A statement signed by the Convener of the Situation Room coalition, Ene Obi, alleged that Bashir was openly affiliated with and contested in the governorship primaries of a political party in Sokoto State in the 2015 general elections.

It also raised concerns about the nominations of Onyeka from Imo State and Agu from Ebonyi State. It stated that Onyeka was a

former staff of INEC who was allegedly redeployed on account of her open association with political parties, while Agu was alleged to be a member of a political party and held a political appointment as an Acting Chief of Staff to Governor David Umahi up until June 2021.

The Situation Room said that Section 156(1) of the Nigerian 1999 Constitution, as amended, makes it mandatory that an appointee at INEC shall not be a member of a Political Party.

Item F, paragraph 14 of the third schedule to the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria forbids a partisan person as a member of INEC - a body charged under the Constitution to independently conduct free and fair elections.

"President Muhammadu Buhari's nomination of people who are clearly partisan into INEC amounts to a major attempt at undermining efforts to improve credibility of the electoral body, and contradicts the President's public claim that he will bequeath a better

electoral process to Nigeria. We wish to remind President Buhari that he was a beneficiary of a fair and credible electoral process in 2015.

"Appointing a person who is a

member of a political party into INEC will affect the independence of the electoral body and citizens' confidence in the electoral process.

"Consequently, Situation Room has called on the Senate Com-

mittee on INEC to whom the nomination was referred to by the Senate Plenary to recommend rejection of the three nominees on grounds of partisanship and likelihood of bias in carrying out

the duties of a REC," it said.

The Situation Room urged the Senate to rise up and insist on a non-partisan and independent membership for INEC "particularly at this critical time".

Geometric Power Says, It Suffers N100m Monthly Energy Theft

Dike Onwuamaeze

The Aba Power Limited (APL), a subsidiary of Geometric Power has cried out that it has been losing over N100 million monthly to 14 communities in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State due to illegal connections and outright energy theft by some members of the communities.

Managing Director of APL, Mr. Patrick Umeh, disclosed this yesterday, in a statement he issued in response to claims in a section of the media by some unnamed persons from the communities that they had been cut off from power supply since last weekend.

APL provides electric power to

nine out of the 17 local government areas in Abia State.

Umeh said: "It is unfair that these persons have failed to honour the invitation from Aba Power Limited to visit our office to agree on how to end the pervasive energy theft in their local governments, which amounts to about N100m monthly."

According to him, the electricity distribution company had gone out of its way to ensure that the communities receive at least 20 hours of quality power daily in recognition of the fact that some manufacturing companies are located there, adding that the APL was also mindful, "of the fact that these communities during the years when EEDC was the distribution company in

the area made commendable efforts to provide distribution transformers to serve their communities."

He noted that leading manufacturing and multinational companies in the area producing noodles, refined vegetable oil, and plastics products require reliable power for extended periods to maintain consistency in product and quality control.

Umeh, therefore, argued that, "it is not right for leaders of these communities to refuse to pay for electric power supplied and consumed on grounds of contributing transformers in the past when the area was serviced by a former distribution company for the area.

"All customers and stakeholders are encouraged to partner with APL, and report incidents of energy theft in any form to reduce losses and enhance the company's ability to focus on rehabilitation of abandoned and obsolete distribution infrastructure it inherited from a former distribution company in the area."

He, however, expressed his company's willingness to reconnect the affected communities "even this very minute if their representatives pledge to end the humungous energy theft."

"What we desire is to see all the factories, offices and homes in our distribution franchise area receive power for 24 hours daily, and not 20 just hours daily."

"This goal is achievable with the signing of an interim power purchase agreement with a reputable generator, while Geometric Power's generation company is nearing completion, and also the arrival of the international electricity management company to help the company implement best practices to international standard."

"We need all customers to pay their bills, protect the distribution assets, and be proactive in discouraging the practice of energy theft by some members of their communities."

Umeh also disclosed that many individuals in the 14 communities have been asking for their own individual meters so that they, "will be paying promptly to Aba Power rather than continue with the current practice of each of the communities having just one meter known as a bulk meter."

"This bulk metering practice enables an entire community to pay their bill as just one customer or one person, thereby denying those who want to pay as and when due the opportunity to do so and continue to enjoy uninterrupted electricity supply."

He assured the communities that the APL is working with multiple syndicates of meter providers and financiers to procure large quantities of meters for distribution and installation in the Aba ringed fence area.

Group: Africa Losing \$88.6bn to Illicit Financial Flow Annually

The Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA) yesterday said Africa was losing \$88.6 billion to Illicit Financial Flow (IFF) annually.

The Consultant to TJNA, Prof. Waithaka Iraki, from University of Nairobi, Kenya, made this known in Abuja, at the launch and dissemination workshop of study report on Tobacco Industry and Illicit Financial Flows in Africa.

The event was organised by the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) in collaboration with Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA).

Iraki, while reading the policy brief on, "Africa should not be Tobacco's wild-west," said this was mainly propagated by tax evasion by multinational companies operating in the continent.

"The AU/UNECA's High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flow (IFFs) Report 2015 brought to the world stage the scourge of IFF on sustainable development and revealed that more than \$50 billion annually was being siphoned on the continent."

"Recent data from the United Nations conference on Trade and Development's Economic Development in Africa report

2020 indicates that IFF have nearly doubled and Africa is now losing over \$88.6 billion.

"Tax evasion strategies to include illegal and exports; such are taxed differently and the difference can lead to tax loss, illegal production and sale, fudging data to obfuscate information that would be used by tax authorities."

"It also noted that political instability could also enhance tax evasion."

"Tobacco firms' revenues were surprisingly steady even during the COVID-19 pandemic, laws should be tightened to reduce advertising and promotions which keep the demand high," he said.

Iraki noted that clearly, African government had not done enough to reduce the tobacco induced burden, adding that the current regulation should be revisited.

He said low-level competition in the tobacco industry from planting to selling and cigarette making gives tobacco firms too much power.

According to the News Agency Nigeria (NAN), he therefore, added that regulation should induce competition along the tobacco supply chain because

more competition would reduce the profits and disperse the power of tobacco firms.

He said the incentives offered to tobacco firms are not commensurate with their contribution to the economy; and seem to ignore the health cost.

"Tobacco money is made in Africa, money goes elsewhere to shareholders outside the continent," he said.

Also, the Director of Customs Union and Taxation, Tiemore Salifou represented by Tax Advisor, ECOWAS Commission, Lucien Ametchohou, explained that with the establishment of an ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), the West African Region was taking another step towards the completion of the common market.

He said the situation in West Africa countries showed lack of use of taxation and the lack of synergy between research, advocacy and policy making in tobacco control.

He said the harmonisation of custom duties and taxes of equivalent effects at the border states would provide an adequate platform for building the common trade policy of ECOWAS.

According to him, Tobacco

abuse was responsible for more than six million deaths per year and has become one of the major challenges of all countries in the world.

The Executive Director CISLAC, Mr. Auwal Rafsanjani, said TJNA with CISLAC conducted a research to show the effects of tobacco companies activities in Africa.

Rafsanjani said this was part of the contribution of the group to ensure that IFF, money laundering, tax evasion tax avoidance, which are directly affecting African economy and development is curbed.

"So, we decided to carry out this study to show the consequences, the negative effects of the way tobacco companies are destroying the health of Africans by sometimes pure corruption in Africa because some of them have found way of bribing African parliaments."

"This is so they can have a soft landing legal framework; they work with some unpatriotic government officials in Africa to get tax relief and waiver instead of taxing them the appropriate taxes that can be used for development."

"This is why we have been working closely with some of the

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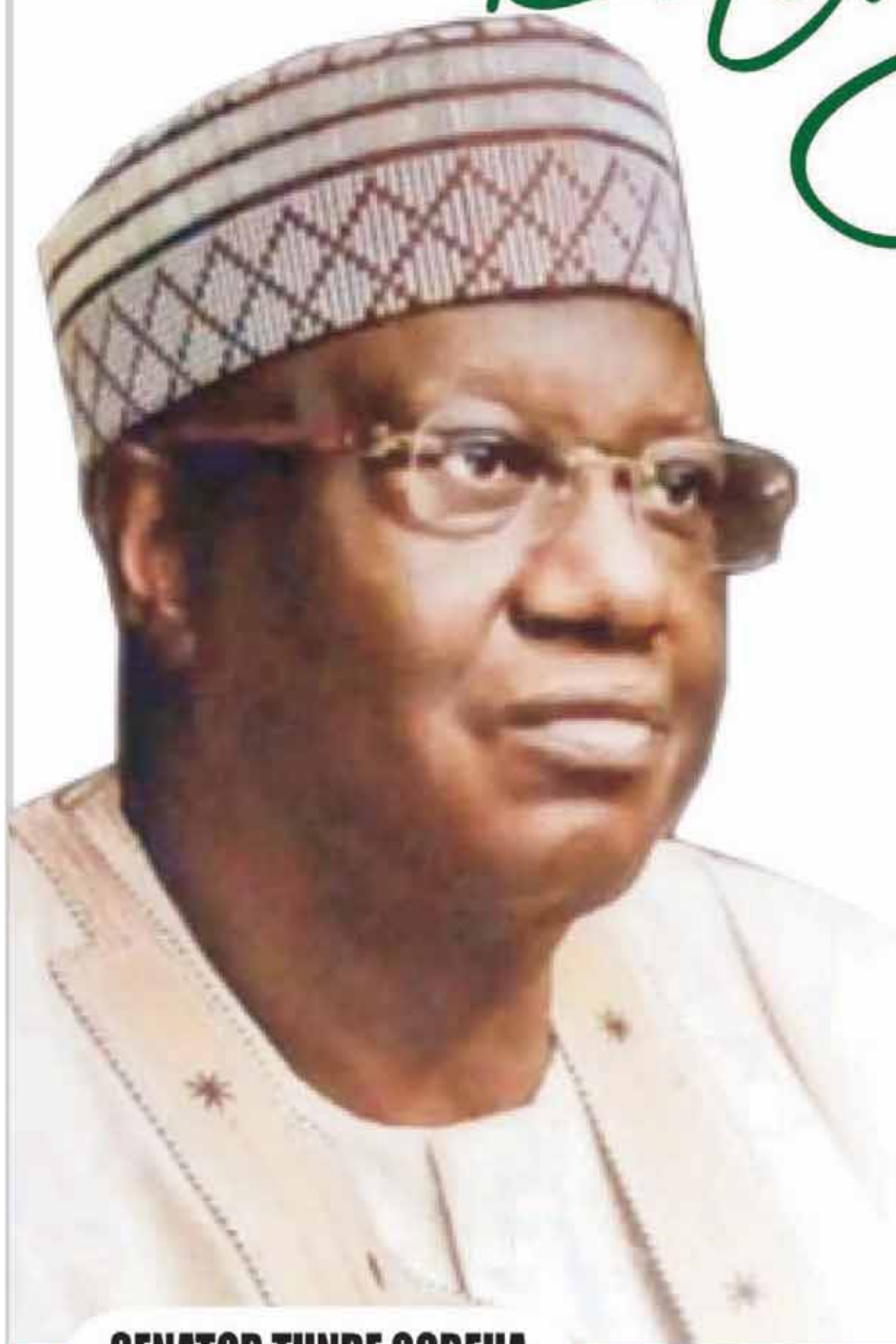
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Happy Birthday Daddy



As we celebrate your 75th birthday, we are thankful to God for His blessings in your life.

*With the help of God, you attained success at the highest level and served at the highest level in your career.
We Love You*

*With the help of God, we have learnt that humility in love is needed to be a dedicated Father and Grandfather. You are patient to listen, you are always approachable and most caring.
We Love You*

We thank God for your presence in our lives. May it be the will of God that He blesses you with joy, laughter and many more blessed years!!!

*Happy Birthday Dad.
We Love You!*

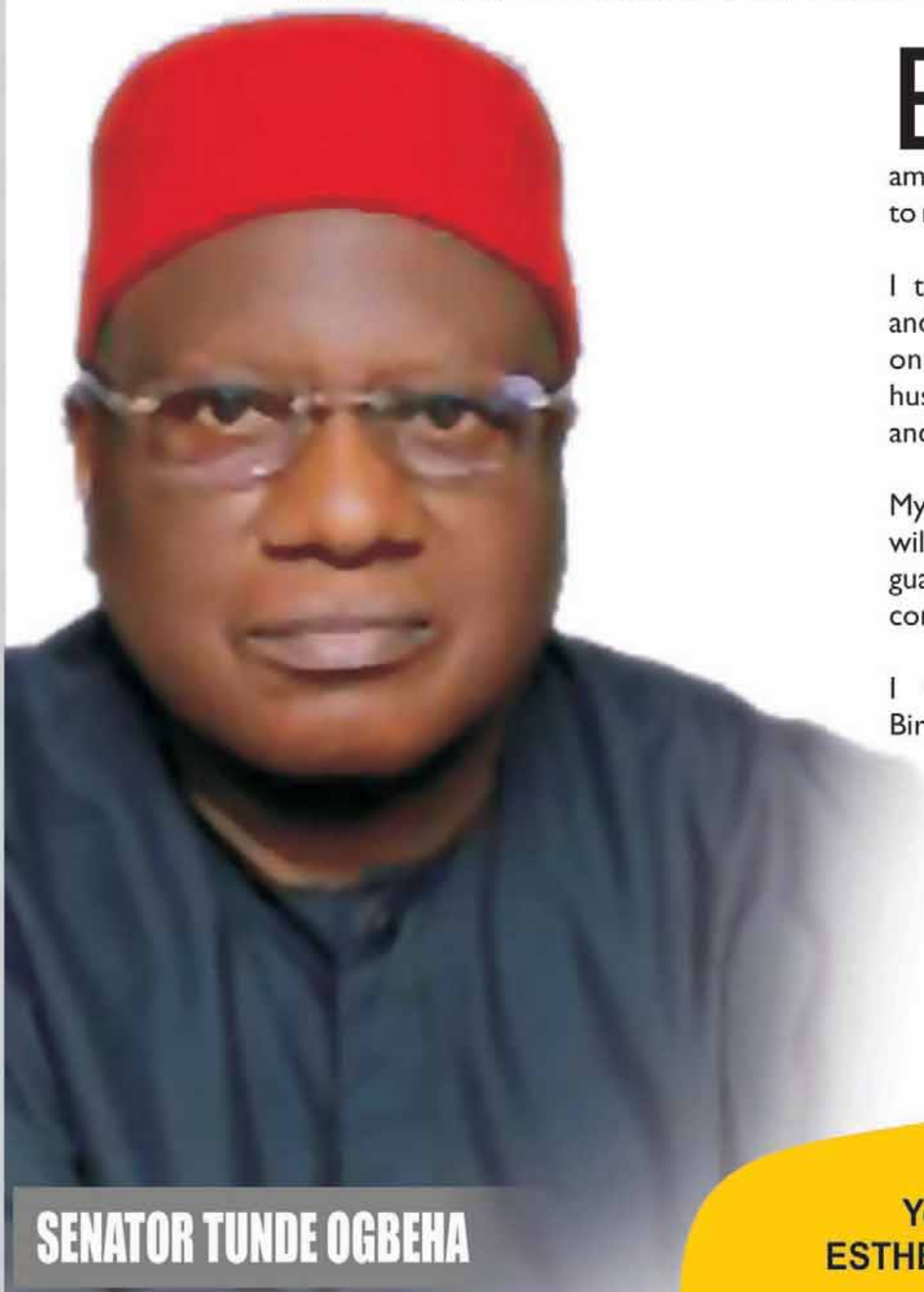
Signed:
Babi

On behalf of the Children and Grandchildren

SENATOR TUNDE OGBEHA

Happy 75th Birthday

My Husband, Best Friend, Father & Gentleman



SENATOR TUNDE OGBEHA

Every sunrise is a new opportunity to let you know what an amazing husband you are to me.

I treasure the care, love and kindness you shower on me as my darling husband, best friend, father and gentleman.

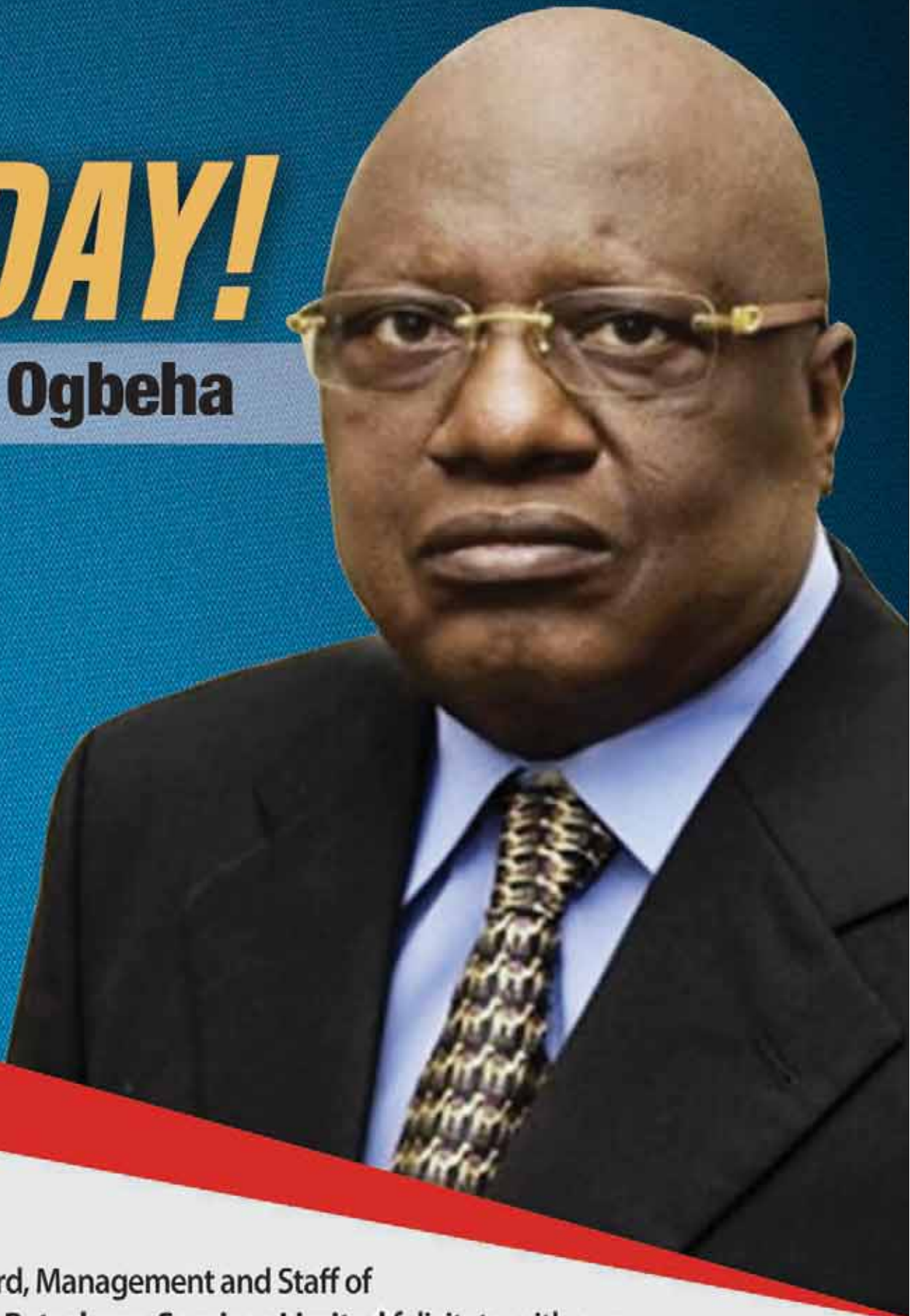
My prayer is that the Lord will continue to guide, guard and perfect all that concerns you.

I wish you a Happy Birthday, my love!

Signed:
**Your loving wife,
ESTHER TUNDE OGBEHA**

HAPPY *BIRTHDAY!*

Senator Tunde J. Ogbaha



The Board, Management and Staff of **Brentex Petroleum Services Limited** felicitate with our iconic Chairman **Senator Tunde J. Ogbaha** on this landmark of his 75th Birthday.

On this special occasion, we wish you a very prosperous, healthy, and happy life.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Signed
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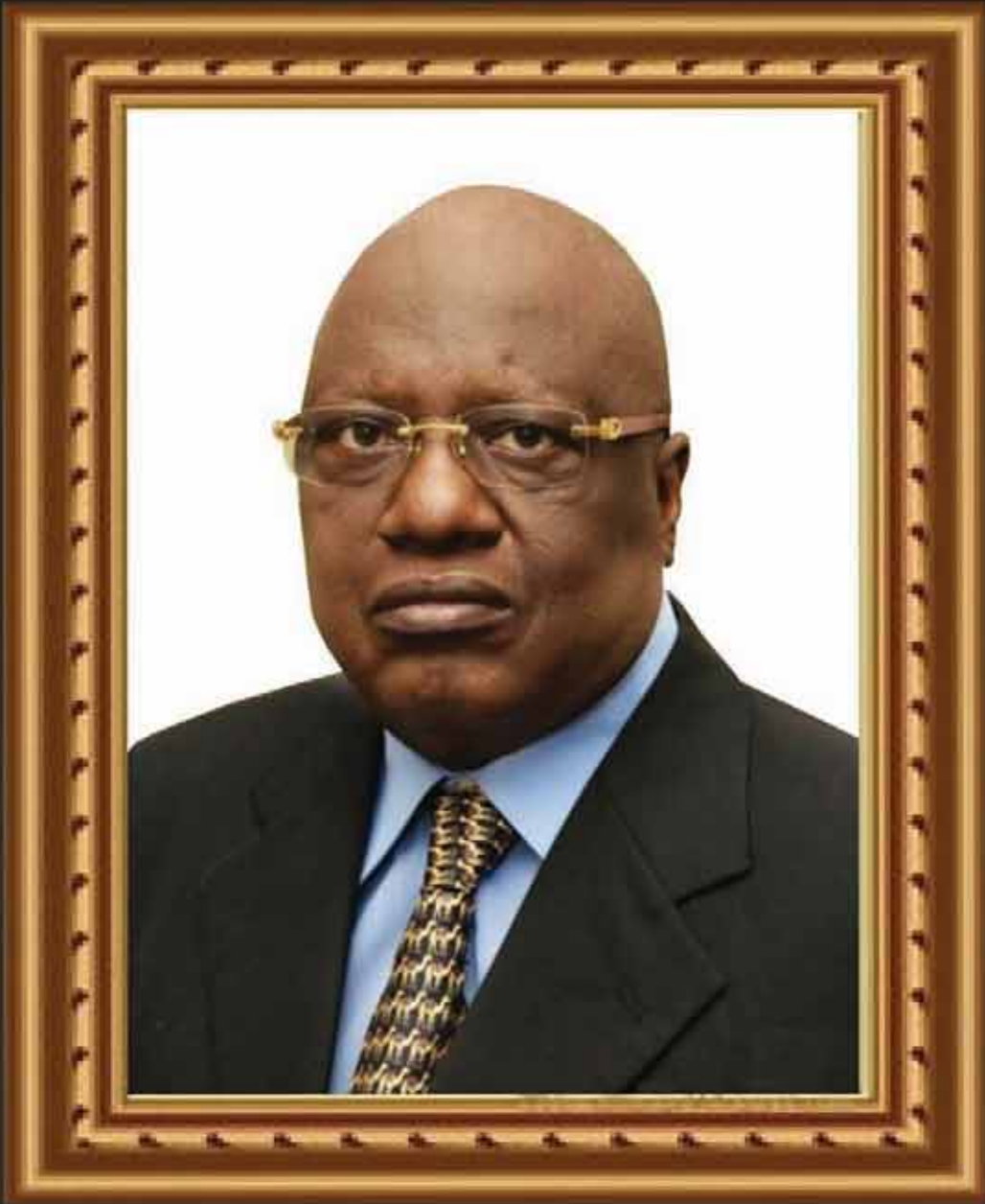


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Senator (Dr.)
Tunde Ogbaha,CON
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On this joyous occasion we wish to reiterate how much we cherish the exemplary leadership you have provided all through our political journey in the last two decades especially in times of enormous challenges.

We wish you a very memorable birthday and many more years of distinguished service to our people in particular and to humanity in general.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| H. E. YOMI AWONIYI | SENATOR DINO MELAIYE | HON. T. J. YUSUF |
| HON. SAM ARO | HON. KOLA OLOGBONDIYAN | HON. SHABA IBRAHIM |
| RT. HON ANGULU | HON. HASSAN SALAU | OLORI MARGARET OREBIYI |
| HON. SAM ABENEMI | HON. YABAGI BOLOGI | BARR. SOLA OJO |
| HON (Dr) STEPHEN OLORUNFEMI | CHIEF JOE ELEBIYO | HON ABIODUN OJO |
| BARR. ALFED BELLO | CHIEF PAUL OLUDOIYI | HON. T. J. FANIYI. |
| BARR. HENRY OJUOLA | HON. GANIYU SALAUDEEN | HON RINDE ASAGUN |
| OTUNBA FUNSO OWOYEMI | CHIEF OLU OWA | CHIEF DAYO AKANDE |
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**PETITION TO THE PRESIDENT OF NIGERIA, H.E. MUHAMMADU BUHARI AGAINST
THE SECRETARY & CHIEFS OF THE OBA OF BENIN FOR THE UNILATERAL
DEMOLITION OF OUR HOMES AND PROPERTIES IN ULEGUN COMMUNITY, EDO
STATE (UNDER PROTECTION FROM THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE!).**

1. There is a common saying that when impunity reigns, there is bound to be chaos multiplied. This is the situation that we would like to bring to Mr. President's attention as a matter of urgency because many of us peace loving, and law-abiding citizens of this country are under serious attack from the people that should protect us.

2. We are sorry to write to you in the pages of the newspaper but have no other choice as our lives are in grave danger and there is a conspiracy of silence from our leaders here in Benin, Edo State.

3. We woke up a few days ago to discover the **SECRETARY** of the Oba of Benin with 3 mobile and fully armed policemen with bulldozers tearing down homes that we have built, some of us for more than 10 years! **MORE THAN 75 HOMES, COMPLETELY DESTROYED.**

4. There was no notice, no information, just sheer display of impunity without any recourse to law and order. Under what Law are we operating when people can be pushed out of their homes, their livelihoods destroyed, and the Nigeria Police Force is there supporting them? Of what use are law courts? Or the systems meant to protect the people?

5. Is there a different constitution for the rulers and another one for the ruled? What kind of country do we live in when you can wake up tomorrow and all your hope is gone? Why this provocative display of impunity and ignominy?
6. What is most painful Sir, is that this is not a land under dispute, as the matter has been resolved by the Court of Law many years ago. We just woke up and saw our properties being destroyed.

7. We also use this opportunity to call on the Inspector General of Police to call his men to order and fish out these police accomplices because what they have done is completely illegal and against the constitution.

8. While we take this matter up in the right way, we plead with Mr. President to prevail on our Governor, Godwin Obaseki to not just stop at investigation, but to also compensate us for the huge losses that we have suffered as a result of this action. Some of us voted for him to safeguard our lives and property, so it is important that he steps into this matter beyond just setting up the usual panel.

9. We plead for justice to be done without fear or favour since our leaders have abandoned us. Mr. President, we look to you and trust that you will invite us to provide further information as they may be required.

1. We also request that you instruct the office of the Attorney General of the Federation and the Minister of Justice to wade into this matter urgently and review the facts as they are to ensure that there is no further breakdown of law and order in Edo State. We do not want any trouble, we just want justice to be done in this matter.

THANK YOU AND LONG LIVE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.

1. Barr. Uyi Emopkai

2. Odianoson Egharevba

3. Mr. Osasere Eghe Aina

4. Mr. Sunny Alegbe

5. Mrs. Fidelia Azu Okonkwo

6. Arc. Lancelot Okunwa
7. Mr. Osas Adjene

8. Barr. Bright Imokhuede

9. Engr. Joseph Obozuwa

10. Aisosa Ogbezuwa

11. Mrs. Adesuwa Abudu



Facts:

PROVIDUSBANK LIMITED WAS NEVER INVOLVED IN ANY FRAUD INCIDENT.

We have read numerous reports circulating in some online news blogs purporting that ProvidusBank Limited was involved in a case of fraudulent transfer of funds from a customer’s account.

Contrary to assertions in the articles being promoted by the online media, ProvidusBank Limited has not been named as a party in any multi-million-naira fraud scandal. Instead, ProvidusBank has assisted the law courts as well as its customers to reclaim moneys transferred unlawfully from their accounts by alleged fraudsters.

The case, with Suit Number: **FHC/L/CS/645/2022**, which is being referenced in the misleading story in circulation, was decided at the Federal High Court, Ikoyi.

In his ruling, Justice. P.O. Lifu (JP) held that ProvidusBank Limited should transfer an amount of money, which had been traced to three accounts domiciled with the Bank, back to its original owner: Aqua 10 Nigeria Limited.

We have long complied with the order of the court and Counsel to the Plaintiff, Nick Omeye Esq, had acknowledged receipt via a letter to ProvidusBank dated August 1, 2022.

ProvidusBank continues to maintain its commitment to transparency, good corporate governance, and the promotion of global best practices in Nigerian enterprise.

POLITICS

Acting Group Politics Editor DEJI ELUMOYE

Email: deji.elumoye@thisdaylive.com (08033025611 **SMS ONLY**)

Dabiri-Erewa: N'Assembly Should Be Diaspora Voting Friendly like Buhari

Chairman/CEO of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM), Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, in an interview, spoke on salient issues including why the National Assembly should become a diaspora friendly parliament. **Deji Elumoye** brings excerpts:

Why is President Muhammadu Buhari not putting pressure on the National Assembly to pass the bill on Diaspora voting?

You know that Mr. President cannot go to Parliament and say, you must do this; you must do that. He has said it severally that he is not against diaspora voting. I think what we need to do is to keep appealing to the National Assembly. I understand their fears and sentiments, which is the fact that maybe our elections are not yet perfect; we're still experimenting. What I'm saying is we need to sit down again, analyze these fears, and see how we can go about it.

So, I don't think Mr. President has anything to do with that despite being the most diaspora friendly President. I'm hoping that the National Assembly becomes the most diaspora friendly Assembly and get their own title too. So even for the diaspora themselves, we've been telling them that 'make it your agenda'. Every time you see parliamentarians talk to them and appeal; it's about lobbying, appealing and explaining. Those fears for instance, they asked me, if the diasporas vote, where do you count them and the answer is simple. Everybody comes from a state. So if a Lagosian votes in London, it goes to Lagos votes. It's the INEC that will decide, not the National Assembly. Let National Assembly hand them the powers to start the diaspora voting when the infrastructure is ready. So, it doesn't mean that INEC will do it tomorrow, or even in 2027. INEC can just say: 'okay I want to do it in one country'; It's when the infrastructure is ready and they say they can. So, I think it's just more about lobbying and appealing, which is what we always do in Parliament.

As \$20 billion Diaspora remittance peaks at N20 billion annually, what's the quantum of their investments in Nigeria in the last three years?

In terms of remittances, the \$20 billion is for 2021. So, in 2017 we have \$17 billion; in 2019, \$25 billion and last year, \$20 billion. So, it even went better during COVID-19 that we thought was going to go down and it comes out every year; World Bank, IOM, Central Bank, it's on the website. So that's for a year. Then in terms of investments, like I said, by the time we do our third, the next Diaspora Investment Summit. It's that we don't want to quote wrong figures, we work with Nigerian Disaporan Summit. So by the next Summit, we can be talking about the real actual figures.

How do you intend to stop the migration of Nigerians to those unfriendly countries where they are being killed and how do you hope to get justice for them?

It's about inter-agency collaboration. It is massive awareness. But I was surprised that somebody said to me last week that they went to somewhere they didn't know; we have to get all those trying to hide under 'we didn't know'; anyone that doesn't know what to do if you go to all these countries and get into trouble are only pretending not to know. Agents are a problem because some go through agents, and you know, NAPTIP saw my traffic, but some just want to go. Some will tell you that their destiny is abroad and I tell them that if it's abroad, you have to go legally, not illegally. But we all achieve our destinies properly, because it's getting tougher. More than half of the people will cry for help you don't hear about it. So, I push that back to you; how can you help in propagating awareness about the dangers of irregular migration? Immigration has been doing their best, NAPTIP, Refugee Commission. There has to be more intentional decision to put it on the front burner. Honestly speaking, there are really pathetic stories.

How has the reportage of conflicts affected the image of Nigeria and what



Dabiri-Erewa

advise do you have for Nigerian media on this?

When we go out even we ourselves, somebody goes on social media lands another country and rolls on the floor and say 'I've left the zoo'. That person is attacking you; he's not attacking Buhari; he's not attacking the government. He's insulting me and you. You don't have to like me; but don't bring down your country. By the time you go out reporting negatively about Nigeria, you're bringing the whole country down. And ultimately it affects every one of us. Now it's more difficult for everybody to get visas. Whether you're going to Canada, whether you're going to the UAE, whether you're even going to America, it's difficult now as Nigerians. It's not because of Buhari, it's because of what you say about yourselves and how we behave. So we need to come together and say bad behavior is not acceptable. You go to UAE, you bring cultism; you bring kidnapping. You go to another man's country, you are involved in cultism and you are killing each other in broad daylight. An American came to my office yesterday and the children are amazed; the wife is amazed that this is not what we read about Nigeria from Nigerians themselves. A lady

wanted to celebrate her birthday in Nigeria, she's done her DNA, and she is Nigerian and said, I'm doing my 70th birthday in Nigeria. Nigerians told her 'Don't go, they will kidnap you. You will not go back alive'. She came, she celebrated and she's been coming every year. We are having our country if we report the right thing. I'm not saying you don't report what is happening. But we don't have to tell lies and exaggerate; and we don't report the good stories. By the time our online radio station comes on stream, we'll be doing all we can. And that's all we do all we can with the media, but we are limited. We're not funded; it's goodwill that has ever led us this far with the media. So yes, the bad stories does affect the perception of our country, Nigeria, and I tell you something: I was in the UK when a parliamentarian was murdered in her office. I didn't even see much of it, though there was a mention of it. Another one: when IRA was terrifying the UK and there was an already policy that no British media should even show the guy talking; they can show his face but they will not track up on him saying rubbish. But here, we're showing terrorists, Boko Haram, celebrating them and you think those people will not be fueled? They're enjoying it. They're watching what you're showing. And they are clapping for themselves. So, honestly, media, you're part of development; you're a part of progress. Present an individual, but bringing your country down, I always go against it. One guy went to Russia and she said they were doing competition and she went to carry Nigeria flag

You know that Mr. President cannot go to Parliament and say, you must do this; you must do that. He has said it severally that he is not against diaspora voting. I think what we need to do is to keep appealing to the National Assembly. I understand their fears and sentiments, which is the fact that maybe our elections are not yet perfect; we're still experimenting. What I'm saying is we need to sit down again, analyze these fears, and see how we can go about it

with bloodstained. Why? They don't represent Nigeria and that was why they extradited her from their country. I'm the proud Nigerian at any time and I always go with my head held up high and anybody that condemns my country, I attack them. Attack me, attack President, attack individuals, but not your country. So, there's a lot of work for the media. However, I should remember that while we have those bad Nigerians, we have them many good. If you give me one Nigerian fomenting trouble, I'll give you 10,000 doing great things. And that is why we will continue to celebrate the good ones.

Tell us more about how your Commission get funded and what you're doing to get more funds in order to be self sustaining

It's Ministry of Foreign Affairs actually that funds us; it's whatever they give us that we have to spend. And I think our budget this year, total capital is N160 million. Recurrent/Overhead is N8 million a month. That's all we have; that's not enough for one trip. But we think outside the box and get things done and we are, as a team, looking at other ways of ensuring that we get funded.

For some of these programs we have to reach out to corporate bodies to support. But we don't put a funding as a major priority. Money is never enough. We'll be doing a lot more but we're hoping that we get more. But most importantly is that we should be able to see how we can just increase funding. If you generate funds, it goes to the federation account. Well, it's something that we keep thinking about and see how we can avoid or minimize what we even spend as a Commission. So you find that honestly speaking, we try to be very strict with whatever kobo we have to spend and all the staff know, they are not smiling most of the time, but I think they know that. At least they are learning a lot on the job. We still even don't have a proper office space; it's the place we're managing at the Federal Secretariat. So no funding, no office, but we're still engaging our people.

How do you intend to inspire the diaspora for sustainable investment in Nigeria considering the prevailing security situation?

Definitely, we can't pretend that everything is perfect. This insecurity, by the grace of God, is a temporary thing with everything being put in place by the government. I posted something yesterday that this one that NAF is bombarding, nobody's talking about it; this is not trending. So there's insecurity. We have issue of terrorism. We have kidnapping, banditry, but the government is doing everything to resolve it. Everybody have their own issues one way or the other. It may discourage you; you may feel so for a while. They come.

I'm encouraged more by those who say 'I know I've been home. I know, I went to my village, this is what I'm doing. That's what I'm doing.' I'm encouraged more by them than those who will say, oh, let's discourage. Look, we have one or two guys who came home. Look there was a case in one of the South-west states, the guy was killed but it turned out that again some family person was the one that was after him. We already told the police that the key thing is let's know... we are in touch with the family. I think the fact that we have one-on-one engagement with them is encouraging.

There are many who don't even want any persuasion. They are coming on their own. They are Nigerians, they know their country. So, I don't have to persuade, but I will tell you, this is the truth I advise them; there are places, maybe you shouldn't go here. But you can do ABCD, then we can help in ABCDE. So there are some that don't want any persuasion.

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

Lukman: Tinubu Can Be Trusted Unlike Atiku, Kwankwaso

The National Vice Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), North-West, Dr. Salihu Lukman in an interview with select journalists said the advantage the presidential flag bearer of the party, Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, has over his opponents is the fact that he's not an election merchant. Excerpts from **Adedayo Akinwale**

How is your party, the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) going to campaign in 2023?

This is the first time in our democratic experience in this country that candidates have emerged and campaigns are not starting immediately. INEC had its reasons that made them develop that, but the time gap between the period when candidates emerged and the period when campaign is going to start is almost three months. But the good thing about that is that it has also enabled political leaders to engage themselves. I mean, at the level of our party, the APC, consultations are going on. In 2015, for instance, or 2014 when Buhari emerged as a candidate, the period of consultation was so short, I think, if I remember very well, Buhari emerged on December 10, 2014. And I think in less than a week, the running mate emerged because the deadline for submission to INEC was very short. So consultation was narrow, it didn't involve the wide spectrum of party leaders as it were. But now that is happening, but because that is happening, it makes people have a stronger say including even in the process that is leading to the constitution of the campaign council. The experience so far and I think that is the challenge of our democracy is that people who are more or less like election merchants. Every election cycle, they present themselves as candidates or as aspirants and if they don't become candidates, they dispute every process that produced the candidate. This is the challenge of this democracy, it is not unique to APC, is not unique to PDP, it is across all the political parties. And go and check, especially at the presidential level, we have a situation where all the candidates are known faces in terms of electoral process in this country at the



Lukman

highest level. The only exception is perhaps our own candidate in APC. The last time the candidate appeared on the ballot was in 2003. And after 2003 he was not on the ballot. But it's not the case, at least with our so-called three popular parties - PDP, NNPP, Labour Party. The candidate of the Labour party was on the ballot in 2019. So I think these are some of the challenges.

I think, for us in APC, it is about managing or regulating these people I called election merchants. What they do is to ensure that they have surrogates who they plant from wards to local government, to state level, if they are strong enough, up to national level. Many of our States where you see an official of the party

defecting to another party is because their godfather or whatever it is called is an election merchant, who couldn't get a ticket from our party has left and gotten a ticket elsewhere. So in order to damage our party, you hear them putting up so-called resignation letters and there is nowhere in the constitution of the party and there is nowhere even in the national constitution where if you have to leave a party, you have to write a resignation letter. No!. It is your freedom, you just leave because when you came in, you didn't write an application letter, you just presented yourself and you can just submit your membership card and move on. Part of the challenge why you have so many party leaders behaving as surrogates to election merchants is largely because there is no clarity in terms of how political parties are being funded. So, ward level structures, local government structures, state level, zonal and even national level, how funds come in is so abnormal, and there are no defined sources of funding. What is at the national and the constitution of the party, you will see some attempt to define it, but it doesn't translate to a specific amount of money coming in periodically. And that is why you find at all levels, there is hardly a budget. So party leaders exist just in name. I believe if we work successfully over the next period of two to four years to address a number of that. By the next election cycle. The incidences of people just coming into political parties for the purpose of contesting elections can be minimized. Not that it will be eliminated. It'll still be there. But the main function of political party can begin to be exercise, which is about delivering on services to the people who elected representatives. Parties can only do that if parties are able to regulate the conduct of those elected representatives. Now the current templates

that exist is that it is the other way round.

I want to take you on on the issue you raised about your presidential candidate not being on the ballot for some time now. Will you see it counting against him?

I raised the point of the candidate not being on the ballot since 2003 on a positive note, to demonstrate that he's not one of those I called election merchants. He wasn't an election merchant. He had every reason to have aspired in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019, he didn't aspire or he engaged politics differently in a way that produced a positive outcome in a different way. That cannot be said of the other candidates, whether Atiku (Abubakar), (Rabiu) Kwankwaso or Peter Obi. Of course, I will not descend to the level of challenging their competence, they may be competent, but in terms of personal integrity and personal trustworthiness, our candidate is about the only one, together with the running mate that have not changed their political parties on account of aspiring to contest for election. Which means they are people with some level of consciousness and integrity. And what that means is that trust can be invested in them more than people who when they don't get what they want in a particular spot, they move to another place. Now for me, these are the issues to highlight. And we are ready to debate it as a party with anybody. Not the other issues about health challenges, what have you, or things that cannot be verified. These ones I mentioned, you can verify them. So I think these are some of the points.

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

Farotimi: Presidential Candidate that Has Given Youth Hope is Obi

In this interview with THISDAY broadcast arm, Arise TV, lawyer and rights activist, Dele Farotimi, speaks on why Peter Obi has become the rallying point for the massive Nigerian youths and why the Nigerian state should ensure there is free, fair, and credible election in 2023. Excerpts:

Only recently the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) gave the platform of its 62nd Annual General Conference to the presidential candidates to express their views. We had Atiku there, we had Shettima representing Asiwaju Tinubu, we had Mr. Peter Obi, we had other candidates at that event. What is your assessment, looking at these candidates and their performance?

The NBA did not do well. I am of the view that if you have decided that you are opening up the space for the presidential candidates and even their surrogates such as Shettima to come and speak at the conference, it should have gone the whole way to invite all the other candidates. I don't understand why they did not invite Omoyele Sowore

Is Omoyele Sowore your favourite candidate?

If it is based on ideology, I should be supporting Sowore, but there is an issue I believe needs to be addressed. Nigeria claims to be a federation, and one of the foundations of that federation is federal character. That federal character didn't come recently, it's something that has been in our constitution as far back as 1954. Going by that, as far as I am concerned I cannot look beyond an Igbo candidate in this race and thanks to God there is an eminently qualified Igbo candidate in this race and that is the person I will be supporting.

That is Peter Obi?

Yes. To be precise, that's the person I will be supporting in the coming election.

Looking at the coming election, what do you fear the most about 2023 elections?

Absolutely nothing. What is the point of fear,



Farotimi

fear is merely a petrifying source, you go to the root, petrify means that you get rooted to the spot. I am excited about the coming election. I am excited by the energy of the youth who have been given hope by Peter Obi's ambition, or should I say, his candidacy. Nigeria had become a hopeless place over the last seven years, completely shorn of hope. The Buhari presidency has sucked up all the energy, all the hopes of the Nigerian people and not everybody is going to be able to escape from Nigeria, not everyone is going to be able to run. If we are not going to run away and we will not descend into violence, we will have to be given hope in one form or the other. And the only candidate that has energised the youth and

given them hope in this season is Peter Obi. If that hope is dashed, if the Nigerian state contrives to take away what appears to be the only reason that the Nigerian youth wakes up in the morning with hope in his heart, then there would be reasons to be afraid, there would be several reasons to fear, because hope denied provokes violence. Nigeria is already violent enough as it is, but to now take away the hope that there might be some change at the end of this process, that is to be feared, other than that, no fear.

So, if that happens?

I am not sure that Nigeria is prepared for what is likely to happen if the peoples' votes are stolen, or if their will is discounted. Let us be clear, ENDSARS was essentially a protest of the hopeless. The only thing that appears to have energised the same people who were largely involved in that struggle is the candidacy of Peter Obi. They have been silenced in terms of noise-making, everybody is facing the election, you will see a bit of exuberance that has been mistaken in some quarters for the Obidient movement being combative, but that's because they have been rendered hopeless. This (Obi's candidacy) is the only thing they are holding on to, so for me it's going to be an interesting time, the coming five to six months will be very interesting, but the only thing to be feared is anyone who is thinking that they might be able, at one level or the other, to truncate the hope of the Nigerian people, other than that, there is nothing to be feared, its only excitement ahead.

What do you make of the series of meetings that some sitting governors and politicians and Nigerian leaders had in London last week. Before London, we had heard of meetings in Spain, Turkey,

etc. Some people say, why can't political issues be discussed inside Nigeria that they want to lead?

It was Fela Anikulapo Kuti of blessed memory, who sang a song we generally reduced its title to "Alhaji Alhaji," and in that song he spoke extensively of how Nigerians are essentially ruled by strangers. Our rulers have practically destroyed everything that used to be good about Nigeria. Their doctors are abroad, their children's schools are abroad, some of them see their dentists abroad, so there shouldn't be any surprise in having them junket outside Nigeria anytime they are seeking "solution" to Nigerian problems. So, in speaking to the fact that they would meet everywhere but in Nigeria, we must also factor in the fact that these are people who might live in Nigeria but their homes are actually not in Nigeria. Their homes are either in the South of France or the Potomac, anywhere but in Nigeria, because they have made Nigeria practically unbearable and unliveable for those unfortunate enough to be trapped in here and have nowhere else to go. We might look to the fact that they are having meetings and settling disputes outside our shores, but the reality is that when you conceal the truth of the matter that they actually don't live here, they are Alhaji's, they are strangers to us, they cannot feel our pains, there is very little by way of empathy, some of them will lose elections and relocate to their homes abroad and then they will come back few months to elections, so there is nothing really new, its just that the election season has tended to highlight these issues for us. They are just doing what is normal to them.

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

Foundation Throws Light on Effects of Westernisation on Cultural Value System

On July 31, Favour Benson, the founder of her Jashabel Touch-A-Heart Foundation (JTAH Foundation), held the annual National Women and Girl Child Stakeholder Conference in Lagos. The day which doubles as her 50th birthday celebration attracted stakeholders from various corporate organisations, government parastatals, as well as traditional rulers as they tackled the theme 'Westernisation, Education, Culture and Religion: The Effect on Today's Family', **Vanessa Obioha** reports

Unarguably, no culture remains the same over many generations. Over time, there is a shift through acculturation. This has been the case for the dying cultural value system suffered by many ethnic groups in Nigeria by factors of westernisation. To be sure, the fruits of westernisation have brought about a marked advancement in various aspects that include government, technology, and generally, an improvement in the living conditions of millions of Nigerians.

However, no two cultures are the same, as certain tenets do not align with the other. For instance, the adoption of western education has placed more value on acquiring either French or English as the official language, a pattern many colonised countries in Africa have adopted. But this has not been the case in many countries in Asia that still retain their vernacular as the official language.

Because culture is learned, certain vital elements are chipped at, reducing their value and significance as it is passed on to the next generation of custodians. Enculturation is weakened. As agreed upon by many scholars, culture is the totality of how people live and behave. It encompasses knowledge, belief, arts, and society, which are conditioned by virtue and values.

Before the arrival of the colonial masters, women, in many societies, played important sociocultural and socioeconomic roles. By nature, these societies exhibited some iteration of a democratic government. What differentiated western democracy from the traditional government was the exclusion of women from playing vital roles. Foreign religions adopted at the time also dictated who played what roles.

The implication of this singular action, over the years, gradually placed women in vulnerable



Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf and Benson

positions. And these have trickled down to reflect how families are being raised to fit into contemporary global standards even though the feminist move is gaining ground. But that, too, comes with its numerous baggage based on individual interpretations.

With the intervention of many concerned bodies like the Jashabel Touch-A-Heart Foundation (JTAH Foundation), women are stepping up to take the front seat and in turn, inspiring a new set of young women and girls.

Furthering this course of promoting the welfare and interest of women and the girl child in Nigeria, the foundation recently held its annual National Women and Girl Child Stakeholder Conference in Lagos.

Attracting stakeholders from various corporate organisations, government parastatals, as well

as traditional rulers, the conference was themed 'Westernisation, Education, Culture and Religion: The Effect on Today's Family'.

For Benson, the theme is a call-to-action and cultural reawakening for families to understand and solve the contemporary issues women and girls suffer, and by extension, create a chain of reaction for overall sociocultural and economic attainment.

"Culture didn't erode our value system. I think it's the parents. Some children between the ages of 10 and 14 years can't speak their language, they don't know their village. This presents a disconnect, and that's where culture comes in," Benson explained.

"These days, you can't question a child

without the mother or father coming the next day to say, 'who made you my child's teacher?' It is sickening because that was not how we were brought up. There is a lack of discipline stemming from abandoning our culture. We have to connect our culture with whatever we are doing to make us who we really are," she added.

Delivering the keynote, Commissioner of Tourism, Arts and Culture, Uzamat Akinbile-Yussuf elucidated strategic models that could be adopted toward empowering women and the girl child. Some of the highlights from her keynote included the adoption of community parenting styles, seeking mental health support and sex education, promoting cultural norms, and supervising the use of social media tools.

"If we train a child, especially a girl child through a proper upbringing that entails discipline, proper care, we are building a better world for ourselves," Akinbile-Yussuf noted.

"The way our parents trained us, what most would call the 'crude' method, is not the way we are training our children. We let our culture be harmed, and everything has become westernised. There is a difference between discipline and abuse. The only thing we owe our children is love, let us discipline them."

Established in 2000, the foundation which prides itself as a haven for women and girls in need, also launched Touch magazine which features some of its past projects and elaborated plans to kickstart future ones, all geared toward female empowerment in various capacities.

Additionally, the conference coincided with Benson's golden jubilee celebration. She was honoured by close family and friends, colleagues and partners for her contributions to the indigents in society.

Academic Staff Union of Universities and Future of the University System

Innocent Ohiambe

Following the recent press briefing by the Honourable Minister of Education, Mal. Adamu Adamu that agreement has been reached with all Staff Unions in our Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education except ASUU, public attention has been focused on the Academic Staff Union of Universities and their annual ritual of strikes. It is an established fact that frequent disruption of academic calendar is not only responsible for the low ranking of Nigerian universities but a source of despair to students and their parents alike. It is therefore disheartening that ASUU has refused to call off the current strike based on Government's adoption of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention on "No work No pay" which is also applicable to the other Unions that have resumed duties.

The social media is awash with efforts by the Union to mobilize its members for an indefinite strike based on misrepresentation of facts. For example, ASUU is telling its local branches that Government only accepted increases of N60,000 and N30,000 for Professors and other teaching staff as against the 35% and 27% increases widely reported. Similarly and contrary to the false claim that the new salary structure will take effect after the 2023 general elections, Government's offer was to take effect from September, 2022 subject to the call-off of the strike. The sole purpose of this deliberate misinformation is to cause disaffection between Government and its rank & file as well as the general public.

It would be recalled that ASUU called out the strike with two (2) stated objectives of adoption of UTAS as replacement for IPPIS and funding for revitalization of universities. It has since expanded its demands to cover as broad a field as to guarantee a stalemate. The strange demand for dictating its payment platform was hinged on the principle of University autonomy as encapsulated in the University (Miscellaneous) Act 1993, 1996, 2003 and 2012. What ASUU is not telling its members and the Nigerian people is that the 2009 agreement as well as the Universities Autonomy Act clearly situates negotiation with staff unions on welfare and other matters squarely within the purview of

Universities Governing Councils. The union has conveniently downplayed this position because in their view, it will sound the death knell for the central and all powerful ASUU since such negotiations will now be undertaken by their branches in their respective institutions. It is also curious that the Federal Government has continued to negotiate with ASUU in violation of these provisions. Perhaps the time is right for a re-think and a faithful implementation of the Act by referring ASUU to the Governing Councils of their institutions. That will also remove the anomaly of the Federal Government entering into agreements on matters bordering on State Governments owned institutions without their participation and consent.

Many on lookers have wondered why State Government owned institutions should be compelled to join the strike when the issues in contention have little or no bearing on them. State institutions are not paid on IPPIS and Visitation Panels were only sent to Federal Government owned institutions. Similarly, needs assessment and rehabilitation of facilities on campuses should be the responsibility of the proprietors of each University – Federal Government, State Government or Private owners. As Governors Nasir El-Rufai of Kaduna State and Darius Ishaku of Taraba State rightly observed, they had no problems or quarrel with their institutions, so why should their students be punished every time a lecturer in Bayero University or University of Calabar feel aggrieved, or an erring lecturer is sacked by Kogi State Governor? The decision of these and other Governors to direct the opening of their schools have received widespread endorsement and acclaim throughout the country. All other Governors should do the same in the true spirit of Autonomy. Afterall, Education is on the concurrent list and not the exclusive preserve of the Federal Government or ASUU.

Another sore thumb in the Federal Government/ASUU imbinglo is the penchant for ASUU members to teach in multiple institutions while denying tens of thousands of qualified Nigerians with PhDs, Masters and First Class degrees employment. With the grant of autonomy to the institutions, the Governing Councils will operate on the strength of their balance sheet i.e identifying and harnessing all revenue sources (including Government grants) determine the appropriate

manning levels and remuneration and charge appropriate fees and charges for services. Government grants may be targeted as scholarships for brilliant and indigent students and/or subsidy for their operations. While this is anathema to ASUU, it is the global practice. Facilities and instruments, such as students' loans and other support systems may be put in place to cater for disadvantaged and vulnerable segments of the society.

Most reputable tertiary institutions around the world are run on endowments, research grants and proceeds from collaborations and linkages with industries and firms. They also engage in economic activities as well as consultancy/advisory services to generate revenue. Here everything is Government, which also explains why ASUU is opposed to the establishment of private universities.

Parents, the larger society and even the students themselves must contribute to tertiary education as the crown jewel and tool for self-actualization and fulfilment. It is manifestly different from basic education which is a fundamental right of citizens. The Government policy approach to education is right on target. Basic education as defined in the Universal Basic Education Commission Act (UBEC) is not only free but compulsory for all citizens. Tertiary education on the other hand is an investment with expectation of returns over a lifetime of work and practice. Exclusive public (Government) funding of tertiary education is neither sustainable nor equitable as it entails a higher burden of tax from the citizens while crowding out the pivotal role of the private sector thereby stifling innovation, creativity and competition. It also sign posts inefficient allocation of resources as it invariably leads to the neglect of other competing needs in social sectors such as food security, primary health care, sanitation and poverty eradication.

To achieve the needed transformation of tertiary education in Nigeria, there is a compelling need to re-imagine and reform institutions in the system

to render their performance more responsive to the aspirations of Nigerians. A predictable and stable academic calendar is an important first step in this direction. ASUU should therefore re-invent itself starting from the composition of its Executive Committee. Retaining spent previous leaders, many in their seventies and eighties, denies the union the much needed fresh breath that new faces and ideas bring. The fixation with obsolete and forgotten Marxist ideology and disdain for alternative viewpoints situates it firmly in the past and out of tune with present day realities. A clear vision for the future must exclude such banalities as free education and illusions of being an alternative government. It must therefore refocus its efforts primarily to the welfare of its members and eschew the creeping partisanship as exemplified by the recent open campaign by its President.

By any imaginable conjecture, the current strike has since exceeded its useful lifespan. The unions and indeed the academic community stand to lose more in terms of battered image and reputation as well as loss of public sympathy for its cause than any misplaced optimism of Government capitulation from continuation of the strike.

The "no work no pay" policy is not a creation of the Buhari Administration and ASUU should not hang its deficit of reasoning and failure to demonstrate sensitivity to the plight of citizens and other workers on the door of Government. Well meaning Nigeria should therefore prevail on ASUU to assuage the suffering and patience of their students who have since seen the futility of constant strikes before the students take matters in their hands. There are now growing calls for the adoption of the practice in the United Kingdom where striking lecturers are surcharged to pay compensation to students for any day lost to strike.

The NANS approach of constant dialogue and constructive engagements with stakeholders coupled with the adoption of a flexible posture will hold ASUU in good stead as they review their critical role in shaping the future of tertiary education in Nigeria.

•Ohiambe is an Abuja-based Public Policy Analyst and Good Governance Advocate

- Zeal-akaraiwe

CAUSATION VS CORRELATION



I'll give a quick example to illustrate the distinction between correlation and causation and, more importantly, the error in judgement that results from applying it incorrectly. When living in most parts of Lagos, it's very easy to assume or conclude that "leaving the doors and windows open causes malaria," and we were also told something similar as children: "If you hug a boy, you'll get pregnant."

One way to think about correlation and causation is by acknowledging a crucial distinction between the two, which is: Causation is PROVEN, whereas correlation is OBSERVED.

The distinction is crucial for society as a whole since problems are resolved by addressing issues at the causality level rather than the correlation level. Therefore, it is simple for a highly opinionated and under-educated society to assume that mere correlation is a cause and therefore, expend energy on treating the symptoms of a correlation without ever addressing the cause.

Here are two examples of what can happen when correlations are incorrect or when the correlation is addressed rather than the underlying reason.

In an effort to relieve currency pressure, the CBN recently believed that felling trees in Abuja would increase the value of the naira. It goes without saying that after felling the trees, we were where we were.

Later on, they asserted that anytime AbokiFX released or published currency rates, it led to a decline in the value of the currency, portraying the company as the adversary responsible for the depreciation of the naira.

AbokiFX then stopped posting rates, but

the decline in the currency persisted, just like when trees were taken down.

It becomes incredibly clear why many of our societal concerns go unaddressed, and we start to believe that "super strong unseen forces" are to blame for the status of the nation. I have serious doubts about that and in my opinion, Hanlon's razor is a good enough explanation. The source of all our evil is the persistent refusal of those in positions of power to address the pain's primary causes. Alternatively stated, "vast ineptitude of wicked principalities in high places."

For instance, everyone is aware that "Lagos floods when it rains." Since everyone generally notices this, there is no doubt that rain and flooding are closely related. However, can we draw the conclusion that rain actually causes floods given the strong correlation between the two?

If the response to that question is "yes," it implies that floods must occur whenever and wherever it rains, but I hope that we know that's not the case. In addition, if we accept that the answer is "yes," and since rain is something we cannot control, we subconsciously force ourselves to live with the outcome.

Floods are actually caused by bad or inadequate drainage systems combined with rain. Our drainage system mostly consists of roadside gutters, which are actually just storage areas for water rather than a drainage system. Therefore, the ongoing "cleaning" of these gutters will take a lot of time and resources, yet produce no results.

This is what is called contributory causality which is different from absolute

causality.

I'll continue with the basic malaria example given in the beginning of this article to illustrate another type of causality:

Living in a wet environment will induce you to OBSERVE that "open doors and windows promotes malaria," and if you test it, you might even think it's been proven. However, in other regions, if you reside on the 10th floor, leaving doors and windows open will result in better sleep and absolutely no malaria.

Malaria enters through open doors and windows. Therefore, there is a clear link between malaria and open doors (in regions where the female anopheles mosquito is present), but if the cause of the link cannot be determined, your treatment for malaria will end with "shut doors and windows." There will be virtually little success from this.

You must first address mosquito breeding as a fundamental malaria prevention measure before addressing mosquito access to humans. We're not really that thorough or long-term oriented, though. Therefore, it appears that our problems are a never-ending cycle.

This time, this is what is called conditional causality which is different from absolute causality.

These examples may help in explaining why we have numerous cases where people invest a lot of time, effort, and resources into a problem but see little or no progress. You may also have heard people say things like, "I've done my best" or "I've done all I can", but in reality, all they've done is waste money, time, and

lives by addressing observed correlation when causation has not been determined.

The persistent cycle of "trial and error" creates a state of mind psychologists refer to as "learned helplessness," which is defined as: "A state that occurs after a person or society has repeatedly experienced a stressful situation and then comes to believe that they are unable to control or change the situation, so they do not try — even when opportunities for change become available."

After frequently going through difficult situations over prolonged periods, a person develops a sense of learned helplessness such that even when there are opportunities for change, individuals choose not to act because they begin to feel that they cannot influence or alter the situation.

In conclusion, if a society suffers from incompetence for a long enough period of time, you will come to believe that there is no problem that can be solved, and if you ever had the chance to do so, you won't even try.

It then becomes understandable why, for many, if not most of our societal ills, the combination of inept leadership, being an overly religious society, our lack of ability to solve basic problems will lead us to accept that we are helpless and therefore, "ONLY GOD" can save us. We inadvertently have been forced to delegate solutions away from ourselves into the unknown.

What will be the result when an unknown problem is taken to an unknown realm to receive unknown solutions?

•Zeal Akaraiwe is the CEO of Graeme Blaque Advisory | Twitter: @zeal_a // LinkedIn: Zeal Akaraiwe

FOREIGN DESK

COMPILED BY BAYO AKINLOYE

Namibia Plane Crash Kills Family of German Tourists

Authorities in Namibia have confirmed a family of four German tourists and their pilot were killed when their plane crashed Tuesday during take-off in the country's northern Zambezi Region.

Namibia's Ministry of Works and Transport says it is investigating what caused the six-seater Cessna 210 to crash shortly after take-off, killing all five people on board.

The ministry says the plane crashed on Tuesday afternoon near Impalila Island, on the Zambezi river in the Kavango-Zambezi Transfrontier Conservation Area.

The plane was carrying four members of a German family on holiday. Namibian media report the pilot was South African.

Ministry spokesman Julius Ngweda told VOA the plane belonged to a local company, Scenic Air, but could provide no further details.

Scenic Air Managing Director Michael Bottger said in a press release the cause of the crash is not known.

"Everyone at Scenic Air is devastated by this tragic event," read the release, "and our deep and heartfelt condolences go out to the families and friends who lost loved ones."

Namibia's Police Chief Inspector Elifas Kuwunga told VOA authorities would release the names of the deceased after their next-of-kin were notified.



US Justice Department Cites Obstruction Evidence in Trump Records Search

The US Justice Department said late Tuesday that it only sought and won court approval for an unprecedented search for highly classified national security documents at former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida after it concluded that "efforts were likely taken to obstruct the government's investigation."

The unannounced August 8 search at Trump's oceanside retreat where he lives in the winter came after one of his lawyers said in June that all classified documents had been returned to the National Archives, as required by US law once a president leaves office.

Trump aides turned over 15 boxes with 184 classified documents to the Archives in January and 38 more such documents in June.

The Justice Department, however, said the Trump lawyer who asserted that everything had been turned over "explicitly prohibited government personnel from opening or looking inside any of the boxes that remained in the storage room [at Mar-a-Lago], giving no opportunity for the government to confirm that no documents with classification markings remained."

Subsequently, the Justice Department said, "The government developed evidence that a search limited to the storage room would not have uncovered all the classified documents" at the former president's oceanside retreat.

Suspecting more classified documents remained at Mar-a-Lago, Attorney General Merrick Garland authorized the unprecedented search of the former president's residence and won approval for the search from US Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart in Florida.

Borrell: EU Members Agree to Suspend Visa Deal for Russians

The European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, says the bloc's 27 members have agreed to suspend an agreement with Russia, which had made it easier for Russians to obtain tourist visas, as a sanction for Moscow's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine.

Borrell announced the decision, which falls short of the total ban on visa issuance some countries sought, on Tuesday after the second day of a meeting of EU foreign ministers in the Czech capital.

A 2007 visa agreement to ease EU entry requirements for Russians was partially suspended in late February, targeting people close to Russian President Vladimir Putin, such as Russia's official delegations and holders of diplomatic passports. But it left so-called "ordinary Russians" untouched, allowing them to continue to enjoy EU visa-facilitation benefits, such as reduced waiting times and costs and the need to present fewer documents when applying.

Countries that share borders with Russia — the

Baltic states, Poland, and Finland — have led the drive for more restrictive bans on visas for Russian tourists. With air service barred by the EU on flights from Russia, most travellers are using their land borders to travel on to other EU countries.

UN Inspectors Heading to Ukraine Nuclear Plant

A team of United Nations nuclear safety experts headed Wednesday toward Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, even as Russia and Ukraine traded accusations that the other was endangering the facility with new attacks.

The inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency left the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv, with IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi saying his team had received guarantees from Ukraine and Russia that they would be able to carry out their work over the coming days.

Kyiv and Moscow accused each other of shelling the area near the power plant, the largest nuclear facility in Europe and a key source of energy for Ukraine. With the nuclear plant in the midst of a war zone, world leaders have expressed fears it could be damaged and result in a radiation disaster like that at Ukraine's Chernobyl plant in 1986.

The UN convoy of vehicles reached Zaporizhzhia city Wednesday afternoon, still about 120 kilometres by road from the plant itself.

"It's a mission that seeks to prevent a nuclear accident," Grossi said.

He said the first tour through the facility would take a few days, after which "we will have a pretty good idea of what's going on."

UN: At least 50 Killed By Malian Army, 'Foreign Troops'

At least 50 civilians were killed during a military operation conducted by Mali's army and "foreign troops" on April 19, the United Nations said in a report on Wednesday.

The UN has repeatedly accused Malian soldiers of summarily executing civilians and suspected militants over the course of their decadelong fight against groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State.

Mali's military government, which took power in a 2020 coup, has been battling Islamist insurgents with the help of private military contractors belonging to Russia's Wagner Group.

The alleged April massacre occurred on market day in Hombori municipality, in the central region of Douentza, after a Malian military convoy hit an improvised explosive device.

The massacre victims included a woman and a child, the UN's peacekeeping mission MINUSMA said in a quarterly report on human rights violations in the insurgent-hit West African country.

It did not specify the nationality of the foreign military personnel accompanying local troops.

Some 500 people were briefly detained during the military operation prompted by the explosion, but most were later freed. Days later, a single Malian soldier allegedly executed 20 of the 27 civilians still held at the military camp in Hombori, according to the UN.

Airstrike in Tigray Capital, Mekelle, as Fighting Escalates

Authorities in Ethiopia's Tigray region have reported a fresh air strike in the capital, Mekelle, that they say hit near a hospital and a center for displaced people. Meanwhile, Ethiopia's federal government said in a statement that fighting has spread to the west of Tigray, near the border with Sudan.

Kibrom Gebreselassie, the chief clinical director at Mekelle's Ayder Referral Hospital, said on Twitter that there was a drone attack "close to midnight" Wednesday near Mekelle General Hospital.

He said casualties were arriving at Ayder Hospital, without giving details.

Meanwhile, Getachew Reda, a spokesman for the Tigray People's Liberation Front, or TPLF, said on Twitter that at least three bombs were dropped on Mekelle, with Mekelle Hospital being among the targets.

He said there were "no conceivable military targets" in the area where the attack took place.

Due to a telecommunications blackout in Tigray, it was impossible for VOA to confirm the accounts or learn the extent of the casualties.

On Wednesday morning, the Ethiopian government issued a statement saying the TPLF had invaded the Amhara Region, near the border with neighboring Sudan.

Reda denied the allegation, saying the government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is "making up stories."

A five-month cease-fire in Ethiopia's civil war came to an end last week, dashing hopes for peace talks. Each side has blamed the other for the renewed fighting.

Meanwhile, Sudan's government has summoned Ethiopia's ambassador to Khartoum over an assertion he made that the Ethiopian military shot down a plane carrying weapons from Sudanese airspace. Sudan says the allegation was unfounded.

India, China to Hold Military Drills with Russia

India and China are among several countries taking part in Russia's weeklong joint military drills scheduled to get underway on Thursday in the east of the country, according to Russia's state-owned news agency Tass.

While India has previously taken part in multinational military drills in Russia — an Indian contingent was part of Zapad military exercises held in September 2021 — analysts say

its participation in the "Vostok-2022" military exercises in the midst of Russia's invasion of Ukraine reaffirms New Delhi's friendly ties with Moscow despite a tightening strategic partnership with the United States.

"India's participation in exercises in Russia is not unusual, but this time, they are also making a political point," said Manoj Joshi, distinguished fellow at the Observer Research Foundation in New Delhi. "New Delhi is emphasizing that it will adhere to the independent position that it has taken in the wake of the Ukraine crisis and continue to remain neutral between the U.S. and Russia."

India has refrained from condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine and has not joined Western sanctions against Moscow. Its oil imports from Moscow have risen sharply this year as it takes advantage of deep discounts.

India has defended its oil purchases as necessary for what it says is an energy-deficient, developing country like India. "We have been very honest about our interests," India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said earlier this month in Bangkok. "I have a country with a per capita income of \$2,000. These aren't people who can afford higher energy prices."

Although India is currently purchasing weapons from other countries, including Israel and the United States, much of its existing weaponry is of Russian origin.

American Nun Abducted by Jihadists in Sahel Freed

The Catholic Church said that an 83-year-old American nun who was abducted by jihadists in northern Burkina Faso in April has been released.

Sister Suellen Tennyson, a nun with the Congregation of Marianites of the Holy Cross, had been kidnapped in the parish of Yalگو, where she had worked since 2014.

In a statement, the bishop of the diocese of Kaya, Theophile Nare, announced "to all, that with great joy and gratitude to God," Tennyson "has been released by her kidnappers."

She is "currently in a safe place ... [and] in good health," Nare said, in the statement that reached AFP on Wednesday, adding that he had no details about the conditions of her release but was "deeply grateful to all those who worked for it."

In Washington, a U.S. State Department spokesman confirmed "the release of a U.S. citizen in Niger who had been held hostage in West Africa."

The spokesman did not identify the individual, but Tennyson was the only known American hostage in the region.

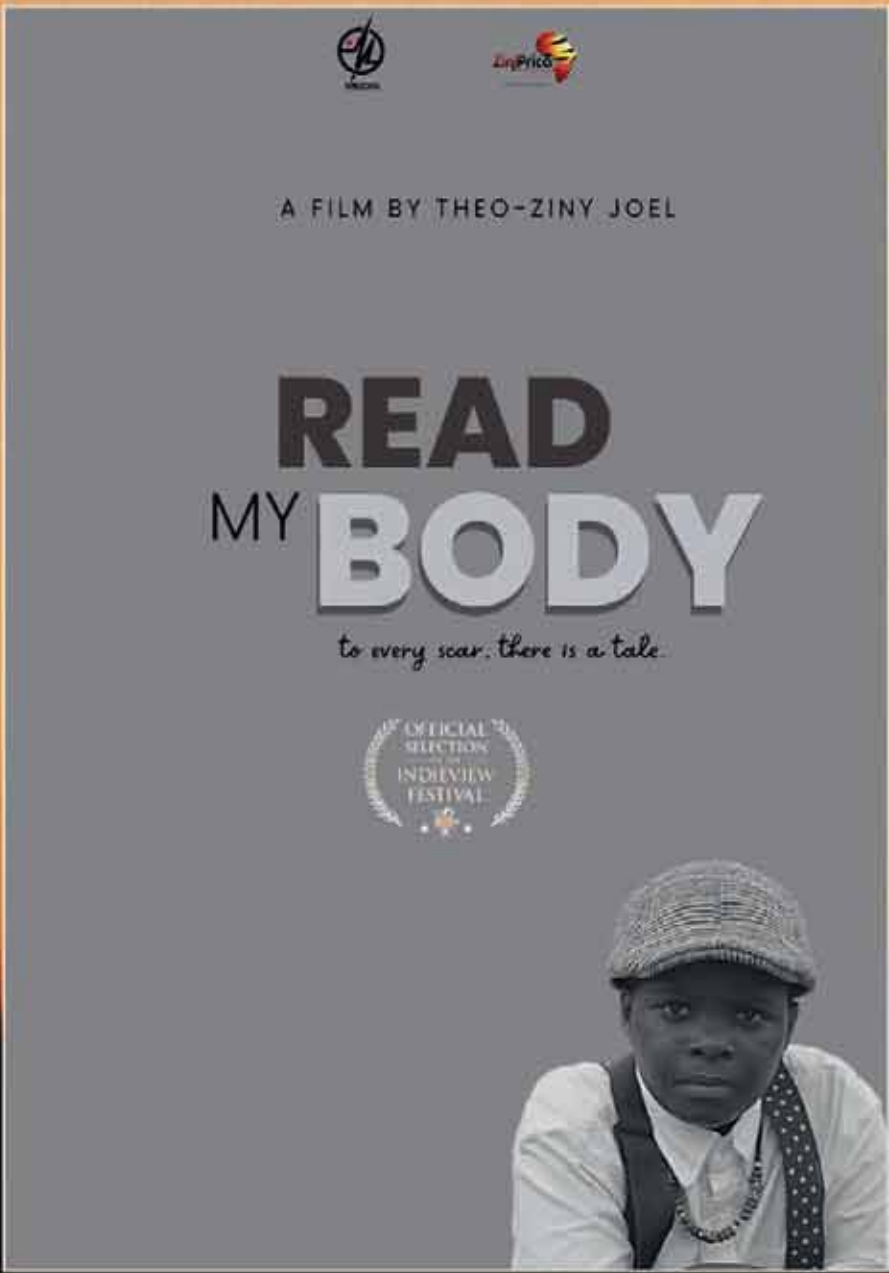
"This individual will soon be reunited with loved ones. It is the wish of the individual to remain private at this time, and we ask that all respect that wish," the spokesman said.



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MATTHEW HASSAN KUKAH AT 70

AYOOLA AJANAKU
pays tribute to Kukah, a
bishop, advocate of justice,
democracy, and religious
co-existence



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AN ASSEMBLY DERAILED BY SUCCESS

The ninth national
assembly is a let-
down, contends **JOSEF
OMOROTIONMWAN**



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EDITORIAL

GORBACHEV: FREEDOM'S LAST TRUMPETER



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*The government should lead other stakeholders
responsibly to save our citadels of learning,*
argues **MONDAY PHILIPS EKPE**



NIGERIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES' LIMBO MOMENT

In April this year, an arts professor called me from the University of Ibadan and asked, "Have you heard anything about our matter?" Feigning ignorance, I wanted to know exactly what he meant. "The strike, of course," was his response. Based on my humble assessment at the time, I counselled him thus: Think of any other productive thing to deploy his energies to at this point - poultry farming, just whatever - that catches his fancy. When he told me that he would work on his inaugural lecture, I wished him well and sincerely hoped that he would deliver it someday. My advice was neither a product of cynicism nor sarcasm. I had watched this federal government negotiate with labour across various sectors and the mostly sorry outcomes. I had also seen the makeup of the current leadership of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and its no-retreat-no surrender stance. And now, the strike, first declared by ASUU in February, has just been pronounced total and indefinite. Welcome to a tunnel of needless, avoidable woes especially for the weak and, ultimately, the nation in general.

In my article, "Pick Your Fights, ASUU Members", published here on July 21, 2022, I advised the striking dons to streamline the demands and concentrate more of their own welfare and entitlements; that fighting for the upliftment of the entire system and holding the government to account, though noble, are not feasible in the present circumstances. Expecting this administration to do the needful would be asking for too much considering the calibre and disposition of those negotiating from its side of the table. I have read and listened to many analysts whose anger is directed solely at ASUU members for "keeping our children at home for too long in pursuit of their own selfish interests." I sometimes wonder how people could rush into believing unsubstantiated claims by government officials who have done little to deserve the trust of Nigerians.

For me, the climax finally arrived the other day when the Minister of Education, Mallam Adamu Adamu, announced in a press conference that the government had settled most of the grievances of the lecturers and that they should forget their outstanding salaries accumulated in the course of the industrial action. He then went on to try his mouth on the bizarre: Nigerian students in public universities, get ready to sue your lecturers for the time lost in the pursuit of your degrees and diplomas. It does not take special perceptive powers to see that bravado coming. It requires, instead, a knowledge of the present parlous state of our national coffers; government's growing helplessness (let's spare it 'cluelessness', a word it used regularly to describe the administration it succeeded) to find workable solutions, and its capacity for tardiness, nonchalance, insensitivity, deviousness and impudence. One thing

you cannot deny the government, though, is its conversance with the psyche of many Nigerians. Their reluctance in scrutinising official pronouncements is legendary. Since Mallam Adamu made those assertions, even some ardent sympathisers of the positions of ASUU have jumped ship without bothering to know exactly how things stand currently.

The union's weakest point in this protracted and painful drama is its public communication strategies. If well-conceived methods exist within the organisation at all, they are clearly ineffective. No matter how brilliant any goal for the general good is, adequately communicating it to the relevant publics should be paramount in the chart of priorities. I have spent the last few days trying to explain, with mixed results, the sad, self-defeating statement reportedly made by the National President of ASUU, Professor Emmanuel Osodeke, about some state universities being quacks. His reactions since then have been denials. In my view, a prompt apology or more credible clarification from him would have doused this fouled atmosphere that ASUU does not need right now within its ranks. Any attempt to proceed with divided fronts will be injurious to the corporate objectives of a group that has already given so much in the fight to salvage this all-important segment of education.

Students of the media of mass communication know that it is always wiser to speak more from the head than the heart in treating burning issues on the mass media. Recall that some days before his Arise News gaffe, the professor of soil science had called on Nigerian youths to vote out the ruling party in next year's general election for jeopardising their interests. In so doing, he unwittingly pulled his union directly into the political arena. Someone in the hot seat he occupies should not openly give in that often to the dictates of his emotions to the detriment of the collective aspirations of his colleagues. The weight on Osodeke's shoulders must be excruciating. His passion about the task before him is unquestionable, a trait readily noticeable in his media outings. Unfortunately, however, he appears to be unravelling at this critical moment. He needs the understanding and empathy of the public,

certainly not latching onto his perceived weaknesses to hang ASUU which in the long run might be guilty of embarking on grossly misunderstood and underappreciated heroism. The union urgently needs to soften some of its grounds to show that it is still a part of the changing world.

ASUU's ideological and operational shortcomings notwithstanding, at the heart of the struggle is a push to enhance university education, a quest that should excite every patriotic citizen. Name calling, muscle-flexing and uninformed anger should not define how the interested parties react to the predicament of our ivory towers. Take state universities, for instance. There are enough reasons for ASUU to know where and when to draw lines between federal and state institutions in its various agitations, most outstanding being their different ownership structures. The unitary system of government has since given way to the federal. But seizing this charged period to part ways with the national body of public university lecturers would not be in the overall interest of the state-owned branches.

The role of the federal government (executive and legislative arms), as the nation's apex entity, in these spiralling crises will surely be interrogated in the years to come, far beyond May 29, 2023. Even in crucial matters relating to proper funding, which it keeps arguing is now beyond its reach, it is still its responsibility to lead the discussions and efforts to institute alternative solutions. ASUU, contrary to what some people think, has not reduced strikes to pastimes. Those who want lecturers to employ viable options have not articulated what they are. Is there any virtue in consistently ignoring agreements reached or in releasing, not even executing, reports of the bargaining and review committees set up by the government itself? If the aim is to present ASUU members as irresponsible and rubbish them in the estimation of the public, who gains in the end?

Nigeria is witnessing a tragedy of epic proportions, only that it probably has not become very apparent. We may not be conscious of the fact that more premium is placed on certificates rather than the quality of schooling itself. Emphasis is often put on the redundancy of students during strikes and its effects and also the psychological burden that is automatically transferred to their parents and guardians. Commensurate energy hardly goes into pondering over the impact on teachers. Apart from financial disability, there is assault on the morale and esteem of the average lecturer. We must not forget that no amount of coercion, legislation or monitoring can compel a teacher to give his or her best. The volume of the multifarious damage being done to tertiary learning is better imagined. ■

**At the heart of the struggle is
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react to the predicament of our
ivory towers**

Dr Ekpe
is a member of THISDAY Editorial Board

AYOOLA AJANAKU pays tribute to Kukah, a bishop, advocate of justice, democracy, and religious co-existence

MATTHEW HASSAN KUKAH AT 70

Where does one start on the elucidation of an elephant in the room and one of Nigeria’s most eminent proponents of humanity via his consistent bandwidth to defend the tenets of democracy, social inclusion, amongst others? One does not need to go far as no other persona encapsulates these values than the Catholic Bishop of Sokoto Diocese christened Matthew Hassan Kukah, as he marked three scores and a decade on Wednesday, 31st August 2022. He has forged an identity as a tireless advocate for justice, democracy, peaceful religious co-existence and human development in Nigeria and beyond.

As a priest and political scientist, he’s been in the forefront of intellectual



exposition on inter-faith dialogue, good governance, and leadership development. He has served as a member of Nigeria’s Truth Commission, as secretary of the Political Reform Conference for Nigeria, and as a member of Nigeria’s Electoral Reform Committee. He played an important role in negotiating an end to the Shell-Ogoni conflict in Niger Delta region. The role of Bishop Hassan Kukah in moulding opinions cannot be understated, as he’s an entity who speaks truth to power not minding whose ox is gored. From the military era till date where the nascent

As a priest and political scientist, he’s been in the forefront of intellectual exposition on inter-faith dialogue, good governance, and leadership development

democracy of Nigeria finds itself, Kukah’s input and yeoman’s contribution in the National Peace Commission is evident for all and sundry to witness.

A champion of respectful and cordial Christian-Muslim relations, Kukah served as chairman of the Committee on Interreligious Dialogue in Nigeria and West Africa and was appointed by Pope Benedict XVI as a member of

the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Named vicar general of the Archdiocese of Kaduna in 2004, he became bishop of Sokoto in 2011.

Kukah was ordained a priest in Kaduna in 1976 at age 24. He subsequently earned a diploma in religious studies from the University of Ibadan, a BA in divinity from the Urban University, Rome, a master’s in peace studies from the University of Bradford, UK, and a PhD in political science from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

He was a senior Rhodes fellow at St. Antony’s College, University of Oxford and an Edward Mason Fellow at the Kennedy School of Government,

Harvard University. Kukah is a renowned speaker and widely sought after egghead in Nigeria and beyond around lectures that dissect human rights, governance and philosophical bandwidth. He’s a journalist delight who leaves you spellbound with his depth and repertoire of knowledge that cuts across different touch points. He’s a shining light of his generation who has added gravitas on the need to articulate ideas and avenues to drive national growth and rejuvenation.

Amongst his many publications are Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria (Codresia, 2001), Religious Militancy and Self-Assertion: Islam and Politics in Nigeria (Avebury, 1997), and Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria (Ibadan, Spectrum Books, 1993), The Church and the Politics of Social Responsibility (2007), Witness to Justice: An Insider’s Account of Nigeria’s Truth Commission (Ibadan, Bookcraft, 2011).

As this servant of God descends into the seventh floor of age bracket, it’s noteworthy to dole garlands to his quarters based on his efforts to drive human development, public policy dissemination and human rights activism. His name is etched in gold and his contributions have a special place in the hearts of Nigerians, the church and the society at large.

Ajanaku is a Communications Specialist based in Lagos



The ninth national assembly is a let-down, contends JOSEF OMOROTIONMWAN

AN ASSEMBLY DERAILED BY SUCCESS



From the very beginning, our founding fathers realised that the concentration of too much power in the hands of one man or in a single institution is an open invitation to tyranny. They, therefore, introduced the Doctrine of Separation of Powers, which divided governmental powers into three branches with specific functions: the Legislature makes laws and policies; the Executive branch executes the laws and policies, and issues of interpretation are referred to the Judiciary.

These divisions were, however, not made into a water-tight compartment. It was sometimes allowed for one branch to play the roles that ordinarily belonged to the other branches. For instance, to become law, any bill passed by the National Assembly must be signed by the President. When the Ministries and Executive Agencies make subsidiary regulations to ease the performance of their assigned functions, they engage in legislative functions.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specifically states that no determination by the Legislature under the impeachment procedure shall be challenged in a court of law. Here, the Legislature carries out a function that ordinarily belongs to the Judiciary.

Again, when the court strikes down laws validly passed by the Legislature and replaces such laws with remedial provisions, they engage in legislative functions.

Essentially, the doctrine of Separation of Powers was not intended to create absolute independence but a situation of mutual interdependence among the branches of government. Nothing here vitiates the fact that no branch of government shall abandon the roles assigned to them. History bears eloquent testimony to the fact that any branch that fails to perform its functions and surrenders its powers to another branch in the name of cooperation destroys itself, the branch it is surrendering to, and eventually the country.

A robust opposition is perhaps a panacea for government performance. This is one way of explaining how the Ninth National Assembly- particularly the Ninth Senate- shall go down as an Institution that was derailed by its success. The ruling party was just satisfied with having a comfortable majority in the Senate. It bundled itself and surrendered to the Executive branch in the name of cooperation. From the very beginning, the National Assembly surrendered to the will of the President on every issue.

Year after year, when the Executive submitted the Appropriation Bill to the National Assembly, you could tell with relative ease how it would come out. It was invariably passed as submitted, except that they added their nebulous Constituency Projects.

In other climes, the Appropriation Bill is nothing but Budget Estimates. The Executive submission could be dismantled, torn apart, and properly rearranged to suit the interest of the electorate. After all, the legislators are the representatives of the people.

That explains why the annual recurrent budgets performed at a 100% level while the capital budgets hovered around the 13% level. This meant that the government was on leave throughout the year - executing only the sham constituency projects scattered all over the country, with no value for development.

In the name of cooperation, all measures submitted to the National Assembly by the Executive were passed as submitted. On a few occasions, the National Assembly made some worthy amendments, which were ignored by the President. The National Assembly could not summon the courage to override his veto.

The President kept dipping his hand into the Excess Crude Account as a slush fund for all forms of illegalities and they watched on.

The President today is accused of nepotism when all the nominees for all those appointments passed through the Senate. Thus, the Senate effectively reduced the Advice and Consent Procedure to total nothingness. They bowed to the will of the President while he ran the country as a Sole Administrator.

Once he became a sole administrator, the President embarked on reckless borrowing - borrowing to finance fraud! And no one cared to check him because the National Assembly had abandoned its duty post. The idea of oversight had been tossed out of the window!

Better a confrontation than a cave-in! Where the Legislature cannot constantly keep the Executive on its toes, the nation is doomed. Cooperation is good but when cooperation between the Legislature and the Executive becomes excessive, it becomes an open invitation to conspiracy. As it is in other spurs of life, so it is in government. When politicians come out of a meeting and they are smiling and back-slapping one another, there is something wrong. They did not tell themselves the truth. A polygamist whose two wives suddenly become very friendly among themselves has cause to worry. His life is at stake!

Omorotionmwan writes from Canada

Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**
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EDITORIAL

GORBACHEV: FREEDOM’S LAST TRUMPETER

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union, dies at age 91

The death on Tuesday of Mikhail Gorbachev, the great reformer who ended the Cold War and saw to the dissolution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) marked the end of an era. While his legacy may be mixed, there can be no doubt that the late Gorbachev was one of the most defining political figures of the 20th century. Even the current Russian President, Vladimir Putin of whom he was very critical has grudgingly admitted that Gorbachev made “huge impact on the course of history.”

After over 70 years of communist rule in the late eighties, Gorbachev opted for greater democracy and a preference for freedom and openness that eventually led to a dramatic ideological shift in the world. Armed with the twin policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), Gorbachev found convenient historic allies in the then United States President Ronald Reagan and, to a lesser extent, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in his drive for political and economic reforms at home and increased cooperation abroad. When on 12th June 1987, the late Reagan stood at the Brandenburg gate separating the then East and West Germany with the Berlin Wall and declared, ‘Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall’, it was a historic clarion call that reverberated in Moscow and across the world. Soon afterwards, the wall came down under the pressure of multitudes of freedom loving humanity.

At the end, what used to be the USSR of 16 republics fell apart with Russia emerging as the sole survivor of a hitherto communist federation. The component republics opted for independence and sovereignty. The United Nations membership enlarged. The client states of Eastern Europe and parts of Africa and Latin America were let loose to seek freedom, democracy and free enterprise. A few resistant nations like North



Gorbachev beckoned on the nations of the world to embrace freedom, democracy and the promise of universal peace and prosperity. He has left the world a legacy of worthy challenges and his place in history is very much assured

Korea, Cuba and Venezuela remained in a hardly recognizable communist bloc.

The birth of the new world order in which we now live owe largely to the courage and conviction of Gorbachev who assumed the leadership of the then Soviet Union at a time of grave challenges. The Soviet economy was tanking as living standards continued to nosedive. Beyond huge budget outlays on defence and armaments, the Soviet system had literally no competitive edge compared to its Western opposites. Rationing of essential goods and other necessities produced a citizenship that was richly fed with ideology but went to bed on empty stomach.

Faced with such enormous challenge, Gorbachev recognised that something had to give. But it was an act of unusual courage for a man who ascended the leadership ladder of the Soviet Union after decades of ideological purity and strict

communist adherence to reverse the course of his nation’s history and embrace the creed of the ‘enemy’. That was Gorbachev’s singular heroic push. Derided at home for the choice he made but celebrated abroad, Gorbachev was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990. He was succeeded by the rambunctious Boris Yeltsin. In later life and in retirement, he remained a critic of Putin’s autocratic flirtations.

To a large extent, Gorbachev spared the world the horrors of a nuclear holocaust by defusing the then clear imminence of a disaster. He freed his nation from ideological tyranny and allowed other nations that were hitherto tethered to the fringes of a dysfunctional system to chart their own course. In the process, along with other like-minded world leaders, Gorbachev beckoned on the nations of the world to embrace freedom, democracy and the promise of universal peace and prosperity. He has left the world a legacy of worthy challenges and his place in history is very much assured.

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Letters to the Editor

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

LETTERS

THE CASE AGAINST ASUU... II

Continued from backpage

In his Monday blog on the influential American Council on Foreign Relations where he is currently a Senior Fellow for African Studies, Ebenezer Obadare (who taught at Ife before moving to American universities) posed more questions: “How can ASUU insist on ‘autonomy’ and at the same time maintain that the federal government pick up the tab for the running of the universities? Why should university faculty spread across 36 states be paid the same salaries even though they teach different things and live and work in different social circumstances? And why should a single union be the one to negotiate on their behalf?”

As someone from a poor background who may not have had a university education if it were not tuition-free, I admit this is not an easy conversation for me. But times have changed. Our population and the number of students (at all levels) has exploded amid dwindling resources. Therefore, to resolve the perpetual financial crisis in the university system so that we can attract quality academic staff, provide necessary teaching aids, and ensure conducive learning environment for students, we must examine alternative sources of funding. That is the only way our graduates can compete globally in the knowledge world. But even

when many students may not be able to pay a commensurate school fee, the universities need not be shut against them.

Apparently having seen that President Muhammadu Buhari is now outsourcing responsibility to the administration that will come after him (with removal of subsidy scheduled to take off in June 2023 after he will have left office), ASUU has also decided to wait for his successor before any dialogue on the strike. I plead for a truce. The two sides must consider the plight of our frustrated students, bury their egos and come to an agreement on how to reopen the campuses. The federal government must also understand that proscribing ASUU as being suggested in some quarters is a military tactic that will backfire. What is required at this stage is leadership. The president and his Education Minister, Adamu Adamu, both of whom mouthed all the right platitudes on this issue when they were in the opposition should take ownership of the process. They must find a way to put an end to this destructive strike.

However, even after we resolve the current ASUU crisis, the federal government must also return to the path of responsibility. Over the years, our political leaders have turned public universities into ‘constituency projects’ to be sited in their villages. That is how we arrived at this sorry pass. Just recently, the National As-

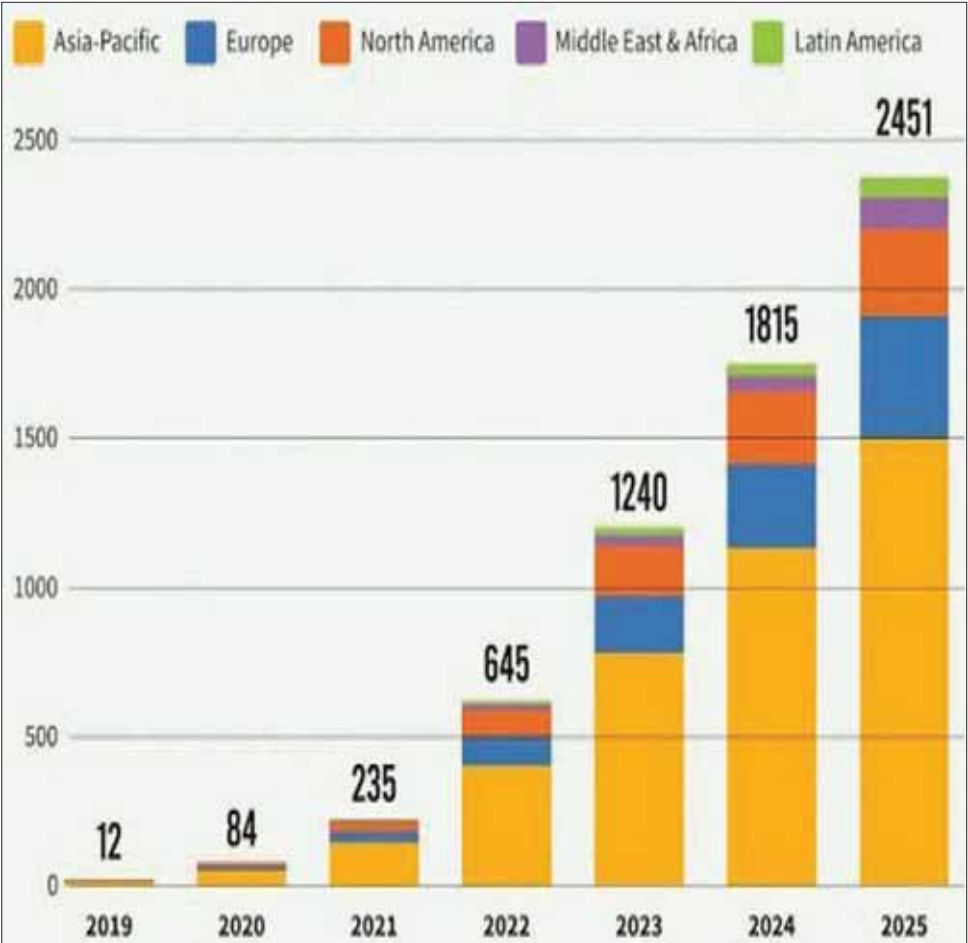
sembly proposed to create additional 26 federal universities, 33 federal colleges of education and four polytechnics when we cannot adequately fund existing ones. To compound the problem, it is now a status symbol for governors, ministers and other top public officials at both the federal and the states to attend the off-shore graduation ceremonies of their children, with the pictures splashed in our newspapers. In as much as nobody can decree where parents choose to educate their children, leaders must be sensitive to public mood.

All said, I concede that so many things will have to change in the way we run our country. And it must start with the federal government increasing budgetary allocation to education, especially to aid research in our universities. The same thing should happen in the 36 states. But ASUU must also collaborate with the enlightened voice of the public to find solutions to the funding of these institutions so that lecturers can also be paid reasonable wages. While solutions must include student support facilities such as loans, grants and scholarship on the basis of merit and need, the reality of the Nigerian condition today is that we can no longer afford tuition-free public university education.

Olusegun Adeniyi,
Abuja

R A T E S A S A T A U G U S T 3 1 , 2 0 2 2							
MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX	
OPR	11.25%	CALL	10.25%	INDEX LEVEL	613.31%	1/4 TO DATE	-0.85%
OVERNIGHT	11.50%	1-MONTH	9.56%	1-DAY	0.16%	YEAR TO DATE	7.64%
		3-MONTH	10.52%	MONTH-TO-DATE	0.44%		
						EXCHANGE RATE	
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						*AS AT LAST FRIDAY	

As More Countries Roll Out 5G Network, ITU Warns against Interference with Radio Navigation Satellite Service



Emma Okonji

In order to avoid the blocking, jamming or serious degradation of services that rely on radio waves, known in the telecommunication world as harmful interference, which can be either accidental or intentional, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations specialised agency responsible for global telecom regulation, has issued a warning against any form of interference with radio navigation satellite service.

The warning is coming at a time when more countries are rolling out 5G network to enhance faster speed of communication, navigation and downloads with minimum latency. Last week, Nigeria joined other countries like China, Japan, India, and South Africa that have rolled out 5G technology. Nigeria rolled out its 5G technology on August 24, following the mandate given by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to MTN Nigeria Plc and Mafab Communications Ltd

to rollout 5G on their various networks after winning the 5G spectrum licence. Although some countries have raised the issue of possible interference on navigation satellite from 5G transmission, authorities from different countries are working towards putting measures that will prevent frequency jam. ITU is of the view that either way, harmful interference poses a significant and growing threat to critical infrastructure and safety services used every day, from

commercial aviation to energy distribution to satellite navigation systems. Protecting this ecosystem is essential for the safe and satisfactory operation of the growing number of devices, applications and autonomous vehicles that rely every day on positioning and navigation systems on air, sea, and land, ITU said in its warning letter. One of the principal objectives of the International Telecommunication Union and its 193 Member States is to ensure

interference-free operations of radio communication systems. Following several incidences of harmful frequency interference brought to the attention of the ITU Radio Regulations Board, a recent circular letter, urged ITU Member States to take measures to prevent interference with radio navigation satellite service (RNSS) signals and receivers. The RNSS is an essential component of global critical infrastructure, providing a ‘safety-of-life’ service that must be protected from interference.

It is used in GPS (the US-based Global Positioning System) and other global navigation satellite systems (GNSS) platforms, such as Europe’s GALILEO, Russia’s GLONASS and China’s BeiDou system. According to ITU, between February 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022, ITU received 329 reports of harmful interference or infringements of the radio regulations, which is the international treaty safeguarding

Continued on page 28

Interswitch: 5G Will Enhance Rollout of Payment Solutions in Nigeria

Emma Okonji

Following last week’s launch of 5G technology in Nigeria by MTN Nigeria Plc, Interswitch, a technology-driven company focused on the digitisation of payments in Nigeria and other African countries, has said the launch of 5G in Nigeria will speed up the rollout of more digital payment solutions across the country.

Managing Director, Payment Processing and Switching at Interswitch, Mr. Akeem Lawal, said this in Lagos, during a press briefing to announce the 20th anniversary of Interswitch and the launch of its anniversary logo. Lawal who expressed excitement over the launch of 5G in Nigeria, said it would allow digital payment solution providers like Interswitch to speed up the rollout of more payment solutions,

using emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Robotics, among others. Addressing the issue of financial fraud across various platforms, the Founder and Group CEO of Interswitch, Mr. Mitchell Elegbe, said when Interswitch designed and launched its open infrastructure 20 years ago to address payment challenges and access to cash, he knew that the platform would also

open avenues for financial fraud because fraudsters would always take advantage of good platforms to attack in order to steal money. He however said Interswitch had always been ahead of hackers, by providing adequate protection for customers’ savings, using emerging technologies. Managing Director, Digital Infrastructure and Managed Services at Interswitch, Jonah Adams, said Interswitch had

always invested in research of new security solutions to protect customers, banks, organisations and individuals. “We have partnered with the best security solution company in the United Kingdom (UK) to develop the best-in-class security platform that will serve banks, merchants and individuals, which will be launched soon,” Adams said. Speaking about the anniversary logo tagged, “#NeverStop Brand

Campaign,” Elegbe said the new brand campaign would project its positioning as a pioneering and integral enabler that has not only actively supported the growth and development of fintech and payments across Africa over the last 20 years, but also to amplify the brand’s progressive outlook as a frontier-driving company, which keeps pushing boundaries and

Continued on page 28

MARKET DATA AS AT WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2022																		
BONDS					BILLS					CPS					OTC FX FUTURES			
DESCRIPTION	Price	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Dis-count	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	Updated Time	CONTRACT TENOR (MONTH)	Contract	Current Rate (\$/N)	Updated Time
^14.20 14-MAR-2024	104.55	10.92	-0.01	August 25, 2022 ▼	NTB 10-Nov-22	3.90	3.93	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬	FDHP CP III 17-MAR-23	12.09	12.96	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬	1	NGUS AUG 31 2022	433.54	August 25, 2022
13.53 23-MAR-2025	100.89	13.10	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬	NTB 26-Jan-23	9.80	10.22	-0.01	August 25, 2022 ▼	VHPL CP III 1-APR-23	16.44	18.24	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬	2	NGUS SEP 28 2022	435.39	August 25, 2022
^12.50 22-JAN-2026	98.10	13.20	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬	NTB 9-Feb-23	10.00	10.48	-0.01	August 25, 2022 ▼						3	NGUS OCT 26 2022	437.24	August 25, 2022
^16.28 17-MAR-2027	112.10	12.70	-0.01	August 25, 2022 ▼	NTB 9-Mar-23	10.05	10.62	-0.01	August 25, 2022 ▼						4	NGUS NOV 30 2022	439.09	August 25, 2022
^13.98 23-FEB-2028	104.50	12.81	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬	NTB 27-Apr-23	4.90	5.07	0.00	August 25, 2022 ▬						5	NGUS DEC 28 2022	440.94	August 25, 2022

Preparing Startups for Technology Innovation

At the recent tech founders’ hangout in Lagos, startups from different technology hubs stressed the need for collaboration and synergy of ideas to build a formidable tech ecosystem that will drive technology innovation, writes **Emma Okonji**



Technology solution developers and entrepreneurs from different technology hubs, last week in Lagos, restated their commitment to collaborate with one another and to support each other though synergy that will help them develop technology solutions that will be commercially viable to address specific challenges in Nigeria, Africa and the rest of the world.

The startup founders, who were brought together through a combined sponsorship, organised by Firstfounders, PropTech Hub Africa Inc., Dual Luxury World and Pocket Lawyer, said collaboration would enable them to share ideas, get financial support and mentorship that would further drive technology innovation.

During the gathering, which lasted for hours, participants who were mainly tech founders, startups, entrepreneurs and tech savvy individuals, were able to network among and identified like minds and areas of interests for collaboration.

DEVELOPING STARTUPS

Founder and CEO, Firstfounders, Mr. David Lanre Messan, said the founders’ hangout had been in existence for some years, but decided to meet physically this year to collaborate and share ideas that will promote technology innovation in Nigeria. According to him, Firstfounders is a technology ecosystem driven by a mission to build, scale and fund a community of 1000 founders with Minimum Viable Products (MVPs), with 200 becoming unicorns 2032.

“Our goal is to enhance team work and engender the growth of technology in Africa. We support startups to scale-up their solutions and ideas and we help them grow. We have an academy where we train and grow entrepreneurs. Firstfounders will be launching its digital

bank next year to help tech founders to source for finance to expand their business. Lack of adequate funding has been a barrier for many tech startups and we will be providing the much needed funds for tech startups to grow their business, through our digital bank. To access the fund, founders must have a business and they must have an account with Firstfounders Digital Bank,” Messan said.

Giving details of his experience, he said: “As an entrepreneur with several years of experience in raising over 250 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), we offer end-to-end solutions from idea formation period to market validation, product creation, fund raising, including exiting stage like business merger and acquisition. Dealing with operational challenges have always been an issue with up-coming startups who may have fantastic ideas, with good knowledge of the market, but may not understand the operational flow of the market, which we offer up-coming startups that identify with our platform. Firstfounders recently signed a \$10 million Studio Fund Partnership with a company in the United States and we are pushing for another seed fund of \$100. The money will be used to build and support more SMEs and technology startups across Africa.”

TECH INNOVATION

Founder and CEO, PropTech Hub Africa, Dr. Freeman Osonuga, said the objective of this year’s Founders’ Hangout was designed to bring together, technology innovators, Startup Founders, Entrepreneurs, Investors and technology savvy people, in order to share ideas, collaborate to build world-class solution that will address specific challenges in Nigeria, Africa and the

rest of the world.

“PropTech Hub Africa is a property solution hub that provides solution for property development, using emerging technologies. Our vision is to develop a crop of startups that will drive technology innovation and the development of a new sub-industry called the Prop Fintech. At PropTech Hub, we are creating the technology to warehouse and enhance the financing of real estate projects across Africa in such a way that investors are at peace with their investments in the real estate sector,” Osonuga said.

Speaking about his passion for technology drive, Osonuga said he graduated as a Medical Doctor but decided to go into startup business in the real estate sector because of his passion for technology.

“I have a passion for technology and I like using technology to provide solutions to specific challenges. Over the years, we have helped several real estate companies to achieve their goals in terms of sales revenue and growth potential and we have empowered thousands of Nigerians in the area of job creation.

“With our Admiralty Business Network, we were able to make investment in real estate a lot easier, with the support of emerging technology. With the business network, we were able to raise several business owners with zero capital in the real estate sector. At PropTech Hub, we believe in people starting their own business with a minimal capital from any location and grow the business to a large enterprise. We have a technology solution called ‘Don Don’, which enables investors to begin with little capital and grow their capital with the

business. As entrepreneurs we do not need huge sums of money to begin business, what we need is the idea and the ability to grow the idea starting with little capital,” Oshonuga said.

SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT

Addressing the issue of support and investment, the CEO, Dual Luxury World, Mr. Faramola Adegunle, said entrepreneurs and tech startups needed to invest in order to expand their businesses beyond the shores of Nigeria for profitability. According to him, Dual Luxury World is a citizenship by investment programme that supports long term investment in a host country that will provide eligibility for citizenship in that country.

“With an investment of up to \$100,000 and \$200,000, the investor is sure of getting a second citizenship in the country of investment and also a second international passport that will enable the investor to have unrestricted access to that country without a visa. The investment package is open to families, with an extension to father, mother and children. Tech entrepreneurs can take advantage of the programme to invest and move their solution around to other countries that offers high growth opportunities to scale their technology business. Dual Luxury World helps people to be part of citizenship investment in order to have free entry and exit to countries where they can grow their business faster, and 80 per cent of our clients are from the tech space,” Adegunle said.

The programme, he added, helps tech startups to take their business outside of Nigeria, grow it there and return it to Nigeria for further growth and expansion. Dual Luxury World has a finance company that offers easy payment plan for families or individuals that may not be able to make a one-off payment for their citizenship investment, Adegunle further said.

Pantami Assures Nigerians of Attaining 95% Digital Literacy by 2030

Emma Okonji

The Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. Isa Ibrahim Pantami, said in Gombe, recently that Nigeria’s march towards attaining 95 per cent digital literacy in 2030 as contained in the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (2020 - 2030), now

looks more promising than ever.

Pantami, who presided over the graduation of participants at a two-week Digital Job Creation Training for the North-east in Gombe, which was facilitated by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), said: The reason we train citizens is because digital skills are no

longer considered a luxury, but necessities required in any business you do. If you want to be successful, you need to have digital skills.”

According to the Minister, “ICT is not just an independent sector but the key enabler of all other sectors today. It enables opportunities in education, in health, in agriculture, in security, in defence, in

manufacturing, in trade, in investment and in industry.”

He therefore urged the participants to adopt innovation-driven enterprises and to utilize the training they have received to improve their economic status and make Nigeria a better place.

“We have to utilise ICT in order to make our country a better place. We must use

ICT even for our personal economic benefits amongst others. Therefore, we want to encourage you not to waste your times online but rather to use the knowledge you have acquired to make Nigeria a better place and at the same time, derive many economic benefits from it,” he said.

The Minister who cited the

recent reports of the National Bureau of Statistics, NBS, about the performance of each sector of the economy, which indicated an unprecedented ICT’s contribution of 18.44% to the economy, described the reports as very heart-warming about the prospects of the industry meeting with the expectations of the relevant policies.

AS MORE COUNTRIES ROLL OUT 5G NETWORK, ITU WARNS AGAINST INTERFERENCE WITH RADIO NAVIGATION SATELLITE SERVICE

the equitable and efficient use of the radio frequency spectrum.

Data collected by a major aircraft manufacturer shows that 10,843 radio-frequency interference events were detected globally over

the same 12-month period. These figures were based on in-flight monitoring of GNSS receivers, which are standard onboard equipment for passenger or transport aircraft.

While most of the interference events occurred in the Middle East, several were also detected in the European, North American, African, and Asian regions.

In the warning letter, ITU said

it would continue to collaborate with affected administrations and industry sectors, as well as with other UN agencies like the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), to address harmful interference that could affect radio communication.

ITU’s Member States are currently preparing for the 2023

World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-23), to be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where further deliberations about harmful interference would be discussed.

INTERSWITCH: 5G WILL ENHANCE ROLLOUT OF PAYMENT SOLUTIONS IN NIGERIA

facilitating the creation of new ecosystems that help businesses and individuals scale and thrive, in line with its purpose of inspiring Africa to greatness through innovation, value-creation and excellence.

According to Elegbe, the runway for growth remains significant as over 50 per cent of Nigeria is still unbanked or underbanked and 85 per cent of transactions in sub-Saharan African still occur in cash.

He said: “Today, technology is at the forefront of society and will continue to play a significant role in how we work and live. Nigeria is fast becoming the tech-capital of Africa, with one of the fastest growing tech markets in

the world. Interswitch has always been focused on the bigger picture, with the understanding that ‘going it alone’ is not the answer, and that we do better by working together.”

Executive Vice-President

for Group Marketing and Communications at Interswitch, Cherry Fromosele said: “Anniversaries not only give the chance to celebrate how far we have come in our journey but also provide the opportunity to stop, reflect and launch out again

with fresh passion, a renewed zeal and a clearer vision. This is what underpins the philosophy that has given rise to #NeverStop. As we look ahead, we see enormous potential for future growth and the furthering of our vision.”

Detecting Babies’ Anomalies with Emerging Technologies

Emma Okonji writes about how Ubenwa healthtech startup deploys emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) in detecting babies’ anomalies and cries

The evolution of technology has caught the attention of various sectors including the health sector where a deep learning model including artificial intelligence (AI), and Machine Learning (ML) are being used to analyse the needs of a baby through their cries.

Ubenwa, a Nigerian-owned healthtech startup is a platform application, which analyses the frequency patterns in the cry of a new born baby in order to quickly diagnose birth asphyxia. It develops AI-powered software for early identification of neurological and respiratory conditions in infants using their cry sounds

Giving details of the technology solution, the CEO of Ubenwa, Mr. Charles Onu, said: “One of the things we have learnt in our research is that the infants’ cries hold a lot of information on their health and this is what we are trying to extract at Ubenwa. The reason for the existence of the connection between the health and

the cry of the baby is because babies have no control over their cry sounds.

“The cry is an involuntary response to internal or external stimulus, and their cry is directly coordinated by the central nervous system (CNS) and what this means is that, when there is a medical condition that affects the CNS, it ultimately changes the pattern of their cries.”

COLLABORATION

While it looks to onboard more hospitals, Ubenwa presently partners with six hospitals internationally, four of which are in Nigeria. They include Enugu State University teaching hospital, River State University teaching hospital, Lagos University teaching hospital, and Lagos State University teaching hospital.

Ubenwa’s research and development is solving scientific problems associated with babies ranging from evolving brain problems, asphyxia, and is

seeing collaboration between computer scientists, medical engineers, and doctors-neonatologists specifically.

WHO’S POSITION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), birth asphyxia, which is the loss of oxygen to a newborn during birth, kills about four million infants every year, or more than one-third of all deaths of children under the age of five.

With its recent raise of \$2.5 million in pre-seedround led by Radical Ventures with participation from AIX Ventures, Joshua Bengio, Google Brain’s Hugo Larochelle and Marc Bellemare, the company is focused on carrying out a launch, and providing parents the opportunity to connect their app to their existing baby monitor devices.

Also, Ubenwa is looking to continue to advance its research and development. “We want to finalise the clinical

programme we are doing internationally and begin the process of getting regulatory approval for our diagnostic tool as a medical device.”

THE SOLUTION

According to the company, it is trying to bring the world to a point where infant cries, just as their heart rates, are considered to be a vital sign.

“Ultimately, our goal is to be a translator for baby cry sounds, providing a non-invasive way to monitor medical conditions everywhere you find a baby- delivery rooms, neonatal and paediatric intensive care units, nurseries, and in the home,” Onu said.

With its machine learning algorithms, the company further stated that it is looking at not just cries for emotional needs but specifically, cries that indicate a health problem. To gain a wider reach, Ubenwa is seeking more partnerships with both public and private hospitals, within Nigeria and globally.

Minister Advocates Promotion of Indigenous Tech Solutions

Raheem Akingbolu

The Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. Isa Ali Pantami has reaffirmed the federal government’s determination to reverse the trend of importation of all types of telecommunications products, especially where production in Nigeria is possible.

Giving his keynote address at the 2022 edition of the

Nigerian Telecommunications Indigenous Content Expo (NTICE), held in Lagos, Pantami charged stakeholders to intensify efforts in the promotion of Nigeria’s indigenous telecommunications sector. He decried the influx of foreign software in Nigeria noting that “77 per cent of software in use are foreign, while only 23 per cent are obtained locally.

The expo was organised as

part of effort to vigorously pursue the objectives of the National Policy for the Promotion of Indigenous Content in the Nigerian Telecommunications Sector (NPPIC), through the National Office for Developing Indigenous Telecoms Sector (NODITS) domiciled in the NCC.

Also speaking at the event, a major player in Nigeria’s digital space, Elo Umeh,

also joined stakeholders in Nigeria’s technology and telecommunications sector to advocate for promotion of indigenous technology solutions and telecom content.

Umeh, who is the Managing Director and Chief executive Officer of Africa’s leading Data and Marketing Technology company, Terragon, made the call while speaking at a panel section alongside other industry stakeholders during the

event, noting that private-public partnership was necessary to drive promotion of indigenous content and solutions.

According to him, “Building an ecosystem consisting of megacorporations is super critical for our indigenous digital economy to thrive. The government must be deliberate about working with the private sector to promote innovation and indigenous content, through policies and initiatives

such as the establishment of NODITS (Nigeria Office for Developing the Indigenous Telecom Sector) to foster indigenisation of software.”

The expert pointed out that Terragon has always been focused on developing technology solutions to solve business challenges within the African context, in order to contribute toward building the indigenous digital economy and its unique ecosystem.

APPSON Sets to Strengthen Standards, Elects New Leadership

Raheem Akingbolu

The Association of Promotional Products Specialists of Nigeria (APPSON) has restated its desire to strengthen the association’s focus and standards and has also elected new executives to run the affairs of the association following the expiration of the last leadership’s term of office.

Established seven years ago to enhance member firms, set standards for sustainable business practices for all stakeholders and influence legislative and regulatory actions by keeping policymakers mindful of its industry’s issues and concerns, APPSON’s new executive council will be led by Mrs. Abiola Sanni, CEO/Managing Director, Queensbridge Nigeria Limited as President.

Other Members of the executive

team include Mr. Femi Oyeniyi, Vice President; Mrs. Abiola Adewole, Secretary; Mr. Psalm Mafoitan, PRO/Communications Director and Mrs. Tolulope Olaiya, Treasurer.

Making a projection into the future ahead for the association, the immediate past President, Mrs. Ngozi Nzegwu noted that, “I believe that the best way to predict the future is to create it! As the African Continent gets ready for AfCTA (Africa Continental Trade Area) the time has come to grow APPSON by harnessing the immense in-house talents and skills that our members have as well as attract quality members for exponential growth.

“After seven years, the time has come for us to create the association we want to see through individual involvement. Our businesses need to do very

well for us to be active. So, part of the member value I want to see is a very vibrant social media presence, E-commerce market place where members can advertise and sell their products online. I want to see an active APPSON Investment club that will birth APPSON Cooperative as a multipurpose vehicle for other mutually beneficial business interests”. She added.

Speaking on the task ahead, the new President, Mrs. Sanni in her inaugural speech noted that, “My team has been blessed with many tools for the task ahead. We have in abundance our collective desires, love, and commitment to building a thriving Promotional Product Industry that will elevate growth and development for members and stakeholders together.”

Ericsson, Google Support Enterprise Applications with Multiple Network Slices

Emma Okonji

Ericsson and Google continue to push for network slicing, bringing the full range of benefits of 5G one step closer to consumers, by demonstrating multiple network slices on a single device that cater to both consumer and enterprise applications.

In their latest collaboration, the ecosystem partners have demonstrated support on Ericsson network infrastructure for multiple slices on a single device running Android 13, supporting both enterprise (work profile) and consumer applications. In addition, for the first time, a slice for carrier branded services will allow communications service providers (CSP) to provide

extra flexibility for customised offerings and capabilities.

Network slicing has long been seen as vital to capturing the value that a 5G network can provide for CSPs and enterprises. The market for network slicing alone in the enterprise segment is projected at \$300 billion by 2025, according to the GSMA. By demonstrating that a single device can make use of multiple slices, which are used according to the on-device user profiles and network policies defined at the CSP level, Google and Ericsson have shown a way to bridge the gap between the three important user groups .

The results were achieved in an Interoperability Device Testing (IODT) environment on Google Pixel 6 (Pro) devices using Android 13. The new release sees

an expansion of the capabilities for enterprises assigning network slicing to applications through User Equipment Route Selection Policy (URSP) rules, which is the feature that enables one device using Android to connect to multiple network slices simultaneously.

Head of Solution Area Packet Core at Ericsson, Monica Zethzon, said: “As carriers and enterprises seek a return on their investment in 5G networks, the ability to provide for a wide and varied selection of use cases is of crucial importance. Communications Service Providers and enterprises who can offer customers the flexibility to take advantage of tailored network slices for both work.”

Report: Northern Customers Spend N322Bn on Personal Care Monthly

Raheem Akingbolu

A 2022 market report by Pierrine Consulting, has revealed that residents of northern Nigeria spend N322 billion monthly on personal care products.

The CEO of Pierrine Consulting, Mr. Sevi Adeoye, said the report was aimed at providing an informed view of the northern market opportunity from consumers’ behavioral dynamics. Additionally, the market value estimations speak to the entire 19 states under the northern market cluster.

The report, which examined the northern market opportunities, showed that the amount was spent monthly on top seven personal care products such as toothpaste, beauty soap, perfume, body lotion, sanitary pads, deodorants and antibacterial soaps.

Using Kano State as a proxy, the report also discovered that residents of the region spend N163 billion monthly on carbonated drinks.

Providing a breakdown of the spending on drinks, the report said: “53 per cent of northern consumers consume some form

of non-alcoholic drinks several times every single week, 66 per cent currently consume CSDs, 45 per cent consume Malt drinks, 24 per cent consume fruit-based drinks, 5 per cent take wine products and 15 per cent are consumers of Energy drink products. Over 60 per cent have Zobo and unbranded milk products within their repertoire of drinks.”

According to the report, northerners also spend big on branded breakfast, as monthly expenditure on cocoa-based drinks, tea, cornflakes, coffee, oats, custard

and Golden Morn is about N223 billion.

As a necessity, food and food-related items constitute 55 per cent of northern consumers’ monthly household expenditure. Additionally, 10 per cent is typically spent on utilities, 7 per cent on personal care products, 7 per cent on clothing and accessories, 6 per cent on airtime, 5 per cent on transport, 5 per cent on medical health, 3 per cent on baby care products, and 2 per cent on electronics.

While 58 per cent of northern consumers have internet access, the

report showed that cash transactions remain king in the region, with 91 per cent usage level. The report however discovered a considerable on-going use of USSD transactions which it put at 31 per cent.

The Pierrine report also said branded powdered milk was the most consumed of all dairy products, at 89 per cent incidence level. Evaporated milk was next at 8 per cent, sweetened yoghurt at 35 per cent and Butter at 30 per cent usage levels. In all, northern consumers spend N151 billion monthly on branded milk

powder, N36.9 billion on evaporated milk, N35 billion on sweetened yogurt, N28.6 billion on butter, N20.7 billion on mayonnaise, N5 billion on condensed milk, and N1.1 billion on UHT milk.

In addition, N102 billion was spent monthly on spices, N156 on laundry, and N146 billion on baby care products.

The report also found that open markets and seven neighborhood stores remain preferred shopping points in the region, with 65 per cent of customers making their purchases via this channel.

Ilona: World’s Biggest Billboard in Nigeria Will Boost Industry Growth

The Chief Executive Officer of Lona Media, Mr. Idoko Ilona, speaks to **Raheem Akingbolu** on how the outdoor practitioners in Nigeria are faring in the global outdoor rating and how the soon-to-be activated biggest billboard in the world in Lagos, will boost brand management. Excerpts:

What is your view about the growth in the Nigeria’s out-of-home sub sector of the advertising industry, compared to current global trend?

In the area of innovation and appreciation of the place of technology in today’s practice, I will say Nigerian practitioners are moving appreciatively well in the right direction. When it comes to regulation, I think Lagos and Abuja are showing the way to go; they are leading the way. Why do I say they are leading the way? Let’s look at it this way. Before now, practitioners pay money to different people but it has now been harmonised. If you practice outdoor in Lagos, you deal with only Lagos Signage and Advertising Agency (LASAA). Also, if you are practicing in Abuja you will have to deal with The Department of Outdoor Advertisement and Signage (DOAS). Those are the only two bodies people deal with and other states too are currently following suit. The reason is simple, regulators know that if the industry is not properly regulated, it will affect the business.

What impact do you think the outdoor industry will make in the build up to the 2023 election?

As we can all see with the recent election, vote buying is gradually becoming a thing of the past in Nigeria. If this continues, it will be difficult to rig in a politician who fail to properly project himself or herself. The truth is that the only way a party can sell its product is to convince people about what they do by selling their product very well. As it stands today, the best way to sell your product is through advertising. Of course, advertising might not be necessary for parties and politicians when the issue of vote buying was rampant because election would be cash and carry. Today, if people don’t know your product, you are in for it. In the past, you see less political ad handled by professionals. Ahead 2023, the entire outdoor landscape would be soaked as politicians will be competing for attention.

How is the industry faring in the midst of economic quagmire in the country?

The issue of harsh economy is more of a global issue, which was caused majorly by recession and later COVID-19. Since the outdoor advertising can’t operate in isolation, the effect of the various crisis was felt but



Ilona

it has only toughened the practitioners and given birth to more innovation and creativity.

Can you speak about OneInfinity, a new offering from your stable?

OneInfinity billboard is the creation of Lona Media. It is set to be the largest advertising billboard in the world. It is 277.4ms by 38m. It will be activated in October 2022. As of today, the largest board in the world is in Dubai. It is about 6230sqms. Oneinfinity is about 10541.2sqms with a display area of 8322.2sqms. The structure is a 12-story building.

Why did you choose Lagos or the Third Mainland Bridge to mount this billboard?

It was supposed to be commissioned in Abuja, but plans changed. We ran into some hitches in Abuja, so, there was a redirect. It is believed that Lagos State is the fourth largest economy in Africa

and the most populous city in Africa.

The Third Mainland Bridge has the largest vehicular traffic in Africa, with 245,000 cars traversing the road. It is the bridge between mainland and island Lagos, so, for us, it is the most strategic advertising location anywhere in Nigeria.

The board, for now, is a static board, because of its share size. We can host between five and seven brands on the board, so, it is an advantage. We intend to upgrade it to a Light Emitting Diode (LED) as time goes on. We have spent billions to achieve this and to put up an LED with the current exchange rate would cost us a lot of money and Lona as a company doesn’t have that kind of money for now. So, we have started with the static board, which we intend to upgrade to an LED in the next six months.

How long does it take from conception to commissioning?

The plan was mooted in 2015, got a company Nivafer Engineering and Construction, one of the leading steel fabricating companies in Nigeria and we signed a contract with Nivafer in 2016. From 2016, till the next two weeks, when the project will be 100 per cent completed.

A lot has gone in and it is a multi-billion-naira project divided into two phases. Phase one, for now, is the billboard, which we have accomplished. Phase two will follow after the completion of phase one, which is the entire landmass of about 9.6 hectares. We intend to beautify and bring in some additional recreational activities within the Third Mainland Bridge vicinity.

We are trying to give Nigerians — individuals, big companies, especially indigenous Nigerian companies — the opportunity to be on the largest advert board in the world. Any company that advertises on this board for now, anytime in the next five to 10 years, when the story of the biggest billboard in the world is being told, your brand will be there.

In October when we will be unveiling the board, the world will see what we are bringing is dynamic, entirely different and amazing.

What are the advantages for advertisers to be on the board?

To be on the board means to be on the biggest outdoor platform in the world. Though activation is for one month to six weeks, but thereafter, long after the six weeks activation period, for the next five to nine years, anybody that advertises on the board whenever the story of the biggest board in the world is told, his or her brand would be prominent. And we are going to do extensive marketing for OneInfinity, so any company that activates on the board would be linked up, whereby the company’s website can be linked to OneInfinity’s website. It is a forever partnership. Whenever the story of OneInfinity is told, any company that is part of the activation will also be featured

Can you tell us more about Lona Media?

Lona Media was incorporated in 2006. And we introduced the LED boards that are seen all over the country. We installed the first LED in Nigeria in 2006. We also built the first LED in Lagos at the Muritala Muhammad International Airport. We built the biggest board in Africa in 2015 and we are about to conquer the world.

DSN Unveils AI-powered On-demand Education Platform

Emma Okonji

Data Scientists Network (formerly known as Data Science Nigeria DSN) has launched a digital education access and delivery platform that helps schools and parents to prepare African youths for the future of work and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

With a median age of 17 years and the increasing need for young Africans

to participate in the digital economy, there is an urgency to prepare primary and secondary students in sub-Saharan Africa to access the over 230 million jobs which will require digital skills by 2030.

The product, “MacroTutor”, is an AI-powered, on-demand, and affordable edtech solution for schools and parents to access the best quality teachers and digital learning content in expert areas such as Coding,

Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Programming, Machine Learning, Data Analytics, Interaction Design, among others.

The platform will democratise access to world-class digital skill acquisition through a network of well-trained tutors who can deliver personalised and curriculum-based learning at students’ homes on a one-on-one basis or to a group of students in a school.

For schools, this will be a significant value-add to enhance the learning outcome of students while eliminating the additional cost of full-time digital/ICT teachers. MacroTutor will provide a cheaper alternative to high-quality teachers and world-class content at the rates that any low to medium-cost schools can afford. With this inclusive, pervasive and more affordable access to digital

skills, no child is left behind across the continent.

Speaking on the initiative, the Executive Director of DSN, Toyin Adekanmbi, described it as “a creative and innovative approach to democratise computer and ICT education in Nigeria, which ensures that any school can offer world-class digital subjects and provide future-focused learning to students without any cash flow strain and an additional salary cost.

Old students associations and Parents-Teachers-Associations can even support their schools with dedicated digital education teachers”.

Adekanmbi said MacroTutor would be the ultimate destination to access the best digital teachers at the most affordable rate for parents and schools who desire to prepare their students for the skills and expertise to drive global competitiveness in the future.

9mobile Offers Voice, Data Bonuses with New Tariff Plan

In line with its commitment to offer value to Nigerian mobile telephone customers, 9mobile has announced the launch of 9Konfam, a tariff plan that rewards customers with generous airtime and data benefits upon SIM activation, and on every recharge.

Director, Product Innovation and Business Development at 9mobile, Kenechukwu Okonkwo, who announced the new tariff plan, said: “9Konfam empowers customers to connect and to do more with their airtime and data purchases. At

9mobile, we are committed to releasing products and services that allow customers to get the most out of their subscriptions. With 9Konfam, new and existing customers get to enjoy exciting bonuses on their airtime and data recharges.”

With 9Konfam, customers who purchase a new 9mobile SIM card will enjoy N1,000 welcome bonus once they activate the SIM. In addition, they will get nine times the value of all recharges from N100 and above to call all networks, send text

messages, and for data/ internet activities. Customers on 9konfam will receive a double data bonus on their first recharge of the month (for the initial six months of joining the network) so long as they recharge with N200 or higher. In addition, new

customers will continue to enjoy a 100 per cent bonus on data bundles that they buy, till they exceed six months on the network.

Okonkwo enjoined all telecom subscribers to get a 9mobile SIM and be ‘confirmed’ with 9konfam.

Igbobi College Wins Sahara Foundation STEAMers Competition

Nosa Alekuogie

Students from Igbobi College in Lagos have emerged as regional winners of the Sahara Foundation Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) Program aimed at giving young African inventors a platform to develop their creativity. The “Sahara Foundation STEAMers” Regional competition featured the top three teams that emerged from the national Demo Day competitions that held in

Nigeria, Kenya, and Uganda. Sahara Foundation is the corporate responsibility vehicle of energy and infrastructure conglomerate, Sahara Group. The regional finalists presented prototype designs of their solutions targeting several sectors including home automation, agriculture, security, energy, health, and transportation. The students displayed a profound understanding of embedded systems, additive manufacturing, and the ability to use human-

centred design in creating sustainable solutions to prevalent social problems around them. The program gave 150 students access to deep-dive classroom learning and practical sessions. The classroom sessions were conducted by the program’s implementing partner, STEM Cafe, a non-linear learning centre as well as mentors from Sahara Foundation Volunteer Group. Known as ‘The Watchmen’, the winning group from Igbobi College comprised Njubigbo Onyeka; Ayo Mofe Moses; Ayilo John and

Maduanusi Chigozirim. The students produced a remarkable ‘Silent Digital Alarming Device, which they named ‘The Watchman.’ The device can help combat home and commercial burglary, as well as tackle unauthorized access into designated buildings and kidnappings in the society. The students explained that the device would enhance security through detection of the crime at the time where the crime begins, and alerts authorised persons through a registered device making them

aware of a crime in progress. The device can also send a phone call to the police station registered on the device. “The device is ready for mass production, and we are confident that it would help increase security and lead to a safer community for all,” they said. He urged the students to stay curious, to keep exploring their creativity, to deepen their STEAM knowledge further, and to continue pushing the boundaries of innovation towards solving challenges around them.

Founder, STEM Cafe, Bosun Tijani, said: “The opportunity to expose more young people to STEM through projects that solve real life problems drives our goal of raising a new generation of change makers across Africa.” He said the organisation’s partnership with Sahara Foundation had paved the way for taking the “desire to dream” to more young Africans. Director, Sahara Foundation, Pearl Uzokwe commended all participants for being worthy ambassadors of Africa.

Techline Develops Software for Sales, Products Stock Taking

Nosa Alekhogie

Techline Communications an information technology (IT) firm based in Surulere Lagos has introduced a home developed software for sales in the country. Known as SalesLine Electronic Salesbook, the company looked at the peculiarities of the Nigerian business scape, and developed indigenous software to handle productivity better. Many business owners and managers who commended the SalesLine Electronic Sales book, said the solution would help to drive sales. SalesLine Electronic Salesbook and Inventory management Solution eliminate paper-based processes in organizations’ sales and inventory management, manages sales and expenditure information and allows administrators make well-informed managerial decisions,

thereby automating bookkeeping processes. Speaking on the importance of the software to businesses in Nigeria, the Vice President, Sales at Techline Communications, Gbekele Iyanoluwa, said: “As we are living in the contemporary world. We need advancements in our existing systems. Companies Inventory and sales are in constant need of a single platform since manual inventory management comes with many issues. It requires a great deal of investment to handle orders from every deal channel freely and to perform routine manual stock checks so you can change your stock levels at any stage. The time it takes to accommodate this data can likewise prompt an absence of ongoing stock level visibility, postponements in setting orders when stock levels are low, stock outs, and lost deals. Additionally,

that time would be better spent developing your company. Due to the time required to reconcile this information, real-time stock levels may not be visible; reordering may take longer when stock levels are low, and stockouts and lost sales may ensue.” On the benefits of the software, Gbekele added that “It can save time, you can get rid of the boring paper work. It can help you in dealing with your selling and purchasing. It can help you for an easy flow of money and most important one is that it can satisfy your customer. The unique thing about this app is the way and manner in which the platform keeps track of everything including the quantity, the stock, capacity, product description sales history and every other information associated with the product with a single click.”

Konga to Boost PCs, Devices Market with Mega Computing Sales

Emma Okonji

The much-anticipated Konga Mega Computing Sales powered with huge discounts and incentives and same day delivery, went live on Monday this week and will last for two weeks. According to the Management of Konga, additional discounts are on offer for customers via its CSR arm, Konga Kares, thereby making it the most discounted computing sales of all seasons this year. Feelers indicate that Konga guarantees to refund customers the difference in price if they find cheaper prices for same genuine products in any channel in Africa. The promotion is geared at encouraging digital emancipation of citizens and it is being supported by HP, Samsung, Lenovo, ASUS, and Zinox for Corporates, Educational Institutions, student who are first-time buyers or planning

to upgrade their existing PCs, Laptops, Tablets, Printers and Consumables, are guaranteed same day delivery in Lagos and Abuja, within 15 minutes – 6 hours. Sharing some insights into the promotion, the Executive Director, Online and Corporate Sales ay Konga, Okezie Akaniro, disclosed that the Konga Mega Computing Sales would deliver huge value for price-sensitive shoppers. “At Konga, we are not unmindful of the current global economic challenges, of which Nigeria is not left out. This is one of the reasons we are, once again, extending a helping hand to fresh or returning students and their parents, to schools, corporate organisations and other consumers through the Konga Mega Computing Sales. All purchases are going at unmatched discounted rates, with best prices in the market

guaranteed for genuine products. “Part of our campaign goals are to assist parents in ensuring that their children or wards start or return to school in fine form for the start of the upcoming academic year, aiding schools equip or upgrade their range of computing devices, while also complementing the efforts of corporate organizations in improving employee and business performance through the acquisition of cutting-edge devices and tools,” Akaniro said. Schools can also take advantage of special deals to buy in bulk for more personalised learning opportunities to help prepare students better or to equip their staff while corporate bodies too can equally benefit in upgrading their profiles as contemporary workspaces, all at prices that make sense in line with current realities, Akaniro further said.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF A FINE GENTLEMAN

Dearest Daddy,

A year has gone by so quickly on your transition to Glory.

We miss you every day, but the Almighty God loves you more.

God be with you till we meet to separate no more. Forever in the hearts of your wife and children.

Iris Odoliyi Lolomari (Wife)

Arc. Odoliyi Lolomari Mnia

Dr. Daerebo Lolomari

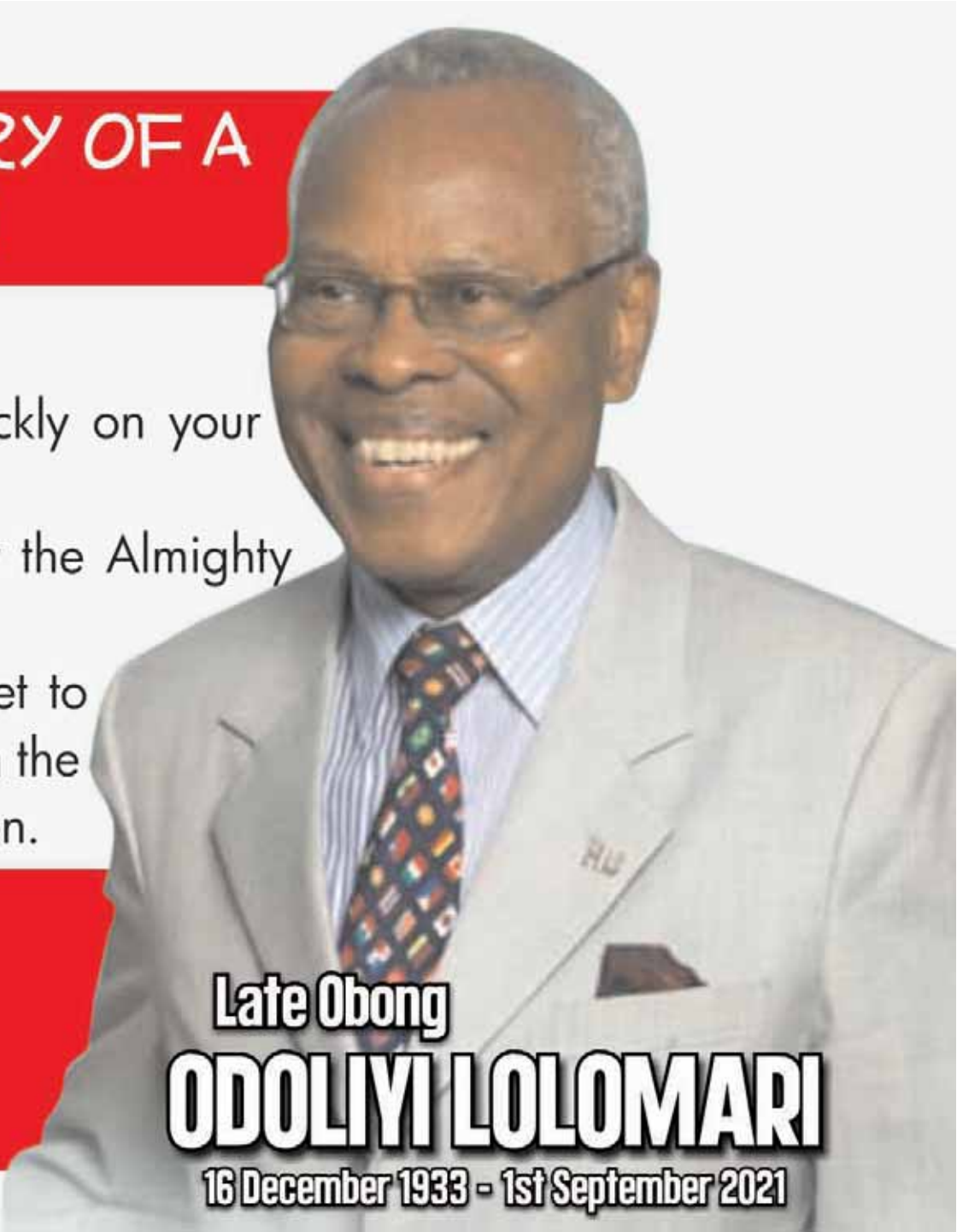
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HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

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Surviving Endometriosis

With about 50 per cent of women infertile globally due to endometriosis, gynaecologists in Nigeria posit that early detection among girls experiencing excruciating menstrual flow coupled with well-skilled and specially trained medical personnel can avert and save women in Nigeria and Africa. In this report, **Rebecca Ejifoma** chronicles the devastating experiences of three African women, who from age 14 have lived with the stigma, misdiagnoses and have undergone countless surgeries to ameliorate the pain

Just like research has it, gynaecologists have described Endometriosis as an incurable disorder in which tissue that normally lines the uterus grows outside the uterus. It is said to come with stabbing pain, menstrual irregularities and quite often, infertility, among women of reproductive age.

Dr Abayomi Ajayi, a co-founder of African Endometriosis Awareness and Support Group and Medical Director of Nordica Fertility Centre in Lagos, confirmed that Endometriosis affects 10 per cent of the global female population and major cause of infertility in over 50 per cent of women living with the condition.

Among this large number of female warriors are Ms Kgomotso Mpho Gagosi from Botswana, Patricia Raymond and Aniefiok Jimmy both from Nigeria.

KGOMOTSO MPHOGAGOSI

Mpho, as she is fondly called, was only 14 years old when she began to experience puberty – her menstrual cycle had just paid an August visit. Like every naive young adolescent in her shoes, it is a feeling of “maturity, here I come”. However, that fateful morning, young Mpho was dressed up for school when she felt an unusually sharp pain beyond an excruciating cramp. This call of nature changed her whole life’s trajectory even to this day. She was only 14 years old.

Narrating her misery, Mpho recounted, “When I started my periods, the flow was so heavy and the pain was excruciating. I started getting these pains from the first day that I had my periods. I thought it was normal. I knew nothing about endometriosis. I was being given light painkillers like Paracetamol. The first time I went to the doctor, I was given Penicillin and a Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) shot. By then I was not sexually active. That was where the misdiagnosis came from because the doctor told me I had an STI.”

According to the endometriosis warrior, although she was not sexually active at 14, the next time she went to the hospital, she was accused of abortion. “I was told I had undergone an abortion because I was bleeding heavily. At 14, I had never had sex, but I was being accused of having an STI just because I was bleeding heavily.

“At some point, a friend who removed an Ovarian Cyst advised me to go and do an HSG test. I did the test and the result showed that one of my fallopian tubes was blocked. The doctor assured me that the test would blow my tubes and increase the chances of me getting pregnant and that was how I conceived,” she expressed.

From Botswana, Mpho travelled to South Africa to give birth through C-section. However, that didn’t halt the throbbing pains. “It persisted,” she chipped in. “Even after I returned home, I went back to South Africa and complained to the doctor that the pains were getting worse. Only then did the doctor open up that I was having endometriosis during the C-section but forgot to tell me because she was concentrating on delivering my baby,” she marvelled in disbelief. “Who does that?

After that encounter, Mpho, the mother of one, felt her life split up. As part of the solution, she underwent six surgeries. With little or no moral support, she went down swinging. “The first time I was told that I had endometriosis, I did not expect I would survive for long.”

This singular discovery put her marriage in a vulnerable position. At this point, 28-year-old Mpho was married. “I felt like my dreams were shattered and I would never have kids,” she bemoaned, as she became teary. “But here I am today,” her words resonated in the hall as she heaved a deep sigh of relief. “I’ve got a 15-year-old child, and I believe with God I will have more children,” although now a single mum.

And because she came, saw, and conquered, she urged the government in Africa “I wish our government will recognise endometriosis as a chronic condition, because that is what it is. It can cause infertility,” she insisted, bemoaning “Women with endometriosis go through depression and we need to get emotional support and get psychologists and talk to somebody who will make us see that there is life after endometriosis.”



Aniefiok Jimmy



Kgomotso Mpho Gagosi

Today, Mpho is the co-founder of the African Endometriosis Awareness and Support Group. She is also the Founder of Botswana Endometriosis, a passion borne out of her very unpleasant experience. “This is how I contribute my quota.”

PATRICIA RAYMOND

Like Mpho, Patricia Raymond – docile and frail looking in nature – is an endometriosis warrior. She told the audience at the International Conference on Endometriosis on the theme, “Endometriosis – An Unrecognised Burden in African Women” in Lagos that this singular disorder neutralised her limbs and vocal cords every time she was in her menstrual flow.

“That I can stand here and talk to the world today is a miracle,” she chuckled gloomily while narrating that “A month ago, I could not stand. I was virtually half gone. I had thoracic surgery done. It was the first time that I could give this disorder a name.

Reverberating the words of Mpho, Raymond conceded, “Endometriosis is scary”, adding, “If you are diagnosed, you are not just a survivor, you are a warrior”.

Having had her first experience at 14 incidentally, it was when she began to have cramping menstrual pains that radiated her whole system to her limbs. “The first question that I could ask my aunt who was my guardian, was how do I stop this thing – my menses,” says Raymond, who bottled up tears as she relayed her journey into endometriosis.

And at 14 while her peers visited the classrooms and field trips, young Raymond swung by the hospital to see the gynaecologist. “I ran there. I did not know what was wrong. The doctors

kept telling me it was normal; it would stop as soon as I started giving birth.” And because the doctors could neither fathom her sorrow of adolescent hood or ordeal, she was only given pain medication and sent home to bear until eternity.

“Whenever I had my period,” she chronicled, “I would force myself to school. But at home, no one would sleep. I would take seven days off work and stay home to nurse my sharp pains. I had just three weeks in a month because for one week I was out of action. I could not walk, talk or move.

“I have had seven medical procedures from 2003 to date. The first time I had a procedure, an ovarian cyst was removed. I was told there was nothing else,” continuing that sadly with every surgery, the pain inflamed.

Consequently, Raymond recalled how some acquaintances told her of being melodramatic. “They tell you you are overreacting, but you aren’t. At that age, if I knew what endometriosis was I would have been better informed to tackle it.”

As an endometriosis warrior, she lends her voice to other young girls and women in her shoes. “I want to encourage everyone suffering from endometriosis in Nigeria and Africa to be informed. Do whatever you can to minimise the pain and suffering of endometriosis medically and traditionally,” she interceded.

ANIEFIOK JIMMY

For Aniefiok Jimmy, tall and elegantly looking, it was yet another misdiagnosis.

“They said it was a fibroid,” she told the audience. “It all started like menstrual cramps. No one understood what I was going through. I went to the hospital and was checked. Nothing was found.”

Just like Mpho and Raymond, Jimmy made painkillers her only companion. “Each menstrual cycle,” she emphasised, “came with a different issue and I just kept managing it with pain relief drugs. But at a time the drugs were not working again. I kept looking for an answer for about four years, but there was no diagnosis.”

Owing to her unexplainable menstrual pain, many labelled her weird. “Whenever I was among other women I kept wondering why me. It was so bad that someone asked whether I had been used for rituals. At a point, I began to believe that it was possible; perhaps, I had indeed been used for rituals, because how could I be among many other women and be the only one crying and in pain during my periods?

She described her journey as traumatic, depressing, and torturing. “Whenever I was on my period, I could not do anything,” explaining that the cramps radiated from her stomach to her legs. “At one point, I had to resign from work because I could not go out; I would just stay home unable to do anything.”

In search of an answer, Jimmy dropped by different hospitals. She did over 20 scans all to no avail. Eventually, someone gave her a report. “One hospital said that I had a fibroid. Although they referred me for fibroid surgery, I was not convinced it was fibroid because the scans I had did not indicate fibroid.

“Four gynaecologists checked me and all said that they could not find anything. They said that my stomach was flat and that I did not have a fibroid. I told them of my symptoms and was instructed to repeat all the tests that I had done previously. At one point, I got fed up and stopped doing the tests,” she resolved.

After scores of tests, Jimmy’s condition was diagnosed. “It was a transvaginal scan that finally detected that I had adenomyosis, which is still a form of endometriosis. At last, I knew what I was battling. It was only then that I had some hope.

Despite finally being well up on her health challenge, Jimmy had a brush with death. “I went to a chemist and was prescribed some hormonal drugs that almost

Doctors and health workers are also clueless about endometriosis and there is still a lot of ignorance. My advice to women is that if you find any strange development in your body, go to the right experts and get it investigated in time

INTERVIEW

SURVIVING ENDOMETRIOSIS



Patricia Raymond

killed me. I later found out that the prescription was against what I was suffering from.” This was until she learnt of Ajayi. “I am thankful to Dr Abayomi Ajayi for his counselling and support.” Hence, she cautioned: “Doctors and health workers are also clueless about endometriosis and there is still a lot of ignorance. My advice to women is that if you find any strange development in your body, go to the right experts and get it investigated in time.” Meanwhile, when THISDAY contacted Jimmy about three times for some clarifications, it was involuntarily abortive. Her only reason was she had another episode of agonising pain. Hence, she expressed regret, “So sorry, I’ve been down and my voice is bad”.

ABOUT ENDOMETRIOSIS

Through the African Endometriosis Awareness and Support Foundation, a coalition of support groups with active members in Botswana, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana and Nigeria, Ajayi and others are creating awareness about endometriosis first among people living with the condition. As a consultant obstetrician, Ajayi highlighted one of the major concerns about the condition – inaccurate diagnoses. “This is usually the result of a dearth of trained medical manpower as well as obsolete equipment in many medical facilities across the African continent.” The fertility specialist raised the alarm that research shows that this condition affects women in their reproductive ages in the early years of secondary school when most girls see their monthly menstrual period for the first time. “For 60 per cent of women who have endometriosis, the symptom started before the age of 20,” he cited.

USING HIFU FOR A DISEASE WITH NO CURE

With over three decades in the medical profession, Ajayi said endometriosis has no cure. However, it

can be managed. “To curb inaccurate diagnoses and better treatment outcomes in the management of endometriosis, African countries need Africa to implement effective policies for women who have the condition,” he enjoined. According to the doctor, “High-Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) is the non-invasive way of treating fibroids and adenomyosis. We are trying to look at the reproductive health outcomes for people who have had surgery for what they thought were fibroids.

THE ADVANTAGES ARE THAT IT IS A NON-INVASIVE

a procedure that spares the uterus, and allows for normal vaginal delivery in future pregnancies. There is no general anaesthetic, a faster recovery period, and non-ionising radiation.”

WAY FORWARD FOR THE AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

While the difficulties of managing endometriosis, including incorrect diagnoses, still worry endometriosis warriors and gynaecologists in Africa, the endometriosis warriors and experts called on the governments across the continent to take a more active role in formulating policies that will significantly enhance the lives of women with endometriosis through improved management. In the words of Ajayi, there is a dire need for medical personnel to be given extra training and extra skills for accurate and timely diagnosis to save more girls and women in Nigeria and Africa. “We also believe that we will be able to attract the attention of African governments to initiate policies and programmes that will greatly impact the lives of women with the condition, especially in accessing care. We are also calling on the media to join forces with us to raise awareness about the condition and give a voice to the voiceless,” Ajayi implored.

2-year-old with Congenital Deformity Needs N25m for Surgery

Rebecca Ejifoma

The family of Fyneface is desperately in need of N2.5 million to save their two-year-old daughter born with a congenital deformity. Rhema Samuel was born with the deformity and has since battled the disease. According to the father, Mr Samuel Fyneface, he and the mother have been tackling it all these years. He narrated how they took the baby to Port-Harcourt Teaching Hospital where the case is being handled. “We were told the condition is called clock legs. And surgery

is what can correct it. But we don’t have the money.” On his part, the President



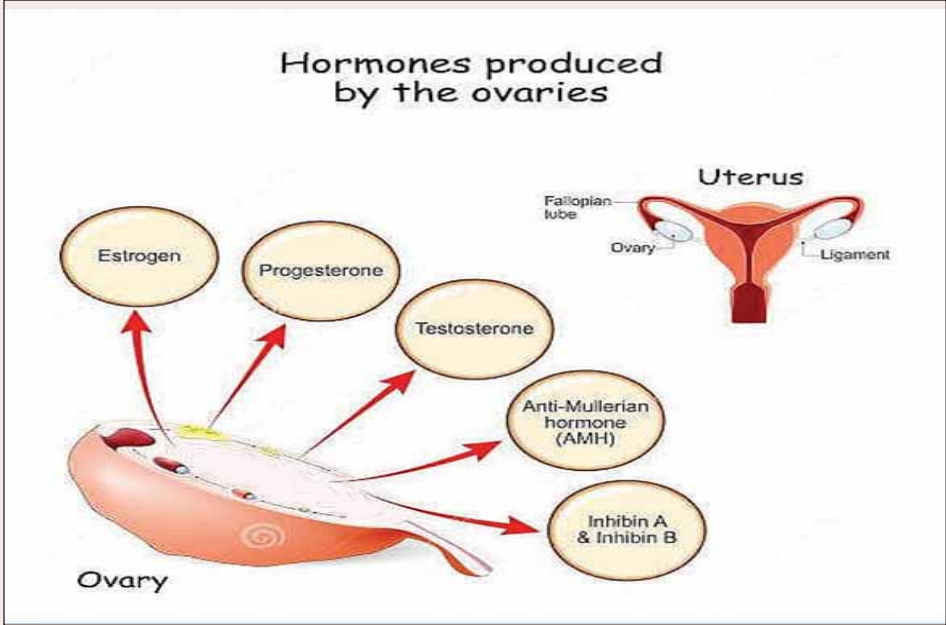
of Prince Decson Savechild Life Foundation, Mr Eustace Njoku, told THISDAY that “The little girl had been booked initially but the family could not afford it”. Hence, the foundation is soliciting funds from well-meaning Nigerians home and abroad to help save Rhema. All donations are to be made to the NGO welfare account, 1016234122, Prince Decson Savechild Life Foundation on Zenith Bank Plc. The family can be reached on 08030496168.

FERTILITY

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Anti-Mullerian Hormone (Amh) On Female Reproduction (Part 1)



Hormone is a chemical substance produced by the body that regulates and governs the functioning of specific cells or organs. Thyroid hormone, generated by the thyroid gland, is one of many hormones secreted by specific glands. Estrogen, insulin, progesterone, oxytocin, and testosterone are probably the ones you are most familiar with. Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (HCG) is another hormone that you may be familiar with if you have ever been pregnant. As a result, Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH) may not be the most well-known hormone in relation to reproductive health. But it is important to know, especially if you want to start a family in the future. Among all tests for infertility, hormone tests are used to determine your ovaries’ efficiency and capacity. FSH, LH, and Estradiol hormones are among the available tests. In addition to these tests, an AMH test can be used to determine your reproductive potentials.

WHAT IS ANTI-MULLERIAN HORMONE?

Anti-mullerian Hormone can be referred to as Mullerian inhibiting substance. This hormone is a protein that aids in the development of the male fetal reproductive tract. It is synthesized by reproductive tissues, namely - the testes in males and the ovaries in females, prior to birth. The role of AMH, as well as the amount that is normally present, differs depending on gender and age. The AMH is important for the development of sexual differentiation in the fetus. AMH secretion changes as the ovarian follicle develops. When follicles deteriorate or approach menopause, AMH is no longer secreted. The level of AMH is used to determine if a female is fertile or has reached menopause. Anti-Mullerian Hormone is produced by small developing follicles and is thus different from ovulation, allowing for a better assessment of genuine ovarian reserve. AMH can be measured from birth through menopause, with a peak in the mid-twenties. The AMH gene codes for a protein involved in growth differentiation and maturation of ovarian follicles.

ROLES OF ANTI-MULLERIAN HORMONE

The roles of AMH and determination of its normal levels depends on age and gender.

IN BABIES

AMH is produced in the testes and ovaries of the fetus before birth. Around eight weeks after conception, a fetus has both female (Müllerian) and male (Wolffian) ducts, which can develop into the female or male reproductive system.

- For a male baby with (XY) genes, the levels of AMH are usually high alongside other male hormones, which prevents the development of females organs and promote the formation of male organs. The Mullerian ducts will disappear as the testes produce AMH. The growth of the male reproductive system will then be aided by testosterone produced in the testes.

- For a female baby with (XX) genes, small amount

of AMH are produced. This frees up space for the growth of female reproductive organs. A lack of testosterone will cause the Wollfian duct to disappear and the Mullerian duct to grow into the female reproductive system if a fetus has XX (female) chromosomes. AMH plays a critical part in the development of a baby’s sex organs while he or she is still in the womb. Babies already have genes to become either a male (XY) or a female (XX). If there is not enough AMH to prevent the development of female organs, organs of both sexes may form, and this would results in an intersex being where a baby’s genitals cannot be identified as male or female.

IN FEMALES

AMH levels can be used to:

- determine fertility in women,
- diagnose menstrual disorders in females,
- monitor the health of women with certain types of ovarian cancer.

IN MALES

AMH is secreted from the testes.

- It is used to detect abnormalities of male development.
- It aids the development of the male sex organs in an unborn baby. Without AMH, the male baby may develop uterus, part of the vagina, and fallopian tubes.

ROLE OF AMH IN FEMALE FERTILITY

An AMH test is used often to check a woman’s ability to produce eggs that can be fertilized for pregnancy. Women ovaries can make thousands of eggs during her childbearing years, and the number reduces as she gets older. The more eggs remained in the ovaries, the higher the quantity of AMH in the bloodstream; hence AMH can determine the number of prospective eggs. A low level of AMH is considered to be a sign of a low ovarian reserve, that is, few remaining follicles. This result would be normal for a woman who is approaching menopause. By the same token, a woman who has polycystic ovarian syndrome, AMH levels would generally be expected to be high in ovarian follicles with several tiny follicles. As a result, AMH plasma levels reflect the continuous proliferation of small follicles, and hence the size of the remaining follicle pool, making it a useful indicator of ovarian reserve. Anti-Mullerian hormone is an endocrine marker that can be used to measure the age related reduction of the ovarian pool and, hence its ability to predict future reproductive lifespan. Although an AMH test is not a complete diagnostic solution, it can be performed at any moment during the monthly cycle, even if the woman is taking oral contraceptives

TO BE CONTINUED

Lagos Country Club Intensifies Efforts to Prevent Malaria Scourge



The President, Lagos Country Club, Ikeja, Arc. Funmi Bamkole with winners of the medley relay from Jimi Osinowo Swimming Club

Mary Nnah

It is reported that Nigeria has the highest number of malaria cases and deaths globally and despite the several programmes and initiatives to combat the disease, the casualties keep mounting.

However, Nigerians are not relenting in their efforts to tackle the malaria scourge as individuals, organisations, NGOs and even government parastatal are using the resources at their disposal to tackle this killer disease.

Consequently, the need to intensify efforts to prevent the malaria scourge witnessed in the country over time by providing prompt, accurate diagnoses and treatment was the focus of a Water Polo Competition organised by the Lagos Country Club, Ikeja, tagged, “Swim against Malaria”.

Held last week at the pool side of the Lagos Country Club, the competition was sponsored by the Sports Secretary, Lagos Country Club, Mr. Jide Egbele, in honour of his father who was the former President of the Swimming Section.

Tagged, “Swim against Malaria”, the competition was majorly to create awareness of the scourge of malaria, highlighting the prevalence, causes, prevention and the best way it can be treated.

During the event, Chief Medical Director, Mayflower Medical Hospital, Magodo, Dr. Richard Okorejor, informed that early prompt, accurate diagnoses and treatment are crucial for the mortality

caused by malaria. He, noted however that poor diagnoses have continued to hinder the measures for control of malaria in Nigeria.

He said further that in Africa, the rising drug cost and ever-expensive combination therapy are responsible for poor treatment of malaria, adding that the treatment of malaria is supposed to be purely for medical professionals as it requires accurate diagnoses and tests for proper treatment.

While providing insight into malaria, its causes, and how it can be treated, Okorejor revealed further that Africa is an epidemic area of malaria and therefore needs serious attention by the authorities concerned.

The event had in attendance both present and past executives of the club including patrons and members featured children, adults, and veterans who showed their skills in freestyle, breaststroke, mixed doubles relay, and water polo.

Sports Secretary of the Club, Mr. Jide Egbele, who described the championship as a huge success and was excited by the number of kids that took part in the one-day event expressing the hope that some of them could become future champions if well nurtured.

“We saw some talented swimmers here today and some of them set good records and I can assure you that with adequate mentorship, some of them can become future champions both nationally and internationally”, he said.

He explained that the theme of Malaria eradication was chosen for the tournament because

malaria is one of the most killer diseases in the West African sub-region and that there was a need to create more awareness about the scourge.

“The truth is that malaria has been described as the number one killer disease in this part of the world and we must continue to create more awareness about the scourge and I believe we are on the right course”, Egbele added.

Chairman Organising Committee of the 8th Swim Against Malaria, Dr. Laja Adesina said, “Swimming is a very good recreational endeavour and we are trying to raise awareness on Malaria by to connecting swimming with malaria. ‘Malaria is a scourge and WHO has it that in 2021 over 200,000 Nigerians died from malaria and that we have about 1.5 million infections of malaria, so it is a big scourge.”

He said therefore that the event was mainly organised to bring members - children and adults to create awareness on how malaria can be prevented and treated.

He explained that those who participated in the competition include children of members of the swimming section of the Club as well as other swimming clubs in Lagos, collaborating to raise awareness of malaria.

Adesina who opined that the government efforts to prevent and treat malaria are a drop in the ocean, noted, “If you look at the value of resources that have been deployed for malaria as compared to other killer diseases, you would agree with me that government needs to put more resources into malaria treatment and prevention than we are

doing at the moment.”

He, therefore, advised that government should strengthen the health facilities and also put more money and personnel into addressing the scourge in Nigeria.

Children below the age of 6 to about 15 years participated in the competition category while adults from 21 years to 50 and above participated in the adult category.

Although there were special prizes for winners who came first, second and third respectively, in all the categories, however, all the competitors in the swimming contest received gifts, as they were all regarded as winners who fought against Malaria.

Governing Board Member, Lagos State Sports Commission, Hon. Olarenwaju Saidi, who represented the State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, described the event as a welcome development.

“We have heard a lot about Polio, Cancer but swimming against Malaria is a very good initiative, which I think should be highly promoted by all and sundry.

“Sports and Health go hand in hand, so having this happen - Swim Against Malaria - we are also talking about sports and health. So, let us see how more we can interface between sports and health and of course we know that health is also about exercising ourselves; sports is the greatest exercise that we can do, so the relationships between these things should be highly promoted, and then we can get to a better place”, Saidi said.

R-Jolad Hospital Opens Modern Facility in Agege

To offer accessible and quality medicare to Lagos residents

Mary Nnah

To accelerate healthcare delivery to residents of Lagos State, R-Jolad Hospital, a private multi-specialty healthcare enterprise, has opened a new, modern facility in Agege.

The facility, which is strategically located on Omotoye Estate Road, off the popular Muleru Bus Stop, Agege, combines a high standard of care with the latest treatments and technology in comfortable surroundings designed to improve healthcare delivery to our devoted and loyal patients in Lagos State.

Commenting on the new facility, the Chief Operating Officer, R-Jolad, Kola Oni stated that “R-Jolad is working with all stakeholders including government and HMOs to reverse the poor global ranking of Nigeria (163 out of 191 countries) in healthcare by bringing quality, affordable health services to our communities.

The Agege branch will provide a mix of mother and childcare, as well as specialist services. It is also equipped with well-equipped theatres, a modern laboratory and an X-Ray for investigations and diagnosis.

Oni noted that the task of providing quality healthcare for a growing population like Lagos cannot be left to the government alone as the resources of the state are needed in other areas such as education, infrastructural development and security.

In a similar vein, the Chief Medical Officer, R-Jolad, Dr. Abiola Fasina reiterated that the new facility was built to address the widening gap in accessing quality and affordable healthcare delivery in Lagos State. “At R-Jolad, we are focused on delivering care across different specialties, and partnering with other hospitals for referrals as the task of healthcare delivery is a joint one”.

R-Jolad Hospital was founded in Lagos in 1982 to provide quality and affordable healthcare services. Over the last four decades, R-Jolad Hospital has sustained a culture of continuous access to affordable healthcare services, expanding from less than 10 beds to 185 beds in its three locations of Gbagada, Isolo and Agege.

Founded by Dr. Funsho Oladipo, R-Jolad combines a passion for care with affordable service models in comfortable surroundings designed to promote healing.

R-Jolad Agege offers Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Paediatrics, Internal medicine, General Surgery, and Cardiology, alongside Radiology (X-Ray, Ultrasound, Scan) and Laboratory services.

Minister Calls for Collective Effort against Challenges in Healthcare, as FMC Commissions Projects

Rebecca Ejifoma

The Minister of state for Health, Mr Joseph Ekumankama has called for collective efforts from private organisations, donor agencies and individuals to address the challenges stunting healthcare delivery.

He made this call during the commissioning of projects at the Federal Medical Centre, FMC Ebute-Metta Lagos State.

According to Ekumankama, lack of facilities contributes to most of the challenges facing the health sector in the nation.

“One of the major challenges responsible for brain drain in this country is due to facilities. So, we look forward to intervention from private organisations, development partners and individuals. The government cannot do it alone,” he emphasised.

Hence, he suggested that collective input from various stakeholders would help to bridge the gap in access and quality healthcare delivery.

The minister added: “Moving Nigeria healthcare forward is not a one-man show. We need intervention from the government, private organisations, donor agencies and individuals.

He, therefore, commended FMC Ebute-Metta for being a pacesetter in innovations and the use of technology in healthcare, “This hospital has substantially contributed towards a positive image for our government.

“It has won several awards and commendations including being the first Federal Government hospital with Safe care Level 4 in Nigeria. The hospital is also on the verge of launching its pin-hole endoscopic surgery program.”

Projects commissioned include the orthopaedic and trauma centre, molecular building complex, clinical training centre, oxygen gas plant, ultra-modern main theatre and powerhouse.

With these projects in place among others in various government facilities, Ekumankama assured the nation that the FG has deployed measures to address other healthcare challenges.

He highlighted: “The greatest challenge facing the sector presently is the doctors and nurses leaving the country.” This is as he appealed to doctors and nurses to remain in Nigeria to see the efforts of the government.

“As a sacrifice, I encourage you to stay back and help us revitalise the health sector. We have witnessed that today with what is on the ground in this hospital,” he said.

The Medical Director and Chief Executive Officer of FMC Ebute Metta, Dr Adedamola Dada told newsmen that the project aimed to improve access and quality healthcare delivery in the nation.

“I will continue to work towards improving the healthcare delivery in this country because I am a Nigerian,” expressing confidence in his team. “They understand the task and deliver it.”

World Malaria’ Day: DOAM Foundation Offers Free Medical Service to Imo Communities

Funmi Ogundare

Daniel Ogechi Akujobi Memorial (DOAM) Foundation, recently, held a free medical outreach in Inyishi and Amaimo communities in Imo State, aimed at providing solution to the rampant health challenges prevalent among the less privileged.

The three-day programme, was aimed at commemorating World Malaria Day, set aside globally to control the scourge.

It was themed; ‘Advance Equity, Build Resilience, End Malaria’, and saw about 500 people including children,

youths and the aged, being impacted.

It was supported by JB Pharmaceutical Limited.

Speaking at the programme, the Programme Officer for the foundation, Ms Ruth Nwachukwu, noted that it has the objective of providing free healthcare and medical check-up as a preventive measure and offer prompt intervention for the less privileged in the communities.

She added that the foundation has in the last 16 years, been proffering solutions to some of the rampant health issues in neglected and marginalised

communities by organising free medical outreaches tailored to meet some of the basic health needs of all age range in our communities.

According to her, “ Since inception, DOAM Foundation has been offering solutions to some of the rampant health issues in neglected and marginalised communities. The programme focused on diagnoses and treatments of illnesses including malaria, diabetes, hypertension, urinary tract infections, among others.”

It’s target audience, she added, are vulnerable

people and/or communities with deplorable state of public healthcare system especially as the exorbitant cost of private healthcare have greatly reduced their access to essential medical care.

A Medical Officer of Amaimo Primary Health Center, Obo-do-Amaimo, Imo State, Dr. Victor Okere who expressed delight about the programme, educated the beneficiaries on the need to be healthy, advantages of good attitude towards their health care, family planning, dangers of teenage pregnancy and self medication.

Reducing Maternal Mortality in Northern Nigeria

To reduce maternal mortality, Polaris Bank recently partnered Societal Healthcare by training 50 community midwives and health extension workers in Northern Nigeria, **Precious Ugwuzor** reports



Participants at the Polaris Bank sponsored Life Saving Skills training session in Kano

Polaris Bank in partnership with Societal Healthcare Organisation (SHO), recently organised a training for community midwives and health extension workers in Northern Nigeria themed: Life Saving Skills (LSS). The three-day intensive training was part of efforts to reduce mortality and morbidity associated with major causes of maternal and neonatal death in the country. In his opening remarks, Polaris Bank's Group Head, North-West Group II, Mr. Ahmed Badru, disclosed that the Bank's intervention was designed to combat the incidence of maternal deaths in Northern Nigeria. There is an estimated statistic of 546 maternal deaths in Northern Nigeria out of reported 100,000 cases in sub-Saharan Africa. Mr. Badru explained that in line with the Bank's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), strategic focus on health, the workshop set out to train 50 community midwives and health

extension workers, randomly selected from 80 per cent public and 20 per cent private hospitals in Kano State. "We will continue to work in partnership with relevant organisations like SHO to improve maternal health so that we can contribute our quota to reducing deaths that occur as a result of complications of pregnancy or childbirth," he added. On his part, the Executive Secretary of Societal Healthcare Organisation, Dr. Mahmoud K. Dankadai, expressed profound gratitude to Polaris Bank for partnering with their organisation to improve the health and wellbeing of women and children in Nigeria. He appreciated the Bank for providing medical consumables comprising Polaris Bank branded bags; umbilical cord scissors; latex sterile gloves; delivery mats; surgical blades; cord clamps; povidone iodine; baby oil; hand sanitizers and facemasks in addition to the intensive training availed the participants.

The Group Head, who represented Polaris Bank's Managing Director/CEO, Mr. Innocent C. Ike, pledged the Bank's commitment to improved maternal health in Nigeria. The training which took place at the Centre for Infectious Diseases Research (CIDR), Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital, Kano had on its faculty; Prof. Isa Abubakar, Director of CIDR; Prof. Zubaida Farouk of Department of Pediatrics and Prof. Muhammad Abdussalam of Department of Pediatrics, all of Aminu Kano Teaching Hospital and Bayero University, Kano. Societal Healthcare Organization is an NGO that offers unique community outreach and social services. Its mission is to provide qualitative and effective health to deprived groups, especially women and children in collaboration with stakeholders.

Polaris Bank has been in the forefront of a series of global action to reduce premature deaths among women. It has supported over 30 indigent cancer patients for treatment; free scanning programmes for over 20,000 women and donated cancer screening machines to Care Organization and Public Enlightenment (C.O.P.E) to enhance quality diagnosis and clinical practices serving all classes of women in Nigeria. Polaris Bank's consistent support for Nigeria's health sector was recently recognized as the "Outstanding Healthcare Financial Institution of the Year" by the Nigeria Healthcare Excellence Awards (NHEA), the nation's premier Health Award body. Polaris Bank, adjudged the Digital Bank of the Year, is a future-determining Bank committed to delivering industry-defining products to individuals and businesses.

World Mosquito Day: PECAN, Rotary Club Fumigates Lagos Drainage against Malaria

Rebecca Ejifoma

The Pest Control Association of Nigeria (PECAN) with the Rotary Club of Gbagada fumigated the drainage system on Owoseri Street in the Surulere area of Lagos in its efforts to combat the menace of malaria and its effect. This was in line with this year's World Mosquito Day on the theme, "No Mosquito, No Malaria" coupled with an awareness campaign. The National President of PECAN, Mr. Olakunle Williams, said the awareness is

to enlighten the residents on the dangers of the vector of malaria and give preventive measures rather than curative. "As we commemorate World Mosquito Day today, we require from our people attitudinal and behavioural change of open dumping of refuse, littering drainages with waste plastic bottles, cans and the likes. He cautioned that mosquito alone transmits the Zika virus, dengue fever, West Nile virus, chikungunya, yellow fever, and filariasis among other diseases. "The question is, should we allow this weakest and most

deadly creature of the world to ravage our lives through our negligence? The answer is No," says Williams. Hence, he noted that PECAN is encouraging the governments at all levels to give priority to partnerships with all stakeholders in environmental health PECAN, reconstruction of the modern drainage system, larval source management, clearing of the existing drainages to allow for free flow of wastewater, health education of the populace for everyone to see the need for a drastic change. As a professional body

saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that our homes, workplaces, schools, shopping and recreational centres, are safe and hygienic for healthy living through the proper fumigation, the president insisted that PECAN joins the world every August 20 to create awareness of deaths caused by mosquitoes worldwide. "This is to allow the world to explore how the deaths can be eliminated or abated," he added. On his part, the President, District 9011 of Rotary Club Gbagada, Rotarian Alozie Nsirimbobi, reiterated the

group's commitment to supporting activities that would continue improving the living of the masses. While noting that this is the second time they would partner with PECAN, Nsirimbobi listed cleaning the environment, disease prevention and treatment as a major focus of the club. He, therefore, urged residents to always consider the hygiene of their environment. Mrs Bosede Natufe, the Scientific Officer Representing Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA), bemoaned that Lagos State would have

been spotless if the residents stopped the indiscriminate dumping of refuse. While commending the State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu for unwavering efforts toward a cleaner environment, she encouraged all residents to always clear clogged gutters, stagnant water and proper disposal of dirt. To further prevent the spread of malaria, the partnership distributed insecticide-treated nets to pregnant women and nursing mothers in Owoseri, Ikate area where the canals were cleared and disinfected.

Rotary Club of Maryland to Rehabilitate School, Build Health Centre

Rebecca Ejifoma

The 21st Hope President of Rotary Club of Maryland, District 9110, Rotarian Rissy Adebimpe Taiwo, has unveiled her projects to rehabilitate a school in Abeokuta, Ogun State and a primary healthcare centre in Lagos. Her proposed plans and activities include adopting Moslem Primary School, Imosan Ijebu in Ogun State and building a Child and

Maternity Health Centre in the Amuwo-Odofin area of Lagos. This was noted at the Investiture of the 21st Hope President at the weekend in the Ikeja area of Lagos. She emphasised: "In the year we call the imagine year, the imaginative president, we have a project that is situated at Imosan in Ogun State. We have a dilapidated school that needs complete rehabilitation. "We have carried out the

needs assessment and we have seen what they need. That's our star project." As part of the activities lined up for the year, Taiwo highlighted the WASH programme. This involves a humanitarian service at the Correction Prison in Ikoyi and another at Abeokuta, Ogun State. For the Rotary Club of Maryland, our focus is service to humanity and that is what we are known to do.

"Rotary International focuses on polio eradication and this has been ongoing over the years with the support of us all," says the president. While the club continues to serve the community and the world, it also impacts the lives of members through the "We Care" programme. "In as much as we are doing good for the world, we are doing things for ourselves at the club. When we do medical outreach for

people, we do it for ourselves, too and the community we live in through We Care", she added. In her remark, the District Governor, Rotary International District 9110, Rotarian Omotunde Lawson, congratulated the president while urging the members to throw their weight behind her in this journey of service. "I appeal to every member to support the president for a beautiful year," she added.

Lawson, however, recalled how the Rotary Club of Maryland won an award as the Best Club in the District in 2021. She, therefore, encouraged members to continue in that line in touching lives so that their works will continue to speak for them. "To all our members and guests, kindly support the projects for the year and assist the president," says the district governor.

Adegbite: Demand for Copper, Lithium, Others to Triple by 2040

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The Minister of Mines and Steel Development, Arc. Olamilenka Adegbite has stated that if the World Bank’s estimation is anything to go by, there will be a huge demand for battery storage minerals, copper, cobalt, lithium, nickel, platinum and to a lesser extent, aluminium by 2040.

He said the World Bank estimate also included chromium, graphite, manganese, rare earth elements and Zinc, to the list following demand from electric vehicles and battery storage.

Disclosing this in Abuja, Adegbite, said the growing demand is propelled by an increase relying on rare earth elements and critical minerals to support climate commitments.

According to Adegbite, “Electric vehicles and battery storage would account for about half of the energy minerals demand over the next two decades, spurred by the increasing

demand for battery materials.”

Adegbite who gave a keynote address at a maiden Summit on Future Minerals in the country, noted that the historic event came at a time when there is a global focus on developing a low-carbon economy that would utilise the future minerals.

He said: “Already, many nations are aggressively initiating policies and strategic models to ensure the accelerated development of these critical energy minerals.

“Last month, the United States Senate passed an Act with incentives for developing critical minerals. Australia is also considering investment packages to stimulate exploration, mining, and processing of these minerals. In addition, China has stepped up imports from developing nations to bolster critical minerals stockpiles.

“The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change emphasizes the need to decline the use of non-renewable components in

energy generation. Renewable sources of energy provide an alternative to the energy transition economy.

“The consequence of this major shift is a high demand for critical minerals for use in climate-friendly technologies. The World Bank has estimated the demand for these minerals to triple by 2040. Undoubtedly, the deployment of critical minerals for a clean energy transition will remain significantly intensive for a long time.”

He said: “We cannot be left out of the global rush to develop our vast deposits of these mineral resources. This administration has taken so many fundamental steps to explore our deposits of these minerals to salvage the low electricity generation by diversifying the country’s energy mix towards renewable alternatives. Nigeria has no choice but to join the global race in developing the critical minerals value chain.”



MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)	
	JUNE 2022
Money Supply (M3)	48,865,823.53
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	167,956.2
Money Supply (M2)	48,797,867.32
-- Quasi Money	28,405,330.1
-- Narrow Money (M1)	20,392,537.22
---- Currency Outside Banks	2,722,785.91
---- Demand Deposits	17,669,751.32
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	6,242,394.29
Net Domestic Assets(NDA)	42,623,429.24
-- Net Domestic Credit (NDC)	57,267,178.05
---- Credit to Government (Net)	17,996,690.06
---- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	0.00
---- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	0.00
--- Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	39,270,488
--Other Assets Net	5,566,430
Reserve Money(Base Money)	11,320,304
--Currency in Circulation	3,259,269.15
--Banks Reserves	11,320,303.72
--Special Intervention Reserves	384,377.56

• Source- CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)	
Month	June 2022
Inter-Bank Call Rate	11.10
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	13.00
Treasury Bill Rate	2.45
Savings Deposit Rate	1.38
1 Month Deposit Rate	3.48
3 Months Deposit Rate	4.55
6 Months Deposit Rate	4.97
12 Months Deposit Rate	5.30
Prime Lending rate	12.29
Maximum Lending Rate	27.61

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

STI Demonstrates Commitment to New Product Development

The management of Sovereign Trust Insurance Plc (STI) has said that the company was committed to evolving innovative products and services that would improve the life of customers even as it has created an enhanced Third Party Motor insurance policy for the insuring public.

The company has also reiterated its commitment in achieving its mission of enhancing the everyday life of insurance customers, creating exceptional value for shareholders.

The Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer of the Company, Olaotan Soyinka,

stated this in an interactive session with the media in Lagos.

He said his company was committed to innovative products and services that would improve the life of customers even as it has created an enhanced Third Party Motor insurance policy for the insuring public.

Olaotan who was represented by Deputy General Manager, Sales & Corporate Communications, Mr. Segun Bankole said “Our mission is to enhance the everyday life of our customers through innovative insurance and financial services while creating exceptional value for our shareholders.

On the enhanced Third Party Motor Insurance, Soyinka said, “In terms of innovation, we have the product called the Enhanced Third Party Motor Insurance. We taught of the usual third party whereby when a claim occurs; it is only the third party that gets the benefit of having his or her vehicle repaired. But with our enhanced third party, which is just N7, 500 per annum, you have the third party being insured in case of any damage to the tune of N1 million and the insured himself or herself has that limit of liability up to the tune of N500,000.”

Heirs Life Rewards Winner of Maiden Heirs Essay Competition

A 12 year old pupil of Gateway Schools, Enugu, Ugbomyke Princewill Ebubedchukwu, has emerged the winner of the first edition of Heirs Life Essay Championship.

The nationwide competition was organised by Heirs Life Assurance (HLA) a digital life insurance company. Over one thousand pupils submitted entries from across the country.

As the overall winner, Princewill was presented with a brand-new laptop, the prize for the first place, and his school, Gateway Schools, represented by the proprietress Dr. Loveline Ndu received the Heirs Life Essay Championship cup and N500, 000 worth of books and other educational materials at the award ceremony held in Enugu, Enugu

State recently.

Participating students were asked to submit a 500-word essay on the topic, ‘If I were the President of Nigeria.’ The over 1000 entries received were graded by a team of experts under the leadership of a notable Professor of English Language, followed by a selection interview for further quality assurance.

Other winners include Purity Chukwuodi Chetachi, a Basic 5 pupil of Star of Hope School, Lagos, who emerged first runner up and won a cash prize of One Hundred Thousand Naira (N100, 000), and Abidoye Habeeb, a JSS 2 student of Mivara Secondary School, Lagos, who won third place with a cash prize of Fifty Thousand Naira

(N50, 000).

According to the MD/CEO of Heirs Life Assurance Limited, Niyi Onifade, the Essay Championship showcase the highly intellectual young future leaders in our nation.

“All the students who participated in this competition are winners. However, we can only award a few of them. Indeed, the quality of essays that we received from these amazing students was fascinating and the winner, Princewill Ugbomyke, expressed himself in such a remarkable way that one could easily visualise his dreams for our country. We congratulate Princewill, his school, and the other finalists, and wish all of them a very bright future.”

AXA Mansard Insurance Posts N44.97bn Premium

AXA Mansard Insurance Plc a member of the AXA Group said it recorded a Gross Written Premium of N44.97 billion, up by 21 per cent from N37.18 billion in June 2021.

According to the company, the Net Premium Income of N22.75 billion, up 31 per cent from N17.42 billion in June 2021, and Investment and Other Income of N2.42 billion, showing 94 per cent growth from N1.24 billion in June 2021

The company’s Operating Expenses went up by 10 percent to stand at N4.8 7 billion, against N4.41bn in June 2021, while Profit before Tax of N1.30 billion, showed remarkable decline by 59 percent from N3.16 billion recorded in June same year and Profit after Tax of N0.87 billion, declining by 62 per cent from N2.29 billion in June 2021.

The firm also said that its total assets went up by 15 percent to N119.78 billion, from N104.06 billion as of December in the

same year. Commenting on the financial performance of the company, the Chief Financial Officer, AXA Mansard Insurance, Mrs. Ngozi Ola-Israel, said, “We delivered double-digit revenue growth of 21 percent YoY from 45.1billion to 37.2 billion and 31 percent YoY net premium income growth from 17.4bn to 22.7bn in the first half of the year despite tough macro-economic conditions, particularly in the second quarter of the year.

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT THURSDAY, MAY 7

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

MARKET NEWS

Fidelity Bank Announce 21.6% PBT Growth, Propose 10 kobo Interim Dividend

Kayode Tokede

Fidelity Bank Plc, yesterday announced its audited half year ended June 30, 2022 result and accounts with 21.6 per cent increase in profit before tax to N25.08billion from N20.63billion reported in the half year ended June 30, 2021.

The lender on the Nigeria Exchange Limited (NGX) also reported N23.31billion profit in H1 2022, representing an

increase of 20.7 per cent from N19.31billion in H1 2021.

With the increase in profit, the board and directors of Fidelity Bank proposed an interim dividend of N0.10 kobo per share.

In addition, the bank reported N154.8billion gross earnings in H1 2022, representing an increase of 38 per cent from N112.3billion reported in H1 2021.

The increase in gross earnings was on account of 52.9 per cent

growth in interest income to N136.2billion in H1 2022 from N89.1billion in H1 2021. The increase in Interest Income was driven by improved yield on earnings assets and 14.9per cent Year-till-Date (YTD) expansion in earnings base to N2,546.5billion.

However, net fee income declined by N1.4billion or 9.6per cent due to N10billion or 117.9 per cent drop in foreign exchange gains.

MD/CEO of Fidelity Bank

Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe in a state-ment explained that, “We are delighted with our H1 2022 performance which showed strong growth across key performance indices.

“With improved efficiency and customer experience around our network, customer transactions have grown considerably as we optimize our balance sheet and build up a large stock of stable low-cost deposits.”

She added that, “We recently

executed a binding agreement for the acquisition of 100per cent equity stake in Union Bank UK Plc in line with our strategic objectives and business expansion drive.

“Union Bank UK offers a compelling synergy we hope to build on, to create a scalable and more sustaining service franchise that will support the wider ecosystem of our trade businesses and diaspora banking services.”

Fidelity Bank’s total deposits increased by 13.1per cent YTD to N2,290.1billion from N2,024.8billion in 2021, driven by double-digit growth in low-cost deposits (Demand | Savings | Domiciliary).

Low-cost deposits increased by 26.1 per cent YTD to N1,902.4billion and now represents 83.1 per cent of total deposits from 74.5 per cent in 2021FY, which explains the drop in funding cost.

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF 30 / 8 / 2022

MAIN BOARD		DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
1	UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	246,235.83	7.20	0.70 ↗	148 9,887,864
2	ZENITH BANK PLC	689,153.04	21.95	0.23 ↗	279 12,450,376
					427 22,338,240
S/N	OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
3	ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	291,570.85	8.20	-0.61 ↘	231 35,805,356
4	FBN HOLDINGS PLC	391,258.09	10.90	0.46 ↗	108 23,063,532
					339 58,868,888
					766 81,207,128
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ICT					
S/N	TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
5	MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	4,070,902.01	200.00	-0.08 ↘	390 825,573
					390 825,573
					390 825,573
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES					
ICT					
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N	BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
6	DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	4,174,924.31	245.00	-	69 231,019
7	LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	384,976.31	23.90	-	90 1,806,492
					189 2,037,510
					189 2,037,510
BUILDING MATERIALS					
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
OIL AND GAS					
S/N	EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
8	REPLAT ENERGY PLC	764,977.93	1,300.00	-	52 47,943
					52 47,943
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION					
OIL AND GAS					
AGRICULTURE					
S/N	CROP PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
9	ELLAH LAKES PLC	7,200.00	3.60	-	4 17,751
10	FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	638.00	0.29	-	9 53,255
11	OKOMU OIL PALM PLC	179,621.25	188.30	-	56 166,223
12	PRESCO PLC	142,600.00	142.60	-	36 530,460
					105 767,889
CROP PRODUCTION					
S/N	LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
13	LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	3,720.00	1.24	-	14 360,370
					14 360,370
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES					
AGRICULTURE					
CONGLOMERATES					
S/N	DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
14	JOHN HOLT PLC	315.21	0.81	-8.99 ↘	2 100,247
15	S C O A NIG. PLC	1,137.19	1.75	-	2 7,213
16	TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	42,273.91	1.04	0.06 ↗	55 5,558,143
17	U A C N PLC	31,982.39	11.10	2.78 ↗	31 817,023
					90 6,482,626
					90 6,482,626
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES					
CONGLOMERATES					
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N	BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
18	ARBICO PLC	152.96	1.03	-	1 1,000
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N	BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
					1 1,000
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION					
S/N	INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
19	JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC	41,440.00	25.90	-	19 102,652
					19 102,652
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION					
S/N	REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
20	UPDC PLC	19,673.57	1.06	-	7 25,400
					7 25,400
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT					
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
					27 129,052
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N	AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
21	DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	-	0 0
					0 0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS					
S/N	BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
22	CHAMPION BREW. PLC	30,143.56	3.85	-	6 65,932
23	GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC	829.98	0.81	-	0 0
24	GUINNESS NIG PLC	175,230.63	80.00	-	43 132,485
25	INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC	134,310.34	5.00	-	29 717,284
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N	BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
26	NIGERIAN BREW. PLC	376,517.49	45.80	-2.88 ↘	86 2,441,150
					164 3,356,851
BEVERAGES--BREWERS/DISTILLERS					
S/N	FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
27	BUA FOODS PLC	1,004,400.00	55.80	-	40 375,337
28	DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	194,350.05	16.00	-	75 942,766
29	FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC	110,710.25	27.00	-	77 343,823
30	HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	21,808.04	2.75	1.10 ↗	23 178,371
31	MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.10	0.36	-	0 0
32	N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	1,336.50	7.50	-	1 280
33	NASCON ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	29,143.82	11.00	-	14 34,105
34	UNION DICON SALT PLC	2,446.38	8.95	-	0 0
					230 1,872,682
FOOD PRODUCTS					
S/N	FOOD PRODUCTS--DIVERSIFIED	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
35	CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	25,167.91	13.40	-	21 196,990
36	NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	1,070,085.94	1,350.00	-	62 19,228
					83 216,218
FOOD PRODUCTS--DIVERSIFIED					
S/N	HOUSEHOLD DURABLES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
37	NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC	1,231.72	16.20	-	0 0
38	VITAFOAM NIG. PLC	27,518.57	22.00	8.37 ↗	46 1,639,357
					46 1,639,357
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES					
S/N	PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
39	P Z CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC	31,862.34	8.05	-	27 139,211
40	UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	77,557.57	13.50	-	28 149,897
					55 288,908
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS					
CONSUMER GOODS					
CONSUMER GOODS					
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
41	ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	198,175.15	10.80	-	31 86,423
42	FIDELITY BANK PLC	88,093.38	3.04	-0.65 ↘	101 9,902,981
43	GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	585,086.47	19.80	-0.50 ↘	437 9,753,695
44	JAIZ BANK PLC	31,097.06	0.90	4.65 ↗	98 40,420,867
45	STERLING BANK PLC	44,537.24	1.54	0.65 ↗	35 8,054,485
46	UNION BANK NIG. PLC	163,076.22	5.60	-	26 213,715
47	UNITY BANK PLC	5,026.42	0.43	2.38 ↗	12 1,273,665
48	WEMA BANK PLC	45,003.54	3.50	-	26 286,532
					766 67,992,363
BANKING					
S/N	INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
49	AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	-	0 0
50	AIICO INSURANCE PLC	19,400.80	0.53	-3.64 ↘	75 5,100,944
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
51	AXAMINSARD INSURANCE PLC	16,659.00	1.85	-	21 183,564
52	CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INSURANCE PLC	6,636.70	0.62	-	4 28,232
53	CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	12,716.47	0.70	-5.71 ↘	22 2,263,435
54	CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	9,116.84	0.38	-	20 616,058
55	GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	-	0 0
56	GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	1,228.00	0.20	-	14 505,300
57	INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	487.95	0.38	-	0 0
58	LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	1,796.91	0.98	2.06 ↗	8 350,136
59	LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	7,280.00	0.52	-	6 43,307
60	MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	6,419.72	0.32	6.67 ↗	70 19,035,090
61	NEM INSURANCE PLC	25,082.39	5.00	-	27 5,648,472
62	NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,547.90	0.20	-	0 0
63	PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	6,758.81	0.51	-	9 222,315
64	REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	1,733.88	0.26	-	3 12,075
65	SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	2,954.76	0.26	-	7 3,532,000
66	STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,483.72	0.48	-	0 0
67	STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	2,582.21	0.20	-	0 0
68	SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC	2,033.78	0.35	-	2 7,190
69	UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	3,200.00	0.20	-	0 0
70	VERITAS CAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	2,773.33	0.20	-	14 830,508
					302 39,266,626
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					
S/N	MICRO-FINANCE BANKS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
71	NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	8,989.40	1.50	-	9 23,673
					9 23,673
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS					

MAIN BOARD		DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
72	ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	17,261.54	1.70	- 0	1 100
73	ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	- 0	0 0
74	INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	5,296.48	1.27	- 0	0 0
75	RESORT SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	2,265.95	0.20	- 0	0 0
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N	MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
76	UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	2,949.22	3.02	- 0	0 0
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					
S/N	OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
77	AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	11,200.00	5.60	- 33	295,239
78	CUSTODIAN INVESTMENT PLC	38,232.12	6.50	- 18	2,874,417
79	DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	300.00	0.20	- 1	100
80	FCMB GROUP PLC	63,368.67	3.20	- 23	81,482
81	NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP	40,362.58	20.55	2.49 29	1,121,848
82	ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	5,248.28	1.02	- 0	0
83	STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	395,188.41	30.50	-0.16 196	5,021,269
84	UNITED CAPITAL PLC	71,700.00	11.95	- 75	935,758
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
					375 10,330,113
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
					1,453 117,612,875
HEALTHCARE					
S/N	HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
85	EKOCORP PLC	2,886.90	5.79	- 0	0 0
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS					
					0 0
S/N	MEDICAL SUPPLIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
86	MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	2,166.26	2.19	- 4	4,510
MEDICAL SUPPLIES					
					4 4,510
S/N	PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
87	FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	20,007.42	9.11	- 43	342,488
88	GLAXO SMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	7,175.26	6.00	- 22	80,523
89	MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	6,693.91	3.88	- 15	37,796
HEALTHCARE					
S/N	PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
90	NEIEMTH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	2,981.68	1.57	- 10	49,342
91	PHARMA-DEKO PLC	379.44	1.75	- 0	0
PHARMACEUTICALS					
					90 510,149
HEALTHCARE					
					94 514,659
ICT					
S/N	COMPUTER BASED SYSTEMS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
92	COURTEVILLE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS PLC	1,847.04	0.52	8.33 16	1,019,410
COMPUTER BASED SYSTEMS					
					16 1,019,410
S/N	COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
93	OMATEK VENTURES PLC	588.36	0.20	- 0	0 0
COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS					
					0 0
S/N	IT SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
94	CWG PLC	2,499.58	0.99	- 2	4,200
95	NCR (NIGERIA) PLC	388.80	3.60	- 0	0
IT SERVICES					
					2 4,200
S/N	PROCESSING SYSTEMS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
96	CHAMS HOLDING COMPANY PLC	1,220.98	0.26	4.00 24	1,439,468
97	E-TRANZACT INTERNATIONAL PLC	15,126.81	2.28	- 11	5,002
PROCESSING SYSTEMS					
					35 1,444,470
S/N	TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
98	AIRTEL AFRICA PLC	7,666,629.07	2,040.00	- 44	13,884
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES					
					44 13,884
ICT					
					97 2,481,964
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N	BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
99	BERGER PAINTS PLC	1,912.83	6.60	- 17	47,353
100	BUA CEMENT PLC	1,760,946.41	52.00	- 79	371,469
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N	BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
101	CAP PLC	13,006.28	16.50	- 8	4,836
102	MEYER PLC	1,205.91	2.27	- 2	1,386
103	PREMIER PAINTS PLC	1,230.00	10.00	- 0	0
BUILDING MATERIALS					
					106 425,044
S/N	ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
104	AUSTIN LAZ & COMPANY PLC	2,192.12	2.03	- 0	0
105	CUTIX PLC	7,468.01	2.12	- 22	443,415
ELECTRONIC AND ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS					
					22 443,415
S/N	PACKAGING/CONTAINERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
106	BETA GLASS PLC	30,719.28	51.20	- 1	500
107	GREIF NIGERIA PLC	232.39	5.45	- 0	0
108	TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC	430.61	0.87	- 2	3,381
PACKAGING/CONTAINERS					
					3 3,881
S/N	AGRO-ALLIED & CHEMICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
109	NOTORE CHEMICAL IND PLC	100,754.14	62.50	- 1	1,000
AGRO-ALLIED & CHEMICALS					
					1 1,000
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
					132 873,340
NATURAL RESOURCES					
S/N	CHEMICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
110	INDUSTRIAL & MEDICAL GASES NIGERIA PLC	3,721.23	7.45	- 6	4,783
CHEMICALS					
					6 4,783
S/N	METALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
111	ALUMINIUM EXTRUSION IND. PLC	1,583.68	7.20	- 3	3,218
METALS					
					3 3,218
NATURAL RESOURCES					
S/N	MINING SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
112	MULTIVERSE MINING AND EXPLORATION PLC	1,116.63	2.62	9.17 31	3,261,423
MINING SERVICES					
					31 3,261,423
S/N	PAPER/FOREST PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
113	THOMAS WYATT NIG. PLC	77.00	0.35	- 0	0
PAPER/FOREST PRODUCTS					
					0 0
NATURAL RESOURCES					
					40 3,269,424
OIL AND GAS					
S/N	ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
114	JAPPAUL GOLD & VENTURES PLC	1,941.44	0.31	-8.82 33	534,901
ENERGY EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES					
					33 534,901
S/N	INTEGRATED OIL AND GAS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
115	OGANO PLC	62,776.63	5.05	-3.17 105	4,606,294
INTEGRATED OIL AND GAS SERVICES					
					105 4,606,294
S/N	PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
116	ARDOVA PLC	15,760.02	12.10	-1.22 24	438,440
117	CONOIL PLC	18,008.06	25.95	- 24	32,169
118	ETERNA PLC	7,890.08	6.05	- 33	241,750
119	MRS OIL NIGERIA PLC	4,920.40	14.35	- 4	1,252
120	TOTALENERGIES MARKETING NIGERIA PLC	79,617.87	234.50	- 12	2,152
PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTORS					
					97 715,763
OIL AND GAS					
					235 5,856,958

Thursday, September 1, 2022

Thisday Afrinvest Index gains 0.33%

The Thisday Afrinvest 40 index rose by 0.33% to 2,498.10 index points due to gains in WAPCO (+4.6%), FBNH (+2.3%), and ACCESSCORP (+1.8%). Cumulatively, these stocks account for 7.1% of the index.

Positive Outing on the Local Bourse... ASI up 0.4%

Yesterday, the local bourse closed on a positive note as gains in BUAFOODS (+4.5%), WAPCO (+4.6%), and GUINNESS (+9.9%) lifted the benchmark index by 0.4% to 49,836.51 points. Likewise, market capitalisation rose ₦104.5bn to ₦26.9tn while YTD return improved to 16.7% (previously: 16.2%). Market activity improved as volume and value traded rose 191.7% and 5.4% respectively to 367.3m units and ₦3.2bn.

Bullish Sector Performance

Performance was bullish across our coverage sectors as 4 indices gained, 1 lost while the AFR-ICT index closed flat. The Consumer Goods and Banking indices advanced 1.8% and 0.6% respectively due to price uptick in BUAFOODS (+4.5%), GUINNESS (+9.9%), ETI (+1.9%), and FIDELITY (+4.9%). Likewise, buy interest in WAPCO (+4.6%), ARDOVA (+4.1%), and OANDO (+1.0%) pushed the Industrial Goods and Oil & Gas indices higher by 30bps and 20bps respectively. On the flip side, the Insurance index declined 0.1% courtesy of selloffs in CHIPLC (-7.7%) and SOVRENIN (-7.1%).

Outlook

Investor sentiment, as measured by market breadth, improved to 0.09x (previously: 0.00x) as 21 indices gained, 14 lost while 81 closed flat. Today, we expect bargain hunting activities to sustain the positive performance.

Corporate Action

Yesterday, Fidelity Bank Plc announced that an interim dividend of 10kb per 50kb ordinary share subject to appropriate withholding tax would be paid to shareholders whose names appear in the Register of members as at close of business on September 12, 2022. The dividend would be paid electronically on September 20, 2022.

THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 INDEX

Fundamental Performance Metrics for THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 Index											
Ticker	Current Price	Previous Price Change	Current Weighting	Price Change YTD	Price Change Index to Date	ROE	ROA	P/E	P/BV	Dividend Yield	Earnings Yield
THISDAY AFRINVEST 40	2498.10	0.33%		34.7%	149.8%	26.2%	4.9%	4.7x	0.8x	6.9%	14.6%
1 Airtel Africa PLC	2,040.00	0.0%	52.2%	113.6%	17.8%	19.2%	6.7%			1.1%	
2 MTN Nigeria Communications PLC	199.00	0.0%	6.7%	1.0%	-13.5%	144.8%	14.4%	12.0x	15.1x	7.1%	8.4%
3 BUA Cement Plc	52.00	0.0%	4.2%	-22.4%	-27.7%	23.3%	12.1%	19.5x	4.4x	5.1%	5.1%
4 Guaranty Trust Holding Co PLC	19.85	0.0%	4.0%	-23.7%	-3.2%	19.8%	3.2%	3.3x	0.7x	15.1%	30.6%
5 Zenith Bank PLC	21.90	-0.2%	4.1%	-12.9%	0.9%	20.7%	2.7%	2.8x	0.5x	14.2%	36.3%
6 Dangote Cement PLC	245.00	0.0%	3.3%	-4.7%	-10.9%	44.2%	15.8%	12.2x	5.5x	8.2%	8.2%
7 Lafarge Africa PLC	25.00	4.6%	2.7%	4.4%	-5.3%	15.6%	11.1%	6.7x	1.0x	8.4%	14.9%
8 FBN Holdings Plc	11.15	2.3%	2.5%	-2.2%	-3.9%	20.5%	1.9%	2.4x	0.5x	3.2%	41.9%
9 Nestle Nigeria PLC	1,350.00	0.0%	2.4%	-13.3%	-3.6%	178.2%	15.1%	23.2x	37.1x	3.7%	4.3%
10 SEPLAT Energy PLC	1,300.00	0.0%	2.5%	100.0%	0.0%	9.9%	5.1%	10.0x	1.0x	3.2%	10.0%
11 Access Holdings PLC	8.30	1.8%	1.9%	-10.8%	-10.8%	17.9%	1.6%	1.8x	0.3x	8.4%	55.1%
12 United Bank for Africa PLC	7.20	0.0%	1.6%	-10.6%	-3.4%	15.6%	1.4%	2.1x	0.3x	14.0%	48.4%
13 Nigerian Breweries PLC	45.50	-0.7%	1.1%	-9.0%	-22.6%	13.4%	4.9%	15.4x	2.0x	3.6%	6.5%
14 Okomu Oil Palm PLC	188.30	0.0%	1.2%	32.6%	-13.2%	52.6%	30.4%	8.4x	4.2x	4.0%	11.9%
15 Ecobank Transnational Inc	11.00	1.9%	1.3%	26.4%	3.8%	20.0%	1.1%	2.2x	0.4x	6.1%	45.4%
16 Stanbic BTC Holdings PLC	31.00	0.0%	1.1%	-13.9%	-7.6%	18.0%	2.3%	6.3x	1.1x	11.3%	15.9%
17 International Breweries PLC	5.00	0.0%	0.9%	1.0%	-20.6%	-2.4%	-0.9%		1.0x		-2.5%
18 Flour Mills of Nigeria PLC	27.30	0.0%	0.8%	-3.7%	-16.0%	14.5%	3.7%	4.2x	0.6x	7.8%	23.7%
19 Fidelity Bank PLC	3.19	4.9%	0.6%	25.1%	-6.7%	13.3%	1.2%	2.2x	0.3x	11.1%	45.6%
20 Guinness Nigeria PLC	87.90	9.9%	0.7%	125.4%	-2.9%	19.1%	8.1%	12.3x	2.1x	8.2%	8.1%
21 Presco PLC	142.60	0.0%	0.4%	62.4%	-13.6%	53.7%	20.2%	6.3x	3.3x	4.8%	15.9%
22 FCMB Group Plc	3.05	-0.7%	0.4%	2.0%	-11.8%	12.4%	1.2%	2.0x	0.2x	6.6%	49.9%
23 AXA Mansard Insurance PLC	1.80	0.0%	0.4%	-22.4%	-10.0%	5.7%	1.7%	8.9x	0.5x	13.9%	11.2%
24 United Capital PLC	12.00	0.4%	0.4%	21.2%	-5.9%			5.7x	2.7x	12.5%	17.4%
25 Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC	16.40	2.5%	0.4%	-5.7%	0.6%	23.2%	8.7%	6.7x	1.5x	6.1%	14.9%
26 Transnational Corp of Nigeria	1.13	8.7%	0.3%	17.7%	-8.1%	19.0%	4.3%	2.8x	0.4x	1.8%	36.1%
27 PZ Cussons Nigeria PLC	8.20	1.9%	0.2%	34.4%	-14.6%			6.2x	0.9x	3.0%	16.0%
28 Cadbury Nigeria PLC	13.00	0.0%	0.2%	47.7%	-24.6%			7.4x	1.6x	3.8%	13.5%
29 UAC of Nigeria PLC	11.00	0.0%	0.2%	15.8%	-0.9%	2.4%	1.1%	27.6x	0.7x	5.9%	3.6%
30 TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeri	234.50	0.0%	0.2%	5.7%	0.0%				1.8x		
31 Julius Berger Nigeria PLC	25.90	0.0%	0.2%	15.9%	-2.3%	19.1%	2.1%	5.5x	0.8x	9.7%	18.2%
32 Custodian and Allied Insurance	6.50	0.0%	0.1%	-17.7%	-7.1%	18.2%	5.2%	3.9x	0.7x	7.7%	25.5%
33 Wema Bank PLC	3.50	0.0%	0.2%	386.1%	9.7%	15.7%	0.9%	8.8x	1.8x	6.9%	11.4%
34 Unilever Nigeria PLC	12.20	-7.2%	0.1%	-15.9%	-17.6%	7.2%	4.3%	38.0x	1.1x	4.1%	2.6%
35 Jaiz Bank PLC	0.86	-4.4%	0.1%	53.6%	-5.5%	20.0%	1.5%	6.3x	1.2x	4.7%	15.9%
36 Dando PLC	5.10	1.0%	0.1%	15.4%	-10.1%		-21.5%				-176.3%
37 Union Bank of Nigeria PLC	5.60	0.0%	0.1%	-5.1%	-8.9%	6.4%	0.7%	8.9x	0.6x		11.2%
38 Sterling Bank PLC	1.55	2.0%	0.1%	2.6%	2.0%			2.8x		6.5%	35.3%
39 Notore Chemical Industries Ltd	62.50	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-17.7%	-4.1%		1.8x		-1.8%
40 Transcorp Hotels Plc	6.25	0.0%	0.0%	16.2%	0.0%				1.0x	1.1%	

Top 10 Gainers		
Ticker	Price	Price Chg %
GUINNESS	87.90	9.9%
CAVERTON	1.14	9.6%
TRANSCORP	1.13	8.7%
NGXGROUP	22.35	6.4%
LASACO	1.03	5.1%
FIDELITYBK	3.19	4.9%
WAPCO	25.00	4.6%
BUAFOODS	58.30	4.5%
ARDOVA	12.60	4.1%
CHAMS	0.27	3.8%

Top 10 Losers		
Ticker	Price	Price Chg %
CHIPLC	0.60	-7.7%
UNILEVER	12.20	-7.2%
SOVRENINS	0.26	-7.1%
UPDCREIT	3.30	-7.0%
JAIZBANK	0.86	-4.4%
UPDC	1.00	-2.0%
HONYFLOUR	2.65	-1.9%
CORNERST	0.69	-1.4%
NB	45.50	-0.7%
FCMB	3.05	-0.7%

Top 10 Trades by Volume		
Ticker	Volume	Price Chg %
STERLNBANK	162.4	2.0%
ACCESSCORP	27.7	1.8%
UBA	26.6	0.0%
FBNH	22.4	2.3%
FIDELITYBK	20.2	4.9%
MBENEFIT	19.2	0.0%
AIICO	8.5	3.8%
ETI	8.0	1.9%
TRANSCORP	6.9	8.7%
ZENITHBANK	6.0	-0.2%

Top 10 Trades by Value		
Ticker	Value	Price Chg %
MTNN	873.3	0.0%
AIRTELAFRI	348.7	0.0%
FBNH	244.7	2.3%
STERLNBANK	238.9	2.0%
ACCESSCORP	228.0	1.8%
UBA	191.3	0.0%
ZENITHBANK	132.3	-0.2%
GTCO	110.1	0.0%
BUAFOODS	93.3	4.5%
ETI	88.4	1.9%

Buhari Mourns Gorbachev, Says He Was a Courageous Reformer

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has mourned leader of former Soviet Union, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, describing him as, "a courageous reformer who will be remembered for years to come because of his immeasurable

contributions to world peace and openness in his own once rigidly closed society."

Reacting to the death of Gorbachev at 91 on Tuesday, Buhari, in a statement issued by his spokesman, Mallam Garba Shehu, said, "the late Gorbachev was a remarkable gentleman

whose reformist agenda had fundamentally changed the Soviet society through his policy of Perestroika and Glasnost, both of which set the stage for economic and political transformation of his own country and that of others in the defunct Soviet Union."

He stressed that, although

Gorbachev's political career was consumed by those reforms, history and posterity would be kind to him for placing the interests of the Soviet people above his own ambition.

According to him, "the impact of Gorbachev's legacy was not limited to the former Soviet

Union, but it also affected the wider world, such as his voluntary dissolution of the Warsaw Pact military alliance in pursuit of permanent peace in the world."

Buhari added: "We cannot forget in a hurry how Gorbachev advocated for the destruction of nuclear weapons by both the

former Soviet Union and the United States during his meeting with Ronald Reagan."

He added that although Gorbachev died without achieving his dream of a nuclear-free world, his genuine commitment to durable international peace and security would never be forgotten.

WITH 177 DAYS TO PRESIDENTIAL POLL, RACE STILL TOO CLOSE TO CALL

Next year's general election, which kicks off with the presidential run on Saturday, February 25, is 177 days away today. But the current standing of the major presidential candidates and their parties, gleaned from assessment of public opinion, is still too close to call, even though campaigns are yet to officially begin.

After the June 9 deadline set by the Independent National Electoral commission (INEC) for political parties to elect their presidential standard bearers, eight candidates emerged and are set to be on the ballot next year.

They are Malik Ado-Ibrahim, Young Progressives Party (YPP); Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP); Omoyele Sowore, African Action Congress (AAC); Peter Obi, Labour Party (LP); Adewole Adebayo, Social Democratic Party (SDP); Kola Abiola, Peoples Redemption Party (PRP); Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, All Progressives Congress (APC); and Atiku Abubakar, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

Of the eight candidates on INEC's list, three have marked themselves out from the lot, and they have since dominated the turf, measuring, albeit for now, in networking, crowd-pulling, and awareness creation.

The three candidates are PDP's Atiku, APC's Tinubu, and LP's Obi, while on the extreme fringe is NNPP's Kwankwaso, who could help shape the fortunes of any of the candidates, if he eventually decides to align or form alliances.

Some of the factors that may count, shape and swing the equation in favour of the candidates include the scorecard of the APC administration, such as the lingering insecurity, poor economic performance, and the rise in corruption. Unfortunately, they were the main campaign topics and the three factors that brought the APC government to power in 2015.

Much as the ages of the candidates are also a critical factor, Tinubu and Atiku have an escape route in their running mates. In other words, if anyone is voting



■ Obi

PETER OBI'S PATHWAY TO ASO ROCK

STATES HE MUST WIN WITH OVER 90% AND WITH OVER 50% TURNOUT	COMMENT
Anambra	Possible
Imo	Possible
Enugu	Likely
Ebonyi	Possible
Abia	Possible
STATES HE MUST WIN WITH OVER 40%	COMMENT
Lagos	Possible
Rivers	Possible
Oyo	Possible
Ogun	Possible
Ondo	Possible
Osun	Possible
Ekiti	Possible
Delta	Possible
Edo	Possible
Bayelsa	Possible
Akwa Ibom	Likely
Cross River	Possible
Kogi	Possible
Kwara	Possible
Benue	Possible
Nasarawa	Possible
Plateau	Possible
Taraba	Unlikely
Adamawa	Unlikely
Gombe	Unlikely
Niger	Possible
Kaduna	Possible
FCT	Possible
Borno	Unlikely

Atiku, he would look at Ifeanyi Okowa, and if it is Tinubu, there is a Kashim Shettima to consider as a huge strength to the joint ticket.

The proper campaign kick-off is still some days away, according to INEC's timetable and schedule of activities. The three most prominent candidates have yet to start pitching their debates on the real issues affecting the nation today.

Interestingly, the 2023 election is beginning to look like a repeat of the 1979 scenario, which produced regional champions, across the then parties like the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), and the Great Nigerian Peoples Party (GNPP).

In 1979, there were just 19 states,

while there are currently 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The six geopolitical zones nationwide were also no there in 1979.

It was one monolithic north and the south in the 1979 election. But the equations have changed significantly with the geopolitical zones, which now vote in different ways, albeit with largely predictable patterns. But this election is tilting too much in the direction of regional champions, a development many believe is not good for the country's unity.

Perhaps, Atiku saw through this danger, when he said recently that he might consider a Government of National Unity (GNU) if elected president, a move which appears the only healing balm post-2023

general election.

But looking at the mechanics of the current campaign structures across the parties and the challenges of winning the presidential election, it is still too close to call. This indicates that a sweeping victory might be impossible. A unity government might ultimately be a life-saver from the pending political conflagration.

In the North-west, for example, the battle is between APC and PDP. While in APC, the current internal contradictions would play the ruling party against itself, save for Zamfara, which is about the only well-put-together APC state for now, after the warring camps had reconciled, the zone seems safe for PDP.

What this means is that, Kano

may be a three-horse race, and Kwankwaso is likely to swing towards either Tinubu or Atiku, in the ancient city. As far as Kano is concerned, Kwankwaso is the beautiful bride. But other states like Kebbi, Jigawa, Katsina, Sokoto, including Kaduna are already pitching for PDP with the situation reports.

Aside from the internal contradictions, one other factor that may determine the North-west election is, evidently, the choice of a Kanuri man as Tinubu's running mate, when the votes of the Kanuri is quite insignificant, compared to the Hausa/Fulani in the zone. The APC Muslim-Muslim ticket may not be the problem. But the LP, without a doubt, has near-zero presence here, while the NNPP would help sculpt the Kano battle.

The North-east, which may also settle for the number one position as being offered by PDP, as against the number two the ruling party is offering, may see the APC corner all of the Kanuri votes, because of the Kashim Shettima factor, although coming largely from Borno, his state. But, again, the Hausa/Fulani population may write off this voting pattern across other states in the zone.

Bauchi, Adamawa, and Taraba are, for example, PDP states. The only time Bauchi swung the other way was when a former governor of the state, Isa Yuguda, allegedly, indulged in anti-party activities in 2015. LP is not an issue here, and neither is NNPP.

Expectedly, the North-central may be the swing zone, even though the Middle Belt, particularly, Benue, is by its frustration now anti-APC, given the heat of insecurity it has suffered in almost eight years of the current administration.

Interestingly, the APC governorship candidate in Benue, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia, is reportedly the most popular and that makes the state dicey for the PDP. But some of the states in the zone may swing either way, with a majority surging in the PDP direction, including Kwara and Niger. Neither the LP nor the NNPP stand a chance here, too.

The South-west is APC's strongest zone and Tinubu's main base. But, unfortunately, it is going to be either a three- or two-horse race in all the states in this zone, including Lagos, where the LP is expected to put up some surprises. Tinubu will definitely hold on to the South-west, but the Obi factor may diminish his gains, while the PDP will vehemently assert itself.

For example, while the youth, essentially children of the elite, are likely going to vote for Obi, their parents, who are the older generation, are more likely going to vote for APC or PDP. But the voting pattern of these youths will not be replicated in the rural areas, where the PDP and the APC logos are what the rural dwellers know.

Coming to the South-south and the South-east, these are arguably traditional PDP zones, which unfortunately, have been intruded by the OBdient movement and the sentiments for a president of the Igbo extraction.

What this means, therefore, is that the battle in both the South-south and South-east is going to be a two-horse race, with the APC in complete relegation.

Indeed, APC is likely not to even bother about the two zones, reason it often dismisses its voting strength, especially, that of the South-east.

But it is important to look at how the crisis between the Rivers State governor, Nyesom Wike, and the PDP leadership may impact the two zones, outside of Rivers, as Wike is believed to have influence in some of the states.

This could mean an unintended opening for APC in the region, if the loose ends are not tidied up and ranks closed to achieve one house before the elections. This, of course, is not forgetting that many of PDP stakeholders have dismissed Wike's case as isolated and incapable of ruining the party's chances, but himself if he pushes too hard.

Over all, the general election next year is for the taking, largely by either Atiku or Tinubu, depending how much damage the OBdient

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AT KUKAH'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION, JONATHAN URGES NIGERIANS TO BE VIGILANT TO SAVE DEMOCRACY

Kukah as a selfless, honest and courageous man of God that has remained devoted to his calling as a servant in the Lord's vineyard and the society at large.

Speaking on the theme of the event, 'Nigeria's Unfinished Greatness: Next steps', Jonathan urged Nigerians to remain vigilant and put all hands on the deck to choose leaders that would take the nation to the promised land.

He said, "Obviously, many people, especially our youth are becoming increasingly disillusioned about our politics and our democracy.

"However, we must remain on the democratic path because it is the only practical way of effectively managing our diversity, developing sustainably and recording progress as a nation.

"The task before all of us is not to lower our guard, lest the democracy we cherish today, succumbs to threats and recedes into fascism tomorrow.

"Towards this goal, we are again faced with a good opportunity of choosing our leaders as the nation prepares to go to the polls next year. Let us choose those that will take us to the desired destination and the promised land.

"I am particularly thrilled that

Nigerian youths are participating actively in the politics of 2023. According to the latest figures from INEC, youths constitute the majority of the 96.2 million registered voters, in the build-up to the next election. That is a good sign."

He charged the youths that have registered ahead of the 2023 elections to endeavor to walk their talk by making sure they come out to vote on election day.

According to him, "They should, by all means, resist the machinations of unscrupulous politicians who would wish to exploit them by luring them to commit acts of violence or disrupt the process of free and fair elections.

"Our recent experience with the heightened youth interest in politics shows how desirous they are of participating directly in the governance process. They now know better not to lend their youthful energy to unpatriotic acts, during elections."

The former Nigerian president described Kukah as a work in progress; adding that until that work was done, people like Bishop Kukah, who serve as the conscience of the nation would continue to be around to constantly hold the

mirror of the nation's progression to its face.

He explained, "In the course of the last few years since I left government, I have been involved in the work of promoting democracy, credible elections and peaceful transitions across Africa.

"From what I know and have seen, I can confidently say that the experience and struggle for development are similar in many parts of Africa.

"Nigeria may not be where we want it to and should be, but we should not give up or lose hope by focusing on only the negative.

"Judging from where we are coming from since independence in 1960, we may have been moving slowly in our journey of nationhood, but it is a journey of progress, all the same.

"Our greatness is still work in progress because we have not been able to adequately deploy the enviable human and natural resources that God gave us, to full advantage. It is a task we will continue to work on and improve.

"A nation is an organic being that sometimes suffers setbacks. Along the line, from 1960, the nation no doubt has had its own doses of setbacks.

This cuts across civil and military rule. The worst was the three-year civil war.

"In every set back, there are always lessons to be learnt and positive takeaways from such painful experiences that should guide us to a more productive future."

Dignitaries present at the occasion included: Governor of Ekiti, Kayode Fayemi; Governor of Plateau State, Simon Lalong; the Secretary to Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha; the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu; and his running mate, Senator Kashim Shettima.

Others were Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Antonio Filippazzi; Archbishop of Abuja, His Grace Most Rev. Ignatius Kaigama; the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar; the President, Christian Association of Nigeria, Archbishop Daniel Okoh; former governor of Sokoto, Attahiru Bafarawa; former governor of Imo, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha; the National Chairman of the Labour Party (LP), Julius Abure; and the Director-General of Budget Office, Ben Akabueze, amongst others.

Also, Sokoto State Governor

Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, described Kukah as a man with undying love for the country.

Tambuwal, who chaired Kukah's ongoing 70th birthday celebration, reiterated the Bishop's unalterable belief in the possibility of a new Nigeria.

According to him, though Kukah's critique of the country's governance have been controversial, he (Kukah) believes Nigeria could and would come out of the woods of failed political leadership.

Tambuwal who was represented by Ihedioha, said, "Kukah's writings over the years have become controversial and have drawn the ire of powers that be, but what is not in doubt is his undying love for Nigeria and Nigerians, and his belief in the possibility of a new Nigeria where justice and equity reigns."

While speaking at the event, former governor of Lagos state and presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC) made some derivation from the country's old national anthem, saying, "though tongues and tribes may differ, in brotherhood we stand."

He also read out the second stanza which he said was about service to the nation.

According to him, the country's diversity was a promise for prosperity.

To Kukah, the former governor said, "We have been in tranches together. I can speak for you because of whom you are, a great man, a very resilient intellectual who has made quality contribution to our country."

The chief host, who spoke about the Kukah Centre, said the Centre came into being out of the desire to help equip young people to stand on their own.

"We realised that the system is so greedy and that the best we can do now is to appreciate that government cannot do everything.

"Let's begin to equip young people because in the final analysis no government anywhere in world employs five percent of its people.

"So the rest us have to find something to do because sooner than later drivers will have no job. So we can see the world is going," he said.

Kukah described the award segment of his 70th birthday event which focused on youths as the best savoured moment of the entire celebration.

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INTERSWITCH 20TH ANNIVERSARY BRIEFING...

L-R: Managing Director, Payment Processing and Switching (Interswitch Purepay), Akeem Lawal; Managing Director, Industry Ecosystems (Interswitch Indeco), Chinyere Don-Okhuofu; Group Managing Director / CEO, Interswitch Group, Mitchell Elegbe; and Managing Director, Digital Infrastructure and Managed Services (Interswitch Systegra), Jonah Adams at the media conference heralding the 20th anniversary of Interswitch held in Lagos...yesterday

PHOTO: SUNDAY ADIGUN

Atiku’s Team Rubbishes Claims Tinubu Singlehandedly ‘Built’ Lagos

●Says he performed worse than many governors in his set

●Flays Buhari over opacity in handling of oil revenues, social investment funds

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

A spokesman of the Atiku Abubakar 2023 presidential campaign, Dr Daniel Bwala, has disputed claims by supporters of the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Bola Tinubu, that he (Tinubu) practically built Lagos as governor of the state between 1999 and 2007.

In an interview with News Central, an online news outlet, Bwala argued that as a former national capital and a former colony, Lagos already had the trappings of a developed city.

He stressed that the agenda being pushed that Tinubu is the father of modern Lagos was baseless, insisting

that Tinubu actually did worse than many governors in his set.

According to Bwala, Lagos already had several infrastructure put in place by the federal government as well as the colonial administration before Tinubu took over in 1999, including the airport, seaport as well as the security architecture which he inherited.

“They are pushing it as an agenda or as a rhetoric that he did well in Lagos. But I will tell you that between 1999 and 2007, if you take out context, he actually performed worse than some governors in Nigeria.

“This is because even the Lagos they said he improved the revenue, he only collected tax. All the

infrastructure needed for a state or for a country to develop were already on ground.

“Lagos used to be the Nigerian national capital. Before Nigeria was formed, Lagos was a colony. You had all the infrastructure for economic development. Asiwaju Bola Tinubu did not establish them.

“There was seaport, there was airport, you had commercial activities. All the embassies were there. So transactions with foreign embassies in Lagos, all the hotels were headquartered in Lagos. All the banks are headquartered in Lagos. All the security agencies operated from Lagos.

“Every facility and infrastructure for economic development was

in Lagos. He didn’t build them. Asiwaju did not invite or introduce or bring to Lagos any serious foreign or domestic investor and these revenues we are talking about that they claimed he generated, it’s just that the previous governments didn’t have the infrastructure in collecting them,” he opined.

Bwala posited that even the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) that Tinubu’s supporters had always boasted that he increased, did not have much basis, since anyone offered a huge commission on a deal will be motivated to exceed expectations.

“So what he did throughout this period was to collect tax. That’s what they claim by revenue. And

even then, the reason he did that was because the company that was collecting the tax is allegedly traceable to him.

“If you pick a man on the street and you tell him, I want you to collect tax in a given area and your percentage is 30 per cent, he will be optimal, he will be highly effective. This is the summary,” Bwala added.

On the other hand, the Atiku campaign spokesman pointed out that Tinubu was destroying basic democratic principles in Lagos state by ensuring only persons he endorses get any position in the state.

“But let me tell you what he did in Lagos. He attempted to destroy democracy and wanted to introduce what we call monarchical democracy, a democracy that is not reflected by the will and wishes of the people.

depressed.

He maintained that in the past when there were periods of oil boom, Nigerians would ordinarily feel the impact, but noted that under the Buhari administration the reverse has been the case.

“The war between Russia and Ukraine has created an advantage for every country that exports oil because there is an increase in oil price. In fact, it is projected that by this December if the crisis continues, the value of oil per barrel in the international market will be between \$150 a barrel to \$200 a barrel.

“During this period of crisis, Saudi Aramco not only profited, but they posted a profit of \$90 billion from which they put some in their stakes in the US, and some they deployed back to their economy. Nigeria made profits, they have not been able to tell us what they did with it,” he lamented.

Bwala stated that when he recently challenged the spokesperson of the All Progressives Congress (APC) over the issue, his excuse was that that the more profit Nigeria is making out of the sale of the oil, the more responsibilities it has to take care of.

“That is called irresponsibility. So I ask the question, is it a curse to enjoy oil boom? Because in the 70s, when we had oil boom, you saw what Nigeria did with the oil? The simple answer to that is the irresponsibility of the government in not dealing with the removal of subsidy, because they are actually paying some few individuals in Nigeria with the subsidy instead of channelling these funds to productive areas of the economy,” he added.

Alleging that most of the social investment funds disbursed by the current government end in private pockets, he wondered why there was no data on who is getting what under the scheme.

He added that it is the reason the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has refused to believe that government has no money to meet their demands.

“The National Assembly committee summoned these individuals managing the funds because of the volume of amounts that they claimed to have disbursed. When they came, they couldn’t produce data.

WITH 177 DAYS TO PRESIDENTIAL POLL, RACE STILL TOO CLOSE TO CALL

movement or the NNPP incursion does to either of them. It is also expected that the current reading will change once the campaigns start and the pitch in each camp comes to distinct reckoning, preparatory to the presidential run.

Pathway to Their Victories

Atiku Abubakar:

The PDP presidential candidate and former vice-president, has been around for some time, as such, the issues of experience, capacity and competence, do not arise in his case. But standing in the way of what appears his last attempt at the presidency are ‘time and chance’.

Atiku clinched the PDP ticket at a time the southern part of the country unanimously believed the presidency should return to them after President Muhammadu Buhari’s eight years. Although the argument that zoning is strictly a party thing is valid, in addition to the fact that the extrapolation of the time the PDP has spent in power does not actually cancel it out of the race; the south remains unhappy with an Atiku candidacy.

To that extent, the PDP candidate, will among other things, do more than he is currently doing to pacify the south and also assure the zone they would not be relegated in the scheme of things. These assurances must not only speak to his credibility and integrity, but must be such that the angry south can vouch for, to be able to earn their trust. If Atiku

is able to sincerely pacify the south and they were truly pacified, then, the election might be his to lose.

Bola Tinubu:

It is common knowledge that the candidate of the APC, Bola Tinubu, comes to the race with personality baggage. But that is not what is standing in his way. First, Tinubu must wean himself of the entitlement mentality that, “emi lo kan”. It is too narcissistic. The Nigerian presidency is not an exclusive preserve of any individual or group of persons. That assertion is already considered offensive in many quarters.

Much as his handlers are doing a good job trying to tone down the manner in which it was said and fast converting it into some sort of joke, there must be a conscious effort on his part as the person, who in the fit of anger, introduced those words into the political lexicon of the country, albeit in the Yoruba language, to bring closure to the offensive understanding of it.

But, more importantly, his preference for a Muslim-Muslim ticket, has yet to be well defended. The position that he preferred same faith ticket on the strength of capacity and competence, is even the more insensitive to the Northern Christians in particular, and the Christian community in general. That was a poor ground for making a choice that many consider insensitive to the mood of the nation and her current realities.

Another equally crucial path to victory for Tinubu and compulsorily too, is the need to heal the party across the states of the federation and achieve one house before the election. The APC family nationwide is in crisis and disarray, the reason the party is witnessing impossible defections almost every day. People are hurting. Former governors are battling their successors, while a majority of the National Assembly members, who were not returned are so bitter that many of them had deliberately stayed back to undo the party. He needs to move round quickly, close ranks and ensure everyone heals before the elections. It is key for him. APC is not one at the moment.

Lastly, the APC brand is in tatters at the moment. The first man, who drove the vehicle is almost grounding it. The party needs serious image laundering. Yes, the Buhari administration has done a lot in terms of infrastructure development, but what are these with growing insecurity, terrible economy and daily increasing institutional corruption? The platform needs to be salvaged and above all, Tinubu cannot run away from the Buhari brand. The more he does that, the more things will get worse. He must inherit it, explain their challenges and offer hope, at the very least. It is the way to go.

Peter Obi:

Away from the noise of the OBIdients cascading the political

firmament of the country, the reality of the fact is that Obi is not a known quantity in many parts of the rural Nigeria, apart from a few city centres, where the social media savvy Nigerians are able to cause havoc from the their keyboards. Politics – national politics – goes beyond that; it rests solely on structure – structure that is tested over time and can withstand a whirlwind of unintended occurrences.

Interestingly, for Obi, and a positive turn of events, Nigerians, both home and abroad, had resolved to do crowdfunding for him, proposing to raise some \$150 million and N100 billion for his campaigns. If this was realised, all that the LP candidate and his team need to do is to properly coordinate, setup structures across the over 8,809 wards in the country and ready to also man the over 119,973 polling units in the country.

This is not a child’s play and requires working almost endlessly and round the clock to achieve. Otherwise, Obi is not a name recognised in the rural areas – major vote churning parts of the country, which is what distinguishes a regional or state election from a federal exercise. The OBIdients should not be deceived by their scanty crowding in a few places and assume that to be a form of popularity test. After all, their movement is a child’s play when compared to Buhari’s, preparatory to the 2015 elections.



2023 BUDGET STAKEHOLDERS’ CONSULTATIVE MEETING...

L-R: Acting Governor of Oyo State, Bayo Lawal; Secretary to the State Government, Mrs. Olubamiwo Adeosun; Head of Service, Mrs. Alolade Agboola and Director General, Bureau of Public Procurement, Ms. Tara Adefope, during the year 2023 Budget stakeholders consultative meeting held at International Conference Centre, University of Ibadan

Okada Ban: Defaulting Riders, Passengers Risk Three Years Imprisonment, Lagos Warns

Segun James

The Lagos State government has reaffirmed that its order on the ban of commercial motorcyclists, popularly referred to as okada in 10 local government areas of the state which takes effect from today stands.

The State Commissioner for Transportation, Dr. Frederic Oladeinde who said this yesterday, restated the readiness of the government to prosecute defaulters in line with the provision of Section 46, sub-section 1, 2 & 3 of the Transport Sector Reform Law (TSRL), 2018 of the state.

He said while the enforcement of the second phase ban commences today, the government was poised to prosecute and jail, upon conviction, both the rider and passenger who are liable to three years in imprisonment.

The Commissioner said the state government has made available alternative means of transportation such as the First and Last Mile Bus Transport Scheme, the BRT Scheme, and the Lagos e-hailing taxi Scheme as a means of being sensitive to the yearnings of the citizenry.

Oladeinde reiterated that the

Ministerial Committee on okada had re-emphasised the need for total compliance with the okada ban as the commencement begins.

According to him, "For the purpose of emphasis and clarification, the state government has extended the ban of okada operations to the following Local Governments and Local Council Development Areas in a bid to further promote and ensure the safety and security of lives and properties in the state

"As a responsive government, we are not leaving the affected passengers who patronise these okadas stranded without any viable means of transportation, that is why we have made available alternative and sustainable means of transportation such as the First and Last Mile Bus Transport Scheme, the BRT Scheme, the Lagos e-hailing taxi Scheme (LAGRIDE) and other acceptable modes of transportation to go about their daily activities.

"As for the riders, we have also made available existing interventions aimed at empowering citizens as an alternative means of livelihood.

"These interventions are coordinated by the following MDAs:

Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA); (vocational training) Ministry of Wealth Creations and Employment; (internship programmes), Office of Civic Engagement; Office of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) (Loan for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs, Lagos Economic Acceleration Programme "LEAP");

Ministry of Agriculture."

The government two weeks ago announced that okada operation had been banned in four local government areas of Kosofe, Oshodi-Isolo, Somolu and Mushin while the six Local Council Development Areas are Ikosi-Isheri, Agboyi-Ketu, Isolo, Bariga, Odi-Olowo and Ejigbo.

In June, okada operation was banned in six Local Governments

Areas of Ikeja, Surulere, Eti-Osa, Lagos Mainland, Lagos Island, and Apapa with their respective nine Local Council Development Areas (LCDAs) and all major bridges and highways in the State.

Members of the Motorcycle Operators Association of Lagos State (MOALS) had on Monday stormed Lagos' seat of power, Alausa, urging the state Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu to

reconsider the recent decision to effect the ban on okada operation in some parts of the state.

Leading the protest, Tijani Pekins MOALS Lagos State Zone C. Chairman, had appealed to the state government to engage the association and work out modalities to save millions of members who according to him their livelihoods would be grossly affected by the enforcement of the ban.

Rehabilitation Work on Tollgate Section of Lagos-Abeokuta to Be Completed in Three Weeks, Abiodun Assures

Commuters plying the ever busy toll gate section of the Lagos-Abeokuta road in Ado-Odo-Ota Local Government area of the state would soon heave a sigh of relief as the toll-gate stretch of the road would be completed in the next three weeks.

The Ogun State governor, Dapo Abiodun made this known during an on-the-spot assessment of the ongoing rehabilitation work at some sections of the road.

Abiodun had announced that rehabilitation of some bad portions of the express road, grouped into

five sections would be awarded for rehabilitation.

Speaking during the visit, the governor noted that the road would be rehabilitated to make life more suitable for the people.

"From toll gate to underneath the bridge, I am very confident that between two to three weeks, it would have completed the stretch of the road from Toll-Gate to the bridge.

"The last time I was here, I promised that this road will be reconstructed within two weeks and I have come back today to

ensure that the promise we made to them has been kept.

"I also inspected the Lagos-Ota-Abeokuta road, starting from the old tollgate section, which is completely nonexistent, it failed. I have since awarded the contract for sectional rehabilitation of that road, all the way to Ewekoro. Work has started. I am not happy with the speed of work, I have called the contractor, he will double up from tomorrow.

"The road to Ijoko-Alagbole, we have divided it into five sections, the road will be reconstructed in sections. Presently, we will do

between two to three sections at the same time," he said.

Abiodun, however, disclosed that transformers would be given to communities within the local government to solve the issues they have with lack of electricity, adding that the state owned road maintenance team would immediately begin palliative works on roads in the local government.

"For those areas without electricity, I have called the local government, the CDC and CDA, I will release between fifteen to twenty transformers for them.

AYU: THOSE CALLING FOR MY SACKING ARE CHILDREN

of the southern members of the party after all. According to the PDP constitution, if he leaves office, another northerner, Deputy National Chairman, North, Ambassador Umar Damagum, would take over.

Despite the internal misgivings, PDP revved up activities ahead of the commencement of the 2023 presidential election campaign. The party's National Working Committee (NWC) had since Tuesday been engaged in lengthy meetings to try to foreclose possible obstacles to a smooth electioneering.

In Makurdi, Benue State Governor Samuel Ortom, spoke on his relationship with his Rivers State counterpart, Nyesom Wike, saying he has proven to be a friend indeed.

Speaking with the BBC Hausa Service, Ayu characterised persons calling for his removal as "children", saying, "When we started PDP, these children were not around. They are children who do not know why we formed the party. We will not allow any individual to destabilise our party."

He added, "I was voted as PDP Chairman for a four-year tenure and I'm yet to complete a year. Atiku's victory doesn't affect the chairman's

position. I won my election based on our party's constitution.

"I didn't commit any offence. I'm only reforming the party, so I'm not bothered with all the noises. I know I'm doing my work and I didn't steal any money, so I see no reason for all these talks."

Wike had led a campaign for Ayu's resignation or removal from office after losing the PDP presidential primary, which he believed he was poised to win, but for a last minute withdrawal in favour of Atiku Abubakar by Sokoto State Governor Aminu Tambuwal. The Rivers State governor felt the outcome of the PDP presidential primary was the product of a pre-planned conspiracy against him that was supervised by the national chairman.

The disagreements had seemed to worsen after the governor of Delta State, Ifeanyi Okowa, emerged vice presidential candidate. This further enraged Wike and tended to embolden other voices accusing PDP of lopsidedness in favour of the north, and against the south.

However, ahead of the takeoff of campaigns for next year's general election, PDP upped efforts to mend

its divisions.

A camp sympathetic to Wike had called for the sack of the national chairman and his replacement by someone from the South-west.

But the PDP constitution says if Ayu is relieved of his job, it is the deputy national chairman from the North-east, Damagum, that will succeed him. So his removal would not solve the allegation of one-sidedness of the offices in the NEC.

At the meeting last week in London between Atiku and Wike, the Rivers State governor's loyalists called for Ayu's sacking. They wanted him to be replaced with a loyal member from the Wike group, most likely former Ondo State Governor Olusegun Mimiko.

The party does not seem prepared to accept such demands and might likely call the bluff of the Wike camp. The marathon NEC meetings, which started on Tuesday, continued yesterday, as NWC tried to find a lasting solution to PDP's internal problems.

A source told THISDAY that Ayu's sacking was ruled out, as it only pandered to the wish of one man.

The source said, "Much as it is true that the leadership of the party is currently structured against the south, it is not deliberate. It would be fundamentally difficult to sack the national chairman at the moment. "But something could be done to ensure that the Wike camp has their way on who will lead the presidential campaign and ensure that the camp of Wike is adequately represented."

Two members of the party are being pencilled in to lead the PDP presidential campaign

A source said, "Ordinarily, the presidential campaign was to be led by the governor of Sokoto State, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal. But the Wike camp opposed him as Director General of the party's presidential campaign. The Wike camp wants former Senate President Bukola Saraki to lead the presidential campaign.

"They argued that both Ayu and Tambuwal could not be trusted to represent their interest, because of the roles they played during and after the PDP presidential convention."

It was gathered that the ongoing series of meetings by the party's NEC were focused on how to

manage the crisis.

"Between Wednesday and early next week, there must be a national caucus and NEC meeting, where the issues involved will be trashed out for the party to move forward," the source said.

Meanwhile, Ortom, who spoke during an interview, also reacted to Miyetti Allah's claim that he had neglected his responsibilities and become an errand boy for Wike. The Benue State governor said his critics were pained by the good relationship he enjoyed with the Rivers State governor. He stressed that Wike had proved to be a good friend in his solidarity with Benue State when the Miyetti Allah people, allegedly, killed innocent indigenes of the state.

Ortom stated, "My relationship with Wike pains them. You know your true friend, when you are in distress. When the same Miyetti Allah came with their people and attacked and killed our people, Wike came here with stakeholders from Rivers State.

"I was not close to Wike before. We disagreed on a number of things. I looked at it and said this is somebody that can be a friend, and

we are working together. Nobody will stop me from being friends with Governor Wike.

"We speak to ourselves frankly. He is not happy with what is happening in the country today, and nobody is happy about this, so we are on the same page. Birds of the same feather flock together. He has spoken to condemn this administration and what Miyetti Allah is doing.

"He followed us in Benue and established the law prohibiting open grazing in Rivers State. They are annoyed, because I have taken the lead in guiding people. I know that some states are already asking me about the process of establishing the Community Volunteers Guard, which they will adopt. Very soon, you will see it.

"If the federal government had listened to us, because the security men are doing their best, but they lack capacity, manpower, equipment, training and funding, they do not have it. We have been talking about restructuring and trying to have state police for a long time. The federal government does not want it. They want to control the security at the centre so they will do what they want."



PRESS CONFERENCE ON A DEPOWA...

L- R: National President NAFOWA, Mrs Olubunmi Amoo, National President NAOWA, Hajia Salamatullah, President DEPOWA, Barr. Vickie Irabor, during a press conference on a DEPOWA - powered Armed forces PTSD center in Abuja... recently

PHOTO: AYO AJAYI.

2023: Court Asked to Restrain NNPP, Kwankwaso, VP from Participating in Presidential Poll

Alex Enumah in Abuja

A Federal High Court in Abuja has been asked to restrain the candidate of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso, and his vice, Bishop Isaac Idohosa, from participating in the 2023 presidential election over alleged unlawful

nomination.

The court was further asked to restrain the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from including the NNPP in the ballot for the 2023 presidential election on the grounds that the party failed to submit names of its presidential and vice presidential candidates for the said election within the time

allowed by law.

The suit filed by the Action Alliance (AA) has INEC, NNPP, Kwankwaso, and Idohosa as 1st to 4th defendants, respectively.

The plaintiff in the suit dated August 15 claimed that NNPP and its presidential and vice presidential candidates could not be on the ballot in the 2023 presidential poll,

having not complied with the law.

The plaintiff, in the suit filed on his behalf by his lawyer, Mr Ukpai Ukairo, claimed that NNPP was pressurising INEC to enlist the party and its presidential and vice presidential candidates in the ballot for the 2023 presidential election, despite admitting that it did not send the names of Kwankwaso and

Idohosa to INEC for uploading and publication in line with the law.

The plaintiff said "unless restrained" by the court "INEC will accept the nomination of the 3rd and 4th defendants as presidential and vice presidential candidates of the 2nd defendants in the 2023 general election."

It, therefore, sought a declaration

of the court that INEC lacked lawful power to list Kwankwaso and Idohosa as presidential and vice presidential candidates of NNPP in the 2023 election, because NNPP did not submit their names as candidates in the said election "at the date of close of nomination specified by the Electoral Act, 2022".

Among the issues for determination was whether INEC was entitled under the Electoral Act to list Kwankwaso and Idohosa as candidates of the NNPP in the 2023 poll, "having ascertained that the NNPP did not submit their names at the close of nomination".

Plaintiff submitted that if the answer to the question raised was no, can INEC be restrained from entering the NNPP in the ballot as a political party?

Meanwhile, Justice Emeka Nwite of the Federal High Court, Abuja, fixed September 6 for hearing of the originating summons.

Court to Hear Wike's Suit against Atiku September 14

●PDP presidential candidate, Tambuwal, others seek dismissal of suit

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Justice Ahmed Mohammed of a Federal High Court, Abuja, has fixed September 14 for hearing in a suit challenging the emergence of Alhaji Atiku Abubakar as presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 general election.

The suit, which has the Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike and one Newgent Ekamon as plaintiffs is seeking the disqualification of Atiku as standard bearer of the PDP on the grounds of alleged irregularities in the conduct of the May 28 and 29 presidential primary that produced Atiku as PDP's candidate.

Although Wike has since distanced himself from the court action, in the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/782/2022, the plaintiffs placed eight issues for determina-

tion before the court, including whether the purported transfer of Tambuwal's votes to Atiku by the PDP was illegal and void.

Defendants in the suit are PDP, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Atiku Abubakar and Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal as 1st to 4th respectively.

But the defendants, in their response, have asked the court to dismiss the suit for being frivolous, baseless, unwarranted and unknown to law.

PDP, Atiku and Tambuwal predicated their objections on four cardinal grounds, amongst which were that the instant suit as filed was unknown to law and not cognizable under a pre-election matter.

In the suit filed on their behalf by Mr Ayo Ajibade, SAN, the three respondents averred that

the first plaintiff, Ekamon, having not participated in the primary election conducted by the PDP lacked the requisite locus standi to institute this suit.

Atiku PDP and Tambuwal further stated that the suit as brought by the applicants did not fall within the purview of Section 84 of the Electoral Act, as such did not qualify as a pre-election dispute.

The fourth ground was that the instant suit was not initiated by due process of the law and therefore sought order of the court striking out or dismissing the suit in its entirety for want of jurisdiction.

In the Originating Summons, the plaintiffs were asking the court to determine if Tambuwal lost his claim to votes the moment he stepped down for Atiku.

They asked the court to

determine whether Tambuwal, "having stepped down during the primaries, ought to lose his votes."

Wike and Ekamon argued that should these issues be determined in their favour, the court should grant their reliefs, including a

declaration that the purported transfer of Tambuwal's votes to Atiku be declared null and void.

They further sought a declaration that the PDP acted negligently and in bad faith by assigning the Sokoto governor's votes to Atiku at the primary.

INEC Expresses Reservation over Observers' Late Submission of Election Reports

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), yesterday, expressed reservations over the late submission of observer groups' reports on Ekiti and Osun governorship polls. INEC National Commissioner in charge of Election and Party Monitoring Committee (EPMC), Mr Sam Olumekun, said this in Abuja at a post-election workshop on Ekiti and Osun governorship elections with accredited observer groups.

Olumekun, represented by INEC Director, Voter Education and Publicity, Mr Victor Aluko, said 85 out of the 88 accredited groups for the election completed their accreditation process and deployed about 9,830 field observers for both

states elections.

He said, "Out of the 88 accredited groups, only 25 reports have been received for Ekiti, while only 27 groups have submitted for Osun election so far."

"Also, response rate has been low on the synopsis form for election observation, which was supposed to have been received by the commission within 72 hours after announcement of results of election."

"For Ekiti, only 26 groups responded, while only 25 groups responded for Osun election. This, indeed, is less than satisfactory."

Olumekun added that another serious issue with election observation, which had been of concern to the commission, was the integrity in election observation.

He said while there were a number of trustworthy, honest, objective, hardworking and credible observer groups that had contributed greatly to efforts to deepen Nigeria democracy and the electoral process, some cared less about integrity.

The INEC commissioner stated, "Over the years, there are still others who have continued to be unserious about election observation and have cared less about integrity. We have evidence of observer groups engaged in plagiarism in their reports. We observed a number of groups submitting similar reports."

"The commission is concerned with this development and new measures will soon be unveiled to manage such elements within the election observation family."

Alleged Plan to Privatisise Health Institutions Suicidal, NLC Tells FG

●Demands 15% budgetary provision for health sector

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) yesterday opposed alleged plan to privatise healthcare institutions in the country.

The NLC said it "would be tantamount to mass suicide to attempt to privatise public healthcare in Nigeria."

The NLC stated this in a position paper submitted to the federal government taskforce on healthcare reform headed by the Vice President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo.

NLC President, Ayuba Wabba said government should halt any plan to privatise healthcare institutions, saying it would compromise the government's responsibility to provide health services to the citizens.

It, however, recommended a national development reform of the public financial management system aimed at strengthening budget design, allocation, and spending.

It also demanded that government should increase funding to health sector to at least 15 per cent in line with Abuja Declaration on Health starting with annual increment of two per cent.

While justifying its position, the NLC stated that that Article

25 of the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948) described Healthcare as a fundamental human right which is indispensable to the enjoyment of other rights.

In addition, the NLC said the right to effective and affordable healthcare was further reinforced in the International Covenant on Social Economic and Cultural Rights (CSECR), a multilateral treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16th December 1966.

It further noted that Article 12 of the CSECR recognised the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

In a "country where the greater percent of her citizens are living below poverty line," the NLC insisted that privatising healthcare would further worsen their situation, and would put a nail to the government realising its targets on universal health coverage.

The congress also said labour would like to work with the government in the design and implementation of a public private participation in the health services delivery in such a way that the workers and their families are able to access and afford available health

care service from primary to tertiary health care with human dignity.

"We will therefore need to examine the existing National Health Act and other policies and programs to enable us steer towards solutions that are workable with implementation strategies."

"It would be tantamount to mass suicide to attempt to privatise public healthcare in Nigeria especially in light of our foregoing submissions. We therefore demand a halt to the idea of a health sector reform that allows for free entry and exit into the health sector yet compromising government's responsibility to provide health services to its citizens and especially the 87 million Nigerians who are living under \$2 per day," it said.

NLC said budgeting more funds for upgrade of the Tertiary Healthcare Sub-sector would enable it carry out the function of providing healthcare, producing skilled personnel, and carrying out research that can add social and economic value to Nigeria.

The labour movement suggested an overhaul the National Health Insurance Scheme to expand the coverage and to capture more people especially women in the informal sector and all retirees above the age of 60 years and above.



LAGOS EDUCATION SUMMIT 2022...

L-R; Lagos State Commissioner for Education, Mrs Folasade Adefisayo; Guest Speaker, Olori Atuwatse; Finnish Ambassador for Education, Marjaana Sall; and other stakeholder; during the Lagos State Education Summit 2022 in Lagos...yesterday

Wike: Why Buhari Must Not Interfere in 2023 Elections

●Rivers governor challenges Makarfi to deliver Kaduna to PDP in 2023 elections

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Rivers State Governor, Mr. Nyesom Wike has called on President Muhammadu Buhari to abide by his promise to Nigerians that he would not interfere in the 2023 general elections across the nation. The Rivers State governor predicted that if the president renege on his pledge not to interfere with the conduct of the elections, the All Progressives Congress (APC) would be destroyed. Wike said this yesterday, during the flag-off of construction work of Igwuruta internal roads in Ikwerre Local Government Area of the State, performed by Dr. Okezie

Ikpeazu. He urged president to ensure he leaves an enduring legacy of conducting free and fair election. "I thank Mr. President that he wants to leave a legacy of conducting a free and fair election," he added. The governor recalled that the APC-led federal government through the immediate past Minister of Transportation, Chibuike Amaechi, allegedly deployed the Nigerian Army to rig the 2019 general elections in Rivers State, which according to him was resisted by the people. He said: "Thank God Mr. President for saying that you will

not interfere or intimidate anybody. That means your party has no way to win." Wike also expressed doubt concerning the promise made by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to deliver a better election to Nigerians. "My problem is INEC, whether they will do what they said they will do. They are making promises now. I don't know whether they will keep to it. If INEC will keep to the promises that Nigeria will get a better election, I will be so happy. "Everybody will see with their eyes; Abuja does not vote. It is

the people here that will vote." Wike stressed the need for those seeking votes from Rivers electorate to courageously tell them what they will eventually benefits from such electoral support. "So, if you have given to Adamawa, you have given to Benue, you have given to Delta, would you not give Rivers? Is it just to collect our votes?" he asked. The governor described as unfortunate the inability of some former military generals to use their contacts with the Central Intelligence Agency of America (CIA) to solve the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. Wike maintained that such generals should have been more concerned about the insecurity situation in the country, and resolve to use their CIA contacts to restoring peace across the country, instead of threatening him and his friends to succumb to their biddings. "Some people threatened that they are former generals, they are close to the CIA in America and they can deal with us. I said listened, no problem. If you are close to America CIA, why don't you use it to solve Boko Haram

problem. Is it on my body you'll use it? "Nigeria has a serious problem and you are close to CIA, you know them as former generals, why not use that contact and solve Nigeria's problem. "You want to use it to threaten me. Who are you that I should come and do your biddings? I say no to that. I will do the biddings of Nigerians not the biddings of few people who believe that if they are not there, it should be their children," he added. Performing the flag-off, the governor of Abia State, Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu, noted the unparalleled leadership style and courage that Wike had wielded in providing enduring infrastructure for Rivers people. Ikpeazu aligned with such determination and enthused that as leaders, they would continue to provide democratic dividends to people of their various states till the of their tenure in 2023. Meanwhile, Wike has slammed the former governor of Kaduna State, Ahmed Makarfi for making some unfavorable statement against his personality on a national

television. Wilke advised the former Kaduna governor and someone he described as his "supposed friend" to ensure he delivers the party in the 2023 general elections to Kaduna. The Rivers State Governor gave the advice Tuesday, during the inauguration of the sand-filled area and estate layout in Ogbum-Nu-Abali, Port Harcourt, performed by Enugu State governor, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi. Wike further advised that Makarfi should focus on the forth coming 2023 general election and how he would ensure victory for the PDP in Kaduna State, instead of joining to say uncanny things about him. "Take it upon yourself that Kaduna falls to PDP. I don't want to hear excuses that they rigged election or they didn't rig election. That is what I've told everybody. In Kano, make sure PDP wins. In Niger, make PDP wins, in Jigawa, make sure PDP wins. If you win, then see whether PDP wins here or not. Its operation deliver your State. Don't use anybody's state to add up," he explained.

Routine Immunisation: Dangote Foundation, Kano, UNICEF, Billgate Renew MoU

Ibrahim Shuaibu in Kano

The Aliko Dangote Foundation, in collaboration with Kano State Government, UNICEF and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on routine immunisation (RI) in the state. The MoU was first signed in 2012, when Aliko Dangote Foundation, Kano State Government and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation decided to work towards improvement of health of women and children in Kano, second most populous state in the country. Appraising the success of the first MoU, the three parties also signed a second addendum in 2017, in a bid to improve on the goal earlier achieved. However, the third Health MoU signing, this time around, witnessed the involvement of UNICEF as the fourth participating party in the agreement. Speaking shortly before the official signing at Kano, yesterday, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Aliko Dangote Foundation, Zouera Yousefou, congratulated the Kano State government for achieving the objectives of the addendum II. Yousefou commended the state government for its efforts to sustain funding for all RI activities, thereby increasing the state's RI budget by 22 percent over the past 6 years, despite challenges to the fiscal space. The MD/CEO said with the signing of the third addendum, it was important to note that while the parties have made a lot of progress together, they remained far from achieving the target maternal and

child health outcomes. "We need to ensure that we use the lessons learnt from the prior years to develop and effectively execute better-suited strategies that ensure we fast-track progress and ultimately achieve the Health MoU addendum III's targets. "One of such area of improvement is the need to devolve the programme's oversight to lower levels and ensure LGA health teams are responsible for driving implementation across the wards in their LGA. "We need to ensure that our health teams at LGA and Ward levels have the autonomy and resources they need to deliver within their specific contexts while holding them accountable for the results," she said. Yousefou also urged traditional rulers to ensure the people utilize essential health services, including immunisation, nutrition and maternal and reproductive health services. The MD/CEO applauded efforts of the Kano State government and encouraged the administration to continue to improve its performance by ensuring timely release of funds for both RI and PHC activities. She restates the commitment of the Aliko Dangote Foundation in supporting Kano in ensuring all residents live long and healthy lives. In his remarks, the Governor of Kano State, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, said the state had achieved significant milestones in healthcare services to the citizenry. Ganduje noted that signing of the health MoU addendum III was a testimony to the commitment of the state towards improvement of

healthcare services. Speaking earlier, the Country Director, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Jeremie Zoungwana expressed delight to witness the signing of the MoU. Meanwhile, the Northern Governors Forum has described Kukah as a selfless, honest and courageous man of God that has remained devoted to his calling as a servant in the Lord's vineyard and the society at large. Chairman of the Forum, Lalong, who was felicitating with the famous Bishop on the occasion of his 70th birthday, also described Kukah as a man who has always been driven by the passion to speak against injustice, oppression and other actions that negate principles of God and his love to humanity. In a statement by Lalong's media aid, Simon Macham, the Northern Governors said they acknowledged his sincere contributions to the efforts in addressing Nigeria's challenges in education, justice administration, poverty eradication, peaceful co-existence, youth empowerment, and national unity through his consistent advocacy at various fora. The governors specifically commended the role Bishop Kukah has played in advancing Nigeria's democracy and promoting credible, violence-free and acceptable elections as Convener of the National Peace Committee headed by Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, as well as steering national discourse and

AT KUKAH'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION, JONATHAN URGES NIGERIANS TO BE VIGILANT TO SAVE DEMOCRACY

You're Selfless, Honest and Courageous, Northern Governors Tell Kukah engagement through his foundation, The Kukah Centre. The governors said the passion and determination of Bishop Kukah to reach out to the youths and speak to them about their role as future leaders of the country has inspired many of them to look beyond the current challenges and work towards building a better nation. While wishing him many more years of God's blessings, good health and protection, Lalong said the Northern governors and Nigeria at large shall continue to benefit from his wealth of knowledge, experience and wise counsel, urging him never to relent in speaking truth to power whenever the situation arises. **Fayemi, Dogara Celebrate Kukah** In a related development, Fayemi also congratulated Kukah on his 70th birthday, describing his contributions to national development as outstanding. The governor in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary Yinka Oyebo, yesterday, described Kukah as a special breed and a gift to Nigeria and humanity. The governor said Bishop Kukah has been a voice for the vulnerable and the less privileged; adding that the priest has an irrevocable commitment to fighting injustice and human right violations. The chairman of the Nigerian

Governors Forum (NGF), hailed Kukah for his patriotism which he said was evident in his contributions to national discourse; stressing that the priest cum scholar has never shy away from speaking truth to power. Eulogising Kukah's virtues of integrity, hard work, resilience and humility; Fayemi said the attributes endeared the priest to the people across tribes and faiths in Nigeria. "Bishop Kukah embodies humility, courage, integrity and diligence. His passion for the masses, especially the vulnerable and less privileged is second to none. Such a man can best be described as a special gift of God to his generation. "On this occasion of his 70th birthday, I wish him long life and good health so that he can continue his selfless service to humanity. "On behalf of my wife, the government and the good people of Ekiti State, I congratulate Bishop Kukah and wish him many more years of celebrations," Fayemi said. In a related development, the immediate past Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Yakubu Dogara, in a statement by his Media Aide, Turaki Hassan Adamu, made available to newsmen in Bauchi yesterday, described Bishop Kukah as a philanthropist, leader and man of courage and a crusader for justice. "On behalf of my humble self

and family, I join the global community of friends, colleagues, and millions of followers, admirers and supporters alike to rejoice with and celebrate our Leader and father in the faith, Bishop Mathew Hassan Kukah. "I celebrate your life of service to God and humanity. I celebrate your numerous humanitarian and philanthropic endeavours over the years. I celebrate the courageous leadership you are providing both at the level of the church, the body of Christ and the global community at large. "My Lord, Bishop; without any doubt, you are one of the finest and erudite scholars our generation is blessed with. Your passion for the gospel of liberation which you preach without equivocation, as James H. Cone noted - "is bad news to all oppressors because they have defined their 'freedom' in terms of slavery of others. "You never wavered in your pursuit of a just, free, , inclusive, peaceful and egalitarian society as a crusader for justice who has never shied away from speaking the truth to power in love even when it makes some people uncomfortable. "As you clock 70 glorious years today, I pray that your ink never runs dry. I pray for more divine wisdom. I pray for sound health and above all I pray for divine protection upon you."

NEWS



SUPREME FEEDS DISTRIBUTORS' CONFERENCE...

L-R: Chief Operating Officer, Pandagric Novum Limited, Federico Mendoza; General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Tunji Osoko; Chief Executive Officer, Bruce Spain; and Chief Financial Officer, Andre Van Der Westhuizen, during the Supreme Feeds 2022 Distributors Conference in Abuja. yesterday

Presidency: Ortom Should Name Who Claimed Buhari Ordered Security Not to Contain Criminal Herdsmen

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The Presidency, yesterday, formally reacted to claims by Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, that top security

personnel claimed President Muhammadu Buhari directed them not to move against criminal Fulani herdsmen causing violence.

Ortom had in a recent

interview claimed that high ranking security personnel had informed him personally that President Buhari had ordered security forces not to move against the Fulani herdsmen responsible for recent violence.

Presidential spokesman,

Mallam Garba Shehu, in a release, described the claims as patently untrue, stressing that, "If he is as brave as he claims to be, let him name names. Let him name the military personnel, who told him this story or forever shut up."

According to the Presidency, it was disappointing that Ortom, who in the same interview, described himself as a child of God, who believed in being lawful and respected the Nigerian constitution, felt the need to spread such a

divisive lie.

"In a period of heightened insecurity, our politicians should be working to bring us closer together, not risking further violence by dishonestly seeking to further divide us along ethnic or religious lines.

DSS Denies Abducting Innocent Citizens

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Department of State Security (DSS) yesterday said that contrary to reports it was not in the habit of abducting innocent citizens. There were recent reports citing human rights group, Amnesty International's contention that the DSS abducts innocent citizens under the Buhari administration.

But a statement, the agency denied any such occurrence, saying "it does not abduct Nigerians".

"As part of its enforcement activities, the DSS arrests when, where and if necessary. This is evidently carried out in line with tenets of democratic ideals. At no time has the agency embarked

on its actions without following laid down procedures in respect of obtaining warrants of arrest or orders for detention from competent legal authorities. The claim of abduction or use of enforced disappearances is an absolute lie and a make-up narrative designed to bring the Service to disrepute", it said.

The statement affirmed that the DSS remained law abiding and committed to the protection of citizens and sensitive government installations, insisting that it will continue to discharge its mandate of intelligence gathering and timely dissemination of same to relevant action agencies and stakeholders.

NSCDC Issues Operating Licences to 20 Private Guard Companies

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), has issued operating licences to 20 Private Guard Companies (PGCs), and warned against the bearing or use of arms.

NSCDC Commandant General, Ahmed Audi, in Abuja yesterday presented the licences with a stern

warning. According to him, the licences were issued because they met with the standard of operations after several procedures and scrutiny.

"The position you occupy is very central and germane to the existence of this country as long as security is concerned.

"This operating licence is not for business profits alone but an

opportunity for you to contribute your quota to security," he said.

He charged PGCs to give timely, credible and reliable intelligence, security reports to the corps for further actions.

"You must turn in intelligence security reports on monthly basis but very important reports should be turned in immediately.

"Report to the corps all

suspicious activities and movements around you.

"No service has monopoly of knowledge to tackle the insecurity the country is currently facing as we must all come together," he said.

He warned that the corps would not hesitate to tackle PGCs who deviated from the standard of operations.

21-year-old Arrested for Stealing Boss' Car

Rebecca Ejifoma

Operatives of the Lagos Rapid Response Squad (RRS) have arrested 21-year-old Temple Samuel for stealing his boss' Lexus ES 330 car.

The suspect was arrested in the Ogba area of the state with three others including Benjamin Bassey aged 32, Chukwuemeka Okorie aged 29, and Joshua Agboche aged 37.

They were said to have conspired with the prime suspect to sell the car. The investigation, according to the

police Spokesman, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, revealed that the suspect who worked in his boss' car wash at Egbeda drove the car away at midnight.

Samuel was said to have taken alongside his boss' iPhone X and iPhone 13 to Bassey's residence in Ikeja.

"He equally fraudulently transferred N75,000 from his boss' account," Hundeyin added.

The spokesman also hinted that the suspect had perfected plans to use the proceeds of the car and other valuables he stole to process his relocation abroad.

Police Parade Suspected Gunrunner in Zamfara

Police in Zamfara paraded a suspected gunrunner yesterday in Gusau. The suspected gunrunner, Sa'idu Lawal, 41, was a lance corporal in the Nigerian Army.

He was arrested on the Abuja-Kaduna Highway in possession of two rifles, a cache of ammunition and eight empty magazines while heading to deliver the items to a

"customer" in Gusau.

Similarly, the Police Command in Katsina State arrested 19 suspected armed robbers and also recovered 13 vehicles suspected to have been stolen by them.

Police spokesman in Zamfara, SP Mohammed Shehu, told newsmen that Lawal was notorious kidnapper, armed robber and a gunrunner.

He said one AK-47 rifle, one AK-49 rifle, 200 rounds of 7.6mm live ammunition, 501 rounds of 7.62x51mm ammunition and eight empty magazines were recovered from Lawal.

SP Shehu told newsmen that Lawal was intercepted in a Pontiac Vibe vehicle with Lagos registration number KRD 686 CY

on the Abuja-Kaduna Highway on his way to Zamfara.

"During interrogation, the suspect confessed that he was conveying the exhibits from Loko Local Government Area of Nasarawa State to his customer, one Dogo Hanza, in Bacha village in Tsafe Local Government Area of Zamfara.

Irele Royal Tussle: Akeredolu Calls for Arrest of Ademola Idowu

Fidelis David in Akure

Ondo State Governor, Mr Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN), yesterday called for the arrest and prosecution of one Mr. Ademola Idowu Oloworiyibi for parading himself as the Olofun of Irele, in Irele Local Government Area of the State.

In a letter addressed to the Commissioner of Police in the State and signed by the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Olugbenga Ale, the state government noted that no person has been approved or appointed as the Olofun of Irele kingdom.

The government described the activities of Oloworiyibi

as overreaching and illegal, adding that it is capable of causing disaffection amongst the peace-loving people of the ancient town which consequences can be better imagined.

The letter reads: "Government has noted with deep concern, the activities of one Mr. Ademola Idowu Oloworiyibi, who has

been parading himself as the Olofun of Irele kingdom, in Irele Local Government Area of Ondo State. This impostor has not only impersonated the Olofun of Irele kingdom, he has also arrogated to himself the powers to confer chieftaincy titles on unsuspecting beneficiaries and his lackeys/cohorts.

2023 Budget: Oyo Holds Stakeholders' Consultative Meeting, Lists Achievements

Kemi Olaitan in Ibadan

The Acting Governor of Oyo State, Banister Bayo Lawal, yesterday said the administration of Governor Seyi Makinde, has recorded unprecedented achievements in all sectors.

This is just as he declared that the Makinde-led administration has, in the last three years, operated an open and inclusive governance.

The Acting Governor while speaking at the 2023 Budget Consultative Forum, the usual precursor to the new budget, held at the International Conference Centre, University of Ibadan, added that the state government has been able to maintain a lower recurrent expenditure to capital expenditure ratio, stating that for the first time, the state's 2022 budget had the capital expenditure at 52.97 per cent, more

than its recurrent expenditure.

Lawal, who led top government functionaries and other stakeholders to the state's inclusive budget initiative, explained that the government, out of a total budget of N294.5Billion, injected One Hundred and Fifty-Six Billion, One Hundred and Thirty-Six Thousand, Nine Hundred and Seventy-One Naira (N156,000,136,971.00) into the economy through investments in

infrastructure and ensuring that people have higher purchasing power.

According to him, for the 2022 fiscal year, Oyo State's recurrent expenditure is One Hundred and Thirty-Eight Billion, Five Hundred and Sixteen Million, Three Hundred and Eight Thousand, One Hundred and Thirty-Six Naira (N138,516,308,136.00), which represents 47.3 per cent of the total budget.

Dangote Cement's N1bn Promo Hailed

It was jubilation galore in Port Harcourt yesterday as more Millionaires emerged in the ongoing Dangote Cement Bag of Goodies 3 promo.

Regulators and winners have commended the management of Dangote Cement Plc as more millionaires emerged in the company's ongoing Bag of Goodies 3 Promotion. Speaking during the promo draw in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, representative of the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC), Linda Owhloo-Okoro said her commission has gone through every detail of the promotion and certified it

good for the cement consumers and that her presence was to lend credence to the fact that the promotion is genuine.

She commended the management of Dangote Cement for the transparent manner it was conducting the promotion, saying: "we have followed through since the commencement of the promo, we monitored to see that everything is done according to rules and Dangote Cement has passed all tests.

A Port Harcourt based block moulder, Noah Adefusi, who won the grand prize of N5 million could not contain his joy as he was called to speak on the promo.

Abia APC Guber Candidate, Emenike, Promises to Develop Umuahia

Emmanuel Ugwu-Nwogo in Umuahia

The people of Ibeku have expressed their anger as Umuahia, the capital city of Abia State, has not witnessed any significant improvement under the present administration of Governor Okezie Ikpeazu,

which has just nine months to its expiration.

The anger over the stunted capital city was fully expressed at a meeting of stakeholders from the "four corners of Ibeku" that was held at Nkata Ibeku Umuahia North Local Government.

Convened under the aegis of

Ibeku Constituency Stakeholders Forum, the meeting was used to adopt the Governorship Candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr. Ikechi Emenike, as "Ibeku APC Project."

They tasked Emenike, who holds the title of Onwa n'Agbara Ibeku (the moon that shines on Ibeku), to develop Umuahia to

a befitting status of a capital city.

In their welcome address, which was read by Professor Chris Nwamuo, the stakeholders lamented that apart from underdevelopment of their land which is hosting the Abia capital, the Ibeku people have also "continued to be treated as second class citizens in their land.

NEWSXTRA



FIDELITY BANK GET ALERT PROMO DRAW...
L-R: Monitoring and Enforcement Officer, National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC), Mr. Niyi Adeleke; Deputy Director, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission, Mrs. Susie Onwuka; Divisional Head, Product Development, Fidelity Bank Plc, Mr. Osita Ede; Deputy Director/Zonal Coordinator, NLRC, Mrs. Nkiru Onuzulu; and Head, Savings and Sales, Fidelity Bank Plc, Mr. Ukpai Ibe, at the Fidelity Bank Get Alert in Millions Season 5 Promo grand draw in Lagos... recently ETOPUKUTT

Lagos Records 4,860 Domestic Violence, Rape, Sexual Assault Cases in 10 Months

Segun James

The Lagos State Government has said that the state recorded 4,860 reported cases of domestic violence, rape, sexual assaults

and others in the last 10 months. The Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Moyosore Onigbanjo who disclosed this at a news conference commemorating

Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Month said the figures are for between the period of September 1, 2021, and July 31, 2022.

According to him, there were 2,029 domestic violence cases, 65 rape cases, 40 sexual assault cases,

10 attempts to commit rape, five sexual assaults by penetration, 73 threats to life and 488 other sundry cases such as separation, and neglect, among others.

Onigbanjo also disclosed that the figure included 113 child abuse/physical assault,

194 defilement cases, 15 defilement/molestation by minor to a minor, 105 child labour, abduction neglect and 145 sexual harassment/molestation cases.

The Attorney General added that 1,578 children experienced emotional abuse, even as he

explained that 55 percent of these children had been taken through counselling programmes to ensure they were able to psychologically deal with the events they had witnessed without it having a permanent and negative impact on them.

Minister Seeks Media Support for Govt Policies

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The Minister of State for Transportation, Mr. Ademola Adegoroye, has reiterated the need for media practitioners to play the role of partners in progress with government on policies and programmes aimed at making life better for Nigerians.

Adegoroye, who received some officers of the Transport and Aviation Correspondents Association on a courtesy visit in his office yesterday, said that the Fourth Estate of the realm has a key and patriotic role to play in nation building.

He said that the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Mu'azu Jaji Sambo, and himself have enjoyed a reasonable level of support from the media since their assumption of office, added that sustaining such level of support would be of immense benefit to the ministry.

He opined that it is important for "those of us in government to maintain a productive relationship with those of you in the media because of the crucial duties your profession has bestowed on you to perform. We must continue to be partners in progress for the good of our nation.

Ogun's New Agro Cargo Airport Excites IATA, Others

James Sowole in Abeokuta

The international aviation sector has been upbeat about the scheduled coming on stream in December this year of Ogun State new Agro Cargo Airport, the first of its kind in Africa.

International aviation agencies such as International Air Transport Association, (IATA), an association of airline traders around the world, and local regulatory agencies such as NCAA, NAMA, NIMET and FAAN, have all indicated interest in the new airport because of its strategic location.

The Nigerian Air Force and Nigerian Immigration Service, two

critical components in aviation security and safety, are also not left behind, while the fire station within the airport is nearing completion.

IATA represents 290 airlines in 120 countries and it carries 83 per cent of the world air traffic.

IATA members include the world's leading passenger and cargo airlines.

Explaining the rationale behind the new airport during a recent facility tour with senior editors, the Ogun State Commissioner for Works, Mr Ade Akinsanya, said the Ogun Agro Cargo Airport is a project that will stimulate economic activity around the corridor.

VBank, Autochek Partner on 48-hour Loan Product

Ugo Aliogo

VBank, a foremost digital banking App has formed a partnership with AUTOCHЕК to guarantee underwriting process for customers loan application process to deliver requisite financing to customers within 48hours of loan origination process.

The partnership will create the first auto-loan securitization process in sub-saharan African while improving the overall efficiency of individuals businesses with automated loan process that will ultimately enhance the overall

experience to improve business models, efficiency and cash flow.

Speaking on the partnership, Senior Vice President, West Africa at Autochek, Mayokun Fadeyibi, said: "We are really excited to unveil this game-changing product, which is the result of a long series of conversations between the Autochek and VFD teams.

He explained that they wanted to create a product that would make the most of our combined expertise to deliver real change in how people across Nigeria access financing for their vehicles.

James Emejo in Abuja

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) yesterday disclosed that the country generated a total of N799.10 billion in crude oil sales in the first quarter of the year (Q1 2022).

This was however far less than the N2.38 trillion oil revenue projection for the period, and represented a 28.3

per cent decline from the N1.12 trillion realised in Q4 2021.

This was contained in the CBN Economic Report, First Quarter 2022, which was obtained from the regulator's website.

The bank also said the current fiscal outlook for the near term remained less optimistic as government revenue remains impaired

CBN: FG Misses Oil Revenue Target, Generated N799.10bn in Q1

Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

The Benin Zonal Command of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), said it secured the conviction and sentencing of three internet fraudsters in Edo State.

In another development, operatives of the Abuja Zonal

Command of the EFCC arrested nine suspected internet fraudsters in a sting operation.

The convicts, Osama Abraham Obasohan, Okunnuwa Moses and Osalenlen Celestine, were jailed by Justice M. Itsuelli of the Edo State High Court, Benin City, on Monday, August 29, 2022 after pleading guilty to one-

count separate charge bordering on possession of documents containing false pretence and retention of illegal proceeds of crime.

The charge against Osama Abraham Obasohan reads: "That you Osama Abraham Obasohan sometime between 29 June, 2022 in Edo State within the jurisdiction of

this honourable court did retain the sum of N1,913,00581 knowing that same represent proceeds of your criminal conduct to wit; cybercrime and thereby committed an offence contrary to Section 17(a) of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (Establishment) Act 2004 and punishable under Section 17(b) of the same Act".

PDP Guber Candidate Asks AbdulRazaq to Talk with Kwarans on Live Chat

Hammed Shittu in Ilorin

Gubernatorial Candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party in Kwara State, Alhaji Abdullahi Shuaibu Yaman has challenged the State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazak to talk with Kwarans in live Radio and Television chat rather than making spurious allegations

in guided chat aired in some local radio stations in the state.

Yaman however asked the Governor to speak to Kwarans in live Radio and Television broadcasts as was done by his predecessors rather than wasting the state resources on his media agents.

Governor AbdulRazaq had last weekend met with several young

people and some online publishers where he took them through the journey so far and the focus of his administration to develop the State.

The governor spoke about his many projects, the inspirations behind them, and their benefits for the people and the excerpts of the meeting was aired on some of the local radio stations in Ilorin

for the mass audience on

But, a statement issued in Ilorin yesterday by the PDP governorship candidate signed by his special adviser on media and strategy, Alhaji Wabab Oba, said "the presentation of Governor AbdulRaham to his so-called "online publishers" is full of theories, hypotheses and rhetorics rather than verifiable facts".

2023: Edevbie Heads to S'Court as Omo-Agege, Oborevwo Bicker

Omon-Julius Onabui in Asaba and Sylvester Idowu in Warri

The last may not have been seen of the legal tussle rocking the Delta State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), following Monday's decision of the appellate court in Abuja, setting aside the July 7, 2022 judgment on who is the authentic

and legal party's governorship candidate for the 2023 election.

Olorogun David Edevbie, yesterday, declared his intention to proceed to the Supreme Court to challenge the August 29, 2022 verdict of the Federal Court of Appeal, Abuja upturning the removal of Sheriff Oborevwo as the Delta PDP governorship candidate in the

2023 election and declaring him as the legally qualified gubernatorial candidate of the PDP.

The Edevbie Campaign Organisation, at an expanded meeting yesterday, in Asaba, broke its silence on the judgment of the Court of Appeal in Abuja, which reinstated Sheriff Oborevwo as the Delta State PDP governorship

candidate for next year's general election.

Director-General of the David Edevbie Governorship Campaign Organisation, Chief Clement Otuani, appealed to Edevbie's supporters across the state to remain calm and optimistic about victory as their principal heads for the Supreme Court.

Farmers Condemn Killing of Member in Kogi

Ibrahim Oyewale in Lokoja

Worried by the incessant attacks on the farming communities in Egbe and its environs which has resulted in death of a farmer in Kogi State, the Egbe Concerned Farmers Association (ECFA) has decried the continued

invasion of the villages and destructions of farm land in Egbeland, Yagba West Local Government Area of the state.

Just as the association called on the security agencies, the local and state governments to as matter of urgency save the people of affected communities from further incessant attacks

and subsequent destruction of farmlands.

The Secretary of ECFA, Mr. Dapo Adeyemi, who made this known while speaking chatting with journalists in Lokoja yesterday, lamented that the atrocities of the suspected herdsmen in the area have continued abated

in the last two weeks.

Adeyemi explained that in the last two weeks, there have been violence attacks by herdsmen on Egbe M'ekun and its environs, noting that these have continued unabated and created fears and pandemonium in the area.

Five-star Haaland Nets Second Hat trick in Five Games

PREMIER LEAGUE

Erling Haaland scored his second hat-trick in as many games as rampant Manchester City outclassed newly-promoted Nottingham Forest 6-0 last night.

After his 19-minute three-timer against Crystal Palace at the weekend, there was a comparatively pedestrian 26 between his first and last goals yesterday evening.

Yet if the two games are combined, Haaland scored an incredible six times in an hour given the Norwegian was replaced six minutes before the end of the Palace game. It takes his overall tally for the season to nine.

Joao Cancelo added a fourth when he drove home Bernardo Silva's fine pass across the penalty area before Haaland's strike partner Julian Alvarez took centre stage.

On his full Premier League debut, the Argentine produced a fine finish to beat Dean Henderson after being set up by Riyad Mahrez.

Then, after Kevin de Bruyne had nicked possession inside his own half and burst forward 50 yards, Alvarez picked his spot and finished high into the roof of the Forest net after Mahrez's shot had been deflected into his path.



Erling Haaland...scored his second hat trick as Manchester City hammered Nottingham Forest 6-0 on Wednesday evening

Transfer: Napoli Insist Osimhen Not for Man Utd

Napoli have put an end to speculations that Victor Osimhen could be on his way to Manchester United with Cristiano Ronaldo moving in the opposite direction.

"Cristiano Ronaldo deal? There was absolutely nothing true," said Napoli Sporting Director Giuntoli. "We've good relationship with Jorge Mendes and nothing else."

Transfer expert Fabrizio Romano further reported there is not transfer by Osimhen to Manchester United.

"There will be no movement around Victor Osimhen and Man United before the deadline.

Rumours are considered 'wide of mark', Romano confirmed on his verified twitter page as reported by Scorenigeria.com.ng

Ten Hag, Manchester United manager, speaking to Sky Sports earlier today when asked if Ronaldo was still in his plans following the arrival of Antony from Ajax: "Clear of course; what I just said we need quality players, we need more to cover all the games to keep all the consistency going".

Victor Osimhen's agent, Roberto Calenda, had long shot down the possibility of his player moving to the Premier League.

First National Summit on Golf Begins in Abuja

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

Delegates from about 70 golf clubs and other critical stakeholders from across Nigeria will today begin to chart a new direction for golf in the country at the 1st Nigeria Golf Federation Summit.

The summit scheduled to hold at the Ladi Kwali Hall, Sheraton Hotel, Abuja, ends on Friday. It will explore topical issues that are related to the development and growth of golf in Nigeria.

The President of the Nigeria Golf Federation (NGF), Otunba Olusegun Runsewe, said the outcome of the summit will give a new lease of life to golf in the country.

He added that NGF also intends to use the platform to galvanise the support and understanding

of the golf captains from across the country by moving the game to a new level including youth development programme.

Runsewe said the summit will enable Nigerian golfers to network on the process of integrating Nigerian golfers into the World Handicap System (WHS) which the board of the NGF is initiating through the Royal and Ancient (R&A).

The WHS will allow the handicap of Nigerian golfers that are captured on the system to be recognized in any part of the world.

The Chairman of IBB Board of Trustees, Gen Ibrahim Bata Haruna (rtd), will chair the occasion expected to be graced by Governor of Plateau State, Simon Lalong and the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Mr Sunday Dare.

Emeruwa: NFF Presidency Not a Do-or-Die Affair

●Rolls out plans on how to turnaround Nigeria's football fortunes

Duro Ikazuagbe

Head of Safety and Security Department of the Confederation of Africa Football (CAF), Dr Christian Emeruwa, has declared in Lagos that his quest to become the next president of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) at the September 30 polls in Benin City was not a do-or-die affair.

Speaking at the unveiling of his programme themed "It's Turnaround Time", at a media parley at the Sheraton Hotel in Ikeja, yesterday, Emeruwa stressed that "his ambition is to rebuild the NFF as a world-class, innovative organisation, inspiring a whole nation and every boy and girl to be part of the Nigerian football ecosystem."

"And so, this contest is not a do-or-die affair for me. If am elected, I will strive to improve Nigerian football ball space not just to compete in the continent but to a global level. If not voted, I will return to my CAF post where I am in charge of security and safety affairs of 54 African countries," observed Emeruwa who is the first African to be a certified Sport



Dr Christian Emeruwa...aiming to lead Nigeria's football as President

Safety and Security professional.

The doctorate degree holder in Administration and Organisation of Sports from the University of Ibadan, admitted that the development of the various football leagues in the country is a key pillar of his strategy to lift the domestic club football from its current state.

Emeruwa pointed out that revenue drive to administer the Nigerian football is one of his cardinal programmes. "We pledge to run the NFF in a transparent and efficient manner, and will make sure that every income generated by NFF will go back into supporting the development of football in Nigeria."

He also spoke on gingering the growth of football from the grassroots through "partnership with some of the top clubs in Europe in order to have a minimum of six world-class academies spread across the country."

Emeruwa who is also a FIFA Senior Safety and Security Officer is already enjoying the support of his colleagues from around the world in his quest to lead Nigerian football for the next four years as president.

During his powerpoint presentation of his programmes, some stakeholders in African football spoke to endorse Emeruwa on video clips from their respective bases.

President of Football Association of Zambia (FAZ), Andrew Ndanga Kamanga, was the first to speak, recalling some of the qualities that stand Emeruwa out of the pack for the top Nigerian football job.

Former Ghana international and CAF's Deputy General Secretary, Anthony Baffoe and a South African FIFA and CAF Security Officer, David Van Vuuren, spoke glowingly of Emeruwa's qualities.

Ex-Olympian, Oshomah, to Launch N50m Weightlifting Academy in Auchi Today

●Appeals to Obaseki, Shaibu, Alimikhena, others for support

In an effort to raise the standard of weightlifting in the country, former world champion and Olympian, Coach Emmanuel Oshomah, is set to launch a Weightlifting Academy, the first of its kind in Nigeria.

The launching/Inauguration ceremony of weightlifting Academy known as Oshobugie, will hold today, September 1, 2022, at 12noon at First Bawak, South Ibie, off Benin - Abuja Road, in Auchi, Edo State.

Oshomah, an ex-Olympian

from Edo State, stated that the vision to set up the academy is meant to upgrade the standard of weightlifting in Nigeria to world level.

"This is to make Nigeria known and respected as a foremost weightlifting nation, just as Cuba is known for Boxing and Jamaica is for athletics," he stressed yesterday.

Speaking further, Oshomah, who recently retired as weightlifting coach said; "Permit me to inform

His Excellency that Nigeria has dominated weightlifting in Africa since the early 1980s, but is yet to replicate this at the world level. By now, Nigeria should now be consistent on the Olympic podium. The defunct Bendel was a leading weightlifting state in Nigeria, a position that was maintained by Edo and Delta states. That is what gives birth to this private initiative to situate the Academy in Auchi."

In his active days as a

weightlifter, Oshomah represented Nigeria at the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, California, USA, the World Weightlifting Championship in Sweden in 1985 as well as the 1987 All African Games in Nairobi, Kenya where he distinguished himself, winning two gold, one silver medal, setting a new African record in the process.

Throughout his career, Oshomah was never involved in any drug scandal.

Sports Business Mogul, Noel Okorougo, Goes Home this Weekend

All roads will this weekend lead to Amokwe Amiyi, Oguuduasa in Isuikwuato Local Government Area of Abia State where business mogul and sports financier, Noel Ugomba Okorougo, will be interred.

The sports philanthropist passed on June 8, 2022 in his Switzerland base after a battle with cancer.

Noel was appointed Nigeria sports ambassador by the Federal Government and was inducted into Nigeria's Sports Hall of Fame after series of achievements in the sports sector one of which was a huge sponsorship by Nike which earned Nigeria money running

into millions of dollars after the USA '94 World Cup.

He also got Nike to endorse many Nigerian players from which they earned fat payments. He once owned a football club in USA where he started sports marketing businesses and became known globally before he became withdrawn largely due to health challenges.

Service of Songs will be on Friday, September 2in his compound according to programme signed by Chudi Okorougo for the family. Interment will be on Saturday, September 3, 2022.

Neymar, Mbappe on Target as PSG Maintain Unbeaten Start to Ligue 1

Paris St-Germain maintained their unbeaten start to the Ligue 1 season under new boss Christophe Galtier with a comfortable victory at Toulouse.

The French champions went ahead in the first half

through Neymar's cool finish and Kylian Mbappe doubled the lead in the second period by slotting in.

The assists for both goals were provided by Argentine star Lionel Messi, while Spanish full-back Juan

Bernat added a third in injury-time.

PSG travel to Nantes on Saturday.

They begin their quest for a maiden Champions League crown on Tuesday when they host Serie A giants Juventus.



Kylian Mbappe (left) was on the scorers' sheet last night as PSG defeated Toulouse 3-0

Para-Powerlifting President Charges Exco Board

President of the Nigeria Para-Powerlifting Federation, Chiemeka Ezenwanne Charles, has charged the newly elected members of his executive board to live up to their responsibilities in order to arrest the dwindling fortunes of Nigeria Para-Powerlifting.

Ezenwanne gave the charge at the inaugural meeting of the federation held on Tuesday August 30, 2022, at the National Stadium, Surulere, Lagos.

He said the sport must bounce

back under his regime.

To this end, some Committees were set up in order to actualise this dream. They include, Marketing/Sponsorship, Protocol, Technical and Media/Publicity among others while the immediate past President, Ruel Ishaku, a former athlete was appointed as the new Technical Director. The board also agreed to embark on talent hunt programmes.

All in an effort to correct the ills of the past especially, the embarrassing situation that made

Nigeria lose two 'important' gold medals at the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games in the United Kingdom.

While seeing funding as a major challenge ahead of their international engagements like the Egypt and Mexico championships, the president thanked the Sports Minister, Chief Sunday Dare and PEAK Milk for their support so far but like 'Oliver Twist' will always do, Ezenwanne said the federation needs some more since the journey has just started.

Bayelsa Proposes New Stadium as Gov Diri Hosts Bayelsa Utd

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, has disclosed that his administration is considering constructing a new stadium following the promotion of the state-sponsored football team, Bayelsa United, to the elite Nigerian Professional Football League (NPFL).

Governor Diri stated this on Tuesday night at a dinner in honour of the management and players of Bayelsa United.

Last Saturday, the team emerged champions of the Group B2 Southern Conference of the 2021/22 Nigerian National League (NNL) after defeating Cynosure of Abakaliki, Ebonyi State 2-0 in their last game at the Samson Siasia Sports Complex in Yenagoa.

The governor said although the Samson Siasia complex, which hosts both Bayelsa United and Bayelsa Queens, which also won the 2021/22 Nigerian Women Football League (NWFL), will be remodelled ahead of the new season, there was need for a stadium of international standard in the state.

He expressed the commitment of his administration in making Bayelsa a hub of sports in Nigeria.

He added that the state would soon organise a sports festival to complement its sports development policies and that the government had received positive responses from corporate organisations.

Diri congratulated Bayelsa United for surmounting all the odds that prevented it from gaining promotion to the elite league in the past seven years.

The governor noted that the victory has opened a new chapter for the team and the sports-loving people of the state, which he said would now witness top class football in the premier league.

He charged the team to remain focused and to target winning the NPFL trophy as well while assuring it of the state government's continuous support, including further training for the technical crew and beefing up of the squad.

He announced the approval of the sum of N10 million as motivation to the team.

His words: "I like to join all Bayelsans to congratulate you and welcome you to the elite division of the Nigerian Professional Football League. Last year, when you were called giant killers because you were in the lower league. But you defeated clubs in the premier league to win the trophy.

"From then on, the sign was

that we can do better. At the end of the day, you made yourselves and the state proud by winning that coveted AITEO Cup.

"Going forward, we have decided to ensure that our past glory is returned to our state. Sports is a veritable tool for youth development and we all know that football is like the king of sports.

"I like to inform you that this is the beginning of a new dawn of your footballing career. We want to signpost you to win the Nigerian Professional Football League so you can represent this country again on the continent.

"If the technical crew needs to go for refresher courses, please let us know. We are prepared to send you to anywhere. Whatever you need to beef up this team, we will provide the resources.

"I am happy to hear that we

have 75 per cent of Bayelsans in the team. But I do not mind if you bring in international players."

In his remarks, Deputy Governor Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo commended Governor Diri for the team's victory, saying it was another feather to his cap in sports development and that it was the beginning of more laurels for the state.

Senator Ewhrudjakpo noted that the governor's passion for sports had resulted in the state recording numerous achievements in just two and a half years in office.

Earlier in his address, the chairman of Bayelsa United, Mr. Ebiki Timimiti, while appreciating the governor for the financial support to the team, noted that frequent pep talk through phone calls boosted the morale of the team.

Super Falcons Arrive Kansas City for Clash with USA

Nine-time African champions, Super Falcons of Nigeria are in the United States of America on a two-match tour with the United States Women's National Team, with the first of the two matches taking place at the Children's Mercy Park in Kansas City, Kansas on Saturday, 3rd September.

Both teams, who have qualified for next year's FIFA Women's

World Cup finals in Australia and New Zealand, will have a go at each other's jugular once more at the Audi Field in Washington, D. C. on Tuesday, 6th September.

Coach Randy Waldrum has picked four members of Nigeria's U20 girls that reached the quarter finals at the just-concluded FIFA U20 Women's World Cup in Costa Rica, namely defenders Oluwatolun

Demehin and Rofiat Imuran, and midfielders Esther Onyenezide and Deborah Abiodun.

Home-based professionals Christy Ochiaeriaku, Akudo Ogbonna and Gift Monday are also in the delegation.

First-choice goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie, defender Osinachi Ohale, midfielder Toni Payne and forwards Rasheedat

Ajibade and Uchenna Kanu will provide the spine for an interesting Nigeria selection.

The USWNT is the most successful team in the FIFA Women's World Cup, having won half (4) of all eight championships competed for so far. The Stars & Stripes were champions of the very first edition in China in 1991, and then won on home soil in

1999, in Canada in 2015 and in France three years ago. The team has also won four Olympic women's football gold medals and eight CONCACAF titles.

The Super Falcons have won the Women Africa Cup of Nations nine times, played in every edition of the FIFA Women's World Cup and also played at the 2000, 2004 and 2008 Olympic women's football tournament. They remain the most successful women's team on the African continent.

The Children's Mercy Park is home to Kansas City in the US National Women's Soccer League and Sporting Kansas City in the Major League Soccer, while Audi Field is utilized by National Women's Soccer League side Washington Spirit and Major League Soccer team, D. C. United.

The match in Kansas City will see Vlatko Andonovski, appointed Coach of USWNT at the end of 2019, return to his home area for the second time. It is the sixth time that the USWNT will be playing at the Children's Mercy Park but it is their first time at the Audi Field, though they have played 10 times previously in Washington - all at the RFK Stadium.

Andonovski says he's excited to send out his girls against the Super Falcons: "First, I'm just excited to play two matches against Nigeria. They have some very talented players who will present a lot of different problems for us to solve on both sides of the ball."



Nigeria's Super Falcons have landed in Kansas City for a two-game friendly with the US Women's Senior National Team



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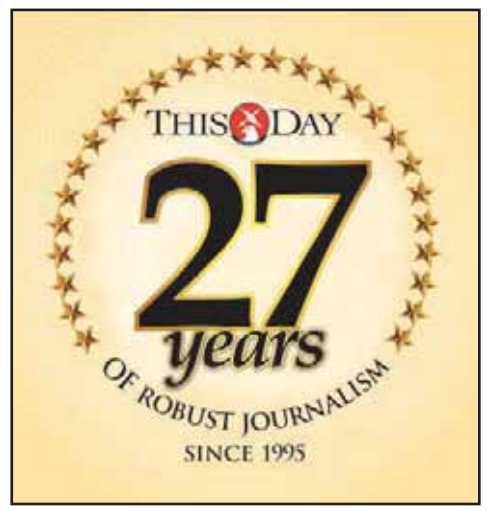
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MISSILE

Emmanuel Osodeke to Adamu Adamu

"Now, let's talk about no work, no pay. In my letter of appointment, the functions of a lecturer are teaching, research and community service. So, if you are on strike, the only thing you are not doing is teaching. When you go to universities, you will see our colleagues in offices, you will see them doing research as part of their job, and doing community service"—ASUU President dismissing the no work no pay stance on striking university lecturers



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THE VERDICT

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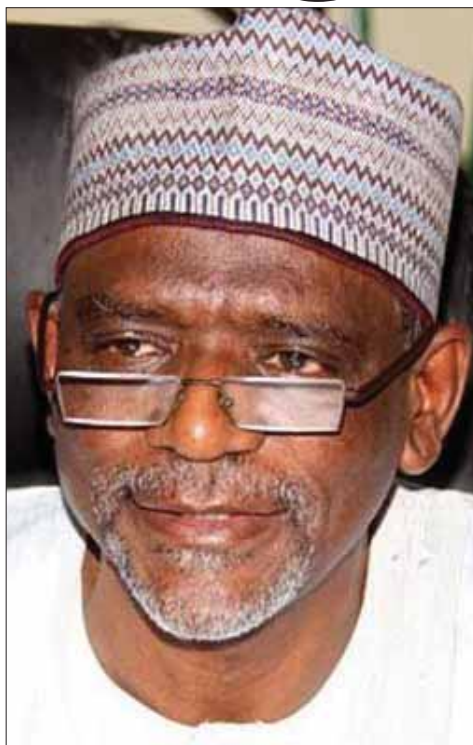
The Case Against ASUU... II

In starting this series on the crisis of tertiary education in Nigeria against the background of the ongoing Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike, I was determined not to deride university lecturers who make enormous sacrifices under impossible conditions. I have many friends in our universities and am aware that the highest paid Professor in Nigeria (on Level 7, Step 10) earns just about N420,000 per month. Even if you use the self-deceiving official exchange rate, it fetches less than \$1000! With such a ridiculous reward system in a sector as critical as tertiary education, I can understand the frustration and anger of university lecturers. But they are not well served by ASUU whose leadership on Tuesday extended the strike indefinitely.

It is unfortunate that intellectuals whose primary job is to produce thinkers for the society cannot even offer decent ideas on how to resolve their own crisis. That then explains why strikes seem to be an annual festival on the university calendar. Yet, what we need is a conversation on sustainable ways to fund tertiary education in Nigeria. The basic problem, as former Vice Chancellor of Federal University Otuoke, Professor Bolaji Aluko, told me in a chat during the week, "is the lack of trust between contending parties, and an unwillingness to do basic and realistic arithmetic of income and expenditure around student fees, staff salaries, operating and capital expenses as well as between innovative revenue streams and accountable expenditures". All these, according to Aluko, are compounded by "a lack of clarity about the status of university workers - whether they are government or council employees."

That precisely is the problem with ASUU. Last Thursday, ASUU President, Prof. Emmanuel Osodeke, featured on 'The Morning Show,' on ARISE News Channels, a THISDAY sister broadcast station. Following the session, I received a message from a former Vice Chancellor of a first-generation university who wrote: "Did you watch the ASUU President on ARISE, dismissing state universities as quacks because they didn't join the strike? That's the quality of the people leading the union." He attached the video clip for me to watch. "So, don't cite those examples as they are irrelevant," Osodeke retorted angrily to suggestions about universities that are not on strike. "Is University of Ibadan on strike? Is University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) on strike? Is Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) on strike? Is Bayero University Kano (BUK) on strike? Is Maiduguri University on strike and the University of Lagos? Let's talk about real universities, not those quacks." Even when the moderator, Dr Reuben Abati gave Osodeke a tacit escape route, the ASUU president merely doubled down on his hubris. "Yes, they are quacks, go and check," he said pompously before claiming the next day that he was "misquoted" when his colleagues descended on him. But it is easy to understand Osodeke's mindset.

In a desperate proposition last week, the National Parent-Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN) requested a meeting with the federal government. "We are proposing a sum of N10,000 per parent every session that will be directly paid to the universities. That will be our own contribution apart from other statutory payments in making more funds available to the universities," NAPTAN's Public Relations Officer, Ademola Ekundayo said. But Osodeke was dismissive of that idea too. "I think what this association should be doing is to tell the government to perform its function. They should put pressure on the



Adamu Adamu

government to use Nigerians' money to fund education as it is done in other countries" he said before adding, "We can't be calling ourselves the giant of Africa and we are the worst in education. You see students from Nigeria going to Ghana, Benin Republic, Togo, and other small countries to study but nobody from these countries is coming to Nigeria to study."

I am not sure Osodeke has bothered to find out how much Ghanaian, Togolese, and Beninois undergraduates pay for university education in their countries before making a comparison lacking in rigour. A paper in the International Journal of Research Studies in Education written by Phinilas Acheampong and Jimmy Jaston Kayande of Beijing Normal University, China, reached a conclusion that tertiary education is more a privilege than a right in Ghana. This, according to the duo, "stems from the fact that high cost of higher education has rendered most economically disadvantaged students (to be) incapable of accessing university education" in the country.

I challenge Osodeke to conduct rudimentary research on tertiary education across Africa. He will realise not only how unsustainable the current Nigerian model is but also the damage ASUU strikes have wrought in the past 23 years. In 1999, ASUU was on strike for 150 days; in 2001, the

strike lasted 90 days and in 2002, the campuses were closed for 14 days. In 2003, ASUU was on strike for 180 days while in 2005 and 2006, the campuses were shut for 14 and three days respectively. The 2007 strike lasted 90 days, that of 2008, seven days and in 2009, the campuses were shut for 120 days. In 2010, ASUU was on strike for 150 days, in 2011 for 59 days and in 2013 for 150 days. In 2014, 2015 and 2016, there was peace on the campuses, but ASUU resumed its strike in 2017 for 30 days while it lasted 90 days in 2018. Their longest strike to date lasted 270 days in 2020 though it also coincided with Covid-19 restrictions. By tomorrow, the current one will mark its 200th day. When you tally the numbers, we are cumulatively looking at a situation in which ASUU has been on strike for about five calendar years between 1999 and now!

While I do not exonerate the federal government that has consistently failed to honour agreements it willingly entered into with ASUU, the point being missed in this conversation is that funding tertiary education takes more than paying the salaries of lecturers. As miserable as that may be at the moment. We need to improve the environment: Functional libraries and laboratories, up to date journals, access to technology, research grants, travel expenses etc. This would require that we expand the pool from which we source funding and such discussions cannot be resolved by a cheap resort to 'Aluta continua.'

You hear it all the time on the street that 'Nigeria is a rich country', a statement that is not backed by any empirical evidence. That is also the underlining argument of ASUU. Yet, by whatever metric one uses, Nigeria is a poor country, essentially because of our population. In 2020, Nigeria's share in the global gross domestic product adjusted for purchasing power parity (which is used to measure both the economic growth and living standards in any country) amounted to approximately 0.81 percent. But when it comes to The Other Room, Nigeria is the gold standard. Using data from the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, Pratap Vardin, an Indian full-stack data science engineer, recently came up with a graphic of countries the next 1000 babies will statistically be born into based on population and birth rates by 2022 estimates. With 57 of those babies expected in Nigeria, it means we will account for about six per cent of children born into the world who will then battle for less than one percent of global resources!

Last Friday, the United Kingdom Mail newspaper carried a report that the number of Nigerian students coming to Britain had risen by 686% in three years to a record high of 65,929, with our country becoming the third largest foreign student group in the UK, after India and China. "While home student fees capped

at £9,250, international ones now pay £24,000," according to the report which exclude feeding, accommodation and other expenses stated. That gives us £1.582 billion which approximates to over a trillion Naira just to train less than 70,000 students. Even the amount of £9,250 paid by each UK student which exceeds N6 million per annum offers us a picture of how expensive education is. But by appealing to the mob that the only problem with Nigeria is corruption and that we have the resources for free education at all levels, ASUU has shut down the conversation we need to have.

There are several avenues that universities can explore to source funds for their operations. They include donations, endowments, professional chairs, gifts, grants, and consultancy services. And for indigent students in this same country, there are records of loans scheme, work study programmes, scholarship schemes, bursaries, grants etc. on our campuses before the oil boom that led us to where we are today. These are things that can be revived if only ASUU will allow all stakeholders to meaningfully engage in finding solutions that will untangle our universities from federal bureaucracy and confer on them real autonomy.

Let me make it clear here. I do not excuse the waste, lack of accountability and irresponsibility that define governance in Nigeria. But the reality of our situation is that we can no longer afford tuition-free university education because the challenge goes beyond payment of salaries. At the weekend, Prof Hamman Tukur Sa'ad whose intervention formed the basis of my last week column sent me a brief by a Mr Leonard Karshima Shilgaba whom he described as the 1992 best graduating student in the Department of Mathematics at ABU Zaria. Using data sourced from his alma mater, Shilgaba said from the N22.57 billion allocated to ABU last year, 92 percent went for personnel expenditure of about 1,400 academic staff and 5,000 supporting staff. ABU, he stated, has a student population of 35,000 (for both degree and pre-degree programmes).

According to Sa'ad, that "these universities exist only to pay salaries and overhead when 92% of the budget goes to useless expenditure", makes no sense. "By any standard you are not expected to have more supporting staff than academic staff. However, government is responsible for this distortion. They insist on funding salaries only and directly too." ASUU, Sa'ad further argues, "Is involved in a fight with government instead of sitting down internally in the Universities to come up with solutions to their in-house problems. They want one size that fits all, when the bane of Nigeria is over centralisation of administration and decision making. ASUU is also a culprit in this case. Imagine a union that takes a percentage of members' income and passes 60% to the centre, as if there is nothing to be done locally. One of the consequences of this centralisation is that even local problems are nationalised and become issues for closing down the whole system."

There are many pertinent questions that require interrogation if we are to resolve this problem. Why should ASUU be negotiating with the federal government on behalf of state universities? Why are students paying less in universities than in primary and secondary schools? Why is the federal government still paying salary of lecturers directly when each university is supposed to run independently with autonomous powers?

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To resolve the perpetual financial crisis in the university system so that we can attract quality academic staff, provide necessary teaching aids, and ensure conducive learning environment for students, we must examine alternative sources of funding. That is the only way our graduates can compete globally in the knowledge world