

Edun: In-country Food Production Will Tame Inflation, Strengthen Exchange Rate

● **FG, AfDB, others ramp up \$538m programme, set to cut post-yield losses to 20%** ● **Agric minister assures 500,000 permanent jobs to be created under initiative**

Emmanuel Adedeji in Abuja
The Minister of Finance and Coordi-

nating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, yesterday argued that with adequate in-country food production,

the current high inflation rate will be curbed considerably. Edun made the comment as the

federal government in collaboration with the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Fund for

Agricultural Development (IFAD) and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) announced a plan to accelerate the

phase 1 of the Special Agro-Industrial
Continued on page 10

President to Judiciary: Anti-graft War Won't Be Won By Technicalities, Frivolous Appeals, Intimidation of Judges... Page 28

THIS DAY

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PDP Accuses INEC of Doctoring BVAS to Conceal Rigging at Edo Gubernatorial Poll

● **Ighodalo, party's attempt to enforce court order on INEC disrupted**

Chuks Okocha in Abuja and **Adibe Emenyonu** in Benin City

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP),

yesterday, condemned the reported refusal by officials of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in Edo State to grant the PDP and its

candidate, Dr. Asue Ighodalo access to the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines and other materials used in the September 21,

2024 Edo State governorship election against the order of court.

In a statement by the National Publicity Secretary of the party, Debo

Ogunagba, the PDP said, "Our Party also alerts the public of how compromised INEC officials used the ploy of waiting for "directives

from above" to allegedly allow thugs recruited by the All Progress-

Continued on page 10

Tinubu Condemns Violence in Rivers, Orders IG to Secure LGA Offices

● **Charges Fubara, other stakeholders to exercise restraint, uphold rule of law**

● **It's irresponsible, gov declares, says he'd knelt for Wike many times for peace's sake**

● **IGP instructs police commissioner to restore law and order**

Deji Elumoye, James Emejo, Sunday Aborisade, Linus Aleke in Abuja, **Segun James** in Lagos and **Blessing Ibunge** in Port Harcourt

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, yesterday, condemned in strong terms the ongoing violence in Rivers State over the outcome of the recent council elections, declaring that self-help has no place in a democracy.

Tinubu directed the Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun, and other security agencies to secure the 23 local government areas in the state, following the outbreak of violence in which three council secretariats were set ablaze.

The president charged the Rivers State governor, Siminalayi Fubara, and other stakeholders in the state to exercise restraint and uphold the rule of law.

In his reaction, Fubara described the burning of council facilities by suspected political thugs as irresponsible. He urged Rivers people to carry out their political business with all sense of responsibility.

Continued on page 10



GOVERNORS VISIT BEREAVED AKWA IBOM COUNTERPART...

L-R: (Front row): Seyi Makinde (Oyo State); Senator Bala Mohammed (Bauchi); Ahmadu Fintiri (Adamawa); Senator Douye Diri (Bayelsa); Sheriff Oborewori (Delta); Back row: AbdulRahman AbdulRasaq (Kwara); Pastor Umo Eno (Akwa Ibom); and Siminalayi Fubara (Rivers), during the governors' condolence visit to their Akwa Ibom counterpart over the death of his wife, Patience Eno, at the Government House, Uyo... yesterday



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CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR JUSTICES AND JUDGES...

L-R: Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu; Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin; Vice President Kashim Shettima; Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun and former Secretary General of the Commonwealth, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, at the EFCC and NJI Capacity Building Workshop for Justices and Judges held at the NJI Headquarters, Abuja...yesterday PHOTO: GODWIN OMOIGUI.

Foundations Launch \$20m Fund to Strengthen Democracy in West Africa

● *Shettima: Tinubu experienced baptism of fire during Niger coup* ● *ECOWAS decries retreating democracy in W/Africa* ● *Tuggar: Africa's democratic institutions too weak against strong leaders*

Adedayo Akinwale in Abuja

The Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Luminate, and Open Society Foundation have launched a \$20 million West Africa Democracy Fund (WADF) to strengthen democracy across the region.

The fund targeted at supporting West African states currently facing various democratic challenges would over three years support activities to increase citizens' engagement with democratic and political transitions in the respective countries.

Speaking at the event on Monday in Abuja, Vice President Kashim Shettima decried retreating democracy the sub region as a result of military takeovers.

Shettima, represented by the Special Adviser to the President on Special Duties, Dr. Aliyu Moddibo, admitted that President Bola Tinubu experienced baptism of fire during the military takeover in Niger.

Recall that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had sanctioned the country following the takeover as part of plan to force the military to relinquish power.

However, the sanction was however lifted after a few months when the military government in the country refused to backdown.

Quoting Vice President Shettima, Moddibo stated: "The vice president wants me to remind you of some of the highlights of what he conveyed, and that has been echoed several times here, regarding the backsliding that we are having in our sub region on military takeovers in some countries, and also the effort that the ECOWAS commission has made.

"Regrettably, one of those was when the military took over in Niger and our president, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu experienced what you may call baptism by fire, because he was just appointed or elected as the chairman of the body of ECOWAS commission and he had to deal with that problem.

"The Vice President also wants us to remind us that amid this despair about democratic reversals, most especially in West Africa, we were encouraged by elections that have held successfully in countries such as Liberia, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa.

"But we are not oblivious to the fact that these elections are not perfect, as all elections are, but we are hopefully doing our best to make sure they reflect the true yearnings of our people.

"We subscribe to the notion that there are basic standards of electoral transparency that every election must meet, however, the continuous practice of democracy will perfect that."

Also, the Commissioner Political Affairs, Peace and Security, ECOWAS, Amb. Abdel-Fatau Musah, said it was gratifying to note that the fund was being launched at a time when the ECOWAS authority of Head of States and governments have renewed its commitment to reinforce and deepen on successes recorded in the region in the face of the current challenges, particularly the relapse of democratic consolidation and the existential traits posed by the menace of terrorism.

Musah, represented by Ebenezer Asiedo, said ECOWAS Commission therefore welcomed the launch of the democracy fund, which seeks

to address the challenges posed by democratic backsliding in West Africa by promoting inclusive governance, strengthening key institutions and reimagining the social contracts in selected countries

He noted that there was an urgent and compelling need for dedicated and strategic collective efforts of critical stakeholders to join hands with other democratic forces towards achieving stable and enduring democratic processes and lasting peace in West Africa.

Musah stressed that it was important to also acknowledge and celebrate recent successes recorded in the region, particularly in democratic consolidation efforts with successful and peaceful elections and smooth transfers of power.

He said the ECOWAS authority of heads of state and government instructed Commission to initiate a process of reviewing the 2001 Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance to enhance constitutionalism, good governance, democratic practices, accountability and respect for the rule of law and the rights of the citizens in order to sustain the peace and stability in our region.

Musah added: "This process has so far been advanced with compromises and consensus reached on some of the elements that previously generated reservations from some of the member states. We hope to finalise the review process by the end of the year.

"In addition, ECOWAS is preparing to launch the process to convene a special summit on the future of regional integration next year, which process will also include a review of the democratic and governance

project in West Africa, in view of the current Security and geo strategic dynamics in the region."

On his part, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Yusuf Tuggar, said there was a need to fund institutions and to build institutions.

Tuggar, represented by Amb. Sefiu Olaniyan, lamented that democratic institution in the region was weak to stand up against strong leaders.

He noted: "Most of the time, the democratic institutions in West Africa are weak, and so they can't stand up against strong leaders. Most of the time they are not standing up for the people, and so democracy falters.

"So, for those who are raising funds for democracy, we should know that it's not going to be a tea party. It's a whole lot of work that needs to be done. These institutions need to be strong, so much so that no matter how strong a leader is, you cannot alter, you cannot pervert the

course of justice for those institutions."

Earlier, Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors, Shehu Musa Yar'Adua Foundation, Mr. Akin Kekere-Ekun, said despite a general preference for democracy among citizens, many have grown disillusioned with its practice, leading to passive acceptance and, in some cases, support for military interventions.

He said afrobarometer surveys confirmed this growing disillusionment, revealing that while 80 per cent of African citizens reject one-man rule and a significant majority oppose military interventions, they remain dissatisfied with the actual delivery of democratic governance.

Kekere-Ekun stressed that this has created a widening gap between the demand for democracy and the supply of effective, accountable leadership.

He pointed out that the establishment of the West Africa Democracy Fund was a direct response to these

urgent challenges.

The President of Ford Foundation, Darren Walker, said research has shown the inextricable link between the rising decline of democracy across West Africa and rising inequality, saying these issues must be addressed simultaneously.

Walker said greater citizen participation in democratic processes was needed to fully realise a peaceful, inclusive democracy that empowers citizens to build a society that is more just, and that contributes to greater prosperity and stable economy.

According to Darren Walker, "Ford Foundation believes in the vision, aspirations and dreams of the people of West Africa. These dreams are for the same things that we dream of and walk here in America to live peacefully, rule of law, shared prosperity and an opportunity for everyone who seeks an education seeks to live with dignity and have a livelihood.

Access Bank Secures Provisional Licence to Expand to Namibia

Nume Ekeghe

Access Holdings Plc has announced that its subsidiary, Access Bank Plc, has secured a provisional licence from the Bank of Namibia to establish commercial operations in the country.

This, it explained, marked another bold step in the bank's aggressive push to extend its footprint across Africa and solidify its dominance

as a leading Pan-African financial institution.

The announcement was made in a statement yesterday, by the company secretary, Access Holdings, Sunday Ekwochi.

The move, it stressed, underscored the bank's strategic commitment to growing its influence in key African markets.

Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Access Bank Plc, Roosevelt Ogbonna, described the expansion into Namibia as a significant milestone in the bank's journey towards creating a connected banking network across Africa.

He said: "This expansion represents an important milestone towards establishing a railroad in Namibia for intra-African trade within the Southern African region, Africa, and the rest of the world.

"It cements our commitment to building a robust Southern African banking network to deliver shared prosperity and advance financial inclusion thereby empowering many to achieve their dreams.

"Our entry into the Namibian market also represents a pivotal step in our broader ambition to

build a strong global franchise and will unlock new opportunities for businesses and individuals alike.

"We look forward to partnering with local stakeholders to drive innovation, empower communities, and contribute meaningfully to the prosperity of the region.

"We remain confident that our investments towards diversifying and strengthening the bank's long-term earnings profile will deliver significant value to our shareholders, customers, and wider stakeholder groups."

Furthermore, it stated that Access Bank's operations in Namibia was expected to stimulate the local economy and strengthen its position as a leading regional player.

"With existing operations in Southern Africa - Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia - the bank is well-positioned to offer stakeholders seamless access to diverse opportunities for expansion and collaboration across the region," it added.

The statement further noted that the bank would be working in the coming months to fulfil the conditions precedent to grant it the final licence.

Aviation Ministry Partners ICRC on Infrastructure Devt

Kasim Sumaina in Abuja

The Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development has stated its readiness to partner with the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) to develop the aviation sector.

Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development Mr. Festus Keyamo, made this known at the Ministry's headquarters in Abuja while receiving the management of ICRC yesterday.

The Minister stated that Public Private Partnership (PPP) remains

the best way to go if Nigeria's infrastructure must develop and promised to set up a task force to drive the collaboration with a fixed timeline to ensure quick delivery.

He explained that upon assumption of office as Minister, he met lots of litigations which he has resolved and urged the ICRC to follow all legal processes in its quest for PPP.

Keyamo, however, thanked the ICRC over the initiative and reiterated the aviation Ministry's commitment to deliver President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope agenda.

Responding, the Director General, ICRC, Dr. Jobson Oseodion Ewalefoh, thanked the Minister for his achievement in the aviation sector within a short time.

Oseodion, said the essence of the meeting was to solicit the ministry's collaboration with the ICRC regarding infrastructure development.

According to him, "We considered the Aviation Ministry as pivotal Ministry for driving the Renewed Hope Agenda of Mr. President.

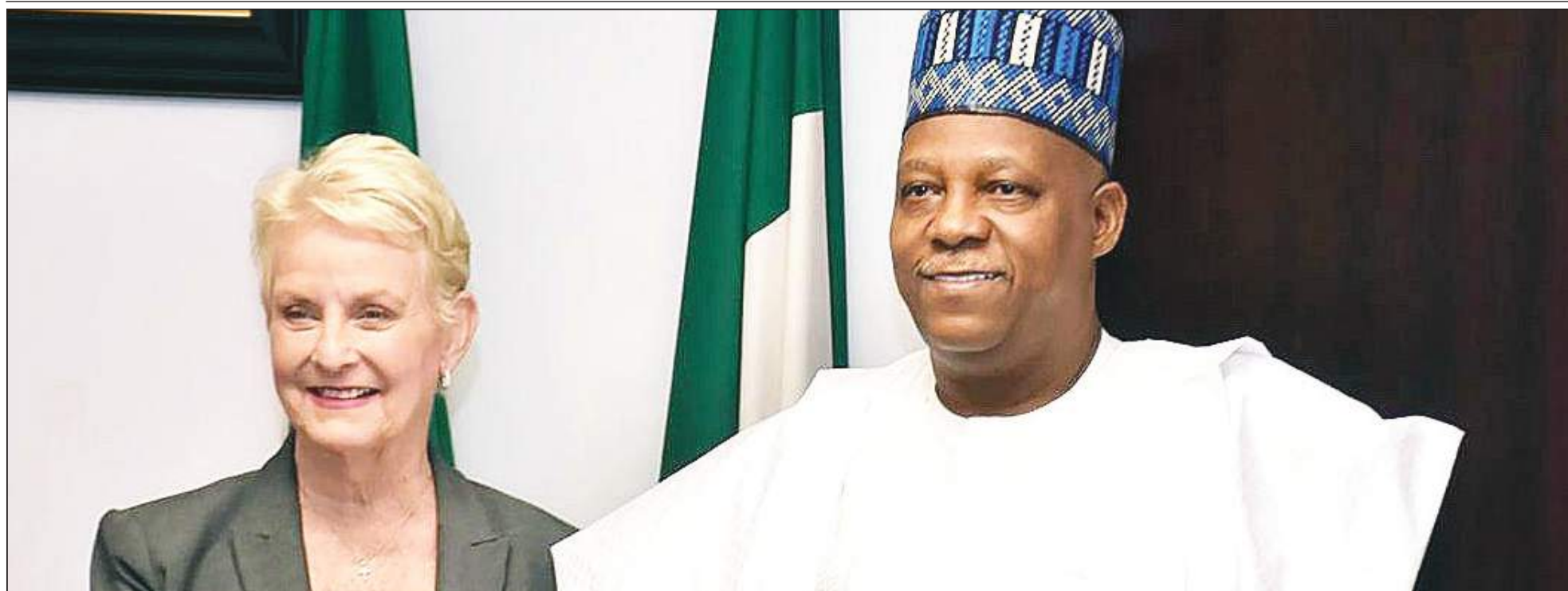
"Your ministry is key in driving the economy and we have decided to come to you because of your

achievements."

The ICRC helmsman emphasised that the Commission has removed all administrative bottlenecks and promised to get it right going forward.

Ewalefoh, added that there was every need to embrace PPP since the country was faced with infrastructure decay, stating that, "With the right infrastructure in place we will attract many investors into Nigeria, this is the time to improve the infrastructure in the aviation sector and we commend Mr President for his commitment so far."

NEWS



WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME DELEGATION MEETS SHETTIMA...

Executive Director, World Food Programme, Mrs Cindy McCain (L) with Vice President Kashim Shettima, during the courtesy visit of the UN delegation to the Presidential Villa, Abuja....yesterday PHOTO: GODWIN OMOGIUI

Shettima Seeks Stronger FG, Private Sector Synergy For Economic Growth

●Says partnership with NESG will unlock nation's economic potential ●Pledges Tinubu's commitment to food security in Nigeria ●Seeks strengthened collaboration with World Food Programme

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

Vice President Kashim Shettima yesterday affirmed the federal government's commitment to fostering a strong partnership with the private sector to drive Nigeria's economic growth and industrialisation.

According to him, the private sector is critical in driving the

industrialisation and job creation agenda of the President Bola Tinubu administration.

Speaking during a meeting with a team from the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) ahead of the group's 30th Nigerian Economic Summit, the Vice President noted that the government's pro-business policies and focus on improving key

infrastructure, such as power, are designed to create an environment where businesses can thrive.

He said, "Our nation is pregnant with possibilities. Hope springs eternal from the hearts of men," while describing the NESG as the "premier economic organisation in the country," that holds the power to support the attainment of Nigeria's

potential.

Emphasising the critical role of electricity in driving industrialization, Shettima noted: "Without power, there can be no industrialisation. I believe that if we get our acts right, Nigeria will influence development in Africa."

According to him, the current administration is uniquely attuned

to the needs of businesses.

"This government is headed by someone who grew up in your ecosystem and speaks your language of business. We have never gotten a government that is as business-friendly as this one".

He also pledged support for the private sector, calling it an essential partnership for economic growth, adding that "we want to create hope and opportunities for our youths, and the resources are there for us to do it. We will do it."

Special Adviser to the President on Economic Matters, Dr. Tope Fasua, urged the NESG to turn discussions into tangible results.

"We cannot have economic development without growth. We are hoping that the NESG can take this forward. Let's begin to have results," Fasua said.

On her part, Special Adviser to the President on NEC and Climate Change, Rukaiya El-Rufai, emphasised the need for action, calling on the NESG to "localize global discussions" to ensure post-summit coordination and impactful outcomes.

Earlier, Chairman of the Central Planning Committee for the 30th Nigerian Economic Summit (NES#30) / Vice Chairman of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG), Mr. Omoboyede Olusanya, said the 30th Nigerian Economic Summit is a pivotal platform for discussing regulatory reforms essential for economic competitiveness.

He said key events will include a meeting with CEOs from Franco-phone countries and sessions that

will tackle topics like local pharmaceutical manufacturing and energy sector dynamics, aiming to foster collaboration among stakeholders for sustainable development.

"Our goal is to create actionable frameworks that address Nigeria's pressing economic challenges," he said.

Okusanya noted that, in addition to these discussions, the summit will feature design workshops aimed at addressing critical issues such as food security, digital inclusion, and healthcare access.

There will also be high-level panels addressing fiscal reforms and infrastructure development, underscoring the need for strategic investments.

"We must leverage these discussions to build a more resilient economy," Olusanya added.

Also on Monday, Shettima restated the unwavering commitment of the administration of President Bola Tinubu in addressing the core challenge of food security in Nigeria, especially tackling the menace of malnutrition.

He said a strengthened collaboration with global bodies and other key stakeholders would go a long way in supporting the efforts of both federal and state authorities.

Shettima disclosed this when he received in audience at the State House, Abuja, a delegation from the World Food Programme (WFP) led by its Executive Director, Mrs Cindy McCain.

Continues online

To Boost Food Security, FG Partners Consortium on Soybean, Sugarcane Processing Plants

Ndubuisi Francis in Abuja

The federal government has expressed its desire to partner Trans Sahara Consortium's soybean and sugar projects' initiative, saying it was a game-changer for Nigeria's agricultural sector.

The projects would involve the

cultivation of three million hectares of soybean and the establishment of sugarcane processing plants, targeted at producing millions of tons of sugar for domestic consumption and export.

Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, disclosed this, yesterday, in Abuja, when he met

with a delegation from Trans Sahara Consortium Limited.

The delegation led by its Chairman, Senator Ibrahim Tura, visited the minister to discuss the Consortium's ambitious soybean and sugar projects.

According to a statement by the Director, Information and Public Relations Ministry of Finance, Mohammed Manga, the projects, designed to significantly boost Nigeria's agro-industry and address the country's trade deficit, align with President Bola Tinubu's strategic objectives of enhancing food security and strengthening the agricultural sector.

Edun, explained that the Trans Sahara Consortium's initiative was a game-changer for Nigeria's agricultural sector, adding: "we are committed to supporting innovative projects that drive economic growth, promote food security, and empower Nigerian farmers."

"This partnership is a significant step towards realising our vision for a prosperous Nigeria. We will work closely with Trans Sahara Consortium Limited to ensure the successful implementation of these projects."

The statement noted that the minister's expression of the government's interest to embark on the partnership with Trans Sahara Consortium, is a reaffirmation of the present administration's commitment to transform Nigeria's agricultural landscape, with the potential to boost food security, reduce trade deficits, and empower local farmers.

"This initiative marks a significant milestone in our journey towards a prosperous Nigeria, even as we look forward to witnessing the tangible impact of this collaboration, fostering economic growth, and improving the lives of millions of the citizenry," it added.

Dano Unveils New Products, Poised to Boost Nutrition for Nigerian Families

Mary Nnah

Arla Foods' leading dairy brand, Dano, has launched two new products: Dano Cool Cow and Dano Full Cream Evaporated Milk.

This move reinforces Dano's position as a leader in Nigeria's dairy industry, catering to the growing demand for healthy and delicious dairy options.

At the unveiling event held on Friday, October 4, at Harbour Point, Victoria Island, Lagos, health enthusiasts and industry experts gathered to experience these innovative products' taste and nutritional benefits.

Managing Director, Arla Foods, Peder Pedersen, emphasised the company's vision, stating that their goal is to bring high-quality nutrition into Nigerian households, understanding the vital role dairy plays in everyday life.

"We recognise the significance of dairy in supporting healthy growth, development, and energy levels," he said.

"We have long envisioned and carefully crafted Dano Evaporated Milk for our beloved Nigerian market. This is not just another product but the culmination of thorough planning, dedication,

and a shared vision of excellence. Every step has been guided by one singular goal: to bring the highest quality nutrition into households across the country," Pedersen added.

Dano's new offerings boast an impressive nutritional profile, carefully crafted to address the specific dietary needs of Nigerian families. Dano Cool Cow is rich in protein, calcium, and vitamins, making it the perfect choice for boosting energy and supporting bone health.

Meanwhile, Dano Full Cream Evaporated Milk is packed with essential nutrients, ideal for enhancing recipes and supporting healthy growth and development.

Gaurav Dwivedi, CEO of Multipro Consumer Products Limited, a member of the Tolaram Group, which operates in partnership with Arla Foods, reiterated the significance of the partnership.

Dwivedi said: "With Dano Evaporated Milk, we proudly deliver a product that embodies the values of nutrition, convenience, and trust that define the Dano brand."

"This launch goes beyond just introducing a new product; it showcases the strength of our partnership with Arla Foods and highlights the success of our joint efforts."

Don't Pay for Pension Processing, Delta Cautions Retirees

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

Chairman, Delta State Bureau for Pension, Sir Edwin Ogidi-Ggbegbaje, has stated that the pension system is often in a flux such that the changes that occur around pension matters also prompt necessary response from the pension managers in order to render effective and satisfactory services to retirees at every point in time.

He observed that such dynamics as sudden increment in basic salaries, like the National Minimum Wage, and frequent retirements of individual workers often lead to a delicate situation whereby the pension managers are constantly under pressure to strike a balance between competing demands or

various pension cases requiring equal attention simultaneously.

He noted that certain critical demands of retirees under the contributory pension scheme have made the job of the Delta State Bureau for Pension even more complex and demanding.

The state pension chairman, who made the remarks while playing host to members of the Asaba Correspondents Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) at his office in Asaba on Monday, noted that some retirees attempting to bend the procedural guidelines or cut corners have sometimes treated another aspect of the challenge.

Specifically, he warned retirees from the State Public Service to refrain from bribing anyone for

processing of their pension benefits as the bureau abhors such practice.

Ogidi-Ggbegbaje said that the Bureau has ensured that Delta State retirees would not have to spend years before getting their rightful pension and retirement benefits.

According to him, it was absurd for anyone to pay money to any official for the purpose of speedy processing of their pension benefits, warning that the Bureau would deal ruthlessly with anyone caught in the act.

However, he said that there could be baseless allegation of fraud against bureau officials, advising journalists to always endeavour to investigate and verify the authenticity or otherwise of such allegations, in order to establish

that facts before going to press with it.

Ogidi-Ggbegbaje, who stressed that traditional or mainstream media had an obligation to continue to sustain the society's confidence in media reports due to the incalculable damage done by most social media, said, "Nobody is expected to pay a dime to access his pension benefits in the state."

"Anybody who pays money to anyone, for the purpose of having his or her benefits processed is acting on his own. Such person does not have the instruction of the bureau to do so."

He tasked journalists to ensure balanced reportage and to check the excesses of quacks on the social media.



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SECOND EDITION OF THE GBEMIGA ABIODUN EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME...

L-R: Miss Oyindamola Abiodun; one of the beneficiaries of the Gbemiga Abiodun Education Support Programme, Miss Paramole Kehinde; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; his wife, Mrs Bamidele Abiodun and first daughter, Miss Lamisa Abiodun, during the second edition of the Gbemiga Abiodun Education Support Programme, held at the Apostolic Church Grammar School, Iperu, Ikenne Local Government Area... yesterday

Association of Housing Corporations Laments Impact of Inflation on Building Industry

● Says fuel subsidy removal rendering many homeless

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The Association of Housing Corporations of Nigeria (AHCN) yesterday lamented the effect of Nigeria's rising inflation on the built environment, stressing that the removal of subsidy on petrol was rendering several Nigerians homeless.

In a press briefing in Abuja, the President and Chairman of Council, AHCN, Eno Obongha, an Estate Surveyor, noted that Nigeria's current economic indices do not favour the growth of the housing sector.

Speaking on the state of the housing sector in Nigeria, Obongha stated that the business environment during the year has been characterised by so many economic variables such as hike in petrol pump price, electricity price hike and unstable economic policies resulting in high interest rate.

According to him, these have almost crippled all businesses, including the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) which has experienced five consecutive hikes and the interest rate is currently at 27.25 per cent from 18.75 per cent in January.

"The galloping inflation does not help matters as prices of building materials continue to rise uncontrollably during the year. Many construction sites have closed down thereby increasing the unemployment rate which stood at 5.3 per cent in first quarter of this year," he stated.

With the theme of this year World

Habitat Day being "Engaging Youth to Create a Better Urban Future", he stated that this provides the government with the opportunity to come up with creative solutions that will help drive economic recovery using housing to create and generate employment opportunities for Nigeria's teeming unemployed youth.

On the way out of the current quagmire, the president stated that Nigeria needs pragmatic approaches and appropriate strategies to tackle housing deficit and affordable mass housing production with a view to utilising housing as a tool for economic recovery to reduce unemployment in the society.

"The impact of removal of petroleum subsidy is grossly affecting the low and middle income earners which are rendering many homeless as a result of surge in construction costs and materials as well as hike in housing rentals.

"These segments of the society are confronted with inadequate resources and affordability question to provide roofs over their heads. To mitigate and provide succour to these segments of the society, government involvement and commitment to social and affordable housing is inevitable.

"Governments need to come up with deliberate and targeted policy to encourage provision of social housing through attractive tax rebates and incentives. One of such incentives is

a specially crafted housing finance backed and supported by appropriate laws that will regulate the process both on the supply and demand sides at a single digit interest rate," Obongha argued.

With the rising instability in foreign exchange market, the use of local building materials, he maintained, should be deliberately encouraged and promoted to arouse acceptability by the general public who have developed apathy for its usage.

According to him, the trend in most state and federal ministries

before now was most state ministries of housing are now duly involved in direct housing construction under the guise of public private partnership while state housing corporations are rendered redundant.

The federal and state ministries, he said, are principally created for policy formulation while state housing agencies are statutorily saddled with the implementation of government policy of housing provision.

He argued that ministries both at the federal and state levels have no business in direct construction.

"Usurpation of the statutory responsibilities of housing agencies in housing construction and development (which has become a norm) for federal and state governments by ministries is purely an unnecessary duplication of duty which will in the long run cause distraction, needless rivalry, unfair competition and sheer wastages and repetition of efforts and resources.

"Ministries of Housing both at the federal and state level should concentrate on providing the enabling environment and supervision for the

housing agency to fulfil its statutory mandates. If the supervising ministry must intervene, it should not be at the expense of relegating the state housing agency to the background," the association stated.

On rental housing, AHCN described it as one of the critical areas of housing that have been neglected over the years which it believes will greatly address certain segments of the housing challenges, especially among the low and medium income groups that cannot afford outright purchase if developed on a large scale.

Fubara, Obaseki, AbdulRazaq, Others Visit, Condole with Umo over Wife's Demise

Blessing Ibunge in Port Harcourt

Governor Siminalayi Fubara of Rivers State, alongside other governors, on Monday, visited the governor of Akwa Ibom State, Pastor Eno Umo, to condole with him over the death of his wife.

On the condolence visit were Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State who is also Chairman of the South-South Governors' Forum, Governor AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, Governor of Kwara State and Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum.

Others were, Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State and Chairman of

the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors' Forum; Governor Seyi Makinde of Oyo State and Deputy Chairman of Nigeria Governors' Forum; Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State; Governor Oborewori of Delta State; and Governor Ahmadu Fintiri of Adamawa State.

In his speech, Governor AbdulRazaq said the news of the death of wife of Governor Eno of 38 years, Mrs. Patience (Oluwakemi) Umo Eno, felt so sad.

He said because of the inevitability of death as decreed by God, Governor Eno will have to accept it in good faith as he bears the loss.

Governor AbdulRazaq also charged him to find strength and courage required for him to carry on with the duties of governance because the people of Akwa Ibom State were looking up to him to provide effective services as their governor.

Also speaking, Governor Godwin Obaseki recalled the close encounter they had with the late wife of Governor Eno during the political campaigns and her energetic posture and contributions.

He said: "Because of your faith, we know you will be strong and take this

home call in good faith. We know it is difficult, and very disturbing but be always reminded of the love you shared with her when she was here, the value she represented and the worth she stood for. You should take consolation in those and pray that God will rest her in peace."

In his response, Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom State said the mourning will last a lifetime because nothing can replace her as his best friend, faithful tender of the home and their concerns.

Palestinian Envoy Rejects Ceasefire, Calls for End to Israeli Occupation

Funmi Ogundare

As the world marks the first anniversary of the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Palestine Ambassador to Nigeria, Abdullah Abu Shawesh, yesterday, rejected the idea of a ceasefire.

Shawesh, stated this while speaking on the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine as a guest on The Morning Show on ARISE News Channel.

He explained that it was needless to call for a ceasefire as it was a war launched by a brutal military occupation against innocent Palestinian people.

He called for a complete end to the Israeli war on Palestine.

The Palestinian Ambassador spoke on the longstanding war against the Palestinian people, criticising the narrative surrounding the October 7 attacks.

According to him, "this situation is not merely a conflict, but rather

a war that began decades ago. "This is not a conflict; this is a war launched against the Palestinian people long ago."

He recalled that the war dates back to the Balfour Declaration issued by the United Kingdom on November 2, 1917, saying that the United Kingdom unjustly promised the land of Palestine to Jewish people without the rightful claim to it.

Shawesh, stressed on the displacement of Palestinians during

the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which he believed further entrenched the ongoing struggle.

Addressing the events of October 7, he acknowledged the day's significance, but insisted that an international inquiry was needed to investigate the circumstances surrounding the attacks and the ongoing conflict.

"Yes, October 7th is a fact, but what happened on that day should lead us to come together for an international inquiry," he stated.

HoS Reintroduces Federal Civil Service Anthem to Drive Reforms

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

The Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Mrs. Esther Didi Walsan-Jack, has announced the reintroduction of the federal civil service anthem to drive reforms.

She announced the move yesterday at a parley with the media where she explained the reintroduction of the anthem was one of the initiatives brought to bear on her 100 days in office.

The HoS also stressed that given

that the federal civil service strategy and implementation plan 2021 to 2025 was an evolving plan, the office had resolved to bring on board creativity and innovation to accelerate that plan.

Walsan-Jack noted that the anthem would be sung by all federal civil servants, public servants, and indeed Nigerians.

She noted that the anthem will encourage every public servant to invite the lyrics of the anthem, to the effect that they must be efficient, productive, incorruptible, and citizen-centered.



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TEN

NCDMB: Presidential Directives on Nigerian Content Has Shortened Contracting Cycle, Eliminated Middlemen in Oil, Gas Industry

Peter Uzoho

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) has announced it had eliminated middlemen and briefcase investors from the country's oil and gas industry value chain and contributed to shortening the industry contracting cycle to six months.

The board attributed the success stories to the three Presidential Directives on Local Content operations issued by President Bola Tinubu in March 2024.

Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Felix Ogbe, stated this yesterday in Lagos, while speaking at a breakfast meeting with some media executives.

He confirmed that NCDMB had complied fully with the Presidential Directive on Local Content Compliance Requirements, 2024 (EO 41), which sought to ensure that only local service companies that have domiciled proven capacities and capabilities can participate in oil

and gas tenders.

He also indicated that the NCDMB has reduced its touch points and fast-tracked projects approval processes, in compliance with the Presidential Directive on Reduction of Petroleum Sector Contracting Costs and Timelines, 2024 (EO 42).

The Presidential Directives and the Board's compliance are geared to attract new international and local investments, encourage speedy development of oil and gas projects and improve the Nigerian economy.

The Executive Secretary hinted on plans to launch a major initiative tagged 'Back to the creeks', explaining that the policy would take the impact and contribution of local content implementation to oil producing communities and other hinterlands across the country.

Responding to questions from journalists, the NCDMB boss dismissed insinuations that local content implementation increases the cost of producing crude oil in

Nigeria.

He clarified that the major drivers of increased cost of crude oil production are downtime and disruptions in operations caused by community issues or technical problems.

According to him, other challenges responsible for extraneous costs include the cost of providing security and the activities of briefcase contractors.

On the Board's strategies for enabling growth of the industry, Ogbe stated that NCDMB was working intently to create an enabling environment for international oil companies to take final investment decisions for new projects and was evolving policies to support indigenous oil and gas service companies.

Responding to a question on insurance, the NCDMB boss promised to revive the insurance services guidelines the Board signed in June 2022 with the National Insurance Commission (NIACOM), which would oblige the Nigerian oil and

gas industry to patronise the local insurance sector.

He acknowledged that the success of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act and the Nigerian Content 10-year strategic roadmap depends largely on public communication, awareness and support from key oil and gas stakeholders.

He also appreciated the media for projecting the activities and programmes of the Board and assured that cooperation with the media would be deepened under his leadership as the Executive Secretary.

In his remarks, the General Manager, Corporate Communications and Zonal Coordination, NCDMB, Mr. Esueme Dan Kikile, indicated that the breakfast meeting was organised to introduce the Executive Secretary formally to leading media stakeholders.

Other senior management of NCDMB that attended the breakfast meeting included the Director,

Legal Services, Mr. Naboth Onyesoh.

In his comments, Director, Corporate Services and Capacity Building, Dr. Ama Ikuru, charged media stakeholders to report Nigeria in a positive light, to attract investments in the oil and gas sector.

On his part, Director, Monitoring and Evaluation, Mr. Abdulmalik Halilu, who gave an update on the performance of the Nigerian Content Intervention Fund (NCIFund), rated the Fund's performance as over 90 per cent, judging by the percentage of access by qualified companies and repayment by the borrowers.

He equally hinted that the Executive Secretary had constituted a team to review the Community Contractors Fund, which is a poor performing product under the Nigerian Content Intervention Fund (NCIFund).

He expressed hope that an announcement would soon be made on the remodeling of that particular product, new partners and product papers.



Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Felix Ogbe

Also, Director, Projects Certification and Authorization, Abayomi Bamidele, highlighted the increased number of projects approved by the Board since it started implementing the Presidential Directive on Local Content.

EDUN: IN-COUNTRY FOOD PRODUCTION WILL TAME INFLATION, STRENGTHEN EXCHANGE RATE

Processing Zones (SAPZ-1) initiative to boost food production in Nigeria.

The minister spoke in Abuja on the first day of a two-day event to galvanise stakeholders, including Nigerian governors on the SAPZ-1 initiative meant to support the development of high food production areas to supply the domestic food market, create exportable surpluses and capacitate smallholder farmers to take advantage of the market demand created by the scheme.

The SAPZ-1 programme is currently in seven states, namely: Cross-River, Imo, Ogun, Oyo, Kaduna, Kano and Kwara and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and is intended to serve as a pilot phase, following which, it would be expanded to all the states of the federation based on the expression of interest by the sub-nationals.

The workshop aimed to deliberate on the existing challenges and forge an accelerated implementation plan to enable Nigeria achieve its food security agenda. The strategic focus is to set modalities for increased production of cassava, rice, maize, cocoa, tomatoes, and livestock amongst the designated SAPZ priority crops.

At the event, Edun restated that President Bola Tinubu's aim was to industrialise the country, ensure domestic production, seek value-added growth, create jobs and reduce poverty.

"We heard about the huge food import bill, and we are currently in a situation where we are having

to look at a stopgap importation in the very short term, although it's being very carefully choreographed to ensure that we do not destroy the incentives, and we do not disrupt domestic production, domestic farming, and domestic milling and food processing.

"But we need to produce enough food. The Minister for Agriculture and his team, and AfDB, as well as the Ministry of Finance meet daily currently, to ensure that the remainder of the wet season, which is being extended by climate change, and the dry season harvest, are hugely successful.

"Food is 50 per cent of the consumer price index. In fact, you would say food is part of the core index, but it has sort of become non-core, because it has become variable, become unpredictable.

"But you can imagine, we have inflation of over 30 per cent, but we know it's coming down, but you can imagine what a real successful food production outcome would do to bring down inflation. That would bring down interest rates, that would strengthen the exchange rate, and it would enable a basis for the private sector to invest even more because it would become affordable to borrow.

"So it is on the basis of successful production that we can now look at exports, that we can now look at the support to the trade balance, support to the foreign exchange reserves that agriculture can and does mean," he stated.

PDP ACCUSES INEC OF DOCTERING BVAS TO CONCEAL RIGGING AT EDO GUBERNATORIAL POLL

sives Congress (APC) and some unscrupulous police operatives to invade the INEC office in Edo State so as to cause confusion and frustrate the PDP from accessing these sensitive materials."

Ologungba said INEC's refusal to release the materials was in brazen affront of the order of the Edo State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal Holden at Benin City, dated 29th day of September, 2024, which ordered the Commission to grant the PDP and its candidate "unfettered access to and open up for inspection all electoral documents or any document in the custody of the National Chief Electoral Commissioner or any officer of the Commission/1st Respondent, particularly the Voter Registers, Ballot papers, the BVAS machines, Forms EC25B, EC25B(i) Forms EC40A and Forms EC40C which were utilized for the conduct of the Edo State Governorship election held on the 21st September 2024."

The PDP spokesman said the action of the INEC in Edo State validated reports of criminal connivance of some INEC officials with the APC to obstruct the course of justice and suppress evidence of election results which was clearly won by the PDP and its candidate.

According to Ologungba, "Information available to the PDP indicates that the heavily compromised INEC officials and the APC are working to

alter the data in the BVAS machines, results sheets, ballot papers and other vital information in favour of the defeated APC candidate.

"It is imperative to draw the attention of Nigerians and the International Community of a pattern by the INEC to continue to present itself as a threat to democracy against its mandate to promote democratic principles of free, fair and credible elections in line with the Constitution and extant electoral laws.

"This manipulative and provocative action by INEC and the APC is already causing apprehensions with the possibility of a breakdown of Law and Order as Nigerians are increasingly getting frustrated with the Commission."

The PDP, therefore, called on the INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, to immediately redeem the image of the Commission by ensuring the immediate release of the BVAS machines, the results sheets, ballot papers and other vital materials used for the election for inspection by our Party and candidate in compliance with the Order of the Tribunal.

"INEC and the APC must know that there is no way the PDP and the people of Edo State will allow the mandate freely given to our Party and candidate at the September 21, 2024 Edo State Governorship to be illegally transferred to the APC which was defeated at the election," he said.

Also speaking, the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, said the current phase wasn't without its challenges, ranging from constraints in project execution, delays in approval processes and procurement issues across various financiers.

According to him, the objective of the two-day workshop was to deliberate on the existing challenges and forge an accelerated implementation plan that will enable stakeholders achieve the president's food security agenda.

"The potential economic benefits of SAPZ programme acceleration, amongst others, will include some additional metric tons of food to the nation's food basket, 500,000 direct and indirect jobs to be created within the programme operations for project location and about 2.5 million temporary jobs to be created

along infrastructure development and related services.

"By design, the SAPZ will improve the yield of our staples from 5 to 10 per cent to about 50 per cent to 100 per cent increase and reduce post-harvest losses from 45 per cent to 20 per cent," he pointed out.

He added that the SAPZ programme was central to the agenda of Tinubu on food security, agro-industrialisation and inclusive economic growth.

The total cost for the SAPZ Program (Phase I) is estimated at \$538.05 million net of taxes. The AfDB will provide a Loan of \$160 million (29.7 per cent of total cost) together with an Africa Growing Together Fund (AGTF) loan of \$50 million (9.3 per cent).

Also, the IsDB and IFAD will provide parallel co-financing of \$150 million (27.9 per cent) and \$100

million (18.6 per cent), respectively. Additional resources (\$60 million, 11.1 per cent) will be mobilised through the Green Climate Fund (GCF) by IFAD from the IGREENFIN initiative. The federal and state governments will contribute \$18.05 million (3.4 per cent) both cash and in kind.

In his comments, the IFAD Country Director, Dede Ekoue listed the key actions to consider to include strengthening coordination at all levels, bolstering technical capacity with additional seasoned experts, addressing financial incentives, and continuing to ensure highly competitive recruitment to attract the best resource persons for this innovative yet complex programme.

Additionally, compliance by all actors with the financial agreement governing the programme's implementation—particularly regarding fiduciary and human resource

matters, Ekoue said, must be ensured.

In his speech, Director General of the AfDB, Nigeria Country Department, Dr Abdul Kamara, said the dialogue aimed at strengthening coordination among all key stakeholders, including the private sector to share ideas and lessons learned so far from the implementation of the programme.

"In phase one, we are financing with \$538 million," he said, stressing that the programme has four core components, namely support to the development of climate adapted infrastructure, improving agricultural productivity, job creation, and employment and improving livelihoods.

Despite the recent progress of implementation, he said there was still room for improvement, explaining that there was the need to speed up the programme.

TINUBU CONDEMNS VIOLENCE IN RIVERS, ORDERS IGP TO SECURE LGA OFFICES

The governor, who later spoke on Channels Television, also hinted at some of the peace moves he had made, including having to kneel for Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, many times in the overall interest of the state.

In obedience to the instructions of the president, the IGP ordered the Commissioner of Police, Rivers State Command, to promptly rise to the occasion and restore law and order in the state.

But former Deputy National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Chief Olabode George, asked the president to call the FCT minister to order to prevent anarchy in Rivers State.

That was as governors elected on the platform of PDP, yesterday, said they were proud of Fubara following his handling of the recent council elections in the state.

At the same time, elder statesman, Chief Edwin Clark, appealed to all residents of Rivers State to give peace a chance and allow democracy to flourish in the local government areas.

Responding to the tension in the state, the president, in a release by his adviser on information and strategy, Bayo Onanuga, instructed law enforcement agencies to bring the situation under control. He emphasised the need to ensure the security of public institutions.

Tinubu expressed concern over reports of arson and explosions in the state and urged all political actors to de-escalate the situation and discourage their supporters from engaging in violence or destructive actions.

According to the president, government facilities built with public funds must be safeguarded from vandalism. He stressed that self-help had no place in a democratic system, especially after 25 years of continuous democracy.

Tinubu stressed that the judiciary could settle all political disputes, and the outcome of the local government poll should not be an exception.

Fubara, who first spoke when he visited the Ikwerre Local Government Secretariat, in Isiooko, to see the level of damage, said politics should not degenerate to the level of killings and destruction of government facilities

built with tax payers' money.

The governor had visited the site to assess the damage, upon arrival from Akwa Ibom State, where he had joined other South-south governors and members of the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) to sympathise with Governor Umo Eno on the demise of his wife, Mrs Patience Umo Eno.

He expressed sadness over the incident at the council, questioning why the secretariat built by the immediate past chairman of the council, a legacy project, was being destroyed because of politics.

Fubara stated, "I am just coming in from Akwa Ibom where the governors of the South-south and also the Nigeria Governors' Forum went to pay a condolence to our brother, the governor of Akwa Ibom, who lost his wife. So, I said it will be proper to come and see for myself the incident that took place in Ikwerre local government council secretariat."

"I feel very sad seeing what has just happened in this council. I want to say this to the entire Rivers State: if you are called upon, play your politics with a sense of responsibility. We don't need to kill ourselves. My time will come, and I will leave. Do I need to bum the Government House?"

"This council secretariat was built by the immediate past chairman, and for me, we know the history of this council, how he sought for fund, and how it was executed.

"This is supposed to be a legacy project for him that whoever that is going to come after now will continue to remember that at a certain time, certain persons built this for the LGA. But, look at what we are seeing here today. Must we go low in politics?"

Fubara expressed disappointment that sponsored agents and enemies of the state used the opportunity of the withdrawal of the police by the IGP to unleash terror on the councils.

Speaking on Channels Television, he expressed worry over Tinubu's mention of his name alone in his statement on the destruction of local government secretariats in Rivers State.

Fubara said regarding the president's intervention, "I do not have any issue with it, but I am a bit concerned when my name was only

mentioned. The issue is very simple.

"It's as simple as ABC, everyone in Nigeria, everyone in Rivers State knows where this issue is coming from. It's not rocket science. We know what the issue is and the issue is not Fubara, it is not."

"I believe strongly that with the recent intervention of the Inspector General of Police, maybe we will have a breathing space."

"Maybe as a result of him pulling his men out of those secretariats, might be one of the reasons they (hoodlums) took advantage of the situation."

"But I will appeal that while the men are there, the elected officers should have the opportunity to do their work, at least, let them provide security for them, which was even what I was thinking of."

"I was never of the opinion that the police should pull out completely. No. When they said they were moving out, it was what allowed these miscreants to take advantage of the secretariats to destroy them."

He urged Wike to let go of any grip he desired to have on Rivers State and allow peace to reign in the oil-rich state.

The governor added, "I have all the guts to do these things. There is nothing that I have not done on this earth for peace to reign. I can tell you the number of times I have knelt to beg to allow this issue to go."

The governor said he had kept all "understanding" he had with the FCT minister to ensure peace in the state, but the issue had continued to escalate.

"There is nothing I have not done on this earth for peace to reign. I can tell you the number of times I have knelt to beg that let's allow this issue to go. I have done everything," Fubara said.

Asked what he would tell Wike if they were to meet, Fubara said, "I'll tell him that it has gotten to a point where he needs to let go. We need peace in this state."

"You don't necessarily need to win all the fights. At times, you just let go for the sake of the good people of Rivers State and the love that you have always professed for the state."

We need to secure the state.

"Fubara will leave tomorrow. Who knows who is going to come? It might be through him or another person, but we need to secure the state."

The governor said election was over and it was time for governance, urging the FCT minister to give peace a chance.

He stated, "What I am appealing is: everyone should sheathe their swords. Even to the minister, my oga (my boss), there is no need to destroy this state."

"He once ruled this state and the state was an envy of every other state. Another person is there now, what we need now is the support, after four years or eight years, who knows? I will also leave and someone else will take over. That should be the spirit."

"When it comes to the election period, you can fight and do whatever but now is the time for governance. We need all the support."

Fubara said all Nigerians knew that he had no hand in the destruction of local government secretariats. He stated that he sounded the alarm on Sunday evening when he swore in 23 newly elected council chairpersons in the state that some aggrieved political actors had mobilised to destabilise the state from Monday.

IGP Orders Police Commissioner to Restore Law, Order

The IGP ordered the Commissioner of Police in Rivers State to rise to the occasion and restore law and order in the state.

Egbetokun gave the order following the spate of violent confrontations and attacks at some local government secretariats, leading to destruction of government facilities in the state immediately after the unsealing of the secretariats.

He emphasised the police's commitment to maintaining law and order, upholding democratic principles, and fostering peace, unity, and progress across the country.

A statement by Force Public Relations Officer (PRO), Olumuyiwa Adejebi, said the IGP gave the order

Continued on page 29

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The Villa's Chief of Staff

It's okay to hanker after the career profile of former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, you had better excuse his current job, writes **Shola Oyeyipo**.

The office of the Chief of Staff to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has suddenly acquired a larger than life aura. The powers believed to be domicile in that office are now synonymous with that of the president himself. The progression of that office, through the window of time, started in recent years.

Rising from the backwaters of official obscurity, akin to the civil service rule of "being seen but not heard", the office of the chief of staff to the president is now one that many people would do anything – indeed go to any length – to occupy.

Although not a constitutional creation, its functions are largely at the discretion of the president, with direct supervision of his activities, personal staff, and security details.

Since 1999, when former President Olusegun Obasanjo introduced the idea patterned after the US presidency, Aso Rock Villa, has played host to a few persons as chief of staff to successive presidents. Each of them lived their time and left their marks in the sand of time.

From General Abdullahi Mohammed under Olusegun Obasanjo to Gbolade Osinowo under Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Mike Oghiadomhe and Jones Arogbofa under Goodluck Jonathan, Abba Kyari and Ibrahim Gambari under Muhammadu Buhari and now Femi Gbajabiamila, under the current president, Bola Tinubu, that office has been shaped largely by the content of the characters of the individual appointees.

Unfortunately, apart from the late Malam Abba Kyari, who was considered "too powerful" under Buhari and thus, received constant knocks and criticisms for doing his job and taking the flaks for his principal, none other comes close to Gbajabiamila in terms of attacks and constant machination of antics designed exclusively to get rid of him.

Today, Gbajabiamila is one of the most popular persons in the country – holding office or not. This, sadly, is not on account of the fact that he was not doing his job well. But essentially, because he has in his hands what several other people desperately covet.

Perhaps, it comes with the job and the territory. But the recent interpretations accorded an otherwise innocuous statement by the presidency, which last week hinted at possible cabinet reshuffle was rather discrediting.

Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, while addressing State House correspondents in Abuja, said Tinubu would be aided in his decision by public opinions that have been empirically extracted.

In company with another Senior Special Assistant to the President on Digital and New Media, O'tega Ogra, Onanuga said there was no timeline to when Tinubu would reshuffle his cabinet, which he inaugurated in August, 2023.

"I don't have any timeline. The president has expressed his desire to reshuffle his cabinet, and he will do it. I don't know whether he's going to do it before October 1, but he will surely do it.

"So that's what I will say. He has not given us any timeline he'll do it, but he will do it. He has expressed his plan he wants to do it," he said.

Ogra would further shed more light on the planned exercise. He explained that the president would be guided by an empirical process, making reference to the performance indicator of everyone.

This, of course, was being coordinated by none other than the Special Adviser to the President on Policy Coordination and head of the Central Delivery Coordination Unit, Ms. Hadiza Bala Usman.

He added: "We also need to realise that the president's decision to reshuffle is also based on empirical evidence. He said it during the retreat for the ministers that they were going to have periodic reviews, and



Gbajabiamila... taking all in his stride

the decisions that are extracted from these reviews will be used to make that final decision.

"I know he's got a couple of reports, and as Mr. Onanuga said, when he's ready to do that, I believe he will," he said, adding that the president has also instructed his ministers to actively promote the accomplishments of his administration.

"The president has given an order to all his ministers at the last Federal Executive Council (FEC) meeting to go out there and speak about the activities of his administration.

"Some of them have been media shy, television shy, radio shy, and he wants them to overcome all that and go out there and speak about what they have been doing.

"Because the feeling out there is that government is not doing enough and the government has been doing a lot. It is up to them to go out there and blow their own trumpet. They should go out there and talk about what their ministries have been doing," he added.

Nothing in the statement above suggested that the president had hinted at the possibility of dropping any of his appointees. At best, the statement was big on the word "reshuffle" and not "shake-up" even though they both mean changes to the cabinet.

However, while the former presu-

poses moving people around to improve the effectiveness of the government, the latter indicates a more chaotic situation, which suggests dropping some appointees outright, albeit for the same purpose. Still, it would not be out of place if he drops anyone as he deems fit.

But the brazen misinterpretation of facts in some of the reports, insinuating that Gbajabiamila was top on the list of those who had been penciled in to be relieved of their duties, was not only curious, but further exposed the reality of the forces that seemed to have piled up against the chief of staff since he assumed office.

For context, the expanded work of the chief of staff varies from president to president. Aside from the ability to exercise discretion, in addition to the rudimentary responsibilities of the office, he functions majorly at the whims of his principal.

In the case of Gbajabiamila, he had so earned his principal's confidence that the president once deemed it expedient to come out to defend and as well reiterate his confidence in him, at the peak of the attacks against him.

This happened at one of the Federal Executive Council (FEC) meetings in October 2023, during which Tinubu also set the ground rules for those eligible to attend the meeting.

"Let me reiterate that a lot of stories are going around about what is happening. I've told everyone that I can make mistakes. They're bound to air them out and correct them.

"Perfection is of God. I have confidence

in the integrity of my chief of staff. All campaigns of calumny and insinuations should stop. The buck stops here.

"If I make a mistake, I'm ready to own up to it. We're all joining hands to fight corruption, and we want to enforce the law with you," he explained.

Even if it was a façade (which it didn't really seem like), the fact that the president came out to stoutly defend his chief of staff was enough to douse insinuations and quell the vacuous struggle for that office, intended to viciously pull down the current occupant, Gbajabiamila.

The office of the chief of staff is not elective, and therefore, the struggle to acquire it is not just unsightly but also dishonourable. This insatiable lust for power accentuated by poverty of ambition, has peaked in this case, sadly, with disturbing consequences on the polity and governance.

Isn't it strange, therefore, that a chief of staff has many jobs on his hands and yet, in the same stroke, has none? Even worse, it is such a thankless call to service that earns the individual a legion of enemies as against medals. So, what about the vain struggle?

In fact, at the state level, many governors had long adopted the idea of abandoning their chief of staff to make very good use of their deputy chief of staff, for personal reasons, instead. If the chief of staff was indispensable, why would they travel that route in the first place?

It is, therefore, interesting to note how some people arrogate so much power to this office and rustle up huge imaginations about the identity of the occupant, sometimes beyond his own grasp.

For instance, how in anyone's wildest imagination is the chief of staff responsible for the state of economy or the rising costs of living? In what capacity, beyond advisory, would a chief of staff give instructions or directive to ministers, the CBN governor, heads of parastatals and agencies outside of the personal staff of the president?

Yet, the impression created out there by the political hawks is that the chief of staff is the alternate president, a dip that could equally create a needless friction between the principal and his staff, where maturity and trust are lacking. This battle for space could even be extended to the vice-president, who might think he'd been shoved aside for the chief of staff to thrive. It's a dangerous power gambit!

For Gbajabiamila, there's no gainsaying that the last 17 months must be the longest in his over two decades of public service and career. He has waltzed through some of the most demeaning allegations of corruption to being tagged the most powerful man in the country, in obvious moves to pit him against his boss.

These ungodly orchestrations by the vermin in the corridors of power are enough to mess with his mental health and emotional stability, especially for a man with grownup kids, whose friends also read some of the "devastating lies" and are wont to ask relevant questions.

Unfortunately, for both his real and perceived enemies, while Gbajabiamila does not appear desperate, his fate is clearly not in their hands either, but his principal, who once publicly stood for him, based on convictions.

It also doesn't mean they would back off if they failed in their current adventure. It is just characteristic of the filthy power play in a black society, where every approach is considered fair, so long the end justifies the means. They are likely to moot and sculpt other more devastating plots in no time.

Until the president decides what he ultimately does with his appointees, some of whom are being reportedly considered for reshuffling in the coming days, the political jobbers currently strutting the turf and fretting their hours on dead wishes, should, at least, let Gbajabiamila breathe?

It is, therefore, interesting to note how some people arrogate so much power to this office and rustle up huge imaginations about the identity of the occupant, sometimes beyond his own grasp.



Grand Award Night '24

for the award presentation of The Nigeria Prizes and celebration of our 35th year of incorporation and 25th year of operations

THEME



Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu
Assistant Director General, World Health Organization and former Director General for Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

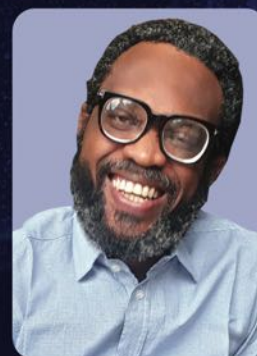
KEYNOTE SPEAKER

TOPIC:
*Inspiring a Future for Nigerians:
Unlocking Excellence and Supporting
National Progress*

2024 CONTENDERS FOR THE LITERATURE PRIZE



Ndidi Chiazor-Enemor
A Father's Pride



Familoni Oluranti Olubunmi
The Road Does Not End



Uchekukwu Peter Umezurike
Wish Maker

11th Oct 2024

Eko Convention Centre
Eko Hotel and Suites

5:00pm prompt



HOSTS

Dr. Philip Mshelbila
MD/CEO, Nigeria LNG Limited

Mr. Olakunle Osobu
Deputy Managing Director

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PLAYING POLITICS WITH TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Muftwang's suspension of the Rekna of Bashar is unfortunate, contends Ibrahim Tagdan



THE BAN ON SACHET WATER

Inyene Nkanta argues that the Lagos State government ban is rather extreme



EDITORIAL

THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN RIVERS STATE



CHIDI ANSELM ODINKALU argues the need for judges to be upright



A SCANDALISED FEDERAL HIGH COURT

On 7 June 1911, the High Court of Australia decided a very interesting case. It arose from a publication issued two months earlier, on 7 April 1911, by a newspaper called *The Mercury*, published from Hobart, in Tasmania. Under the title "A Modest Judge", the newspaper took aim at Mr. Justice Higgins, a senior judge of the High Court of Australia who was also the first President of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.

According to the records, in a case presided over by Justice Higgins in the Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, a lawyer, Mr. Starke, accused a labour union of impunity, alleging that "they are encouraged.... by the Government of this country." On hearing this, Justice Higgins prohibited the lawyer from uttering such words. When counsel protested his right to vigorously advance the case of his client, the judge retorted "[Y]ou are not entitled to speak disrespectfully of those above us." Here was the jurisprudence of Kabiyesi articulated with forceful clarity more than three quarters of a century before it arrived in Ligali Ayorinde's High Court of Lagos in 1989.

This was the factual background to the article that was to become the centrepiece of the proceedings in the High Court of Australia in which the newspaper said of Mr. Justice Higgins that he was "we believe, what is called a political Judge, that is, he was appointed because he had well served a political party. He, moreover, seems to know his position, and does not mean to allow any reflections on those to whom he may be said to be indebted for his judgeship."

The Attorney-General of Australia charged the newspaper with the crime of "scandalizing the judiciary." Dismissing the charge, Samuel Walker Griffith, Australia's inaugural Chief Justice, who presided over the proceedings had this to say: "I am not prepared to accede to the proposition that an imputation of want of impartiality to a Judge is necessarily a contempt of Court. On the contrary, I think that, if any Judge of this Court or of any other Court were to make a public utterance of such character as to be likely to impair the confidence of the public, or of suitors or any class of suitors in the impartiality of the Court in any matter likely to be brought before it, any public comment on such an utterance, if it were a fair comment, would, so far from being a contempt of Court, be for the public benefit, and would be entitled to similar protection to that which comment upon matters of public interest is entitled under the law of libel."

The crime of "scandalizing the judiciary" has largely fallen into disuse. It assumed that the people who scandalize courts were always others rather than judicial staff, or even judges themselves.



In Nigeria, the people most likely to scandalize the judiciary these days sit in most cases as judges and magistrates.

In her first official act as the 18th indigenous occupant of the office on Monday, 30 September, at a special session of the Supreme Court to conduct the annual ritual of inducting the latest set of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs), new Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, warned that under her watch, obedience to court orders will be "non-negotiable. No individual or institution, irrespective of their standing, will be permitted to treat the judgements of our courts with levity or disregard. The Judiciary stands resolute in ensuring that the sanctity of our legal decisions is upheld."

Regrettably, Madam CJN labours under the misapprehension that it is always possible or easy to know what the order is that is to be obeyed. The joke is that court orders these days are so lucrative that many judges make them – in good old Nigeria-speak – double-double. Responsibility for this sorry state lies mostly with the Federal High Court.

The ancient city of Kano now has two Emirs, one state and the other federal after a rogue Federal High Court judge decided to take chieftaincy into the federal realm.

Edo State has two Deputy Governors too.

By dint of the judicial labours of Peter Lifu, a judge, the Federal High Court also attempted to impose two separate dates on Rivers State for the conduct of Local Government elections after Chigozi Igwe, a judge of the High Court of Rivers State, had issued a considered decision setting 5 October as the date for the election. Rivers State Governor, Sim Fubara, acknowledged Peter Lifu's hard work by handing him the moniker of "that justice that gave that fraudulent judgment."

This is not the first time the Federal High Court will gratuitously constitute itself into an appellate forum to review without benefit of the records of proceedings and with the practised ill-will of a political hit-job dressed up in judicial robes, decisions of State High Courts. Nor is it the first time that the Federal High Court will convert itself into a court of unlimited jurisdiction that it is not at the expense of a State High Court which, under the Constitution, is indeed

the only court of unlimited jurisdiction.

This Federal High Court has become the place where the law falls into disrepute and Lady Justice suffers repeat rape.

This has become the routine of the Federal High Court under the leadership of its current Chief Judge who enables a line up of judges of the court who clearly seem to be able to habitually scandalize the judiciary without consequence.

Not even the Inspector-General of Police who must provide the steel behind the orders of courts in Nigeria, has much regard for them. The most charitable that can be said of Kayode Egbetokun is that he is a political IGP. For most of his professional life, Mr. Egbetokun has been the Aide-de-camp to the man who now occupies the presidency. Even as IGP, the habits of a lifetime as ADC die hard. In that role, his brief is to make his principal happy. If a court order gets in the way of that, it is for CJN Kekere-Ekun to worry about that.

The people who have the gumption to call out such conspiracy of conceit become the butt of a line-up of professional hirelings defending the habitual malefaction of those who supervise judicial malpractice as standard procedure. One example of such faceless hirelings is the fly-by-night entity that calls itself "Global Network for Justice and Equity." There's the even more risible "Centre for Reform and Advocacy". Others are plainly disreputable. One of the more enthusiastic among that species, a lawyer, has a quite shameful rapsheet with the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee. It reflects the sad state of the judiciary whose orders CJN Kekere-Ekun swears by, that such are the only specimens these days who can now be counted upon to speak up in defence of the authority of the branch of government that she must lead.

Some lawyers, judges and politicians would like to see the new CJN shut down all criticism of judicial malfeasance, requiring them all to go to the National Judicial Council. Regrettably, she cannot do that without bringing manifest disrepute upon herself. As David Pannick KC reminds us: "where criticism [of judges] is wrong or misguided, one should have the confidence in the strength of the institution to demonstrate by its conduct that it serves a valuable function and does its job well."

Above all, that is very much like insisting that Martin Luther, instead of posting his 95 Theses on the gate of that church in Wittenberg as he did, must hand them to the Pope. Surely, there would have been no Reformation to speak of. Meanwhile, we await the next judicial scandal of a pre-destined order on Rivers State to be issued by the Federal High Court.

A lawyer and a teacher, Odinkalu can be reached at chidi.odinkalu@tufts.edu

Muftwang's suspension of the Rekna of Bashar is unfortunate, contends IBRAHIM TAGDAN

PLAYING POLITICS WITH TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Great political leaders have over the years shown that it is more expedient to focus on decisions that foster unity among their people than take actions which could cause divisions through stoking the embers of discord.

It is with this consideration that leaders usually avoid undue partisanship in their actions but become intentional about enhancing unity and cohesion among the populace.

Rather than toe this line however, Governor Caleb Muftwang of Plateau State, who by learning and experience is a product of justice and fairness, appears to be treading the wrong path by importing



partisanship into a matter as sensitive as the choice of a traditional ruler, which process has since been concluded even before he assumed office as governor.

As far as the people of Bashar District in Wase Local Government Area of Plateau State, and indeed the entire state can recall, the process that led to the selection of the Rekna of Bashar, His Royal Highness, Alhaji Abdullahi Idris Isa, following the demise of Alhaji Adamu Idris in September 2022, is a settled matter. This has been concluded following all laid down procedures.

It is to the credit of the kingmakers that all matters pertaining to the selection of the Second Class chief were settled, and the unanimous choice of Alhaji Abdullahi Idris Isa was made public without anyone challenge to the process in a court of law. If there were flaws, some would have gone to court, as is usual with such keenly contested positions.

The exhumation of the matter two years after it has been concluded and more than a year into the reign of the current Rekna through a petition by some faceless individuals, and the manner in which the state government attended to it with military dispatch raises suspicion as to the intentions of both the government and those behind the petition.

As observed earlier, the matter, having been concluded and sealed with the imprimatur of the then governor, Simon Lalong in 2022 was unanimous, undisputed and without complaints to warrant a revisit at any point in time.

But even if there were issues concerning the selection process, that such matter was not raised until after two years should have, under normal circumstances, made the matter status barred, and therefore unfit for arbitration or adjudication.

It is well known that even in the election of the Nigerian president, which is the highest political office in the land, the time allowed for filing of petitions does not flow endlessly but is confined to 21 days after election.

It is therefore curious that Governor Muftwang, who is a lawyer and hence expected to be versed in legal procedure and administration of justice, is going against this principle by allowing himself to be lured into taking certain actions that could question his expected fair-mindedness as a leader, and as an officer in the temple of justice.

Secondly, the speed with which the state government responded to the questionable petition by suspending the Rekna even before the 'petition'

would be responded to, claiming that it took the action in order to prevent the traditional ruler from interfering with investigations into the matter, raises further suspicion.

The Rekna was not among the kingmakers who did the selection in 2022, and will certainly not be the one to constitute the committee that will look into the matter or decide those to appear as witnesses. Hence, it is unclear how he would have interfered with any investigation into the process of his selection that should warrant his suspension from office.

Suspending the Rekna appears to be a predetermined action to penalise the traditional ruler and ridicule him before his people, regardless of whatever the outcome of the investigation would be.

This is also another case of gross violation of the principle of justice, as it is similar to punishing a defendant even before a matter is heard, and determined.

At this stage, it will be pertinent to remind the governor that when his election was challenged by his opponent, he was asked to vacate his office even when the appeal court ruled in favour of his opponent, but he was allowed to continue as governor until the Supreme Court gave its final verdict.

Asking the Rekna to proceed on suspension, therefore, is akin to putting the cart before the horse as it has already imposed on him a penalty even before the hearing of the matter.

Discerning minds expect that having benefited from the fairness of the law, Governor Muftwang should extend the same measures to citizens of his state regardless of how strongly he feels about an issue.

This is more so because the Rekna has not been accused of any wrong doing. What the petitioners allege has to do with the process of his selection to the stool, a process which he, just like any other contestant for the throne submitted to. It bears restating that the petition was only against the process of his selection but has nothing to do with his person.

Governor Muftwang cannot allow himself to be used by people who are afraid of fair competition, and who lack the capacity for winning public trust but attempt getting through the backdoor what they could not get via a transparent process.

It is trite that once a selection process is concluded, it remains sealed and incontrovertible while the process which was not challenged ab initio cannot be exhumed at the whims of any individual.

The governor will do well to crosscheck the fact that all the traditional rulers that had been sent on suspension were due to acts considered as gross misconduct and not through a revisit of the processes that threw them up.

The groundswell of suspicion in this respect is that the governor may have chosen to be blind to all these facts because the Rekna Bashar is a brother to the former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Ahmed Idris Wase, who is known to be the engine room of the opposition All Progressives Congress in Plateau State, the governor being of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

As the local government election is set to hold on Wednesday, it is being rumoured that it is because of the influence of the former deputy speaker who has never lost an election since 2007, but has been delivering Wase to the APC and its legacy parties that he is being indirectly hounded.

No doubt, Wase has consistently shown that he calls the shot in the entire local government and may deliver the local government to the APC again in the elections, but that is entirely a different matter which should not have anything to do with the traditional stool of Bashar.

If, however, this is what is driving Governor Muftwang to treat the traditional ruler so unfairly, then it is unfortunate. Because, this will definitely send a signal to the people that the governor does not respect whatever they cherish and is only out to pursue partisan interests, even at the detriment of their collective well-being.

Ibrahim writes from Dengi, Kanam local government area, Plateau State

INYENE NKANTA argues that the Lagos State government ban is rather extreme



THE BAN ON SACHET WATER

Recently, the Lagos State Government announced intentions to ban sachet water, commonly known as pure water and other single-use plastics beginning January 2025.

This decision is part of a broader environmental effort to address the significant plastic waste problem, which clogs drainage systems, contributes to flooding, and harms marine ecosystems. According to what I read, the government is yet to finalize specific alternatives to replace sachet water and other plastics. Although, they have started consulting with stakeholders including manufacturers and waste management groups to develop sustainable packaging alternatives.

As a Circular Economy expert, I am aware and conscious of the environmental importance of reducing waste in Nigeria, particularly in Lagos State. This is what I argue for as a Circular Economy researcher. But I also understand the economic and societal consequences of blatant prohibitions like this one. The government ban on sachet water seems a little extreme to me, particularly when there are no immediate alternative solutions and the timing is rather too short to implement this. Here are some of the reasons why I think, it is a little too extreme;

One, Accessibility and Affordability: Sachet water is often a vital source of affordable drinking water in many communities in Nigeria. Same, with majority of households in Lagos State. A ban could disproportionately impact low-income groups who rely on sachet water for daily hydration.

Two, Economic Impact: The sachet water industry supports a wide range of jobs, from small scale producers to informal vendors. A sudden ban could cause job losses and negatively impact livelihoods without providing alternative solutions or transitional support.

Three, Insufficient Infrastructure: In many areas in Lagos State, clean, piped water systems are either inadequate, unreliable and even not available. Sachet water serves as a stopgap solution, and without addressing this underlying issue, the ban may cause unintended hardships on the population.

Four, Waste Management Gaps: Rather than banning sachet water, the government could focus on improving waste collection and recycling systems, which would be a circular economy friendly approach. Promoting the collection, reuse, or recycling of sachet waste would help reduce pollution while keeping this accessible water supply available for majority of Lagosians.

As a Nigerian, who is a Circular Economy expert/researcher. I am advocating that the Lagos State government should focus on a more balanced approach towards this ban. Here are some of my suggestions for a more balanced approach;

- Phased Reduction: Gradually reducing the use of sachet water while introducing sustainable alternatives. For example, rather than having an abrupt ban, a gradual phase out of sachet water will give time for: i. Developing alternatives, such as affordable, reusable containers or bottled water made from biodegradable materials. ii. Improving infrastructure, such as reliable piped water supply or communal water dispensers in areas that rely heavily on sachet water.

- Promoting Innovation and Circular Economy Solutions: Governments can give some incentives towards innovation by encouraging companies to invest in biodegradable packaging, eco-friendly alternatives or alternative water delivery systems.

By investing in research and development, businesses can contribute to reducing waste without losing their customer base.

Additionally, government can introduce Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies where producers take responsibility for the collection and recycling of sachets. This can create a closed loop system where materials are continuously reused.

- Education and Waste Management: Focus on education around waste disposal, recycling programs and product take back schemes.

Government can build a Waste Management Capacity which will likely increase investments in waste management systems. Further more, government can introduce a community based recycling initiatives, where local groups collect and recycle sachets. Last but not the least,



government can create public awareness campaigns to educate people about proper disposal and recycling methods. This can create a behavioral shift towards responsible waste management.

Let's look at some of the Economic and Social Considerations. The emphasis of the potential economic fallout of an immediate ban cannot be overlooked as this ban will cause job loss and disruption in the informal economy. Therefore, it is imperative that the Lagos State government invest in retraining and reskilling programs for those affected, helping them transition into new roles in the water distribution system and the recycling industry. Additionally, there is need to support the small businesses to adapt to the new regulations by providing financial assistance or subsidies for eco-friendly packaging.

In conclusion, I believe that these approach can foster a cleaner environment while being mindful of economic and social realities.

The Lagos State government is able to protect both the environment and the economic well-being of those dependent on the sachet water industry. This creates a more holistic, sustainable solution that aligns with circular economy principles.

Nkanta, PhD, is a lecturer in Circular Economy, Sustainability and Entrepreneurship University of the West of Scotland

Editor, Editorial Page **PETER ISHAKA**

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EDITORIAL

THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN RIVERS STATE

There must be a limit to meaningless politics and brigandage

The outcome of the local government elections held last Saturday in Rivers State showcases the superficiality of our political party architecture. That a governor can literally commandeer people into a party platform and deploy it to a major electoral victory in so short a time says much about the abnormality of our party politics and the absence of genuine democratic culture in Nigeria. It also shows the charade that local government elections have become in Nigeria. But we align ourselves with the position of former President Goodluck Jonathan that the lingering political crisis in Rivers State "is a cause for serious concern for everyone, especially lovers of democracy and all actors within the peace and security sector of our nation."

Rivers State has been engulfed in crisis since last October after some lawmakers loyal to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Minister, Nyesom Wike initiated impeachment proceedings against Governor Siminalayi Fubara. The power tussle between the governor and his predecessor (and former godfather) has since split the 31-member assembly into two warring factions. That development led to the bombing of a section of the state assembly complex. Meanwhile, Fubara has spent most of his time mired in political survival at the expense of governance and development of the state. Similarly, Wike has spent more time on the politics of Rivers State than on his primary assignment in Abuja.

It is more unfortunate that the judiciary has allowed itself to be dragged into the crisis by issuing too many conflicting orders while the approach of the police has been partisan and ignoble. But it is Fubara and Wike that must give peace a chance. The personal interest of individual politicians must have limits, and the pursuit of self interest should be enlightened.

Before last Saturday's local government elections,



The personal interest of individual politicians must have limits, and the pursuit of self interest should be enlightened

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the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state had secured a judgment from a Federal High Court in Abuja restraining the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) from releasing voters' registers to the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC). The judgment also restrained the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, from providing security for the elections. But citing a judgment of the Supreme Court, which ordered that democratically elected officials must govern all the local governments in the country and a judgment of the Rivers State High Court, Fubara insisted that the elections must hold. Though the police withdrew their services on the pretext of obeying a court order, the elections were held in a largely peaceful atmosphere and winners have been declared.

We do not believe that any of the parties to the crisis in Rivers State is acting in pursuit of the public good. Yet, there must be a limit to meaningless politics and brigandage.

As a former governor, Wike must create the right environment for his successor to work. Similarly, Fubara cannot continue to conduct the business of government in contempt of the state legislature, the engine room of democracy. For more than one year now, the various challenges that confront Rivers State, like the rest of the country, are worsening because those who should provide leadership are fighting over control of public resources and 'political structure'. As things stand, the people are the ultimate losers.

As President Jonathan has pointed out, this crisis has serious national security implications. Rivers remains one of the most strategic states in the country. It is the cosmopolitan home base of the nation's oil and gas industry. It is also home to the nation's second most important sea access and marine economy. Unfortunately, with an embattled governor, and in the absence of a functioning legislature, a total breakdown of law and order is not too far away.

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

GOVERNMENT COLLEGE LAGOS AT 50

Government College Lagos (GCL) is celebrating 50 years of its existence. For those connected with the school, it's a time to clink glasses in joyous celebration.

But behind the façade of smiles for photo ops was an unsavoury prelude to the celebration. Only a few weeks to this milestone, the Board of Trustees (BOT) of GCL Old Boys Association (GCLOBA) and the Executive were muscle-flexing thereby threatening the event. It reminded me that the Association is indeed a microcosm of Nigeria. In the end, the love of school triumphed over personal ego and ambition. I also hope for Nigeria, that the love of country triumphs over personal ego and ambition.

The week-long celebration was packed with activities. One of them is the Founders Day Lecture. The Chairman of the Day, Senator Tokunbo Abiru, a member of the 1980 Class set struck a chord in his speech. He said, "The separation between public and private schools has widened, with the children of elites attending private institutions far removed from the experiences of the average Nigerian child. The decline in public education has further deepened this divide, leaving many without access to the quality education that was once a given."

Today, it is as if there is contempt for public education. Those who attended public schools feel ashamed to make their children do the same. Some put their children in private schools even if to keep up with the Joneses. Abiru continued: "So, the question we must ask ourselves is: how can we restore the pride of Government College, Lagos, and schools like it? How do we rebuild an education system that brings

students from different backgrounds together and prepares them for the future?" To this end, he built for the school a state-of-the-art STEM Lab full with robotics the type you can only see in Silicon Valley in the US. The place is free for graduates and students and equips teachers with modern teaching methodologies. This adds to the school's modern language laboratory used by students of languages in institutions of higher learning.

The College too has taken a big facelift. From the decrepit buildings that were there since its inception to ultramodern structures and facilities that make Old Boys brim with pride. The Old Boys of the school played a part in the renovation of the structures but not without acknowledging the role of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Princess Adejoke-Orelope Adefulire. The Global President of Government College Lagos Old Boys Association, Rear Admiral Leye Jaiyeola (Rtd), commended the school's benefactors in this regard.

Renowned professor of intellectual property, Professor Bankole Shodipo, SAN, who is also an alumnus of GCL delivered the keynote lecture entitled, "Living a life of legacy."

Government College Lagos (GCL), was established on 23rd September 1974 by the military government of Brigadier General Mobolaji Johnson. At that time the late Chief Adeniran Ogunsanya was the Commissioner of Education in the State.

The College was among the first five Government Colleges in Lagos State as established in 1974 and they were founded to compete with the unity schools of the federal government known as Federal Gov-

ernment Colleges. They were famously nicknamed the IBILE from the first letters of the local governments. The five schools were Government College Lagos, representing Lagos Island; Government College Ojo which represented Badagry division; Government College Ikorodu, representing Ikorodu division; Government College Agege for the Lagos Mainland division and Government College Ketu, for the Epe division.

As its 1989 set, I recall with nostalgia after leaving the Elizabeth Fowler Memorial Primary School in Surulere, I was informed I had been offered a place in Government College Lagos. The first sign that there was something unique about the school was its only boys thing. Another was its white uniform; a colour that represents purity. Because of GCL, till date, no matter what colour I am wearing, I would never sit on any surface without first ensuring they are clean. When unsure, I had a handkerchief to place on it. I cringe at the sight of people sitting on any surface without even checking.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of GCL is its motto: Knowledge is light. The opposite of knowledge is ignorance or if you like, darkness. Paraphrasing James Wilson the founder of the Economist, knowledge (light) presses forward against an unworthy, timid ignorance (darkness) that obstructs humanity's progress. As a medical doctor today, GCL stands as my foundation. It was there I first experienced the "light" that equipped me for independent study.

Dr Cosmas Odoemena, Consultant Family Physician, and Fellow of the West African College of Physicians, Lagos

LAWYER

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2024

A THIS  DAY WEEKLY PULLOUT



SIEC, INEC or a Combination, for Credible Local Government Elections?

IN THIS EDITION



Whether Failure to Give Notice or Payment in Lieu Renders Termination Invalid

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Fapohunda, SAN, to Lead Review of Laws of the Federation

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QUOTABLES



'If there is a situation where a Judge is found to have ex-parte orders prepared in advance, such a Judge should be reported to the NJC, and necessary action will be taken. It isn't fair on the Judiciary, when these allegations are made and nothing is done to substantiate them....' - **Honourable Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, GCON, Chief Justice of Nigeria**



'Corruption is not our problem in Nigeria; it is impunity.' - **Dele Farotimi, Lawyer**



Yahaya Bello to Face Fresh Charges

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Issues Before the Law Review Committee

Committee to Review the Laws of the Federation 2004

The news that the **Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, SAN (AGF)**, has set in motion a Committee chaired by former **Ekiti State Attorney-General, Olawale Fapohunda, SAN (our Columnist, "Serious Matters")**, to review the Laws of the Federation which were last audited and updated in 2004, is not just welcome, but timeous. Aside from the fact that we still have laws that prescribe a fine of N20 upon conviction (which amount was still ridiculous in 2004), some laws are simply outdated, irrelevant/overtaken by events, while others are inconsistent with the provisions of the **1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended)(the Constitution)**.

Outdated Laws

Take the **Stamp Duties Act (SDA)**, it has some somewhat outdated punishments for various offences, prescribing fines of N20, N200, N1,000 and the like. For instance, Section 25 of the SDA prescribes a penalty of a N20 fine for denying or obstructing access of authorised Inspectors to examine any document chargeable with stamp duty, to ascertain that it is in full compliance with the SDA. Today, can you even purchase one TomTom sweet or kolanut with N20? I doubt it. Similarly, Section 13(1)(b) of the **National Youth Service Corps Act (NYSC Act)** inter alia prescribes a fine of N2,000 for those who fail to show up for NYSC as directed by the Act. Some other laws are no longer applicable, and need to be expunged from the Laws of Federation completely.

Laws that are Inconsistent with the Constitution

Last week, I discussed the inconsistency of Section 396(7) of the **Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015 (ACJA)** which allowed a Judge who has been elevated to a higher court to complete part-heard criminal matters, so as not to delay criminal justice, but is contrary to Sections 253, 258 & 273 of the Constitution. It was initially struck down by Gabriel Kolawole J (now JCA) and subsequently, declared null and void by virtue of its inconsistency with the Constitution, by the Supreme Court in **Ude Jones Udeogu v FRN, Orji Uzor Kalu & Slok Nig. Ltd (2020) LPELR-57034(SC)**.

The Law Review Committee, must examine all the existing laws with a toothpick. And, the truth of the matter is that, even if there isn't going to be holistic redrawing of the Constitution presently, there may be need for some constitutional amendments for perfect synergy between the Constitution and Statute, for what the country wants to achieve with its legal framework.

For instance, Section 179(2) of the Constitution sets out the requirements for a Candidate in a Gubernatorial election with two or more Candidates, to be deemed to have been duly elected. And, even though Section 78 of the Constitution donates power to INEC to conduct elections, INEC must do so within the ambit of the Constitution. If for a valid reason INEC has to declare an election inconclusive, then there should be a clear proviso to Section 179(2) of the Constitution (and other similar provisions) allowing it, because the conditions for declaration as Governor in Section 179(2) are clear, unequivocal and categorical. They cannot be varied by the EA, subsidiary legislation or INEC Guidelines, because it is trite that a law cannot be used to amend the provisions of the Constitution; Section 9 of the Constitution sets out the way and manner in which the grundnorm can be amended.

The scenario that played out in the 2018 Osun Gubernatorial election, is a prime example in this regard. Senator Ademola Adeleke had already satisfied the conditions set out in Section 179(2) of the Constitution to be declared as the duly elected Governor of Osun State. But, then, INEC declared the election inconclusive, making it appear as if INEC's decision is superior to Section 179(2) of the Constitution. This cannot be so, as Section 1(1) of the Constitution clearly declares the supremacy of the grundnorm and its bindingness on all authorities and persons throughout Nigeria, which naturally includes INEC that is a creation of the same Constitution by virtue of its Section 153(1)(f). In **Saraki v FRN (2016) LPELR-40013(SC) per Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, JSC (now CJN)**, the Supreme Court confirmed the Constitution as the **"supreme law of the land" and "the basic law from which all other laws of the society derive their validity"**.

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The Advocate



"Aside from the fact that we still have laws that prescribe a fine of N20 upon conviction...some laws are simply outdated, irrelevant/overtaken by events, while others are inconsistent with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution..."

Last year, there was a hot debate on whether the Minister of Arts and Culture, Hanatu Musawa should be appointed, because she hadn't quite completed her NYSC programme. But, was she really doing anything wrong? On the face of it, it was easy for all to say she must complete her NYSC, before she was made a Minister. But, constitutionally, NYSC is not a requirement for a Ministerial appointment. Section 147(5) of the Constitution simply provides that a Ministerial appointee must be qualified for election as a member of the House of Representatives. The qualifications and disqualifications for election to the House of Representatives are stated in Sections 65(1)(b), (2)(a) & (b) & 66 of the Constitution respectively, and there's no mention of the completion of NYSC in those provisions. In fact, in terms of education, all that is required is education up to at least School Certificate level or its equivalent, and School Certificate level defined in Section 318 of the Constitution is as low as Primary School Leaving Certificate - in short, NYSC is not required.

Section 2(1) of the NYSC Act sets out those who must do NYSC, while Section 2(2) thereof lists the exceptions. It may be best to address the issue of Ministerial appointments in the exceptions, since the matter of Ministerial Appointees and NYSC may be becoming a recurring decimal. There was also a controversy in the case of former Finance Minister, Kemi Adeosun. Or maybe it was just a ruse to get her out of office! Of course, I have always argued that the bar of educational qualifications for elective officers should be lifted, and that Primary School Leaving Certificate is definitely not equivalent to attending School up to School Certificate Level. It is rather bizarre and inexplicable to place an impediment on educated political office holders, by insisting they must have completed the NYSC programme, when their barely educated counterparts only have to attend Primary School to qualify for the same jobs. Anyway, it appears that things

like merit, intelligence and education are no longer appreciated in Nigeria; the more unintelligent and uneducated you are, the more progress you can make!

Laws Must be for the Good Government of Nigeria

Though there is a need to carry the Legislature along and get their cooperation to make the project more effective and successful, the Law Review Committee will submit its work to the Federal Executive Council, and consequent upon deliberation, it will go to the National Assembly (NASS) for the necessary action, amendments etc. This may be the time for the Committee to make recommendations, and for FEC and the Legislature to attend to the matter of educational qualifications for elective office holistically. We cannot continue to place Welders, and those who are barely literate - all unequipped to govern, into high offices to mess up Nigeria as they have been doing, due to their lack of knowledge and incapacity.

It appears that NASS does not always fulfil its constitutional responsibility of making laws for the good government of Nigeria (see Section 4 of the Constitution), and sometimes inadvertently and sometimes deliberately, it makes laws to satisfy certain interests. It is time for NASS to step up to the plate, and be as adamant as it is in fighting for national honours, in enacting good laws. In terms of deliberately enacting laws to satisfy certain interests, examples are the self-serving Section 29(5) of the **Electoral Act 2022 (EA)** to suit the interest of unqualified political candidates; and the amendment to Section 38(2) of the **Central Bank of Nigeria Act 2007 (CBN Act)** to suit the interest of the Federal Government in increasing Ways and Means Advances from 5% to 10%; also see Section 38(3) (b) of the CBN Act which prohibited the securitisation of Ways and Means

Advances, and has now been by passed to allow the collateralisation of same.

In terms of possible inadvertence, there is Section 7(2) & (6) of the **Nigeria Police Act 2020 (NPA)**. When I discussed with a Police Officer, among other things, I was made to understand that by the time the Inspector General of Police (IG) is appointed from the rank of Deputy Inspector General, it is unlikely that such an individual has up to four more years to serve in the Police Force, which is the tenure for the IG provided in Section 7(6) of the NPA. Additionally, Section 18(8) of the NPA provides that every Police Officer shall serve for 35 years or until the attainment of the age of 60, whichever comes first. So, invariably, the IG, on appointment, is a serving Police Officer (see Section 215(1) (a) of the Constitution), but ceases to be a serving Police Officer before the end of the tenure. This state of affairs played out in the case of the last few IGs, including the present one, Dr Kayode Egbetokun.

Of course, the amendment of Section 18(8) of the NPA to allow an IG complete the four year tenure, whether or not the 35 years/age 60 retirement is exceeded, is a deliberate enactment by NASS - the jury is however, still out on whether the amendment is expedient or to serve specific interests. Section 215(1)(a) of the Constitution makes it mandatory that the IG be appointed from among serving Police Officers; it doesn't expressly state when the IG must retire. See the case of **Nwakire v COP (1992) LPELR-2097 (SC) per Philip Nnaemeka-Agu, JSC**, on the application of the literal rule of interpretation. However, Rule 020908(i) & (ii) of the **Federal Government Public Service Rules (2021 Edition)** clearly states that the retirement age of a Public Officer is 60 or 35 years in service, whichever is earlier, and no Officer shall remain in service beyond then. The Fifth Schedule to the Constitution Part II Public Officers for the Purposes of the Code of Conduct Paragraph 9 includes the IG, all other Police Officers and officers of government security agencies established by law, as Public Officers.

Of course, the Constitution precedes the NPA, and in the past, the office of the IG wasn't tenured, as it has become since 2020. I had identified the problem in 2018 or so, when even though at the time, the office of the IG wasn't tenured, Ibrahim Idris Kpotum reached the retirement age, but was kept on a bit longer. With the enactment of the NPA, other IGs, Mohammed Adamu and Usman Alkali Baba, also faced the same retirement age problem, and also stayed a little bit beyond when they should have retired.

While many complained that the amendment of Section 18(8) of the NPA is self-serving, in that it allows the President's appointee to have an extension of stay in the Police, others argue that it is the best option, because, usually, if the IG is chosen from the rank of AIG, many experienced, well trained DIGs who have not reached the retirement age are let go, due to the fact that, by convention, they shouldn't serve under an IG who was hitherto junior to them in rank. During the time of Idris Kpotum, seven DIGs went on forced retirement. This translates to a waste of the country's resources, because it means that much needed hands are needlessly retired, while their expertise (including training which the Police has paid for) is wasted, by not being put to any use.

Conclusion

If the mandate of the Law Review Committee is not just about changing outdated fines from N20 to N2 million, but to actually do a complete audit of our laws in terms of their content, it will be good. It is important for them, to decide what each law is designed to achieve and whether it is actually doing so. Is the Committee going to address touchy issues like that of the **Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act 2013 (SSMPA)** which prohibits and criminalises same sex relationships, but is silent about men not just cross-dressing as women, but promoting homosexual sexual content which may be dangerously close to offending the SSMPA? Or do laws like the SSMPA breach the fundamental rights of those who choose to go down that road? See Sections 37, 38(1) & 39(1) of the Constitution which guarantee our right to privacy, freedom of thought and expression, respectively. Of course, the supporters of the SSMPA argue that the law falls under Section 45(1)(a) of the Constitution, that is, a law that restricts the aforementioned freedoms in the interest of public morality. The task ahead of the Fapohunda Committee is not a particularly easy one, and we wish them the best of luck in their endeavours.



Attorney-General of Federation, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, SAN



Olawale Fapohunda, SAN

LAW REPORT

Whether Failure to Give Notice or Payment in Lieu Renders Termination Invalid

Facts

The Respondents were employees of the former Benue Cement Company Plc taken over by the present Appellant, who were suspended indefinitely for investigation to be carried out on allegations of fraud and theft in the company's commercial/marketing department. The Respondents protested the indefinite suspension, and on finding that the company would not budge, the Respondents filed an action (against Benue Cement) at the High Court, while seeking injunctive reliefs restraining the company from doing any act adverse to the Respondents during the pendency of the action.

Meanwhile, there was a development, post the filing of the action. The company (Benue Cement Company Plc) had been taken over by the Appellant, which became responsible for the termination of the employment of the Respondents (alongside other employees). This led to the Respondents amending their claim before the trial court, to include reinstatement and payment of entitlements from the date of the indefinite suspension and termination of employment, on the basis of breach of their contract of employment. At the close of trial, the trial Judge found that the indefinite suspension and termination of the Respondents' employment was unlawful and the company was ordered to pay all entitlements from the date of the suspension, termination and disengagement.

Aggrieved by the decision of the trial court, the Appellant appealed to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal however, dismissed the Appellant's appeal and held that the Appellant is to pay the salaries of the Respondents from the date of suspension to the date of the judgement. All their entitlements, that is, salaries and allowances to be paid to them in full, up till the date of the judgement.

Further aggrieved, the Appellant filed its Notice of Appeal to the Supreme Court containing two grounds of appeal.

Issues for Determination

The Appellant raised three issues for determination:-

(i) *Whether the learned Justices of the Court of Appeal were not in error, when they affirmed the trial court's holding that the indefinite suspension of the Respondents amounted to a breach of the terms of service contained in Exhibit 1.*

(ii) *Whether the learned Justices of the Court of Appeal were not in error, when they affirmed the trial court's declaration of Exhibits 17 and 42 (letters of termination issued to the Respondents) as being unlawful, null and void.*

(iii) *Whether the learned Justices of the Court of Appeal were not in error, when they affirmed the undetermined entitlements awarded by the trial court and suo moto extended the damages awarded to cover the period from dates of the Respondents' suspensions in 2003 to the date of its judgement (9th December, 2009).*

The Respondents were represented by distinct legal practitioners who filed separate (although largely similar arguments) brief of arguments, bordering on the Appellant's second and third issues for determination.

Arguments

Counsel for the Appellant argued on the first issue that on the authority of **LONGE v F.B.N. PLC. (2006) 3 NWLR (Pt. 967) 228 at 265**, the lower courts erred in law in holding that the suspension of the Respondent amounted to a breach of the terms of service ("Exhibit 1"). It was Counsel's submission that since the Respondents' suspension was for the purpose of investigation, Exhibit 1 does not apply especially as the Exhibit only applies where the suspension is imposed as a disciplinary measure against an employee who has been found guilty of some wrong doing. The emphatic argument of Counsel in this regard, was that paragraph 19.01 of Exhibit 1 which stipulates a seven day limit in terms of suspension (without pay), did not arise.

In reaction to the first issue, Counsel representing the 1st and 2nd Respondent respectively, submitted that the indefinite suspension without cause or offence, constituted a breach of Exhibit



Honourable Mohammed Lawal Garba, JSC

In the Supreme Court of Nigeria
Holden at Abuja
On Friday, the 8th day of March, 2024

Before Their Lordships

Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun
Mohammed Lawal Garba
Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju
Adamu Jairo
Tijjani Abubakar

Justices, Supreme Court

SC. 70/2010
SC. 52/2012

Between

Dangote Cement Plc. Appellant
(Formerly Benue Cement Company Plc)

And

1. Peter Asom Ager Respondents
2. Gazbriel Samali

(Lead Judgement delivered by Honourable Mohammed Lawal Garba, JSC)

1, having exceeded seven days. It was canvassed that in employment/labour matters, the terms and conditions signed by both the employer and employees form the formal agreement/contract that govern and regulate the relationship between the parties. As such, any of the parties who breaches or acts in violation of terms and conditions of the terms of service, will be liable in breach of the contract - **OKONKWO v CO-OP. & COMM. BANK NIG. PLC. (2006) FWLR (Pt. 154) 457(SC)**.

Regarding the second issue, Counsel for the Appellant argued that the termination letters (Exhibits 17 and 42), were not in contravention of the interlocutory injunction granted by the trial court. The reasoning was that, the termination was done by the acquiring company after a successful take over (and not the target company). Counsel also argued that failure of the Respondents to plead the issue of "lack or insufficiency of notice

of termination in Exhibits 17 and 42" or seek same in their relief, should impact the judgement of the lower court.

Responding to this issue, Counsel for the Respondents submitted that parties are bound by their contract, and that disobedience of order of injunction by the Appellant amounted to contempt of court which should not be condoned. **GARBA v F.C.S.C. (1988) 1 NWLR (Pt. 71) 449 at 472.**

Court's Judgement and Rationale

On the first issue in the appeal, applying the principle that statutes be given their plain and ordinary meaning, the Supreme Court agreed with the lower courts that the indefinite suspension of the Respondents and for a period exceeding seven days, breached the provisions of Exhibit 1, which regulates the contract between parties. However, the court regarded the issue as spent, because the Appellant did not appeal against the finding at the Court of Appeal. The Supreme Court therefore, held that *the law does not permit or allow the Appellant to raise grounds of appeal and canvass arguments, as it lacks jurisdiction to directly entertain an appeal against any finding or decision by the trial court which was accepted by the Appellant, and in respect of which no appeal was lodged* - See **IJEBU-ODE L.G. v ADEDEJI BALOGUN & CO. LTD. (1991) 1 NWLR (Pt. 166) 136(SC)**. In consequence, the pronouncement by the lower courts

that the indefinite suspension amounted to a violation of Exhibit 1, remain extant and binding on the Appellant.

Deciding issues two and three, the Supreme Court held that *the Appellant as the employer has the requisite power and authority to lawfully terminate the employment of the Respondents without any stated reasons; whether disciplinary or otherwise, so long as the requisite notice or payment in lieu thereof, was given or made. Termination of employment can only be said to be wrongful, when it was done in breach or violation of, or in a manner not contemplated by the agreed terms and conditions set out either in the contract of the employment entered into by the parties, or contrary to or the relevant statutory provisions governing the employment with statutory flavour - GBEDU v LTIE (2020) 3 NWLR (Pt. 1710) 104 (SC)*. The courts below found that by Exhibit 17 and 24, the Appellant did not pay any money in lieu of notice as stipulated by paragraph 19.02 of Exhibit 1. As per paragraph 19.02 the Appellant reserves the right to terminate any of its employees without giving any reason; however, the Appellant must pay 1 month or 2 weeks salary, depending on the category of the employee, in lieu of notice. In the case of the Respondents, the Appellant terminated their appointment by letters dated 16th December, 2003, Exhibits 17 and 42 to take effect retrospectively from 1st October, 2003. It was further to the foregoing, that the Court of Appeal held that the Respondents are entitled to payment from the date of their suspension to delivery of the judgement.

The Supreme Court disagreed with the decision of the court below that the termination was null and void, on the ground only that notice or payment in lieu was not given by the Appellant as stipulated in paragraph 19.02. The court held that *failure to give the requisite prior notice or pay in lieu of such notice before the termination of service of the employment, only renders the termination wrongful, but, not null and void or invalid, since the termination was done in the exercise of an acknowledged power and authority of the employer to do so at any time in the course of the employment, without giving any reason at all.*

The law, for many years now, has been that in employment that does not enjoy the benefit of statutory favour, but of the nature of pure master and servant relationship, an employee cannot be imposed on an unwilling employer who rightfully exercises the power and authority to end the employment relationship, even if wrongfully done - OBANYE v UBA PLC (2018) 17 NWLR (Pt. 1648) 375 (SC). The remedy opened to the employee in cases of wrongful termination of employment by his employer, and recognised by the law, is the claim for damages, and the law is now firmly established that the quantum of damages a Claimant would be entitled to, is the sum or amount of money to be in lieu of the requisite notice for the proper termination of the employment. Consequently, the Supreme Court ordered that salaries and allowances of the Respondents be paid from the date(s) of indefinite suspension to the dates of the wrongful termination of the Respondents' employment. It was likewise ordered that the Respondents be paid salaries and allowances they would have earned, had their employment been properly terminated by giving of requisite notice period embedded in Exhibit 1.

Their Lordships, therefore, unanimously upheld the appeal in part, in respect of the order of the court below for payment of salaries and allowances of the Respondents from the date of the suspension to the date of judgement - which order the Apex Court set aside.

Appeal Succeeds in Part.**Representation**

T.O. Ezeobi Jnr for the Appellant.

B.I. Wayo with N. Nyikwagh (Ms) for the 1st Respondent.

A. Labi-Lawal, for the 2nd Respondent.

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".... failure to give the requisite prior notice or pay in lieu of such notice before the termination of employment in line with the conditions of service of the employment, only renders the termination wrongful, but, not null and void or invalid..."

NEWS



Olawale Fapohunda, SAN



Former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello



Hon. Justice Ambrose Lewis-Allagoa

Fapohunda, SAN, to Lead Review of Laws of the Federation

Stories by Steve Aya

The immediate past Attorney-General and Commissioner of Justice, Ekiti State, Olawale Fapohunda, SAN, has been appointed to Chair the Federal Government of Nigeria Working Group to review the Laws of the Federation, and propose legislation that will promote development across all sectors of national life.

This announcement was made by the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, SAN, during the commencement

ceremony of the 2024/2025 New Legal Year.

According to Prince Fagbemi, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is cognisant of the concerns surrounding the current state of the nation's laws, and the pressing need for a comprehensive review. "Our laws need to respond to current developments, not only nationally, but also globally. Our desire to make rapid progress in all aspects of our socio-economic and indeed, political life, requires that we have enabling and empowering legislation", the AGF

stated.

Olawale Fapohunda, SAN, according to the AGF, has been instrumental in various law reform efforts, at both State and Federal levels. "Mr Fapohunda played a key role in the passage of several justice sector reform laws, including the Judicial Remuneration Act, which significantly increased the salaries of judicial officers by 300%. He also contributed

to the Administration of Criminal Justice Act, Ekiti State Administration of Civil Justice Law, amendments to the Evidence Act, the Police Act, the Correctional Services Act, the National Human Rights Commission Act, and the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria Act".

The last comprehensive review of the Laws of the Federation occurred in 2004,

making this initiative a much-needed step towards modernising Nigeria's legal framework. The AGF expressed gratitude to Mr Fapohunda and the other members of the Working Group for their service, and reaffirmed the Government's commitment to delivering a revised set of laws by the start of the 2025 legal year.

The establishment of this Working

Group signifies the Federal Government's dedication to ensuring that Nigeria's laws are up-to-date, responsive to current challenges, and capable of fostering development across all sectors of the nation. The outcome of this review is expected to have far-reaching implications for the country's socio-economic and political landscape, the AGF further added.

Yahaya Bello to Face Fresh Charges

Former Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello has been summoned to appear in court, to answer to a fresh 16-count charge against him. The summons requires Bello to attend court on October 24, 2024, along with two other Defendants.

Justice Maryanne Anenih of the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Maitama, issued the order for the public summons following an application by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

The EFCC has been

directed to publish the public summons in a newspaper with wide circulation, as well as to pass copies to Bello's last known address and in conspicuous places on court premises.

The charge, filed on September 24, 2024, alleges criminal breach of trust amounting to N110.4 billion. The other two Defendants in the charge are Umar Oricha and Abdulsalami Hudu.

Bello's absence has led to the postponement of the arraignment, which has been rescheduled more than five times.

Spain-Bound Nigerian Convicted for Cocaine Trafficking

Justice Ambrose Lewis-Allagoa of the Federal High Court sitting in Lagos, has convicted and sentenced a man, Akajiobi Francis, to four years imprisonment, for trafficking in 1.20 kilograms of cocaine.

The court handed down the jail term, after the Defendant pleaded guilty to a one count charge of trafficking in a prohibited drug, made against him by the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), after his arraignment before the court.

The Prosecutor, Mr Abu Ibrahim, had told the court that the Defendant was arrested with prohibited drugs at the Departure Hall of the new Terminal of the

Murtala Muhammed Ikeja, Lagos, during the outward clearance of passengers of Royal Air Maroc to Valencia, Spain.

The Defendant was said to have concealed the prohibited drug, inside his footwear.

Abu had told the court that the unlawful act of the Defendant contravened Section 11(b) of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act Cap. N30 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, and is punishable under the same Act.

The Defendant had pleaded guilty to the charge, when it was read to him. Based on his plea, the court ordered the Prosecutor to review

the facts of the case. Upon reviewing the facts of the case and tendering of exhibits, the Prosecutor urged the court to convict and sentence the Defendant, based on his plea and the exhibits tendered. But, Counsel to the Defendant, Chief Benson Ndakara, in his allocutus, begged the court to temper justice with mercy in sentencing his client, for being a first-time offender and not wasting the court's time.

Based on the allocutus and confirmation from the Prosecutor that the Defendant was a first-time offender, Justice Lewis-Allagoa ordered the Defendant to pay a fine option of N2

million instead of the jail term.

The charge against the Defendant read: "That you, Akajiobi Francis, adult, male, on or about the 25th July, 2024, at the Departure Hall of the new Terminal of the Murtala Muhammed Ikeja, Lagos during the outward clearance of passengers of Royal Air Maroc to Valencia, Spain, without lawful authority Exported 1.20 kilograms of Cocaine, a Narcotic Drug and you thereby, committed an act which is an offence contrary to and punishable under Section 11(b) of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency Act Cap. N30 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004".

STATE OF THE NATION

President Tinubu Inherited the Present Mess - Kingsley Jesuorobo

Currently, Nigeria is experiencing challenges that are too numerous to list. Among the innumerable challenges, two stand out for me. Firstly, in virtually all the public governance sectors, the prescriptions in our statutory and regulatory instruments are observed more in breach. There is profound infidelity to due process. Secondly, there has emerged a formidable army of people who use both the traditional and social media platforms, to fabricate or spread polity-heating lies about individuals and institutions.



Often times, these fabrications are a part of elaborate mind-theft machinations. To be fair, the current administration of President Tinubu inherited the mess.

As a remedy, government at all levels, need to declare a due process state of emergency. Nigeria needs massive reforms, aimed at ensuring that governance practices meet best policy-driven standards. Public governance decisions should be subjected to filtration processes, with in-built effective and functional oversight mechanisms. Nigeria needs to create and actualise guidelines on the operational modalities of all governance institutions, especially in the law enforcement sector.

There is also a dire need to leverage technology, to cut and eliminate the red-tape and other archaic processes that inhibit due process, and serve as drain pipes into public purse. To tame the mind pollution crisis, well-meaning stakeholders need to embark on a full-throttled sensitisation campaign, to alert citizens about the dangers of gullibility.

Kingsley Jesuorobo, Chairman, Board of Directors, Canadian Association of Nigerian Lawyers; Member of the Board of Governors of the Law Commission of Ontario, Canada

Nigerians are facing a Crisis of High Living Cost - Dr Olisa Agbakoba, SAN

As we attained a new milestone on October 1, 2024, it is clear that Nigerians are faced with a grave crisis of very high cost of living. I believe the Federal Government has the means and skills to turn things around, by introducing emergency economic measures.

I recommend that the Government take steps to resolve the unexplained and clearly confused situation around the Dangote Refinery whose capacity to pump Petrol into the system, will have an impact on prices. The FG will need to identify urgent economic measures, to bring down cost of food.



I suggest opening up our food reserves, to flood the market. Generally, economic quantitative easing by the Central Bank of Nigeria will help alleviate the huge pain Nigerians feel at this time. A direct impact to consider is free education and health, for the most vulnerable Nigerians. I strongly believe that a strong packet of economic measures, even if in the short term, will be of value to millions of Nigerians, as we await long term turn around policies to take effect.

Dr Olisa Agbakoba, SAN, 23rd President, Nigerian Bar Association

Nigeria's Economic Reality Check 16 Months Under



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR

State of the Nation: How is Nigeria Faring?

Assessing the state of the Nigerian nation; for some, there may not be much to cheer about, while for others, the Nigeria of their dream is work in progress. It has been a cacophony of discordant tunes, in listening to varying and differing opinions on the present state of affairs in the polity. From the economy to security, infrastructure, energy, power, politics and the electioneering process, the general perception is that Nigeria, the Giant of Africa, is still in a slumber. Awakenning Nigeria would, in the view of many, take a lot more than mere wishes and rhetorics, but, deft political, conscious and deliberate efforts. The hitherto excuses of blaming previous administrations for the woes of the nation, doesn't seem to be easily acceptable by the masses anymore. THISDAY LAWYER sought the views of a cross-section Lawyers on the state of the nation, and what they believe should be done as a matter of urgency, to move Nigeria away from the edge of this near precipice

Tinubu - Kede Aihie

After 16 months of President Bola Tinubu's administration, Nigeria's economy remains challenging.



Skyrocketing living costs have become a harsh reality, with painful reforms evoking memories of the country's toughest economic periods. Communication has been inadequate, and impulsive decisions fuel uncertainty.

To move forward, the administration must address key challenges: stabilising the Naira, removing subsidies, developing infrastructure (especially electricity), fostering investor confidence through transparency, and effective communication. Contrary to earlier claims, the subsidy regime remains intact, perpetuating inefficiencies. Nigeria's potential is vast, but the Tinubu administration must navigate these challenges to unlock sustainable growth.

Kede Aihie, Lawyer; Publisher of Nigerian Magazine, London, UK

The State of the Nation is Deeply Concerning - Mrs Mandy Asagba

The current state of Nigeria under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, is deeply concerning. The nation's welfare and security are in shambles, leaving citizens to struggle for survival. The minimum wage is woefully inadequate, while the wealthy elite flaunt their ill-gotten wealth, and corrupt officials receive a slap-on-the-wrist and/ or make believe punishments.

Key issues plaguing Nigeria include skyrocketing poverty and prices of food stuffs, Gender Based Violence (GBV), mortality rate, suicide, human trafficking, organ harvesting et al. The Government's insincerity regarding promises to Labour unions and citizens,



"...the current administration of President Tinubu inherited the mess....I believe the Federal Government has the means and skills to turn things around, by introducing emergency economic measures"

Cont'd from page VII

has exacerbated economic struggles. To prevent catastrophic collapse, Nigeria needs urgent strategic planning, justice system reform, and accountability.

Economic Development: Diversify the economy, promote entrepreneurship, and enhance infrastructure.

Security and Stability: Strengthen institutions, address regional conflicts, and ensure citizens' safety.

Good Governance: Foster transparency, accountability, and inclusive decision-making processes.

Implementing sustainable development goals, prioritising poverty eradication, gender equality, and justice is crucial.

Nigerians deserve meaningful change now, not continual failed promises in the face of excruciating pain and poverty.
Mandy Demechi-Asagba, President, African Women Lawyers Association (AWLA)

Nigeria is in Motion Without Movement - Dr Mudiaga Odje

Frankly speaking, we are at a crossroad, and hopes dashed by uninspiring and impaired leadership.



Dr Mudiaga Odje, Constitutional Lawyer, Warri, Delta State

Motion without movement, we expect Government to sit up and roll visionary templates to renaissance the now sunken delicate ship of state.

Government Needs to Critically Review its Policies - Chief Anthony Aikhunegbe Malik, SAN

Viewed from every objective prism, Nigeria is at a critical juncture in its developmental march, with indicators suggesting a breaking point. The National Bureau of Statistics reports a 3.19% year-on-year GDP growth in real terms for Q2 2024. However, for many Nigerians, the current state of the nation is marked by chaos, poverty, suffering and insecurity.

Despite Government's efforts to improve the bad situation it inherited, more needs to be done. Critically, Government must establish supportive structures to help Nigerians cope with newly implemented policies. As the saying goes, "you cannot put nothing on nothing and expect it to stand". This, in my view, is one of the weaknesses of the present administration. The Government takes pride in its long-term vision for the nation, but, Nigerians desire and, indeed, deserve tangible support during this period.

Effective policies must be paired with practical solutions, to address the pressing needs of the population. For instance, before the recent increment in the price of PMS, the Government should have introduced practical, well-thought through measures, to cushion the



“We failed to meet any of the eight Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, and we are not on course to meeting any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals barely six years to the end date in 2030”



debilitating effects on the cost of living for Nigerians. In this regard, implementing evidence-based palliatives for the citizens become a desideratum.

On the whole, this Government cannot afford to be in dire straits. Some of the policies it has introduced need revisiting and reviewing, in the overall interest of Nigerians whom it is meant to serve. By and large, the Government has my best wishes.
Chief Anthony Aikhunegbe Malik, SAN, Abuja

Human Rights Deteriorating - Emmanuel Onwubiko

Nigeria, under the current administration, is collapsing rapidly in all facets of our national life: security, economy, energy, and most citizens have become even poorer, because of suffocating and bad economic policies of Naira depreciation and the hike in the costs of petrol, kerosene and other basic commodities such as essential items of food. There is also price instability and lack of regulation, in such a way that the costs of purchasing essential provisions lack stability in the marketplace. It is so sad. Also, there is a rapidly deteriorating respect for the fundamental human



rights of citizens.

Emmanuel Onwubiko, National Coordinator, Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria (HURIWA)

Nigerians Now in Hobbesian State - Jide Ojo

Nigeria has had 16 Presidents and Heads of State since independence on October 1, 1960. Each of them has contributed incrementally, to nation building. However, while we are not where we were at independence, we are not where we ought to be in the comity of nations. We failed to meet any of the eight Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations, and we are not on course to meeting any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals barely six years to the end date in 2030. We have set many targets such as Health and Education for All by 2010. Vision 20:2020 was to make us part of the twenty most industrialised countries by 2020, however, they all turned out to be a mirage.

The Tinubu administration which kick started 16 months ago, came with the mantra of eight broad Renewed Hope Agenda. Unfortunately, with the rising cost of living occasioned by the removal of subsidy from petrol and the floating of the Naira which is our national currency, Nigerians now live in a Hobbesian state painted by the Philosophy, Thomas Hobbes, where life is poor, short, brutish and nasty.

If at all this administration is making progress as it will want us to believe, let it come out with credible statistics of the number of gainful employment that has been recorded in 16 months, how many poor have been lifted above the poverty line, state of infrastructure, success in the war against corruption and insecurity.

Until the development indices start looking North rather than South, there will be no accolades for this Government. There is need for political and



economic restructuring. For instance, shouldn't we reduce the estimated 1,300 Ministries, Departments and Agencies currently existing to cut cost of governance? There is need for fiscal federalism that will make States control their natural resources, while paying royalties to the Federal Government. It is imperative to rein in insecurity; promote ease of doing business and genuinely fight corruption.

Jide Ojo, Development Consultant, Author and Public Affairs Analyst

Civil Protests are Being Criminalised - Prof Mike Ozekhome SAN

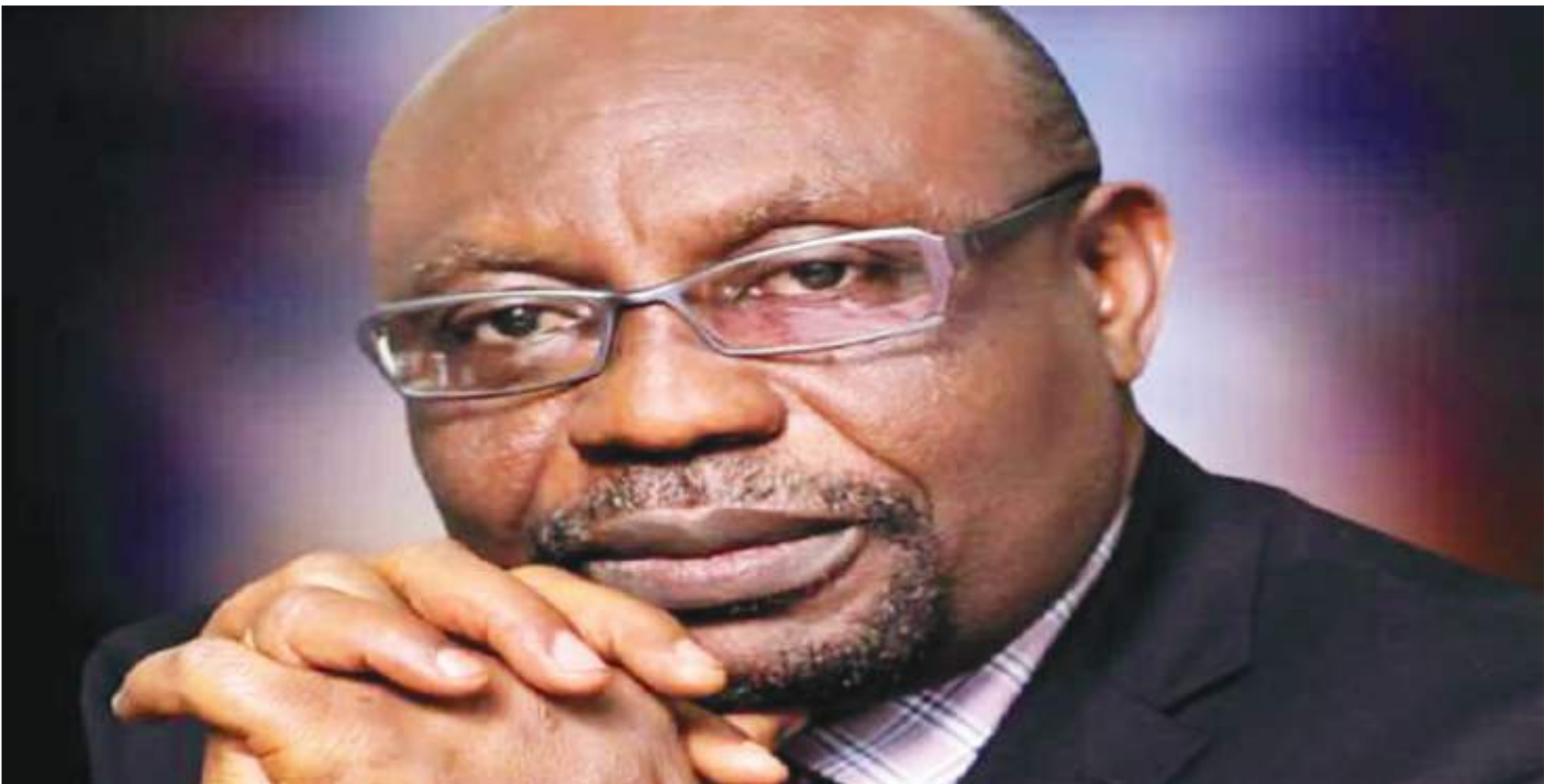
The Nigerian nation has graduated from stagnation to retrogression. With the economy in tatters, education in shambles, health facilities, comatose and spiralling inflation unhinged, Nigeria has never has never had it so bad. Corruption has graduated from kindergarten level to Ph.D doctorate level. Wastefulness and insensitivity in Government, have compounded our problems. The asphyxiating proverbial common man is left gasping for existential oxygen, holding on to mere straws for survival. There is palpable gloom, despondency, melancholy, hopelessness, haplessness, anger, hunger and frustration everywhere.

Government has compounded our problems, by doing everything possible to remove the little freedoms we enjoy - the right to speak, assemble, protest, including the dignity of the human person. Civil protests are being criminalised, as alleged attempts to have a regime change. No one knows the direction we are going to, nor has the Government which appears clueless, told us where we are headed. We are told to endure the suffering, by power wielders who are insulated and immune from it. God, come to our aid!

Prof Mike Ozekhome, SAN, Human Rights Lawyer



COVER



Festus Okoye

SIEC, INEC or a Combination, for Credible Local Government Elections?

The age-long debate as to the status of Local Government Councils (LGC) doesn't appear to have been finally settled, even with the recent Supreme Court judgement asserting the financial autonomy of the LGCs. Other important issues have trailed the LGCs, especially that of whether or not there should be a Local Government Electoral Commission, possibly within the structure of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), to replace the State Independent Electoral Commission. Will it make LGC elections credible, so that it's not always the ruling political party in the State or appointees of the Governors that take all the Chairmanship and Councillorship positions within their States, as has been the outcome in most States over the years, since it is the Governor that is responsible for staffing SIEC? Will it guarantee the LGC's independence, and their place as a third tier of Government? Will it curb the high handedness of the State Governors? **Festus Okoye, a former National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)** gives an in-depth analysis of the issue, and recommends the best approach to settling it

Sooner or later, the critical stakeholders in the Nigerian Federation must settle the debate on the place and role of State Independent Electoral Commissions in the matrix of electoral Commissions in Nigeria. Coterminous to the role and place of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIEC), is the raging debate on the role, place, and independence of Local Governments in the Federal structure

of Nigeria.

Related Issues

Three related issues underscore the urgency of a quick debate and resolution of the issue of Local Governments, through constitutional alteration and amendment of the constitutive legal instruments. The first is the unreported judgement of the **Supreme Court in Suit No.**

SC/CV/343/2024 delivered on the 11th day of July, 2024 involving the **Attorney-General of the Federation and the Attorneys -General of the 36 States of the Federation**, on what is now popularly referred to as Local Government autonomy.

The second issue relates to a pending Bill before the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, seeking to establish a National Independent Local Government Electoral Commission (NILGEC) charged with the responsibility of conducting elections to the office of Local Government Chairmen and Councillors across all States of the Federation. The Bill titled "Local Government Independent Electoral Commission (Establishment) Bill, 2024 (SB. 531)" was sponsored by the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, Senator Sani Musa, (APC, Niger-East).

The third issue is the flurry of Local Government Elections that have been conducted since the judgement of the Supreme Court delivered on the 11th day of July, 2024. There are also the judgements of the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court on the dissolution of Local Governments, and the

unimplemented reports of Committees set up by the Federal Government on electoral matters, that have become residual issues in our electoral framework.

The other ancillary issue is that **Section 197 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), establishes the State Independent Electoral Commission as one of the State Executive Bodies.** The Constitution gives the Governor of each State the power to appoint the Chairman and members, subject to confirmation by the House of Assembly of the State. Nigeria and Nigerians must resolve whether the State Independent Electoral Commissions must continue to exist and conduct Local Government elections. This is because of their performance and sheer powerlessness, before the State Governors and the State Houses of Assembly.

Impact of Supreme Court Judgement in LG Financial Autonomy Case

There is no doubt that the judgement of the Supreme Court of Nigeria on financial autonomy for the seven hundred and sixty-eight Local Government Areas in Nigeria and six Area Council Areas in the Federal Capital Territory has raised, once

"Many people who submitted memoranda, expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of SIECs, which were considered mere organs of the incumbent State Governors and the ruling parties.....In most of the States where local government elections were conducted, candidates of the ruling parties won virtually all the seats. Often, such results do not reflect the voting pattern in Federal elections"

SIEC, INEC or a Combination, for Credible Local Government Elections?

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again, the question of the place, relevance and independence of the various Local Governments in Nigeria. It has also raised the question of the independence, relevance, and impartiality of the States' Independent Electoral Commissions. More fundamentally, it has brought to the fore, our practice of Federalism and the place of grassroots structures in our Federal structure.

The critical question is, whether the judgement of the Supreme Court delivered on the 11th day of July, 2024 will solve the myriad challenges bedeviling the Local Government system in Nigeria. Other than the Supreme Court judgement on the financial independence of the local governments, are there other issues that must be tackled to strengthen the place of local governments in the Nigerian Federal structure? First, it will be good to understand the problems resolved by the judgement of the Supreme Court.

On the 24th day of May, 2024, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) took out an Originating Summons before the Supreme Court of Nigeria against the Attorneys-General of 36 States of the Federation, seeking various reliefs. On the 11th day of July, 2024, the Supreme Court delivered its judgement and granted 11 Declarations and 3 Orders. The Supreme Court granted a declaration that the States of Nigeria, or any one of them, acting through their/its respective State Governors and or State House of Assembly, are/is under obligation to ensure democratic governance at the third tier of government in Nigeria, that is the Local Government level.

The Supreme Court decried the unlawful and unconstitutional dissolution of democratically elected Local Government Councils, and their replacement with Caretaker Committees. It held that State Governments and the Houses of Assembly have no power to constitute, appoint, or determine a Local Government. It held that **a State Government or the Governor of a State has no power to constitute, appoint, or determine a local government that Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution has prescribed can only be by Local Government Councils, democratically elected by persons in a local government area.** The Supreme Court stated that **only democratically elected Local Governments can receive distributable amounts standing to the credit of Local Government Councils in the Federation Account.** The Supreme Court held that **it amounts to grave misconduct to use a State Law or Administrative directive to dissolve or cause the dissolution of democratically elected Local Government Councils. It also held that the State Governments have no power to keep, control, or disburse allocations from the Federation Account to Local Government Councils.** It granted an order of injunction restraining the State governments by themselves, their privies, agents, officials, or howsoever called, from further collecting, receiving, spending, or tampering with local government council funds from the Federation Account for the benefit of Local Government Councils. It also ordered that the Federation or Federal Government of Nigeria, through its relevant officials, should commence the direct payment to each Local Government Council of the amount standing to the credit of each of them in the Federation Account.

Before the Supreme Court judgement, most Nigerians saw the local governments as glorified outposts of the State Governments, and most of them were selected and not democratically elected. The State Independent Electoral Commissions organised "one-way" elections, and in most of the States, the ruling party "cleared" all the contested positions.

The State Governments and the State Houses of Assembly dissolved the Local Government



ALGON National President, Hon. Aminu Mu'azu Maifata

Councils at will, appointed Caretaker Committees, and arbitrarily fixed their tenure. The Courts intervened, but, the problems persisted. The bone of contention has been the interpretation and application of Section 7 of the Constitution (as it provides that "The system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this Constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the Government of every State shall, subject to Section 8 of this Constitution, ensure their existence under a Law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance, and functions of such councils").

In the case of **Eze & ors v Governor of Abia State & ors (2010) LPELR-4133(CA)** on the dissolution of democratically elected Local Governments, the Court of Appeal **per Helen Moronkeji Ogunwumiju, JCA (as she then was)** held that **the powers conferred on the Government of every State by Section 7(1) of the 1999 Constitution to ensure the existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of a local government, can only be executed within the confines of the provisions of the Constitution. Thus, the power of the State House of Assembly under Section 4(7) of the Constitution, cannot extend to truncate the tenure of a democratically elected local government council. The Constitution only recognises elected members of the local government council. It is ultra vires the Constitution, for any State Legislature to make a law that dissolves a local government council made up of elected Chairmen and Councillors, and replace it with members of a Caretaker Committee selected by the State Government.**

The Court of Appeal in the case of **AG Benue State & ors v Umar & ors (2007) LPELR-8076**, emphasised

that Caretaker Committees have no place in our constitutional democracy. It held that **"under Section 7(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, the system of local government by democratically elected Local Government Councils is guaranteed, and the Government of every State is obliged to ensure their existence under a law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance and functions of such councils"**.

The Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) (2008), weighed in on the conduct of Local Government elections by the State Independent Electoral Commission (SIEC). It addressed the composition and functions of SIEC in Chapter 5 of Volume 1 (Main Report). The Committee found that "the 1999 Constitution provides for the establishment of State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs), which have the function of conducting elections of Chairmen and Councillors into the Local Government Councils. Paragraph 3 to the Third Schedule (Part II) of the 1999 Constitution provides that "A State Independent Electoral Commission shall comprise the following members (a) a Chairman; and (b) not less than five but not more than seven other persons" who are to be appointed by the State Governor, and confirmed by the House of Assembly for the State. Many people who submitted memoranda, expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of SIECs, which were considered mere organs of the incumbent State Governors and the ruling parties. Unfortunately, the conduct of the local government elections by them in 2004, and more recently in 2008 in many States of the Federation, tended to support the negative perception of the SIECs. In most of the States where local government elections were conducted, candidates of the ruling parties won virtually all the seats. Often, such results do not reflect the voting pattern in Federal elections. In view of the performance of the SIECs in 2004 and 2008 elections, there have been popular suggestions at the public hearings, in some of the memoranda submitted, and also in the media for their abrogation. The poor performance of SIECs gives cause for concern, given the significance of local governments in a democratic society. The third tier of government, should be the foundation of democratic governance for the citizens. It is the closest level of government to the citizens. Therefore, it should be seen to address the basic needs of the citizens. Furthermore, it provides citizens with more direct representation, and opportunity for

political participation. However, in its present form, Local Government operators are seen as mere nominees of State Governors who lack the independence to implement popular and democratic programmes".

Various Recommendations on the Reform of SIECs

The Committee recommended that the existing SIECs be reorganised and integrated into the structure of INEC, for greater efficiency and autonomy. This will entail constitutional amendment and statutory provisions, integrating and coordinating the activities of the State offices of INEC and SIECs for all elections.

1) Scrapping of SIECs and Transfer of their Functions to INEC

On 4th October, 2016, the Constitution and Electoral Reform Committee (CERC) was inaugurated by Mr Abubakar Malami, SAN, the then Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice "to, among other things, recommend measures required to improve the electoral process and deepen democracy in Nigeria". The Committee recommended the scrapping of SIECs, and the transfer of their functions to INEC. The Committee also recommended the amendment of the Constitution to include a provision that "INEC shall not be subject to the directive or control of any other authority or person, in the performance of its functions". This provision is to insulate INEC from the influence and control of Government and its agencies.

2) Establishment of National Independent Local Government Electoral Commission

Presently, we have a Bill before the National Assembly seeking to establish a Local Government Independent Electoral Commission. The Bill titled "Local Government Independent Electoral Commission (Establishment) Bill, 2024 (SB. 531)", was sponsored by the Chairman Senate Committee on Finance, Senator Sani Musa, (APC, Niger-East). The Bill seeks to establish the National Independent Local Government Electoral Commission (NILGEC) responsible for conducting elections to the office of the Local Government Chairman and Councillors, and any other matter to do with local government as a third tier of government. NILGEC will organise, oversee, and conduct elections for the offices of Local Government Chairman and Councillors across all States.

Part of the functions of NILGEC will include preparing and maintaining an accurate and up-to-date voter register, ensuring the conduct of voter education and public awareness regarding the electoral process, and setting and enforcing electoral guidelines and regulations for Local Government elections, recruitment and training of electoral officers

"...Local Government Independent Electoral Commission (Establishment) Bill, 2024 (SB. 531), cannot be used to amend the Constitution. The Bill cannot abolish SIEC, as it is a creation of the Constitution....The best approach to an independent electoral management body that can conduct credible elections at the local governments, is suggested by the Electoral Reform Committee (2008), and that is the integration of SIEC into the structure of INEC, to form one electoral body for the country"

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SIEC, INEC or a Combination, for Credible Local Government Elections?

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and staff for efficient election management and investigating and adjudicating electoral disputes. The budget for the proposed Commission will be approved by the National Assembly, and elections for the offices of Local Government Chairman and Councillors shall be conducted every four years. "Upon the establishment of NILGEC, all powers and functions related to the conduct of Local Government elections previously vested in any other body or authority, shall be transferred to NILGEC."

Now, the Federal and State Governments are working out modalities to implement the judgement of the Supreme Court. This has led to a flurry of Local Government elections, and dates for their conduct. Kwara State has conducted its Local Government Election, and the ruling party "won" all 16 Chairmanship positions and the 193 Councillorship positions. Imo State conducted its Local Government elections, and the ruling party "won" all 17 Chairmanship positions and the 305 Councillorship positions. Enugu State has conducted its Local Government Elections, and the ruling party won all 17 Chairmanship positions. In Delta State, the ruling party "won" the 25 Chairmanship positions and 499 of the 500 Councillorship seats. In Sokoto State, the ruling party "won" all the 23 Chairmanship seats and the 244 Councillorship positions. Anambra State conducted its own Local Government elections on the 28th day of September, 2024. The ruling party "won" the Chairmanship and Councillorship positions in the 21 Local Government Areas of the State. Kaduna State will conduct its own on the 19th day of October, 2024 and Abia State will conduct its own on the 4th of November, 2024.

The Supreme Court's judgement, is a huge victory for the rule of law and due process. It is a credit to the AGF, that some form of financial independence has been restored to the Local Governments. Nigerians expect the Local Governments to impact grassroots development, rather than existing for the payment of salaries and sharing overheads.

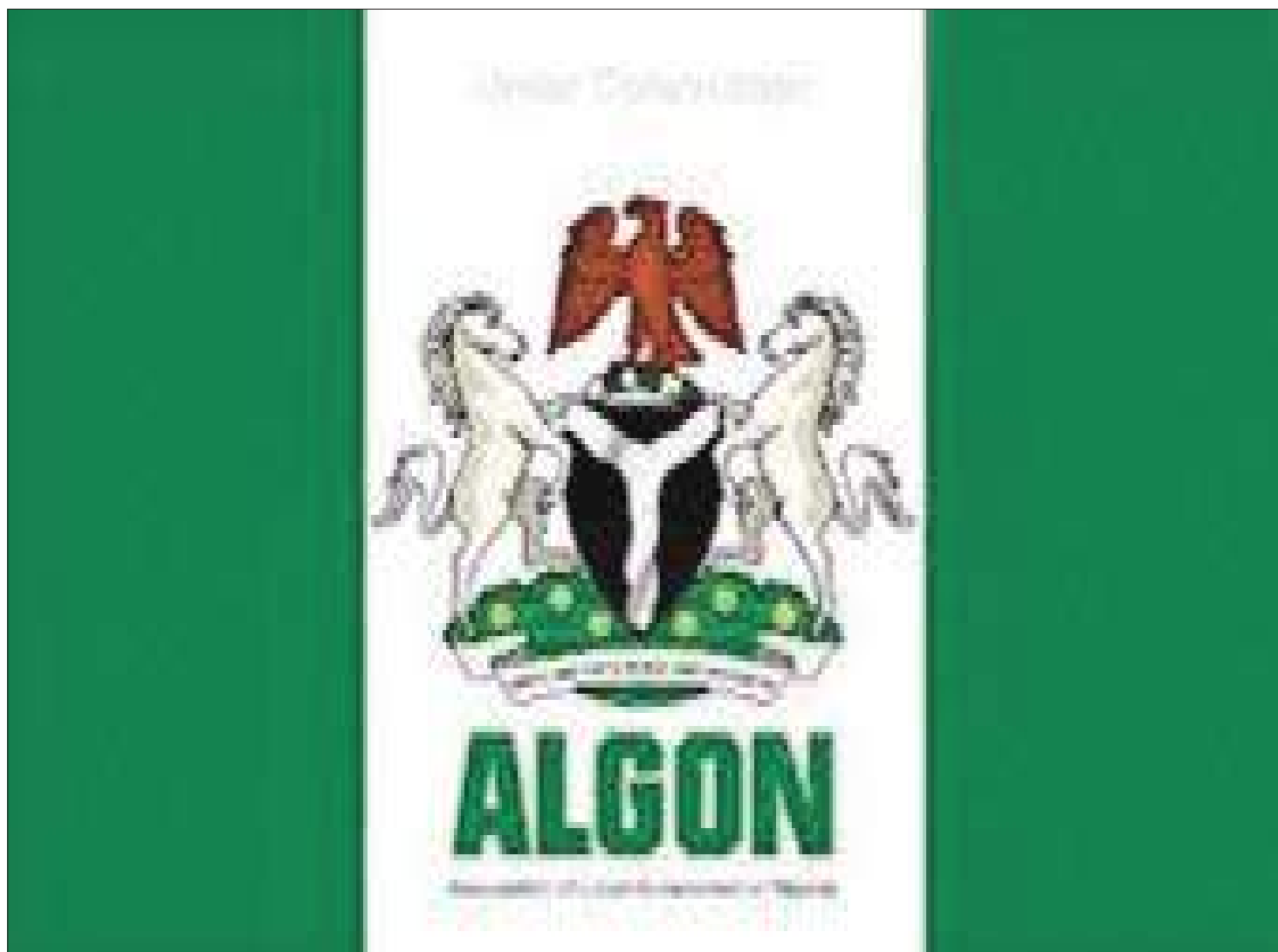
A related issue thrown up by the Supreme Court's judgement on the local government's financial autonomy, is whether the problems bedeviling the Local Governments have everything to do with the retention and use of money meant for the Local Governments by State Governments through the Joint Accounts. The retention of the money due to them, rendered the Local Governments redundant. The arbitrary dissolution of the local governments instills fear in the occupants of the positions, and makes them subservient to the State Government and the State Assembly. The juggling and uncertainty of tenure means that, aspirants to the position of Chairman and Councillors of Local Governments can spend so much money on nomination forms, campaigns, payment of poll agents, and other ancillary things, and lose office in less than one year after assuming office.

Financial autonomy has not changed, and may not change the dizzying scenarios associated with Local Government elections. The results from the conduct of Local Government elections after the judgement of the Supreme Court, further affirms that Nigeria has a long way to go in restoring the integrity and independence of the Local Governments.

The Bill pending before the National Assembly, seeks to establish a NILGEC. The sponsor of the Bill is responding to the challenge of the Local Governments, and the inability of the State Independent Electoral Commissions to conduct credible elections. The sponsor of the Bill therefore, seeks a collective and uniform approach to solving the problem through a single electoral management body to conduct elections in the Local Governments in the 36 States of the Federation.

The Bill may suffer a stillbirth, for a variety of reasons. Local Governments in Nigeria are a creation of the Constitution. Section 7 of the Constitution is clear and emphatic,

"Half measures, will not be enough. Financial independence alone, will not guarantee the autonomy of the Local Governments. The process through which Local Government Chairmen and Councillors get elected and assume office, must be protected. Their tenure must be guaranteed....."



on the system of local government administration. "The system of local government by democratically elected local government councils is under this Constitution guaranteed; and accordingly, the Government of every State shall, subject to Section 8 of this Constitution, ensure their existence under a Law which provides for the establishment, structure, composition, finance, and functions of such councils". Furthermore, Section 197 of the Constitution establishes the State Independent Electoral Commission, as one of the State Executive Bodies. The Constitution gives the Governor the power to appoint the Chairman and members, subject to confirmation by the House of Assembly of the State.

This means that no law made by the National Assembly, can alter or override the provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution is the fundamental law of the land, and all other laws flow from the Constitution, and any other law that is inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution will be void to the extent of the inconsistency. Section 1(3) of the Constitution provides: "If any other law is inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution, this Constitution shall prevail, and that other law shall to the extent of the inconsistency be void".

The National Assembly, the Executive, and the Judiciary derive their powers from the Constitution. As observed by **Ayoola, JSC** in the case of **INEC v MUSA (2003) LPELR-24927(SC)**, "the legislative powers of the Legislature, cannot be exercised inconsistently with the Constitution. Where it is so exercised, it is invalid to the extent of such inconsistency". He also observed that "where the Constitution has enacted exhaustively relating to any situation, conduct, or subject, a body that claims to legislate in addition to what the Constitution had enacted, must show that it has derived the legislative authority to do so from the Constitution". Hon.

Justice Mary Peter-Odili, JSC, made the same point in the case of **Jegede & Anor v INEC & Ors** and said "The Constitution is the very foundation and structure, upon which the existence of all organs of government is hinged. It must be held inviolable". Similarly, in the case of **HOPE DEMOCRATIC PARTY v OBI (2012) ALL FWLR (Pt. 612) 1620 at page 1644**, the Supreme Court, per **Adekeye JSC** held that: "The Constitution is the supreme law of the land, therefore, the provisions are superior to every provision embodied in any Act or law, and are binding on all persons or authorities in Nigeria. The failure to follow any of the provisions, renders the steps taken unconstitutional, null, and void."

The Bill titled "Local Government Independent Electoral Commission (Establishment) Bill, 2024 (SB. 531), cannot be used to amend the Constitution. The Bill cannot abolish State Independent Electoral Commission, as it is a creation of the Constitution. The new Commission cannot organise the registration of voters, as that power is specifically donated to the Independent National Electoral Commission. The Distinguished Senator can only introduce a Bill to amend the Constitution, and bring into being the proposed Local Government Independent Electoral Commission. While the sentiments that gave rise to Local Government Independent Electoral Commission (Establishment) Bill, 2024 (SB. 531) are understandable, the route to an independent State Electoral Commission must be found in the Constitution. It is wasteful to duplicate electoral management bodies. It is wasteful for the new body, to conduct voter registration. It is wasteful for the new body to have the full complement of offices, staff, and the paraphernalia of conducting elections.

I still submit that it is wasteful to have 36 electoral management bodies for the country, with each having offices and staff in all the Local Government areas of the country. It is wasteful for the State Independent Electoral Commissions to have their own Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, ballot boxes, and cubicles.

The Best Approach and Constitutional Amendments Required

The best approach to an independent electoral management body that can conduct credible elections at the local governments, is suggested by the Electoral Reform Committee (2008), and that is the integration of the State Independent Electoral Commission into the structure of the Independent National Electoral Commission, to form one electoral body for the country. The Committee recommended

that the existing SIECs be reorganised and integrated into the structure of INEC, for greater efficiency and autonomy. This will entail constitutional amendments, and statutory provisions integrating and coordinating the activities of the State offices of INEC and SIECs for all elections. This will entail altering Part 1 of the Third Schedule to the Constitution, to vest the Independent National Electoral Commission with the power to conduct Local Government Elections. It will entail amending Section 285 of the Constitution and all other corresponding sections, to bring them into conformity with the new legal regime.

It will also entail amending Section 7 of the Constitution, to prescribe a definite tenure for the Local Governments in Nigeria. The National Assembly must amend Section 197 establishing the State Independent Electoral Commission. They must also amend Sections 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, and 205 of the Constitution. These sections deal with the removal of members of SIEC, independence of certain bodies, quorum and decisions, powers and procedures, and interpretation. Section 110 of the Electoral Act 2022 has prescribed the procedure for the removal from office, of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman of an Area Council. The amendment must follow the same pattern, and prescribe the procedure for the removal from office of a Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Local Government. The National Assembly must also tweak Section 150 of the Electoral Act relating to the procedure for Local Government Elections, in furtherance of Paragraph 11 of Part II of the Second Schedule to the Constitution, to rhyme with Sections 98 to 113 of the Electoral Act.

Half measures, will not be enough. Financial independence alone, will not guarantee the autonomy of the Local Governments. The process through which Local Government Chairmen and Councillors get elected and assume office, must be protected. Their tenure must be guaranteed, and there must be diversity in the membership of the various Local Government Councils. The Executive and the Legislature at the National and State levels must put the nation first, and strengthen grassroots democracy. Every nation arrives at Federalism based on its history, culture, practices, and antecedents. We must practice Federalism that works for us, and not one that undermines grassroots democracy.

Festus Okoye, Legal Practitioner; former National Commissioner, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

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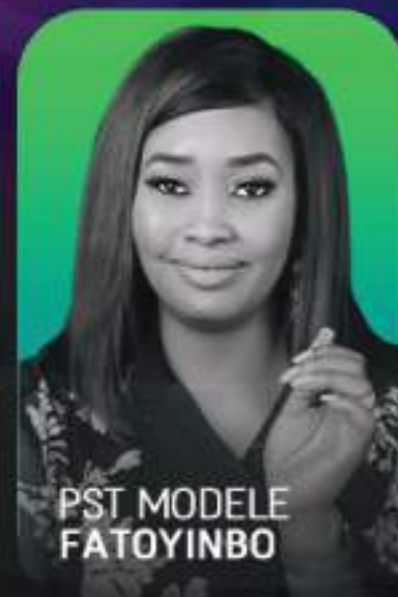
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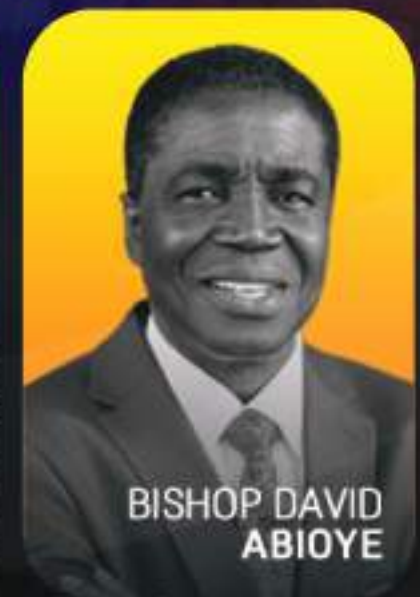
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POLITY

Countering Banditry: Utilizing Technology and Civil Cooperation for Immediate Solutions

By Emmanuel Uzo Obi

Nigeria is currently facing a pressing security challenge: banditry in its northern and central regions. These bandits, increasingly resorting to kidnapping for ransom, especially along highways, have left citizens vulnerable and threatened national stability. The urgency of this situation cannot be overstated. In a recent address, Nigeria's Chief of Defense Staff, General Christopher Musa, outlined the military's complex issues in combating these groups. He highlighted the difficulty of locating bandits due to their mobility, delays in receiving intelligence, and the limitations of current surveillance technologies, particularly drones, in dense forest terrains. Despite these formidable obstacles, they are not insurmountable. Nigeria can significantly improve its counter-banditry efforts by addressing these challenges with appropriate technological solutions, enhanced civil cooperation, and targeted reforms.

The Challenges Facing Nigeria's Military
The Nigerian military, though formidable, faces several critical challenges in its fight against banditry. These challenges arise from the country's vast geography, the agility and mobility of criminal elements, the unpredictability of bandit movements, and delays in intelligence sharing.

- **Geographical and Logistical Hurdles:** Nigeria's diverse landscape, ranging from open savannahs to dense forests, provides numerous hiding spots for bandits. Forests, in particular, complicate drone surveillance, as Musa emphasizes. The country's vast size makes patrolling and surveillance difficult, especially when dealing with mobile criminal groups that can quickly relocate.

- **Delays in Intelligence:** Intelligence gathering in counter-banditry efforts is often compromised by time delays. Musa noted that due to Nigeria's size and the distance between military units and banditry hotspots, it can take up to 24 hours for information on bandit activity to reach the appropriate authorities. By the time the military can respond, the bandits have often moved on, making real-time tracking extremely difficult.

- **Bandits' Mobility and Terrain Advantage:** The constant movement of bandits adds another layer of complexity to military operations. Bandit groups must stay in one place longer for forces to engage them effectively. Their ability to navigate forested areas further shields them from aerial surveillance, limiting the military's capacity to track and apprehend them.

- **Civilian Support and Information Sharing:** Musa also emphasized the role of civilian cooperation in enhancing intelligence efforts. Timely and accurate information from local communities could help mitigate the time lag in intelligence gathering and increase the military's chances of intercepting bandits before they strike again.

Are the Challenges Insurmountable?
While these challenges are significant, they are far from impossible. Similar situations have been faced and successfully managed in other countries, indicating that Nigeria's security forces can turn the tide with the right strategy and tools. The potential for success is high. Solutions can be drawn from combining technology, improved intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and civilian engagement. Nigeria can overcome these challenges and significantly improve its security with the right approach, instilling a sense of optimism in the audience.

The key to effectively combating banditry in Nigeria lies in adopting a multifaceted approach that addresses immediate and long-term needs. In the short term, increasing intelligence capabilities, enhancing surveillance technology, and fostering greater cooperation between security forces and civilians will offer tangible results. However, to truly address the root causes of banditry and prevent its resurgence, long-term strategies such as police reform and infrastructural development are also necessary. By implementing a comprehensive plan, Nigeria can significantly improve its security situation and protect its citizens from the threat of banditry.

The Promise of Technological Solutions to Nigeria's Banditry Problem

1. **Drone Technology and Aerial Surveillance:** Musa's comments about drones' limitations in forested areas are only partially accurate. While current surveillance drones may struggle to see through dense forest canopies, technological advancements offer solutions. Modern drones equipped with thermal imaging sensors can



Chief of Defense Staff, General Christopher Musa

detect heat signatures, allowing security forces to track movements through dense forests. **Lidar technology** (Light Detection and Ranging) can also be integrated into drones, accurately mapping forest terrains and detecting bandit hideouts in otherwise inaccessible areas. Upgrading Nigeria's drone fleet with these advanced capabilities would drastically improve its effectiveness in tracking and identifying bandit groups.

2. **Satellite Surveillance and Geospatial Technology:**

In addition to drones, satellite technology can play a significant role in combating banditry. **Geospatial Intelligence (GEOINT)** uses satellite images and GPS data to track movements over vast areas and can monitor areas where physical forces or drones cannot reach. Real-time satellite imagery, combined with artificial intelligence (AI), can detect irregular movements, such as the formation of groups in forested regions, triggering alerts for ground forces to intervene.

3. **Real-Time Intelligence and Communication Networks:**

One of the most critical problems identified by Musa is the time lag in intelligence sharing. This delay could be mitigated using a **real-time intelligence network**, where civilian, ground troops and aerial surveillance information is relayed instantly to a central command center. Developing a **mobile app** that citizens can use to report suspicious activity directly to military or police forces could help overcome the lag in intelligence sharing. This type of crowdsourced intelligence could ensure a faster response from the military, allowing them to intercept bandits more effectively.

4. **Integration of Artificial Intelligence and Predictive Analytics:**

Artificial intelligence (AI) can be utilized to predict bandit movements based on historical data and current intelligence. **Predictive analytics** software could analyze patterns in banditry, identify hotspots, and predict where attacks will likely occur next. AI systems could sift through vast amounts of data from drones, satellites, and ground forces, providing real-time, actionable intelligence that helps military units position themselves strategically before bandits strike.

Leveraging National Identity Systems and License Plate Technologies

In addition to the broader technological strategies, more targeted solutions such as a reliable national identity system, database-driven license plates, and license plate readers can be crucial in combating banditry and kidnapping for ransom. These systems are vital in disrupting the anonymity that criminals exploit to evade detection.

1. **National Identity System for Improved Tracking:** A robust national identity system is essential for tracking and verifying the identities of individuals across Nigeria. Criminals, including kidnapers and bandits, often exploit gaps in identification systems to move undetected. A comprehensive identity database with biometric data linked to mobile networks, bank accounts, and vehicle registrations would make it more difficult for criminals to operate anonymously. This system would also enhance law enforcement's ability to track individuals across different regions and sectors, thereby reducing the ability of bandits to move freely and commit crimes. Database-Driven License Plates and License Plate Readers: Kidnappers and bandits frequently transport victims in vehicles that are often unregistered or have false license plates. Database-driven license plates combined with automated license plate readers (ALPRs) can be instrumental in identifying and tracking vehicles used in criminal activities. License plate readers, installed at strategic checkpoints and on drones, could automatically scan and match plates against a national database, flagging suspicious vehicles for further inspection.

Additionally, integrating license plate databases with Nigeria's national identity system would enable law enforcement to trace the owners of vehicles involved in kidnappings or banditry, even when fake or stolen plates are used. This system would also allow for immediate alerts when a car of interest passes through monitored areas, enabling quicker responses by security forces.

2. **Technology-Driven Search and Rescue Capabilities:** The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) can significantly enhance its search and rescue operations by integrating drones, satellite imagery, and AI-driven analytics with traditional ground operations. By using drones equipped with thermal

imaging and AI to scan vast areas, police can locate kidnapped victims more efficiently, especially in rural or forested areas. AI can further assist by predicting where kidnapers may take their victims based on historical patterns and real-time data, improving the chances of swift rescue.

3. **Kidnap-for-Ransom Disruption Technologies:** Cellular tracking technology can also be crucial in disrupting kidnapping for ransom. Criminals often use mobile phones to negotiate ransoms, and law enforcement can use cell-site simulators (also known as "stingrays") to locate these phones and track the kidnapers. By monitoring communications and mapping the location of ransom calls, police can track down and apprehend criminals more efficiently while reducing the need for families to comply with ransom demands.

The Role of Civilian Cooperation
While technology is a powerful tool, it can only partially solve Nigeria's security problems. Civilians' active cooperation is crucial. Bandits often operate in remote areas where local communities have valuable knowledge of their movements. Encouraging civilians to report suspicious activity through secure and accessible channels is essential. However, trust must be built between security forces and the public for this strategy to be effective.

- **Community Policing Initiatives:** Residents are often the first to notice bandit movements or new faces in their communities. Community policing initiatives, where trained local volunteers work alongside national security forces, can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility for local safety. However, there is a potential for misuse of these initiatives, which could undermine their effectiveness. Therefore, providing proper training and resources is crucial to ensure their effectiveness and prevent misuse.

- **Building Trust and Reducing Response Time:** For civilians to engage actively with security forces, they must trust that their reports will lead to swift and meaningful action. If intelligence is reported and no intervention occurs, civilians will become disillusioned. Improving the military and police response time to reports from the public is critical. This can be achieved through better coordination and ensuring security units are stationed closer to high-risk areas.

Reforming Nigeria's Police Force and Military Coordination

Beyond technological and civilian solutions, Nigeria must also reform its internal security apparatus. The police's slow response to many instances of banditry is a significant obstacle to effective crime prevention. A comprehensive police reform focusing on enhancing response times, improving professionalism, and rooting out corruption is essential. In addition to police reform, better coordination between the military and police is required to ensure seamless operations and effective resource deployment.

Nigeria's battle against banditry may be difficult, but winning is not impossible. The challenges outlined by Chief of Defense Staff Christopher Musa can be mitigated through advanced technology, real-time intelligence sharing, and a robust partnership between the military and civilians. Solutions such as thermal imaging drones, satellite surveillance, AI-driven predictive analytics, national identity systems, license plate readers, and community policing initiatives can significantly improve Nigeria's ability to counter banditry.

Moreover, police reforms and better military coordination are necessary to ensure a swift and effective response. By integrating technology such as a national identity system and license plate tracking with real-time intelligence sharing, law enforcement agencies can better track criminal movements, disrupt kidnapping operations, and improve search and rescue capabilities. Public cooperation will also be essential, with civilians playing a vital role in intelligence gathering and community policing.

Ultimately, if Nigeria implements these strategies comprehensively, it can disrupt bandits' operations, reduce the rate of kidnapping for ransom, and restore peace to its troubled regions. A combination of modern technology, strategic reforms, and civil engagement will pave the way for long-term national security and stability. By leveraging these tools and building trust with communities, Nigeria can move closer to winning the fight against banditry and ensuring the safety of its citizens.

- **Emmanuel Obi is a professor of cybersecurity and public affairs analyst and writes from North Carolina**

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UBA Tribe Wall, Time Capsule Unveiled to Celebrate Bank's 75 Years

Charles Ajunwa writes that Africa's global bank last week in Lagos unveiled the UBA Tribe Wall and Time Capsule to celebrate its staff and bank's trajectory in the last 75 years



L-R: Nasir, Alawuba, Akinyemi and a female staff of UBA admiring the portrait of UBA Chairman, Elumelu



Alawuba (2nd left) and others admiring UBA Tribe Wall and UBA Time Capsule

"Oh, see the innocent face of our Chairman."

The above exclamation, which was involuntary, came from a female staff of the United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc on sighting portrait of the Chairman of UBA, Mr. Tony Elumelu where he looked so young, at the ground floor of the UBA House located at 57, Marina, Lagos Island, Lagos.

The woman's loud voice reverberated through the entire ground floor attracting others' attention at the imposing state-of-the-art 20-floor office overlooking Apogon Bridge and Apapa sea port.

The event was the unveiling of the UBA Tribe Wall and UBA Time Capsule put together as part of activities to celebrate the bank's 75 years anniversary. As early as 9:30a.m., the staff of the bank and other invited guests were already on the ground floor exchanging pleasantries as they waited for the arrival of the Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Oliver Alawuba, to declare the exhibition open.

Shortly after arriving in company of some Board Members, Executive Directors and Senior Executives, the GMD/CEO of UBA, Alawuba who dressed smartly in black suit having a UBA logo, white shirts with long red tie and a pair of well-polished black shoes, hit the ground running after the National Anthem was played.

Alawuba, who moved his body and gesticulated with two hands while addressing the crowd, started by thanking and welcoming everybody to the occasion. "This is a very momentous occasion. Two things we are doing today: The UBA Tribe Wall and The UBA Time Capsule," he said.

UBA Tribe Wall

"This is one of the programmes for UBA at 75, and this is a very big programme for us. The Tribe Wall is about you, the staff of UBA. We have pictures of all the staff of UBA because we think that at UBA 75, we should celebrate you. There will be no UBA without you.

"All the staff of UBA, wherever you are today, those on their seats, those that are running from one customer to the other, those that are making fishes, we see you and we know that you count. That is why we have gathered all the pictures to celebrate you.

"We are proud of you, we are proud of all your contributions and all the sacrifices you are making for the growth of UBA.

"So the UBA Tribe Wall will be an enduring memory that today (September 19, 2024) you are part of UBA and you will remain part of the UBA," Alawuba said.

UBA Time Capsule

"We also have the UBA Time Capsule, which is a way of telling our story from the beginning of the UBA. From just a small location (Kakawa) behind us in 1949, UBA has grown to become a global financial institution, and we are so proud of what UBA has achieved in the last 75 years. Adding, "We want to show our history, where we started and where we got to today.

Appreciation to Founders, Staff, Customers

"It's also an occasion for us to be very grateful and show appreciation to all those who have worked from the founders of UBA till day to make UBA what it is.

"I would like to specially and humbly thank



Alawuba at the unveiling of UBA Tribe Wall and UBA Time Capsule

the Group Chairman of UBA, Mr. Tony Elumelu, and all the board members for the vision, the courage for leading UBA to this great institution that we are today.

"I thank all the Board members, all the Executive Directors, all the Senior Executives of UBA across all the countries, all the Board members in the subsidiaries, they are also making great contributions to UBA. I would like to thank all Managers, all Branch Managers, all staff of UBA wherever you are, you are part of what we are doing today.

"We also like to thank all the customers of UBA. Indeed, without the customers of UBA there would have been no UBA. So we thank every customer of UBA, you have been banking for the past 50 years and I feel humbled that you have continued to patronize UBA. They are the UBA that we are celebrating today.

"I would like to also thank all those that contributed in one way or the other. Some of them may not be customers, they may be third parties like the vendors. You are also part of the UBA family, I would like to thank you. We appreciate everybody.

Where UBA is Going in the next 75 years

Today, we have about \$20bn in total assets. In the next 75, UBA will be \$20 trillion. Today, we have over 40 million customers. In the next 75 years, UBA will have one billion customers across the world. Today, we are present in about 24 countries. In the next 75 years, UBA will be present and dominant in over 100 countries. Yes, we are dominant in a few countries today, in the next 75 years UBA would be among the top 10 banks in the whole world.

"Why do I say so? Because I know that the future of the world is in Africa, and the future in Africa is in UBA. So in the next 75 years, UBA will be that bank that will continue to link Africans to the world and the world to Africa. UBA will be that bank that will be controlling payment systems across all the countries in Africa and the world at large. UBA will be dogged in our

financial institution.

"UBA has a future and the future of UBA is great. I pray that you continue to preach and believe that this institution that has been handed over to us, that we will hand it over to the next generation that will keep UBA flying in the next 100 and 200 years to come.

Driven By Innovation

According to Alawuba, UBA is driven by innovation. "This bank, UBA, is driven by innovation. Our staff are very innovative and our customers will continue to support us because we are innovating products that bring confidence, security to their businesses and to their lifestyle. You are still going to see UBA in the next 75 years.

"We will continue to focus on the people, on our businesses and on customers. This bank has the primary and singular responsibility to our customers. So the customer will continue to be the bedrock of what we do in UBA."

On the bank's plans to preserve the artefacts, Alawuba said, "We have an electronic library where all these artefacts are stored for the future generation. I'm talking about 75 years and for you to do that, you have to electronically store these artefacts. We have that and we want to sustain that in the next 100 years and beyond."

On most accomplishments of the bank, he said, This bank has been around for 75 years and we have been able to put excellence and stability, we have been able to serve, grow the business, grow customers' base up to 40 million and we are still growing. We have been able to touch so many lives across 24 countries. UBA is growing, UBA is doing well, UBA is changing lives, UBA is building confidence, connecting Africa to the world, connecting the world to Africa, improving payment systems across businesses, across several continents, four continents, 24 countries. UBA is growing 1,000 branches across the world, over 2,000 ATMs, over 500,000 POS. This bank has the future of Africa in mind, this bank will continue to reposition the continent and reposition the people of Africa."

Other Insights

Mr. Oluwa Muiyiwa Akinyemi, Group Deputy Managing Director, said before the merger of Standard Trust Bank with UBA, "The evolution of UBA actually started before the merger. It

started 75 years ago. The merger happened in 2005, the third largest bank and the fifth largest bank then came together to form the new UBA. And as you can see, the transformation of our logo right from the colours of blue and yellow to red, we see the vibrancy and focus of the new UBA.

On what has kept UBA after many acquisitions, Akinyemi said, "I think one of the greatest assets for UBA is the people. The commitment of the people to achieve that X vision that we have for UBA and everyday when we come to work, we look at how we impact on our society, how we impact businesses that we serve across 24 countries. So, people have been the most important assets for UBA. It has kept us, sustained our growth and trajectory over the past 75 years and that also would continue to be the greatest asset for us in the next 75 years.

"In terms of innovation, we want to be on the edge. A few years back, we launched the first AI chat box in Africa. That is going to be a major platform of our service to our customers and conventionally too we would be going to leverage on AI to serve our customers a lot more. In the next two to five years you will see a transformation of our platforms to the next level."

Another staff member, Moronike Akinrimisi, said that ladies in the bank have continued to be given equal opportunities with their male counterparts in order for them to attain any heights in their chosen career. We have two Executive Directors that are women. "There is one thing our Chairman and GMD promote, and that is the fact as a woman we give the very best that we have. Everybody is represented well. We give the same things in terms of professionalism."

Mr. Ramon Nasir, Group Head, Media and External Relations of UBA, in his press review said that the Time Capsule experience is designed to captivate and inspire visitors through several key features.

Namely, Illuminated History and Milestone Wall - An expansive, backlit wall showcasing UBA's significant milestones and achievements, highlighting the bank's growth and impact since its inception, Display Stands Featuring Prototype Products- A collection of UBA's pioneering products, including the first ATMs, early card designs, and other memorabilia that tell the story of UBA's innovation and service excellence over the years, Hanging Acrylic Infographic Frames- Elegant frames suspended throughout the exhibit, presenting infographics of past Group Managing Directors and Chairmen, celebrating the leadership that has shaped UBA's legacy. Screen Display of Past TVCs and Ads - A dedicated screen area looping iconic TV commercials and advertisements, offering a nostalgic look at UBA's brand journey and the creative campaigns that have defined its public image, Carpeted Flooring and Crafted Lighting- Premium carpeted flooring paired with thoughtfully designed lighting, creating a warm and inviting ambiance that enhances the overall experience, Experience and Engagement- The Time Capsule exhibit is curated to engage all visitors, from long-standing stakeholders to new employees. It provides a unique opportunity to explore UBA's historical narrative and understand the values and innovations that have sustained its growth and relevance across the African continent and beyond.

The unveiling of the UBA Tribe Wall and UBA Time Capsule, was one event that would continue to ring bell in the minds of all staff of Africa's global bank which they would forever cherish.

Art of Investment: The Rise and Rise of African Art

Ngozi Akinyele

A diversified portfolio is one of the key metrics of investment success. The greater this diversity, the more likely it will outperform the market, and the savviest investors are often looking for new opportunities: the rising stars among new asset classes.

Investment in art is certainly not a new concept, but what makes it unique is that it often has low correlation with other major asset classes, meaning lower overall price volatility. It's the sure bet, sometimes with incredible escalating value, especially for those opting to invest in blue-chip artists (renowned artists whose work demands high prices in the art market).

However, not all of us can afford to invest in the works of Picasso, Van Gogh, or Warhol, with many blue-chip pieces only accessible as a luxury asset class – creating the perception that all art investment is only for the extremely wealthy.

However, a new trend is emerging, where investors of all types are finally escaping the confines of Western Art, triggering a surge of interest in non-Western artists. Collectors are recognising their cultural significance and artistic quality, leading to a rise in the prices in the work of artists from China, India, Brazil, and of course, Nigeria – receiving the international recognition they deserve.

African art is gaining traction across the world. Consider the meteoric trajectory of El Anatsui, the Ghanaian sculptor who is rising through the world-rankings of best-selling artists at auctions, with his shimmering tapestries and sculptures selling for \$5000 to \$2.2 million USD. Similarly, Nigerian sculptor, Yinka Shonibare's diverse array of works have sold for hundreds of thousands of US dollars at auction.

Early investors in their work have been greatly rewarded, which is why many passionate collectors are looking for similarly talented African artists, whose works are both culturally significant and affordable.

In 2019, the Nigerian art market reached a ten year high, reaching sales of N400 million across the country's numerous auction houses. However, recent economic volatility has shaken the progress of the sector. Yet even in the face of the recent currency crisis, the art market held firm, performing better than the overall market. Some international auction houses, such as Bonhams, even saw a significant increase in purchases of African art between 2022 and 2023 – from \$8.9m in 2022 to \$10.3m in 2023.

To maintain any sort of forward trajectory – to ensure our art remains highly valued locally and internationally – it is of vital importance that we, as the private sector, continue to support the



Ngozi Akinyele

collectors and the artists who are helping to grow interest in the sector, while also making art more accessible.

Democratisation – of wealth, of investment, of art – has been a key focus for the Coronation Group since its establishment. Our founder, Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, is a consummate lover of art, and believes in the transformative power of artistic expression.

While he is widely recognised for his achievements as an investor, banker, and philanthropist, his passion for art predates his career in finance. His mother, a curator and gallerist, and his father, a civil servant in Nigeria's cultural ministry inspired his love of art in its many mediums, laying the foundation for the Coronation Art Gallery that opened to the public in 2022.

In September (2024), we opened a new exhibit honouring the distinguished women art collectors of our country, whose incredible private collections highlight the extraordinary power of Nigerian art.

These collectors include Ugoma Ebilah, curator and culture convener, Tinuade Awe, consultant & Former CEO of NGX Regulation, Sola Carena, corporate finance executive, and 10 others who understand the power of investing in our Nigerian masters.

We are incredibly proud to have collaborated with such extraordinary women for this exhibition, and hope to inspire future generations of art lovers, collectors, and creators to engage with African art and its powerful role in shaping our

collective future.

Featuring the works of Victor Ehikhamenor, Ndidi Emefiele, Tony Nsofor, and dozens of other examples of Nigeria's artistic excellence, the overall value of the works on display totalled N451 million, a clear indication of their growing investment potential.

The gallery opening attracted the attention – and attendance – of the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, Chairman of Aluko & Oyebo, Gbenga Oyebo, Chairman of Eko Electricity Distribution Company, Dere Otubu, and Chairman, First Ally Capital, Femi Okunsanya.

The presence of these dignitaries underscored not only the cultural significance that art plays in our society, but also that it must be recognised as a multidimensional asset class that can drive wealth creation and socio-economic development.

However, to create genuine access to this cultural wealth, we must find ways in which we can make art affordable to those outside of the HNWI (high-net-worth individual) bracket. Yet we have to be cautious in how we do this.

It is this desire to democratise art that spurred the development of the NFT (non-fungible token) market, with these tokens becoming an entirely new cryptocurrency asset. NFTs are a digital representation of an asset, such as a work of art, recorded on a blockchain to allegedly ensure authenticity. While certainly more affordable than a Picasso, like any cryptocurrency, they are considered a very high-risk investment, and one crypto investment research company has alleged that almost 96% of NFTs are "dead", or no longer have any value – lending credence to the idea that the tokens are a fad.

How the Lagos-Calabar Highway is Paving the Way for Nigeria's Economic Transformation

Nigeria's 700-kilometre Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, led by Hitech Construction, is set to transform the nation's economy by enhancing connectivity, unlocking new markets, and driving regional growth, **Precious Ugwuzor** writes

Throughout history, transportation infrastructure has been a powerful driver of economic transformation.

From the Roman roads that built an empire to the railways of the Industrial Revolution, infrastructure has consistently fueled progress. Today, countries like South Korea and China have risen as global economic powerhouses through massive infrastructure investments. Now, it's Africa's turn.

Nigeria, the most populated country in Africa, urgently needs better transportation networks. Severe traffic congestion in Lagos stifles productivity and increases business costs, while deteriorating roads in the Southeast and inadequate rail systems in the North disrupt trade and agricultural transport. To address these issues, the Nigerian government has embarked on several ambitious infrastructure projects, the most transformative being the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway.

Led by Hitech Construction, a company founded by the Chagoury Group, this project aims to reshape the nation's economy by enhancing regional connectivity. Oba Abdulwasii Abisogun II, Paramount Traditional Ruler of Iru Land, describes it as a project that will "unlock significant economic opportunities for local communities." Hon. Ebiye Benson, Delta State Representative, echoes this sentiment, stating, "For many, the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway is more than just a road—it's a lifeline."

Bridging the gap

Indeed, the highway promises to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas, enabling small farmers in Akwa Ibom to access larger markets, artisans in Ondo to reach new custom-



Prototype of Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road

ers, and creating job opportunities for youth in Cross River. This project is also expected to generate nearly 10,000 direct jobs and another 15,000 indirect jobs in sectors such as raw materials supply and logistics. It will particularly benefit underrepresented groups like women and rural communities, fostering

inclusive economic growth.

Beyond job creation, the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway stands to enhance Nigeria's position in the global market. As one of the country's most ambitious infrastructure projects, it will improve transportation networks across key economic hubs, boosting Nigeria's Logistics Performance Index by 0.5 to 1.0 points. This

Thankfully, there are safer ways of investing in art. A recent trend towards fractional ownership has been gaining traction since last year, where buyers can purchase fractional shares of a given artwork for partial ownership. The London based market research firm, Artfactic, conducted a survey earlier this year revealing that more buyers in the art market were cautiously partaking in the practice of fractional ownership – from 9% in 2023 to 16% in May this year.

The largest firm in the fractional ownership art business, New York's Masterworks, has been able to secure more than \$1 billion (USD) in capital since it was established in 2017, purchasing more than 415 major artworks to fractionalise and sell to investors.

Similarly, blockchain technology has been used to tokenise physical art pieces – yet another way to enable fractional ownership.

It remains to be seen if this trend is yet another bubble waiting to burst, but it is impossible to deny this is an innovative way to democratise access to (partial) art ownership.

It will likely be the fintech innovators who will be central to lowering the barriers to art collection and investment, and considering Nigeria remains in the top five African countries for fintech investment, I suspect we may see such innovative investment platforms sooner rather than later.

At Coronation Group, we will continue to promote the art itself, the collectors, artists, and the capabilities of Nigerian art to diversify investment portfolios. Because when we invest in local art, we don't just enrich ourselves, we enrich our culture.

About Coronation Group: Coronation Group Limited is a leading African Financial Markets Holding Company headquartered in Lagos Nigeria. As the holding company, it provides strategic oversight to a diverse portfolio of companies operating in the Financial Services, Technology, and Energy sectors across the continent. Coronation Group's Financial Services companies offer a comprehensive range of investment, lending, and assurance solutions tailored to address the unique needs of its clients. The Group holds non-operating investments in energy, technology, and consumer businesses, diversifying its presence in key sectors.

Coronation Group's vision extends beyond the present, continuously evolving to meet the changing needs of its customers. For more information about Coronation Group and its subsidiaries, please visit www.coronation.ng.

-Coronation is a leading African financial services conglomerate based in Lagos and Ngozi Akinyele is the Group Executive with oversight for brand, marketing, communications, corporate citizenship and sustainability across all Coronation's entities.

improvement is expected to attract foreign investment, making the country more competitive internationally. The project will also cut travel time between Lagos and Calabar from 14 hours to just 7, significantly improving connectivity and efficiency. But the impact of the highway goes beyond just economic gains.

Contributing to the nation's long-term prosperity

Ronald Chagoury Jr., Director of Hitech, emphasizes that the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway is "more than an economic booster—it's a catalyst for social and sustainable development." Aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, it integrates reforestation initiatives and eco-friendly construction practices to minimize its carbon footprint. Additionally, the inclusion of a train system alongside the highway will reduce both traffic congestion and pollution.

Beyond its environmental impact, improved transportation will significantly enhance access to education, healthcare, and essential services, particularly in rural areas. This expanded access has the potential to increase school attendance, strengthen human capital, and contribute to Nigeria's long-term prosperity. As Chagoury points out, the highway's influence will ripple through every sector of Nigerian life, reflecting the country's broader vision for inclusive growth.

More than just a transportation link, the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway symbolizes Nigeria's drive for progress, with the power to reshape the nation's social and economic fabric for generations to come, underscoring its ambition to become a global economic leader.

IMAGES

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L-R: A student of Government Secondary School, Akabuka in Andoni Local Government Area of Rivers State, Oki Emmanuel; the school Principal, Mr. Uti Uche; General Manager, Community Affairs Division, TotalEnergies EP Nigeria Limited, Mr. Godspower Nwachukwu; and HCDT Leader, TotalEnergies EP Nigeria Limited, Mr. Okechukwu Obara, during the distribution of solar lamps to schools as part of TotalEnergies EP Nigeria Limited 'Light Up Naija' initiative at OML 58 in Rivers State...recently



R-L: Former Editor, City People Magazine, Susan Eyo Honesty; Founder, Isis Model Africa and Africa Next Super Model, Joan Okorodudu; and Ambassador Aju Elumelu James in Baltimore in Maryland, United States when Okorodudu received the Presidential Lifetime Achievement Award at the Runway International Fashion Awards (RIFAS) held in Baltimore, USA...recently



L-R: Head of SME and Wealth Team, AXA Mansard, Funmilayo Kunle-Komolafe; Head of Marketing, AXA Mansard, Olusesan Ogunyoye; and the Commissioner for Communications Technology and Digital Economy, Mallam Suleiman Isah, at the MSME Nairametrics Awards where AXA Mansard won the award for Best MSME Insurance Company of the Year, held in Lagos...recently



L-R: Chief Executive Officer, Sinbol Group, Mr. Sinari Bolade Daranijo; Founder and Chief Strategist, Kenneth Soriyan Research and Ideas LLC, Dr. Olakunle Soriyan; Lead Pastor, The LightHouse NGR, Ayo Daniels; Co-founder and CEO, Vesti, Mr. Olusola Amusan; Co-founder and COO, Vesti, Mr. Abimbola Amusan; and Partnerships and Communications Lead of Vesti, Ifeoluwa Ariyo-Agbaje, during the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the grand opening of Vesti's new Lagos office...recently



L-R: District Executive Secretary, Rotary Club District 9111, Valentine Shomoye; ICT Director, Public Service Staff Development Centre (PSSDC), Mr. Adetona Akeem; District Governor, Rotary Club District 9111, Dr. Oluwale Kukoyi; Faculty Member, Mrs. Babaranti Titilayomi; Personal Assistant to the District Governor, Shina Abiola; and the Course Coordinator, Mr. Rasheed Rasaki, during District 9111 AI Mastery Class held in celebration of International Teachers Day in Lagos...recently



L-R: The Director-General, Maryam Babangida Women Development Centre, Hajia Asabe Bashir; Senior International Trade Policy Officer, National Action Committee on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA), Mr. Olusegun Olutayo; Founder/CEO, LeLook Bags Academy, Mrs. Chinwe Ezenwa; former Minister of Women Affairs, Dame Pauline Tallen; and Programme Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mrs. Clare Henshaw, during the UNDP, AFCFTA and LeLook Bags Academy first onboarding students training programme for women, youths, and persons with disabilities (PWDs) in fashion, bag-making, and innovative accessories, held at the LeLook Bags Academy head office in Abuja...recently

BUSINESSWORLD

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RATES AS AT OCTOBER 7, 2024

MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX		EXCHANGE RATE
OPR	25.34%	CALL	23.25%	INDEX LEVEL	595.26	1/4 TO DATE	0.24%	N1,262.85/1 US DOLLAR*
OVERNIGHT	25.18%	1-MONTH	21.37%	1-DAY	0.10%	YEAR TO DATE	-10.99%	*AS AT MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024
		3-MONTH	22.41%	MONTH-TO-DATE	0.24%			

Discos Grow Revenue by 61.4% after 230% Electricity Tariff Hike for Band 'A' Customers



Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

Revenues earned by electricity Distribution Companies (Discos) in Nigeria have risen by over 61.4 per cent after the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) approved a 230 per cent tariff increase for Band 'A' customers nationwide in April.

Latest data from NERC indicated that in July 2024, Discos' earnings soared to N162.1 billion from N100.4 billion in March just before the new tariff regime was introduced in Q2 this year.

This is coming amid rising complaints by electricity consumers, especially in Abuja and Lagos that they were being arbitrarily migrated to Band 'A' without the 20 hours power supply they are ordinarily entitled to under the band.

Residents of Abuja in September protested the Band 'A' tariff increase, complaining that they receive less than 10 hours of power daily, instead of the promised 20-hour daily power supply.

Also, they have lamented that these 'migrations' are done without prior notice. The tariff band is intended for customers who receive 20 hours to 24 hours of electricity daily and are charged N209.5 per kilowatt-hour (kWh).

In Lagos, several customers have similarly demonstrated against their 'forceful migration' to the Band A category by the Discos in the state. They recently carried placards with inscriptions like 're-migrate our communities away from Band A', 'scrap all bands', 'affordable tariff reduces cost of living', among others.

Aside the Band 'A' category, Band 'B' category is at least 16 hours, Band 'C' is 12 hours, Band 'D' is eight hours, while Band E will have a minimum of four hours daily.

But the NERC commercial data for the month of July under consideration showed that Discos raked in N162.14 billion out of the N191.11 total billing for the month.

Collection efficiency was 82.26 per cent, the data showed, with recovery efficiency at 72.38 per cent. This meant that for subsidised customers, only N83.77 was collected from allowed average tariff of N115.74/kWh.

A THISDAY analysis recently showed that in the whole of Q1, 2024, the 12 power distributors raked in N291.6 billion and N433 billion in Q2.

After about two years of tariff freeze in the power sector, the

federal government had in April increased the rate paid per kilowatt hour (kwh) of electricity from about N68 to N225 for Band 'A' customers, who it said consistently enjoyed 20 hours of supply daily. That amount has fallen to N209/kWh.

Announcing the increment in Abuja, the power sector regulator stated that only about 15 per cent of the over 12 million registered power customers would be affected by the new decision.

According to NERC, the decision to raise tariff was to relieve the federal government of the burden of paying N240 billion per month and N2.9 trillion per year as electricity subsidy.

In April, the power distributors raked in N142.92 billion, N139.23 billion in May and N150.86 billion

in June, a THISDAY breakdown pointed out.

With the over N161 billion revenue in July, the highest so far this year, the Discos in Nigeria made an additional revenue of N61.4 billion since the month preceding the Band 'A' tariff approval by the industry regulator.

Historical data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), recently showed that in the whole of 2020, the total revenue made by the Discos was just N526.77 billion, while in 2021, it rose to N761.17 billion.

Similarly, in 2022, the power distributors raked in about N828 billion, more than rounding the figure off in the 12 months of 2023, with N1.1 trillion as revenue.

With the current revenue collection pattern in the first seven months of

2024 which has hit N886.74 billion, the Discos have already exceeded their revenue for the whole 2020 and are have also broken the records for 2021 and 2022 and will most likely exceed the 2023 record by year-end.

With this considerable rise in revenue, the Discos are expected to plough back part into building the much-needed investment in infrastructure.

But the electricity distributors have in the past been accused of under-investing in infrastructure to boost power supply to over 200 million Nigerians, who currently depend more on self-generated power for their homes and businesses, instead of the national grid.

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

PMI Report: Business Activities Dropped in September as Conditions Deteriorate

Dike Onwuamaeze

Economic output of the Nigerian private sector declined marginally in September 2024 as inflationary pressures strengthened and caused input costs and selling prices to rise at sharpest rates in six months.

This was disclosed by the Stanbic IBTC Bank Nigeria's 'Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) report, which stated that the headline PMI was little-changed in September, posting 49.8 following a reading of 49.9 in August.

The PMI said: "As such, the index pointed to a further fractional deterioration in business conditions,

the third in as many months. "Companies continued to report challenging demand conditions, in large part due to the inflation environment. In fact, September saw an intensification of inflationary pressures, with both input costs and output prices increasing at the sharpest rates in six months."

According to the report, business activity in the Nigerian private sector continued to tick lower in September, falling for the third month running amid muted demand and strong inflationary pressures.

The pace of reduction remained marginal, however, some firms were

able to secure greater new business during the month.

The report added that purchase prices rose rapidly amid currency weakness and higher costs for fuel, logistics, materials and transportation.

"Some firms made efforts to help their workers with higher living costs, but the rate of wage inflation eased to an 18-month low.

"Higher costs were then passed through to customers, with close to 49 per cent of respondents raising selling prices in September," the report said.

Commenting, Head of Equity Research West Africa, Stanbic

IBTC Bank, Mr. Muyiwa Oni, said, "Nigeria's PMI remained below the 50-point mark for the third consecutive month, settling at 49.8 points in September from 49.9 points in August."

Oni said that this pointed to a further fractional deterioration in business conditions, the third in as many months, largely due to challenging demand conditions amid the inflationary environment.

He, however, pointed out that the pace of deterioration remained marginal as some firms were able to secure greater new business during the month.

"Output increased in agriculture

and manufacturing, but fell in wholesale, retail and services. Meanwhile, companies remained reluctant to hold inventories in September, cutting stocks of purchases for the second month running and to the largest extent since May 2020. Inventories were reduced in line with falling output and muted customer demand.

"Elsewhere, input costs increased to their third steepest on record while output prices quickened to their fastest level in six months," Oni said.

He added: "Business activity was underwhelming in Q3:24 relative to Q2:24, implying that the non-oil

sector may grow slowly in Q3:24 amid the triple whammy of high inflation rate, elevated interest rates, and currency volatility all of which continue to undermine domestic demand and business investments. "However, because of higher crude oil production relative to same period last year, the oil sector is likely to compensate for a lack lustre non-oil sector's performance, thereby pushing real GDP growth to 3.10 per cent y/y in Q3:24, based on our estimates."

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


FOOD COMMODITIES PRICE TODAY


NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
	100KG	ABUJA	N65,000 - N70,000
	50KG	OYO	N50,000 - N60,000
	50KG	PLATEAU (JOS)	N50,500 - N60,000
	50KG	KWARA	N24,000 - N27,000
	50KG	LAGOS	N60,000 - N70,000
	50KG	RIVERS	N50,500 - N60,500
	50KG	SOKOTO	N60,000 - N70,000


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


NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
	50KG BAG	MAIDU GURI	N22,000 - N30,000
	100KG	LAGOS	N36,000
	100KG	KANO	N35,000
	100KG	DELTA	N36,000
	100KG	ABIA	N35,700

FOOD COMMODITIES PRICE TODAY

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

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

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	STATE	PRICE
	100KG	IBADAN	N60,000
	100KG	KANO	N30,000
	100KG	BENUE	N65,000
	100KG	PLATEAU	N45,000
	100KG	DELTA	N50,000
	100KG	LAGOS	N60,000
	100KG	ENUGU	N45,000

NAME OF COMMODITY	SIZE	LOCATION	PRICE
	100KG	OYO	N10,000
	100KG	ENUGU	N16,500
	100KG	DELTA	N14,000
	100KG	ABIA	N11,000
	50KG	LAGOS	N9,000
	100KG	KANO	N9,400
	50KG	BENUE	N6,000

Husk Power, AEDC Seal Deal for Interconnected Mini-grids

Stories Emmanuel Addeh
in Abuja

The Abuja Electricity Distribution Plc (AEDC) and Husk Power Systems have signed an agreement to build the first of what is expected to be several interconnected mini-grids.

Solar energy from a Husk mini-grid will be injected into the AEDC service network to enhance service, improve revenue, reduce technical losses and cut carbon emissions, a statement said.

Husk said it had identified a pipeline of more than 50 interconnected mini-grids across 10 states in Nigeria.

The announcement, the firm said, is a major step in Husk's 250 MW partnership with the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) to scale the renewable energy service company (RESCO) model.

Husk and AEDC, together

with Duduguru community in Nasarawa State, signed a partnership agreement to serve peri-urban commercial and residential customers with sustainable, affordable and reliable energy from interconnected mini-grids.

The solar-powered mini-grid in Duduguru, located in Obi Local Government Area (LGA), has a planned average daily energy supply of 656 kW, which will serve about 1,000 customers, roughly 80 per cent households and 20 per cent micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and small factories.

The signing was attended by AEDC's Acting Managing Director, Chijioke Okwuonkenye, Nigeria Country Director, Olu Aruikie from Husk Power Systems and Prince Bulus Iwala, Chief of Duduguru, the stem added.

Interconnected minigrids involve a three-way partnership

between mini-grid developers, Distribution Companies (Discos) like AEDC, and the community where they are located.

In May 2024, Husk and the REA announced a partnership to deploy 250 MW of Decentralised Renewable

Energy (DRE) projects in Nigeria, including IMGs. This, Husk said, is part of its strategy to scale the Renewable Energy Service Company (RESCO) model and meet Nigeria's goal of increasing the percentage of renewables in the grid with

resilient, distributed energy infrastructure.

Commenting on the announcement, Husk's Co-Founder and Chief Executive, Manoj Sinha, said: "This is a first step in successfully scaling the

RESCO model, not only for all of Nigeria, but eventually across Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a clear demonstration of how decentralized renewable energy systems give people and businesses the ability to control their own energy future."

NEMSA, Ondo Collaborate on Standardisation of Electrical Equipment

The management of the Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA) and the Ondo state government have expressed willingness to collaborate in the areas of technical standardization, inspection and testing of all electrical equipment and materials within the state.

This formed part of the resolutions at a virtual meeting held between officials of the federal government agency and those of the Ondo state government, a release by the Head Communications & Protocol at NEMSA, Ama Umoren, said.

NEMSA was established by the NEMSA Act of 2015

(now Electricity Act 2023) and charged with the mandate of the enforcement of technical standards and regulations, technical inspection, testing and certification of all categories of electrical installations, electricity meters and instruments.

This is to ensure an efficient production and delivery of safe, reliable and sustainable electricity power supply and to guarantee safety of lives and property in the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI) and allied industries in the country.

The virtual meeting which was held at the instance of the NEMSA management was chaired by the Managing

Director/Chief Executive of NEMSA, Tukur Tahir, who also doubles as the Chief Electrical Inspector of the Federation (CEIF).

In attendance were top management staff of the agency and representatives of the Ondo State government led by the Special Adviser to the State Governor on Energy Light Olatunji.

Welcoming the representatives of the Ondo state government to the meeting, Tahir said it was a good development aimed at fostering mutual cooperation between the federal government owned agency and the Ondo State government, adding that the purpose was to ensure

standardisation, safety of lives and property in the sector.

In his opening remarks, leader of the Ondo State government team, Olatunji, conveyed the commendation of the state governor, Mr. Lucky Aiyedatiwa to NEMSA management for inviting them to the meeting, stressing that it would lead to a strong collaborative effort in ensuring safety of lives and property in the state.

He said the state government was already collaborating with other federal government agencies in the same regard. According to him, the state government is embarking on a number of projects that would need collaboration with NEMSA.

NNPC/Seplat JV Carries Out Medical Outreach in Imo

The NNPC Ltd/ Seplat Energy Joint Venture (JV) partnership has conducted a medical outreach, providing free eye health services to individuals with visual impairments in Ohaji/Egbema community of Imo State.

Through its "Eye Can See" programme, a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the JV dispensed more than 10,000 reading glasses and successfully performed 639 eye surgeries, including cataract removals, for host community members who otherwise had limited access to such vital medical services.

The "Eye Can See" programme, which commenced

in 2017, has been a beacon of hope in the eastern asset of the NNPC upstream investments, positively impacting over 20,000 people to date, an NNPC statement said.

In his remarks during the event, Chief Upstream Investment Officer of NNPC's Upstream Investment Management Services (NUIMS), Bala Wunti, represented by Dr. Obinna Otutu, Manager, JV Asset B emphasised the significance of the initiative to NNPC's corporate mission of enriching the lives of Nigerians.

Elaborating further on the broader vision behind the programme, Wunti stated that the NNPC Ltd takes pride in being more than just an energy provider. "We are a partner in progress, dedicated to making sustainable contributions to the communities that support us," he added.

According to him, the "Eye Can See" initiative reflects "our belief that corporate structures can and should play a vital role in societal development."

He noted that the programme goes beyond immediate medical care by educating individuals on lifestyle choices to prevent conditions like hypertension and diabetes, which can lead to permanent vision loss.

Expressing his appreciation for the support of the local government, beneficiaries, and NNPC Ltd's partners, Wunti observed that together with Seplat, the National Oil Company is paving the way for a brighter future where access to essential health services is possible for all.

Report: Exported Gas Produces Far Worse Emissions Than Coal

Exported gas emits far more greenhouse gas emissions than coal, despite fossil-fuel industry claims it is a cleaner alternative, according to a major new research paper that challenges the controversial yet rapid expansion of gas exports from the US to Europe and Asia.

Coal is the dirtiest of fossil fuels when combusted for energy, with oil and gas producers for years promoting cleaner-burning gas as a "bridge" fuel and even a "climate solution" amid a glut of new Liquefied Natural Gas (or LNG) terminals.

But the research, which itself has become enmeshed in a political argument in the US, has concluded that LNG is 33 per cent worse in terms of planet-heating emissions over a 20-year period compared with coal, a The Guardian UK report said.

"The idea that coal is worse for the climate is mistaken -

LNG has a larger greenhouse gas footprint than any other fuel," said Robert Howarth, an environmental scientist at Cornell University and author of the new paper.

"To think we should be shipping around this gas as a climate solution is just plain wrong. It's greenwashing from oil and gas companies that has severely underestimated the emissions from this type of energy," Howarth added.

Drilling, moving, cooling and shipping gas from one country to another uses so much energy that the actual final burning of gas in people's homes and businesses only accounts for about a third of the total emissions from this process, the research found.

The large resulting emissions mean there is "no need for LNG as an interim energy source", the paper said, adding that "ending the use of LNG should be a global priority".

The peer-reviewed research, published in the Energy Science & Engineering journal, challenges the rationale for a huge surge in LNG facilities along the US Gulf coast, in order to send gas in huge tankers to overseas markets. The US is the world's leading LNG exporter, followed by Australia and Qatar.

Previous government and industry estimates have assumed that LNG is considerably lower emitting than coal, offering the promise that it could replace it in countries such as China, as well as aiding European allies menaced by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, a major gas producer.

But scientists have determined that LNG expansion is not compatible with the world avoiding dangerous global heating, with researchers finding in recent years the leakage of methane, a

primary component of gas and a potent planet-heating agent, from drilling operations is far higher than official estimates.

Howarth's paper finds that as much as 3.5 per cent of the gas delivered to customers leaks to the atmosphere unburned, much more than previously assumed. Methane is about 80 times more powerful as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, even though it persists for less time in the atmosphere, and scientists have warned that rising global methane emissions risk blowing apart agreed-upon climate goals.

The research found that during LNG production, around half of the total emissions occur during the long journey taken by gas as it is pushed through pipelines to coastal terminals after it is initially drilled, usually via hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, from areas such as the US's vast shale deposits.

NEYIF, AL-YATEEM Empower 120 Youth in Sokoto

Onuminya Innocent in Sokoto

The North East Youth Initiative for Development in collaboration with AL-YATEEM empowered 120 youth trained on various skills and trades in Sokoto State.

The beneficiaries were drawn from Sokoto South, Sokoto North,

Kware and Wamakko LGAs.

In his remarks, the Executive Director of NEYIF, Dauda Muh'd Gombe called on all the beneficiaries to make good use of the training and tools given to them.

He said each of the beneficiaries was expected to feed a minimum of three

persons in their families, thus reducing poverty in the society.

Also speaking, Ambassador Mairo Abass, from the office of the National Security Adviser, commended the state government for creating a budget line for the programme sustainability, which she described as rare among states

all over the country.

Earlier in his remarks, representative of the state Commissioner for Budget and Economic Planning, Musa Balarabe, commended the organization for the gesture which he said would go a long way in reducing poverty in their communities.

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Smart: IST Has Restored Confidence in Economy

In this exclusive interview with James Emejo, a former member of the Investments and Securities Tribunal, Mr. Osemwengie Smart, said the court has restored confidence to both domestic and foreign investors in the Nigerian economy. Among other things, he discussed the motive behind the establishment of the tribunal, its achievements, challenges and way forward.

Why was the Investment and Securities Tribunal (IST) established when we have courts of competent jurisdiction in the country?

The capital market is a time-sensitive business, and it's not the kind of industry where you want any activity regulated by a system that causes delays. For example, if there are disputes, and you take them to regular courts, there will be delays. By the time the case is resolved, time would have erased the importance of the issue.

The government saw the need for a specialized court to handle capital market cases expeditiously. That was why the government set up a committee to reform the finance industry, known as the Defeat Committee. The committee made far-reaching recommendations, particularly regarding capital markets.

One of those recommendations was to set up a specialized court to resolve capital market disputes. The unique aspect of this court is that any dispute brought before it must be resolved within three months. This is distinct from regular courts, where cases can drag on for 12 years or more. The IST must resolve the substantive case within three months, after addressing all preliminaries.

That's how the IST came about. It is a specialized court dealing with investment and securities disputes arising from the investment and securities sector of the economy.

During your tenure, were there instances where the timeline had to be extended due to the complexity of the case?

Never. Speaking specifically for myself, all the cases I presided over, we always adhered to the three-month timeline. To the best of my knowledge, none of my colleagues have ever exceeded three months either.

What happens if a matter cannot be resolved amicably within the timeframe?

If you're talking about amicable resolution, that's a different matter. When a case comes before us, we encourage settlement, so we don't necessarily need to go through the entire litigation process. In fact, the tribunal's procedure rules encourage amicable settlement.

If both parties express interest in settling, we give them time. We might give them a month or two to resolve the issue outside of court. If they settle, we adopt it as the court's judgment. But if they're unable to settle within the period we grant, we immediately proceed with the case.

So, there's no issue of adjournment. We start the definite hearing. We encourage settlements. For example, an investor may sue a stockbroker or a capital market operator, perhaps for default. Maybe the investor gave money to buy stock, but the stockbroker didn't buy it, and perhaps the sum involved is around one million. The stockbroker might realize that it's not worth wasting time, so we encourage them to go and settle. If they settle, they come to the court with their terms of settlement, and that's the end of the matter. But if they're not able to settle, then we begin to take evidence. If the stockbroker claims he has already paid or issued a check, we'll then call for evidence to resolve the matter.

What percentage of such disputes gets settled out of court, and which ones go through the whole litigation process?

The number of cases that get settled out of court is fewer than those that go through litigation. Sometimes it's because of the nature of legal practice—some lawyers don't want settlements, as they prefer to take the case to court because their fees may depend on it. They may feel that if they settle, their clients might think they haven't done much. So, they often opt to go to trial.

However, we also have our Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) center, which is another option provided by law. It's part of the amicable settlement process. For cases with smaller monetary sums or cases that aren't too contentious, we refer them to ADR. ADR looks into the matter and often settles it amicably, especially if the case isn't complex or the sum involved is not large.

From your perspective, how would you assess the effectiveness of the IST in resolving investment disputes?

The IST has been very effective. Let me digress a



Smart

bit—the jurisdiction of the IST is both appellate and original. If an investor has a dispute with their stockbroker, they must first complain to the regulator, which in this case is the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

By law, you are required to complain to the regulator first. If the SEC settles the matter and you're not satisfied, then you can approach the tribunal. Or, if the other party is dissatisfied with the SEC's decision, they can also come to the tribunal by way of an appeal. However, if you're satisfied with the SEC's resolution, then the matter ends there.

If the SEC delays in resolving the issue, for example, if one or two months pass without any action, you don't have to wait indefinitely. In that case, you can approach the tribunal, and we'll take your case even if the SEC has not made a determination.

The tribunal has held in many cases that inaction is also a form of action. If you refer the matter to the SEC and they delay, that inaction is treated as an action. You can then bring the case to the tribunal. Before doing so, however, you must give the SEC a pre-action notice, informing them that you intend to take the matter to the tribunal.

You give them 14 days' notice. And this is my own opinion. Whether or not you're joining the SEC, you need to give the SEC a pre-action notice. The reason is, who knows? If you give the SEC pre-action notice that you're going to court within 14 days, they might resolve your matter. They might not want you to go to court and could resolve it within those 14 days. At the end of the day, you might not even need to go to the tribunal.

To what extent has this helped in terms of confidence building among investors?

The settlements we are doing here have brought back confidence in the minds of investors. You know, foreign investors now see that the regulator of the SEC has registered some cryptocurrency business exchanges where you can trade cryptocurrency. This has an international dimension. People want to be sure that if they have a dispute, there's an effective mechanism to resolve it. That's the mechanism that the IST represents. It has brought confidence to investors. And because of IST, Nigeria has become a signatory to what we call IOSCO—International Organization of Securities Commissions. Nigeria is now a signatory to that association. One of the reasons for this is that we have an effective mechanism for settling disputes. This creates confidence and helps maintain investor confidence.

So, how popular is the IST among investors and what's the level of engagement?

People are using it. The IST has offices not only in Abuja and Lagos—the commercial capital of the country—but also in Kano, Enugu, and Port Harcourt. Of course, the IST isn't dealing with people selling tomatoes in the market. It's dealing with a specialised target: investors in the capital markets. These investors have associations—capital market associations. So, to that extent, IST is popular with those who require its services. These associations know where to go when they have problems, and they know they don't need to go to a regular court anymore. They come to IST.

The story continues online on www.thisdaylive.com



ECOWAS COMMISSION

Invitation for Bids

SUPPLY OF EIGHT (8) VEHICLES FOR ECOWAS COMMISSION

RCB No: ECW-CIS-DAGS/02-2024

Date: 20th September 2024

Lot 1: six (06) Utility vehicles.

Lot 2: two (02) Minibus (1 Executive and 1 Standard)

1. ECOWAS Commission has allocated funds towards the cost of the “Supply of Eight (8) vehicles for ECOWAS Commission”

2. The ECOWAS Commission, therefore, invites sealed bids for the “Supply of Eight (8) Vehicles for ECOWAS Commission”

3. The Bidding Document is available online. Interested Bidders may obtain further information at the address below, during office hours: Monday to Friday from **9.00am to 4.00pm (Nigeria Time, GMT+1)**, ECOWAS Commission, Directorate of Administration & General Services, Procurement Division, 1st Floor, Plot 101, Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Asokoro District, PMB 401 Abuja Nigeria. E-mail: procurement@ecowas.int; with copy to sbangoura@ecowas.int; ikkamara@ecowas.int; ombacke@ecowas.int

4. Bids SHALL be valid for a period of **120 days** after Bid Opening and must be accompanied by a Bid Security (**ORIGINAL Bank Guarantee**) of **Five Thousand US Dollars Lot 1 and Two Thousand US Dollars (2,000 USD) Lot 2** or its equivalent in one of the currencies of one of the ECOWAS Member countries; The Bid Security (ies) SHALL REMAIN VALID for **150 days** after bid opening.

5. Bids (**1 original and 3 copies**) SHALL be delivered in a sealed envelope clearly marked Regional Competitive Bidding for “Supply of eight (8) vehicle for ECOWAS Commission” “Do Not Open, Except in Presence of the OPENING COMMITTEE”. The envelope SHALL also indicate the bidder's name.

6. Bids SHALL be deposited in the ECOWAS Tender Box located at the **Directorate of Administration and General Services, Procurement Division Office, 1st Floor ECOWAS Commission, 101 Yakubu Gowon Crescent, Asokoro District, Abuja, Nigeria on or before Friday, 31st October 2024 at 11 .00 am (Nigeria Time, GMT + 1).**

7. Bids will be opened the same day in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend at **11:30am, (Nigeria Time, GMT + 1), Room 523, ECOWAS Commission, Abuja, Nigeria.** (Either a physical opening session or via online participation to be confirmed).

8. Joint Ventures are allowed, to enhance chances of qualification. **In pursuance of Community human and financial capacity development in ECOWAS, foreign firms that do not enter into Joint Venture agreement with Member States' firms shall not be eligible to participate in a tender process.**

9. The bidding document can be obtained by writing to the email addresses indicated at point 3 of this invitation.

Commissioner for Internal Services

BUSINESS/MONEYGUIDE

Walson-Jack Urges Public Servants to Take IT, Digitalisation Seriously

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

Head of Civil Service of the Federation, Mrs Esther Didi Walson-Jack, has tasked public servants to embrace to begin to take IT and digitalisation very seriously because promotion test is computer based.

She made the appeal in Abuja while supervising the Combined Confirmation and Promotion Examination, commonly known as Compro, simultaneously held across the country.

Public servants from GL 7 upwards, some serving policemen and paramilitary officers of the Federal Road Safety Corps, (FRSC), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Nigeria Immigration Service and

Customs numbering 13,933 wrote the promotion examination held simultaneously across the country.

The computer-based test was supervised by Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB).

Walson-Jack, who monitored the conduct of the test in two centres in Abuja, expressed satisfaction with the exercise.

About 2,573 of those candidates that wrote the test were from the FCT.

The head of service noted that the examination was computer-based because the federal Government was moving towards a digitalised public service, which is one of the pillars of the the Federal Civil Service Strategy and Implementation Plan 2021-2025.

"You will recall that this exam used to be a written exam, but recently we made it computer based, and so it is expected that as we go along, it will encourage civil servants, public servants, to begin to take IT and digitalisation very seriously because the test is computer based and there will be need to be IT savvy to pass the test," she said.

She assured the Office would facilitate a lot of training on ICT, as such will help the workers as they go along with the CBT tests.

The Permanent Secretary Career Management Office, Fatima Mahmood, said the process was smooth despite a few technical glitches that was later addressed.



L-R: Executive Director, United Nations Global Compact Network Nigeria (UNGCNN), Naomi Nwokolo; CEO, Sterling One Foundation, Olapeju Ibekwe and Assistant Secretary General & CEO, United Nations Global Compact, Sanda Ojiambo, at the Global Africa Business Initiative (GABI) discussion on energy and digital transitions for Africa's transformation, held on the sidelines of UNGA 79 in New York... recently

DataPro Assembles A-Rated Panelists for Rating Webinar

Nigeria's technology-driven credit rating agency, DataPro, has assembled a stellar team of experts and panelists for its 2024 International Rating Webinar holding digitally on Thursday 10th October 2024.

A statement issued on Sunday by the company's Client Service Manager, Mr. Kehinde Rasheed explained that the annual Webinar has the theme: "Navigating Economic Uncertainties: The Role of Credit Rating Agencies."

Meanwhile, the Keynote Speaker for the 2024 Webinar, which the organisers said would be aired live on LinkedIn and YouTube channels is Christian Ruedmer. "Christian is one of

the most accomplished speakers on the evolving trends and patterns related to Credit Risk Management in the world and he is the CEO and Co-founder of Q-Lana, a fully digitalised knowledge-based open-banking institution spread across Africa and other developing regions of the world."

The statement further said Christian, a globally recognised expert on Risk Management, Investment and Treasury, Christian is expected to bring his A-Game to enlighten and educate participants at the Webinar. Other A-listed Panelists expected at the Webinar are the Group Managing Director of Metropol Ratings

in Kenya, Sam Omukoko, the Group Managing Director of the DLM Group, Dr. Sonnie Ayere, and the Managing Director of Chapel Hill Dehman.

The statement said the chief Rating Officer of DataPro, Mr. Oladele Adeoye would moderate the panel discussion. Meanwhile, the founder and Managing Director of the company, Mr. Abimbola Adeseyoju, has said that the event will further allow participants and listeners to understand the workings and value proposition of Credit Rating Institutions, especially during difficult economic situations such as the one Nigeria is presently experiencing.

Ibom Air, Others to Address Local Needs with Tech Innovation Challenge

Emma Okonji

Ibom Air and other sponsors have identified with Ibom Innovation Network, organisers of Akwa Ibom Tech Week, to support tech startups in developing local solutions that will help Ibom Air address some of the identified challenges in the Aviation sector.

In support of tech innovation and in order to contribute to Nigeria's economic growth through innovation and technology, Akwa Ibom Tech Week has launched the 2024 Innovation Challenge, which seeks to bring tech startups from across the country to develop local solutions that will address identified challenges and needs across various sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Speaking at a recent webinar, organised by Ibom Innovation

Network, the Group Manager, ICT at Ibom Air, Stanley Igwe, said Ibom Air would want startups to develop solution that would help air passengers with disability to board aircraft effortlessly with Ibom Air.

According to Igwe, "Ibom Air happens to be one of the state's iconic ventures, and we have always portrayed ourselves as a world-class team, and we know that this is not just mere words of mouth. We are looking forward to driving this by the day-to-day innovations coming up within tech sector. However, one of our challenges that we are seeking solution from tech startups, is about the challenge faced by our passengers who have walking disability. We need a solution that will help them get into the aircraft almost effortlessly."

GM, Marketing and Commu-

nications for Ibom Air, Aniekan Essienette, while speaking, announced the Ibom Air Prize for Innovation and emphasised the airline's mission to lead Nigeria's aviation space with homegrown innovation, hence the sponsorship of the Innovation Challenge of Akwa Ibom Tech Week.

Highlighting the importance of the Innovation Challenge, President of Ibom Innovation Network (IIN), Hanson Johnson, said: "The Akwa Ibom Tech Week 2024 Innovation Challenge will bring together, our brightest minds to develop solutions that address real-world problems, fostering a resilient innovation ecosystem. The initiative reflects our commitment to empowering youth, driving economic growth, and positioning Akwa Ibom as Africa's new tech destination."

Sony Introduces ULT Power Sound Series Products in Nigeria

Agnes Ekebuike

Determined to offer Nigerians a revolutionary option in home and outdoor entertainment, Sony has officially launched its latest ULT Power Sound Series.

The speakers and headphones are custom-built and assembled with top-quality craftsmanship by Sony's most experienced production professionals.

Head of marketing, Sony Middle East and Africa, Sekiguchi Koji, said the ULT Power Sound series, which were designed to offer a premium auditory experience, set a new

standard in audio experiences to bring music lovers and party starters massive bass and ultimate vibes.

Speaking at the unveiling of the products in Lagos recently, Koji said the ULT Tower 10, ULT Field 1, ULT Field 7, and ULT Wear were out to set a new standard for powerful bass and signature sound quality.

According to Koji, one of the features that make the ULT Tower 10 unique is that it links up to 100 compatible speakers to synchronise music and lighting through Party Connect and fill any place with powerful sound

to create the ultimate party atmosphere.

"The ULT FIELD 1 is designed to be portable with up to 12 hours of battery life that allows users to enjoy tunes longer, adding that its multi-way strap, IP67 waterproof and dustproof rating, shockproof design and salt-water resistance allow users to use it indoors or outdoors. The ULT Field 7 speaker has Sound Field optimisation allowing it to detect noise and automatically adjust the sound setting to provide an optimal music experience, however busy the venue might be," Koji said.

MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)

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

• Source - CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)

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

NSE MARKET INDEX

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

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT 4TH APRIL, 2024

The price of OPEC basket of twelve crudes stood at \$87.33 a barrel on Monday, compared with \$86.00 the previous Thursday, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations. The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basrah Medium (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela).

MARKET NEWS

Agama: Investor Education Key Prerequisite to Capital Market Growth

Kayode Tokede

The Director General, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Dr. Emonotimi Agama, yesterday emphasized that investor education is a key prerequisite for a healthy market and the development of market confidence, adding that a well-informed investor base is crucial for the stability and growth of any capital market.

He disclosed this during the opening of the 2024 International Organisation of Securities Com-

missions (IOSCO) World Investor Week (WIW) held at the FMDQ Exchange in Lagos.

He highlighted that investor education empowers individuals to make informed decisions and safeguard themselves against fraud, Ponzi schemes, misinformation, and excessive risk. Agama, who was represented by the Executive Commissioner Operations of the SEC, Mr. Bola Ajomale, stated that Nigeria has witnessed increasing participation in the capital market, with more retail investors enter-

ing the fold, stressing that it also highlights the need to strengthen educational efforts, especially in this era of digital finance.

He said, "As financial products become more complex and technology-driven, from fintech innovations to cryptocurrency trading, it is critical and responsible for stakeholders to commit to equipping investors with the knowledge to navigate these markets confidently and responsibly."

"World Investor Week provides a platform for us to reinforce

this commitment. Throughout this week, we will engage with investors, discuss best practices, and focus on improving transparency and accountability in financial markets. I encourage all participants to take these opportunities to learn and share knowledge, so we can continue building a robust, investor-friendly ecosystem."

The SEC DG said the focus for 2024 is apt and extremely timeous as it covers Technology and Digital Finance, Crypto Assets, and Sustainable Finance, three

critical areas that will shape the future of global capital markets adding that the reward potential is unimaginable but the risks are equally enormous.

"The rise of technology in finance is reshaping the way capital markets function, creating opportunities for greater efficiency, transparency, and inclusion. Fintech solutions are democratizing access to financial services, reducing transaction costs, and enabling faster, more secure operations across the market. In Nigeria, the rapid adoption of

mobile technology and digital payments demonstrates the immense potential for growth in digital finance.

"As we embrace these innovations, the SEC assures the capital market that we work assiduously with other regulators to adopt frameworks that protect investors. Our desire is to ensure that technological advancements are deployed responsibly and that market participants understand the risks associated with digital finance, such as cybersecurity threats and data privacy concerns."

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF OCTOBER 7/24

MAIN BOARD		DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N BANKING					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
1	UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	26.00	2.38	926	24,138,747
2	ZENITH BANK PLC	37.50	-0.13	395	9,944,029
BANKING				1,321	47,992,775
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
3	ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC	19.55	-2.25	581	11,397,883
4	FBN HOLDINGS PLC	25.49	1.00	279	7,140,444
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				861	18,538,327
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
5	MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	191.10	0.42	235	45,187
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				235	45,187
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
6	DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	478.80	-	99	39,148
7	LAFARGE AFRICA PLC	36.20	-2.16	117	4,285,256
BUILDING MATERIALS				216	2,524,404
INDUSTRIAL GOODS					
S/N OIL AND GAS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
8	SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	4,064.70	-	16	12,532
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION				16	12,532
OIL AND GAS				16	12,532
AGRICULTURE					
S/N CROP PRODUCTION					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
9	ELLAH LAKES PLC	13,438.48	4.88	240	14,648,506
10	FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	7,722.00	1.98	121	7,377,863
11	OKOJU OIL PALM PLC	346,269.33	363.00	111	85,767
12	PRESCO PLC	485,400.00	485.40	90	101,063
CROP PRODUCTION				562	22,215,189
S/N LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
13	LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC	10,800.00	3.60	79	2,752,178
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES				79	2,752,178
AGRICULTURE					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
14	CUSTOMER INVESTMENT PLC	75,287.86	12.80	45	311,873
15	JOHN HOLT PLC	1,186.91	3.05	13	305,420
16	S C O A NIG PLC	1,111.20	-10.00	11	234,706
17	TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION PLC	449,160.29	11.05	209	3,985,250
18	U A C N PLC	62,033.99	21.20	75	744,760
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES				353	5,642,009
CONGLOMERATES				353	5,642,009
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE					
S/N INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
19	AVA INFRASTRUCTURE FUND	4,075.00	1,000,000.00	0	0
20	CHAPEL HILL DENHAM NIG. INFRAS DEBT FUND	107,357.54	111.70	5	15,231
21	JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC	240,000.00	150.00	111	225,213
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION				116	240,444
S/N REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
22	UPDC PLC	31,180.75	1.68	34	313,101
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT				34	313,101
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				150	553,545
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
23	DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	054.53	0.20	0	0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS				0	0
S/N BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
24	CHAMPION BREW. PLC	27,828.27	3.11	4	32,502
25	GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC	3,227.70	3.15	1	100
BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS				5	32,602
CONSUMER GOODS					
S/N BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
26	GUINNESS NIG PLC	148,946.03	68.00	65	280,931
27	INTERNATIONAL BEVERAGES PLC	742,165.92	4.41	128	5,476,173
28	NIGERIAN BREW. PLC	308,283.97	30.00	116	12,169,088
BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS				314	17,958,794
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
29	BUA FOODS PLC	7,108,280.30	394.99	92	24,752
30	DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	393,568.86	32.40	326	3,170,765
31	FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC	254,223.54	62.00	127	5,504,493
32	HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	36,875.42	4.65	66	1,027,036
33	MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,624.01	0.38	0	0
34	N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC	5,800.41	32.55	29	96,589
35	MASCOR ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	81,072.81	30.00	65	1,608,775
36	UNION DICOM SALT PLC	2,186.71	8.00	0	0
FOOD PRODUCTS				707	11,432,418
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
37	CADBURY NIGERIA PLC	41,501.18	18.20	45	85,778
38	NESTLE NIGERIA PLC	705,484.06	890.00	64	10,741
FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED				109	96,519
S/N HOUSEHOLD DURABLES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
39	NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC	1,467.42	19.30	0	0
40	VITAFORM NIG PLC	27,518.57	22.00	31	79,413
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES				31	79,413
S/N PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
41	P Z CUSONS NIGERIA PLC	70,076.92	17.65	34	49,125
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS				34	49,125
CONSUMER GOODS				65	87,938
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
42	UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC	112,027.61	19.50	31	38,813
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS				65	87,938
CONSUMER GOODS				1,226	29,655,074
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
S/N BANKING					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
43	ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	440,389.23	24.00	39	191,188
44	FIDELITY BANK PLC	457,774.62	14.30	105	7,236,301
45	GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	1,442,127.78	49.00	576	16,030,208
46	JAIZ BANK PLC	86,898.34	2.51	114	5,824,459
47	STERLING FINANCIAL HOLDINGS COMPANY PLC	143,952.09	5.00	182	12,634,090
48	UNITY BANK PLC	17,650.90	1.51	0	0
49	WEMA BANK PLC	176,798.97	8.25	161	3,751,688
BANKING				1,177	45,667,934
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
50	AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	0	0
FINANCIAL SERVICES				0	0
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
51	AICO INSURANCE PLC	43,560.28	1.19	126	4,230,074
52	AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	49,590.00	5.51	41	254,731
53	CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK HOLDINGS PLC	15,284.40	1.41	9	127,863
54	CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	45,597.65	2.51	31	1,075,308
55	CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	18,473.59	0.77	44	475,797
56	GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	0	0
57	GUINEA INSURANCE PLC	3,494.83	0.44	40	2,633,864
58	INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	2,028.86	1.58	5	228,321
59	LASACO ASSURANCE PLC	4,217.25	2.30	0	0
60	LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	14,168.00	0.92	12	269,092
61	MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	12,237.59	0.61	0	0
62	NEM INSURANCE PLC	43,894.18	8.75	23	193,960
63	PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	6,891.33	0.52	17	3,494,858
64	REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	6,001.88	0.50	16	1,746,680
65	SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	8,821.45	0.62	24	3,167,988
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	10,110.79	1.74	26	1,821,673
69	UNIVERSAL ASSURANCE PLC	5,760.00	0.36	45	4,117,465
70	VERITAS KAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	22,464.00	1.62	129	10,454,954
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				588	34,292,628
S/N MICRO-FINANCE BANKS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
71	NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	10,307.84	1.72	56	2,424,057
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS				56	2,424,057

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	27,923.08	2.75	10	8,513
73	ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	0	0
74	INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	29,193.19	7.00	7	7,250
75	UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	2,949.22	3.02	0	0
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				17	15,763
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
76	AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	21,300.00	10.65	86	136,362
77	DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	2,145.00	1.43	125	5,676,405
78	FCMB GROUP PLC	166,342.77	8.40	194	7,184,369
79	NIGERIAN EXCHANGE GROUP	41,148.23	20.95	88	2,165,015
80	ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC	5,621.36	0.68	32	4,860,594
81	STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	750,857.99	57.95	61	141,137
82	UNITED CAPITAL PLC	330,300.00	18.35	222	4,074,302
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				788	24,238,184
FINANCIAL SERVICES				2,626	106,638,566
HEALTHCARE					
S/N HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
83	EKOICORP PLC	2,891.89	5.80	0	0
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS				0	0
S/N MEDICAL SUPPLIES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
84	MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC	4,401.77	4.45	1	2,000
MEDICAL SUPPLIES				1	2,000
S/N PHARMACEUTICALS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
85	FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	35,457.69	15.45	77	1,110,664
86	MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC	12,507.95	7.25	38	653,756
87	NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	8,332.55	1.95	37	912,393
88	PHARMA-DEKO PLC	396.78	1.83	0	0
PHARMACEUTICALS				152	2,676,813
HEALTHCARE				153	2,678,813
ICT					
S/N COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
89	OMATEK VENTURES PLC	2,000.42	0.68	23	427,797
COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS				23	427,797
S/N IT SERVICES					
MARKET CAP(Nm)		PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES	VOLUME
90					

MARKET NEWS



FUND MANAGERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

A Mutual fund (Unit Trust) is an investment vehicle managed by a SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) registered Fund Manager. Investors with similar objectives buy units of the Fund so that the Fund Manager can buy securities that will generate their desired return.

An ETF (Exchange Traded Fund) is a type of fund which owns the assets (shares of stock, bonds, oil futures, gold bars, foreign currency, etc.) and divides ownership of those assets into shares. Investors can buy these 'shares' on the

floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

A REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust) is an investment vehicle that allows both small and large investors to part-own real estate ventures (eg. Offices, Houses, Hospitals) in proportion to their investments. The assets are divided into shares that are traded on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

GUIDE TO DATA:

Date: All fund prices are quoted in Naira as at 4 October-2024, unless otherwise stated.

Offer price: The price at which units of a trust or ETF are bought by investors.

Bid Price: The price at which Investors redeem (sell) units of a trust or ETF.

Yield/Total Return: Denotes the total return an investor would have earned on his investment. Money Market Funds report Yield while others report Year- to-date Total Return.

NAV: Is value per share of the real estate assets held by a REIT on a specific date.

DAILY PRICE LIST FOR MUTUAL FUNDS, REITS and ETFs

MUTUAL FUNDS / UNIT TRUSTS			
AFRINVEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD aaml@afriinvest.com			
Web: www.afriinvest.com; Tel: +234 818 885 6757			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Afrinvest Equity Fund	350.45	350.45	16.68%
Afrinvest Plutus Fund	343.57	343.57	12.66%
Nigeria International Debt Fund	100.00	100.00	19.52%
Afrinvest Dollar Fund	110.71	110.71	4.99%
AIICO CAPITAL LTD ammf@aiccocapital.com			
Web: www.aiccocapital.com, Tel: +234-1-2792974			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AIICO Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AIICO Bonded Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AIICO Eurobond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Web: www.anchoriam.com, Tel: 08166830267; 08036814510; 08028419180			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Anchoria Money Market	100.00	100.00	18.55%
Anchoria Equity Fund	223.44	225.99	15.40%
Anchoria Fixed Income Fund	1.29	1.29	0.63%
ARM INVESTMENT MANAGERS LTD enquiries@arminvestmentcenter.com			
Web: www.arm.com.ng; Tel: 0700 CALLARM (0700 225 5276)			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ARM Aggressive Growth Fund	33.29	34.29	8.96%
ARM Discovery Bonded Fund	752.16	774.84	13.54%
ARM Ethical Fund	64.31	66.25	17.94%
ARM Eurobond Fund (\$)	1.15	1.15	4.28%
ARM Fixed Income Fund	1.20	1.20	12.39%
ARM Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	20.59%
ARM Short Term Bond Fund	1.09	1.09	10.44%
AVA GLOBAL ASSET MANAGERS LIMITED info@avacapitalgroup.com			
Web: www.avacapitalgroup.com; Tel 08069294653			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AVA GAM Fixed Income Dollar Fund	105.72	105.72	6.08%
AVA GAM Fixed Income Naira Fund	1,081.16	1,081.16	4.52%
AXA MANSARD INVESTMENTS LIMITED investmentcare@axamansard.com			
Web: www.axamansard.com; Tel: +2341-4488482			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AXA Mansard Equity Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AXA Mansard Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CAPITAL EXPRESS ASSET AND TRUST LIMITED info@capitalexpressassetandtrust.com			
Web: www.capitalexpressassetandtrust.com; Tel: +234 803 307 5048			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CEAT Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Capital Express Bonded Fund(Formerly: Union Trustees Mixed Fund)	N/A	N/A	N/A
CAPITALTRUST INVESTMENTS AND ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED info@capitalexpressassetandtrust.com			
Web: www.capitaltrustnigeria.com; Tel: 08061458806			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Capitaltrust Halal Fixed Income Fund	NILL	NILL	NILL
CARDINALSTONE ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED mutualfunds@cardinalstone.com			
Web: www.cardinalstoneassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 (1) 710 0433 4			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CardinalStone Fixed Income Alpha Fund	1.05	1.05	14.15%
CardinalStone Dollar Fund	1.04	1.04	5.92%
CardinalStone Equity Fund	0.93	0.94	-6.45%
CHAPELHILL DENHAM MANAGEMENT LTD investmentmanagement@chapelhilldenham.com			
Web: www.chapelhilldenham.com, Tel: +234 461 0691			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Chapel Hill Denham Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nigeria Bond Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nigeria Dollar Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paramount Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CORDROS ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED assetmgteam@cordros.com			
Web: www.cordros.com, Tel: 019036947			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Cordros Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	0.00%
Cordros Fixed Income Fund	111.76	111.76	10.69%
Cordros Halal Fixed Income Fund	116.50	116.50	11.66%
Cordros Dollar Fund (\$)	114.69	114.69	6.78%
Cordros Milestone Fund	184.74	186.02	19.10%
CORONATION ASSETS MANAGEMENT investment@coronationam.com			
Web: www.coronationam.com, Tel: 012366215			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coronation Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Bonded Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC FUNDS MANAGEMENT LIMITED mutualfundng@ecobank.com			
Web: www.ecobank.com Tel: 012265281			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class B	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC Nigeria Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
EMERGING AFRICA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED assetmanagement@emergingafricagroup.com			
Web: www.emergingafricagroup.com/emerging-africa-asset-management-limited/, Tel: 08039492594			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Emerging Africa Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	21.98%
Emerging Africa Bond Fund	1.15	1.15	17.14%
Emerging Africa Bonded Diversity Fund	1.24	1.25	9.24%
Emerging Africa Eurobond Fund	109.59	109.59	6.32%
FBNQUEST ASSETS MANAGEMENT LIMITED invest@fbnquest.com			
Web: www.fbnquest.com/asset-management; Tel: +234-81 0082 0082			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
FBN Money Market Fund	100	100	0.00%
FBN Bond Fund	1673.49	1673.49	0.00%
FBN Dollar Fund	131.36	131.36	0.00%
FBN Halal Fund	149.17	149.17	0.00%
FBN Specialized Dollar Fund	120.07	120.07	0.00%
FBN Bonded Fund	332.41	334.63	22.93%
FBN Smart Beta Equity Fund	320.71	325.2	28.97%
FCMB ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED fcmbamhelpdesk@fcmb.com			
Web: www.fcmbassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 462 2596			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Legacy Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	0.00%
Legacy USD Bond Fund	1.37	1.37	4.73%
Legacy Debt Fund	3.53	3.53	-1.78%
Legacy Equity Fund	3.31	3.38	19.47%
FSDH ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD coralassets@fsdhgroup.com			
Web: www.fsdhaml.com; Tel: 01-270 4884-5; 01-280 9740-1			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coral income fund	4,295.31	4,295.31	9.77%
Coral money market fund	100.00	100.00	21.40%
FSDH HALAL FUND	1,139.22	1,139.22	14.06%

FSDH dollar fund	1.24	1.24	5.35%
Coral Bonded Fund	7,113.09	7,164.11	30.15%
INVESTMENT ONE FUNDS MANAGEMENT LTD enquiries@investment-one.com			
Web: www.investment-one.com; Tel: +234 812 992 1045,+234 1 448 8888			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ABACUS: Guaranty Trust Money Market Fund (GTMMF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
VEIF: Guaranty Trust Equity Income Fund (GTEIF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
VBF: Guaranty Trust Bonded Fund (GTBF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
VDF: Guaranty Trust Dollar Fund (GTFD)	N/A	N/A	N/A
VGF: Guaranty Trust Fixed Income Fund (GTFIF)	N/A	N/A	N/A
LOTUS CAPITAL LTD fincon@lotuscapitallimited.com			
Web: www.lotuscapitallimited.com; Tel: +234 1-291 4626 / +234 1-291 4624			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Investment Fund	1,213.53	1,213.53	14.28%
Lotus Halal Fixed Income Fund	2.08	2.11	28.44%
Lotus Halal Equity Exchange Traded Fund	27.51	30.41	26.67%
MERISTEM WEALTH MANAGEMENT LTD info@meristemwealth.com			
Web: www.meristemwealth.com/funds/; Tel: +2348028496012			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Meristem Equity Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Meristem Value ETF	N/A	N/A	N/A
Meristem Growth ETF	N/A	N/A	N/A
Meristem Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Meristem Dollar Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Meristem Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
NORRENBERGER INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT LIMITED enquiries@norrenberger.com			
Web: www.norrenberger.com, Tel: +234 (0) 908 781 2026			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Norrenberger Money Market Fund (NMMF)	100.00	100.00	20.03%
Norrenberger Islamic Fund (NIF)	102.71	102.71	11.96%
NORRENBERGER DOLLAR FUND (NDF)-----(\$)	103.04	103.04	10.03%
NORRENBERGER TURBO FUND (NTF)-----(\$)	100.86	100.86	13.67%
PAC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD info@pacassetmanagement.com			
Web: www.pacassetmanagement.com/mutualfunds; Tel: +234 1 271 8632			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
PACAM Bonded Fund	10.00	10.00	16.4
PACAM Fixed Income Fund	11.95	12.20	-0.44%
PACAM Money Market Fund	2.32	2.37	-0.04%
PACAM Equity Fund	1.31	1.37	-38.40%
PACAM EuroBond Fund	131.21	135.36	-0.18%
SCM CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED info@scmcapitalng.com			
Web: www.scmcapitalng.com; Tel: +234 1-280 2226,+234 1- 280 2227			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SCM Capital The Frontier Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
SFS CAPITAL NIGERIA LTD investments@sfsnigeria.com			
Web: www.sfsnigeria.com, Tel: +234 (01) 2801400			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SFS Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Skye Shelter Fund*	N/A	N/A	N/A
Union Homes REIT	N/A	N/A	N/A
STANBIC IBTC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD assetmanagement@stanbicibtc.com			
Web: www.stanbicibtcassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 280 1266; 0700 MUTUALFUNDS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Stanbic IBTC Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	20.02%
Stanbic IBTC Bond Fund	258.42	258.42	1.32%
Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund (USD)	1.55	1.55	7.42%
Stanbic IBTC Shariah Fixed Income Fund	132.79	132.79	4.59%
Stanbic IBTC Enhanced Short-Term Fixed Income Fund	10.66	10.66	7.99%
Stanbic IBTC Bonded Fund	5,828.38	5,884.81	17.12%
Stanbic IBTC ETF 30 Fund	499.00	499.00	-30.40%
Stanbic IBTC Ethical Fund	2.55	2.58	23.91%
Stanbic IBTC Guaranteed Investment Fund	358.79	359.31	1.62%
Stanbic IBTC Imaan Fund	429.17	434.63	13.79%
Stanbic IBTC Nigerian Equity Fund	22,863.79	23,210.02	26.23%
SIAML Pension ETF 40	855.90	855.90	71.18%
Stanbic IBTC Aggressive Fund	6,985.41	7,088.73	29.98%
Stanbic IBTC Conservative Fund	6,334.64	6,365.06	19.86%
STL ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED jemenike@stlassetmgt.com			
Web: WWW.STLASSETMGT.COM; Tel: 8136115170			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
STL MONEY MARKET FUND	100.00	100.00	21.70%
STL BALANCED FUND	1,057.61	1,071.31	6.45%
UNITED CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD unitedcapitalplcgroup.com			
Web: www.unitedcapitalplcgroup.com; Tel: +234 01-6317876			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
United Capital Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	20.39%
United Capital Sukuk Fund	1.19	1.19	9.62%
United Capital Fixed Income Fund	1.93	1.93	5.87%
United Capital Nigerian Eurobond Fund	122.65	122.65	5.30%
United Capital Global Fixed Income Fund	1.14	1.14	8.56%
United Capital Equity Fund	1.37	1.38	22.40%
United Capital Bonded Fund	1.78	1.79	15.28%
United Capital Wealth for Women Fund	1.42	1.43	18.95%
VETIVA FUND MANAGERS LTD funds@vetiva.com			
Web: www.vetiva.com; Tel: +234 1 453 0697			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Vetiva Banking Exchange Traded Fund	9.21	9.31	11.77%
Vetiva Consumer Goods Exchange Traded Fund	15.76	15.86	2.40%
Vetiva Griffin 30 Exchange Traded Fund	35.87	36.07	-0.53%
Vetiva Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	18.91%
Vetiva Industrial Goods Exchange Traded Fund	37.97	38.17	-18.84%
Vetiva S&P Nigeria Sovereign Bond Exchange Traded Fund	147.83	149.83	0.00%
QUANTUM ZENITH ASSET MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENTS LTD service@quantumzenithasset.com.ng			
Web: www.quantumzenith.com.ng; Tel: +234 1-2784219			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Zenith Bonded Strategy Fund	20.59	20.83	11.65%
Zenith ESG Impact Fund	26.04	26.30	19.55%
Zenith Income Fund	27.25	27.25	7.56%
Zenith Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	21.50%
ZEDCREST INVESTMENT MANAGER LIMITED investmentoperations@zedcrest.com			
Web: www.zedcrestwealth.com; Tel: +2348075881240			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Zedcrest Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	24.78%
Zedcrest Fixed Income Fund	1.06	1.06	2.10%
Zedcrest Dollar Fund	N/A	1.21	14.93%
REITS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Chapel Hill Denham Nigeria Infrastructure Debt Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A

The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise. Past performance is a guide and not an indication of future returns. Fund prices published in this edition are also available on each fund manager's website and FMAN's website at www.fman.com.ng. Fund prices are supplied by the operator of the relevant fund and are published for information purposes only.



Tuesday September 24th, 2024

Thisday Afrinvest Index Up 0.3%

Thisday Afrinvest 40 index advanced by 0.3% to print at 4,400.73 points due to price uptick in **MTNN** (+0.4%), **FBNH** (+1.6%), and **FIDELITYBK** (+10.0%). Cumulatively, these stocks account for 12.7% of the index.

Bullish Start to the Week... ASI up 0.2%

Yesterday, the domestic bourse opened the week on a positive note as the **NGX ASI** rose 0.2% to 97,706.70 points, buoyed by gains in **FIDELITY** (+10.0%), **UBA** (+2.4%), and **DANGSUGAR** (+5.9%). As a result, YTD return advanced to 30.7% (previously: 30.4%), and market capitalisation gained 0.2% (₦107.0bn) to ₦56.1tn. Activity level varied as volume traded surged 308.1% to 1.3bn units while value traded declined by 1.0% to ₦6.0bn.

Bullish Sector Performance

Performance across the sectors within our purview was positive as four indices gained, while the other two lost. Leading the gainers, the **Banking** and **Consumer Goods** indices rose 0.8% and 0.4%, respectively, on the back of price appreciation in **FIDELITY** (+10.0%), **UBA** (+2.4%), and **DANGSUGAR** (+5.9%). Similarly, buy interest in **OANDO** (+2.0%) and **MTNN** (+0.4%) pushed the **Oil & Gas** and **AFR ICT** indices up 0.2% and 0.1%, accordingly. Conversely, the **Insurance** and **Industrial Goods** indices shed 0.5% and 0.1% respectively, owing to sell offs on **WAPIC** (7.2%), **LINKASSU** (3.6%), **WAPCO** (2.2%), and **BERGER** (10.0%).

Outlook

Investor sentiment, as measured by market breath weakened to 0.06x from 0.20x as 28 stocks advanced, 24 declined, while 70 remained flat. Today, we expect continued buying activity as investors position themselves ahead of anticipated strong Q3 earnings, particularly from the banking sector.

Fundamental Performance Metrics for THISDAY AFRINVEST 40 Index

	Current	Previous Change	Current Weight	Change	Change Index to					Dividend	Earnings
THISDAY AFRINVEST 40	4400.73	0.31%		86.3%	340.1%	20.3%					
Transcorp Power Ltd											
Airtel Africa PLC											
Guaranty Trust Holding Co PLC											
Dangote Cement PLC											
MTN Nigeria Communications PLC											
SEPLAT Energy PLC											
Zenith Bank PLC											
FBN Holdings Plc											
Access Holdings PLC											
Lafarge Africa PLC											
Geregu Power PLC											
Transnational Corp of Nigeria											
BUA Foods PLC											
Fidelity Bank PLC											
United Bank for Africa PLC											
Ecobank Transnational Inc											
Nestle Nigeria PLC											
Stanbic IBTC Holdings PLC											
Flour Mills of Nigeria PLC											
Dangote Sugar Refinery PLC											
FCMB Group Plc											
Nigerian Breweries PLC											
Transcorp Hotels Plc											
United Capital PLC											
International Breweries PLC											
BUA Cement Plc											
Chapel Hill Denham Management											
NASCON Allied Industries PLC											
Okomu Oil Palm PLC											
PZ Cussons Nigeria PLC											
Julius Berger Nigeria PLC											
Guinness Nigeria PLC											
Sterling Financial Holdings Co											
TotalEnergies Marketing Nigeri											
Wema Bank PLC											
Unilever Nigeria PLC											
Notore Chemical Industries Ltd											

Top 10 Gainers			Top 10 Trades by Volume		
Ticker	Price	Price Chg %		Volume	Price Chg %
SEPLAT	4964.70	10.0%	TRANSCORP		
ABCTRANS	123	9.8%	FIDELITYBK		
LIVESTOCK	3.28	9.7%	ACCESSCORP		
CAVERTON	2.62	9.6%	NPFMCRFBK		
FTNCOCOA	2.00	9.3%	ELLAHLAKES		
ELLAHLAKES	4.50	8.4%			
NSLTECH	0.66	8.2%			
CUTIX	2.68	7.2%	STERLINGNG		
JBERGER	150.00	7.1%	MANSARD		
GUINEAINS	0.48	6.7%			

Top 10 Losers			Top 10 Trades by Value		
Ticker	Price	Price Chg %			Price Chg %
ETERNA	27.00	-10.0%	TRANSCORP		
PZ	17.65	-9.5%	FIDELITYBK		
REGALINS	0.82	-8.9%	OANDO		
MANSARD	5.51	-7.1%	ACCESSCORP		
DANGSUGAR	30.60	-5.8%			
FIDELITYBK	13.00	-4.8%	ZENITHBANK		
CORNERST	2.51	-3.5%			
NASCON	30.00	-2.9%			
OMATEK	0.68	-2.9%	DANGSUGAR		
MAYBAKER	6.80	-2.9%	FLOURMILL		

NEWS

**DURING A MEETING AT THE IMO HEADQUARTERS IN LONDON...**

Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Dayo Mobereola (L), and Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Arsenio Dominguez, during a meeting at the IMO headquarters in London...recently

Conflicting Orders on Rivers LG Polls: NJC May Summon Justices Lifu, Igwe

Alex Enumah in Abuja

Any moment from now the leadership of the judiciary, the National Judicial Council (NJC) may invite Justice Peter Lifu of the Federal High Court in Abuja, and his counterpart in the Rivers State High Court, Justice I. Igwe, to explain themselves in respect of contradictory and conflicting court orders issued to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and security agencies, regarding the just concluded Local Government Area (LGA) elections

in Rivers State.

The development following a petition written to the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, THISDAY learnt on Monday.

While Justice Igwe in a suit brought by the All People's Party (APP) had ordered INEC to release the voter register used for the conduct of the 2023 general election to the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission (RSIEC), for the purpose of conducting local government elections slated for

October 5, Justice Lifu on the other hand ordered INEC not to release same register to the RSIEC until it has been updated.

Similarly, while Igwe in the September 5 judgement ordered security agencies to provide security during the LG polls, Lifu had ordered the contrary.

The two conflicting orders led to a near breakdown of law and order in the state before and during the elections as some thugs, factions of the All Progressives Congress (APC)

and People's Democratic Party (PDP), said to be loyal to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and immediate past governor of Rivers State, Mr. Nyesom Wike, did everything to stop and frustrate the conduct of the poll, held last Saturday.

As at Monday, three LGA secretariats have been burnt by people protesting against the conduct of the LGA polls.

The arsonists are believed to have capitalized on the withdrawal of the police which have kept the 23 local government secretariats under lock

and key for about three months.

Meanwhile, before the conduct of the polls last Saturday, many Nigerians, including former President Goodluck Jonathan had warned that the issue of conflicting court orders if not nipped in the bud could derail the country's democracy.

However, following the filing of a petition, THISDAY learnt that the CJN, who is also the Chairman of the NJC, has already written to the two judges to give their sides of the story.

"The CJN has received a petition on conflicting orders of court of concurrent jurisdiction and a letter has been written to the concerned judges", a source which pleaded anonymity told our correspondent.

According to the source, the letter was in line with the spirit of fair hearing.

"After they have stated their own sides then the NJC will now look into the matter and invite them where necessary", the source added.

The spokesperson for the NJC, Mrs. Kemi Ogedengbe, declined to speak on the issue when contacted, stating the body would respond at the appropriate time.

Recall that few days back, shortly after she was sworn in as substantive CJN, Justice Kekere-Ekun had vowed to restore the dignity of the Judiciary, which has been battered by acts, though not limited to contrary and conflicting

court orders.

The new CJN had remarked that the issue of "Forum shopping" by some lawyers is not only rampant, but, has often given rise to the emergence of conflicting orders by courts of coordinate jurisdiction.

"I would like to state clearly that henceforth, there will be consequences for any act of indiscretion that could bring the judiciary to disrepute. We have rules and ethics guiding the practice of our noble profession, and we must work assiduously to abide by them and always do what is right in the eye of the law.

"Under my leadership, the judiciary will adhere to the principles of honesty, transparency, and integrity. I call upon all judicial officers and members of the Bar to join me in achieving this goal", she said.

However, barely a week after she stated this, Kekere-Ekun is confronted with the menace of conflicting court orders by court of coordinate jurisdiction.

Accusing the Inspector General (IG) of Police, Mr. Kayode Egbetokun, of taking sides with the FCT minister, the Rivers State Governor, Mr. Siminalayi Fubara, had vowed to proceed with the polls, adding that he would hold Egbetokun responsible for any breakdown of law and order in Rivers State.

Bayelsa Launches 5-year Strategic Plan for Vulnerable Children, Seeks Effective Collaboration

Olusegun Samuel in Yenagoa

The Bayelsa State Government has called for closer collaboration between all tiers of government, development partners and other critical stakeholders in alleviating the plight of orphans and vulnerable children in society.

Deputy Governor Lawrence Ewhrudjakpo made the call on Monday at the launch of the Bayelsa State Strategic Plan for Vulnerable Children (2025-2030) organised by the Centre for Clinical Care and Clinical Research Nigeria (CCCRN) in collaboration with the state Ministry of Women, Children Affairs, Empowerment and Social Development in Yenagoa.

Ewhrudjakpo, in a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Media, Mr. Doubara Atasi, stressed that the fundamental human rights of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) like any other citizens of the country must not be neglected but protected at all times.

While underscoring the state government's commitment towards providing a better livelihood for OVCs in the state, the Deputy Governor urged the Women and Children Ministry to expand the Integrated Child Health and Social Service Award (ICHSSA 1) project to include more people living in the rural areas.

Speaking further on the expansion of the programme, Ewhrudjakpo called on the Centre for Clinical Care and Clinical Research Nigeria and other stakeholders to limit the issue of vulnerability to those living with HIV/AIDS and their children alone but to all disadvantaged orphans.

He also charged local government authorities in the state to replicate what the state government is doing by developing their own strategic plans on how to reduce the suffering of vulnerable children.

Ewhrudjakpo, who was conferred with an Excellence Merit Award at the event, thanked the organizers for the honour, adding that the award would inspire him to do more in touching the lives of the needy in society.

His words: "First of all, we are humbled by this award and we believe it is an inspiration to do more in terms of making our orphans and vulnerable children have better means of livelihood in Bayelsa and Nigeria in general.

"So, I thank the organizers of this programme. We want the programme sustained; not only sustained but taken to the rural areas, where over 70% of our population live and work.

"The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs should expand the programme because what we are doing is like a dot on the spot of a drawing. Orphans and vulnerable children are not limited to those who have HIV/AIDS alone. OVC have a very wide spectrum.

"Very often, an OVC programme, we must look at it holistically to include all those who are deprived and those suffering abuses from their parents, foster parents and other guardians because all of them have the right to be protected."

Earlier in her welcome address, the Commissioner for Women, Children Affairs, Empowerment and Social

Development, Deaconess Elizabeth Bidei, noted that the Integrated Child Health and Social Services Award (ICHSSA) project was initiated three years ago to build the resilience of vulnerable children in the state.

She commended the state government for providing support including a conducive office for the programme, which was being implemented in all the eight local government areas of the state.

Delivering a keynote address, the Chief of Party, ICHSSA 1 Project,

Dr. Peter Adekoya, said the project significantly impacted the lives of 3,311 orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) from 1,171 households in the state through livelihood-based social protection and care programmes.

In his goodwill message, the Commissioner for Health, Prof. Seiyefa Brisibe, congratulated the women ministry on its achievements in caring for orphans and vulnerable children, and pledged his ministry's support in terms of providing good healthcare for the children.

New FCT Commissioner of Police Assumes Duty, Vows to Clamp Down on Criminals

Linus Aleke in Abuja

The Commissioner of Police FCT Command, Olatunji Disu, yesterday vowed to clamp down on criminal elements within the federal capital territory, Abuja.

Disu who made this pledge while addressing a press conference shortly after his official assumption of duty on Monday also noted that he will not tolerate any form of criminality in the territory.

He said that his leadership will prioritize community policing, intelligence gathering, technology integration, training and development and public engagement.

While acknowledging the security challenges facing the FCT and the

foundational work laid by his predecessors to maintain relative peace, the commissioner of police said that he was committed to building on this groundwork and enhancing police efforts to significantly improve the security situation in the territory.

He said: "To those who seek to disrupt the tranquility of the FCT, I send a clear and resolute message: my tenure will be marked by a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of crime and criminality.

"We will not waver in our commitment to safeguarding our community, ensuring that law enforcement is both effective and respectful of the rights of all citizens.

"I also aim to strengthen our partnerships with local organiza-

tions, community leaders, and other stakeholders. Together, we will foster trust and collaborate on innovative strategies to address the security concerns that affect our residents.

"Your insights and feedback will be invaluable as we navigate these challenges together, and we will actively encourage feedback from members of the public to refine our approach."

He explained that FCT Command under his leadership will enhance their community policing initiatives to ensure that their officers are more visible and accessible, fostering a sense of safety and trust among residents.

Disu added that strengthening intelligence-gathering capabilities

will be crucial in preemptively addressing potential threats and criminal activities.

"We will leverage modern technology to aid our policing efforts, utilizing tools such as data analytics and surveillance systems to enhance our operational efficiency and response times.

"Continuous training for our officers will be emphasized to ensure they are equipped with the latest techniques and knowledge in modern policing," he said.

Disu averred that the command will actively engage the public through town hall meetings and outreach programs to create a stronger bond between the police and the community.



TRINITY HOUSE HONOUR NIGERIA AWARD...

L-R: The Orangun of Oke-Ila, Oba Adedokun Abolarin; Senior Pastor of Trinity House Church, Lagos, Pastor Ituah Ighodalo; former President Olusegun Obasanjo; Representative of Senator Daisy Danjuma/Chief Executive Officer, Design Options Ltd, Ifeyinwa Ighodalo; and recipient of posthumous award of late Ken Saro-Wiwa, Alee Wiwa, during the Trinity House Honour Nigeria Service and Award themed "Enthroning the Right Values", held at the Church Auditorium In Lagos... last Sunday

PHOTO: SUNDAY ADIGUN

Unions Kick against Handing Salaries Payment to LGs, Seek First-line Charge on Federation Account

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

Local Government unions have urged the federal government to make workers' salaries a first-line charge on the Federation Account and paid directly to statutory bodies, including the Local Government Service Commission (LGSC).

This appears to be a departure from the Supreme Court judgment giving financial autonomy to local government councils in the country, THISDAY learnt.

In a memorandum to the federal government, the unions, under the aegis of the Joint Action Committee of Local Government-based unions, made up of the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT), and the Nigeria Union of Pensioners (NUP), said this was necessary for industrial stability of the local government system.

"For workers' welfare and industrial harmony, training and capacity building and sustainability of industrial stability in the local government system, payment of (the gross salary of local government workers) should be made a first-line charge and domiciled in the relevant agencies," the unions said.

The memorandum was signed by NUT president, Titus Amba; NULGE president, Ambali Akeem and NUP president, Godwin Abumisi.

The Supreme Court had on July 11, 2024, ruled that it was unconstitutional for governors to hold funds allocated to the local governments, saying the

councils should determine how to maintain and utilise their funds.

Following the judgment, the federal government expressed its commitment to its implementation. It thereafter set up a 10-man committee under the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, to work out the modalities for enforcing the judgment.

The committee also set up a subcommittee headed by the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Bagudu, to work with stakeholders on the technical details of the enforcement.

However, despite the general sentiments in favour of the apex court judgment, there have been concerns about the capacity of the local councils to discharge the responsibilities bestowed on them efficiently.

The unions amplified this fear in the memorandum, urging the federal government to pay their salary, training and pension funds to the Local Government Service Commission.

"Gross salary of local government workers should be domiciled with the Local Government Service Commission," they said, adding, "2 per cent of total local government allocation for Local Government Commission running grants and Local Government training should be domiciled with the commission."

According to the unions, the gross salary of primary school teachers and 1.5 per cent of the total local government allocation for running

the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) should be domiciled with the board.

The unions also requested that 25 per cent of the gross salary of teachers and local government workers be deducted from the local government allocation to pay pension and gratuity and be domiciled with the local government staff pension board.

Finally, the workers' unions urged the federal government to pay the 5 per cent statutory grant for traditional rulers to the traditional councils' account.

To secure their preferred fiscal allocation model, the unions urged the federal government to restructure all the supervisory institutions controlling and supervising local government

workers by expanding their governing board to include the workers' and council chairman's representatives.

The institutions include NULGE, SUBEB, Local Government Staff Pension Board, and Primary Health Care Agency.

The JAC pushed for a renewed drive for transparent and prudent management of resources at the

council level.

"We recommend the enforcement of procurement policy in all local governments; enforcement of Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) guidelines; creation of audit department; and appointment of the Auditor-General for the LG from chartered accountants in the LG," the group said.

Kenya Court Dismisses former Flutterwave Employee \$900k Appeal

Wale Igbinde

The High Court of Kenya, sitting at Nairobi, has dismissed the appeal filed by a former employee of Flutterwave, Clara Wanjiku Odera, over alleged emotional distress and reputational damage after her former employer Flutterwave failed to remove her contact details from its M Pesa Paybill account following her departure from the firm in 2018.

Justice Alexander Muasya Muteti in his judgement held that the appellant (Odera) was unable to prove the special damages for the therapist she allegedly consulted.

Odera, had sought \$900,000 in damages as claims for emotional distress and reputational damage against her former employer, Flutterwave.

Odera's initial suit alleged that in failing to remove her number from the company's bill contact list after her resignation, led to a series of inquiries from the fintech's customers which she claimed caused her public

embarrassment, emotional distress, and reputational damage.

She claimed that as a result, customers continued to contact her regarding company related issues long after she had left her role as Head of Implementation for Rest of Africa at Flutterwave.

The appellant urges the court to find that the respondent's failure to remove her name from the records held by Safaricom in respect to their pay bill was negligent and unlawful since she had already left the employment with the respondent company.

The appellant contends that the Magistrate's decision that there was no causal link between the emotional distress suffered by her and the respondent's failure to remove her name from the records in connection with the pay bill number used to organize the sex party, was erroneous and not backed by evidence.

But, the respondent in its response admitted that the appellant was their former employee who served as an expansion manager in charge of the company's operations till 3 October 2018 when she resigned

from the company.

As an expansion manager, she was responsible for setting up the aggregate pay bill model with Safaricom PLC which role she played and her contact details were registered as the contact person.

The respondent maintained that when the appellant resigned, they informed Safaricom and requested change of the contact details on the pay bill number set up by the appellant.

However, in his judgement Justice Muteti held that the appellant was able to prove that she worked for the respondent and as a result her contact details were registered by Safaricom PLC as the contact person for their aggregate pay bill.

The court held: "No doubt after she left the company her contact details continued to feature against the pay bill number, a fact that the respondent's witness admitted.

"It is however not clear from her evidence how she links up the company to the sex party that she says was the cause of her public embarrassment.

"From my independent analysis

of evidence, I do not find the company's involvement in the sex party organization.

"It is also important to note that the appellant did not present evidence from the police who investigated the issue of the sex party to determine whether there was fault on the part of the respondent.

"The appellant did not link the respondent to the money that was being collected for the sex party.

"In my considered view, the learned Honourable Magistrate was correct in his finding that there was no causal link nor proof of the emotional distress suffered by the appellant in the hands of the police.

"The case by the appellant is one basically premised on the duty of care that the respondent owed to the appellant regarding the use of the pay bill number.

"The number having been registered by the appellant for and on behalf of the respondent company, once she left the service of the company, the respondent was duty bound to ensure that the number was used purely for the purpose it was intended for.

FG Advocates Multi-faceted Approach in Tackling Violence against Children

Alex Enumah in Abuja

The federal government has again urged a multi-faceted approach in tackling rising incidences of violence against children in the country.

To this end, the government has charged individuals, organizations and relevant agencies to intensify commitment towards the protection of the most vulnerable and thereby create a world where all children can thrive and be supported to reach their full potential.

This charge was given by the Solicitor General of the Federation (SGF) and Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Justice, Mrs. Beatrice Jeddy-Agba.

She spoke on Monday while delivering a keynote address at the two-day stakeholder's forum on ending violence against children in Nigeria, held in Abuja.

Her words: "Ending violence against children requires a multifaceted approach with concerted and intentional

efforts of all stakeholders, institutions and development partners, particularly those invested in developing and implementing government policies, to embark on initiatives and institutionalize mechanisms to address the scourge.

"By working together with a common goal, governments, organizations, communities, and individuals can build a safer world for our children and end the scourge of violence against children in our communities and nation, while also ensuring that children who suffer from violence are given the necessary physical and mental support they require to be rehabilitated."

Jeddy-Agba expressed regrets that while the Child's Right Act/Laws guarantees respect for the dignity of the child and stipulates that children shall not be subjected to physical, mental or emotional abuse, she noted that only a fraction of children whose rights are violated come forward to seek redress or have access to justice which will enable them seek redress.

Going forward, the Perm Sec pledged the ministry's desire to continue to partner with UNICEF, other donor agencies, as well as respective heads of courts with a view to developing capacity of judges and magistrates on the implementation and enforcement of the Child Rights Act, especially in the area of the effective use of family Court Rules and Procedures.

In her goodwill message, the Child Protection Manager, UNICEF, Mona Aika commended the ministry for leading the conversation.

Aika, who described as alarming a data indicating that 6 out of 10 children experienced physical, sexual violence, et cetera, before attaining 18 years, added: "Worst still, they do not receive the help they require."

The Speaker, FCT Children Parliament, Waziri Rahama Yarada, urged all stakeholders at the meeting to help stem the menace, assuring that the parliament would be presenting a Charter of Demand before the end of the programme.

Gombe Gov Inaugurates Negotiation Team to Resolve GSU Unions Strike

Segun Awofadeji in Gombe

Governor Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya of Gombe State has inaugurated a high-powered negotiation team as a decisive move to address the ongoing strike unions at the Gombe State University (GSU) which has disrupted academic activities for weeks.

The strike embarked on by the university's unions, including the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), the Non-Academic Staff Union (NASU), and the National Association of Academic Technologists (NAAT), has left government, students and parents concerned about the prolonged halt in academic activities.

Speaking during the inauguration ceremony at the Government House, Gombe, Monday, Governor Inuwa Yahaya expressed deep concern over the impact of the strike on students and the state's education sector.

He emphasized the need for a swift

resolution, stating: "Education is a priority for this administration, and we will do everything within our powers to ensure that the students return to class. This negotiation team has my full support to explore all avenues in resolving the pressing issues.

"While our investment in education extends beyond the university to include secondary and basic levels, we recognize the critical importance of supporting the university for its smooth operation. Since 2019, we have consistently increased the monthly subvention, ensuring the university receives over 200 million naira each month."

He explained that the issue of Earned Academic Allowances was an inherited challenge from the past administration, noting that in 2019, when he assumed leadership of the state, the university owed over 1.025 billion naira in allowances while emphasizing his efforts to address the backlog, citing his recent approval of over 265 million naira in benefits for

the university staff.

Governor Inuwa Yahaya also emphasized that his administration's commitment to education was a key factor in his decision to reject a proposal by some members of Gombe State University to raise students' registration fees as done by other states.

He added that being aware of the challenging economic conditions and the need to make university education accessible to the people of Gombe made him to reject the proposal while noting that other universities in the country charge three times the current fees at GSU.

The governor used the opportunity to explain that the endowment fund, which he had planned to launch prior to the strike, was designed to address some of the unions' concerns, noting that several prominent philanthropists across the country have pledged contributions to support the fund to complement the government's efforts to enhance the university's growth.

NEWS

**LAWLESSNESS IN RIVERS STATE...**

Parts of the building burnt by political thugs at the Ikwere LG Council, Isiokpo community... yesterday

President to Judiciary: Anti-graft War Won't Be Won By Technicalities, Frivolous Appeals, Intimidation of Judges

- Notes that prosecution of corruption cases has remarkably improved
- Lists student loan, consumer credit scheme as FG's strategic initiatives to curb corruption

Deji Elumoye and Alex Enumah in Abuja

President Bola Tinubu yesterday identified frivolous appeals, alleged intimidation of judges by lawyers and judgments delivered on grounds of technicalities as some of the major challenges impeding the war against corruption in Nigeria.

According to him, until these challenges are curtailed, they would continue to hamper the speedy adjudication of corruption cases.

The President, who spoke while declaring open the Sixth Economic and Financial Crimes Commission/

National Judicial Institute Capacity Building Workshop for Justices and Judges at the National Judicial Institute (NJI), Abuja, however, acknowledged that prosecution of corruption cases has improved remarkably, following the justice sector reforms in the last few years.

Represented at the event by Vice President Kashim Shettima, Tinubu described the capacity-building workshop as a platform to collectively raise a strong voice against Nigeria's common enemy called corruption.

Shettima, while delivering the President's speech at the event,

stated: "There is no gainsaying the fact that the judiciary is central to the success of the anticorruption efforts. The commitment, courage and patriotism of judicial officers are ingredients that make the difference in the fight against corruption.

"Though I am aware that prosecution of corruption matters has improved in the light of the justice sector reforms in the last few years, we are not oblivious of some challenges that continue to impede the speedy adjudication of corruption cases.

"They include frivolous applications and appeals, meant to delay the trial,

intimidation of judges by counsel, and judgment based not on the facts of cases but on technicalities."

Tinubu pointed out that, "no Nigerian is immune to corruption, a cancer which continues to deny the nation the full benefits of her God-given resources," even as he maintained that only the enlightened collective interest of all Nigerians "to close ranks and aggressively tackle this common enemy" can make the difference, instead of looking up "to only the Anti-Corruption Agencies for solutions to this malaise."

Observing that advances in technol-

ogy have increased the complexity of financial crimes beyond the scope of current jurisprudence, Tinubu cited the emergence of virtual assets, which, he said, "have occasioned an upsurge in cryptocurrency fraud."

He urged the judicial arm of government to ensure that the courts are equipped with the required knowledge to handle cases involving these new forms of crime.

According to him: "As an administration, we remain committed to creating the right environment for judicial officers to discharge their responsibilities. One of the major actions of the government within the first year of my administration was improving the welfare of judges across the board with an increase in their remuneration.

"Official accommodation is also being provided for various categories of judicial officers in highbrow areas of the Federal Capital Territory."

On the part of the executive arm of government, the President said his administration has, through strategic investment of recovered proceeds of corruption in critical social programmes, moved to reduce the pressure on vulnerable Nigerians to resort to corrupt practices, just as he identified the Students Loan Fund and the Consumer Credit Scheme as part of these social interventions.

His words: "The two notable ones are the Students Loan Fund being managed by NELSUND and the Consumer Credit Scheme under the

Continued on page 29

Saraki to Abdulrahman: Kwarans Can't Be Cowed By This Wave of Demolition Exercise

Former Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki, has told the incumbent governor of Kwara State, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq, that the current wave of demolition exercise to intimidate, suppress, and silence all Kwarans would not work.

In a statement by his media aide, Yusuph Olaniyonu, Saraki said, some people would expect that he would be indifferent to the weekend demolition of the Crystal Place, a shopping mall on Sulu Gambari Road in Ilorin, ordered by the government of Kwara State.

This, he said, was because of the political relationship between

him and the owner, Hon. Moshood Mustapha, who after serving as his commissioner, Special Adviser, and House of Representatives member under the platform of his party, the PDP, later defected to the All Progressives Congress (APC) and had worked against his structure since 2018.

"However, it is not my style to take positions on issues from the narrow, parochial perspective. It is my view that one should always look at the big picture, a broad perspective of any issue in reacting to it.

"It is violence against the people of Kwara State and the economy of

the state. My decision to speak out against this action that reflects the pettiness of the governor and his government, which is anti-people, and against the economic development of the state is irrespective of who is involved.

"The State Governor, Abdulrahman Abdulrazaq is using this demolition exercise to intimidate, suppress, and silence all Kwarans. It is his reaction to the growing unpopularity of everything that he represents within the state.

"Why is Abdulrazaq just realising the fault or whatever he interprets to be wrong with the building of the Crystal Mall structure after 64 months that he has been in office?

"The Kwara State Governor is ordering this demolition as his response in the aftermath of the recently conducted local government polls, where people in all the constituencies massively voted and rose against his party and its candidates, even when he malevolently, fraudulently, and

maliciously got contrary results to be declared by his hand-picked electoral officials.

"This is the beginning of a war against Kwara State for rejecting a governor, who has failed to deliver good governance on all fronts. We should recall that he has ordered the arrest of some opposition politicians on frame-up charges.

"In my view, Abdulrazaq believes unveiling a regime of violence and destruction against the people, particularly, the elite and their property will impose a culture of silence on the state. Now, the news circulating across Ilorin is that the next target of Abdulrazaq's demolition squad is the place where the remains of my late father, Oloye (Dr.) Abubakar Olusola Saraki, of blessed memory, is interred.

"Even, this evil plan will not stop me from saying what is right. Let me make it clear that he will only try, he must be joking if he thinks he can erase the legacies left by the great Oloye.

Kogi Govt Approves N72,500 Minimum Wage, Grants a Year Tax Relief to Workers

Ibrahim Oyewale in Lokoja

The Kogi State government, has approved the sum of N72,500.00 (Seventy-two thousand and Five hundred Naira only) as minimum wage for the state civil servants and local government workers.

The State governor, Usman Ododo, disclosed this while receiving the reports of the State Minimum Wage Committee, set up by the government to look into the implementation of the new minimum wage for the workers at the banquet hall, Government House in Lokoja.

He also stated that consequential adjustments would be done to cut across all categories of workers in the state, stressing that the move was in the fulfilment of the promises made to serve the people.

Ododo, however, granted a tax relief order for a period of one year to all civil servants in the state, a

pronouncement that received loud ovation.

"After looking at all indices, we have discussed and agreed jointly and graciously approved the sum of N72,500 as minimum wage for all category of workers."

The governor urged the civil servants to rededicate themselves to the present administration's agenda for overall transformations to the state.

Earlier, Chairman of the Kogi State Minimum Wage Committee and the Head of Service, Mr. Elijah Abenemi, explained that the state government had set up the committee on the September 17th, 2024 with the terms of reference to look in the modalities to implement the new minimum wage in the State.

Abenemi pointed out that the Committee engaged in a dialogue with the unwavering commitment to get the best for Kogi Civil servants.

APGA, PDP, Others Reject Benue Council Polls, Alia's Govt Says Process Remarkable

George Okoh in Makurdi

The leadership of All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), the People Democratic Party (PDP) and others, have rejected and called for immediate reconciliation of the controversial local government election in Benue State, held last weekend.

But the Benue State government has highlighted the remarkable achievements of the process, as well as the positive changes ushered in by the current administration under Governor Hyacinth Alia.

The Benue State Chairman of APGA, Comrade Joseph Ogi, in a statement on Monday denounced the 100 per cent victory claimed by the All Progressive Congress (APC), calling

it "a shame and embarrassment."

He criticized the BSIEC for alleged irregularities, including candidates being forced to pay large sums of money.

Similarly, the PDP in Benue State, has condemned and rejected result of the local government polls, describing it as a 'charade'.

The party in a press statement by its new Publicity Secretary, Tim Nyor, noted that the travesty and facade that unfolded on 5th October, 2024, in the name of local government elections in the state was characterised by numerous well-documented incidences of irregularities, including the shocking non-deployment of election officials or electoral materials to polling units

across the state.

PDP said in few areas where some semblance of the charade was orchestrated by the APC-led administration, evidence erupted everywhere, including media space, of ballot stuffing and mass thumb-printing of ballots.

Also reacting to the poll, the Senate Minority Leader, Comrade Abba Moro, rejected the election and described it as a sham and an insult to democracy.

The senator representing Benue South Senatorial District, said in a statement by his media aide, Emmanuel Eche'Ofun John, that reports from polling units across his senatorial district indicated that elections did not hold.

According to him, election materials and officials of the Benue State Independent Electoral Commission, BSIEC "were not seen anywhere except in the premises of APC leaders where ballots were thumb-printed for their candidates."

The only Chairmanship Candidate of APGA in Agatu Local Government, Rev. Mrs. Azumi Elaigwu, also condemned the lack of transparency in the electoral process and vows to uphold democratic principles.

"The traditional process in Nigeria for Local Government elections has been disrupted in Benue State by Reverend Father Alia. He promised a credible election and invited all political parties to participate but see what came out of it. Sad," she said.



LAUNCH OF THE NEW DANO FULL CREAM...

L-R: Category Manager, Liquid, Cheese and Butter, Arla Foods, Ms. Ndidi Okoye; Danish Consul General, Ms. Jette Bjerrum; Sector Counsellor Food and Agriculture, Danish Consulate, Ms. Sanne Chipeta; Head of Post Marketing Surveillance, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, (NAFDAC), Dr. Ms. Regina Garba; Head of Marketing, Arla West Africa, Ms. Ifunanya Obiakor; General Manager, Sales, Multipro Consumer Products Limited, Mr. Ripudarman Sharma; Managing Director, Arla Foods, Mr. Peder Pedersen; and CEO, Multipro Consumer Products Limited, Mr. Guarav Dwivedi, at the launch of the new Dano Full Cream and Dano Cool Cow Evaporated Milk held in Lagos...recently

Planned Youth Confab Shows Tinubu's Agenda on Course, Says Arewa Group

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The 30-day youth confab announced by President Bola Tinubu will go a long way to unite the young people across the country, and help enhance issues such as education, employment, innovation, security, and social justice, the Arewa Think Tank (ATT) has said.

ATT in a statement yesterday by its convener, Muhammad Alhaji Yakubu, commended Tinubu on what it described as his rare initiative in the annals of the nation's administration towards empowering the youth across the country.

The group expressed satisfaction that the modalities of the confab and selection of delegates will be designed in close consultation with our young people through their representatives.

Arewa Think Tank therefore urged Northern Youths to be prepared to take advantage of the confab, adding that ATT was setting an agenda or road map for the northern youths on the confab.

It also aligned with the statement of the former governor of Ogun State, Segun Osoba that Tinubu should be allowed to complete two terms in office because, "He will do better. After his first four-year term, he will serve another four years".

"We are equally drumming support for the tenure elongation for the Nigerian Customs Service Management operations under the leadership of its comptroller General, Mr. Adewale Adeniyi.

"Our call for the extension is purely clear and away from any political influence, the idea is borne out of our assessment of the Nigeria's economic growth which is gaining momentum through revenue generation by the NCS leadership," the Arewa group stated.

It commended Tinubu for his Independence Day speech which read in part: "As we work to overcome the challenges of the day, we remain mindful of the next generation as we seek to galvanize their creative energy towards a better future.

"We lead today with the future we wish to bequeath to our children in focus, recognising that we cannot design a future that belongs to them without making them its architects.

"Through this confab, it will be our job as leaders to ensure that their aspirations are at the heart of the conference's deliberations. The government will thoroughly consider and implement the recommendations

and outcomes from this forum as we remain resolute in our mission to build a more inclusive, prosperous, and united Nigeria.

"Our government is implementing several other youth-centric programmes to give our young people an advantage in the rapidly changing world. We are implementing, amongst others, the 3 million Technical Talents programme (3MTT) of the Ministry

of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, aimed at building Nigeria's technical talent backbone.

"We have also enthusiastically implemented the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), which provides cheap loans to our students to pursue their tertiary educational dreams. In addition, later this month, we shall launch The Renewed Hope Labour Employment and Empower-

ment Programme (LEEP).

"It is conceived as a comprehensive suite of interventions at job creation by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment that is aimed at facilitating the creation of 2.5 million jobs, directly and indirectly, on an annual incremental basis whilst simultaneously ensuring the welfare and safety of workers across the country."

Rights Advocate Faults Ribadu's Claim of Improved Security in Nigeria

Linus Aleke in Abuja

A Child and Gender Rights Advocate, Lemmy Ughegbe, yesterday faulted National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu's claim that there was improved security in the country. He insisted that NSA's claim was empty government rhetoric.

The National Security Adviser (NSA), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, had

last week inferred that the security situation had tremendously improved from what was obtainable in 2022/23. The NSA who represented President Bola Tinubu at the Maiden News Agency of Nigeria's Annual International Lecture themed, "Insecurity In The Sahel (2008-2024): Dissecting Nigeria's Challenges - the Genesis, Impacts And Options," in Abuja, said the military and other security

agencies had killed no fewer than 30 terrorist and bandit commanders.

But speaking yesterday during a newspaper review session on ATT flagship programme Kakaki, Ughegbe said that farmers can no longer go to their farms because of the growing level of insecurity in the country.

He noted that the high price of food items in the market are directly connected with high level of insecurity in the land.

He noted that even the federal capital territory was relatively unsafe, as there are several unreported kidnap cases taking place regularly in the remotest part of the territory.

The senior journalist who described Ribadu's claim of Improved security as empty government rhetoric also took a swipe at the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

He averred that going back on unpopular government policies does

not amount to weakness, rather it is mark of statesmanship.

He appealed to the president to reverse some of his economic policies, like removal of petroleum subsidy and floating of Naira, arguing that the policies are strangulating citizens.

He observed that Central Bank of Nigeria's decision to float Naira when Nigeria's manufacturing capacity was at its lowest ebb was ill advised.

Ughegbe also said that the current statistics by NBS does not represent reality as many Nigerians are going to bed on empty stomach, adding that millions of households are sliding into multidimensional poverty and NBS does not seem to captured this because of political considerations.

On his part the publisher of CKN, Chris Nwandu, said that more and more children are dropping out of school in Nigeria, thereby worsening the worrisome statistics of out of school children in the country.

TINUBU CONDEMNS VIOLENCE IN RIVERS, ORDERS IG TO SECURE LGA OFFICES

while directing the immediate unsealing of all local government secretariats in Rivers State.

The local government offices had been sealed by the police following violent disagreements between the former elected chairmen, whose tenure had expired, and caretaker council chairmen inaugurated by the state government over control of the secretariats.

The matter is still pending in court. Adejebi explained that the unsealing of the secretariats took place on October 6 after the police received the report that elected chairmen had been sworn in by the state government.

He stated that the decision to unseal the secretariats was informed by the need to maintain neutrality in the political development in the state and allow smooth functioning of democratic institutions.

Earlier, yesterday, suspected hoodlums set ablaze sections of Emohua, Eleme and Ikwerre local government secretariats.

The mob invaded the Emohua secretariat after David Omereji, the newly elected chairman, his deputy, and councillors were sworn in on Sunday.

After the ceremony, hoodlums invaded many Rivers State council secretariats to cause destruction and prevent the newly elected officials from resuming their duties.

Some of the newly elected chairpersons and councillors arrived at their new offices to the sight of thick black smoke billowing from the buildings.

At Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, hoodlums invaded the secretariat and started shooting sporadically

to scare away workers. They were reportedly repelled by armed police officers.

The destruction came hours after Egbetokun ordered the immediate withdrawal of police personnel from the secretariats of the 23 local government areas of the state.

Police spokesperson in Rivers, Grace Iringe-Koko, who announced the development, said the IGP's directive "is in line with the commitment of the Nigeria Police Force to ensure neutrality and the smooth functioning of democratic institutions".

Fubara had on Sunday sworn in the 23 newly elected local government chairpersons. Action Peoples Party (APP), which was believed to be supported by the governor, despite maintaining his membership of PDP, won Saturday's election in 22 local government areas, while Action Alliance (AA) was victorious in one council area.

Fubara's loyalists had joined APP to secure the party's tickets to contest the election.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony on Sunday, Fubara said there were plans to perpetrate violence against the elected officials.

The crisis in the state is widely believed to be directly connected to the feud between Fubara and Wike.

The build-up to the Rivers council elections was trailed by controversy, which was exacerbated by conflicting court orders and pushback from All Progressives Congress (APC) and PDP.

George to Tinubu: Call Wike to Order

Former Deputy National Chairman

of the PDP, Chief Olabode George, Tinubu to call Wike to order to prevent anarchy in Rivers State.

George warned Wike to allow Fubara to work and deliver the dividends of democracy to the people, saying one man's ambition must not be allowed to derail democracy in the country.

In a statement he personally signed, George said, "I saw this with all sense of responsibility because if this democracy is truncated, God forbid, Tinubu, as the Commander-in-Chief, will be the biggest loser.

"All lovers of democracy will agree with me that political happenings in this oil-bearing state in the last few months, if allowed to continue, can lead to a re-enactment of the crisis in the defunct Western Region between 1962 and 1966, which eventually led to the first military coup of January 15, 1966.

"Many of our national figures were killed and events of that day led to a second coup on July 29, 1966, when scores of military officers were killed.

"Since history is no longer taught in our schools, I want to remind the gladiators in this Rivers crisis that the January and July 1966 killings eventually led to the civil war between July 6, 1967 and January 15, 1970. Close to two million Nigerians died in the war.

"I am raising this alarm because what is happening in Rivers now is a cause for serious concern for everyone. My understanding of this man-made crisis is that there is a despotic, divisive, wicked and anti-people design to create a conflagration, which may eventually consume our country.

Fubara is Our Pride, Say PDP Governors

Governors elected on the platform of PDP described Fubara as their pride.

Chairman of PDP Governors' Forum, Bala Mohammed, made the assertion during a visit to Rivers State to witness the swearing-in of the newly elected council chairmen in the state, held at Government House, Port Harcourt.

Mohammed said Fubara had proven himself a true democrat, who against all odds, pushed through with decisions and actions to deepen democracy.

He praised Fubara for being proactive and an open minded, and deploying his democratic instincts and strategies to carefully deliver democratic governance at the local government level, irrespective of party allegiance or consideration.

Continues online

NEWS



JAVAHOPE CAREER EMPOWERMENT CONFERENCE...

L-R: Director, Finance and Risk Management, JavaHope Foundation, Sade Aina; Director, Project Management, Ken Ifidon; Executive Director and Founder, Abimbola Ola Ifidon, and Director Governance and Compliance, Oyindamola Adetunji, at the career empowerment conference and unveiling of Learn and Unlock New Career Horizon by Javahope Foundation in Alberta, Canada...recently

NAFDAC Mgt Dialogues with Union as Strike by Staff Enters Day Two

Onyebuchi Ezigbo in Abuja

The industrial action embarked upon workers of the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) entered the second day today (Tuesday) just as the management of the agency continued with efforts to resolve

their grievances.

The staff has declared an indefinite strike starting from yesterday to protest management's failure to uphold an agreement signed in 2022, which addressed the workers' welfare and promotion issues.

The strike called by NAFDAC's Council of the

Medical and Health Workers' Union of Nigeria (MHWUN), came after the expiration of a 14-day ultimatum issued to management, which failed to

address key grievances raised by the union.

However, the agency said that it waded into the matter, pledging that in a few days, the

issues will be resolved.

NAFDAC's Resident Media Consultant, Sayo Akintola, who spoke to THISDAY regarding the strike last night, said the

Director General of NAFDAC Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, has initiated talks with the leadership of workers union with a view to resolving the dispute.

Peter Igho Appointed NSCC Goodwill Ambassadors Coordinator

The Nigerian Senior Citizens Centre (NSCC) has appointed former Director General (DG), National Lottery Commission and foremost television producer Olorogun Peter Igho as National Coordinator, National Senior Citizens Centre Goodwill Ambassadors.

The DG, NSCC, Dr Emem Omokaro, announced the appointment at a media and entertainment roundtable event convened to inaugurate a committee of NSCC Goodwill Ambassadors consisting of retired media veterans above the age of 60 years in Abuja.

Speaking at the ceremony,

Omokaro outlined the mission of the NSCC and charged the Goodwill Ambassadors led by Igho to extend the frontiers of the centre through advocacy, defence of senior citizens rights seeking social justice and the promotion of a healthy, comfortable environment for elders and senior citizens as they age gracefully.

Stressing that this is also a major plank of President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, Omokaro charged the Goodwill ambassadors to utilise a lot of their popularity and goodwill to create enhanced awareness and acceptance of the initiative by the entire populace of the country.

Lotus Bank Sponsors NIMSA Games, Others

Managing Director of Lotus Bank, one of Nigeria's fastest-growing non-interest banks, Mrs. Kafilat Araoye, has announced the bank's sponsorship of the upcoming Nigerian Medical Students Association (NIMSA) Games. This initiative highlights Lotus bank's commitment to fostering youth development, health, and sportsmanship across Nigeria.

The NIMSA Games commenced on Saturday, October 5, 2024, starting with student registration. The event will bring together medical students from various institutions nationwide, promoting friendly competition while emphasizing teamwork and physical wellness.

Commenting, Mrs. Araoye

said: "Encouraging a healthy lifestyle among our future healthcare professionals is essential. Sports not only enhance physical fitness but also cultivate vital skills such as collaboration and leadership."

Additionally, Mrs. Araoye reflected on the recent sponsorship of the Federation of African Student Universities (FASU) Games, which took place last week.

This event served as a platform for students from across the continent to unite, compete, and celebrate their diverse cultures. Participants from countries such as Nigeria, Egypt, Angola, Ghana, Zambia, and Mauritius showcased remarkable team spirit, resilience, and responsibility.

Triangle Magazine Boss Marks 44th Birthday

Chief Executive Officer of Triangle News International, Otunba Olufemi Salako, will celebrate his 44th birthday today, October 8, 2024.

Otunba Salako, who is an award-winning journalist is a trailblazer in the Nigerian media industry, has garnered acclaim both locally and internationally for his contributions to journalism. As the publisher of Triangle News International, he has built a formidable media platform known for its incisive reporting and commitment to journalistic integrity.

According to a statement, under his leadership, Triangle News has become a respected voice in the Nigerian media landscape, known for breaking key stories and setting the pace for investigative journalism.

"Born in Ilaro, Ogun State, Salako's rise in the world of journalism has been marked by dedication, innovation, and a passion for telling the stories that matter. His achievements have made him a reference point in Nigerian journalism, inspiring a new generation of media professionals."

Senior Advocate, Idigbe, Tasks Kekere-Ekun on Judicial Officers' Capacity

Sunday Okobi

A Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), Chief Anthony Idigbe, has urged the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, to enhance the capacity of judicial officers.

He also urged her to evolve measures to attract the best into

the justice delivery system.

Idigbe provide the recommendation in Abuja while inaugurating a solar-powered generating system which he donated to Veritas University, Bwari. The SAN said: "The key issue is for the CJN to work on the people and the process of justice delivery in Nigeria. If she can focus

on that, she will make a significant impact. The emphasis should be on the people, the process."

He said the CJN should firstly work on ways to "retain those that are there, enhance their capacity, and work on how to attract the best," adding: "I think part of the biggest problem in the judiciary is that it is not able to attract the best.

"For the process, there is the need for reform in calendaring, case management and so many other areas. There are some fundamental reforms that need to be considered around the administration of justice generally. Some are constitutional, but some can be done through the reform of the regulation of the profession among others."

Lagos Assembly Suspends Alimosho Council Boss Indefinitely

Segun James

The Lagos State House of Assembly yesterday suspended the Chairman of the Alimosho Local Government Area, Jelili Sulaimon with immediate effect. However, no reason

was given for the suspension.

Although it could not be ascertained if the state Assembly has the power to suspend the chairman without Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's direct order.

Sitting at plenary, the lawmakers resolved that the

Vice Chairman of the council, Mr. Akinpelu Johnson, should take over the running of the affairs of the council.

It further instructed the management of the council, including the manager and treasurer, to recognise the authority of the vice chairman

and accord him all the support to make him work effectively.

The chairman was suspended in a unanimous vote by the lawmakers over an alleged non-compliance, defiance and unyielding attitude to the Legislative House.

Lecturers Ground UNIZIK Medical School over Vice Chancellorship Post

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

The medical school of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, comprising the faculties of Medicine and Basic Clinical Sciences, Nnewi campus, has remained grounded for the 12th day following the withdrawal of services by clinical lecturers, who

are members of Medical and Dental Consultants Association of Nigeria (MDCAN). The medical school is the arm of the institution, charged with the teaching and training of undergraduate students of Medicine, both in theory, in clinics and in theatre.

But for 12 days now, members

of MDCAN have withdrawn their services because of an advert publication by Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, on the notification of the vacancy of the vice chancellorship position, which also listed requirements that excluded medical professors from vying for the position.

On August 2, 2024, the clinical lecturers had written to the acting Vice Chancellor of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Prof. Carol Arinze-Umeobi, to protest against the advertisement for the position of vice chancellor, which they alleged excluded their members from vying.

Nasarawa LG Polls: APC Pegs Chairmanship Nomination Form at N5m

Igbawase Ukumba in Lafia

The All Progressives Congress (APC) has fixed the sales of its nomination form for the chairmanship seats in the forthcoming Nasarawa State Local Government Councils elections at N5 million.

The Nasarawa State

Independent Electoral Commissions (NASIEC) last week rescheduled the state local government councils elections across the 13 LGAs and 147 electoral wards of the state for November 2, 2024.

The Nasarawa State Chairman of the APC, Aliyu Bello, disclosed the party's nomination and

Expression of Interest fee at a stakeholders' meeting of the party in Lafia yesterday.

He added that the fee for the expression of interest for chairmanship aspirants was pegged at N1 million.

Bello said: "Accordingly, the state Executive Committee proposed the sales of forms

as follows: chairmanship - N5 million; Expression of Interest, N1 million; councillorship nomination, N1.5 million, and Expression of Interest for councillor, N400,000.

"Our task in this meeting is to work out the dynamism and modalities for nominating our flag bearers for the chairmanship and councillorship seats.

Group Petitions AGF over Unlawful Prosecution of ACADIP Members

Wale Igbirtade

A civil society group, Human Rights Monitoring Agenda (HURMA), has written to the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, over illegal prosecution of the leader of Academy of Islamic

Propagation (ACADIP), Alhaji Yusuf Adepoju, and six others for alleged cybercrime.

In a letter dated August 6, 2024, and signed by human rights lawyer, Lekan Alabi, he questioned the legal justification for the prosecution of Yusuf Adepoju, Mubarak Adepoju, Tunde Badmus

(aka Uptown), Adalakin Gideon, and Abdul Rasaq Akinola without any investigation by the police.

According to him, the defendants in respect of Charge No. FHC/4421/22 between Federal Republic of Nigeria V. Muhammed Yahaya and six Ors, pending before Justice Deinde Dipeolu of the

Federal High Court, Lagos Division were never showed any petition of allegation of crime before the charge was pressed against them.

He stated that they were never invited by the officers of Nigeria Police Force, Zone 2 Command to make representation about the allegations of crime against them.

UNIPGC Appoints Former Liberian VP, Howard-Taylor, Matron

Onuminya Innocent

The United International Peace and Governance Council (UNIPGC) has appointed the former Liberian Vice President, Jewel Howard-Taylor, as its pioneer matron for African chapter.

According to a source, the official swearing-in ceremony took place at the Jewel Starfish headquarters in Monrovia, Liberia.

She took the oath of office administered by the Global President and Chairman of the Supreme Council of UNIPGC

Africa, Dr. Jonathan Ojadah, in which she pledged to lead, manage resources, and create collaborative value for the organisation.

Ojadah, who also serves as the permanent representative to the United Nations and a

recipient of the US president's Lifetime Achievement Award, praised Howard-Taylor during the ceremony.

He expressed optimism that her leadership would significantly contribute to advance the goals of the UNIPGC in Africa.

Enyimba Draw Champions Zamalek in Confederation Cup Group Stage

Femi Solaja with agency report

A battle of epic proportions is in the offing as Confederation Cup holders and Super Cup winners, Zamalek of Egypt are drawn against Nigeria's

Enyimba in the CAF Confederation Cup group stage.

The draw was made yesterday in Cairo, several former champions, including USM Alger, Zamalek SC, and RS Berkane are involved in the

group stage this year as they gear up for fierce competition.

The Egyptian side Zamalek were also placed in the same group as their compatriot Al Masry and Black Bulls in what promises to be an

exciting Group D.

Zamalek SC are seeking to add another CAF Confederation Cup to their illustrious history but face a tricky group.

Group B features former

champions RS Berkane of Morocco, Mali's Stade Malien, CD Lunda Sul, and South African debutants Stellenbosch.

Some tip Berkane as favourites to advance, but their challengers are determined to disrupt the status quo.

Group C includes former champions USM Alger from Algeria, who will battle ASEC Mimosas, ASC Jaraaf and Orapa United.

With USM Alger's pedigree and ASEC's ambition, this group is expected to deliver high-quality football with ASC Jaraaf and Orapa United proving to be no pushovers.

Group A is arguably the "Group of Death," featuring Simba SC of Tanzania, CS Sfaxien from Tunisia, and Algerian powerhouses CS Constantine.

Angola's Bravos do Maquis complete the group, but the focus will be on the heavyweight clashes among Simba, Sfaxien, and CS Constantine, all of whom have serious continental credentials.

The group stage kicks off in November, setting the stage for some of Africa's biggest clubs to chase TotalEnergies CAF Confederation Cup glory.

GROUP STAGE

- A: Simba SC, CS Sfaxien, CS Constantine, FC Bravos do Maquis
- B: RS Berkane, Stade Malien, Stellenbosch, CD Lunda Sul
- C: USM Alger, ASEC Mimosas, ASC Jaraaf, Orapa United
- D: Zamalek SC, Al Masry, Enyimba, Black Bulls.



Leicester City midfielder, Wilfred Ndidi (left) is one of the Nigerian players whose flight to Uyo to join the Super Eagles camp was cancelled yesterday. He's due to fly out to the Akwa Ibom capital city this morning

Flight Hitches Delay Ndidi, Tanimu, Ogunmodede in Lagos

●Libyan team in disarray ahead of double header clashes with Super Eagles

Super Eagles call-ups Wilfred Ndidi and Benjamin Tanimu failed to hit the team's training camp in Uyo yesterday after their local flight out of Lagos was cancelled at the last minute.

It was also learnt that Super Eagles Assistant Coach, Daniel Ogunmodede, was also affected by this cancellation.

According to ScoreNigeria.com.ng, the Ibor Air flight was originally scheduled to take off by 3pm before it was delayed severally and eventually cancelled.

The airline later announced that the new departure of this flight to Uyo is now 6.30am this Tuesday

AFCON 2025 QUALIFIERS

morning.

The Super Eagles camp opened yesterday in Uyo ahead of the double header 2025 AFCON qualifier against Libya's Mediterranean Knights this Friday in the Akwa Ibom State capital and the reverse fixture away on Tuesday October 15 in the former Muammar Gaddafi-led country.

Meanwhile, with barely three days to the back-to-back AFCON 2025 qualifiers

internal strife has crept into the camp of Libya as the new coach brought in at the last minute is find-

ing it difficult to raise a formidable team for the two rounds of matches.

A Libyan publication, Libya News 24noted yesterday that part of the headache of the Mediterranean Knights' coach, Nasser Al-Hadhiri, is that some of the invited players have refused to honour the call, making things difficult for the coach to put up a good squad for match-day three and four fixtures against Nigeria.

The situation has led to big pressure from the fans on the coach. Libya are at the bottom of the standings

after losing their first two matches.

Coach Al-Hadhiri confirmed that three players from Al-Ahly Tripoli refused call-up to the national team. They include; Hamdou El-Houni, Sand Al-Warfali, and Mohamed Al-Munir.

Their absence has increased the pressure on the coach who is trying to manage the crisis of the boycotting players, the injured ones amid widespread public criticism.

The coach also pointed out that the team suffers from a significant lack of physical preparation, explaining: "We have not yet reached the required readiness to face a strong opponent the size of Nigeria."

CAS Explains Why Pogba's Dope Ban Was Reduced

Paul Pogba's doping ban was reduced after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) accepted the Juventus midfielder's argument that his ingestion of a banned substance "was not intentional".

CAS, who cut the ban from four years to 18 months, added that the France international "should have paid a greater care in the circumstances".

The 31-year-old was suspended by Italy's national anti-doping tribunal (NADO) in February after a drugs test found elevated levels of testosterone - a hormone that increases endurance - in his system.

Pogba appealed against the ruling to CAS, who "confirmed the ADRV (anti-doping rule violation) but reduced the sanction" to 18 months, starting from 11 September 2023.

Sources close to Pogba told BBC Sport last week he can resume training in January and will be eligible to play again from March.

The former Manchester United player argued that his offence "was not intentional and was the result of erroneously taking a supplement prescribed to him by a medical doctor in Florida".

Pogba did not "seek a determina-



Paul Pogba...relieved as his dope ban reduced to 18 months by CAS.

tion of no fault or negligence" but, instead wanted his ban reduced to 12 months, although NADO believed the four-year punishment should have stood because "the player's recklessness was serious".

The CAS panel "partially upheld the appeal" but "determined, however, that Mr Pogba was not without fault and that, as a professional football player, he should have paid a greater care in the circumstances."

BetKing Supports Nigerian Football with Ikorodu City FC Sponsorship in NPFL

Despite a challenging start to the 2024/2025 Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) season, Ikorodu City FC remains committed in their pursuit of excellence, bolstered by the continued support of their major sponsor, BetKing.

The Lagos-based club, newly promoted to the NPFL, has faced tough opponents, including Kano Pillars, Enugu Rangers, and Nasarawa United, recording losses in these encounters.

However, BetKing's commitment to the club and Nigerian football development remains resolute.

Since the inception of their partnership in 2023, BetKing has played an instrumental role in the growth of Ikorodu City FC. The sports betting giant's support goes beyond financial backing, providing the resources necessary to elevate the team's performance on and off the field. This enduring sponsorship is a key part of BetKing's vision to empower local talent and contribute to the broader Nigerian sports ecosystem.

Ikorodu City FC's remarkable

promotion to the NPFL this year is proof to the dedication and hard work of the team, coupled with the support from BetKing. Despite the early-season setbacks, BetKing continues to believe in the potential of the "Oga Boys" and remains committed to their long-term success.

Speaking on the continued sponsorship, BetKing's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, KingMakers, Gossy Ukanwoke, expressed his optimism about the future of Ikorodu City FC and reaffirmed the company's dedication to supporting grassroots football.

"At BetKing, we believe that every great team has its ups and downs, and Ikorodu City FC's journey is no different. We are proud of the progress they've made, and despite their current challenges, we stand firmly with them.

"Our partnership is built on a shared vision of growth and success, and we remain committed to helping Ikorodu City FC reach new heights in Nigerian football," observed the BetKing Chief Executive.

Betsy Obaseki Dreams Participation of European Teams in Future BOWFT

After two Benin Republic teams debuted as the first foreigners in the 2024 edition of the Betsy Obaseki Women's Football Tournament in Benin City, Initiator of the competition, Mrs Betsy Obaseki is looking forward to European teams' presence in future editions.

The Edo State First Lady said during a media briefing at the Government House in Benin City to herald the fourth edition of the tournament that her vision was to see a European women's club gracing the tournament in the nearest future.

Agile and Espor of Benin Republic were the two additions to this year's tournament, giving it an international flavor.

"When we started this competition, it was just with four teams. Today, it has grown to 14 teams. It was also our intention for it to become an international competition but didn't know it will

come so soon with the involvement of two teams from Benin Republic. We are therefore looking forward to the involvement of European teams in this our tournament," observed an obviously excited Mrs Obaseki.

The Edo State First Lady stressed further that it was part of her vision for the tournament to continue to improve than previous editions that informed the current increase on the winners prize money on offer from the N7million paid out last year to the N10million for the winner of the 2024 edition.

While giving assurances that the competition will not end with her husband ending his tenure as Edo State governor in November, Mrs. Obaseki hinted that private sector partnership will continue to drive the existence of the tournament.

Apart from a Betsy Obaseki Foundation put in place, a sports marketing company, Nilayo Sports Management Limited, has been engaged as the official marketer of the competition going forward.

In some of the matches played yesterday, Bayelsa Queens defeated Brave-Heart FC 6-0 while Heartland Queens beat Fortress Ladies 3-0.

Espoir FC of Benin Republic defeated Naija Ratels of Abuja 1-0.

Matches in the 2024 edition will continue today with Bayelsa Queens battling Naija Ratels while Brave-Hearts and Espoir FC will tango for the maximum points on offer. Nasarawa Amazons will engage Confluence Queens. Heartland Queens have a date with Delta Queens while Fortress Ladies and Aigles Royal will battle in the last game of Match-day 2 of the BOWFT.



Mrs Betsy Obaseki... speaking at the briefing to herald the 2024 edition of the BOWFT preseason tournament in Benin City yesterday

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MISSILE
CLO to President Tinubu
"The failure of the state to address the worsening living conditions of Nigerians led to the #EndBadGovernance protests and the response of the President Tinubu in his Independence day broadcast was the promise to give buses to NANS, and the NLC as well as plan for a 30-day national youth conference. The CLO sees this deliberate diversion from reality"
-CLO President, Igho Akeregha, advises Tinubu to end hunger, poverty in the country.

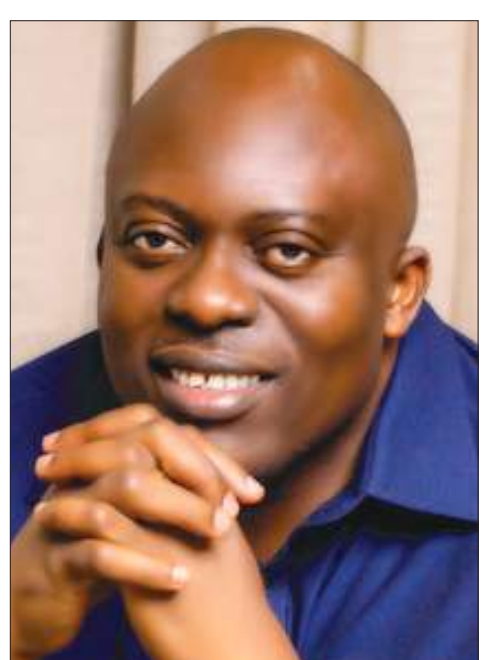
TUESDAY WITH REUBEN ABATI

abati1990@gmail.com



Fire And The Ballot Revolution in Rivers State

There is a fire and ballot revolution in Rivers state and the main victim that I can see for now in the burning fire is Nyesom Wike, former Governor of Rivers State, incumbent Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) who is on record has having boasted garrulously that if anybody, a politician from any other part of the country thinks that he or she can support Governor Sim Fubara, his successor, to take the political structure away from him, he, Wike would put fire in that person's state. Wike is also on record as having said that there is no politician in the country today that is bigger than him. Wike was so strong a week ago that when he was hosted by a group of Ijaws, supposedly Fubara's kinsmen, he even repeated his claim that he was effectively in charge of Rivers State. At that occasion, Seyi Makinde, Governor of Oyo State begged Wike not to bring fire to his own state. Heineken Lokpobiri, Minister of State for Petroleum publicly confessed that Wike is indeed the Godfather of Niger Delta politics. Wike may never have heard of Percy Shelley's Ozymandias. But what has happened in our reckoning on October 5, with the conduct of the local Government elections in Rivers State is better described as Wike's Ozymandias moment. It was a moment when Sim Fubara who was brought to power, by Wike as Wike and his allies claim, and who has suffered for so long in their hands decided that enough was enough and that Wike's dictatorial hold over Rivers State must end. On Saturday, October 5, Fubara the godson, decided that it was time he became the father of the father, and produced his own sons. It was the moment he decided that his own Godfather must be beheaded, so that the son could become the man. He proved the point that Godfathers do not live forever, particularly in Nigerian politics, and that the answer to Godfatherism is political patricide, given the circumstances.



Governor Sim Fubara

It will be recalled that Minister Nyesom Wike has never hidden the fact that he made Sim Fubara Governor of Rivers State on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Fubara was indeed Wike's Chief Accountant (2020 - 2022). Wike decided that Fubara would be his preferred successor. So, he bought the form for his nomination. He told the people of Rivers State that Fubara would be their next Governor. He bankrolled the campaign so he claims. He has told us that he did everything possible to make Fubara the Governor. And that came to pass. And that was where the problem began. It was not enough that Wike had been rewarded with a Ministerial appointment by President Bola Tinubu of the rival, now ruling party, the All -Progressives Congress (APC) in compensation for Wike's treachery against his own party, the PDP, we were faced with a curious situation whereby Wike decided that he would remain in control of governance in Rivers State. He was shameless in defending the amphibian nature of his politics, a man who betrayed his party at the national level insisting that he would also hold on to how politics is played in his home state. His critics alleged that he chose all the political appointees in Fubara's administration with the exception of maybe one or two. Members of the House of Assembly were majority Wike's men. Key commissioners in the administration treated the Governor shabbily because they reported directly to the Godfather in Abuja. Fubara's wife was not even allowed to attend any event without Wike's approval. Fubara himself was under close watch. He was a captive in the position that he occupied, a prisoner of the Godfather's goodwill. But there is a limit to which some people can be pushed to the wall. In May 2024, a frustrated, humiliated Governor Fubara felt compelled to speak up. He said "The Jungle Has Matured."

What he meant then was that he was tired of the former Governor, wearing the toga of the Godfather riding roughshod over him, breathing down his neck. He threatened to set up a panel of

inquiry to investigate the past administration. He sacked or frustrated out of his government Wike's acolytes who spied on him and treated him as if he did not matter. He faced the House of Assembly members head-long and began to stare them down. His larynx suddenly opened up and he began to talk. He transformed from the timid Godson who begged for peace to the Godson who had developed fangs. He had the support of the elders and youths of the community who felt Wike should allow Fubara to have his turn as Governor. He wanted to suspend local government chairmen. He was told he could not do it. The people of Rivers had now become divided, pro-Wike, pro-Fubara, both parties threatening fire and brimstone. The majority stood by Fubara. In December 2023, Fubara sacked local government chairmen who served under Wike. He also removed the Chairman of the Supreme Council of Traditional Rulers, another Wike ally. He threatened to demolish both the Rivers State House of Assembly and the state legislative quarters.

On October 5, 2024 the jungle had finally matured. It was the day when local council elections were held in 23 local councils of Rivers State. Before the election, Wike's loyalists in the PDP and the APC staged a protest on the streets. The PDP in Rivers State, the sitting Governor's own party even went ahead to boycott the elections. Boycott has never been a potent political weapon. It may raise questions of legitimacy after the fact but the election would have been won and lost. There were court cases, with the Rivers State High Court and the Federal High Court giving conflicting judgments. In the end, Governor Fubara insisted that the elections would proceed as scheduled on the strength of a July 11, 2024 Supreme Court ruling that only democratically elected persons could be Chairpersons of Local Councils in Nigeria, the Rivers High Court ruling, Section 197 of the 1999 Constitution which creates State Independent Electoral Commissions and Section 59 of the Rivers State Electoral Commission Law No. 2 of 2018. Pro-Wike objectors to the election relied on a Federal High Court ruling which ordered that even the Police must not provide security during the elections. There were skirmishes about the police carting away election materials and the Governor having to visit the headquarters of the RSIEC, as the state electoral body is known, to challenge the police. Nonetheless, the Governor insisted that the elections will take place.

And so it was, that on Saturday October 5, in 23 local governments, 6, 866 polling units in 319 wards in Rivers State, local government elections were conducted, superintended by Justice Adolphus

Enebeli (rtd), and his staff at RSIEC, with 18 political parties out of 19, participating. The people of Rivers State turned out in large numbers. They defied the rain. And they voted in a process witnessed by journalists, observers, members of the Nigerian Bar Association and party agents. In the end, Justice Enebeli (rtd) declared the Action Peoples Party (APP), Fubara's proxy party, since his own PDP boycotted the elections having been hijacked by Wike, as winner in 22 LGAs and 314 councillorship positions. Etche Local Government where results had been suspended was finally declared for the Action Alliance. The remaining councillorship seats were won by the APC (in Ward 3), the Social Democratic Party, the Boot Party and the Young People's Party (YPP). Without much ado, the newly elected Chairmen were quickly sworn in and given their certificates of return on Sunday, October 6 at a Government House ceremony where Governor Fubara proclaimed that desperate situations require desperate measures.

Truly, the situation in Rivers last Saturday was a desperate one. For me, the following are the quick takeaways. One, Fubara, the godson had become the father. This is in line with an aspect of the wisdom of Silenus which says that ultimately the son becomes the father in the process of Being-ness. Charles Kettering once said that "Every father should remember one day his son will follow his example, not his advice." Whatever advice Wike may have given Fubara, what we witnessed on Saturday in Rivers state was a case of Fubara following Wike's example. In 2016, one of the first things Wike did upon the assumption of office as Governor was to sack some of the Local Government Caretaker Committee Chairmen appointed by Governor Rotimi Amaechi, his predecessor. Wike would soon elect his own Local council Chairmen. And he seized control of the political structure in Rivers State. He beheaded his own Godfather. The same destiny has now caught up with him. Nemesis. Hubris. What a man sows he reaps. Karma. What goes around comes around. Fubara is now the new Godfather in Rivers politics and he sounded so as he admonished the new local council Chairmen on Sunday to serve the people and not their stomachs.

Two, Wike had promised to put fire in other people's states should they interfere in the politics of Rivers State. The fire that he talked about has been lit in his own very backyard. Should he be allowed to put fire in Rivers State? The biggest fear in Rivers today is the fear of violence and the breakdown of law and order. On election day, there was violence in Ogunabali area of Port Harcourt where voters were attacked and election materials were destroyed. In Ward 19, Elekahia, policemen were said to have invaded the polling unit and obstructed the voting process. On Monday, that is yesterday, after the police announced that they had unsealed the local council secretariats, hoodlums attacked the local councils in Ikwerre, Emohua, Ahoada East and Eleme and set them on fire. Elsewhere, anti-Fubara groups tried to prevent the local government chairmen from taking office. Each one of those locations must be treated as crime scenes. The police may have unsealed the secretariats but their role in the Rivers crisis is deplorable. The Nigeria Police Force has a constitutional role under Sections 214 - 216 of the 1999 Constitution, and Section 4 of the Police Act to protect lives and property. It is one of those strange things in Nigeria's democratic process that a court of law would give an order that the Police must not provide security in any part of Nigeria and the police hierarchy would claim it is bound by that order, rather than challenge it immediately. The elections in Rivers took place without the police providing security. It is unfortunate that the Nigeria Police unwittingly exposed its own creeping irrelevance in election matters. The people of Rivers did not need 35, 000 policemen deployed in the Edo Gubernatorial elections last month. When the people are determined, they will safeguard the peace and make their own choices. President Tinubu after the fact, and fire that has erupted in Rivers State

has now ordered the police to provide security in that state. Must the President wait for the blow-out before intervening?

Three, the President must go a step further. He must call the main gladiators in Rivers state to order. He must put a stop to the money business whereby Wike and his allies come to see him in the morning, and Fubara sneaks in later in the day, both parties carrying tales about who is right and who is wrong. Before the burning of local council headquarters began in Rivers, President Goodluck Jonathan had warned that the desperate situation in Rivers should be handled with caution. He was right. It was precisely an election and the craziness of the political actors that set the Western Region on fire in 1965. Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa thought it was a problem of the Yoruba people, so Awolowo should worry about it. The Western Region soon became the "Wild Wild West", and the fires that time consumed not just the Western region but the entire country and Nigeria's democracy at its infancy. Tinubu says he is on a working vacation abroad, even when such an oxymoron as a working vacation is most strange. We need him to call Fubara and make it clear that he needs to put Rivers in order, otherwise he risks the possibility of a state of emergency being declared in that state. As for Wike, he must be told eyeball to eyeball that if there is no peace in Rivers, he will lose his Ministerial position in the proposed cabinet reshuffle. Fubara and his allies have made it clear that Wike is not so much of a political asset to Tinubu after all. He is not bound to be the man that will deliver Rivers state to Tinubu in 2027. The people of Rivers State have shown that they are done with him. It remains for Wike to learn from Sir Peter Odili, and Mr. Rotimi Amaechi, former Rivers Governors who have chosen peace by staying in a position of respect and dignity.

Four, the judiciary showed up wrongly in the Rivers election. Can you imagine a court of law forbidding the security agencies from carrying out their constitutional duties to provide security? This is against the spirit and letter of the Constitution. Can you imagine courts of equal and co-ordinate jurisdiction issuing conflicting orders, allowing political actors to shop for forum from Port Harcourt to Abuja? There is a new sheriff in the judiciary who has promised to put an end to such conduct. We urge Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, CJN, to begin with the example of Rivers State. The various gladiators have announced that the courts will be their next battle ground. His Lordship must call the judex to order and put a stop to the continued denigration of the role of the judiciary in Nigeria's electoral processes.

Five, something has to be done about the local council election process, which in virtually every state simply ends up producing the ruling party in the state or the proxy party of the Governor as the victor. The Governors have seized control of the local government process. In the last week of September in Anambra State, the ruling All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) was declared winner by the ANSIEC in the state's 21 local government councils and 326 wards. In Rivers, the Governor's proxy party, the APP took 22 out of 23 local councils and 314 wards out of 319. They "donated" just one local council to another party - the Action Alliance. We witnessed the same scenario in Akwa Ibom state over the weekend where the ruling PDP took 30 councils out of 31. One council, Essien Udim was "donated" to the APC. Senator Godswill Akpabio comes from that local government! The Governor had to spare Essien Udim in recognition of Akpabio's political relevance. Local council elections were also held in Benue on Saturday, October 5. The Governor of Benue state is a Catholic priest in politics, Fr. Hyacinth Alia. His party followed the familiar pattern winning all 23 Chairmanship positions and all 276 councillorship seats. We need to rethink, review and reconsider our local council/state election system that serves only the interest of the incumbent Governor.