

FG still paying electricity subsidy despite Band A tariff hike —Minister

● **to pay N1.8trn for 2024**

AGENCY REPORT

The Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu, on Thursday said the Federal Government is still paying subsidy on electricity despite the recent hike in tariff paid by Band A customers said to be about 1.5

million of the total 12 million consumers in the sector.

The minister, who was a guest on Channels Television's Politics Today programme, said the government has about N1.8trn to pay in electricity subsidy for 2024.

Adelabu insisted that the

Electricity Act, 2023 made provisions for the review of tariff twice a year.

Channels TV reports that contrary to claim by human rights lawyer, Femi Falana, that the increase in tariff paid by Band A consumers was illegal, Adelabu said, "Review of tariff

is actually legal once it is within the exclusive responsibility of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC). The Act actually provides for review twice in a year, every six months."

On claims in some quarters that the Federal Government

had removed subsidy on electricity in 2022, Adelabu cited rising dollar, soaring gas price, the cost of power plant, transmission and distribution infrastructure, amongst others in the last two years.

"If we have been paying the tariff at the same level in the last

two years, it logically means that someone has been paying the burden of all these increases," he stated.

"As it is today, looking at a total production, transmission

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...that the people may know

Tinubu, Buhari, Obi, others mourn passing of ex-Abia gov, Ogbonnaya Onu

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Edo deepens telemedicine to drive quality healthcare delivery

● **launches programme in Esan West council**

JENNIFER OSADOH

The Edo State Government on Thursday launched telemedicine programme in Central Clinic, Ukpenu in Esan West Local Government Area of the state, with the state governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, assuring that the deployment of telemedicine programmes across Primary Healthcare Centres in the state would ensure delivery of quality healthcare to Edo people.

At the occasion which was attended by the Edo State First Lady,

Dr. Betsy Obaseki; Commissioner for Health, Dr. Samuel Alli; Local Government Chairmen from Edo Central Senatorial District; Heads of Local Government Administration (HOLGA) in the district, market women associations, amongst others, Obaseki said the telemedicine programme in the state is a dream come true for his administration, noting that the government met a broken healthcare system when it came into office in 2016.

The governor noted that his administration focused on two ma-

jor areas, namely, education and healthcare system, to restore the dignity of the people.

"This administration has changed the narrative in the education sector and now we are doing the same with the healthcare system. Now our focus is on the healthcare system focusing on Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC) across the state," Obaseki said.

"We are building clinics in different communities. We focused on refurbishing at least 200

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The Nigerian Observer

Space for Sale

Experts emphasise regular checkups amid growing NCDs burden ● *warn of the dangers of self-medication*

JENNIFER OSADOH

Amid a rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) leading to sudden and untimely deaths, experts in the medical and health sector have once again emphasised the crucial role of regular health checks in maintaining well-being and preventing serious health issues.

The experts also frowned at the culture of self-medication, where many individuals often rely on self-prescribed treatments without consulting healthcare professionals.

The said contrary to popular notions, not all stomach pains are symptoms of ulcer, loss of appetite is not necessarily caused by worms, and not every rise in body temperature, headache or feverish conditions are caused by malaria, and so individuals

should seek proper medical examination before commencing treatment.

They further said the practice of self-medication, while sometimes driven by convenience and affordability, poses significant risks to individual health and public well-being.

Research shows that Nigeria, like other sub-Saharan African countries, is undergoing an epidemiological transition with a rising burden of NCDs.

Adelakun Odunuyemi, Taslima Rahman & Khurshid Alam, in a 2023 article 'Economic burden of non-communicable diseases on households in Nigeria: evidence from the Nigeria living standard survey 2018-19', noted that nearly 30 per cent of all deaths in Nigeria are due to NCDs.

"The risk of premature death from cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), cancers, respiratory

diseases, and diabetes among Nigeria's 30 to 69-year-olds is 22%," the scholars said.

This is why experts say health check-ups should not be just for when people feel unwell but are essential for early detection of potential health problems, allowing for timely intervention and treatment, especially in today's fast-paced society where busy schedules and hectic lifestyles are the norm.

"We are having more people come down with those non-communicable diseases. These are a group of diseases that are not really spread from person to person. And what are the common ones we are talking about? Hypertension and diabetes, and then, cancers," said the Resident Doctor in the Department of Internal Medicine, University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), Dr. Samson Oshomoh.

"Now these diseases are increasing in number and many of them are usually silent, especially in the early stages, and the advantage of medical checkup is to be able to pick them up at the early stage and to be able to intervene and prevent what we call complications.

"By the time they are getting into their late stages, which are the stages where you have complications, you will be able to do next to nothing about it because the damage has already been done over the years," he said in an interview with The Nigerian Observer.

Dr. Oshomoh said there are individuals who have the inherent risk of having such diseases, like those who have had family history of hypertension, diabetes, heart problems, kidney diseases and the rest, as well as others who, though not having

family history, are inherent risk in themselves as in the case of obesity, those who live sedentary lives, those that are not exercising regularly, and so on.

"I keep saying no-communicable diseases because these are the ones that barely have any symptoms. If you have malaria, you have HIV/ AIDS, you have some infectious diseases, they usually present with symptoms but hypertension, for example, is a silent killer. So until you check your BP, you may not know when it's high. The first time the person will be hearing that he or she has high blood pressure is when he or she has had a stroke which is already a complication and could have been prevented by doing regular checks and starting your medications early enough," he said.

Also speaking recently during the commemoration of the 2024 World Health Day, the Chief Medical Director, Asaba Specialist Hospital, Delta State, Dr Peace Ighosewe, sensitized the people on the importance of healthy habits and reasons why health should be prioritized.

Dr Ighosewe urged people

to engage in regular physical exercise, eat a balanced diet, and go for routine medical checkups which will help to quickly detect any health issues on time so that early treatment can commence.

On the prevalent culture of self-medication, the experts said it often stems from limited access to healthcare facilities, high healthcare costs, lack of health insurance coverage leading individuals to seek cheaper alternatives, lack of health education and misinformation about medications and their proper use, as well as beliefs and reliance on family or community advice.

But this has led to a lot of abuse, with a major underlying danger being antibiotics resistance, said Dr. Oshomoh.

"If you just abuse those antibiotics, when you now have a condition that requires particular antibiotics, because the organism has been exposed to it repeatedly, the organism now develops what we call resistance. The organism is able to resist antibiotics even if you give it at the right dose because the organism, being a living thing, has some level of intelligence and develops resistance.



80TH BIRTHDAY THANKSGIVING:

L-R: Chieftain of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), High Chief Tom Ikimi; Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki; representative of Delta State Governor and Deputy Governor, Monday Onyeme, and former Governor of Delta State, James Ibori, during the 80th birthday thanksgiving service of High Chief Tom Ikimi, in Benin City.

Edo deepens telemedicine to drive quality...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

PHCs and equipped them with a solar power system. About 50 PHCs have Internet, solar, water, admission space for male and females. They are fenced and have secured facilities and are ready to provide medical services for Edo people," he said.

The governor acknowledged the shortage of doctors and nurses in the state, noting that his administration is working to correct the challenges faced with the establishment of one of the best training schools in the state to groom health workers.

"The truth is that we don't have enough doctors. However, we have vowed that we can train nurses and community health workers. Today, we have one of the best nursing schools in Benin City, training nurses. The first set of nursing graduates from the school will leave

school in September this year," Obaseki said.

"It is not only nurses you meet in Hospital or PHC; you have other categories of workers like community health workers, pharmacy assistants, laboratory assistants, among others. The school established by Samuel Ogbemudia to train this set of people was run down. We are now revamping the Edo State School of Medical Health Technology, to help train the people that will work in our hospital and PHCs across the state.

"In the last one year, we have been working with my local government chairmen and have connected every local government area in the state with fibre optic internet infrastructure," he said.

Obaseki pointed out that healthcare is very expensive, and so to address the problem of cost, his administration introduced

the Edo State Health Insurance Scheme. He appealed to the citizens to embrace the scheme.

"The one we are doing here today comes to about N17,800 a year. It gives you access to this clinic and other offerings.

"Each PHC now has their own electronic records. Your information will be readily available for use by doctors. It can be used to treat or advise patients as the case may be. We buy medicine in bulk. You can always come to our PHCs for medication. We have drugs and they are original.

"I am here today to join you to bring telemedicine to Edo Central Senatorial District. This is the first in Edo Central. We will open more centres. I am appealing to you to enroll in the health insurance scheme as health is wealth. With this telemedicine programme, you will get the best quality care from the best doctors in the

world," he said.

The Commissioner for Health, Dr. Samuel Alli, said telemedicine is intended to bridge the gap between rural and urban healthcare systems as the programme is creating access to professionals providing general and specialized healthcare services.

He urged market women and other Edo citizens to embrace Edo Health Insurance Scheme as it will enable them access quality healthcare Services.

"We started telemedicine in Oredo in Edo South, now we are in Ukpenu in Esan West. It will soon go round the State," he said.

The President of Esan Peoples Congress in America (EPC), Dr. Joseph Abbulimen, said the governor has made the dream of Esan people come true with the provision of telemedicine in Esan West Local Government Area.

FG still paying electricity subsidy...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

and distribution cost, the Nigerian Government is bearing 67% percent of that cost before the increase in tariff for Band A customers. But when you look at generation cost, the Nigerian Government is paying 90% but in terms of total subsidy, it is about 67% of subsidy on the tariff.

"Last year, it was about N720bn which was not fully funded, we have about N305bn carried into this year. If we retain tariff at the current level, the Nigerian Government will be needing about N2.9trn to subsidise electricity but with the increase for Band A customers, we are going to have a reduction of about N1.1trn. So, we are looking at about N1.8trn in subsidy," he further explained.

On April 3, 2024, NERC raised electricity tariff for customers enjoying 20 hours power supply daily. Customers in this category are said to be under the Band A classification. The increase will see the customers paying N225 kilowatt per hour from the current N66, a development that has been heavily criticised by many Nigerians, considering the immediacy of the tariff hike and the current hardship in the land.

However, Adelabu said, "The fact that the tariff for Band A, which is 15% of the total consumers will increase by over 200%, does not necessarily translate into 200% increase in their electricity bill if power is properly managed in terms of consumption."

The minister assured Band A customers of value for their money. He also assured Nigerians that consumers on other bands won't be shortchanged by

distribution companies as the regulators won't hesitate to wield their big stick on any of such discos.

He also said the government has shifted its attention on discos inefficiently ran and won't hold back in taking the appropriate steps in the interest of consumers.

Adelabu said by cutting down the inefficiencies of some operators in the sector, couple with the gains by the naira against the dollar in the last few weeks, tariff paid by Nigerians should moderate positively.

"The tariff is flexible and I can tell you that even if naira gains more and the exchange rate comes down below N1,000, it must positively affect the tariff and the tariff even for the Band A will come to down below the N225 kilowatt per hour that we are currently charging," he said.

The minister further said the government has been working on ramping up power generation from about 4,000 megawatts to 6,000 megawatts in the next six months. He said 25% of Nigeria's power generation is from hydroelectric power while the remaining 75% is from gas plants.

The minister said "the gas that is supposed to be the raw material has not been coming in adequate proportion" but the government has been working with electricity generation companies to ramp up power generated for the benefit of Nigerians.

He said the President Bola Tinubu administration plans to decentralise power generation across states of the federation and strengthen transmission and distribution of the energy to power Nigeria's industrial transformation.

NEWS

OPEC sees robust fuel use amid global economic growth prospects

NAOMI EWANSIHA

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has

maintained its projection for strong global oil demand in 2024, anticipating a rise of 2.25 million barrels per day (bpd) this year and a further increase

of 1.85 million bpd in 2025.

The projection, contained in a monthly report released by OPEC on Thursday, remains unchanged from the previous month's report.

Despite acknowledging potential downside risks, OPEC expressed optimism regarding the possibility of stronger-than-expected global economic growth in 2024, which could provide additional momentum to oil prices.

This comes as oil prices have surged above \$90 a barrel in 2024 due to tightened supply and ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

OPEC and its allies, collectively known as OPEC+, recently agreed to extend oil output cuts until the end of June, aiming to support oil prices amid supply constraints.

However, the group will convene in June to assess whether further output adjustments are necessary.

According to the report, OPEC's oil production remained steady in March, reaching 26.60 million bpd, despite the implementation of voluntary output cuts by OPEC+ members since January.

"The robust oil demand outlook for the summer months warrants careful market monitoring, amid ongoing uncertainties, to ensure a sound and sustainable market balance," according to the OPEC.

Sanwo-Olu visits site of Dosunmu fire, orders integrity test on standing structures

CHRIS ONUOHA

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, on Thursday ordered full assessment of buildings in Dosunmu and adjoining areas on the Lagos Island, following the fire disaster that engulfed the market on Tuesday.

Two days after the fire broke, the site remains an active disaster zone, with first responders from the Lagos State Government still battling isolated inferno in some of the affected buildings on the midday of Thursday.

At least, 14 multi-storey buildings were completely razed to rubble in the incident allegedly caused by reckless handling of flammable materials by some traders.

Sanwo-Olu, in company of top Government officials, visited the fire site to assess the situation and met with victims.

Although the Governor had directed full investigation into the immediate cause of the fire; he said unapproved and failed structures in the market area will be pulled down.

Arguments, however, ensued between the traders and some residents over the cause of the incident.

Some traders were said to be

dealing in illegal sale of combustible liquids, which were stored in warehouses attached to the affected buildings. Some believe the fire was an act of sabotage allegedly arising from the rivalry between some of the traders.

Sanwo-Olu said the Government would come hard on structures and properties not conforming to the Government's guidelines across markets. The Governor directed Dosunmu market to remain shut until the full report of the incident is ready.

Sanwo-Olu decried conversion of residential buildings to warehouses without approval from the Government, noting that preliminary report indicted owners of buildings in the market.

The Governor was taken aback by the reckless storage of combustible materials in the market buildings despite extended warnings and advocacy by the State Government on safe way to store such items in harsh weather.

Sanwo-Olu said the market fire was preventable, but noted that "gross carelessness" in storage of the flammable materials supported the spread of the fire, which completely destroyed goods and assets worth millions.

NACCIMA boss urges Nigerians to continue working for nation's peace, prosperity

RUTH ISIGBE

The President of the Nigeria Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), Dele Oye Esq., has urged Nigerians not to lose hope in the country but continue working towards peace and prosperity of the nation.

Oye made the call in his message in celebration of Eid-el-Fitr after the successful completion of the Ramadan fast.

"As the crescent moon is sighted and we mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan, it is with a heart full of gratitude and joy that I extend my warmest Eid Mubarak to you, your families, and loved ones," Oye said.

"This auspicious occasion of Eid al-Fitr is not only a time for celebration but also a moment to reflect on the lessons of devotion, compassion, and solidarity

that we have embraced during Ramadan. It is a time to carry forward the spirit of generosity and togetherness into every facet of our lives."

Oye urged all members of NACCIMA to "use this time to renew our commitment to fostering economic growth and sustainable development within our country."

"Our unity and collaborative efforts are the driving force that propels our nation forward, and I am confident that together, we will continue to achieve remarkable milestones," the NACCIMA boss said.

"To every Nigerian, whether at home or abroad, Eid al-Fitr is a reminder of our shared values and the strength found in our diversity. It is a call to continue working towards the peace and prosperity of our great nation, ensuring that the bonds of community and mutual respect remain unshakable."



LESSER HAJJ:

L-R: Former Speaker Lagos state House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Adeyemi Ikuforiji; husband to the Deputy Governor of Ogun state, Otunba Bode Oyedele; His Excellency Alhaji Dauda Lawal, Executive Governor of Zamfara state; Senator Musiliu Obanikoro; Member House of Representatives Ekiti/Irepodun/Isin/Oke-Ero Federal Constituency, Hon. Rahim Olawuyi; Chief whip Ogun state House of Assembly, Hon. Omolola Bakare and Chairman Agege local government, Lagos, Chief Ganiyu Egunjobi, shortly before boarding Airpeace flight to Nigeria, after performing lesser hajj from Jeddah to Kano, and Lagos, yesterday.

Lagos-Calabar Highway: No damage to Landmark, no job losses, Umahi assures

Minister of Works, Dave Umahi, says that no permanent structure nor jobs will be lost in Landmark Beach and resort in the construction of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway.

Speaking in an interview with ARISE NEWS on Thursday, Umahi said with the design of the coastal highway project, only 15 meters of the shoreline and a few shanties in that line will be removed, assuring that all other facilities in the business hub will be intact.

"I went to see Landmark yesterday (Wednesday). I had to tour that shoreline and he is not the only one that is involved. We had a very good chat. I went there to understand something. His Excellency said that 12,000 jobs will be lost and I told Landmark that by what we are doing, no jobs will be lost.

"What could be lost is the shoreline and the people that go to play at the shoreline, but his facilities are all intact because we reduced the corridor to 15 meters and we saw that there are no permanent structures other than a few shanties along that shoreline that are affected.

So, I told him that no job

is lost and he agreed with me because tackling this council without knowledge is just heating up the system. All his structures are all intact and no single one of them is to be demolished."

Umahi also said that even though by the ruling of the Supreme Court, the land on which Landmark is running the business belongs to the Federal Government, by actions of magnanimity, the construction of the 700km Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway will only require 15 meters of the shoreline from the tourism destination, which is irrevocable.

He also called on the public to disregard any false information pointing to people losing their jobs as a result of the construction.

"I am told by Eko Atlantic that even where Landmark is situated belongs to them but that is not supposed to be my business, and who owns the land is not supposed to be my problem but by the recent Supreme Court judgement, the act about the waterways, gave the right of the ownership of the land to Federal Government; 250 meters from the point of the shoreline to Federal Government which means

the land belongs to the Federal Government.

"But we are interested here because we are talking about investment and we are happy with investment, and so we are taking 15 meters of that shoreline and it is irrevocable. We have been magnanimous by reducing the corridors to 15 meters just to ensure that not only his properties but the properties of the other people along that shoreline are secured. They have dished out wrong information that jobs will be lost and properties damaged but that is wrong."

Meanwhile, speaking on the Third Mainland Bridge, he said plans for its rehabilitation exemplify a proactive approach towards addressing aging infrastructure concerns, citing that most of the bridges in the country were constructed over 50 years ago.

"I am a Nigerian and I don't believe in saying these people are for me and all, even when I was governor, that was my position. The Third Mainland Bridge job was awarded by the previous administration and was awarded to an indigenous company and it is supposed to be limited rehabilitation.

"Limited rehabilitation al-

most destroyed that bridge, because that bridge was designed to have a dead load of Asphalt of 2 inches but over the years, you have between four inches and fourteen inches on that bridge. They created a super elevation and so there were pot-holes everywhere. When we came, we had to reach an understanding with the contractors and we cancelled the project. So, it was not an interest of President Tinubu, neither was it me that initiated it to please him. It is a national interest. I feel for the life of people. Some of these bridges were built over 50 years ago."

He further said that an observation room will be set up on the islands on the Third Mainland Bridge that would aid quick response in times of emergencies.

"In the Third Mainland Bridge, I am going to set out a building by the islands within the Third Mainland Bridge to set up a kind of observation room. Within that location, we will have a small jetty where we will have a boat, within that house we are building, we will have the navy, army, and local security. We will have CCTV, which we will aggregate in that observation room."

InsideEdo

Embark on business you are familiar with, women urged

● **as beneficiaries receive FONWIP interest-free loan**

EUBALDUS ENAHORO

A former commissioner, Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development in Edo State, Hon. (Dr.) Florence Gbinigie, has advised women beneficiaries of Forum of Nigeria Women in Politics (FONWIP) interest free loan of N1 million not to jump into any business they are not familiar with just because others are doing it and prospering.

Speaking with the beneficiaries on the theme, 'Empower Women, Prevent Violence' during the FONWIP presentation of the fourth batch of interest free loan to nine beneficiaries in Benin City, the Edo State capital, Amb. Florence Gbinigie stated that this loan is given based on request and capability of managing the amount requested in line with the kind of business they

are doing.

According to Gbinigie, "engage yourselves with what you are familiar with and have the capability to do it successfully. Most importantly, keep God first in all your understandings and place Him inside your business if you desire greater success. The testimonies of the previous beneficiaries, they can now fend for their families despite the challenges from their partners and those around them."

She disclosed that FONWIP, in contribution to the eradication of violence against women and girls, has created this avenue of supporting women's economy based towards making themselves reliant and economically vibrant, particularly the widows, single mothers, survivors of violence and the poor.

"To become a beneficiary, you must prove your capability

of managing a business. FONWIP in continuation to promote, boost and support such businesses is giving out the fourth batch of this interest free loan. This is happening because of the success stories we have recorded from the previous batches. I congratulate you all for the progress recorded so far and urge you not to relent in pressing higher. Like I always said, you are getting to the level of owning your own factories, becoming wholesalers and distributors if you faint not," she said.

She advised that, "in business, you should be committed, prudent in your spending and steadfast. Your business money should never be diverted to personal needs. The only money you can spend is the profit that comes out, do not copy people to do the wrong thing, be yourself

and be innovative."

Earlier, the Committee chair, Hon. Favour Oseki, who thanked the founder and president of FONWIP, Florence Gbinigie for the trust reposed on them to select the beneficiaries, disclosed that it was 10 women who indicated interest but nine scaled through for empowerment.

"This is the fourth batch of beneficiaries and they are expected to pay back in six months, while the first month is a grace period. Those who are consistent in their payment are entitled to get more money," she said.

Two women testified how the interest free loan they took assisted them to set up their businesses and lamented that in the past when they accessed loans from another source, they paid interest of as much as 30 percent.

Obaseki extends free bus service by another 3 months

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has approved the extension of the free bus scheme implemented by the state government for another three months.

The free transport scheme, now extended to July 2024, was introduced in September 2023 for an initial two-month period to cushion the effect of the fuel subsidy removal by the Federal Government on the people of the State.

Following the success of the first phase which benefited over 1.5m Edo people, the governor thereafter extended the palliative programme till February 2024 and later April 2024.

The free transport scheme covers all intra and intercity routes operated by the State-owned Edo City Transport Services (ECTS), including Auchi – Igarra – Ibillo-Ososo; Uzebba-Ikhin – Otuo, and Abudu-Ubajaja, Abudu-Urho-

nigbe and Ewohimi to Ewatto.

The intra-city routes are Ramat-Kingsquare; New Benin-Kingsquare; Kingsquare – Ekenwan Road; Kingsquare-Airport Road; Kingsquare-Sapele Road and Kingsquare – Adesuwa, Kingsquare-Ogida; New Benin – Upper Mission; Kingsquare-Ugbowo; Kingsquare-Agbor Road; Kingsquare-Upper Sokponba; New Benin – Ugbowo and New Benin-Aduwawa.

In a statement, the Managing Director of Edo State Transport Authority (ESTA), Mrs. Edugie Agbonlahor, said the extension is in furtherance of the government's commitment to the welfare of Edo people, noting that the free bus scheme will now run till July 2024.

According to her, "His Excellency, the Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has graciously approved the extension of the free bus service till July 10, 2024."

Eid-el-Fitri: Etsako East boss tasks Muslims 'ummah on sustaining virtues of Ramadan

LAMAI CASSIUS

As Muslims across the world celebrate Eid-el-Fitri to mark the successful end of the holy month of Ramadan, chairman of Etsako East Local Government Council, Hon. (Princess) Benedicta Attah, has admonished Muslim faithfuls in Nigeria to sustain the values and virtues the holy month of Ramadan taught them, particularly in their day-to-day relationship with God and fellow humans.

Hon. Attah in her goodwill message to celebrate with them assured Muslims in Etsako East of

maximum security arrangements all through the period of Sallah celebration, calling on them to also use the period to pray for divine intervention for God to heal all that ails the nation.

"Happy Eid-el-Fitri to all Etsako East Muslims, particularly Islamic leaders, Councillors, appointees, and all workers in the councils as well as my Muslim friends and well-wishers," she said.

While congratulating Muslim ummah and the entire Muslim community on the occasion, she prayed to God Almighty to grant everyone the opportunity to witness many more of it in good health and sound mind.

Revisit law regulating tricycle operations, Eguavoen urges govt

LUCKY EFESE

A retired captain of the Nigerian Army and a chief-tain of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Edo State, Elder Peter Otamere Eguavoen, has urged the state governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, to urgently revisit law regulating tricycle operations in the state.

Eguavoen, who narrated his experience in the hands of one of the Keke-Napep (tricycle) drivers in the Benin City, said if urgent steps are not taken to address the unwholesome attitude of these drivers in Benin metropolis, the situation would continue to get worse.

"One instance happened to me when I engaged a Keke driver from Cook Road to my house at Upper Lawani Road to collect my phone that I forgot at home. I told the Keke driver to wait for me, and before I could come back, the driver left with

my bag containing my valuable items, including my handset (phone)," Elder Eguavoen narrated.

"For over weeks now, I reported the matter in Keke-Napep park at EdoKpolor/Federal Road and up till now, I'm unable to recover my property. I also went as far as Iyaro/Obakhavbaye park of Keke-Napep, and no good result has come out of my report," he said.

He urged government to regulate the activities of the Keke drivers by ensuring that all the Keke-Napep have number plates.

"And I also noticed that those who have plate number will shade them or have only one plate number at the back or front to avoid arrest or check.

"It would be of good to Edo State people if the state government mandates members of PU-WOV or sets up a task force to check their activities," he said.



TELEMEDICINE:

L-R: Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki; his wife, Betsy, and Consultant on Telemedicine, Dr. Philip Osehobo, during the launch of the telemedicine programme in Central Clinic, Ukpenu in Esan West Local Governments of Edo State, Thursday, April 11, 2024.

Applauses pour in for Ikimi at 80

Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki; his Delta State counterpart, Sheriff Oborevwori; former Governor of Delta State, James Ibori; former Governor of Edo State, Lucky Igbinedion, and the Esama of Benin Kingdom, Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, were among dignitaries present at the 80th birthday thanksgiving of the Chieftain of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), High Chief Tom Ikimi.

The thanksgiving service took place at St. Paul's Catholic Church, Airport Road, and attracted guests from all walks of

life who turned out enmasse to celebrate the Octogenarian.

Obaseki at the event congratulated Ikimi, hailing his contributions to societal development, and wished him many more years in good health and sound mind.

Earlier, Archbishop of Benin, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Augustine Akubueze was joined by Archbishop Emeritus of Ibadan, His Grace, Most Rev. Dr. Felix Akaba Job; Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja, Cardinal John Onaiyekan, and Bishop of Uromi, Most Rev. Dr. Donatus Oguns, among other clergymen to officiate the

thanksgiving mass.

In his homily titled, "What a Life," the Emeritus Archbishop of Ibadan, Most Rev. Dr. Felix Akaba Job, charged the congregation on love, urging them on good neighbourliness, selflessness and sacrifice.

According to him, "God created us to serve him in the journey of life. The life given to us is a life of love for God and neighbours. It's not the number of years spent on earth that matters but the quality and value of how the years were utilized for humanity and mankind."

The clergy congratulated Chief Ikimi for joining the league of octogenarians, wishing him many more years in good health and wisdom.

Other guests at the event include former Minister of Women Affairs, Josephine Anenih, PDP candidate for 2024 governorship election, Asue Ighodalo, and his wife, Ifeyinwa; the Edo State Head of Service (HoS), Dr. Anthony Okungbowa; Edo PDP chairman, Anthony Aziegbemi, and former Inspector General of Police (IGP), Solomon Arase, among others.

Environmental challenges: Stakeholders advocate for Climate Litigation Option

EUBALDUS ENAHORO

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and environmental stakeholders have advocated for a climate change friendly government that will adopt litigation as an option to addressing emerging issues that have severe implications for the environment and the people's livelihood in the Niger Delta region.

The advocacy, made by participants at a round-table dialogue on climate litigation organized by Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice (ANE EJ), a non governmental organization, in Benin City in partnership with the People AGM, stressed on the need for environmental awareness by everyone.

The stakeholders among others seek for compensation for affected communities and ecosystems due to climate related harm caused by oil spills, deforestation and pollution as well as advocating for robust environmental policies, stricter regulations and effective enforcement mechanisms to prevent further damage, and seeking to empower local communities to actively participate in legal processes, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights protected.

The Edo State Commissioner, Ministry of Environment and Sustainability, Arc. Joshua Omokhodion, who declared the one-day event on climate litigation open, said climate change is the greatest environmental challenge the world faces today

and scientific consensus and growing political will to address the issue are slowly but surely changing the global context in which businesses operate.

According to the Commissioner, who was represented by the Director, Climate Change, Mr. Kenneth Woghiren, climate litigation means legal action that aims to combat climate change and involves arguments that are related to climate change.

In his words, "Climate litigation has brought new clues redirecting the mode of fighting climate change in our world today. Climate related judicial cases are now common today with international, national, regional, tribunals and quasi-judicial courts as well as arbitration or special mediation bodies playing prominent roles in resolving climate related cases or disputes, which further drives climate change governance reforms in various countries across the world.

"Climate change litigation has brought judges, lawyers, advocates, policy makers, researchers, environmental defenders, climate activists, human rights activists, especially women's rights, NGOs, CSOs and the business community into understanding the current state of our climate through witnessing, participating and handling climate litigation cases.

"It further shows that environmental laws used in combating climate change, loss of biodiversity and the pollution of our land space have gone a long way in protecting and sustaining our environment."

The Commissioner noted

that as the heart beat state of Nigeria, Edo State will continue to be accountable to promises made, saying, "We will count on the support of everyone present here today as well as all relevant stakeholders to support the implementation of these climate litigation dialogue outcomes."

The Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice, acting Executive Director, Leo Atakpu, disclosed that ANEEJ is currently working with some climate justice activists under the umbrella of the Peoples AGM to further the work on climate change and the environment.

"Particularly, we are interested in advancing the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement by encouraging oil

companies and their investors to adopt the call for carbon emission reduction targeting 1.5C and below, and fossil fuel phase out with a just energy transition projection to protect the natural environment from pollution and over exploitation.

"Despite the urgent need for the world to quickly move away from fossil fuel or at least drastically reduce carbon emission to meet the 1.5C target set in Paris and save the planet from destruction, oil and gas companies have failed to provide realistic plans that will ensure global comfort," he noted.

According to him, "Major oil companies have abandoned initial climate commitments for short term profit because of

increased global demands for crude oil. In 2023 the church of England pensions Board, a major investor in Shell and other oil companies announced that they were withdrawing their funds from Shell and other companies because such companies have abandoned their climate commitments for profits."

After a paper presentation on Climate Litigation by Dr. Eghosa Ekhatior, senior lecturer in Law at the University of Derby, United Kingdom, it was resolved that there is a need for CSOs and the stakeholders to put pressure on the government to do things right through good governance.

There is also the need for environmental awareness and

building of partnerships, both at the international, national and local levels. And the need for the CSOs through collaboration to always hold multinationals and the government accountable for their actions, irrespective of the challenges encountered.

The voice of the victims who are the communities impacted by the activities of the multinationals in the Niger Delta must be amplified despite the difficult situation the CSOs find themselves in.

The founder, ANEEJ, Rev. David Ugolo in his remarks pointed out that the level of mistrust in the Niger Delta is huge and due to lack of resources the CSOs are handicapped in achieving success in climate litigation.



ROUND-TABLE:

Acting Executive Director, ANEEJ, Leo Atakpu (2nd r); the Director, Climate Change, Mr. Kenneth Woghiren (2nd l); Dr. Eghosa Ekhatior, senior lecturer in Law at the University of Derby, United Kingdom (r), and Mrs. Abiola Daisy Igaga, CONGOS chairperson, at the round-table dialogue organized by ANEEJ.

Marriage is God's holy gift to humanity —Fr. Iyangbe solemnizes Chief & Mrs. Ikekhuamen's union

OBOH SYLVESTER

There was joyous mood in the household of the Iyasele of Ohordua, Chief Isaac Ikekhuamen, his lovely wife, Mrs. Christiana Ikekhuamen as they celebrated additional and significant family milestones in Benin City at the weekend.

The events, which comprised solemnisation and ratification of marriage, 48th year marriage anniversary and birthday celebration of the Septuagenarian were severally described by many as manifestations of good intent, pure and grateful heart by the celebrants and evident blessings of God Almighty in the family.

Many business associates and friends of the family present described Chief Ikekhuamen as a man of the people who is very consistent in reaching out to colleagues, friends and relatives.

Chief Ikekhuamen was further described as a determined and focused individual who believes in hard work, very empathic and result oriented.

Speaking in his homily during the marriage ratification at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Benin City, the officiating Priest, Rev. Fr. Daniel Iyangbe, explained that God himself instituted marriage and gave it to humanity as a holy gift.

Referencing variously from the Bible in Genesis 2:18, Ephesians 5:21, and John 2:1-11, Fr. Iyangbe said when Adam saw the woman created for him in the Garden of Eden, he contentedly proclaimed her as the flesh of his flesh and the bone of his bone.

He therefore urged couples to work in love and consequently admonished wives to be subject to their husbands as the Church is subject to Christ.

Dignitaries present at the three events include business associates of the celebrants and CEO, Zico Oil and Zafiki Conglomerates, entrepreneurs from far and near, Nollywood celebrities, political bigwigs, friends and family members.

be subject to their husbands as the Church is subject to Christ.

Dignitaries present at the three events include business associates of the celebrants and CEO, Zico Oil and Zafiki Conglomerates, entrepreneurs from far and near, Nollywood celebrities, political bigwigs, friends and family members.



RATIFICATION OF MARRIAGE:

Chief Isaac and Mrs Christiana Ikekhuamen during the thanksgiving service at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Obehi Street, GRA, Benin City, after the solemnization and ratification of their marriage, recently.

Epilepsy is treatable and not contagious —Doctor

EUBALDUS ENAHORO

A consultant pediatrician, University of Benin, Professor Paul Ukhurionan, has dispelled the myth that epilepsy is contagious, untreatable, and appealed for the spread of accurate information to support people with the condition.

Speaking on the topic, Epilepsy: The Myth, the Mystery and the true story, during a seminar organized by the Institute of Child Health, University of Benin/University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), to commemorate the World Epilepsy Day, in Benin City, Prof. Ukhurionan said epilepsy is not contagious and it is treatable.

According to Prof. Ukhurionan, "The public should stop denying people with epilepsy the compassion they deserve because the disease is not contagious. The condition shrouded in mystery is a disease of the brain and it is treatable.

"The main goal of Purple Day is to break the stigma as more parents deal with perceived stigma than real stigma, and they are likely to have depression and

low esteem. The parents of epilepsy patients should join support groups to enable them have the power to go through.

"The public should spread accurate information and support people with epilepsy. Encourage the forming of support groups by people with the condition and at the community level people should talk about it to provide more truth about the disease."

While advocating that funds must be made available to research on the condition, which started a long time ago, Prof. Ukhurionan said epilepsy is still an area of research, adding that it is a disease of the brain and not the mind that results in at least two unprovoked seizures at least in 24 hours apart.

"There are several environmental causes of epilepsy including adverse perinatal events, trauma and brain infections. Discourage the throwing up and shaking of babies because it affects the brain," he said.

Epilepsy stigma persists due to misconceptions and it is defined by recurrent unprovoked seizures, which result from exaggerated brain impulses, he said.

South-SouthReport

UNDP offers N200m support to Bayelsa MSMEs

● as Gov. Diri assents to Medical Residency Training Bill

PHILIP EKE, YENAGOA

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has offered a N200 million support to Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Bayelsa State.

Leader of the UNDP team, Joyce Oboro, who presented a cheque to Governor Douye Diri at the Government House in Yenagoa on Monday, said the objective of the initiative, which was co-sponsored by the European Union, is to mitigate the effect of the current socio-economic challenges through the empowerment of medium and small businesses across various sectors.

She said the components of the programme include financial support and capacity building while the cluster-based approach will be adopted to achieve set objectives.

Expressing the optimism that the project will stimulate economic growth and improve the standard of living of Bayelsans, Oboro urged well-meaning groups and individuals to key into the project.

Governor Douye Diri, in his remarks, welcomed the partnership between the government and the UNDP to develop MSMEs in the state.

According to a statement by Daniel Alabrah, Chief Press Secretary to the Bayelsa State Governor, the Bayelsa governor expressed delight over the partnership and said his administration was already doing a lot in developing and supporting MSMEs.

He said in line with the prosperity mantra of his administration, the government had trained many Bayelsans and empowered them with starter packs as well as offered grants of N200,000 monthly to 420 small business owners across the 105 wards as part of its effort to encourage small businesses.

He assured the UNDP delegation that the state will play its role in the partnership, insisting that whatever will add value to the lives of Bayelsans his administration will take it seriously.

The state helmsman equally acknowledged the support of the UNDP when Bayelsa battled a terrible flood in 2022, describing the organisation as a true friend of the state.

He said: "For us as an administration, our mantra has been shared prosperity. Our people have to prosper in all aspects of their lives. So we are very happy to meet development-oriented organisations like yours. Let me

acknowledge the UNDP for its support to our people during the flood in 2022. We have been partners.

"Going forward, I believe we will have a robust relationship with you. We are very well prepared to partner and play our role to ensure we attract whatever is due to us.

"In Bayelsa, we started a programme three years ago and gave out grants to encourage small businesses. We paid N200,000 each to 420 SMEs monthly across the 105 wards in the state until the end of our first tenure. Now we want to evaluate the level of success of the scheme.

"I am happy with the aspect of capacity building, training and mentorship. As a govern-

ment, we have been doing that and after training we also give them starter packs. So you are coming to an area we consider a priority.

"It is good to build other infrastructure but the human beings to manage them are more important. That is why as a government we are taking it seriously and I believe that this is one partnership that will bring succour to our people."

Meanwhile, Governor Diri on Monday, signed the Medical Residency Training Law 2024, making it the first state in Nigeria with such a beneficial law for resident doctors.

The executive bill sent to the Bayelsa State House of Assembly provides for funding

support for resident doctors to specialise in specific fields.

The governor commended the House of Assembly for giving the bill accelerated hearing, considering its importance.

He said his administration had always prioritised the welfare of its workers and will continue to provide the enabling environment for resident doctors whose profession is threatened by brain drain.

The Bayelsa helmsman, who expressed delight that Bayelsa was the first state with such a law, promised that every aspect of the new legislation will be implemented.

He said: "I know this is one area that our unionists have been very interested in. Every

meeting they have had with me, this issue was tabled and I promised to do something about it. I am happy that this went as an executive bill to the state assembly and the assembly expeditiously attended to it, knowing its importance.

"This government prioritises the welfare of our workers. If our workers in the medical profession see this law as something that must be attended to and we agree with them for the benefit of the larger society, today we have put pen to paper and it is now a law."

He appreciated the medical unions for demanding for what would enhance the status of resident doctors and the whole of society.



RESIDENT DOCTORS:

Bayelsa State Governor Douye Diri (left) on Monday, signed the Medical Residency Training Law 2024, making it the first state in Nigeria with such a beneficial law for resident doctors.

Udu Harbour Market ready April 2025 —Oborevwo

AJUWA VICTOR

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwo, Monday, said the multi-billion naira Udu Harbour Market in Udu Local Government Area of the state would be ready for inauguration in April 2025.

Governor Oborevwo gave the assurance after inspecting ongoing works on the project which, according to him, had been delayed for too long.

Accompanied by the Commissioner for Trade and Investments, Mr Samuel Oligida, Housing, Hon. Godknows Angele and Oil and Gas Chief Vincent Oyibode, Governor Oborevwo, while assuring the contractor of prompt payment of his certificates, warned that his administration had zero tolerance for shoddy jobs, and urged him to work harder to deliver the project on time as promised.

Governor Oborevwo said: "I was here for a function about two weeks ago, and I promised to come here and inspect this project with a view to fast tracking it.

"Contract for this project was awarded in 2006 and the initial

contractor abandoned the project and it was re-awarded. I was here with the immediate past Governor when I was Speaker, to inspect this project.

"From 2023 to now, you can see the level of improvement on the project. When we came the last time, the fence was not there and the new buildings were not there as well. I made a promise that no project would be abandoned and it is important to note that this project is very key to the people of Udu and environs.

"The project comprises 600 lockup shops and 122 open shops, and if it is completed in a very short time, as we expect it will, it will serve the economic needs of the people of this area.

"Keep working because we will not delay your payments, whether I come for inspection or not; I have with me here the Special Adviser on Project Monitoring and Audit, Dr Goodnews Agbi.

"He will be coming to oversee what you are doing here to take measurements and also look at the quality of work you are doing because what we want is quality jobs. We don't want substandard jobs."

Oversight functions: Delta Assembly sets goals for standards in education sector

AJUWA VICTOR

Delta State House of Assembly Committee on Education has commenced visits to establishments under its legislative oversight to ascertain a level of commitment to quality service delivery in line with the MORE mantra of the state government.

Chairman of the Committee, Charles Emetulu, said the eighth Delta State House of Assembly expects nothing but excellent performance in the education sector, hence the need for all hands to be on deck to achieve the set goals.

Flanked by the Vice Chairman of the Committee, Chief Benson Obire, and other members, including Chief Ferguson

Onwo, Emmanuel Sinebe, Mrs Marylyn Okowa-Daramola, Mrs Bridget Anyafulu, and Matthew Omonade, the lawmakers at the start of the legislative oversight were at the Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara, College of Education Mosogar, and College of Education, Warri.

The chairman, Charles Emetulu, who represents Ndokwa West in the House, said oversight duty is a constitutional responsibility of the legislature, which empowers its committees to oversight on financial appropriations made to the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

Emetulu stated that his led House Committee on Education has resolved to ensure standards in the state's education sector,

and commended the removal of some bureaucratic bottlenecks to enable higher institutions run independently for massive infrastructural development.

He urged the authorities to be innovative; pointing out that the managers of educational institutions must create alternative means of funding and not depend solely on the government.

Emetulu said he was very impressed with the institutions, most especially in the area of project executions with internally generated revenue as well as meeting the TETFund requirements to attract projects from the intervention body.

Commissioner for Higher Education, Professor Johnbull Tonukeri commended the legislators for the oversight visit

and support, and noted that the Ministry has made provisions for accreditations of courses in the various institutions as well as addresses the issue of shortage of staff.

Rector, Delta State Polytechnic Otefe-Oghara, Professor Emmanuel Ufuophu-Biri, appealed to the Committee to assist on the completion of abandoned projects in the institution and release of funds for accreditations of some programmes.

The Provost of College of Education Mosogar, Dr Israel Emide and that of College of Education Warri, Dr Dickson Oyo-vwe, appealed for domestication of the dual mode programme as applicable at federal level to enable the institutions to award both NCE certificate and degrees.

Gov. Fubara pledges not to hurt opposition parties

ELIZABETH AGBOEGBULEM,
PORT HARCOURT

Rivers State Governor, Sir Siminalayi Fubara, has assured that the right

climate will be created for all political parties to operate so that they can engage with the government to offer credible opposition.

The governor emphasised

that it was the best thing to do, especially because the opposition political parties have acknowledged that elections are over, and are resolved to offer effective support required to

advance good governance in the state.

Governor Fubara spoke on Monday, when he played host to the leadership of the Inter-Party Advisory Council

(IPAC), Rivers State chapter, led by its chairman, Barrister Sensei Solusuema Osaro, at Government House in Port Harcourt.

The governor insisted that an egalitarian society will be engendered so that people can feel free to voice their opinions without intimidation, because, according to him, those criticisms will contribute to having more focused implementation of policies that serve the general good of the state.

“So, we are happy to identify with you. We are assuring you, even when you leave here, criticise me, I don’t have a problem with that, it is meant to spur me to do well. We will continue to give you the freedom. We will not cage anybody. We will not revoke your property.

“You can also take my message to your National Secretariat; we will continue to stand on the right path. We will support them because we can see that they are also doing what is right. Anytime they need our support, let them feel free to ask for it,” the governor said.

Governor Fubara commended IPAC for identifying with his administration, and pledging to collaborate for the good of the state.

The State Chief Executive pointed out that no person who truly loves Rivers State, whether embittered, or not, will gladly want to burn down the state to achieve personal or political agenda.

The governor said whatever political strength anybody claims to have, it amounts to nothing without the state and its people, and assured that his team in government will steadily work, genuinely, to protect the interest of the state.

While thanking the delegation for the vote of confidence passed on him and investing him as their Grand Patron, Governor Fubara urged them to tread the path of peace always in their activities.

Governor Fubara promised to consult with them and include their interest whenever appointments are made, and promised to donate a utility vehicle to enhance their logistics, while committing to support the upcoming programme of the body.

In his address, the Rivers State chairman of Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC), Barrister Sensei Solusuema Osaro, thanked Governor Fubara for the opportunity to meet with them and announced that IPAC has passed a vote of confidence on the governor.

He also announced the decision of IPAC to honour the governor as the Grand Patron and Leader of the umbrella body of all political parties in the state.

“IPAC is a roundtable of political parties saddled with the responsibility of enlightenment, advocacy, educating, and inspiring courage among political parties and the society at large.

“With the elections come and gone; it is practically the time for governance and to ensure all dividends of democracy to the people of Rivers State.

“Herein lies the core of our visit today to forge a collaborative bond with you, His Excellency, to foster partnership for the overall interest of Rivers State.

“We heartily congratulate you on your victory at the Supreme Court judgement, which affirmed your election at the polls. To this end, we in IPAC have passed a vote of confidence on His Excellency, and assure you of our collaborative, collective and individual support to succeed now, and in the course of your administration, and after,” he said.

Highlights of the visit were the presentation of a large plaque of portrait picture, certificate as Grand Patron, IPAC T-Shirt and Fez Cap by the IPAC chairman to Governor Fubara.



CONSTRUCTION WORK INSPECTION:

R-L: Delta State Commissioner for Housing, Hon. Godknows Angele; Commissioner for Trade and Investment, Mr. Oligida Samuel; Special Adviser on Project Monitoring and Audit, Dr Goodnews Agbi; Governor Sheriff Oborevwori; Commissioner for Oil and Gas, Chief Vincent Oyibode, and others, addressing journalists shortly after inspecting the construction work on the multi-billion naira Udu Harbour Market.

PIX ENARUSAI BRIPIN

Governor Otu will strengthen state's business community —Great Ogban

PATRICK ABANG, CALABAR

The Director-General the Cross River State Microfinance and Enterprise Development Agency (MEDA), Mr. Great Ogban has said the season of sweetness will be positively impactful on entrepreneurs in the state, as the Governor (Prince) Bassey Otu will strengthen the business community in the state and make it viable.

Mr. Ogban said the governor's objectives for the business community known during his visit to the state secretariat of Nigerian Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (NASME) in Calabar, as part of his assessment

tour aimed at having personal engagement with business owners in the state to know their challenges and how government can offer solutions through his agency.

In a welcome address, Mr. James Aliche, chairman of NASME, welcomed the MEDA boss to their secretariat, applauded the governor for appointing a man who has vast knowledge of the business community in the state, and described the appointment of Mr. Great Ogban as fitting for the agency, adding that NASME is an umbrella body for small and medium scale enterprises that was founded by the Central Bank of Nigeria and Bank of Industry for the

organizing of small and medium businesses in Nigeria.

He mentioned that NASME is committed to growing the economy of Cross River State, which is why they are advocating for promotion of SME activities in the state for revenue generation, enumerating part of the entrepreneurs' challenges to include lack of access to funds and cost of acquiring funds.

The NASME women leader, Dr. Ekaete Vincent also appealed for support through loans and grants to women, as they mostly operate the nano business in the state. Same was also done by the youth leader, Mr. Declan Ogar, who stated that the youths are the

drivers of every economy and as such need government support to make them proactive in the entrepreneurial sector.

The MEDA boss, Mr. Ogban further applauded NASME for keeping afloat the business commercial environment in the state, and assured them of partnership with his agency for the delivery of Governor Bassey Otu's vision, which is strengthening the business sector and making it viable. He noted that his agency has a strategic plan that will be developed to accommodate the digital and creative sector in the state, as the government will also give out loans and grants to support business owners to upscale their businesses.

Oza Nogogo elite foundation holds 13th convention

AJUWA VICTOR

Oza Nogogo Elites Foundation (OEF) has held her 13th convention with a call on Oza people all over the world to promote the cultural ties of the Ozanigbigbe people.

The theme of this year's OEF convention was: “Promoting the cultural ties of the Ozanigbigbe people”. The convention was chaired by Sir Dr Alex Ikhue-Omoregbe and the father of the day was Ogisi Etinosa Okor, the Ogisi of Oza.

In his brief remark, Sir Dr Alex Ikhue-Omoregbe stressed the need for all Oza people to promote their culture and language.

He noted that Oza people are unique; therefore, there should be a sustained effort to grow the rich cultural heritage of Oza and her people.

He thanked members of OEF for paying priority attention to the development of their place of origin, and urged them not to relent as the community is proud of them. He also thanked all Oza sons and daughters who attended the convention, declaring that Oza will grow to become the envy of other communities one day.

In his speech, the president, Oza-Nogogo Elites Foundation, Mr Victor Abulele, stated that OEF is glad having achieved numerous milestones for the community.

According to Abulele, “This year's convention of OEF with the theme, “Promoting the cultural ties of the Ozanigbigbe people”, is a follow up to what we started last year. This year we are to consolidate on the gains made so far and also, to expand the discussions to include more views from others who are hungry for the development of Oza communities.

“We will come up with recommendations towards achieving peaceful co-existence through cultural exchange programmes and other collaborative initiatives that will enhance our economic development among our communities.”

On behalf of the group, Abulele expressed gratitude

to the immediate past governor of Delta State, Senator Dr Ifeanyi Okowa for treating the Oza community road project as a priority, and Hon. Kingsley Noye Philip, for his overwhelming achievements for Oza people.

He declared that the Oza community will remain eternally grateful to Okowa and Kingsley, as he also commended other persons who are contributing in different ways towards the advancement of Oza.

He concluded by calling for more collective efforts in the building of better Oza communities, which every Oza person will be proud of.

However, in a paper presented by one of the illustrious

sons of Oza-Nogogo, Chief Bernard Ibero Oriahi, Esq., harped on the importance of not allowing Oza genealogy, beliefs, practice and significance of the Ohenship, which according to Oriahi, is the bedrock of the culture and traditions of the Ozanigbigbe people to go into extinction.

He said that this is the time for Oza communities to come together to achieve common goals, which he listed as the promotion of Oza language, cultural practice (festivals), traditions, social life and educational advancements.

“It's the belief that a more pragmatic approach to an enduring footprint will help us

to forestall our past. We need to have a clear cut road map to those events that will make us remember our common origin,” Chief Oriahi stated.

Meanwhile, the first Vice President, OEF, Mr Uche Ebu, in an interview, said that the convention was a success as it really reawakened the minds of the Oza people on the importance of promoting Oza culture, language and tradition. While thanking all Oza people who were part of the convention, he called on all to join efforts at moving Oza communities forward.

The convention was attended by well-meaning Oza people from different parts of Nigeria.

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FG must stand up for the local aviation industry

Private indigenous Nigerian airline, Air Peace, is growing and making inroads into the international aviation space. The development at this time is rare, worthy and commendable, considering the economic downturn. The usual story in this season is of businesses shrinking, dying or migrating out of the country's shores.

However, as Air Peace grows, strives to expand into the international market and encourage other local players to follow suit, it is meeting with strong resistance from an apparent conspiracy of foreign airlines and regulators abroad who are accustomed to monopolising the Nigerian space, charging exorbitant and inordinate fares, bleeding the country of scarce foreign exchange and then getting territorial and restrictive when Nigerian operators conversely seek to venture lawfully into their markets.

On the part of international regulators and service providers, this conspiracy is said to manifest by way of stalling on granting of due access rights to Nigerian operators, despite explicit Bilateral Air Services Agreements (BASA) which im-

ply that if you fly into my country on stated terms, I can fly into your country on the same terms. It further manifests by way of restrictions on Nigerian operators from premium airports abroad, as well as undue and artificial delays and shoddy handling of flights of the Nigerian airlines in the then designated airports, in this case, the UK.

Furthermore, the foreign airlines operating into Nigeria, which hitherto charged cut-throat rates, are said to be suddenly knocking the bottom off the bucket of price regimes and charging lower than the cost of operations so as to strangle the smaller and newer entrant, Air Peace.

These unwholesome and anti-competitive acts against Nigerian businesses abroad must be resisted by the Federal Government with its full might and authority, reason being that Nigeria has much to gain from the growth of local businesses at this time. The benefits to the country of growth and expansion of its aviation sector are that it will directly generate much-needed jobs for teeming countrymen in this season of lay-offs, generate even more jobs from attendant spin-offs,

generate foreign exchange earnings into the nation, thus relieving government of some of the obligation of sourcing foreign exchange for repatriation by foreign airlines operating here. It will enrich the country's trove of funds from taxes as well as inspire confidence in the country's economic prospects and corporate being at home and abroad.

Furthermore, aircraft of Nigeria's indigenous airlines bear the 'call sign' or prefix '5N' on their tail sections, which is Nigeria's unique marker and identifier in the international aviation space. By these markings, aircraft belonging to indigenous Nigerian airlines are identified as the nation's flag carriers, as they land and take off at airports around the world, thus advertising Nigeria's brand, pride, prospects and its splendour hoped for.

For these reasons and more, the Federal Government must resist this foreign conspiracy of unlawful, unwholesome and anti-competitive conduct against Nigerian businesses with iron and grit.

Furthermore, the International Civil Aviation Authority

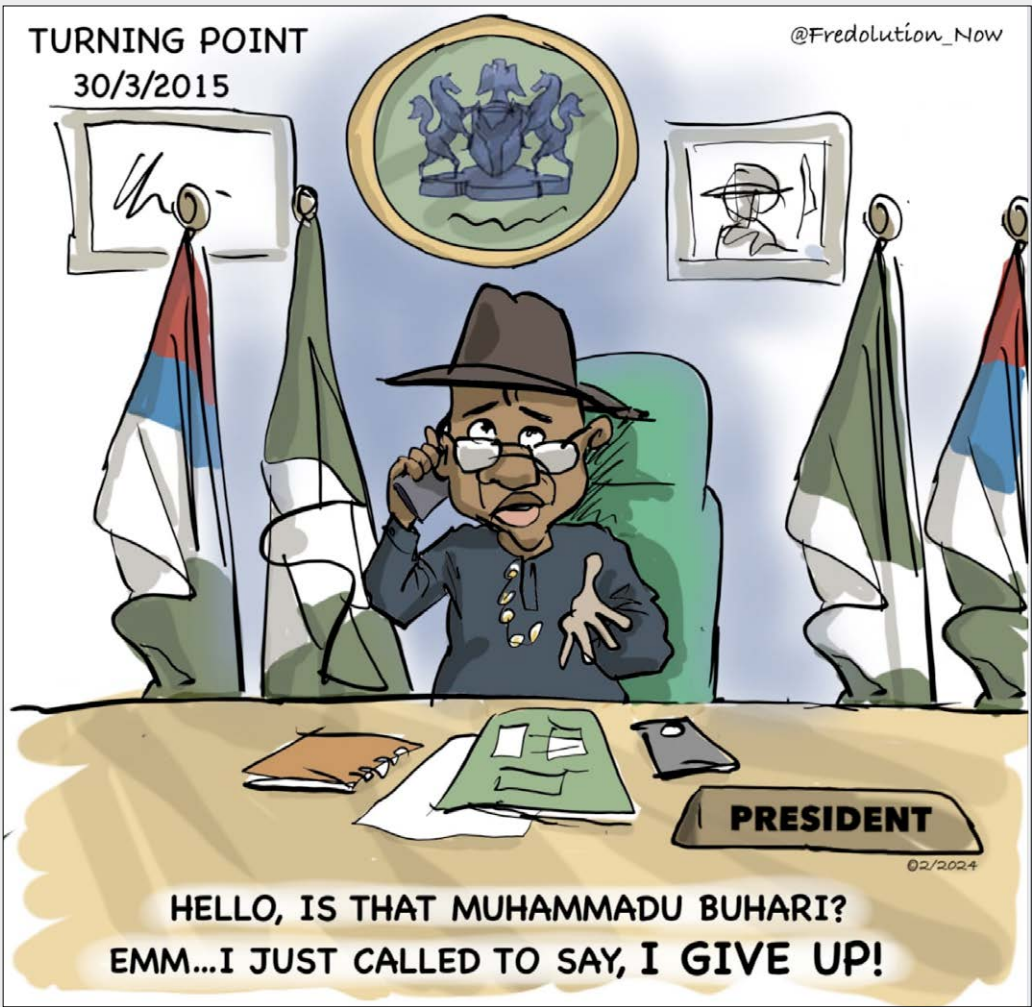
(ICAO) frowns upon anti-competitive practices in the industry and assigns the conduct of initial resolution initiatives to home governments of affected businesses. This model clause has been made part of the ICAO Template Air Services Agreements (TASA), Appendix 1. to ICAO Doc 9587 Policy and Guidance Material on the Economic Regulation of International Air Transport. The purpose, according to ICAO, is "to preserve consumer welfare and ensure fair competition".

Indicators reveal that the Federal Government of Nigeria has started exploring moves in this direction. Government must move with speed and resolve, wielding over the heads of the errant concerns its prerogative to balance, quid pro quo, the terms and conditions for foreign airlines doing business in Nigeria according to the terms and measures meted out to Nigerian operators on foreign turf. By so doing, the Federal Government would be upholding Nigeria's rights, pride and integrity as a sovereign state and performing its obligation to indigenous businesses, thereby empowering them to grow the local economy.

The Nigerian Observer

Cartoon Corner

...that the people may know



NERC should urge DisCos to catch up with some African countries in provision of reliable, accessible electricity, please!

ISAAC ASABOR

Against the foregoing backdrop, it is expedient to urge the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) to give the 11 DisCos a marching order that would enable them catch up with other African countries mentioned in this context as it is very obvious that Nigeria is lagging behind in terms of provision of reliable electricity to its citizens.

The question, “Is Darkness For Sale?” which incidentally is what not a few Nigerians are asking, sums up the bewilderment of many electricity consumers over the recent approval of a 300% increase in the electricity tariff for Band A consumers by the NERC to ensure sustainable energy distribution.

Accordingly, power distribution companies (DisCos) will be allowed to raise electricity prices for urban consumers to N225 (\$0.15) per kilowatt-hour from N68 this month, effective April 1, 2024.

Unfortunately, a casual appraisal of the services being rendered by the 11 power DisCos across the six geo-political zones of the country would reveal that NERC does not have any iota of justification to give DisCos the power to increase electricity tariff.

In my personal view, NERC, as a regulatory body in Nigeria's power sector, ought to have compelled the 11 DisCos to adopt a compensatory policy aimed at offering free services to its customers that are credit worthy. This kind of pol-

icy would be similar to what is done in the telecommunication industry.

Telecommunication companies are wont to compensate their subscribers with free airtime whenever it is observed that their services are not satisfactorily delivered. What stops NERC, by virtue of its regulatory power, from urging the 11 DisCos to do so to its customers? Is it because the Nigerian Electricity market is oligopolistic? Let me quickly opine at this juncture that the 11 DisCos are both individually and collectively still light years away from satisfying their customers through the application of modern day Customer Service Management.

For the sake of clarity, the term “oligopoly” refers to an industry where there are only a small number of firms operating. In an oligopoly, no single firm enjoys a large amount of market power. Thus, no single firm is able to raise its prices above the price that would exist under a perfect competition scenario.

Amid the shocking news that a 300% increase in the electricity tariff for Band A consumers in Nigeria's power sector has been approved by NERC, not a few consumers of electricity across the country are questioning the rationale behind the increase as they unanimously argued that the quality of services being rendered by the 11 DisCos, respectively, ought to be improved before imposing an unrealistic tariff regime on its “choiceless” consumers. They added by asking whether NERC is expecting

electricity consumers to be paying for darkness. The question made sense. In my personal view, once the 11 DisCos are not distributing light to their customers as they ought to, it therefore means that they are distributing darkness. Argued from the foregoing backdrop, it becomes expedient to ask, “Is darkness for sale?” We all know that darkness cannot be offered for sale because it has no value and does not satisfy needs since nobody needs it. Then why is NERC, as a regulatory body that ought to be protecting electricity consumers by giving DisCos the opportunity to sell darkness to Nigerians in the guise of increasing electricity tariff?

Moreso, the collective performance of the 11 DisCos falls below the expectations of millions of Nigerians if the promises made during the last presidential campaign of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is anything to go by. When I watched and read his lips during the campaign period I was expecting the performance of the DisCos by now to equal what is obtainable in several African countries that have made significant strides in electricity supplies to their citizens, who are virtually consumers.

Against the foregoing backdrop, it is expedient to explore some of the front-runners in Africa in terms of quality electricity supplies as compared to Nigeria.

Egypt, for instance, is achieving a remarkable 100% national electricity access rate for both rural and urban populations. As gathered, Egypt sources

its electricity mainly from hydropower and thermal power stations. The country is also advancing as a leader in the renewable energy sector and has plans to export surplus electricity through interconnections to Europe, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa.

In a similar vein, Morocco, like Egypt, boasts of a 100% electricity access rate for both rural and urban areas. Located in North Africa, Morocco is a high-potential renewable energy market, particularly in solar energy. The country aims to increase the share of renewables in its energy mix to 52% for wind and solar by 2030.

Just like other African countries that are doing well in terms of electricity supplies to their citizens, Tunisia is reputed to be covering all its domestic consumption needs; Tunisia achieves 100% national electricity access. The country predominantly generates electricity from natural gas and is committed to long-term investments in renewable energy, targeting a 30% share of renewables by 2023.

Still in the same similar nexus is Algeria with a 99.8% national electricity access rate, Algeria ranks among the top electrified countries in Africa.

Natural gas accounts for 96% of its installed capacity, with the remaining 4% sourced from a combination of oil, solar, hydropower, and wind.

Within the ranks of countries that are doing well or better in terms of electricity supplies is Gabon, which is noted to boasts of an electricity access

rate of 91.6%. While rural areas have lower access of 27.8%, the urban population enjoys a higher rate 98.6%. The country aims to introduce a sustainable energy mix, including biomass, natural gas, and hydropower, to improve access across the rural population.

Also in the same league of successful countries in the area of electricity supply is Ghana. As gathered, its electricity mix includes hydropower, thermal energy, and gas. Currently, it has a national electricity access rate of 85.9%, with 74% access in rural areas and 94% in urban zones. The country has promising prospects for better balancing its electricity sources. Thanks to significant natural gas reserves and various renewable resources.

Given the foregoing shining examples been shone by these countries, it will not be mistaken in this context to opine that they have made commendable efforts to provide reliable and accessible electricity to their citizens, contributing to socioeconomic growth and industrialization across the continent.

Against the foregoing backdrop, it is expedient to urge NERC to give the 11 DisCos a marching order that would enable them catch up with other African countries mentioned in this context as it is very obvious that Nigeria is lagging behind in terms of provision of reliable electricity to its citizens.

Isaac Asabor is a business news reporter

Many Nigerians don't know Ghana is larger than Southern Nigeria

AZUKA ONWUKA

Smaller countries are also easier to manage. A look at the Human Development Index (HDI) list shows that no country with more than 100 million population is in the top 15. The same thing happens when the list of most liveable cities is published. The top cities are usually from countries with smaller populations, except for Osaka, which is from Japan, with over 100 million people. Even the cities of the United States rarely make the top 10.

One ridiculous point some Nigerians raise any time they want to prove their supremacy over Ghana is that Ghana is the size of one state in Nigeria. And many people who don't bother to investigate things lap it up and repeat it during discussions and debates.

Many people say it is mere social media banter or “cruise” (in Nigerian lingo), but it goes beyond that. Looking at the map of Africa or West Africa, many are deceived into believing that Ghana is very small, and they spread that misinformation. Comedians use it in their jokes. Speakers use it to buttress their points. Friends use it during chats.

The challenge is that whatever is regularly repeated in public discourse attains the stature of truth. Many people no longer bother to verify it. Their logic is that if it were false, people would not be repeating it, and it would have been punctured with facts. But things don't usually work that way.

At over 238,000 square kilometres, Ghana is larger than the whole of Southern Nigeria (which is slightly over 200,000sq km). That is, Ghana is larger than South-East, South-South

and South-West combined. There are 17 states in the south of Nigeria. Many people find it hard to believe this. But that is a fact.

Ghana is about 20 times larger than Qatar which has 11,627sq km – that is about the landmass of Rivers State, which ranks number 26 among Nigerian 36 states. Meanwhile, Qatar hosted the last World Cup, but Nigeria, despite its large population and landmass, is not mentioned among the countries that can host the World Cup in the next 20 years.

If Qatar is described as small, how can Singapore be described? Little? Tiny? Minute? Well, Singapore has about 700sq km (the size of Lekki peninsula in Lagos), but is one of the best countries of the world when it comes to the HDI. In the 2022 HDI list, Singapore is number 9, while the United States is 20. Landlocked Switzerland is number 1. Ghana places 145th, within the group categorised as “medium human development,” while Nigeria is 161st and placed in the group categorised as “low human development.”

With a population of 34 million people, Ghana has almost the same population as Canada, which many Nigerians want to flee to. Canada holds the 18th position in HDI. Ghana has a larger population than each of Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Republic of Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Qatar, Singapore, Belgium, Greece, etc.

Many Nigerians also make this vacuous point to prove their supremacy when Nigerian states or zones are being discussed. Those who do this usually compare the landmass or population

of one zone with another state to prove how that zone is too small. The queer thing is that those who make this point leave out important issues like literacy rate, poverty rate, etc and focus on landmass or population as if these two factors, on their own, confer any special advantage on any state or zone. For example, Lagos State is by far the smallest state in Nigeria in landmass but has the largest GDP and amenities by Nigerian standards.

On the surface, a large population should be a plus. A large population conveys the image of power: large market, strength, etc. That is what China and India have to their advantage. A country with a large population can throw its weight around if it has some other things to display. It also has a ready-made population for its products and services.

Landmass is also a plus on the surface. It gives a country enough room to do different types of things, especially if the land is even and fertile. These include agriculture, construction, and conservation, expansion of cities and establishment of new cities.

Russia has the largest landmass on earth (17,098,242sq km). In fact, the land mass of Russia is almost that of the combined landmass of Canada and China, which are second and third, respectively. Yet Russia under Vladimir Putin is not satisfied with that large land area. In February 2014, Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine. In February 2022, it invaded Ukraine and is currently prosecuting a war to annex the whole of Ukraine.

What makes a country tick is neither landmass nor population. Think of how

the United Kingdom, France and Spain conquered and colonised virtually all the countries of Africa, Asia, South America, North America and Oceania. By 1850 when the United Kingdom was conquering Nigeria and other African countries, its population was less than 30 million people. Before Africa, it had conquered and ruled many countries in North America. From Nigeria to Ghana, Kenya, India/Pakistan/Bangladesh, Malaysia/Singapore, the UK was conquering and ruling many countries at the same time. After conquering these countries, it ruled them for over 100 years before granting them independence, mostly after a fierce struggle or war.

The UK, France, Spain or Portugal did not conquer these countries because of their superior population and landmass. They achieved that through their superior firepower. Most of them had earlier been conquered by the Roman Empire. They saw that they lost to Rome because Rome was more organised and had a superior military. Therefore, they built an organised country which used technology to create guns, ships and other machines that made it easier to conquer many countries and rule them at the same time.

Interestingly, some countries that were colonised have overtaken their colonisers. The UK overtook Rome. The US overtook the UK. Even though India has not overtaken the UK in HDI, it overtook the UK long ago in GDP.

Regrettably, many of those countries that used technology to conquer other continents are still using technology to rule over many continents. They do this by producing most of the goods and services that other continents con-

sume. This increases their wealth and makes the consuming nations depend on them. The consuming nations also borrow money regularly from the richer nations, thereby perpetually tied to them like puppets.

The implication is that the richer nations have become more stable, while the poorer nations have become less stable. This has led to a desperate emigration of people from the less stable countries to the more stable ones. Interestingly, the more stable countries like Canada, United Kingdom, United States, Australia, etc, even have programmes through which professionals from the less stable countries are brought in as permanent residents or citizens. The more these professionals leave their countries of birth, the more those less stable countries lose experts in different fields and become more unstable, while the stable countries get stronger. Therefore, in all ramifications, the developed countries win while the developing countries lose.

Smaller countries are also easier to manage. A look at the HDI list shows that no country with more than 100 million population is in the top 15. The same thing happens when the list of most liveable cities is published. The top cities are usually from countries with smaller populations, except for Osaka which is from Japan with over 100 million people. Even the cities of the United States rarely make the top 10.

Onwuka is a trainer on effective writing/speaking; professional editor; public relations professional



EBS RECRUITMENT 2024

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates to fill the following positions below:

1.) Reporter II & 1- TV (Grade Level 08/09) – Position 4

Key Responsibilities:

- Capable of maintaining an ethical and objective standard in reporting
- Ability to meet deadlines and accurately fact-check information.
- Excellent observation and judgment skills
- Superb communication and networking skills, along with an aptitude to effectively extract information.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor degree in Journalism, communications, English or relevant field with a minimum of 2 years working experience as a journalist or reporter.
- Master's degree in the relevant position will be an added advantage
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT-MSWORD, EXCEL/Broadcast television network
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

2.) TV/Radio Producer - TV (Grade Level 08/09) – Position 4

Key Responsibilities:

- Source funding for projects
- Create a budget and schedule for projects
- Find new projects to pursue
- Edit the script where necessary
- Excellent time management
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Ability to solve problems quickly and effectively
- Willingness to work irregular hours

Qualifications:

- A degree in Film Production or relevant field
- Prior experience with film production
- Master's degree for Grade Level 09 is required
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT-MSWORD, EXCEL/Broadcast television network
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

3.) Presenter 1 – TV (Grade 09) – Position 2

Key Responsibilities:

- Understanding of the Radio/TV Industry
- Developing programs of assigned belt to suit the stations demographic and brand identity
- Moderating panels or talks shows, interviewing show quests on topic in line with the station's policies, NBC rules and other relevant governing bodies
- Attention to details

Qualifications:

- HND or BSc. in Journalism, Linguistics and other related courses
- Must have 3 years' experience in presentation on radio and television.
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT-MSWORD, EXCEL/Broadcast television network
- Fluent skill in the use of English Language without affectation.
- Must be able to read and write in British English.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

4.) Presenter II – TV (Grade Level 08) – Position 2

Key Responsibilities:

- Understanding of the Radio/TV Industry
- Developing programs of assigned belt to suit the stations demographic and brand identity
- Moderating panels or talks shows, interviewing show quests on topic in line with the station's policies, NBC rules and other relevant governing bodies
- Attention to details

Qualifications:

- HND or BSc. in Journalism, Linguistics and other related courses.
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT-MSWORD, EXCEL/Broadcast television network
- Fluent skill in the use of English Language without affectation.
- Must be able to read and write in British English.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

5.) Senior Presenter - TV (Grade Level 10) – Position 1

Key Responsibilities:

- Understanding of the Radio/TV Industry
- Developing programs of assigned belt to suit the stations demographic and brand identity
- Moderating panels or talks shows, interviewing show quests on topic in line with the station's policies, NBC rules and other relevant governing bodies
- Attention to details

Qualifications:

- HND or BSc. in Journalism, Linguistics and other related courses
- M.A. or MSC will be an added advantage

- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT- MSWORD, EXCEL/Broadcast television network
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT/Broadcast television network
- Must have 6 years' experience in presentation on radio and television.
- Fluent skill in the use of English Language without affectation.
- Must be able to read and write in British English.
- Good body language during communication
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

6) Production Directors – Master Control Room – TV (G. Levels 12/10/09/08/07) – Positions 7

Key responsibilities:

- Responsible for performing all on – air operations to include recording, downloading, uploading and editing of all on – air programming and commercial material in a live news and programmes.
- Operate all control room equipment associated with a typical live News and Programmes
- Monitor and maintain the quality, continuity and availability of multiple networks and distribution channels in a live and non-live environment
- Monitors, video/audio quality and signal availability using waveform monitors, meters and other test and monitoring equipment
- Prepare and maintain sports, news, programmes and associated database for air
- Capture and encoding of content related to on-air schedules, operate on-air branding for the news.
- Assists media operations group in the recording and storage of content feeds
- Manages deployment and retrieval of playlists and as –run files and monitors commercial insertion system
- Integrates live and previously recorded program content with commercial and promotional spots
- Maintains program and break continuity
- Able to work any scheduled time, including nights, weekends and holidays

Qualifications:

- Must hold a B.Sc/B.A/B.Eng in any of these fields with First or Second Class options
- Mass Comm., Electrical Electronics, Computer Science or qualification in an associated field and a Master's degree would be an added advantage.
- Must have a minimum of 3 - 6 - 9 years work experience respectively for each grade level
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT/Broadcast television network
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

7.) Graphics- Film and Voice Editors – TV (G. Levels 10/09/08) – Positions 5

Key responsibilities:

- Responsible for recording, downloading, uploading and editing of all on – air programming and commercial material
- Operate all control room equipment associated with graphics
- Monitors, video/audio quality and signal availability using waveform monitors, meters and other test and monitoring equipment
- Capture and encoding of content related to on-air schedules, operate on-air branding for the news.
- Assists media operations group in the recording, storage of content feeds and graphical works
- Manages deployment and retrieval of playlists and as –run files and monitors commercial insertion system
- Integrates live and previously recorded program content and ensure a balance in the voicing
- Able to work any scheduled time, including nights, weekends and holidays

Qualifications:

- Must hold a B.Sc/B.A/B.Eng in any of these fields with, at least a Second Class Upper
- Mass Comm., Electrical Electronics, Computer Science or qualification in an associated field and a Master's degree would be an added advantage.
- Must have a minimum of 3 - 6 years' work experience respectively to be qualified for grade levels 10 - 09
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT/Broadcast television network
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

8.) Senior Officer – Programme Scheduling – Radio/TV (Grade 10) – Position 1

Key Responsibilities

- Provide strong support in the area of scheduling programs
- Provide accurate and reliable statistics
- Collate and analyze data
- Prepare relevant reports to inform decision making
- Design and manage surveys, process and analyze data to enable effective allocation of resources, advocate for change in policy and other decision making elements

- Foster teamwork and meaningfully contribute to team's performance outcomes. Any other relevant duty as assigned

Minimum Qualification

- A degree in Library Management of any of the discipline of social science or humanities
- A Masters' degree in any of the discipline specified above will be an added advantage.
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least (6) six years' working experience
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

9.) Officer II or I – Programme Scheduling – Radio/TV (Grade Level 8/9) – Position 2

Key Responsibilities

- Scheduling programs
- Ensure that Video/Audio programs are properly profiled
- Good records keeping of programs in the Library
- Foster teamwork and meaningfully contribute to team's performance outcomes. Any other relevant duty as assigned

Minimum Qualification

- A degree in Library Management of any of the discipline of social science or humanities
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least (3) three years' working experience for Grade 9 position
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

10.) Senior Officer – Accounts (Grade Level 10) – Position 1

Key Responsibilities

- Manage preparation, payment of salaries and remittance of Third-Party deductions simultaneously
- Organize and supervise the finance and accounting functions in a manner that facilitates transparency and accountability in the management of state funds
- Ensure that actual expenditures are in line with the approved budget
- Identify effective tax planning measures on a continuous basis
- Assist in recording and safeguarding the assets of the Library Board
- Ensure completeness, adequacy and integrity of financial records
- Ensures accurate recording and appropriate treatment of accounting data, including processing of Accounts Payable, Credit & Accounts receivable, Assets, Inventory, etc.

Minimum Qualification

- Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Banking & Finance or any related field
- NYSC discharge certificate or Exemption Letter
- Preferably, Minimum of six (6) Years' Work Experience within Edo State Civil Service while rising through the ranks
- Professional certification, ICAN or ANAN Required.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

11.) Senior Admin Officer/Admin Officer I (Grade Level 09) – Position 1

Key Responsibilities

- Make submissions and prepare draft letters on specific matters
- Initiate the preparation of draft memorandum and speeches.
- Establish and maintain relevant controls and feedback systems to monitor the operation of the department.
- Manage the preparation and maintenance of periodic reports necessary to carry out the functions of the department as necessary or requested
- Lead, Coach, mentor and develop staff to meet expectations for productivity, quality, continuous improvement, and goal accomplishment.
- Appropriately communicate agency information through department meetings, one-on-one meetings, and appropriate email and regular interpersonal communication.
- Oversee general facility maintenance
- Manage employee's health and safety in the work place by ensuring adherence to employee safety and health regulations Agency-wide
- Ensure all departments have appropriate space, infrastructure, and workplace environment to function at an optimal level as defined EDSG policy, standards and guidelines.
- Manage the fleet and drivers and other associated assignment

Minimum Qualification

- Bachelor's Degree in any of the disciplines of Social science or Humanities.
- Master's degree in the relevant field
- NYSC discharge certificate or Exemption Letter
- Preferably, Minimum of five (3) Years' Work Experience within the Ministry, rising through the ranks
- Professional certification in any Administration course.
- Proficient in Ms-word, Excel, Presentation etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

12.) Admin Officer II (Grade Level 08) – Position 2



EBS RECRUITMENT 2024

Key Responsibilities

- Make submissions and prepare draft letters on specific matters
- Manage the preparation and maintenance of periodic reports necessary to carry out the functions of the department as necessary or requested
- Appropriately communicate agency information through department meetings, one-on-one meetings, and appropriate email and regular interpersonal communication.
- Oversee general facility maintenance
- Manage employee's health and safety in the work place by ensuring adherence to employee safety and health regulations Agency-wide
- Ensure all departments have appropriate space, infrastructure, and workplace environment to function at an optimal level as defined EDSG policy, standards and guidelines.
- Manage the fleet and drivers and other associated assignment

Minimum Qualification

- Bachelor's Degree in any of the disciplines of Social science or Humanities.
- NYSC discharge certificate or Exemption Letter
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, Presentations etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

13.) Statistician (Grade Level 09) – 1

Key Responsibilities

- Provide strong support in the area of Planning, Research, Statistics and Technology in the discharge of assigned duties and responsibilities
- Provide accurate and reliable statistics
- Design questionnaires for the collection of statistical data
- Collate and analyze data
- Respond to enquiries on statistics from the State, researchers and stakeholders
- Prepare relevant reports to inform decision making
- Design and manage surveys, process and analyze data to enable effective allocation of resources, advocate for change in policy and other decision making elements
- Foster teamwork and meaningfully contribute to team's performance outcomes. Any other relevant duty as assigned

Minimum Qualification

- A degree in any of the discipline of social science or humanities
- A Masters' degree in Industrial & Labor Relations or any of the discipline specified above will be an added advantage.
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least (3) three years' working experience for Grade Level 09 position.
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, Presentation etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

14.) Telecom/Broadcast/Sound Engineers (Grade Level 08/09/10) – Position 4

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for operating, monitor, and adjust audio, video, lighting and broadcast equipment to ensure consistent quality
- Set and take down equipment for events and live performances
- Record speech, music, and other sounds on recording equipment or computers, sometimes using complex software
- Synchronize sounds and dialogue with action taking place on tv or in movie productions
- Convert video and audio records to digital formats for editing on computers
- Install audio, video and lighting equipment
- Report any problems that arise with complex equipment and make routine repairs
- Keep records of recordings and equipment used

Qualifications

- A degree in Electronics, Computer, Sound or Telecom Engineering (B.Eng/B.SC Eng)
- A Masters' degree in the discipline specified above will be an added advantage for Grade Levels 09/10 and Professional Certification (COREN)
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least 3 - 6 years' working experience for Grade Level 09/10 positions.
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, CAD softwares etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

15.) Principal Technical Officers – Engineering/Equipment Technician (Grade Level 10) Positions 2

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for providing technical and practical support to Engineers in design, construction, maintenance and repairs
- Use variety of tools, including computers and other electronic devices
- Able to work with CAD software to create complex designs when needed
- Supervision on subordinates to install, maintain, and repair electronic and mechanical equipment
- Carry out routine checks and tests
- Provide technical advice and support to colleagues and customers
- Troubleshoot and diagnose faults and malfunctions
- Keep records of recordings and equipment used
- Carry out modifications and upgrades
- Order and maintain stocks of spares and components

Qualifications

- HND Electrical/Electronics, Computer, Sound or Telecom Engineering
- A PGD/MSc in the discipline specified above will be an added advantage and Professional Certification (COREN)
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least 6 years' working experience.
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, CAD softwares etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

16.) Senior Technical Officer (Grade Level 10) – Position 2

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for providing technical and practical support to Engineers in design, construction, maintenance and repairs
- Carry out systems maintenance, repairs and installations
- Provide technical support
- Diagnose faults and inspections to check equipment performance
- Document test results and produce reports
- Maintain records of installation and maintenance activities

Qualifications

- HND Electrical/Electronics, Computer, Sound or Telecom Engineering
- A PGD/MSc in the discipline specified above will be an added advantage and Professional Certification (COREN)
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least 3 years' working experience.
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, CAD softwares etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

17.) Technical Officers (Grade Level 06 - 08) – Position 6

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for providing technical and practical support to Engineers
- Use variety of tools, including computers and other electronic devices
- Install, maintain, and repair electronic and mechanical equipment
- Carry out routine checks and tests
- Troubleshoot and diagnose faults and malfunctions
- Keep records of recordings and equipment used
- Carry out modifications and upgrades
- Maintain stocks of spares and components

Qualifications

- OND, HND Electrical/Electronics, Computer, Sound or Telecom Engineering
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, CAD softwares etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

18.) Cameramen (Grade Level 04 – 07) Positions 6

Key Responsibilities

- Manage and operate motion picture cameras to record scenes related to TV Broadcasts, advertisement and motion film

- Compose shots and proper framing
- Able to perform camera moves accurately
- Multi-task and take direction

Qualifications

- SSCE/OND in Mass Comm., Film Production or related field
- At least 3 years' working experience.
- Proficient in computer usage
- Applicants must not be more than 50 years old or younger to be considered for the job

Location: Edo

19.) Reporters I & II - Radio (Grade Level 08/09) – Position 3

Key Responsibilities:

- Capable of maintaining an ethical and objective standard in reporting
- Ability to meet deadlines and accurately fact-check information.
- Excellent observation and judgment skills
- Superb communication and networking skills, along with an aptitude to effectively extract information.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor degree in Journalism, communications, English or relevant field with a minimum of 2 years working experience as a journalist or reporter.
- Must have completed NYSC or hold a Certificate of Exemption
- Knowledge in IT-MSWORD, EXCEL/Broadcast television network
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

Location: Edo

20.) Marketers (Grade Level 08) – Positions 4

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for promoting and selling products and services to customers, typically working in a retail store or business environment.
- Knowledge about the products and services
- Generating sales leads, maintaining customer relationships, providing product information and advice to customers, negotiating contracts and closing sales, meeting sales targets
- Preparing and submitting sales reports

Qualifications:

- A degree in any of the discipline of social science or humanities.
- NYSC Discharge or Exception Certificate
- At least (3) three years' working experience in salesmanship
- Proficient in MS-Word, Excel, Presentation etc.
- Applicants must be 35 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

21.) Clerical Officers (Grade Level 04/05) – Positions 3

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for receiving mails, dispatching, (physically and online)
- Managing records and proper documentation
- Arrangement of meeting places
- Ensuring that meeting schedules are pasted on notice board

Qualifications:

- SSCE/NECO not beyond 2010
- Any Senior High School Certificates with up to 5 related credits (English inclusive)
- At least (3) three years' working experience
- Computer literacy.
- Applicants must not be more than 40 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

22.) Storekeepers (Grade Level 04/05) – Positions 2

Key Responsibilities

- Responsible for receiving materials
- Managing records and proper documentation of records
- Arrangement of materials and equipment in the store
- Ensuring that the relevant receipts are issued

Qualifications:

- SSCE/NECO
- Any Senior High School Certificates with up to 5 related credits (English inclusive)
- At least (3) three years' working experience
- Computer literacy.
- Applicants must not be more than 40 years old or younger to be considered for the job.

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ThePolity

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Season of subsidy removal and tariff hikes

JIBUNMA ANTHONY-SPINKS

“Please Sir, I want some more. To do a great right you may do a little wrong; and you may take any means which the end to be attained will justify.” That is one of Charles Dickens’ most popular lines quoted from his novel, *Oliver Twist* - a poor orphan rendered notorious and beggarly, always asking for more food because of extreme poverty. The theme of desperation induced by hardship is further accentuated when one of Oliver’s roommates could not sleep at night for fear that the boy by his side might eat him up. Oliver came at a time when a large population of England were living in abject poverty, forcing many of them to be cramped into what they called ‘work houses’ with little or nothing to live for.

The predicament of poor Nigerians today is not much different from that of the pitiable character of Oliver Twist and his poor English friends.

A few weeks ago, two students of Nasarawa State University were trampled to death and fourteen injured during a stampede to get hand-outs of rice palliatives being shared by the school authorities.

In this country, a goat seller parked his truckload of goats by the roadside and went to a nearby ‘mamaput’ for lunch; he came back to find a band of men and women looting his goats from the truck. Evidently, that level of hardship and deprivation is capable of driving people crazy.

In recent times, there have been several reported incidents of looting of food items from shops and moving trucks, of hungry folks burgling their neighbours’ kitchen and carting away their pot of soup. Hardship and poverty have exposed Nigerians to all kinds of indignities comparable only to the life of lower animals. Palliatives that Nigerians used to be ashamed to queue for have become manna from heaven to the extent that they are now willing to die in order to get a crumb of it. Many believe that much of the hardship was the direct result of some of the reform policies of the present federal government under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The removal of oil subsidy and recent electricity tariff hike rank highest in the catalogue of policies perceived as anti-people.

It has been argued that though these harsh policies may create initial hardship, in the long run the country would be better for it. Of course, everybody knows that typically, this argument would be dismissed as story for the gods because it sounds like a broken record in the ears of the average Nigerian who has been hearing it from each successive government since he was born, only to be disappointed at the end. As far as the energy sector is concerned, the general belief is that what is being subsidized is darkness, not electricity, which means that more darkness should be expected in the years ahead if the present price regime continues.



TINUBU

And one bad thing about darkness is that it attracts all kinds of demons! Is it not even scandalous that eleven years after privatization of the power sector, the so-called private companies are still unable to provide meters to their customers? Instead they have the audacity to impose estimated bills on consumers, a crime that could earn them long jail terms in sane climes.

The fact that Nigerians, as intelligent as they are, could descend so low as to accept such enslavement simply beats one’s imagination. When the telecom sector was privatized, one can easily point at the benefits by simply making a call with one’s own cell phone even with borrowed data. This fact is incontrovertible. In the power sector, it is darkness and tales of woe all the way. Trying to tinker the current energy architecture as is currently being done, and then attempting to obfuscate the human intellect with technical jargon, is like storing dirty water. Everyone knows that what poor people do with dirty water is to either throw it away or use it to flush their toilets. Whether a consumer is in the so-called Band A or not, the impact of the hike will ultimately trickle down to every citizen of this country. In any case, those in other Bands not currently affected should be wise enough not to rejoice yet. The whip used in chastising the first wife is at the back of the door waiting for the second wife. The dark dynamics of darkness entrenched within the sector has not changed, and experience has shown that no amount of tariff hikes can change it except there is a total rejigging of the entire framework. The rejigging must, of course, include a thorough assessment to determine whether the GENCOS

and DISCOS are part of the problem or part of the solution. If the former is the case, the country cannot move an inch towards light.

The famous American civil rights activist, Martin Luther King Jr, once said, “If you can’t fly then run. If you can’t run then walk. If you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”

These inspirational words provoke one question Nigerians are asking today, and have been asking in recent years: with all this suffering in the land, is our country actually moving forward as being made out by some of these new-breed technocrats at Abuja? And if indeed the country is moving forward, the question is: moving forward to where?

On his inauguration on May 29, 2023, President Tinubu announced that “oil subsidy is gone”. The announcement came like a resounding knock delivered on the head of a stubborn pupil by his teacher. Painful and shocking as it was, while the na-

tion is still writhing in pain from that policy, hike in electricity tariff was again slammed on citizens. According to Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), the federal government will incur electricity subsidy commitments of as much as N1.6 trillion in 2024, a burden it considers no longer sustainable. Well, excuses are excuses. It is hard to see how executive pillow-talk and suffer-now-and-enjoy-later gospel can win the trust of citizens already buffeted with life-threatening policies. The excuse that the federal government is under pressure from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international financial organizations to remove subsidy from all subsidized items is even more pathetic because it tends to lay credence to the sad idea that the nation may indeed fall into the embarrassing category of a failed state. By the way, in whose interest is IMF mounting the pressure?

As at 2023, energy statistics showed that Nigeria has the lowest access to electricity globally with about 92 million out of the country’s over 200 million population lacking in power supply.

In the last three years, electricity tariff has been increased three times and each increase came with excruciating difficulties with no visible economic gain to the nation. With less than 3,500 miserable megawatts currently being generated, what therefore is the guarantee that the present tariff increase from N65 per kilowatt hour to N225, representing as high as 240 per cent, will be different?

Stating the obvious, the reputed social activist nicknamed Comrade Mai-Gashi, Senator Shehu Sani, said the electricity tariff hike will “electrocute human lives and businesses in Nigeria”. Add this to food inflation, exorbitant fuel and transportation costs, house rent, naira scarcity, unaffordable price of cooking gas, unemployment, and the latest madness called banditry and kidnapping, what you get is life on tenterhooks for both the rich and the poor.

From the 3,500 megawatts the country generates, over 40,000 megawatts are derived from generators. According to the Association of Nigerian Electricity Distributors, the country’s 200 million population requires a minimum of 33,000 mega-

watts, which means we haven’t even started crawling, let alone moving forward. So frankly speaking, to ask whether the country is moving forward only begs the question.

There was a time during previous regimes when the country managed to stabilize its output at around 5,000 megawatts. Ironically, those in today’s corridors of power and their followers who mobilized protesters to “occupy Lagos and Abuja” when the previous governments attempted to remove subsidies are the ones now telling Nigerians that election is over and this is not the time for criticism and protest. Diehard opponents of subsidy removal have suddenly become the strongest advocates of the same policy. Is this how to move forward?

The problem with us is self-deceit. That’s why we are where we are. Fela said we were ‘suffering and smiling’, but now we are also crying and dancing at the same time.

A number of pragmatic remedies have been put forward one of which is that states should simply go ahead and reinvent their own energy sector devoid of any of these encumbrances of tariffs and subsidy palaver from Abuja. In Delta State, for example, a number of key public establishments no longer have any business with the national grid as they get their power supply from the state-owned independent power project which has since proved more efficient than the darkness we have all along been paying for.

Secondly, renewable energy sources offer wider options across board, particularly for federating units who have the foresight to grab the opportunity.

In this season of subsidy removal and tariff hikes, it won’t be surprising if the economic experts in Abuja suddenly discover that taxing the air we breathe would provide revenue to build prisons for the poor, very much like the workhouses built by 19th century Englishmen for the likes of Oliver Twist.

By and large, one thing is certain. Just like Oliver Twist, as long as citizens of Nigeria are subjected to untold hardship, they would continue to “ask for more” until they attain a life worth living.

Anthony-Spinks writes from Asaba, Delta State.

Tinubu, Buhari, Obi, others mourn passing of ex-Abia gov, Ogbonnaya Onu

TOBORE JEROME

Nigeria as a nation was greeted on Thursday with the shocking news of the death of the first civilian governor of Abia State and former Minister of Science and Technology, Dr Ogbonnaya Onu.

Following the news, political leaders, business associate, friends and family members have expressed their grief over the passing of the APC chieftain.

President Bola Tinubu, in his condolence message, extended his deepest condolences to the Onu family over the passing of the ex-minister.

The president, in a message through his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Chief Ajuri Ngelale, described Onu as a luminous star in Nigeria’s political firmament, a man of proven integrity, defiant of indiscipline.

The statement reads, “President Bola Tinubu extends his deepest condolenc-

es to the Onu family over the passing of Chief Ogbonnaya Onu, CON.

“Chief Onu passed away on Thursday at the age of 72. The President mourns a luminous star in Nigeria’s political firmament. The first civilian governor of Abia State; former minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, a principal draughtsman in the founding of the All Progressives Congress (APC), and a

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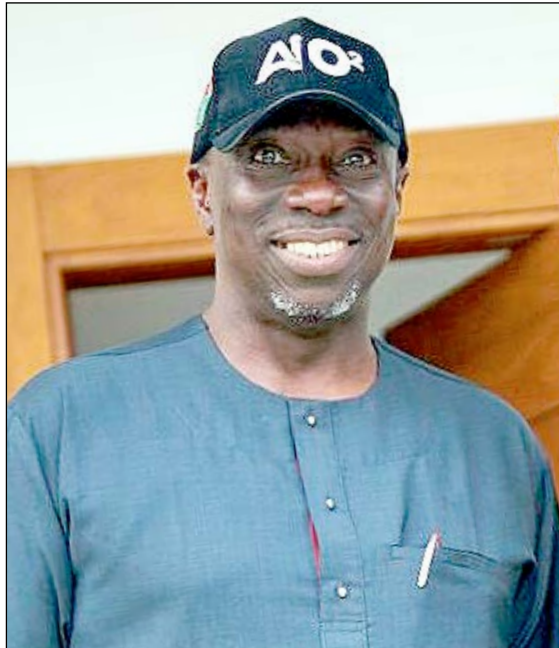
'Sabiness' and the Asue-Ogie unbeatable team

● Edo 2024 gubernatorial election augury

AUSTIN ISIKHUEMEN

Barrister (Dr.) Asue Igbodalo was officially given the PDP ticket for the Edo State 2024 governorship election at the National Secretariat of the party in Abuja on Tuesday, 27th February 2024. The presentation of the certificate of return marked the official closure of the primaries held at the Ogbemudia Stadium on 22nd February 2024. His nearest 'rival' polled 1 vote. It would have been 2 had he not left to run his own primary in his own yard and declare himself winner!

He defeated, rather as he would love to humbly put it, came first, among a galaxy of aspirants many of whom would make a good governor too. Edo is not looking for a good governor. They want, and justifiably deserve, an Excellent Governor who will deliver superlative performance and put Edo as primus inter pares in the comity of states of the federation the way then Brigadier Osaigbovo Ogbemudia did in the '70s. Asue fitted the bill and they delivered a verdict by giving him 577 out of 578 valid votes cast. The mandate was clear and unequivocal.



IGHODALO



OGIE

Before Barrister Osarodion Ogie joined the PDP gubernatorial ticket on the 27th March 2024 as running mate to the brilliant technocrat, suave and

streetwise homey, empathetic people's man, debonair marketer and corporate legal luminary, all we saw in huge billboards, banners and posters was 'MAN

WEY SABI'. After the current super-efficient grassroots mobilizer and Secretary to Edo State Government was announced as running mate, people began to see AiO2 and 'MEN WEY SABI' or 'PEOPLE WEY SABI'. Edo is one of the South-South states where pidgin English is the oil with which conversations are eaten! That's what drives this apt SABI narrative (or is it 'narration'?).

Wetin be this SABI sef? Why would such an intellectually loaded ticket hinge their marketing, branding if you like, on a phenomenon of Sabiness? As our Waffi (Warri) folks like to yarn, 'These Asue Ogie guymen wan use pidgin gbege opponents o! Some diehard Edo voters will add, 'Who no sabi no go sabi' or 'Asue and Ogie sabi die!' They do not mean death at all, literally or figuratively. What they are saying in this flowery language, in which Asue is an adept, is that the Asue-Ogie team's capacity, capability and integrity are unassailable. Some will even add, 'Their sabiness no get part two!' in the lingo of Upper Iwaka film producers and marketers.

Sabiness is capacity, capability, fitness for purpose and an uncanny arrival at the right time in the right place with just what is needed! It is a situation where adequate preparation meets opportunity. Round pegs in round holes. A team with enough chutzpa that even their opponents longingly, secretly, but forlornly, wish they were playing on their side! A team that keeps saying the right things the right way at the right time to the right audiences across the world while first attempts at imitation by their main opponent has created a bumbling foot-in-the-mouth scenario! The Asue-Ogie team is Sabiness personified.

Asue had the best education at the best schools at the right age and had outstanding, verifiable results. He went on to co-found Banwo & Ighodalo, a legal firm with more than a hundred lawyers in its employ partnering professionally with the very best law firms across the globe. The records of achievements of this firm are as long as Mission Road with Upper Mission combined! To become Chairman of Nigerian Breweries and successfully run that behemoth to deliver best-in-class profitability and corporate image in line with stringent Heineken code of business conduct is no mean feat!

Asue Ighodalo simultaneously chaired, or was a member of, the Boards

of several companies involved in varied businesses from manufacturing, banking, foods and beverage, legal, nonprofit foundations and technology. This is proof positive of his ability to lead and multitask. He has resigned from all these profitable ventures to serve our people. Has any of the others resigned from anything, made such sacrifice? Sabiness writ large!

Ogie, a barrister-at-law, on the other hand, has been a steady hand in guiding and advising governments in Edo State over the years. A very experienced bureaucrat and State Executive Council player that works quietly, seamlessly and without the uncouth abrasiveness of some power wielders that sometimes harm their principal. Not for Ogie the vaulting ambition of some which has led to their fall from grace in a self-inflicted unravelling and demystification! Ogie is loyal and that is why he can never 'Ioya' in the inimitable Esan words of the great Chief Tony Akhakon Aneni.

Before the badly-managed palliatives became a buzzword in Nigeria, Ogie has quietly been giving palliatives to citizens by way of sharing live chickens and rice at festive periods at his home to whoever can get there. The selfless giving has no political, ethnic nor party affiliation requirement. Just stay on the long queue and when it gets to your turn, you get your live chicken and rice and take the joy of the season to your family no matter how poor you are! He has been doing this for many years without knowing that one day he will be a running mate to a governorship aspirant. He will bring stability, continuity and empathetic flavour to the government to be sworn in by November this year. Ask me to show you a man with demonstrated sabiness over eight years without it getting to his head and I will take you to Osarodion Ogie!

So, folks, that is the sabiness you see on the billboards that adorn strategic junctions, across highways and alleyways of Benin City at this time. That's the sabiness that's going to be put on show starting 24th April 2024 in a campaign whose indicative signs are already visible to the blind and audible to the deaf! A campaign that will sieve the chaff from the grain, and show who Edo will be proud to have work for them for the next four or eight years and represent them at the Council of State meetings with the President. A man who will not be asking for interpretation of what was said and agreed there in English. A man whose voice will be heard and respected.

Lastly, Sabiness also include the ability to network with the right people at the right places to help get things done or to leave you alone unencumbered to deliver your best effort in the interest of your people. On this score, Asue sabi the President and the President and his crew sabi Asue's sabiness and will not rig him out as democrats do not do that to one that will make one of the 36 states a shining star and give a sense of pride to the Tinubu era, not minding party affiliation. Asue and Ogie will build bridges across divides. If you still need further clarifications on the sabiness phenomenon, talk to Asue or Ogie. They listen a lot and understand questions whether you ask in English or pidgin, and will provide answers.

Isikhuemen can be reached via auxtynisi@yahoo.com.

Tinubu, Buhari, Obi, others mourn passing...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 12

valiant partner in the victory of the party in the 2015 elections.

"Most importantly, the President celebrates the life of an accomplished scholar, first-class engineer; a man of proven integrity; defiant to indiscipline, but ever yielding to the highest standards of rectitude.

"President Tinubu affirms that Chief Onu epitomizes Nigeria in concord; in wholeness, as the late statesman believed in and defended Nigeria's unity, advocated peace, and promoted fellowship across the Niger.

"The President also condoles with the friends and associates of Chief Onu, Ebonyi and Abia State Governments, and all Nigerians grieving this gaping loss.

"President Tinubu prays to God Almighty to grant repose to the gentle soul of this great leader."

Also, former President Muhammadu Buhari said the nation had lost "one of its most outstanding scientific minds and intellectuals".

The former president, in a statement through his senior special assistant on media and publicity, Garba Shehu, described Onu as an intellectual giant who contributed massively to his administration as the minister of science and technology.

"He was an intellectual giant. My heart goes out to his family, the government and people of Abia State and the country at large. May his soul rest in peace," he said.

Similarly, the presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the 2023 general election, Peter Obi, who posted on his X account, expressed sadness over the passing away of the former minister.

The former Anambra governor described Onu as a gentleman who stood for peace and interest of the nation, a patriotic and detribalised Nigerian who served the country in different capacities.

"Dr Onu was a gentleman par excellence, a patriotic and detribalised Nigerian who served the nation in different capacities. His contributions to our



● OGBONNAYA ONU

educational growth as a lecturer and author remain commendable," Obi said.

"Dr Onu was a leader who stood for peace and progress of the nation. He pursued justice and courageously stood up for equity and good governance. He was committed to the development of the nation.

"As one who understood the critical need to move our nation from consumption to production, he pursued many initiatives to boost local production for the development of the nation.

"His death is, undoubtedly, a huge loss to the nation. May God console his family, and all of us who mourn him, and grant us the fortitude to bear his sad irreplaceable loss. May God grant him eternal rest," he stated.

Imo State Governor, Hope Uzodimma, described the death of the former governor of old Abia State and ex-minister as shocking.

A statement by Oguwike Nwachuku, chief press secretary and media adviser to the Imo State governor, said his principal received with shock the sad, devastating, and unexpected news of the passing of Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, a man he loves to describe as one of Nigeria's intellectual and political giants with extraordinary gentility.

The statement said that with Dr. Onu's death, Southeast, Nigeria, and the global community have lost a states-

man who believed so much in the unity, peace, progress and development of Nigeria.

Former Abia State Governor and Chairman, Senate Committee on Privatization, Orji Uzor Kalu, in a message he personally signed, described the late politician as a nationalist who had passion for unity and progress of Nigeria.

Kalu acknowledged the invaluable contributions of the former minister to nation building.

The lawmaker, while admonishing the family of the deceased to take solace in the fact that their late patriarch lived a purposeful life, urged them to sustain his worthy legacy.

"The demise of former Governor of Abia State, Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu, is a huge loss to Ndigbo and Nigeria in general.

"The late statesman was a consummate politician and selfless philanthropist who was committed to nation building.

"Having served meritoriously in various capacities in the public sector, his wise counsel on national issues will be greatly missed.

"He will be remembered for his outstanding leadership qualities. The former governor will be greatly missed," Kalu said.

A graduate of the University of Lagos, Onu became a teacher at St. Augustine's Seminary in the Ezzamgbo area of Ebonyi State.

After the completion of his doctoral studies at the University of California, he became a lecturer in the Department of Chemical Engineering at the University of Port Harcourt, where he rose to become the pioneer head of the department.

The ex-minister began his political career as an aspirant for a senatorial seat in the old Imo State under the umbrella of the National Party of Nigeria.

In 1991, he contested for the position of Governor of Abia State on the platform of the National Republican Convention and won.

Onu was sworn in as the first executive governor of the state in January 1992.

Health & Environment

• Community Health • Primary Health • Medicine • Climate

WHO sounds alarm on viral hepatitis infections claiming 3,500 lives daily

JENNIFER OSADOH

The World Health Organization (WHO) has raised concerns over the alarming toll of viral hepatitis infections, which continue to claim the lives of approximately 3,500 people every day worldwide.

Based on the 2024 Global Hepatitis Report released at the World Hepatitis Summit 2024 in Lisbon, Portugal, the organization has emphasized the urgent need for intensified efforts to combat this silent epidemic, which is the second leading infectious cause of death globally -- with 1.3 million deaths per year, the same as tuberculosis, a top infectious killer.

Viral hepatitis, characterized by inflammation of the liver due to viral infection, encompasses hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E viruses. Among these, hepatitis B and C are of particular concern due to their chronic nature, leading to severe liver damage, cirrhosis, and an increased risk of liver cancer if left untreated.

The number of deaths from viral hepatitis climbed from 1.1 million in 2019 to 1.3 million in 2022, according to new statistics from 187 countries of which Hepatitis B was the cause of 83% of cases and Hepatitis C was the cause of 17%.

An updated WHO report indicated that an estimated 254 million people live with hepatitis B and 50 million with hepatitis C in 2022. Half the burden of chronic hepatitis B and C infections is among people 30–54 years old, with 12% among children under 18 years of age and 58% of Men for all cases.

Despite advances in medical

science and the availability of effective tools for diagnosis and treatments, decreasing product prices, testing, and treatment coverage rates have stalled with viral hepatitis still being a major cause of morbidity and mortality globally.

The WHO's latest report underscores the scale of the problem, revealing that viral hepatitis accounts for an estimated 1.3 million deaths annually, equivalent to 3,500 deaths per day. This staggering figure highlights the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to prevent, diagnose, and treat hepatitis infections on a global scale.

According to the Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus "This report paints a troubling picture: despite progress globally in preventing hepatitis infections, deaths are rising because far too few people with hepatitis are being diagnosed and treated."

"WHO is committed to supporting countries to use all the tools at their disposal - at access prices - to save lives and turn this trend around," Dr. Ghebreyesus

The revised estimates are derived from enhanced data from national prevalence surveys. They also indicate that prevention measures such as immunization and safe injections, along with the expansion of hepatitis C treatment, have contributed to reducing the incidence.

In response to the growing threat of viral hepatitis, the WHO has called for concerted action from governments, healthcare providers, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

According to WHO, much more needs to be done to

achieve its goal of eliminating viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030. This will require sustained investment in healthcare infrastructure,

expanding access to testing and diagnostics, shifting from policies to implementation for equitable treatment, strengthening primary care prevention

efforts innovative approaches to service delivery, optimizing product regulation and supply and using improved data for action as well as engaging af-

ected communities and civil society and advancing research for improved diagnostics and potential cures for hepatitis B among other actions.



EDO STATE TECHNICAL PARTNERS:

L-R: Executive Secretary, EDSPHCDA, Dr. Omosigho Izedonmwen (2nd), Honourable Commissioner for Health, Edo State, Dr. Samuel Alli (4th) in a group photograph with Members of the Edo State NTD Technical Advisory Committee drawn from the Academia, Line Ministries and MDAs, and Edo State Technical Partners.

EDSPHCDA partners Carter Centre to tackle Neglected Tropical Diseases in Edo

EDWARD OSEGHE AND
NENE OLAYE

In a concerted effort to tackle Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) head-on, the Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCDA) in partnership with the Carter Centre hosted a 2-day workshop on the Development of the Edo

State Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) Master Plan, which was climaxed with the Inauguration of the Edo State NTD Technical Advisory Committee.

The event was held from 4th to 5th April 2024, at John Odigie Oyegun Public Service Academy (JOOPSA), Benin City.

The workshop aims to establish and inaugurate the Edo

State NTD Technical Advisory Committee, outline its terms of reference, provide updates on NTDs in the State, present guidelines for the NTD Master Plan, and develop the State's NTD Master Plan.

Notably, the role of the State Technical Steering Committee is to guide the State in the implementation of NTD control in the State.

The Edo State Honourable Commissioner for Health, Dr. Samuel Alli officially inaugurated the committee which comprises the Academia led by Professor Mrs. Vivian Omuemu, Professor of Public Health and Community Medicine UNIBEN/UBTH, as Co-Chair, Dr. Omosigho Izedonmwen, Executive Secretary, EDSPHCDA, as Co-Chair, while Dr. Efeomon Esegbe, Director, Disease Control and Immunization, EDSPHCDA, is the Secretary of the Committee.

Other members of the Committee were drawn from relevant line Ministries: the Edo State Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Edo State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Ministry of Communication and Orientation, Ministry of Budget and Planning,

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASSA), The Carter Center, World Health Organisation (WHO) and Edo State NTD Coordinator.

In his opening speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the State NTD Technical Advisory Committee, the Honourable Commissioner for Health, Edo State, Dr. Samuel Alli said the inauguration of the State's Steering Committee for Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) control underscores the ministry's commitment to the health and well-being of Edo people.

He appreciated the Carter Centre for their support over the years as well as the World Health Organization for their role in NTD control in the State.

While speaking on "The Challenge of Neglected Tropical Diseases", Dr. Alli said, "Neglected Tropical Diseases are a group of debilitating illnesses that disproportionately affect the world's most vulnerable populations. These diseases thrive in poverty-stricken areas, where access to healthcare is limited, and resources are scarce. Edo State, like many other regions, faces the burden of NTDs, impacting the lives of our citizens and hindering socio-economic development."

NCDC records 164 suspected cases of mysterious illness in Sokoto

TRACY OHOVWORE AND
AGENCY REPORT

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC), announced a total of 164 unknown illnesses with a record of 4 deaths have been reported in the Isa Local government of Sokoto state.

The agency also alerted the Sokoto State Ministry of Health on the cases surrounding the mysterious disease.

A national rapid response team, NRRT, has been deployed by the NCDC to collaborate with the state Ministry of Health in investigating the matter.

According to Jide Idris, the Director-General of the NCDC, the mysterious illness was reported on March 21, 2024, to the agency which moved into

swift action to launch an investigation into the case.

While speaking with journalists in a press briefing at Abuja on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, Idris said the illness is characterized by symptoms such as abdominal distension, fever, vomiting, and weight loss, primarily affecting children aged four to 13, as well as some adults.

"Most of these cases are children aged 4–13 years, including some adults. The patients came from different wards and settlements across the LGA," He said.

He further informed that the affected wards include; Bargaja (22), Isa North (17), Isa South (98), Tozai (12), Tsabre (4), and Turba (11).

"So far, 164 suspected cases have been identified across six wards in Isa Local Government, resulting in four tragic fatalities.

"Notably, this is not the first occurrence as a similar incident was documented in 2023. That one went without a conclusive diagnosis," Idris stated.

Idris also noted that while clinical assessments and thorough investigations are ongoing; "Results indicate varying levels of lead and chromium in blood samples, prompting scrutiny of local activities such as mining and agricultural practices involving chemical usage.

"The collaborative efforts extend beyond health institutions, encompassing government agencies, research bodies, and community stakeholders.

"At the moment, security challenges hamper access to affected areas, complicating response efforts," he added.

The Director-General also

announced that 2 suspected cases are currently undergoing treatment in the Uthman Dan Fodio University Teaching Hospital (UDUTH) in Sokoto.

He also added that one was discharged on improved symptoms while four other suspected cases are also on admission at the Isa General Hospital and about 130 cases still receiving care in the Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC) in the affected LGA.

Idris further urged the ministers of the public to be vigilant, and that affected areas should also be watchful of any unusual symptoms. He also appealed that an immediate report to the Healthcare Centre or designated authorities in case of identified symptoms of the unknown illness should be made so that treatment can commence.

Poor waste management and the Nigerian society

BRADLEY IYAMU

Nigeria is a country blessed by God with its various resources and blessings. As citizens of the country, we should be proud of our nation, yet a silent threat looms large on the bustling streets – poor waste management.

Similar to many African countries, Nigeria is abreast with heaps of trash and waste materials that should be disposed of properly.

From the passengers throwing used nylon bags and pet bottles from the windows of moving vehicles to the market trader piling up trash indiscriminately, without proper disposal after the day's sales of their wares and some customers, to residents using drainage systems and gutters as an alternative mode for waste disposal, the waste management culture underscores an appalling sight even with environmental laws and policies.

While some cities across the country have improved waste management culture and practices with better enforcement, this is not so with several cities across the country. This is not to insinuate that abroad trash is not seen but it is properly disposed of where it should.

According to a 2023 report by The Insider Monkey, Nigeria is

ranked among the 25 most unhygienic countries in the world. This was based on the Mercer Health and Sanitation Index, with Nigeria exhibiting a score of 46.8, indicating a significant deviation from the standard of cleanliness associated with countries deemed to be clean.

"The issue of trash disposal in Nigeria persists, leading to the contamination of waterways and varying impacts on different towns within the country" the report states.

If as a citizen, you step outside your place of work or even your home you will trash everywhere. Undoubtedly, as one walks the streets of some major cities, wraps, nylon bags, sachet water packets, pet bottles, and fruit peels litter the street.

Environmental activists often wonder why the same practice can't be imbibed in Nigeria. Why can't we understand that it is not enough for our homes and surroundings to be clean, our country as a whole should follow suit.

Nigeria produces an estimated 32 million tons of solid waste per year, with only about 20-30 percent of it being collected and managed correctly.

The country's management of solid waste is problematic and has been well documented just as its effects on the well-being

of the citizens. But it is not the government that produces this waste; it is the citizens who have the option to burn trash before it is collected by waste management.

However, waste can be recycled and repurposed to generate wealth, jobs, and other advantages for the environment and society. But this is not the norm in Nigeria, which needs to be changed before the tipping

point is reached.

The remainder of the waste is either dumped in unauthorized places or burned, contributing to pollution and health risks.

As citizens of this beautiful country, we should understand that we are destroying it with our own hands.

While some see it as part of the everyday routine, it shouldn't be so. We can't afford to wait for the government to solve all our

problems for us.

Each plastic bag (nylon) that is dropped out of a moving car, every sachet water that is randomly thrown away, and refuse dumps, found in almost every area, are some of the breeding sites for mosquitoes.

Other diseases that can be traceable to poor waste management include typhoid, diarrhoea, cholera, asthma, and bronchitis.

In 2021, Nigeria recorded 111,062 Cholera cases and 3,640 cholera deaths. Nigeria produces the most solid garbage in Africa with approximately 70 percent of it being plastic waste that winds up in landfills water Bodies or sewers.

According to the World Bank Nigeria is the tenth largest producer of unmanaged plastics in the world accounting for 2.7 percent of the global total.



SRADEV NIGERIA:

Participants at the stakeholder workshop in Abuja, organised by the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) in collaboration with Sustainable Research and Action for Environmental Development (SRADev Nigeria), to raise awareness and strengthen national capacity for lead paint elimination in Nigeria.

Lead paint: Why it should be eliminated in Nigeria

Millions of people, many of whom are children and pregnant women, have suffered lifelong health complications like anaemia, hypertension, and reproductive organ damage as a result of low-level lead exposure.

This situation is considerably more worrying when it is understood that the neurological and behavioural impacts of lead could be irreversible.

Generally, the common question that any right-thinking person will ask is, "What in the world is lead?" And what is its relationship to humans? To put it simply, "lead" is a "chemical," and it is used to produce a variety of products found in and

around our homes, including paint, which is the subject of our discussion.

With this understanding in mind, it is evident just how vital this lethal material is to contemporary living, especially considering its function in boosting socioeconomic development. Lead components, for instance, are employed in paint manufacturing due to their special chemical characteristics that speed up drying, boost durability, preserve freshness, and withstand moisture-induced corrosion.

As beneficial as lead is in daily life, it is also a basic human right for all citizens to know that its components can be hazardous to human health

and the environment if not handled properly.

In Nigeria, how to effectively regulate chemicals remains a critical prerequisite for achieving sustainable development, which is why the country's Federal Ministry of Environment, following its mandate, has been making concerted efforts to ensure the environmentally sound management of chemicals, including lead, for the sake of public safety.

EnviroNews Nigeria reports that in light of the above, on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, in Abuja, the National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA), in collaboration with

Sustainable Research and Action for Environmental Development (SRADev Nigeria), organised a regional workshop to raise awareness on the dangers, safer alternatives, and reformulation paint methods for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Although the activity was motivated to achieve several goals, one that stands out is to enhance public knowledge of the negative health and economic impact of lead compounds, as well as to strengthen the national capacity for eliminating the use of lead paint in Nigeria. It was also designed to help improve understanding of Nigeria's current lead paint standards, ongoing efforts to

review them, and the gazetted National Environmental Chemicals and Pesticides Regulations, 2024, for lead paint in Nigeria, to ensure that all stakeholders are well-informed and ready to comply with the new guidelines.

Speaking at the ceremony, NESREA director-general, Professor Aliyu Jauro, acknowledged that his agency was fully aware of the gravity of the problem and has been actively working to protect public health and the environment by regulating chemicals, including paint and other products that contain lead.

This is significant, he explained, because lead is a highly hazardous material that can cause developmental delays,

irreversible brain damage, and a variety of other health problems. It also poses substantial health risks, particularly for young people. Consequently, it is critical to understand that, to ensure a healthier and more sustainable future, getting rid of lead from paint is not only feasible but also necessary.

"We will provide technical guidance, share best practices, and facilitate collaborations to ensure a smooth transition to lead-free paints," Prof. Jauro stated, assuring participants that NESREA and SRADev Nigeria would help them through the Lead Exposure Elimination Project to achieve their goal of ensuring a lead-free society.

CLASSIFIED

SIGMUS

That my name was wrongly captured on my BANK ACCOUNT as SIGMUS THOMPSON instead of AGAZUMA SIGMUS OSEMUDIAMEN. My full and correct name is AGAZUMA SIGMUS OSEMUDIAMEN. AGAZUMA (surname) SIGMUS (first name) and OSEMUDIAMEN (middle). Concerned authorities should take note.

EBOSETALE

I, formerly known and addressed as OSOJIE JULIET EBOSETALE now wish to be known and addressed as JULIET EBOSETALE OKOEGUALE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

LINDA

I, formerly known and addressed as OMOKARO LINDA now wish to be known and addressed as EDOKPAYI OVBOKHAN LINDA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSAZEE

I, formerly known and addressed as OMOROGBE OSAZEE LILLIAN now wish to be known and addressed as OWENS OSAZEE LILLIAN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OWENS

That ENORH OWENS, ELORHO OWENS, OWENS .E. ANDREW, OWENS ANDREW and OWENS ELOHOR ANDREW is one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as OWENS ELOHOR ANDREW. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities should take note.

OSARENWINDA

I, formerly known and addressed as OSARENMWINDA JEFF now wish to be known and addressed as OSARENWINDA OSAYANDE JEFF. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSAZEE

That I wish to add OMOROGIEVA to the names on my NIN which is JOHN OSAZEE. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as OMOROGIEVA JOHN OSAZEE. OMOROGIEVA is my surname, JOHN is my first name and OSAZEE is my middle name. Concerned authorities should take note.

EBERE

That OKENWA FIDELIA EBERE and DANIEL FIDELIA EBERE is one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as DANIEL FIDELIA EBERE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

BERNARD

That my name was wrongly captured on my BANK ACCOUNT as OFUANI BERNARD A.J instead of AFOWILI BERNARD AKWUMEFUNE JUDE. My correct name is AFOWILI BERNARD AKWUMEFUNE JUDE. AFOWILI (surname), BERNARD (first name) and AKWUMEFUNE JUDE (middle name). Concerned authorities should take note.

OSARUMWENSE

That I wish to add OGBODU to the names on my BVN which is OSARUMWENSE GOLDEN. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as OGBODU GOLDEN OSARUMWENSE. OGBODU (surname), GOLDEN (first name), and OSARUMWENSE (middle name). Concerned authorities should take note.

OKORIE

I, formerly known and addressed as OKORIE FRANK now wish to be known and addressed as OKORIE AMARACHI. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

MEG

I, formerly known and addressed as MEG OMOSEDE ODIASE now wish to be known and addressed as SALAM MEG FATIMA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSASUMWEN

I, formerly known and addressed as UWAGBOE OSASUMWEN JOE now wish to be known and addressed as EWEKA OSASUMWEN JOE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

SARAH

I, formerly known and addressed as MISS SARA AGBENE now wish to be known and addressed as MRS SARAH GODWIN IKECHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OMOYEMWEN

I, formerly known as IDIARU OMOYEMWEN FAITH, now wish to be known and addressed as OGHOLU OMOYEMWEN. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

OCHECHE

The general public should take note that EZECHI PATIENCE OCHECHE and OSHEKU PATIENCE OCHECHE are one and the same person. Henceforth, I now wish to be known as EZECHI PATIENCE OCHECHE. Former documents remain valid.

SPACE
FOR SALE

SPACE
FOR SALE

Arts & Heritage

● Culture ● Entertainment ● Tourism

Showcasing talent, inspiring the future at World Theatre Day in Edo

GODSBLESSING OKHUELEIGBE
AND EMMANUELLA OKO

It was an entertaining and educational day as theatre enthusiasts gathered at the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, Benin City, Edo State capital, to celebrate World Theatre Day.

The event, themed “Theatre: A Culture of Peace”, was organized by the Edo State Ministry of Arts, Culture, and Tourism in collaboration with the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP).

The event, which was attended by dignitaries including the Edo State Commissioner for Arts, Culture, and Tourism, Dr. Uyi Oduwa-Malaka, and the Commissioner for Education, Mr. Edwin Osawe, was

a resounding success, showcasing the immense talent and creativity within the local theatre community and among creatives of Edo origin.

Exuding a rich, colourful cultural aura, the event was filled with breathtaking performances that left the audience in awe. For instance, the was Omoreghie Deborah who captivated hearts with her powerful spoken word piece on “Peace”, while a ballet dance by Moonlight Academy mesmerized with its grace and elegance.

NANTAP thereafter took the stage with an engaging playlet that showcased the depth of storytelling in theatre. Additionally, special students from Home Made College stole the show with their heartfelt rendition of the Edo Anthem.

The celebration also included an interactive session with a panel of theatre experts on the topic, “Theatre for a Sustainable Future: Unveiling Nigeria’s Creative Economy”. The focus of the panel discussed the future of theatre and its sustainability. The panellists, who included four creatives, emphasized the importance of nurturing young talent and creating opportunities for growth within the theater community. They also highlighted the need for collaboration between theatre artists, the Ggvernment, and the private sector to support the development of theatre as an art form.

There was a drama competition by students from different secondary schools in Edo State. The presentations were evaluated by a total of sev-

en judges who graded the competition on several criteria that included performance quality, storytelling, costume, running time, diction and others.

At the end of the beautiful performances, Benin Technical College was announced the winner, Oredo Girls Grammar School came second, and Edokpolor Grammar School came in third place. Special recognition was given to Ogbé Secondary School which took the fourth position. Oba Ewuare Secondary School came fifth, Eghosa Grammar School came sixth, Imaguero College came seventh, while St. Mary’s Grammar School took the eighth position.

The head judge, Mr. Davidson, also announced winners of

different categories. Best in Costume went to Imaguero College, Best in Acting went to Benin Technical College, Oredo Girls won Best in Singing, while Best in Instrumentation went to Benin Technical College.

The World Theatre Day was not only a celebration of the present but also an inspiration for the future. The event came to a close with a vote of thanks given by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Tourism. Attendees left with a renewed sense of pride in the local theatre scene and a commitment to continue supporting and promoting the art culture.

The success of this year’s celebration sets the stage for an even brighter future for theatre in Edo State.



Photos from the 2024 World Theatre Day held at the Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, Benin City.

COURTESY: SAVIOUR MATHIAS

Rites and rituals: The African perspective

MONDAY OIKEH

Rites and religious customs are religious obligations carried out by adherents of a religious set. When a rite is carried out repeatedly, it becomes a ritual (a norm/habit). Ritual can also be seen or described as prescribed procedure of/for conducting religious ceremonies. Rites and rituals are global phenomena. They cut across religions and continents or races. It is, however, worrisome that Europe and the Western world see most of our religious practices as barbaric and uncivilized, hence this paper aims at correcting global misconceptions about African beliefs, customs and traditions and also harps on the need for Africans to value their own.

Rites and rituals are synonymous with offering of different forms of sacrifices including shedding of blood. However, before progressing further, let me stress that even the Holy Bible clearly stated that “without the shedding of blood, there cannot be remission of sin”. That was why Jesus Christ sacrificed His blood, His life for the remission and forgiveness of the sins of mankind. This is a universally accepted truth especially in Christendom. Cases abound in the Holy Bible where God

required blood sacrifice offering for spiritual cleansing or atonement. Rams, sheep and goats were used as sacrificial offerings to God by the Israelites in the Old Testament.

In African Traditional Religion (ATR) which forms part of our beliefs, customs and traditions, rites/rituals play a very key role. Blood of animals and not of humans is often required as a means of spiritual cleansing or atonement. Most times, the magnitude or nature of the offence committed by individuals often determines the dimension of the rite/rituals. Often, it is the blood of goats and rams that is used in most African communities. Aside from this, in some African countries including Nigeria, graduation into adulthood or admission into some cults involves one form of rite and ritual or the other. These are fully subscribed to by members of such cults. There are some festivals that are characterized with some forms of rituals. If you are not an initiate, you cannot participate fully. An example is the Ukpako masquerade in Evbiobe Ora, Owan West Local Government Area, Edo State. Only those who have been initiated into adulthood that year are qualified to bear the masquerade and the bearer must be a male. In majority of African commu-

nities, male cults are more in number than the females. In Ora, for instance, initiation into adulthood is for both males and females. This is so because the exercise does not involve serious rituals. It is usually done openly and not in secret. But for those cults that are purely secret and ritualistic, the mode of initiation varies. In Ozalla clan, for example, the initiation rite into adulthood is only carried out on the males in Iuleha clan. One of such festivals is Obazu. This is a masquerade worn only by the males. The spirit empowers the bearers to do some extraordinary things and speak to the people through the bearers making some revelations and proclamations. The females are forbidden to see them as this will lead to very dire consequences. Whether you are visitor or not, as long as you are a female, you are forbidden to see it. Travellers plying the road across the clan are pre-informed to be guided during the period of the festival. Even the males taking part in the festivals have to be fully spiritually fortified, as no one with questionable disposition can fully participate in it.

Investigation about the Ovia Religious Society reveals that the adherents spend up to a month in their grove equipping themselves. The grove is not opened to females and non-na-

tives as well as non-initiates. It is not an all-comers affair. In that one month you have to be spiritually cooked and loaded. The period involves spiritual cleansing coupled with performance of different rituals. You need to learn the language, dance and songs unique to the society. All these and many more activities take place in the grove.

We also have the Okhuade deity. There are so many mysteries associated with the Okhuade deity. For instance, the head - Ohen Okhuade - is the only person or authority that wears a crown and dresses like the Oba of Benin but throughout the reign of any Oba, he does not step into Benin land.

The burial and coronation of Obas and some key traditional heads in Nigeria and in some other African countries involve different forms of rites/rituals. This is symbolic of the powers they carry and the roles they play between the ancestors and the living. In Benin, for instance, the Oba does not die but transits. The Oba’s coronation and canonization follow the same the pattern of rites and rituals. For him to ascend the throne, the land must be cleansed and as he journeys to the ancestral land, cleansing also takes place.

The burial of the late Queen Elizabeth II of England involved some ritu-

als. The most sacred parts of the burial rites were not televised. What happened to the ram that was dragged along? It was not showed or revealed to the viewing public. Yet we tend to believe and listen to the West throwing aspersions at our religion and festivals as archaic and barbaric and ritualistic. The presence of the ram in the funeral procession was indeed not for fun. We should be ready and able to tell the world our own story ourselves and not continue to allow others to tell it the way it soothes them, thereby making us feel inferior.

As a documentary officer with National Museum, I came across one returned-repatriated object from England. The description and name given to the object by the British Museum was “a shrine stick”, instead of the original local name of “Ukhure”. With this, no one coming to the museum would see it as a mere stick but as one that carries power and authority.

In conclusion, I wish to state and re-state that our culture, customs and traditions are not barbaric. We should learn to tell our own stories. It is the value you place on your product that will determine how much people will price it. We should be very deliberate in packaging and presenting our culture, customs and traditions.

Entertainment

Henry Legemah: An actor's actor

NOSAZEME AIMIUWU

The first time I met the legendary Legemah in person was in 2023. This prolific writer, outstanding actor and experienced director endowed with the technicalities of impeccable filmmaking is always full of life, humour and artistic spontaneity.

Our Edo-born Henry Iyobosah Legemah is a force of nature especially with his excellent role interpretation. This multi-talented and multidimensional artist reverberates dramatic excellence, exudes artistic intelligence and constantly actuates charisma on several levels. He breathes life onto every role he is given. But what makes the “legendary legendariness” of Henry Iyobosah Legemah so peculiar?

Let us examine a slice of a slice of his intimidating filmography.

Blood of Enogie: In this intriguing story of royal succession in Isibor Dukedom, we meet the contentiously charming elder, the father of Itohan, called Chief Enoma, played by Henry Legemah.

This series reminds us all of the importance of raising our children right and maintaining a good relationship with them, otherwise it could lead to strained future relationships. Chief Enoma was antagonistic against Itohan's decision to support the Enogie in taking in a second wife. However, Chief Enoma reminds me that ultimately, our parents might seem harsh but they are usually looking out for our best interests, considering how the story later panned out.

Culture: In this Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen direction, we find the Enogie embodied and really personified in the person of Henry Legemah. He carried the role with the authority and characteristically subtle nuance it deserved. Starring alongside Chinyere Wilfred, Benjamin Olaye, Monalisa Chinda and occasional humorous references from Andrew Osawaru and Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen, Legemah's script and character interpretation was impeccable. I learnt the impor-

tance of true love and acceptance from this film but also appreciated the deconstruction of our cultural realism with regard to our marital alliances.

Rita's Draughts: This ROK Studios film written by Aimiuwu Nosazeme Eseosa, directed by Kabat Esosa Egbon and Osazee Osagie Ikpefuran and shot in Benin City was a great definition of a phenomenal family drama. But it would have felt hollow with-

out the dramatic effect of the great Legemah himself. Playing Osazee, a kind father but irresponsible drunk, he showed brilliance in every breath both on and off camera. I learnt from “Rita's Draughts” not to give up doing what you are good at until you succeed. I love that I also got to act a scene with this masterful and great actor. Once upon a time I used to see him on television as a child but I have

grown up to work with him in real life. It's a dream come true for me. I am grateful to work with my heroes.

Tuke Tuke (Ovbigbo and Oviedo Saga): Most people are trying their best to survive in a harsh economic climate, especially our bus drivers also known as Tuke Tuke bus drivers. This film written by Aimiuwu Nosazeme Eseosa and directed by Jeremiah Onoge (DGN) stars Ebele Okaro, Ruby Orjiakor, Kelvin Avielele (MC Twinko), Precious Otas also had a scene with Henry Legemah where his character ran a loan business. This film teaches us that the road to success is rough but if you keep trying your best, you can succeed.

Izoduwa: Etinosa Idemudia says she had to go deep, deep down in order to interpret this role. But Chief Ogbebor played by Henry Legemah was exceptional in this Kabat Esosa Egbon-directed film. I learnt that what is destined for us will not pass us by. I love how the central conflict of this film from the stables of ROK

Studios begins. And I love the resolution. Quite unexpected. A thoroughly engaging film with a highly satisfying conclusion.

Conclusion: I consider myself quite privileged to have interacted with this phenomenal force of nature. This is a great man that knows how to keep the jokes coming in. There is never a dull moment with the legendary legendariness called Henry Iyobosah Legemah. Every moment with him is full of artistic brilliance. In case you need an excellent actor for the roles he can carry, you will enjoy working with him. He is experienced. He is connected. He is greatly talented, knows about a billion stories and interprets his character with a special flair, a flavour exuded and demonstrated by the best of the best.

With his cultural inclination leaning towards the Edocentric, I am grateful for the legendary legendariness of the exceptional Henry Iyobosah Legemah and his conscientious endeavours to push Edo To The World.



The entertainment in youth

JUDE ORHORHA

If you (or any individual from any facet of life) take a critical but cursory look at our society, we all would come to the conclusion that the youths boost the entertainment industry. They pour the water that meets its roots constantly alive to enable it penetrate deeper into the heart of the graces.

Youthfulness in the entertainment industry can bring a fresh perspective, which it has done in many cases whether in film, creative literary works, music, comedy and even many underutilized aspects of the creative sector. Youthfulness' magic-touch is felt in innovative ideas, as well as a strong connection to current trends.

If we take our minds back to actors like Sylvester Stallone, we would all discover that the popularity the

actor enjoys today has more to do with his innovative ideas, his youthfulness. Same goes for Arnold and many more. Today if you mention late Chinua Achebe, the book amongst his numerous books that come to your mind is ‘Things Fall Apart’.

The role of youthfulness in the creative space has been and would continually be felt in the manner they weave creativity on their fingertips. Is it in operas, symphonies, sculpture, metal art, paintings? The list is endless.

Young individuals often have a natural charisma and energy that can captivate audiences and breathe new life into projects. They are typically more tech-savvy and adaptable to changes in the industry, making them valuable assets in a fast-paced and ever-evolving field.

However, there are also drawbacks

”
Young individuals often have a natural charisma and energy that can captivate audiences and breathe new life into projects. They are typically more tech-savvy and adaptable...

to relying solely on youth in the entertainment industry - though it's not like drawbacks are only peculiar to the youths alone as adults also have had their fill in the good, the bad and the ugly. Bitter experiences are always a bitter pill that one must swallow in the course of journeying through the labyrinths of creativity.

Inexperience can lead to mistakes and a lack of understanding of the complexities of the business. Which has made many to be faced with depressive disorders and finally taking hard drugs. It's not shocking to know that the youths are more in prisons. It's not meant to be an achievement but to let you know the level of risks they are exposed to. Again the youths are more in sports, and sadly too, more in any rehab.

Young individuals may struggle

with handling pressure, criticism, and rejection, which are common in the competitive world of entertainment. Additionally, there can be a tendency to prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability, potentially sacrificing quality for quick success. To the youths, success is a book and they have access to the pen to write on it. They see procrastination as a taboo and would rather get things done now than get same postponed.

In conclusion, while youthfulness can bring many benefits to the entertainment industry, it is essential to strike a balance with experienced professionals to ensure a well-rounded and successful creative environment. Collaboration between different age groups can lead to a dynamic and innovative industry that appeals to a wide range of audiences.

PidginService

Tuke-Tuke Gossip with **Sam Imagbe**



Well don, Edo NYCN

Thank God say all de wahala wey no let de Edo State chapter of the National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) don finish and de pepos wey de office don dey setto down well well. Una do well ooooh.

Plenti boku tins dey wey una all must gada do for espesially dey yuts wey dey under una eyes for dis state. We beleve say una brodas and sistas wey dis una office sopro to dey work for also top stand dey make una sabi de kind tins wey dem want make una do for dem, even kpakpa dem go also know say una no be Baba God wey fit put solucion for all their mata.

Yes, me too gree say one person abi one regime no go fit ansa all issue so far na human beans wahala. Make una no mind dose people wey dey talk say no be one day dem take build Rome. Dem be wayo pepos. Na one day dem take build am. De day wey man pikin begin to operate de vision abi na idea wey him get, na dat day him finish work.

By dis time, I sabi say de oga wey dey carry de oda officers do de program of dis regime go don plan all de tins wey dem wan do for their time for office. So therefore na only two area we go like to make dem look well well so dat pepo go always remember dem and de tins wey dem do.

De numba one na de thing wey dey bring about katakata for this our base - if dem no fit get one hundred percent, make dem try get half of de mark - de thing na job mata. Pepo wey go school say de mind wey no get de tins wey dey make am do work nahim be de place of work for devil. Abeg make una no laugh me bikos, I myself I no go skool. All de ones wey I dey talk so, na tiff I tiff am.

Like we dey talk before, dis present gofment of our yuts, de way I take see dem, na very intelligent and clever pepo wey know how their onions go fit make soup sweet. No be say I dey praise dem sha bikos one person no fit sabi everything. Too many of our pikins dem wey no get work for house. No be say dem no go unificity but gofment no fit find place put dem. If one thousand commot for school na only about ten go fit get work. And some of dis ten people get work nor be bikos dem know book pass those wey dey for house but na bikos of de tin wey dey spoil dis our country. Nahim be say who you know. How poor man wey dey struggle to pay unificity money go fit know de pamanet sekretary for office? Tolototo and chicken na de same bird but na different club dem dey. Cockroach nor fit dance kokoma for day time because of fowl, no be say dem no know or like dance.

Thank God say de team leader of Edo chaputa of National Youth Council of Nigeria, Moses Agwine Joseph

seph, don tanda gidigba to make sure say our youth no just dey house dey sidion look. Him say de true word be say gofment no go fit give work for everybodi, therefore dats why de gofment of Obaseki come introduce for one ogbonge way where our pikins go dey do something instead of make dem dey stay for house doing nothing at all. Dis nahim dem dey call Edo Job kini kon. Dis Edo Job office na him be dey place wey our pikins dem fit go learn plenti boku work wey go fit make dem beta for life.

Oga Joseph Moses also talk say de pepos wey dey for dis regime of him council dem no get wahala at all at all with de youths wey dey for Edo, espesially since dem come power. Him talk say na two areas dem dey handle very seriously now wey concine youth. Dis na cultism plus drug addiction.

According to dis NYCN chairman, dem don already dey kolabo with de oga kpatakata for police and dat of sojas to carry mirror look how dem go fit work together to put final full stop for cult and drug mata. Dem don also put de mata before de people wey dey do drug mata wey dem dey call NDLEA.

No be only dat sha. De campaign plus meeting to put mind together for how dis two mata go take stop don also dey shelle. No be only dis one dem don dey do, dis chairman come talk say even sef dem go soon start to dey train Edo youths for inside de compound of the Youth Council Secretariat when dem finish de job creation centre wey dem dey build. Him talk say because no be everybodi wey go unificity sabi how to dey do application for work, one of de tins wey dem go dey teach pepo for this job creation centre wey dem dey build inside de secretariat na how to dey write application for different kind of work. Dis na an-

other kolabo wey de council go do with Edo State gofment.

To make sure say dis plan work well well, de oga madam wey be acting oga for this Edo Jobs don ready gidigba to also do kolabo and join hand with dem. Him come talk say since the arrangee stat, de result na very good one. No be say dem go just dey sidion look, de officials of NYCN go also play their own part by de time de centre don fully dey ground for inside the secretariat complex.

Cultism mata, dis youth chairman of Edo chapter no dey take de mata joke at all at all. Him and de other members of de council don dey do campaign and dem talk say nothing go make dem stop until Edo State no go get cultist again. Everybodi sabi say dis na mata wey go difficult but since dis pepos don go beg de Commissioner of Police and Commander of the 4th Mechanized Brigade wey dey for Edo State, nahim be say dem fit succeed, so far de youths go listen to dem.

Oga Moses Joseph talk say Edo youths na people wey dey hear word, so therefore him beleve say dem go hear the things wey him dey tell dem, espesially as dis job creation office go soon begin for inside de council complex.

Final final, him come beg de youths say for dis eleshon wey dey come so, make dem no let politician people use dem as agbero abi as pepo wey go cause katakata. Him come talk say no be say him no go support any protest so far de protest no be de kind wey people dey do because of their own wayo interest. If na correct protest wey concine de masses and de suffer suffer for pepos, dat kind one na beta protest. So far no be de one wey people go dey do gragra.

My people, una don hear from de mouth of de horse. But our pikins dey listen?

● **MOSES AGWINEDE JOSEPH**



TATAFO



Na cooperation make rice full pot

DAVIDSON IZEGAEGBE

I don land again but as usual, na always with tori. My pipo, how una de? Shebi una get time to jolificate de Estar wey just pass? Many pipo celebrate de Estar in difrent styles but above dem all, we thank baba God say many of us wey use mouth shout happy Estar, jolificate am, still gallant reach today to join us for awa new wik tori. Like my friend wey me and am start college dos days for Edokpolor Grammar School, Eugene Asemota, no fit make am with us. Las las na baba God alone no why. Inside all dis Evian so, I say make him soul and many laik am wey nor see dis weekend, rest in perfect peace plus say make dia family fit quick arrange dia minds for movement ahead. Na so life reach. Notin more.

Sometin de wey de laik push me to wan shake de table, but my fia be say men wey dia minds de back don break all the table legs finish. Now yan me, to let me no, na which table I wan shake him leg? Anyways, me nor ready to carry las for dis mata. The reason of de reason be say, pipo de fit break de table leg bcos of wia dem for break de table leg, and wetin dem take break am. If you neva undastand my yanings yet, naim be say I need to show you de map to de issue. Any time you de watch film for cinema or for ya house with pipo, you de feel laik to blame yasef and even come ask yasef qestion join say, na wetin make you sidion with dis pipo insted of you to by yasef watch de film alone?

Me I no send anybodi as e don tery brokotor, wey me don de apply "I nor gree for anybodi". If I wan to watch any film, na only me becos person nor fit cum use him reggae spoil my Obito music.... Wat cause dat? For some cinema, bet9ja and viewing centas better pass dem. Pipo go wan use talk talk plus qestions take change ya destiny as if to say, na you get de film or na ya relations or friend get de films.

I de good mood one time and cum enkorage mysef cum cinema to watch film wey dat actor wey don delete but act wakanda de. Na dia my wahala for start. As dem jus show de man naim one man and anoda woman attack me. De first one nack my hand and say, "why you allow dat man die laik dat?" Instanta I jus loss bearing laik agbegi

wey break fail. I gada mind as I don de vex cum ask am, "who, me?" De man nor shake at all as him ansa me sharp sharp, "yes na, abi nor be ya hand I nak jus na?" Dis time so, my belle don be laik wia motorsaw wey nor sharp de cut iroko tree. I nor jus waste time as I giv am raps from my mouth wotowoto as I ask am, "bros, de man luk laik my relation, or dem yan you say na de same village we from cum? Na wetin konsan agbero with overload?" De man konfuse and de tin sweet my belle laik gudigudi. I cum bend my neck small to make am be laik say na ogbonge attitude I wan release join wetin I first talk, but whoosai, de woman wey dis unexpected yanings no konsan jus wik my legs like rubber band wey fall inside fire. She jus pose ask me say, "if de bros nor ask you, na vulcanizer him go ask? No be una de do all dis films? If film sweet we de worry una? Not be wen una do film wey de worry person belle we de ask una qestion? Common wetin kpai una actor, you don de misyan.... abegi!" Anyways, na so I no take watch de film I pay money com watch plus say I still buy big miniral with guguru wey I cum jolificate for road as I de trek go back my house.

Make una nor misyan me for dis mata wey I jus explain small so. De mata no be about me and de pipo wey get dat argue. I wan make una, as film pipo undastand say pipo wey de watch film belif say all of us no awaself die like awa teeth for awa mouth. Na so dem also belif say film na wetin de actors jus de do without script and plenty oda tins. Dis one also mean to say, dat as film pipo, we all must to de work togeda as pipo wey de watch awa film only belif say na all of us gada get all de films for cinema.

Una fit no undastand as film pipo as some of una go de buga say you de do film for moon and dose wey de do film for my village nor konsan you. Nor worry, jus de play. One day you go sidion for my sit for inside cinema for naija, Obodo oyinbo or China and wen dem ask you dis kain qestion for anoda way, you go start to explain and explain but las las with not evidence as de pipo go de tink say you de jus carri yan Balablu or bulaba. As for me, I tank God say, de ones wey ask me qestions nor carri hammer follow bodi, how you go take de sure of ya own???

WeekendColumn

Thriving Family Life with Peace



Be the high priest for a thriving intimate marriage

A few days ago I stumbled on a page of the Punch Newspaper of October 2nd, 2016. It was the column 'Famous Parents' on page 48 of the newspaper. The interview was done by Gbenga Adeniji with Olumide, a son of the late popular lawyer, political activist and founder of the Nigeria Advance Party, Dr Tunji Braithwaite. Olumide shared the story of his late father's life but I just want to focus on an extract of the interview.

"My father was the chief priest of the house. We have a chapel in the house. At 7am on daily basis, he would ring a bell and all of us including the house help must assemble to worship and sing praises to God. My older siblings were training on how to play piano and they would play corresponding tune to the hymn being sung. We would then be selected to say prayer one after the other. The worship always lasted for 30 minutes

after which we could leave to start our daily activities. Some relatives lived with us at the time," Olumide said in the interview.

"In the evening, the bell would be rung again and we repeat what we did in the morning. The only addition to the worship was a study of the bible and we would take turns to ask questions on the scripture read. We read the bible both in Yoruba and English. Some of his favourite biblical characters were King David and Moses. Thus all of us were conversant with the bible," he said.

Ideally, the father should be the spiritual leader of the home, the high priest and the prophet of the family. The father should be a spiritual leader who leads the wife and children in living a Godly life. He should lead by example. He should be seen daily praying and reading the scripture. Each child should be given a Godly foundation that will shape the

child's future and belief system.

A father should be submitted to God so he could lead his wife and children to submit to God. A father should be there in his family to offer spiritual guidance, direction and counsel. When it comes to spirituality, a father should be the first chief priest and superhero in spiritual matters. Not taking up this responsibility is abdicating your responsibility as a father. You owe it to the society and to your family to build a Godly foundation for your offspring. There is a vacuum in everybody's lifetime where nothing else can fill except the knowledge of and relationship with your creator.

One of the greatest security you can give to your spouse and your children is spiritual security. As a father you have to train your children to depend on God, not just growing up with the self-sufficient capacity of making decisions without first consulting their creator. As a father, it is very impor-

tant for you to point your children to their heavenly father. Teach your children to see God as the rock that is a shelter, refuge and defender. As an earthly father, model to your child the attributes of God the heavenly father.

As a father, I want to suggest that you introduce the attributes of God to your family. God is a spirit. God is all powerful, he can help them with anything. God knows everything, they can go to him with all their questions and concerns. God is just, he will treat them fairly. God is love, he is unconditionally committed to their well-being. God is faithful, they should trust him to always keep his promises. God never changes, their future is secure with God.

As a father, you must not abandon the spiritual ship. As the captain, you are the man and the head of the family. When you married your wife, you initiated the formation of a family. Don't let go of the steering wheel of spirituality in your home. You

are the pilot, your spouse is just a co-pilot, so take charge, drive your family's spiritual needs and cares. As you intentionally work toward succeeding as a professional and in the society, let it be a special honour that all people that carry your surname have you as their chief priest and prophet. No marriage thrives and enjoys the blessings that come with marriage if the family downplays spirituality or takes the one who instituted marriage out of the equation.

As a father, when your spouse and your child are having a bad day, facing a challenge or when they are in trouble, they need encouragement to go through the challenging time. Do you know how to direct them to God and direct their case to God on their behalf? Sir, you are the best for the position of the head of your family, ask your Maker for help and wisdom to lead your family and He will surely grant it.

Personal Finance with Queen



Why personal finance matters

We started out last week by stating the need to define your financial goal. Not a bad place to start for a column that's going to be all about personal finance. However, before we go any further, I think we need to understand what personal finance is and why it is important.

As the name suggests, personal finance refers to managing your money, which encompasses saving, investing, budgeting, planning, etc. Understanding the need for personal financial planning helps you to live a financially secure life without running out of funds or into debt.

Your income is the first port of call in personal finance. It is all the money you bring in, which includes salaries, wages, dividends, and other sources of cash.

Expenditure is an outflow of cash and typically where the bulk of the income goes. This has to do with whatever an individual uses their income to buy or pay for. This includes rent,

groceries, eating out, home repairs, travels, entertainment, etc.

Being able to manage spending is a critical aspect of personal finance. Individuals must ensure their spending is less than their income, otherwise they will fall into debt.

That is why budgeting is a vital part of personal finance as it helps you to keep track of your spending patterns each month. Start by calculating your total monthly income and then track all of your expenses for the month. This will help you to know where your money is going, where you can save more, and where you can spend little each month.

The best step in any good financial life should be knowing where your money is, and spending less than you make. While we almost all aspire on some level to a lifestyle of the rich and famous, very few get there, and even those who get there may not stay there as a result of poor financial planning. The savings created from good planning can prove beneficial in

difficult times.

So, before committing to a significant expenditure, estimate how much income is likely to be available to you. If attending a burial, wedding, naming ceremony, or marriage anniversary will eat into your savings, avoid them till the right time. Truth be told, you will be called names; accept the name-calling but understand one thing - that these same people will call you worse names if you have to borrow from them to feed or meet your basic needs.

Endeavour to stay within your means, stay within what you can afford. Cut your cloth according to your material, not your size. It is best to continue to live and make purchase in a way that will keep you as financially free as possible and in complete control of your finances.

Whether you're in your 20's still trying to figure out this thing called life, or just starting to learn about personal finance, in your 30's and looking to better manage your funds, or in

your 50's and looking forward to your retirement age, one thing is certain, you should be saving for the future. It is important to set up an emergency saving fund to cover any financial hardship that may arise in the future. For instance, you can make sure there is enough insurance coverage to replace any lost income in case the family's breadwinner becomes unable to work or passes away.

And here's something parents should take note of. A South African pension and insurance expert looking at the demographic trend in Nigeria stated that the new generation of children have taken to western lifestyle and would gradually think less of the extended family pattern of living.

"It is common to find these days family sizes pruning down to three and four, unlike what existed in the past and that suggests that people want to keep smaller homes, so the tendency that they will have a luxury to begin to look after aged parents in the future is declined," the expert said.

The implication of this, the expert said, is that people should now begin to think of how to provide for their future and retirement, rather than want to depend on their children who may have chosen to live the city way of life, or who may still be struggling to find their feet. This reality demands that people begin to get knowledgeable on how to provide for their future through pension plans, such that dependence on children and relatives for support would be less if it must be.

Bottom line: Personal finance is necessary for everyone - the young as well as the old. It provides you with the understanding of how a decision you make today affects your tomorrow. It is about making smart choices that lead to financial stability. Wherever you find yourself in life, make sure you are growing in the aspect of your finance because it is a habit that can literally save your life. No matter how much or how little you earn, a portion of it should be kept as savings. E get why.

Fashion&Style

Making a fashion statement

GODSBLESSING OKHUELEIGBE
AND EMMANUELLA OKO

Every day, Aisosa steps out in her own unique way. She loves to mix and match different patterns and textures to create harmonious combinations. She pays attention to details accessorizing with statement jewellery like earrings or bangles that add an extra touch of personality to her outfits, but most importantly, she wears her everyday outfit with pride, owning her style and expressing herself authentically, which makes her a walking fashion statement.

Aisosa's approach to fashion aligns perfectly with the concept of a "fashion statement". She mixes patterns and textures, accessorizing with statement jewellery, and owning her unique outfits with pride, whereby she stands out and catches people's attention, making a statement about her personality, creativity, and confidence.

When we talk about making a fashion statement, it means expressing your individuality and personal style through your clothing choices, accessories and even hairstyles. You can either flaunt a bold outfit, accessorize with eye-catching jewellery, or sport a trendy hairstyle, allowing your personality shine through. Fashion is a powerful form of self-expression, and when you put together an outfit that reflects your unique style and taste, you showcase and express yourself.

Making a fashion statement is more complex than it may seem at first glance. There's a fine line between standing out with your unique style and ending up with a fashion disaster. You find the right balance and understand what works for you. Fashion is subjective, and what may be a statement for one person might not work for another. You ought to consider your personal taste, body type, and the occasion when putting together an outfit. Experimentation is key, but it's also crucial to feel confident and comfortable in what you're wearing.

To make a fashion statement, here are common rounded up tips and tricks:

Mix up your preferred styles: This explains combining different elements from various fashion genres to create a unique and unexpected look. Elements such as dresses, tops, jackets, shorts etc. By blending contrasting styles, you can add a touch of individuality to your outfits. For example, you could pair a feminine floral dress with a leather jacket for an edgy twist, or mix vintage pieces with modern accessories for a retro-modern fusion. The key is to experiment and have fun with your fashion choices.

Try out classic pieces: Classic pieces never go out of style, and they have a timeless elegance that can elevate any outfit. Think of items like a tailored blazer, a little black dress, or a white button-down shirt. These pieces

can be the foundation of your wardrobe and serve as a canvas for your personal style. You add your own unique touch to these classics, accessorize with bold statement jewellery, experiment with different textures and patterns, or play with unexpected colour combinations. Mixing classic pieces with more contemporary elements can create a look that is both sophisticated and fashion-forward.

Add an essence of glamour: It's all about incorporating luxurious and eye-catching elements into your outfits. You can achieve this by opting for fabrics like satin, velvet, or sequins that have a touch of opulence. Consider adding statement accessories like sparkling jewellery or a glamorous clutch to elevate your look, and a sleek hairstyle to complete the glamorous vibe. Whether you're dressing up for a special occasion or just want to bring some extra sparkle to your everyday style, embracing glamour is a surefire way to make a fashion statement that turns heads.

Prior to the simple statement tips, Gen-Zs in expressing their individuality through fashion make their fashion statement by embracing a mix of styles, experimenting with unique combinations, and breaking traditional fashion norms. They love to incorporate vintage pieces, streetwear, and bold colours into their outfits. Gen-Zs also value sustainability and often seek out eco-friendly and ethical fashion choices. They are not afraid to

take risks and express their personality through their clothing choices.

Gen-Zs are reshaping the fashion landscape through various means:

DIY fashion: It stands for "Do It Yourself" and it's all about creating unique and personalized clothing and accessories. Gen-Zs love to get crafty and showcase their creativity by customizing their outfits. They might paint, embroider, or add patches to their clothes, or even repurpose old items to give them a fresh new look. DIY fashion allows them to express their individuality and stand out from the crowd.

Thrifting and vintage: Thrifting is all about shopping at secondhand stores or online platforms to find unique and one-of-a-kind pieces. Gen-Zs love discovering hidden gems that reflect their individual style. Vintage fashion, on the other hand, involves wearing clothing and accessories from previous eras, like the '80s or '90s. It's a way for them to embrace nostalgia and stand out with retro vibes. Both thrifting and vintage fashion allow them to express their creativity, uniqueness, and sustainability values.

Bold styles: Bold styles are a major way Gen-Zs make a fashion statement. They love to step outside of the box and embrace eye-catching looks that turn heads. Whether it's vibrant colours, unconventional patterns, or daring silhouettes, Gen-Zs take risks and express their individuality

through fashion. They mix and match different styles to create a unique twist that truly stands out.

Statement pieces: These are bold and eye-catching items that instantly grab attention and add a unique touch to an outfit. It could be a vibrant jacket, a funky pair of shoes, or a standout accessory like a statement necklace or hat. Gen-Zs love to mix and match these statement pieces with their everyday wardrobe to create a look that truly stands out. It's all about expressing their individuality and making a bold impact with their fashion choices.

Influencer and celebrity spark: Gen-Zs definitely look to influencers and celebrities for fashion inspiration when it comes to making a statement. Influencers are individuals who have gained a large following on social media platforms due to their unique style and fashion sense. They often collaborate with brands and share their outfit ideas, which can be a great source of inspiration for Gen-Zs. Celebrities, on the other hand, have always been a source of fashion inspiration for people of all ages. Gen-Zs look up to their favourite celebrities and pay attention to their red carpet looks, street style, and social media posts for ideas on how to make a fashion statement. By taking cues from influencers and celebrities, Gen-Zs incorporate the latest trends and experiment with different styles to create their own unique fashion statement.



Love&Life

Dress to impress: Outfits suitable for dates

GODSBLESSING OKHUELEIGBE
AND EMMANUELLA OKO

When it comes to going on a date, there is a mix of excitement, nervousness, and anticipation all rolled into one. You might feel butterflies in your stomach, a racing heartbeat, and a sense of anticipation for what's to come. It's that thrilling feeling of stepping into the unknown and the possibility of making a meaningful connection with someone, and choosing the right outfit can make all the difference. Whether you're meeting someone new or going out with your long-term partner, your outfit can help you feel confident and make a lasting impression.

Outfits that make you feel confident and comfortable will boost your self-esteem and help you project a positive image. Choosing clothes that highlight your best features and make you feel like the best version of yourself helps achieve this. Whether it's a favourite dress, a well-fitted suit, or a stylish casual ensemble, wear something that reflects your personal style and makes you feel amazing. When you feel good about how you look, it radiates through your confidence and can make a lasting impression on your date.

In achieving a stylish look, firstly consider the occasion and location of the date. Is it a casual coffee meetup or a fancy dinner? Dressing appropriately for the occasion shows that you've put thought into your appearance.

Secondly, choose an outfit that reflects your personality and makes you feel amazing. Wear something that accentuates your best features and makes you feel confident.

And finally, pay attention to the details. Add accessories that complement your outfit and make you stand out. It could be a statement necklace, a stylish handbag, or a pair of

eye-catching shoes.

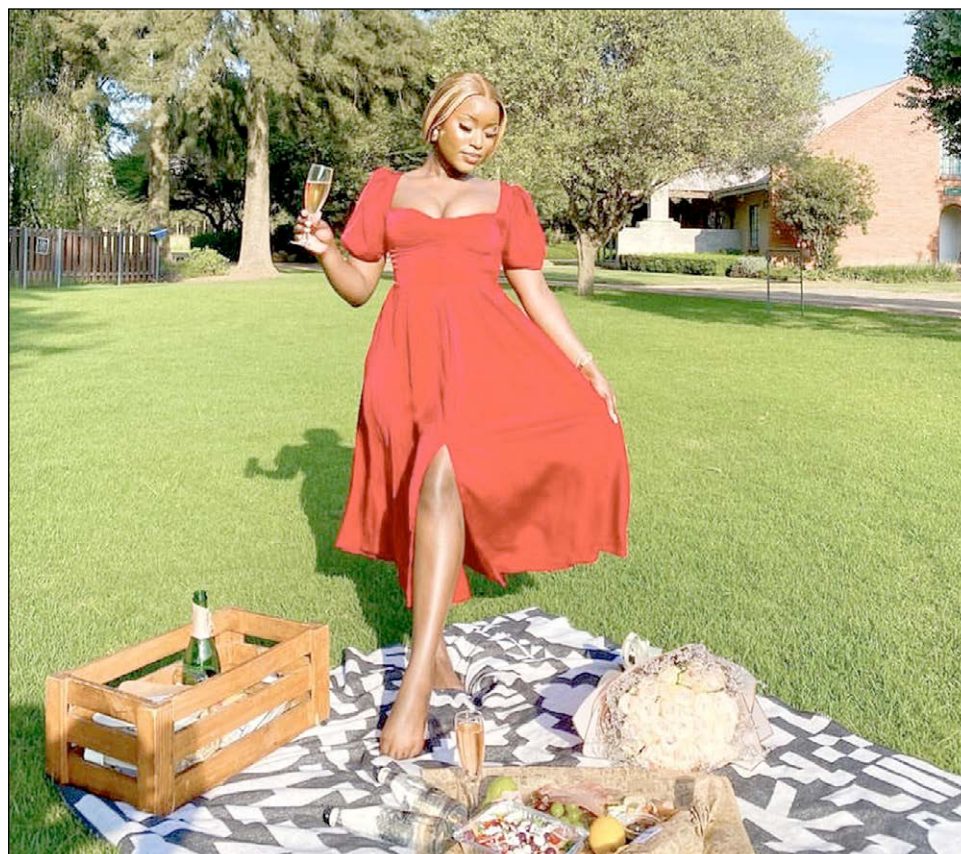
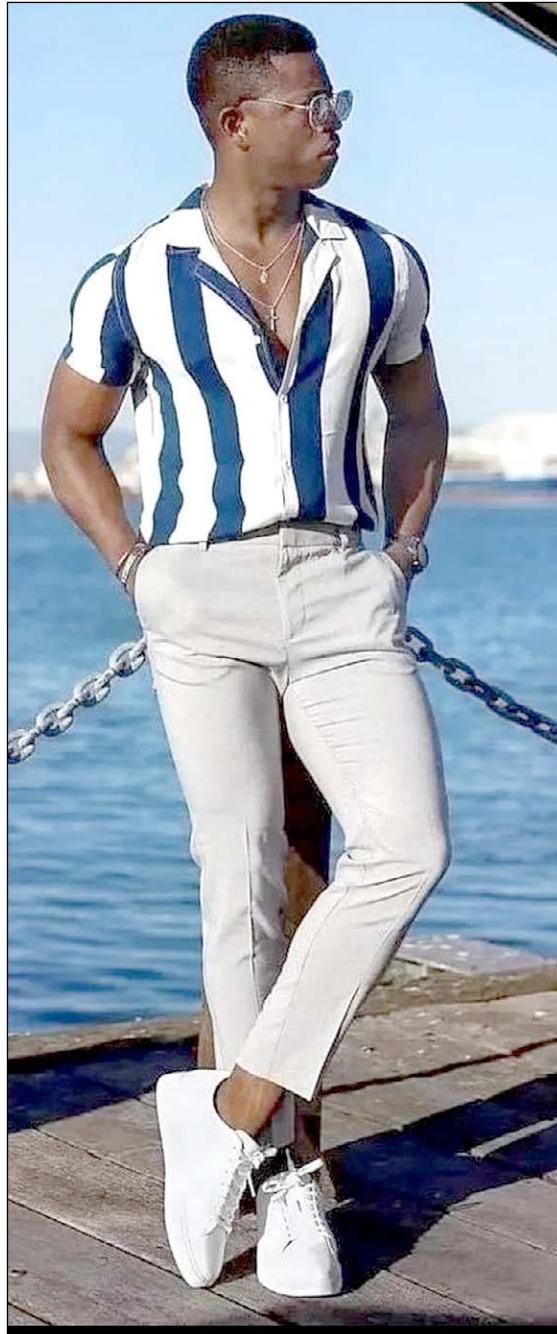
If ever you are confused, try out these styles techniques for specific dates.

Casual and comfortable: For a casual date, such as grabbing coffee or going for a walk, opt for an outfit that's both comfortable and stylish. A pair of well-fitted jeans or trousers paired with a cute top is a classic choice. Add some personality with accessories like a statement necklace or a trendy scarf. Complete the look with comfortable shoes, like sneakers or flats, so you can enjoy your time together without any discomfort.

Dressing it up: If your date is more formal or you're heading out for a fancy dinner, it's time to step up your style game. Consider wearing a dress or a skirt paired with a blouse. Choose fabrics that make you feel elegant and confident, and select colours that complement your skin tone. Don't forget to pay attention to the details by adding some sparkle with jewellery and finish off the look with a pair of heels that you can comfortably walk in.

Adapting to the occasion: It's important to dress appropriately for the occasion and location of your date. If you're going for a picnic in the park, a cute sundress and sandals would be perfect. On the other hand, if you're going to a concert or a trendy restaurant, you might want to opt for a more fashionable and edgy look. Consider the weather, dress codes, and your personal style to create an outfit that reflects your personality and makes you feel amazing.

Choosing the right outfit for a date is about finding a balance between comfort, style, and appropriateness for the occasion. Ultimately, the most important thing is to wear something that makes you feel confident and allows you to be yourself.



Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

Paris 2024 Olympics qualifier: First Lady hails Super Falcons for breaking 16-year jinx

EDWARD OSEGHE

Wife of the President, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, has congratulated Nigeria's senior female national team, the Super Falcons, for qualifying for the 2024 Olympic Games.

Oluemi Tinubu lauded the Super Falcons' perseverance and commitment after they overpowered their South African counterpart, Banyana Banyana to qualify for the Olympics.

The Super Falcons held the Banyana Banyana of South Africa to a 0-0 draw in Pretoria on Tuesday night to book their passage to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games on a 1-0 aggregate.

With the win, Randy Waldrum's side accomplished a glorious return to the Women's Olympic Football Tournament after 16 years.

Mrs. Tinubu praised the players for their exceptional performance, noting the victory means a lot to the country.

She also charged the nine-time African champions to win the gold medal in the women's football event at upcoming the Paris Olympic Games.

"Congratulations our Super Falcons @NGSuper_Falcons," Senator Olufemi Tinubu wrote on X.

"Ending a 16-year Olympic jinx is no small feat, and your perseverance and commitment have truly paid off. Your hard work, resilience, and team spirit have brought glory to Nigeria and inspired countless young girls across the country to pursue their dreams fearlessly.

"I am so proud of all your achievements. Your journey doesn't end here; it's just the begin-

ning of an even greater adventure. "Make Nigeria proud, Super Falcons! Bring home the gold!" she added.

Recall that the reigning African champions, Bayanna Bayanna, who had boasted that Nigeria's one-goal win in Abuja on Friday would be swiftly cancelled within the first quarter-hour, sped off the blocks at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium but found a resilient Super Falcons unwilling to give an inch.

Goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie was called upon to save from a deep-flying corner as early as the third minute, but in a back-and-forth theme that characterized the entire game, Nigeria was on the front foot immediately after, with Chinwendu Ihezuo seeing her headed ball caught by Kaylin Swart after a cross by captain Rasheedat Ajibade.



NLO releases fixtures as 2024 season kicks off Saturday

The Nigeria Nationwide League (NLO) Division One has released fixtures for the 2024 season.

The new season is scheduled to kick-start on Saturday, April, 13th 2024.

Kaduna United will battle against YOCA Crocodiles in the opening fixture of the season at the Ahmadu Bello Stadium in Kaduna.

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the league body, Olushola Ogunnowo states that the 2024 league season in NLO promises to be a very interesting showpiece of football at the grassroots in Nigeria and the league opener in Kaduna will give a glimpse of what to expect in the entire season in the third tier league in Nigeria.

"NLO season kicks off on Saturday, April 13, in Kaduna. Kaduna United will host Yoca Crocodiles FC. This is the league opening game and the board and secretariat of the NLO hope to see very interesting football in

Kaduna," Ogunnowo said.

"We also expect to see more organised and better football games from the clubs participating in the 2024 season. The NLO clubs have done well in the past season, but they can also do better this season to continue to ensure a smooth flow of football at the league venues, devoid of any rancour

or acts that can bring the administration of the game to disrepute," he added.

Football enthusiasts residing in Kaduna and surrounding areas are welcome to witness the exciting grassroots football. The game is scheduled to start at 3 pm.

The remaining fixtures of the matchday one will be played on Saturday the 20th, of April.



Boxing: Tyson Fury warns Oleksandr Usyk ahead of undisputed fight

● *'This is my time, my destiny, my era and my generation'*

Tyson Fury has warned Oleksandr Usyk that while the Ukrainian might have defeated Anthony Joshua he won't be able to overcome an "elite, big" heavyweight.

Fury, the WBC champion, meets the unified WBA, WBO, and IBF titlist Usyk in the undisputed heavyweight championship fight on May 18.

Fury paid due respect to his opponent at a press conference in his hometown of Morecambe.

"It's not personal. It's strictly business for both fighters. There's a lot of stuff on the line, but I don't hate him," Fury said of Usyk.

"I respect him as a man, as a fighter.

"Anyone would have to respect the man's achievements. He's unified heavyweight



champion, undisputed cruiserweight champion," he added.

But Fury's confidence is rock solid that he will prevail in their May 18 clash: "I'm the best. I'm just defending my 'best-ness' against him," he declared.

He is determined to leave his

mark on the sport's history and crown himself as, indisputably, the best heavyweight in the world next month.

"I've studied this game all my life. This is my time, my destiny, my era, and my generation," he said.

Epe smashes course record at inaugural Acropolis Golf Tournament

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Nigeria's leading golfer, Francis Epe, achieved a remarkable feat by shooting an impressive twelve under par 60 to establish a new course record during the inaugural tournament at the Acropolis Gardens and Residence Golf Course in Okija, Anambra State, over the weekend.

The event attracted top professional and amateur golfers from across the country, with a total of 86 participants vying for victory on the expansive nine-hole facility spanning 42 hectares.

Epe's outstanding performance set him four shots clear of Gift Willy from Python Golf Club, who secured the runner-up position in the professional category with a score of eight under par 64.

Chukwudi Okoro from Benin Golf Club clinched third place with a score of 67.

In the ladies' category, Nkechi Nwaokolo, with a gross score of 112, emerged victorious with a net score of 76, edging out Rita Izojie by two strokes, who finished with a net score of 78. Nkechi Musa-Tolani secured the third position with a net score of 79 after 18

holes of play.

"The course is well laid out and played to my strengths. I just told myself that I was go-



ing to avoid all the sand traps and water hazards, and I also chipped in twice in the round. In all, I had 12 birdies and

six pars. It was a bogey-free round," Epe said after the win.

Azudialu-Obiejesi, the promoter of the venue, expressed delight at the high-caliber individuals who attended the inaugural event and the considerable distances traveled by some to participate.

"Acropolis Gardens and Residence Golf Course is now open, and we have a befitting world-class 155-room capacity at the Acropolis Gardens and Residence Golf Course to cater for their accommodation while they are here. We are planning to hold a series of events at least once a quarter that would involve the professionals going forward," he said.

The Professional Golfers' Association of Nigeria, through its director, Tony Philmoore, also praised the exceptional quality evident in every aspect of the facility's construction.

"I dare say that this facility is one of the best in the country. As the director of the PGA in Nigeria, I am very proud that the promoters of this project did not hold anything back in making sure they gave a world-class infrastructure.

"I and the present PGA executives will be working with this team to make sure they realise their goal," Philmoore remarked.

Ajunwa, Udo-Obong thrilled by \$50k reward for Olympics gold medalists

EDWARD OSEGHE AND
OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Nigerian Olympic gold medalists, Chioma Ajunwa and Enefiok Udo-Obong have expressed their excitement over World Athletics' recent announcement regarding prize money for gold medalists at the upcoming Paris 2024 Olympics.

Recall that the World Athletics announced on Wednesday it will become the first international federation to award prize money at an Olympics, beginning at this year's Games in Paris.

Gold medal winners in each of the 48 athletics events in Paris will receive \$50,000 (46,000 euros).

Both retired sprinters believe this move signifies a positive step by the global athletics governing body and will contribute to enhancing competition in athletics events.

The prize money, totaling \$2.4 million, will be distributed among gold medalists, who will each receive \$50,000. Relay gold medalists will share their prize money amongst themselves.

The total prize fund of \$2.4 million will come from the IOC's revenue share allocation that World Athletics receives every four years.

World Athletics has also confirmed that this initiative will extend to silver and bronze medalists at the 2028 Olympics



in Los Angeles.

Speaking on the development, Nigeria's first-ever Olympic gold medalist, Ajunwa, said, "It's a great step for them to announce that there will be rewards for gold medalists but I would have loved them to give a token to other athletes who make the podium."

"This will make the athletics events in Paris more competitive."

Also speaking, Udo-Obong, said, "It's a good move actually because it is the first time this is happening and it should be encouraged, but I also hope that other international federations emulate the World Athletics by encouraging their athletes at the Olympics."

"Gone are the days that people

say the Olympics is about amateurism because professionals now take part in it. The TV money is also there, so it's only right athletes get some incentives."

While athletes are often paid by sponsors and the Olympic tradition of amateur competition has long since been consigned to history, the decision by track and field's international body to pay prize money represents a major shift for the Games.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe told reporters the decision reflected the efforts of track and field athletes "which attract billions of eyeballs" to the TV coverage of the Olympics.

"I don't believe this is re-

motely at variance with the concept that the International Olympic Committee often talks about, which is recognising the efforts that our competitors make for the overall success of the Games," Coe said.

He stated that World Athletics had only informed the IOC of the prize money decision on Wednesday, shortly before the announcement, and there had been no discussion beforehand.

Asked if he felt the IOC should have been given more notice, Coe said: "It's a matter for the sport. The one thing the IOC has consistently recognised is the primacy of international federations to fashion their own futures."

Novak Djokovic breaks Roger Federer's record in ATP rankings, Ben Shelton achieves milestone

as Nadal hopes to return from injury for Barcelona Open

EDWARD OSEGHE AND
OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Novak Djokovic continues to rewrite ATP rankings history by surpassing a record previously held by Roger Federer, while Ben Shelton secures a career-high ranking following his victory in Houston.

Djokovic maintains a comfortable lead of 1,015 points over world No. 2 Jannik Sinner, with a total of 9,725 points at the pinnacle of the rankings. Furthermore, he holds a significant 1,080-point advantage over third-ranked Carlos Alcaraz.

Although Djokovic has participated in only three tournaments in 2024, including the United Cup, the Australian Open, and the Indian Wells Masters, he has extended his remarkable streak of weeks at the top of the world rankings to an astonishing 420 weeks.

At 36 years old, the Serbian athlete has achieved another milestone by surpassing his long-time rival Federer to become the oldest player in ATP history to hold the world No. 1 ranking.

Roger Federer previously held the distinction of being the oldest player to reach the top of the ATP Rankings, achieving this feat at the age of 36 years, 10 months, and 16 days on June 24, 2018, marking his final day in the top spot.

However, Djokovic, who will turn 37 on May 22, has now surpassed Federer's accomplishment and has the potential to further extend his record.

In the meantime, Ben Shelton clinched his inaugural clay-court title and grabbed his second ca-

reer title overall by triumphing at the ATP 250 tournament in Houston, defeating Frances Tiafoe in the final. The 21-year-old American has ascended to a career-high ranking of world No. 14, improving from his previous position of 16th before the tournament.

ATP Rankings, Top 20:

1. Novak Djokovic, Serbia – 9,725 points
2. Jannik Sinner, Italy – 8,710
3. Carlos Alcaraz, Spain – 8,645
4. Daniil Medvedev – 7,165
5. Alexander Zverev, Germany – 5,415
6. Andrey Rublev – 4,890
7. Holger Rune, Denmark – 3,795
8. Hubert Hurkacz, Poland – 3,665
9. Grigor Dimitrov, Bulgaria – 3,540
10. Casper Ruud, Norway – 3,465
11. Alex de Minaur, Australia – 3,355
12. Stefanos Tsitsipas, Greece – 3,175
13. Taylor Fritz, United States – 2,765
14. Ben Shelton, United States – 2,490
15. Ugo Humbert, France – 2,425

Meanwhile, Rafael Nadal hopes to be able to make his return from injury at next week's Barcelona Open, the 22-time Grand Slam champion said on Wednesday.

"First training... with the hope of being here these days before the start of the tournament. I'm here to see how it goes... with the desire to try to play," Nadal wrote on social media, alongside a picture of the Spaniard sitting courtside with his rackets.

"Important to say that I don't want to confirm that I will play, hopefully I will," he added.



English Premier League to introduce semi-automated offside technology

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

The English Premier League (EPL) has announced plans to implement semi-automated offside technology for the upcoming season in the hope of reducing the time it takes to make VAR decisions.

At a shareholders' meeting on Thursday, top-flight clubs unanimously agreed to introduce the system, which is expected to cut the average length of a VAR check for offside by about 30 seconds.

This innovative system aims to revolutionise the officiating process by providing quicker and more consistent placement of the virtual offside line, all thanks to optical player track-



ing technology.

Traditionally, offside decisions have been a point of contention in football matches, with referees and assistant referees often facing intense scrutiny for their calls.

However, the introduction of semi-automated offside technology is set to change the game by reducing human error and ensuring a fairer playing

field for all teams. The technology works by utilising advanced optical tracking systems to accurately monitor player positions on the field in real time. This allows for the instantaneous calculation of offside decisions, providing referees with immediate feedback to make informed rulings.

By adopting this cutting-edge technology, the Premier League aims to enhance the integrity and efficiency of officiating while maintaining the excitement and competitiveness of the game.

Fans can expect to see a smoother and more streamlined officiating process, with fewer controversial calls and disruptions to the flow of play.



Basketball: Warriors defeat Lakers in an unprecedented game marked by exceptional 3-point shooting

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

On the road, the Golden State Warriors dominated the short-handed Lakers with a 134-120 victory, fueled by a relentless barrage of three-pointers. The Warriors made an impressive 26 out of 41 attempts from beyond the arc, with Stephen Curry leading the charge with a flawless 6-of-6 performance, contributing 23 points.

Klay Thompson and Draymond Green also made signifi-

cant contributions, each hitting five three-pointers.

Despite the absence of the injured Anthony Davis, LeBron James led the Lakers in scoring with 33 points, supported by Austin Reaves with 22 points and Rui Hachimura with 20 points.

Elsewhere in the Western Conference, the Phoenix Suns dropped to seventh place after a 105-92 defeat at home to the Los Angeles Clippers, while the New Orleans Pelicans climbed to sixth place with a 110-100 victory over

the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Philadelphia 76ers extended their winning streak to six games with a commanding 120-102 victory over the Detroit Pistons, continuing their impressive run since Joel Embiid's return from injury.

Reigning NBA Most Valuable Player, Embiid delivered a standout performance, tallying 37 points, 11 rebounds, and eight assists. The win improved the Sixers' record to 45-35, placing them just behind the sixth-placed Indiana Pacers (46-34) in the standings.

With two regular-season fixtures remaining for both teams, Sixers coach Nick Nurse noted that Embiid is still progressing in his recovery.

"I think he's still got some work to do on it."

"But we're getting there. We're just slowly inching him up the ladder, just a little bit more each game," Nurse said.

Luka Doncic led the Dallas Mavericks to a dominant 130-104 road victory over the Charlotte Hornets, scoring a 39-point triple-double.

SPORTS

The Nigerian Observer
...that the people may know

EPL: Nottingham Forest to get update on Awoniyi's injury this week



Nottingham Forest are hopeful Taiwo Awoniyi will return to action

before the end of the season. Awoniyi has struggled with injuries this season.

The Nigeria international has already missed a chunk of the campaign after undergoing

a groin surgery.

The 26-year-old returned to action in January but is currently sidelined again with a thigh injury.

Awoniyi has missed Forest's last four games due to the setback.

The striker is now set to undergo a scan this week, according to The Telegraph.

It is hoped the scan will provide clarity on when Awoniyi can make his comeback.

Nottingham Forest have six games remaining as they battle to avoid relegation from the Premier League.

It would be a big boost for head coach Nuno Espirito Santo if Awoniyi is in contention to feature in some of those fixtures.



Championship: Dennis wins Watford's March Goal of the Month award

Nigeria winger, Emmanuel Dennis has won Watford's March Goal of the Month award.

Dennis won the award for his solo strike in Watford's 2-2 draw against Leeds United at the Vicarage Road.

The 26-year-old won an aerial duel and showed off his skills with two stepovers before placing

the ball into the bottom corner.

The strike received more than 1,400 votes from Hornets supporters on the club's WhatsApp channel.

Ryan Porteous came second for his looping header against Coventry City.

Dennis also finished third thanks to his winner against Birmingham City.

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Monterrey, the Mexican team, dealt a blow to Lionel Messi and Inter Miami's CONCACAF Champions Cup hopes on Wednesday by securing a 5-2 aggregate victory in their quarter-final showdown.

Brandon Vazquez, German Berterame, and Jesus Gallardo found the net, leading Monterrey to a well-deserved 3-1 victory in the match. As a result, Monterrey advances to the semi-finals where they will face Major League Soccer champions Columbus.

In the first leg of the match in Florida, Inter Miami trailed 2-1, prompting them to include Messi in the starting lineup for the first time since his recent injury absence. In spite of Messi's presence, Monterrey displayed superior performance across all areas, leaving Inter struggling.

Inter goalkeeper, Drake Callender was called into action early, making a crucial save from a header by Monterrey's US international striker Vazquez. Although Messi had a promising opportunity for Miami in the first half, he missed the target from inside the area.

Monterrey seized the lead in the 31st minute after Vazquez capitalized on a mistake by Callender, who failed to connect with Sergio Busquets and left Vazquez with a clear shot on goal, which he calmly converted.

Inter Miami struggled to create significant chances thereafter, and Messi's former Barcelona teammate, Luis Suarez, saw a goal rightfully disallowed for offside just before halftime.

In the 58th minute, Monterrey extended their lead with a stunning goal from their Argentine striker, Berterame. After a precise build-up, Berterame

CONCACAF Champions Cup: Monterrey send Inter Miami, Messi's team out

evaded his marker on the edge of the box and unleashed a powerful shot into the top corner.

Six minutes later, Berterame turned provider, lofting a cross to an unmarked Gallardo, who expertly headed the ball past Callender.

Miami's woes continued as former Barcelona defender, Jordi Alba was shown a red card in the 78th minute for a second yellow,

following a stamp on Gallardo.

Diego Gomez provided a late consolation goal for Miami in the 85th minute, heading in Messi's well-placed free-kick.

Miami coach Gerardo Martino said Monterrey's second goal had killed the tie off.

"We said that even if we conceded the first goal it didn't change anything because we al-

ways needed to score twice.

"But their second goal ended the tie for us," Martino said.

The CONCACAF Champions Cup is the premier regional club competition for North America, Central America and the Caribbean, with the winner of this year's tournament earning a place at next year's expanded FIFA Club World Cup.



Champions League: PSG pledge to stage comeback following 2-3 loss to Barcelona

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) manager, Luis Enrique remains optimistic despite his team's 2-3 home defeat to FC Barcelona in the Champions League quarterfinal.

Enrique expresses confidence in PSG's ability to bounce back and hopes for a strong performance against the Spanish side in the upcoming match to secure progression.

Despite surrendering a late lead in pursuing their first Champions League title, PSG still faced a resilient FC Barcelona side that capitalized on

their opportunities.

The result meant Barcelona earned a narrow advantage for the return leg in Spain.

"It is clear that all defeats hurt and annoy, but I believe we played a good game against a very strong team," Luis Enrique said in a press conference on Wednesday.

"We are only going to change the things that didn't work; we always have to appreciate what a match of this magnitude means.

"We're going to Barcelona with a lot of desire. It's a positive point of view to think that we can win there. It's going to be a final for us. I'm confident in my team," he added.

Luis Enrique opted not to discuss Kylian Mbappe's performance, noting the French captain faced a formidable Barcelona defense and struggled to make an impact.

The Spanish manager, who achieved a treble with Barcelona in 2015, asserted that his team deserved the victory. He also emphasized that despite Barcelona's win and home-field advantage, they were not necessarily considered favourites.

"We are going to go to Barcelona to fight a war.

"I never see the opposition as favourites, whoever they are.

PSG edge closer to signing Victor Osimhen

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) is edging closer to securing the services of Nigerian football sensation, Victor Osimhen, from Napoli.

According to reports, PSG is prepared to meet Osimhen's release clause of €120 million, signaling a significant move in the transfer market.

The French club's willingness to pay such a hefty sum underscores their determination to bolster their squad with

top-tier talent.

Osimhen, known for his impressive goal-scoring ability and dynamic playing style, would undoubtedly add firepower to PSG's forward line.

Should the deal materialise, Osimhen is set to sign a four-year contract with PSG, with an annual salary of €13 million.

PSG is reportedly willing to allow the Nigerian striker to retain his image rights, a testament to the club's commitment to accommodating the player's preferences.



In top-level competition, that's how I see it. And I will continue

to believe that we will go to Barcelona to win the game," he said.