

DAILY Sun

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Voice of The Nation N250

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024 *VOL. 20 NO. 5506

APC, PDP in verbal war over alleged shooting incident to halt CVR in Edo - 6

Tinubu signs bill returning old national anthem into law - 26

■ Says it portrays country's diversity, unity

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Insecurity: Reps reject engagement of mercenaries - 6



FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY ADMINISTRATION

The Honourable Minister of FCT, **BARR. EZENWO NYESOM WIKE, CON, GSSRS**
and the Honourable Minister of State, **DR. MARIYA MAHMOUD**
On behalf of the entire residents of the FCT Heartily

Welcome

HIS EXCELLENCY,
PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU, GCFR

To the
Commissioning

OF ENGINEERING INFRASTRUCTURE
TO WUYE DISTRICT

DATE: 30TH MAY, 2024

VENUE: ON THE WUYE BRIDGE

TIME: 10:00AM



H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR

PRESIDENT, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES
OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

BARR. EZENWO NYESOM WIKE, CON, GSSRS

HON. MINISTER, FCT

DR. MARIYA MAHMOUD

HON. MINISTER OF STATE, FCT



FCT Administration building a better Abuja for all

PAGE 2 BUSINESS

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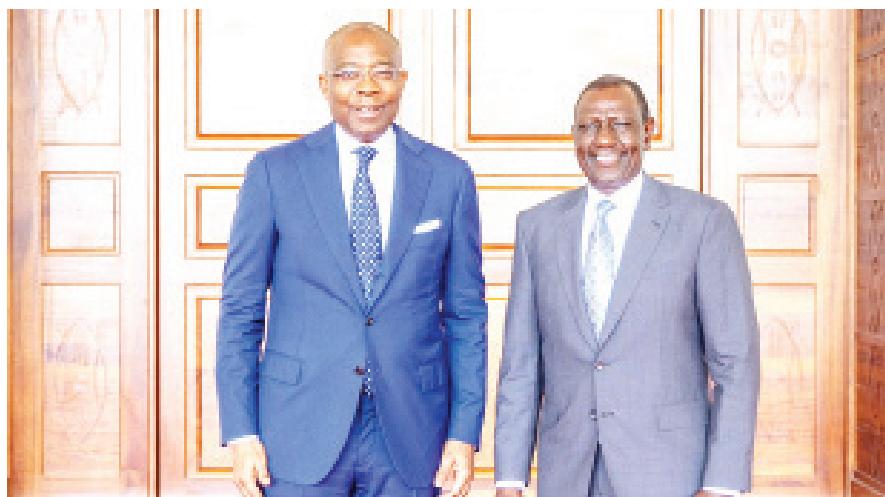
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Sun Radio



L-R: Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, Chairman, Access Holdings PLC with President William Ruto, during Aig-Imoukhuede's visit to the state house in Nairobi following the receipt of the African Banker Lifetime Achievement Award, recently.

UBA emerges 'Best Regional Bank - West Africa at African Banker Awards 2024'

AFRICA'S Global Bank, United Bank for Africa (UBA) Plc, emerged the Best Regional Bank - West Africa at the prestigious African Banker Awards 2024.

The annual African Banker Awards, organised by the African Banker Magazine, took place on Tuesday at the JW Marriott Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya, on the side-lines of the African Development Bank Annual Meetings.

The ceremony was attended by over 300 of the continent's leading figures in banking and finance and UBA being recognised as the Best Regional Bank - West Africa, marks a significant milestone especially as the bank celebrates 75 years of delivering on its promises, solidifying its legacy as Africa's Global Bank.

While receiving the awards on behalf of the bank, The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, UBA Kenya, Ms. Mary Muliili, highlighted the significance of this achievement in line with the bank's commitment to its customers and partners.

She stated, "We are honoured to be recognised as the Best Regional Bank - West Africa. This award is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and innovation

of the entire UBA team. It reflects our commitment to excellence and our unwavering focus on delivering value to our customers. For our global presence, this award reinforces UBA's position as a leading global financial institution with a deep understanding of the African market and a strong international network.

Continuing, she said, this award also showcases our ability to serve as bridge between Africa and the world, providing seamless financial solutions that drive growth and prosperity. As we celebrate 75 years of UBA, we remain committed to inspiring innovation, growth, and excellence. This award is not just a recognition of our past achievement but a motivation to continue striving for greatness in the years to come."

In his speech, Chair of the Awards Committee, Omar Ben Yedder, noted that banks and financial institutions are going through an important transition and are playing a critical role in financing growth especially with the retreat of international banks from the continent.

"We are seeing a coalition of DFIs taking shape and these will have to see con-

siderable capital increases to plug the gap in infrastructure, trade, climate and also SME Financing. We are also seeing further reform and new capital requirements for banks. This will lead to bigger banks and we have seen how the likes of UBA play a role in financing big conglomerates and large infrastructure projects, something unimaginable two decades ago," he said.

United Bank for Africa is one of the largest employers in the financial sector

on the African continent, with 25,000 employees group wide and serving over 45 million customers globally. Operating in twenty African countries and in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France and the United Arab Emirates, UBA provides retail, commercial and institutional banking services, leading financial inclusion and implementing cutting edge technology.

Energy transition: Tinubu to commission NASENI CNG conversion centre

From Adanna Nnamani, Abuja

IN an effort to promote sustainable energy, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is set to commission the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) Conversion, Filling, Reverse Engineering and Training Centre in Utako Abuja.

This was disclosed by the Executive Vice Chairman/CEO of NASENI, Khalil Suleiman Halilu at a press briefing on Wednesday.

Halilu said the landmark

event, which will take place on Friday, marks another of the agency's milestones in its commitment to supporting the Federal Government's Renewed Hope Agenda, particularly on sustainable energy alternatives and a clean energy ecosystem.

He added that the Centre, which is a partnership between NASENI and Portland Gas Limited, is a state-of-the-art facility for the conversion of fossil fuel vehicles to CNG, a cleaner and more cost-effective alternative.

The EVC noted that the adoption of CNG will offer economic benefits by reducing fuel costs for consumers and creating new job opportunities in Nigeria's green energy sector.

Regarding capacity, the head of NASENI mentioned the agency's aim to convert approximately 3,000 vehicles monthly. Additionally, he outlined plans to establish 10 similar centers in each state within the next year, aiming to swiftly address the CNG conversion deficit nationwide.

"The centre, equipped with the latest technology and staffed by highly trained professionals to ensure efficient and safe conversions, is aimed at building local capacity in CNG technology.

"It will offer comprehensive training programmes for technicians, engineers, and other stakeholders, fostering domestication of expertise in CNG systems and promoting the adoption of green energy solutions across the nation."

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com



BREAKFAST NEWS



Glo bags 'Telecom Company of the Year' award

DIGITAL solutions company, Globacom has been announced as the Telecommunication Company of The Year Award, at the annual Champion Newspapers Awards which held Eko Hotel and Suites recently.

The award was in recognition of its position as Nigeria's Most innovative telecoms operator focused on providing affordable tools of communication that will transform lives and businesses.

In her welcome address, Managing Director of Champion Newspapers Limited, Dr (Mrs) Nwadiuto Iheakanwa, expatiated on reason for the awards ceremony. She said, "all that we strive to do is to recognize excellence and hard work with a view to agitating our minds into doing more good".

She explained further that "for Nigeria to get better and bigger, we will need more of this caliber of people and institutions who we set out to honour this evening because they constitute an integral part of the best".

Personalities at the event include top private and public sector players from First Bank, Fidelity Bank, Julius Berger Plc, Consolidated Hallmark Insurance Limited, CEOs of UBA, Zenith Bank and Fidelity Bank.

The Managing Editor of Champion, Mr Kelvin Egerue remarked that Globacom has made a lot of sacrifice to make telecommunications services available to Nigerians at the most affordable rate.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

BRIEFCASE



Companies info in brief

Education key to Africa's talent development -MultiChoice

IN commemoration of the 2024 Africa Day, Africa's leading entertainment company, MultiChoice, has emphasized the role of education in cultivating talent and sustainability in the African entertainment industry.

According to the company, the continent is ripe with unrealised potential, and it is pertinent that organisations address Africa's education challenge, to ensure that skills that students gain are directly relevant to their future development, and that of the continent.

Aligning with the 2024 Africa Day theme: "Educate an African Fit For The 21st Century," the company said it remains committed to equipping aspiring industry professionals with the crucial "sustainable education" it takes to thrive in the rapidly changing film and television sector, through the MultiChoice Talent Factory (MTF) initiative.

"An MTF survey has found that around 92 per cent of MTF Academy graduates go on to work in the creative sector. Many of these young professionals go on to careers at MultiChoice, which bills itself as "Africa's most-loved storyteller," said MultiChoice West Africa CEO, Mr. John Ugbe.

"This level of absorption demonstrates another benefit of education in the African development journey: it unlocks the massive potential of the continent's youthful population. Education is what will transform Africa's 400 million young people aged between 15 and 35 into a generation of doctors, lawyers, financiers, engineers and media professionals," he added.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Int'l crude oil and commodity prices



Brent crude oil-	\$84.10	+1.20%
WTI crude oil -	\$79.71	+2.56%
Natural Gas -	\$2.54	+0.60%
RBOB Gasoline-	\$2.52	+1.53%
Heating oil -	\$2.48	+2.55%

Prices as at 28/5/2024

CEO Quote

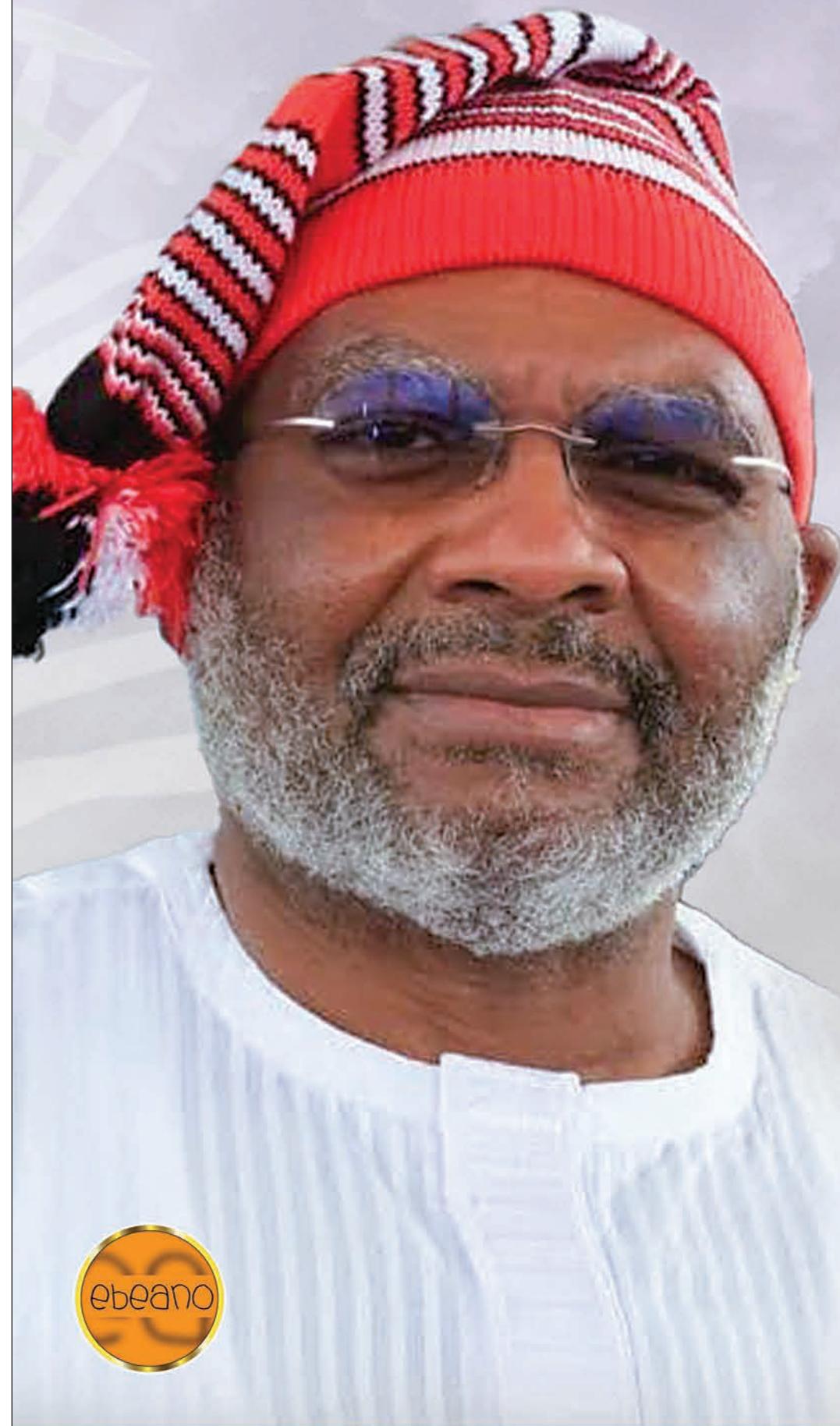


Every time you make the hard, correct decision you become a bit more courageous, and every time you make the easy, wrong decision you become a bit more cowardly. If you are CEO, these choices will lead to a courageous or cowardly company."

- Ben Horowitz, CEO of Opsware



Senator Chimaroke Nnamani



@

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I, Hon Chidera Odo, Ezeomeogo 1 of Nkporogwu Ukehe, MD/CEO Colliery Guest House Enugu join millions of your followers, admirers, and well-wishers, to heartily wish you a Super Happy Birthday Sir.

We celebrate an inspiring leader, trailblazer in many respects, mentor, builder of men and women alike, author of democracy dividends, and illustrious son of Enugu State, the Igbo Nation, Nigeria, and indeed a global citizen of note.

We pray that this your new age brings greater accomplishments in the years ahead.

May you be rejuvenated with wisdom, strength and divine good health and grace.
Sir, you will be blessed beyond measure..



Signed:

Hon Chidera OdoEzeomeogo 1 of Nkporogwu Ukehe,
MD/CEO Colliery Guest House Enugu

His Excellency
Chimaroke Nnamani, MD
Former Governor of Enugu State

Fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology; Specialist in maternal and fetal medicine at the College of Medicine, Loma Linda University, Southern Florida, United States

Copyright infringement: NAS threatens legal action against impersonator

By Lukman Olabiyi

THE National Association of Seadogs (NAS), popularly known as the Pyrates Confraternity, has threatened to take legal action against a group, the Association of Humble and Obedient Youths (AHOY) infringing its copyright.

NAS's Capoon, Mr Abiola Owoaje, made the disclosure, yesterday, at a press conference while dissociating his group from AHOY, which he accused of infringing on NAS's copyright and also impersonating it.

Reacting to a viral video purportedly made by AHOY, members of the Board of Trustees and Tortuga-in-Council of NAS berated the group, and dissociated itself from it saying, NAS has no connection with AHOY, warned its promoters to desist from misleading the pupil with fabricated a story that has no basis.

Owoaje, who spoke on behalf of NAS, said: "The said video constitutes the most impudent, brazen episode of piracy on the high seas—the real thing yet to be acknowledged in seafaring lore. It is more comical than Baba Sala in cross-dressing, more improbable than a Mr Bean cartoon, more puerile than the petulant antics of an infant denied a lick from an ice cream cone."

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline)

Police storm kidnappers' hideout, rescue 2 victims, arrest suspect

From **Scholastica Hir**, Makurdi

THE Benue State Police Command has bursted a kidnappers' hideout in Ukum Local Government Area (LGA) of the state, killed three suspects and rescued two victims.

The Commissioner of Police, Benue State Command, Hassan Yabanet, made the disclosure in a statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Catherine Anene, and made available to newsmen in Makurdi, yesterday. He also stated that one of the suspected kidnappers was arrested during the raid.

The statement noted that the command, under the leadership of CP Hassan Yabanet, has intensified operations across the state, particularly in the Sankara axis; Logo, Ukum and Katsina-Ala LGAs. The operation is geared towards returning farmers to their farm lands and curbing banditry in the area.

The Commissioner said: "On 29/5/2024, at about 0600hrs, officers of the Operation Zenda Joint Task Force (JTF) stormed a kidnap hideout at Utanger Council Ward in Katsina-Ala LGA. On sighting the police, the kidnappers, led by the gang leader, Terse Dada, aka "Causer", engaged the team in a gun duel, but were overpowered by the superior fire power of the police.

"Consequently, three suspects sustained gunshot injuries and were eventually confirmed dead at the hospital,

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline)

News around the C



L-R: Principal Surveillance and Investigation Officer, Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC), Ibrahim Suleiman; Assistant Director, Legal, Eme Ojugo; Director, Brand Management and Strategy, X3M Ideas, Temitope Ayeni; Acting Vice Chairman, Adamu Abdullahi; Creative Director, Anthony Eigbe and Chief Legal Officer, Florence Abebe, at the Pan-African Creative Awards, in Abuja.

Shake up in FRSC as Agwu, 4 other senior officers deployed

From **Okwe Obi**, Abuja

THE Corps Marshal, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Shehu Muhammed, has approved the redeployment of five senior officers, in the category of three assistant corps marshals, one corps commander and one deputy corps commander who are expected to report to their new responsibilities with immediate effect.

The affected officers are Assistant Corps Marshal, Jonas Agwu, who was the public education officer and is now redeployed to head the Administration and Human Resources Department at the national headquarters.

Assistant Corps Marshal Chidi Nkwonta, former commandant, FRSC Command and Staff College, Enugu State, takes over duty as the Principal Staff Officer (PSO) to the Corps Marshal from Assistant Corps Marshal Hafeez Muhammed, who has been redeployed as Zonal Commanding Officer Zone 7. This was contained in a statement by FRSC Public Education Officer, Olusegun Ogungbemide, yesterday.

The statement reads in part: "In the same vein, the Corps Marshal also approved the redeployment of Corps Commander Olusegun Ogungbemide as the new Public Education Officer. Before his redeployment, the new spokesperson was in charge of Command Administration and Strategy, Operations Department, at the National Headquarters.

"In addition, Shehu Muhammed also appointed Deputy Corps Commander Wasiu Adenekan as the Technical Advisor to the Corps Marshal and Head, Corps Information Technology Office, respectively.

"Arising from the need to keep the redeployed officers on their toes, the Corps Marshal charged them to remain steadfast in their commitment

and dedication to duties and to share in the FRSC vision of making Nigerian roads safer for all motorists.

"You would recall that the Corps Marshal had, while reading out his policy thrust,

NAF bombs terrorists' bases in Katsina, Borno, kills 30

From **Molly Kilete**, Abuja

THE Nigerian Air Force (NAF) said its air component of Operation Hadarin Daji in Northwest Nigeria has bombed terrorist hideouts in Katsina and Borno states, killing 30 terrorists in the attack.

NAF Director, Public Relations and Information, Air Vice Marshal Edward Gabkwet, who made the disclosure, said the air strikes, carried out on May 27, 2024, were conducted around Bakai, Bakarya, and Yartsintsiya bandits' hideouts in Kankara Local Government Area of Katsina State and Tumbun Fulani, near Lake Chad.

Gabkwet's statement reads: "It has now been confirmed that air strikes undertaken by the air component of Operation Hadarin Daji in Northwest Nigeria have eliminated several terrorists loyal to notorious terrorist kingpin known as Babura.

The statement reads in part: "The air strikes, carried out on May 27, 2024, were conducted around Bakai, Bakarya, and Yartsintsiya bandits' hideouts in Kankara Local Government Area of Katsina State. Credible intelligence received after the strike revealed that about 30 terrorists were confirmed to have been neutralised. It was also confirmed that Babura narrowly escaped being eliminated, while most of his foot soldiers were not so lucky.

"Similar air strikes were also carried out by the air component of Operation Hadin Kai on the same day, at Tumbun Fulani, near Lake Chad, against terrorists at a once abandoned hideout. "The strikes were authorised after Intelligence Surveillance and

said that his administration is committed to playing a critical role towards the realisation of the renewed hope agenda of

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, on safer road, hence the strategic redeployment."

"That these remnants of

Thailand lauds NDLEA over drop in number of Nigerian prisoners

From **Godwin Tsa**, Abuja

THE government of Thailand has commended the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) for mounting a vigorous fight against substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking in Nigeria, a development that has impacted positively on the image of the country in the international community.

The commendation was given by the Charge d'affaires/Deputy Head of Mission of the Royal Thai Embassy in Nigeria, Mr. Kriwat Pharmorabuta, who was accompanied by a Counsellor, Mr. Perapol Berananda, during a courtesy visit to the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig Gen Mohamed Buba Marwa (retd).

While praising the inspiring leadership Marwa has provided the NDLEA in the last three years, the Thai envoy said, "I have good news that I received as we speak because, before, there were around 800 prisoners from Nigeria in Thai prisons, but, right now, the number has decreased greatly to less than 200. That means it's very difficult now for them to get out with the drugs. So, I congratulate you and the Nigerian people. I feel pleased because I'm a diplomat in Nigeria, and so, I love not only my country, I also love Nige-

ria because Nigeria is my second home. So, when I receive good news like this, I feel very happy."

On the ongoing collaboration between the Thai embassy and NDLEA on visa clearance, Pharmorabuta said his government seeks to strengthen the partnership since the embassy relies more on NDLEA visa clearance to issue Thai visa to any Nigerian travelling to

Thailand from anywhere in the world, because of the thorough job usually done by the agency on the important travel document.

He said: "I would like to thank your excellency and to inform you that the government of Thailand gives more importance to the certificate of NDLEA of Nigeria before issuing visas.

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline)

2 female undergraduates kidnapped in Benue

From **Scholastica Hir**, Makurdi

TWO female students of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, (JOS-TUM), formerly University of Agriculture Makurdi (FUAM), has been kidnapped by unknown gunmen, the Benue state Police Command have said.

The State Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Catherine Anene, who confirmed the incident on Wednesday in Makurdi said the students were kidnapped on Saturday night.

Anene said the incident took place at about 11pm along North Bank/Univer-

sity of Agriculture Road.

Anene who said the incident took place outside the university campus explained that the gunmen blocked the road, attacked and took the victims before the security operatives could arrive at the scene.

The Police spokesperson said both the families of the students and the school authorities have notified the Command and investigation into the matter was ongoing.

Efforts to get the school authorities failed as the deputy Public Relations Officer, Mrs Iwodi said she needs to get permission to speak to the press.

City

CRIME, COURT & LIVING

**CALL 08052088288
08109473658**

Police stray bullets kill 2 in Ekiti

From **Priscilla Ediare**,
Ado-Ekiti

A police officer has reportedly killed two young men in Ado-Ekiti, the capital of Ekiti State.

The incident happened at about 8pm, on Tuesday, at the Omisanjana area of the capital city, when a yet-to-be-identified officer allegedly fired gun shots to disperse some irate youths at the scene of an incident in the area.

A source said some operatives of the Rapid Response Squad (RRS) accidentally fired gun shots while trying

to disperse some youths who accosted a hit-and-run driver and were about to lynch him. The driver was said to have fled after hitting a commercial motorcyclist and a passenger, breaking their legs and arms in the accident.

The source added that the driver made a phone call to the RRS men, and when they arrived at the scene of the incident, one of the officers opened fire which hit the two people.

"When the RRS men arrived at the scene, the irate youths made an attempt to confront them, and mobbed the officers, and one of the officers fired

bullets that hit the two men. The victims were rushed to the Ekiti State Teaching Hospital in Ado-Ekiti, but, unfortunately, they died at the hospital. Their bodies have been deposited at the mortuary."

Reacting, the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Ekiti State Command, DSP Sunday Abutu, in a statement, yesterday, said the Commissioner of Police, Akinwale Adeniran, has ordered discreet investigation into the incident and condoled with the family members of the deceased.

Abutu said: "A serious motor vehicle/motorcycle accident

occurred, involving a Lexus car and a Jincheng motorcycle, along the Omisanjana area of Ado-Ekiti. The command, upon the receipt of the information, deployed the state traffic section to the scene to ensure there is no breakdown of law and order, as well as ensuring the safety of the victims.

"On getting to the scene, the operatives met a resistance as some irate youths disallowed them from performing their lawful duty and insisted on carrying out jungle justice. This necessitated a call for reinforcement to assist the officers on ground. However, in the process, one of the officers accidentally fired a shot that fatally injured two people.

"The officer responsible for the shooting has been disarmed, arrested and detained and shall be made to face disciplinary action, immediately. While the command is already in touch with the two families of the deceased, the Ekiti State Commissioner of Police, Akinwale Kunle Adeniran, condoles with the families and assures them that discreet investigation has commenced and justice shall prevail."

Emirship tussle: Kano govt bans public gathering, protests

From **Desmond Mgboh**
Kano

KANO State Governor, Abba Kabir Yusuf, has imposed stringent restrictions on all public gatherings intended for protest within the state.

This was contained in a statement issued by the governor's Spokesperson, Sanusi Bature Dawakin Tofa, yesterday.

The governor directed the Police, the Directorate of State Security Services, and the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps to apprehend, detain, and prosecute any individual or group partaking in demonstrations on the streets of Kano.

The statement read: "We are privy to credible intelligence indicating that certain prominent figures from the opposition party in Kano have devised plans to sponsor student associations and political agitators from other northwestern states to incite chaos under the guise of advocating for the dethroned Emir of Kano, Aminu Ado Bayero. Through this declaration, we caution student groups against being manipulated by troublemakers who are resolute in fomenting disorder in Kano."

The governor urged all citizens of the state to carry on with their normal activities "as the state retains its tranquility, while the government will persist in vigilant oversight of the situation to promptly address any individuals or factions trying to undermine the relative peace that the state presently enjoys."

Meanwhile, the police command in Kano said it will ensure the state government order that banned all forms of protests is implemented with all sense of vigour and warned that any person found violating the order will be arrested and prosecuted, accordingly.

In a statement by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), SP Abdullahi Haruna Kiyawa, the Commissioner of Police, Kano State, Mohammed Gumel, called on

residents in the state to remain patriotic and obey the government's order.

The statement reads: "CP Gumel calls on Kano State residents to remain patriotic and obey the Kano State government's order, which was issued this morning, 29/05/2024, that put a ban on all forms of unlawful gatherings, protests or processions. Already, armed personnel have since been deployed to identify flash points in and outside the Metropolis, and are poised to deal with any form of violation and other unforeseen circumstances.

"In the same vein, the police command has placed its fully

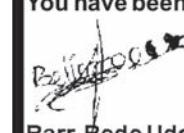
CAVEAT EMPTOR

The general public is hereby notified that the parcel of land being, situate and lying at Ilo-Aro Land, Odida Village, Ogidi, otherwise known as "Ani Ilo-Aro Nsika" belongs to Nsika Kindred of Dualor Clan, Odida Village, Ogidi in Idemili North Local Government Area of Anambra State of Nigeria. Nsika Kindred is made up of four families namely: Okafor family, Udo family, Okuife family and Anyaonwu family. These four families mentioned above jointly own the "Ani Ilo-Aro Nsika".

Attention of the general public is hereby drawn to the fact that some land grabbers are going about presenting themselves to unsuspecting and potential buyers of land as owners of several parcels of land situate at Ilo-Aro Land including "Ani Ilo-Aro Nsika". Based on this ugly development, we deemed it appropriate and necessary to let the public know that members of Nsika Kindred are not selling any land at their "Ani Ilo-Aro Nsika" neither has they contracted any agent whosoever to do same on their behalves. Anybody that negotiates with these land grabbers or any other body whosoever does so at his or her own risk.

Any sale made in respect of any piece or parcel of land at "Ani Ilo-Aro Nsika" without the consent of the Principal Members of the four families mentioned above is unlawful and thus cannot confer any legal title to the purchaser.

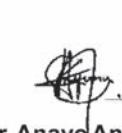
You have been warned.



Barr. Bede Udo
for Udo family,

High Chief Barth Okafor
for Okafor family,

Principal Members of the four families.



Engr. Anayo Anyaonwu
for Anyaonwu family.

Chief James Okuife
for Okuife family,

IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE IKEJA MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT
HODEN AT OGBA

HEARING NOTICE

BETWEEN:
Solanke Tetisimi Naomi ... CLAINTANT
AND
Oche Peter ... DEFENDANT
TO: *Oche Peter*

The above cause will be transferred from the General Cause List to the Hearing Paper for **Hearing on 6th June, 2024** at 10:00 o'clock in the forecourt, and will come up on the day of **May 2024** to be heard on that day if the business of the Court permits or otherwise on some adjournment day which will receive no further notice.

If either party desires to postpone the hearing they must apply to the Court as such as possible the purpose, and if application is based on any other matter than facts, they must be prepared to show proof of those facts.

Dated at **Court 1 Ogba** on the day of **May 2024**.

BY ORDER OF THE COURT

[Signature]
RECORDED

MCIK/66/FAM/2024 Page 1 of 1

**IN THE MAGISTRATE'S COURT OF LAGOS STATE
IN THE IKEJA MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT
HODEN AT OGBA**

SUIT NO.: MCIK/66/FAM/2024

IN THE MATTER FOR AN APPLICATION FOR AN ORDER FOR CUSTODY

BETWEEN:

1. SOLANKE TETISIMI NAOMI
2. SOLANKE TENIOLA ESTHER
(Suing Through their mother Solanke Gbemisola Kemi)
3. SOLANKE GBEMISOLA KEMI ... APPLICANTS

AND

OCHE PETER ... RESPONDENT

FURTHER AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF ORIGINATING MOTION

I, SOLANKE GBEMISOLA KEMI, Female, Nigerian of 9 Aje Street Baale Bus Stop Akowonjo Egbeda Lagos, do hereby make Oath and state as follows:

- That I am the 3rd Applicant in this suit and mother to the 1st and 2nd Applicant herein and by virtue of which I am conversant with the facts hereby deposed to herein.
- That I stand by my deposition in support of the Originating process dated 6th March 2024.
- That in paragraph 6 of that deposition, I made reference to pictures and marked them SG5.
- That upon a review of the case file, it was discovered that the said pictures were not attached.
- That now attached are the said pictures referred to as SG5.
- That the orders herein sought are to formalize my role in the lives of the 1st and 2nd Applicant.
- That the orders herein sought are in the best interest of the 1st and 2nd Applicant.
- That I swear to this Affidavit in good faith, believing the contents thereof to be true and in accordance with the Oaths Law.

SWORN to at the Magistrate's Court Registry, Ikeja, this day of May 2024
22 day of May 2024 BEFORE ME:
MAGISTRATE
FEDERICA ALI (MRS)
COMMISSIONER
LAGOS STATE JUDICIARY
Date:
CASH OFFICE, IKEJA



PUBLIC NOTICE

FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) OF THE PROPOSED 2000 METRIC TONS OF LUBRICATING OIL BLENDING PLANT PROJECT AT KM 2, OWERRI-ONITSHA EXPRESSWAY, OWERRI NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, IMO STATE BY FRANK & GENE ENERGY LIMITED.

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act CAP E12 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major developmental activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of their proposed projects the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces twenty-one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the draft EIA report submitted by Frank and Gene Energy Limited.

Brief Project Description:

The proposed project involves the construction of a 2000 metric tons lubricating oil blending plant for the production of lubricants (engine Oil, gear oil and others). The plant shall be sited on a land take of 0.3972830ha at KM 2, Owerri-Onitsha Expressway. Owerri North Local Government Area Imo State. Component of the project include but not limited to Base Oil Storage tanks, Blending facility, Metering skids, Reception and Loading bays.

The Display Centers Are:

- Headquarters, Owerri North Local Government Area, Orie-Uratta, Imo State.
- Imo State Ministry of Environment, Owerri Imo State,
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environmental Assessment Department, Environment House Independence Way South Central Business District, Abuja F.C.T.
- www.ead.gov.ng

Duration of Display:

Date: 14th May - 11th June, 2024.

Time: 8:00am - 4:00pm Daily.

ALL COMMENTS RECEIVED SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, HEADQUARTERS MABUSHI, ABUJA - FCT AND VIA info@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 18TH JUNE, 2024.

**SIGNED
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Tinubu attends joint NASS session, seeks lawmakers' support

From Fred Itua, Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye and Ndubuisi Orji, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu, yesterday, declined to address a joint session of the National Assembly despite repeated appeals by the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas.

He had planned to deliver a State of the Union address to mark the one year anniversary of his administration.

On Tuesday, there were conflicting statements from two aides to President Tinubu. While one announced that the president would brief a joint session, another countered it, revealing that there were no such plans.

Ahead of the planned address, the bureaucracy of the National Assembly placed advertorials in national dailies, announcing the planned address.

Daily Sun gathered that yesterday in the morning, at about 9:30 am, Akpabio and Abbas rushed to the Villa, to convince the President to make a stopover at the joint session.

It was learnt that for over two hours, the two National Assembly leaders failed to convince President Tinubu, who sources said, insisted that he was not properly briefed before the appearance.

It was further learnt that Akpabio and Abbas apologised to Tinubu, who then promised to make a brief stop over before proceeding to the commissioning of the relaunched Abuja Light Rail.

When Daily Sun visited the National Assembly Complex, security officials from the Presidential Villa were seen while the regular security agents were pushed to the fringes.

In his brief remarks, Tinubu commended the lawmakers for their efforts in sustaining democracy and urged the National Assembly to continue to collaborate with the Executive for further development of Nigeria and prosperity of the people.

"Without this House, I'm not sure I would have found my path to where I am today. That is why I am giving that respect to you. We are walking the talk. I will soon bring the year 2024 appropriation bill. We must nurture this democracy, build this nation, so the future of our nation will progress."

"You are the first and foremost leaders that speak for our people. And you have been in the forefront of this struggle."

"This institution, the hallowed chambers, represent our consciousness for freedom and sense of belonging, you ring out the latest national anthem, Nigeria we hail thee."

"You see, this is our diversity, representing all characters and how we blend together to be brothers and sisters. Without this House, probably I may not find a part in the presidency. I started off from here."

"And that is why I have given that respect this morning to you. So, please continue to collaborate, work together and build our country. We have no other choice. It is

our nation. No one, no aid, no other institution or other personality will help us. Except we do it ourselves, no amount of aid that may be coming from foreign countries or any other nation will do it for us. They take care of themselves first.

"Let us work together as we are doing to build our nation. Not only for us but also for generations yet unborn. Charting a new path, the question of a programme for development. I submitted the last budget to you, you expeditiously passed it. We are walking the talk. I will soon bring the 2024 appropriation bill, that is just for your information."

"But, we must not risk this democracy, build this nation so that the future of our great grandchildren will be sure of prosperity, development, and progress," Tinubu noted during his brief remarks.

Tinubu called for collaboration between the legislature and the executive to build the country.

The President stated that this is because no outsider can build Nigeria except the people. Consequently, he solicited the continued support and partnership of the National Assembly in the overall interest of the country.

Akpabio, in his remarks, said: "Mr President, this is your National Assembly. The senators and members have asked me to congratulate you on your first anniversary since you were sworn-in into office. Congratulations sir."

"Before you came, myself and my brother, Tajudeen Abbas, explained the purpose of this visit, that this is what we call in Nollywood, 'waka pass.' You intend to celebrate Democracy Day, which is June 12. But out of honour and respect for the National Assembly, you said you must pass through the National Assembly on your first anniversary in office."

"Of all the significant things you have done, I think one of the most profound, is to take us back to the genealogy, the genealogical of our birth, that though we may belong to different tribes, though we may have different tongues, in brotherhood we all stand."

"Henceforth, we won't refer to ourselves as mere compatriots, we will refer to ourselves as brothers, and as we go into battle in the field of sports or politics, in economic endeavours, we must hail Nigeria."

Akpabio said the National Assembly was the best place to "commence this revolution of going back to our genealogy."

Abbas, in his vote of thanks, said the National Assembly erred by inviting Tinubu to address a joint session.

"Mr president has other commitments after the National Assembly engagement. He is supposed to be at the commissioning of the light rail station somewhere in town," Abbas said.

"His presence here today will be largely to symbolise the commencement of the use of the national anthem."

"He might not be able to give any speech. All the speeches coming from us too are not going to take place. June 12 is supposed to be the real Democracy Day, not May 29."

"It was an error from us. Mr president has acknowledged our shortcomings in that regard and advised that whatever ceremony we have, whatever speech we have should be reserved for June 12."

"That will be the day that we will all convene to actually celebrate democracy. Distinguish senators

and honourable members; forgive us for this lapse."

Nonetheless, he said the lawmakers were pleased with his scorecard in the last one year and with the partnership that has existed between the legislature and executive in the last one year.

"I want you to know that we

in the National Assembly are very happy with your report card; with your performance so far. The National Assembly is very happy at the partnership that has existed in the last one year between you and us here. It is a partnership that has been mutually beneficial to us here. It is a win-win. That is

how democracy is supposed to be played. We want to thank you for finding time to come here. And to assure you as well that the National Assembly will always support your noble objective. We want to thank you for bringing back our national anthem, for those above 50 years, the one we grew up with."



Publisher/Chairman, Sun Publishing Limited, Nneya Kalu (middle), receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from former Ogun State governor, Gbenga Daniel (right) and Publisher of TimelineNg, Yusuf Adeoye, during the TimelineNg annual lecture/awards in Lagos, yesterday. Photo: Dele Onatafe

Insecurity: Reps reject motion to engage mercenaries

From Ndubuisi Orji, Abuja

MEMBERS of the House of Representatives, yesterday, kicked against a motion calling on the Federal Government to engage mercenaries in the fight against insecurity.

The lawmakers, who were contributing to the proposal made by Ahmed Jaha, as an amendment to a motion on banditry in parts of Katsina State, said engaging mercenaries might be counterproductive.

Jaha had argued that since the security challenges in the country were still lingering, despite the efforts of security agencies, it was time the government engaged mercenaries like it did during the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan.

"We commend our security agencies; they have done well, but we need help. We deserve to know the truth, so that we know what to relay to our constituents."

However, the immediate past deputy speaker, Idris Wase, said the issue of whether or not the government should engage mercenaries was not something that could be discussed publicly.

Wase noted that all over the world, no parliament discusses sensitive security issues in the open.

Similarly, Abbas Adigun, said it would be insensitive for the Nigerian government to be engaging mercenaries to fight insecurity in the country.

"Asking another country to send us mercenaries is an insult to the giant of Africa that we are. Our security agencies can work with retired service chiefs to get this work done. We need to increase the capacity of our security agencies. We need to look into the welfare of our security agencies. When they go out, there is a 50 percent chance that they won't come back, so what happened to their families?"

"They need modern equipment to face the insurgents. Do we have all they need to effectively fight them? No. In the 9th Assembly, all we discussed about security, none was done and that is why I don't attend any security meeting in this assembly," he said.

The Deputy Speaker, Benjamin Kalu, who presided, after listening to the various contributions on the motion, implored Jaha to step it down. Consequently, the lawmaker applied to step down the motion, expressing hope that the issue would be discussed in an executive session.

Nevertheless, the House resolved that its leadership would meet with President Tinubu to discuss issues surrounding the spate of insecurity in the country. It also urged the government to rebuild security infrastructure destroyed by insurgents.

From Tony Osauzo, Benin

THE Edo State chapters of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), yesterday, engaged in war of words over alleged attack and shooting incident at Idia College Centre for the ongoing Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise in Benin City.

The Commissioner for Communication and Orientation, Chris Nehikhare, had in a statement said the attention of the Edo State Government had been drawn to deliberate attempts by the APC to stir violence and cause crisis in the state, in a desperate move to halt the ongoing Continuous Voters Registration (CVR) by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"The state government strongly condemns the recent attack and shooting at Idia College a couple of days ago, which led to the injury of an innocent student. To say the least, this is most troubling, disheartening, and shameful, and is never a way to play

the opposition role expected of a responsible opposition party."

"It is utterly appalling that a political party would resort to attacking a CVR centre to obstruct eligible voters from registering to participate in an election that they are contesting. One is left to wonder how the APC plans to get the electorate to vote for their candidate. We say no to such shenanigans and resort to violence by the APC and their agents and call on security agencies to rein in these agents of violence."

"We thank God there was no loss of life from the reprehensible act, and we are, therefore, warning the APC to desist from this dishonorable conduct and embrace democratic norms."

"If the APC really has a candidate to sell and believes in the viability and credibility of their candidate, they should get more people to register, and also campaign to convince the people to vote for him, instead of resorting to attacking Edo people and disrupting the peace in the state."

"We urge all Edo people not to be discouraged by the desperate antics

of the APC and their agents, but leverage on the opportunity of the CVR exercise to register for their Permanent Voters Cards (PCVs), and participate in the September 21 gubernatorial election with a determination to collectively work towards a free, fair, and violence-free electoral process," the statement said.

But, in a swift reaction, the APC in a statement signed by its assistant state publicity secretary, Ofure Osehobo, described the PDP's allegation as fabricated and fraudulent, and tasked the party to explain where its governorship candidate, Asue Ighodalo, got the voter card he used on INEC nomination forms since he just registered as a voter this week.

"Our attention has been drawn to a comedy script by Mr. Chris Nehikhare, the publicity secretary of the PDP, and the outgoing Commissioner for Information. We expected him and the PDP to be more serious and help explain how their governorship candidate, Asue Ighodalo, came about the voter's card he submitted on his INEC

nomination forms, considering that he only registered as a voter this week. Nehikhare's allegations of a recent attack and shooting at Idia College, and his vague reference to the incident as taking place a couple of days ago without specifying a date, are not only fabricated, but also fraudulent.

"Officials, who are monitoring the Continuous Voter Registration (CVR) exercise have reported no such incident. If there was any incident, why did Chris Nehikhare fail to mention the exact date, instead of loosely referring to his phantom 'recent attack and shooting at Idia College a couple of days ago'?"

"Edo State residents are disillusioned with the outgoing administration, particularly after the recent devastating floods in Benin City. The sooner Nehikhare and the PDP realise that Edo people are not ready to accommodate them further in the state, especially after several of their relatives have been swept away by floods, the better for them."

•Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

UZODIMMA CONGRATULATES MR. PRESIDENT FOR AN ACTION PACKED ONE YEAR IN OFFICE

On behalf of the government and good people of Imo state, I, Senator Hope Uzodimma, Governor of Imo State, most sincerely Congratulate our able and visionary President, Alhaji Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, on the occasion of the commemoration of his action packed one year in office.

Mr. President, the journey has been quite tough and rough, but your resilience, vision, unwavering patriotism, and courage have combined to see you successfully navigating the ship of the country this past one year.

Your inspirational leadership has birthed the landscape with legendary legacy projects such as the iconic super highways, energy transition, economic rejuvenation, enhanced security, social cohesion, inclusivity, and numerous others in just one year.

In just one year, you have demonstrated uncommon dexterity in providing the courageous leadership needed to save this nation from economic collapse.

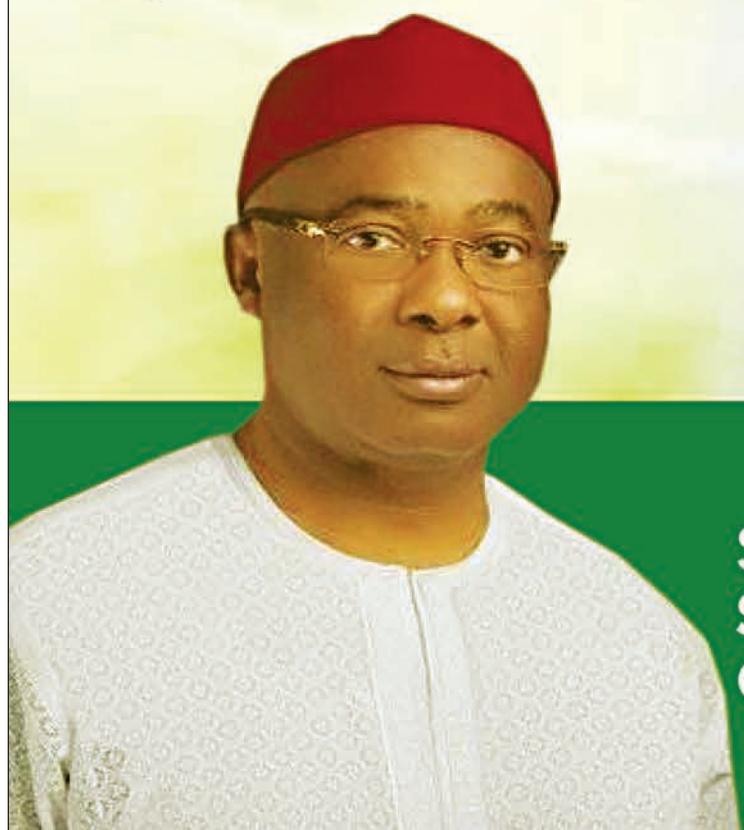
As you march on with your reforms encapsulated on the Renewed Hope Agenda, be assured of the support and prayers of Imo people.

Just as the darkest hour heralds a glorious dawn, I have no doubt that your purposeful and impactful administration will soon enough, lead Nigeria to a rebirth of peace, progress, and development.

Happy one year anniversary, Mr. President. It can only be better.



Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR
President and Commander-in-Chief of the
Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria



Signed:
Sen. Hope Uzodimma
Governor, Imo State

Democracy: Africa'll never, ever be great if Nigeria is not great -Lumumba

• As ex-head of state, Abdulsalami, reflects on democracy @ 25

From **Aidogbie Paulinus**, Abuja

FIERY public speaker and Director, Kenyan School of Law, Professor Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba, has said Africa cannot be great if Nigeria is not great.

According to him, the democracy of Nigeria will only begin to have meaning when Nigeria provides leadership.

Lumumba made the submission while delivering a lecture titled 'Democracy in Africa: The Legacy of Abdulsalami Abubakar' organised by The Leadership Scorecard Integrated in Abuja in honour of former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, who returned Nigeria to democratic rule in 1999.

Lumumba, former Director of the Kenyan Anti-Corruption Commission, also said in true democracy, those who have the honour and privilege to serve their country must be servants of their people.

He stated that those who have the honour and privilege of serving their country must only have one agenda which is that they must be trustees of the things that are entrusted with.

He added that those who have the honour and privilege of serving their people will go out there and will be prepared to say that they are prepared to lay down their lives for the benefit of the people.

Lumumba stated that in true democracy, the people want to

be told that if there is agriculture, it will be supported and they be able to deliver that they can feed themselves.

He explained that in true democracy, the people want to be told that they will have good health system so that when they are sick, they will go to hospitals that are hospitals in the true sense of the word and not hospitals built for them and their leaders running away to different parts of the world to seek better medical care.

Lumumba also said the people would not want to see their education system being an education system prepared for them and then the children of those whom they have elected going to different parts of the world.

He disclosed that the people would want to ensure that they have power, particularly the younger generation, they want to ensure that they are enjoying the dividends of artificial intelligence, that governance facilitates them and makes them inventors and innovators and create for them, an environment where they can thrive.

Lumumba asserted that if the aforementioned were not done, young men and women of the continent will be dying in the Mediterranean Sea; they will be humiliated at embassies of foreign countries and those who have the opportunity will run away to go and be engineers in different parts of the world.

He added that if true democracy is not practiced in Nigeria, the young men and women will not have faith in their country and would want to acquire the passports of different countries and will not be proud of democracy.

Lumumba told Abubakar that the democracy he cherished, the democracy he keeps talking about and walking around Africa for, is the democracy that promises Africans that Africa can be great again.

"And Africa must be great again. And Africa will never, ever be great, I submit to you Nigerians, if Nigeria is not great," Lumumba said.

Explaining the rationale behind his submission, Lumumba said he arrived at the conclusion because with the population of over 300 million, if Nigeria can be made into a market, who can confront the continent of Africa.

"Who can ignore the continent of Africa? Tell me, where in the world do you not find a Nigerian? Somebody once told me that if you go to any place in the world and you do not find a Nigerian, run away from there because there is nothing to be done in that place.

"I am suggesting that the democracy of Nigeria will only begin to have meaning when Nigeria provides leadership.

"The time is now. As we celebrate democracy in Africa today, I am calling upon Nigeria and Nigerians to rise to the occasion, rise up so that your politics will be a point of reference so that when

we watch men and women in the Senate in Nigeria and in the House of Representatives in Nigeria and we watch them debate, they will be debating about the things that relate to Africa; they will be debating about Africa Agenda 2063, they will be debating about Africa Continental Free Trade Area, they will not demand of anybody that wants to come to Nigeria who is an Africa must have a visa. No! Nigeria being as big as it is, should be the welcoming big brother because when you do that, we follow your leadership.

"We want to see a Nigeria that is economically dominant because if Nigeria is strong, then the test

of Africa is strong," Lumumba also said.

Lumumba further said when he hears occasionally Nigeria saying that it is the second largest and first largest economy in Africa sometimes, he wasn't impressed because when Nigeria had a GDP of 500 billion, he is not impressed.

According to Lumumba, Nigeria "should have a GDP of \$10 trillion then I will be impressed."

He asserted that this is possible because Nigeria has the human resources and the intellectual wherewithal to ensure that it happens.

"When I hear Nigeria saying that they generate anything

between 5,000 and 10,000 megawatts of electricity, I am not impressed. I am not impressed because little Denmark generates 35,000 megawatts of electricity and if Nigeria is to earn the dividends of democracy through industrialisation, Nigeria must now get and embark in the serious business of ensuring that Nigeria has energy to propel not only her and her neighbour, but the continent of Africa into the fourth industrial revolution. Those are the dividends of democracy," Lumumba stated.

• Continued on www.sunnewonline.com

Ganduje's aide advises Primate Ayodele against certain prophesies

PRIMATE Elijah Ayodele of the INRI Evangelical Spiritual Church has been advised to stop making negative prophesies.

Chief Oliver Okpala, Senior Special Assistant on Public Enlightenment to APC National Chairman, Dr. Abdullahi Ganduje, while reacting to Primate Ayodele prophesy that Ganduje's time was up and he would soon be replaced as national chairman of the ruling party, said the church leader should not say things that would instill fear in those concerned.

Ayodele in the statement through his media aide, Oluwatosin Osho Ayodele, said of Ganduje: "He will not be appreciated, there will be problems between him

and other party members. He should watch his back; they want to stab him. Somebody is about to replace him; let them be careful so that there won't be any crisis or unexpected gunshot inside the secretariat."

Okpala said Ayodele's kind of prophecy was unacceptable.

He said: "Men of God, both in the Bible and even the holy Koran are known to always preach peace, unity, love and happiness. Even when such negative things are revealed to them about their nation or individuals, they pray fervently against such occurrence and anything to the contrary is deviance and ungodly. Through this and similar prophecies, Primate Ayo-

dele tend to make people believe that he is a politician in cassock.

"God warned in Jeremiah 23:16 "thus saith the Lord of hosts, hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you. They lead you unto vanity. They speak a vision of their own heart and not out of the mouth of the Lord."

"Dr. Ganduje knows too well that no religion preaches or authors confusion. He remains focused working closely with our amiable leader, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

"The national chairman, irrespective of prophecies of doom and catastrophe will never succumb to politics of bad blood for he is widely known as a man who has love for his people and the nation."



NCC: A Digital Enabler of the Renewed Hope Agenda

In Nigeria, a young tech-savvy and upwardly mobile population is teeming, and exploring derivable benefits of digital technologies. They are propelled by rapidly expanding internet access and steady broadband penetration, currently about 43 per cent. Our digital economy is poised for significant growth, positively impacting various sectors and benefiting the nation through enhanced connectivity and digital skills.

Digital transformation is happening globally at a record pace. During the Covid-19 pandemic, for example, remote work and virtual collaboration tools took centre stage; platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet became—and still are—essential for meetings, conferences and team collaboration. E-commerce and online retail have transformed how consumers seamlessly order and receive goods and services. Even traditionally brick-and-mortar businesses are changing the ways they engage with their customers through introduction of digital solutions to improve the customer experience. It is a no-brainer that Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are revolutionising our lives for the better, whether in education, healthcare delivery, living, public services, energy management, and much more.

Suffice to say, that underpinning this global digital transformation is the indispensable role of telecommunications infrastructure. Universal, affordable, reliable and fast telecom services are becoming social rights, as mobile networks and data-centres form the backbone for digital transformation by enabling the storage and processing of large amounts of data as well as the integration of digital technologies into numerous use cases.

For President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Renewed Hope Agenda draws us all to a more promising outlook. Inherent in his agenda is the pledge to embolden and support the youth and women by harnessing emerging sectors such as the digital economy. In delivering this vision, the Honourable Minister of Communications, Innovation and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani unveiled a blueprint appropriately titled – "Accelerating our Collective Prosperity through Technical Efficiency" with the goal of supporting Nigeria's economic growth by enhancing productivity, facilitated by digital innovation.

Acknowledging the criticality of resilient telecommunications infrastructure to a robust digital economy, Dr. Tijani's Strategic Agenda 2023 — 2027 sets targets to achieve a 50 per cent improvement in Quality of Service (QoS) by the end of 2024; to boost Nigeria's broadband penetration rate to 70 per cent by the end of 2025; to deliver data download speed of 25Mbps in urban areas and 10Mbps in rural areas by the end of 2025; to provide coverage for, at least, 80 per cent of the country's population, especially the underserved and unserved populations by the end of 2026; to reduce the gap of unconnected Nigerians in rural areas from 61 per cent to less than 20 per cent by 2027; and to secure between 300 per cent to 500 per cent increase in broadband investment by the end of 2027.

Drawing from the Strategic Agenda of the Ministry, Dr. Aminu Maida, the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Communications Commission, (NCC) has emplaced three Strategic Focus Areas for the Commission: The Consumers, the Industry and Licensees; and the Government.

Dr. Maida's approach to delivering on President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda comes from the recognition that each of these stakeholders has a unique perspective and different, occasionally-paradoxical expectations of the Commission. His goal is to forge a path that carefully balances each stakeholder's needs while meeting their expectations.

Consider the Consumers—who are central to Dr. Maida's focus—for example. His approach focuses on ensuring that they receive an enhanced Quality of Experience, beyond the narrow and very technically-evaluated Quality of Service. Quality of experience takes into account all touch points along the consumers journey in using telecom services from selection, through on boarding, usage, support and even off-boarding. This means that, consumers are empowered to make the right network selection, enjoy a seamless onboarding into the network of their choice, enjoy quality service at fair costs, receive responsive customer service and enjoy protected off-boarding where they chose to leave the network. To address consumer complaints on data depletion, the Commission has directed Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to conduct an independent audit of their billing systems and is concluding a

consultation process to simplify tariff plans. These initiatives would provide enhanced transparency to the consumer.

The Commission, under Dr. Maida, rather than taking a national outlook on data collection for Quality-of-Service delivery, has adopted an approach where more granular data is collected from operators and analysed to determine quality of service at very small, local levels, to allow the deployment of optimised solutions or regulatory actions where needed.

On the side of the Industry and Licensees of the Commission, Dr. Maida's focus is aimed at forging a resilient industry and enhancing the delivery of regulatory services. Since he came on board, the Commission has shown commitment to tackling industry debt issues more seriously. It has also embarked on critical advocacy initiatives to address long-term challenges in the sector, including advocacy for designating telecom infrastructure as Critical National Infrastructure, as well as successfully persuading over six states to waive Right of Way (RoW) fees, even as he initiates discussions with more states. The Commission, under Dr. Maida's leadership, is equally engaging with the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms towards addressing multiple taxation issues in the telecoms sector.

In order to ensure that the industry is in line with current realities, the Commission is also undertaking a review of its extant Regulatory Instruments and Licensing Frameworks. For instance, Quality of Service Regulations have been reviewed to incorporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 5G and other participants that are critical to the Quality of Service.

By achieving expected QoS KPIs, high-speed internet connectivity, and forging a resilient and innovative telecommunications industry, the Commission is actively supporting the Ministry's vision of boosting economic growth and productivity through technological innovation, delivering on the promise of Renewed Hope for all Nigerians.

Signed:
Reuben Muoka
Director, Public Affairs



Congratulations to our Dear Governor on His One Year in Office.



HIS EXCELLENCY
BARR DR.
PETER MBAH
GOVERNOR, ENUGU STATE

The Management of **LIT GROUP** heartily congratulate our performing Governor, His Excellency, **Mr Peter Mbah**, Governor of Enugu State as he marks one year anniversary in office.

HIS EXCELLENCE, Your Journey to the pinnacle of leadership in the last one year as the Executive Governor of our dear state is a clear manifestation of your resilience and commitment to the growth and development of Enugu through quality leadership that guarantees the welfare of the people.

May Almighty God continue to guide you as you bring more glory to Enugu State and our country, Nigeria., Amen

Congratulations!

Signed
HON.PRINCE OFOR CHUKWUEGBO
Ochukomgbada Zogbuoenyi 1
Chairman, LIT Group

ADVERTORIAL:

NDI IGBO ARE THE TARGETS, NOT MAZI NNAMDI KANU

Today is the 57th anniversary of the declaration of the defunct Republic of Biafra as an independent entity from Nigeria by the late Col. Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu. This led to the Biafra War, which officially ended on 15th January 1970. General Yakubu Gowon declared "No Victor, No Vanquished," which has historically proved to be a barefaced fraud for which Nigeria's leaders are notorious.

That the agitation for Biafra's independence was restarted by the current generation of Igbo people is an indicator that nothing has changed. The factors that led to the crises, coups and the War – sectional domination, corrupt, incompetent leadership and injustice mostly aimed at the Igbo nation and its derivative groups and neighbours – still reign supreme. Just as Biafrans stood up and challenged for freedom about six decades ago, they have been in the trenches, albeit with peaceful agitation, largely. The Igbo spirit will never bow to tyranny and injustice or lie supine for evil forces.

The preference for peaceful agitation was inspired by the release of Dr Nelson Mandela from 28 years behind bars, and the end of Apartheid with minimal armed conflict. It was also encouraged by the fact that referendums and peaceful separations helped to free East Timor from Indonesia and our former colonial master, Britain, from the European Union. The Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) led by Mazi Nnamdi Okwu Kanu, opted for a referendum to enable indigenous people decide if they wanted to remain in Nigeria or determine their futures from Frederick Lugard's forced amalgamation of 1914. What is good for the United Kingdom is good enough for Nigeria's indigenous people.

Mazi Nnamdi Kanu has always made it clear that should a free and fair referendum hold, and majority of the people (including the Igbo nation) choose to stay in Nigeria, he will fold up his agitation and let them have their way. It was only when former President Muhammadu Buhari started importing his armed herdsmen kinsmen from all over Africa to kill, displace and occupy farmlands and communities that the Eastern Security Network (ESN) was formed. It was not an offensive force, but a legitimate self-defensive measure since Buhari was using the armed forces, police, security agencies federal government policy instruments and funds to aid and abet what many called the Fulanisation Agenda.

In December 2015, Mazi Nnamdi Kanu was arrested, detained and put on trial. In April 2017, he was released on bail on health grounds. But while negotiations were ongoing towards an amicable settlement, IPOB was proscribed and later declared a "terrorist" organisation. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu's home in Afaraukwu Ibeku, Umuahia, was attacked by a company of armed Nigerian troops with clear intentions of killing the IPOB leader, but he was lucky to escape into exile. He was, however, extraordinarily renditioned from Kenya in June 2021 back to Nigeria and put back on trial.

Kanu was systematically cleared of all charges against him by the trial court. Indeed, on 14th October 2022, the Court of Appeal dropped all charges against Mazi Nnamdi Kanu in that he was illegally arrested in Kenya. Despite the order by the Working Group of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for the unconditional release of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu because of the illegality of his extraordinary rendition, the Buhari government obstinately pressed the case to the Supreme Court. In December

2023, the order for his release was quashed and his fresh trial okayed.

It has become obvious that Buhari was not alone in the conspiracy to keep Mazi Nnamdi Kanu in State Security Services (SSS) custody. The incumbent president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, has continued in the same line, frantically egged on by some evil-minded Igbo politicians who feel the release of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu will upset their political apple carts.

Tinubu has since facilitated the freed his kinsman, Chief Sunday Igboho, facing similar ordeals as Mazi Nnamdi Kanu in Benin Republic. He has also withdrawn charges of treason against Omoyele Sowore, the Revolution Now activist. Perhaps due to the pressure of his Igbo party men and some disgruntled Northern elements, Tinubu has failed to do as he was widely expected: release Mazi Nnamdi Kanu and embrace a process towards resolving the Igbo question within the Nigerian equation. It is becoming more obvious to those who care to note, that what is going on is no longer just the persecution of Mazi Nnamdi Kanu for resurrecting the Biafra freedom issue. The system has gone back to full throttle in targeted destruction of Igbo interests in Nigeria.

The so-called Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway is a glaring case in point. Despite an already existing route map for a coastal highway, the Federal and Lagos State Governments conspired to demolish the multimillion dollar Landmark Beach owned by an Igbo man only to suddenly realise that strategic telecom infrastructure lay buried on the route.

Typically, an Igbo man, David Umahi, is at the centre of it. This reminds us of how Buhari exploited Chibuike Amaechi and the Rivers people's money to gain power and use him to build a railway to Maradi in Niger Republic. Meanwhile, he did nothing for his people in his eight years as a Minister.

We used to hear of a Lagos-Calabar Highway proposal that was supposed to cross all three Southern geopolitical zones, passing through some of the densest population areas, enhancing its viability. But we now have a purported Coastal Highway that will completely exclude the South East; a project that will need no less than 600 bridges and pass through extremely difficult aquatic terrains imaginable. The East-West Road that leads from Warri to Port Harcourt has failed to be completed after over 20 years. It is now a N15 trillion 700-kilometre coastal highway that will be done in eight years!

Our people need to know that the ruling Nigerian Establishment is still fighting the civil war in their hearts against the Igbo nation. Mazi Nnamdi Kanu is just the current symbol of the Igbo struggle, just as Ojukwu used to be. Nigeria is the only country in the world where a significant section of its population is not wanted and yet not allowed to go their way. According to the Bible, two cannot walk together unless they agree. But Nigeria's case is different, which is why there is neither peace nor progress. The entire system is mottled with self-inflicted insecurity and instability.

The call for referendum is legitimate and sensible. If Nigerians choose to stay together, they will decide the terms and conditions. If they choose to part ways, they will still be good neighbours and friends. Forced unions only produce miseries for those trapped in them. Who is happy in Nigeria? Who is safe?

Free Mazi Nnamdi Kanu today, and let's discuss the future of Nigeria!

Signed:

AKPARAWA OMENUKO
(Achoghm Case).



Governors and local government autonomy

IT is beyond argument that many state governments are misappropriating funds meant for local governments (LGs) in Nigeria. This is in spite of the 1976 local government reform which established the structure, functions and financing of local governments. The office of the chairman and that of the councillors, for instance, are supposed to be elected and made full-time with fixed monetary allowances. A statutory percentage share of the Federation Account is also supposed to go to the local governments. The reform was meant to ensure the independence of local governments from state governments.

On the contrary, state governments have taken over the control of local government administration in the country. They run joint accounts with the LGs in which federal allocations to the LGs are deposited. State governments control these funds and only release what they wish to the LGs.

Recently, the Senate frowned upon this practice. It regretted that "local governments are dead in Nigeria. Governors misappropriate local governments' funds. They force these local government chairmen to sign off cheques and they give them meagre amounts as running costs. There are some governors who are different and we thank them for doing that."

The upper chamber called on President Bola Tinubu to stop allocating funds to caretaker committee-led LGs. It also asked the President to convene a national dialogue involving governors, state legislators, local government officials, civil society organisations and community leaders to discuss the roadmap towards achieving full local government autonomy. It further urged "federal agencies to fully comply with the existing legal provisions that empower local governments, ensuring timely release of allocated funds directly to their bank accounts, and streamlining administrative processes."

It is unfortunate that in most states, elections don't even take place in the local government areas (LGAs). These states operate caretaker committees in these LGAs, as governors appoint and use the caretaker committee chairmen as they wish. Even when elections take place, it is usually a charade. Senator Ifeanyi Ubah, who represents Anambra South in the Senate, recently lamented the non-conduct of LG elections in Anambra State in the last 18 years. The incumbent governor, Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, promised to conduct LG elections. So far, he is yet to do so.

It is heartening that the Federal Government appears to have woken up to its responsibilities. A few days ago, it sued the 36 governors at the Supreme Court, seeking the enforcement

of full autonomy for the LGs. It noted that all efforts to make the governors comply with the provisions of the 1999 Constitution by putting in place, a democratically elected local government system, have not yielded any fruit.

In the suit, instituted by the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, the government urged the court to issue an order stopping governors from embarking on unilateral, arbitrary and unlawful dissolution of democratically elected local government leaders. It also wants the Supreme Court to make an order that funds meant for the LGs from the Federation Account should be channelled directly to them in line with the provisions of the constitution instead of the current practice of paying into the joint accounts created by the governors. It prayed the court to stop the governors from constituting caretaker committees for the LGs which is against the democratic system recognized and guaranteed by the constitution.

The administration of former President Muhammadu Buhari had made moves to abolish the state/LG joint accounts and ensure that LGs directly receive funds meant for them in the Federation Account. The Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) made the moves then on behalf of the government. But the state governments vehemently opposed it. Incidentally, the current Attorney General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi, was their counsel. The argument of the governors was that the NFIU, which is a federal government body, lacked the power (under a federal system of government) to dictate to state governments how to use their funds.

Ironically, the same state governments dictate to the LGs how to use their money. The Constitution recognises three tiers of government in Nigeria – federal, state and local governments. In the third tier, the constitution recognises 774 local government areas. This tier of government should be given the respect it deserves. State governments should stop interfering in their affairs.

LGs are closer to the people. There are things they do that state governments cannot do. They construct local roads, culverts, drainage systems, schools, health care centres, markets and many others. Today, many of the recognised LGAs face decaying infrastructure, widespread unemployment, insecurity, rural-urban migration and many other problems because of lack of funds.

It is high time the LGs were freed from the apron strings of the state governments. A comprehensive reform of the LG system is desirable this time. The starting point is to restore their autonomy.

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Tinubu's courageous pursuits

By Pere Abiyesuku

IT may not be generally accepted, but this is not the best time to be the president of a country like Nigeria. Anybody who does must be extremely courageous. And I think President Ahmed Bola Tinubu is.

With his administration barely one year in office, Nigerians were long divided on its achievements. The performance rating was run up the flagpole a little bit earlier than usual. Unlike previous administrations, it was not allowed any period of grace and was sent to the court of public opinion too early. With an inherited economy in the throes of recession and an insecure state the Tinubu administration was exposed to vicarious criticisms. Virulent opposition latched onto the gap and attacked the government in hope of causing it some image problem.

But the administration was undeterred and has continued to work so hard in the last one year to stem the drift and return the country on the path of growth. It has introduced far-reaching principles of action to guide the economic recovery. These principles, many of which are already on stream, may not be evident yet, but are there nonetheless to boost the economic recovery and de-escalate insecurity in the country. Though the administration is just one year in office, which time is not enough for critical assessment, but it has made substantial progress by taking a lot of bold actions.

The implementation of the Steven Orasanyo Report hitherto kept under lock is a bold step in cutting down waste in government. Until now, responsibilities, many of them otiose, were duplicated in the course of running government. Ministries, Depart-

ments and Agencies with overlapping responsibilities were allowed to exist at the expense of the state. What the administration did was to streamline and make them more effective and cost-efficient. In line with the cost-reduction policy of the administration, foreign travel by government officials was cut down by 60 percent. This was widely acclaimed even by the opposition. The presidential candidate of the Labour Party in the 2023 presidential election Mr. Peter Obi commended the government for the effort. "It was one positive step towards the reduction of cost of governance and a way of halting wastage". It is important to state that the cost-reduction policy affected not just other government officials, but the President's entourage, those of the Vice President's Kashim Shettima, the First Lady Remi Tinubu's and the ministers.'

The money saved from this and elsewhere in government businesses is being moved to shore up funding of capital projects. Aware that his administration may not achieve much without an economic team whose priority is to advise on fiscal and monetary reforms, energy development, job creation and capital projects funding, the administration formed a Presidential Economic Coordination Council chaired by the President himself with twelve cabinet members and the Central Bank Governor. Other members of the team are Doyin Salami and prominent business men like Aliko Dangote, Tony Elumelu and Funke Opeke. This is in addition to another Economic Management Team Taskforce headed by the Finance Minister Wale Edun. The Taskforce is mandated to develop and execute a six month emergency economic plan within two weeks.

It will complement the existing structures and has as members Cabinet Ministers, the National Security Adviser, Group Managing Director of the NNPC, State Governors and leading economist Bismarck Rewane and Suleiman Ndanusa.

With the removal of petroleum subsidy, the Tinubu government has decided to stabilize petroleum refining in the country. It has commenced the Turn-Around-Maintenance (TAM) of the four existing refineries in the country and encouraged establishment of private ones. The maintenance of the four namely Port-Harcourt Refining Company (old and new) Warri Refining and Petrochemicals Company, and Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company is ongoing. This will not only allow for availability of petroleum products, but its affordability as well. And in line with the energy reforms of his administration, President Tinubu equally directed mandatory procurement of Compressed Natural Gas CNG-compliant vehicles by government ministries, departments and agencies, and rejected memos brought by members of the Federal Executive Council, seeking to purchase fuel-dependent vehicles. He insisted that the "nation will not progress forward if we continue to dance on the same spot". Note the CNG will ensure drive utility, energy security and cut in high fuel cost as well as augur for a cleaner energy because CNG-enabled vehicles produce lower emissions and are cost effective.

It is a mark of courageous leadership on the part of the Tinubu administration to direct interest to the nation's abundant gas deposits, until now neglected. The administration is not only ready to harness it as

alternative energy source, but will use it to boost the economy and create jobs. This does not in any way detract from the effort the administration is making to keep the country together.

The effort of the administration on security is also commendable. With all the six geopolitical zones of the country contending with peculiar security challenges, the administration has since doubled down on its effort. The Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast, unknown gunmen in the Southeast, farmer-herders clashes in the North-central, oil bunkering and militancy in the South-south, banditry in the Northwest, and abduction and armed robbery in the Southwest have been reduced in intensity. The frequency of hostage-taking, seizure of government facilities and sundry other security breaches have been tackled effectively. Insecurity is no longer as rife as it was previously. Hostages are freed from captivity with criminal elements substantially decimated. This became possible with government renewed support to the security forces. A new aircraft to upgrade the national defense capability was procured just as a whopping sum of N18 billion as Group Life Assurance benefits was approved for the families of fallen heroes. The effort may not prove sufficient for the parlous state yet, but it is encouraging that the administration is working hard to revamp the economy and contain the rabid violence in the country. It is believed that before long, the economy will improve and lives of Nigerians woody with hunger will be renewed with vigor.

• Abiyesuku writes from Port Harcourt

Reaffirming Nigeria's one China policy

By Charles Onunaiju

WHATEVER its internal differences, serious countries built consensus around its international relations, articulated in foreign policy framework as such, not guarantees the respectability of the country but ensures that international partners view her institutions as stable, credible and reliable.

Nigeria's One China Policy, which will be explained in more detail below, is a key enduring line in the country foreign policy since the two countries established diplomatic relations in 1971. The "One China" Nigeria Policy holds that the Taiwan region is inalienable part of China and the Taiwan question, a left-over of Chinese history, especially after its civil war in the 1940's, when the Communist Party of China in a patriotic coalition of other parties defeated the then ruling Kuomintang or Nationalist Party (KMT), whose top military and political leaders fled across the straits between the mainland and island of Taiwan region of China.

Proposed by the United States and other western powers, the Nationalist party held on to the illusion of being the legitimate government of all Chinese people, and held the seat in the United Nations until the iconic resolution 2758, which expelled once and for all, the representatives of Chang Kai Sheik and readmitted the government of the Peoples of Republic of the China as the sole and legitimate government of all Chinese people. Nigeria was among the 26 African countries who voted for the historic resolution, which became a vital cornerstone of Nigeria-China diplomatic cooperation established earlier on the February, 1971, few months before the iconic UN resolution in October of the same year.

An alleged parliamentary group in the House of Representative which describes itself as Nigeria-Taiwan parliamentary friendship group has recently circulated an invitation, notifying of its inauguration, thereby not only brazenly interfering in China's internal affairs but flagrantly undermining the integrity of Nigeria's unambiguous and explicit "One China" foreign policy. Such affront to a historical key pillar of Nigeria's foreign relations also dastardly stuck a knife at One Nigeria's viable diplomatic cooperation.

The shockwave of the insensitive and brazen behavior to the friendly Chinese people, would



Nigeria's demonstration of clear sensitivity to China's core national concerns especially on the matter of the Taiwan question has had clear effects on China-Africa cooperation, pointing clearly to the exemplary nature of China-Africa cooperation as a model of international partnership."

be exactly the same here, should any such misguided element of Chinese parliament attempt to establish "A China-Biafra, or China-Yoruba Nation or even China-Boko Haram parliamentary group.

In solving their national question as it relates to the Taiwan region, the two sides of the straits have established a "consensus" in 1992, which holds that the two sides of the straits belong to one and the same China and can thereby actively working on a formula for reunion. As we have our few hot heads, who will settle at nothing except disintegration, the Taiwan separatist hot heads urged on, by the U.S make a case for such extremity. The Taipei Trade Office in Nigeria since 1991 is not a diplomatic mission but a trade promotion center, just as any Nigeria sub-national entity may choose to open a trade promotion center anywhere in the world.

Nigeria National parliament is a key national State institution and cannot possibly contradict Nigeria's vital foreign policy position.

As the Taipei Trade Office currently in Lagos, seemed desperate to engage in activities, inconsistent with its status a trade promotion center. the federal government should consider to repudiate and abrogate 1991 trade memorandum with the Taiwan region of China, and expel immediately Trade representatives and its staff, before it does much damage to the integrity of Nigeria's One China Policy.

In early 2017, the federal government took a definitive stand in response to the Taiwan question of the People's Republic of China and reaffirmed her long standing "One China policy" which leaves no ambiguity that there is only but One China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China. Speaking at a joint press conference in Abuja then with the visiting Chinese Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, Nigeria's then, Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama said Nigeria would take all necessary measures to maintain the integrity of its "One China Policy".

A joint statement issued after the press conference asserted the One - China Policy is at the core of strategic partnership between the two countries and further stated that "the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes that there is only One China in the world, that the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory," and added the governments of

China and Nigeria have mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Earlier, the Nigeria's government has directed that the Taiwan trade office in Abuja which was redesignated Taipei Trade office to immediately relocate to the Nigeria's commercial capital, as the continued stay of the trade office in the Nigeria's political capital has been used for dubious political maneuverings and activities inconsistent with its status of trade office. The Nigerian government took the action of directing the trade office to relocate to Nigeria's business and commercial hub, so as to leave no doubt about her strict and unequivocal "One China Policy". As is notorious to the insurgent separatist clique in Taiwan, it's so called Ministry of Foreign affairs issued a rude rebuttal to Nigeria's government's firm position and said that it "seriously object and condemns the unreasonable actions by the Nigeria's government".

Chinese government said then that it "affirms and greatly appreciates Nigeria's support for the "One China Principle" and stated further "this thoroughly resolves an issue left over from history that influenced mutual political trust between China and Nigeria, and eliminates a political obstacle that interfered with the healthy development of bilateral relations".

Nigeria's definitive stance is an integral part of global consensus, clearly affirmed by the iconic United Nations (UN) resolution 2758 mainstreamed to the core of international law, convention and standard practice. As a key member of the international community and regional power house, Nigeria's principled measures to restore the integrity of her "One China Policy" aligns with the fundamental principle of state to state relations, in which a demonstration of unassailable sensitivity to each other's core concerns is a standard norm.

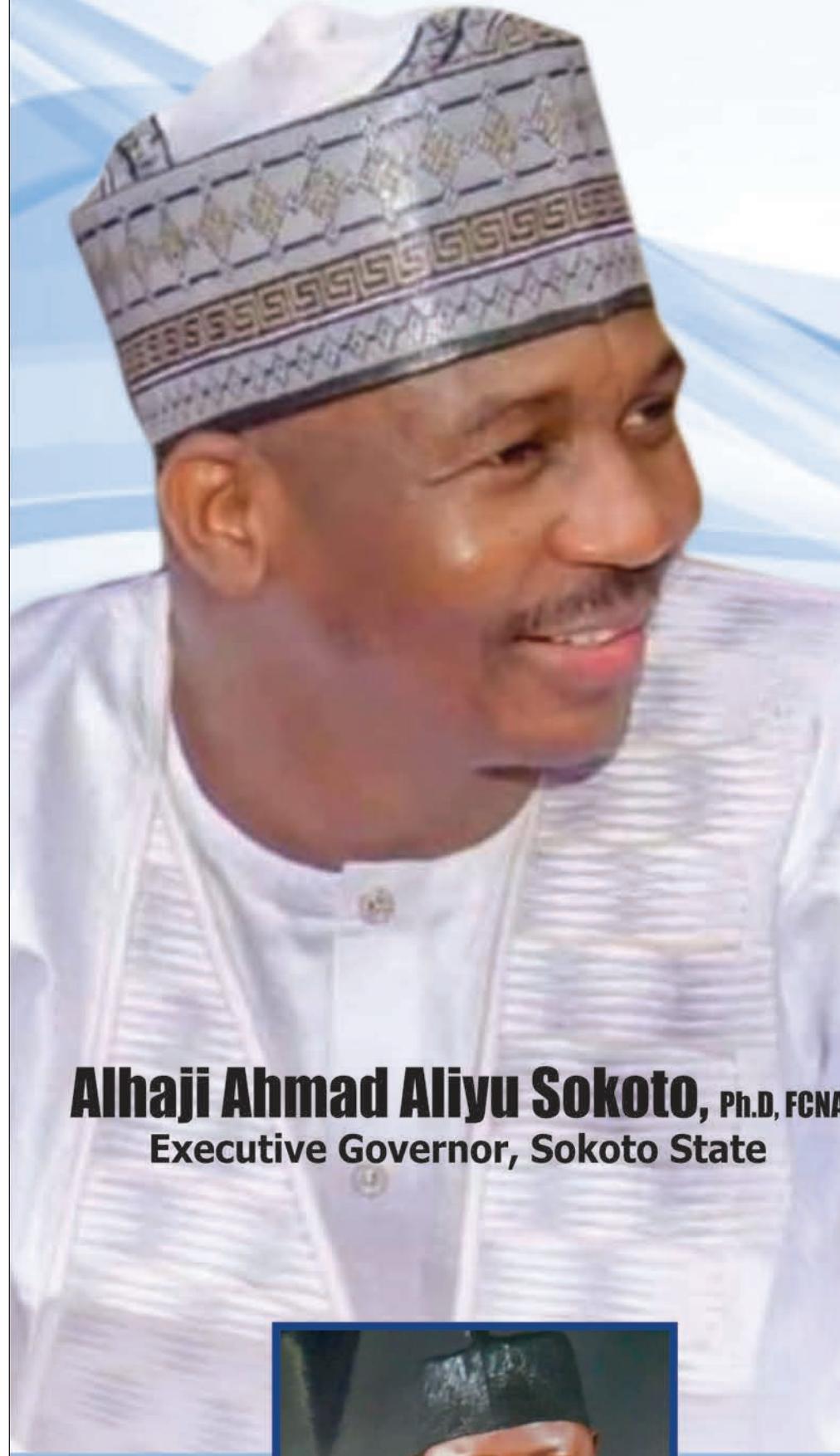
Despite the provocative visits of the former U.S House Speaker, Ms. Nancy Pelosi in 2022, the "One China Principle", according to the white paper of the Chinese government released in 2022 "represents the Universal Consensus of the International community and is consistent with basic norms of international relations".

Most countries in the world, including the United States have established diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China on the

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

• Mr. Onunaiju is research director of Abuja based Think-Tank

Celebrating The Peoples' **GOVERNOR**



Alhaji Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto, Ph.D, FCNA
Executive Governor, Sokoto State



Signed:
Hon. Isa Salihu Bashar Kalanjeni,
Chairman, Tangaza LGA,
Chairman, ALGON, Sokoto State

On behalf of my family, the Administrative Staff of Tangaza Local Government Council and the entire people of Tangaza Local Government Area of Sokoto State, I extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency, Alhaji Ahmed Aliyu Sokoto, Ph.D, FCNA on your one year anniversary in office.

This milestone marks a significant achievement in your journey as our Executive Governor of our dear State, and we are proud of the progress you have made so far.

Your Excellency, your dedication to the development of Sokoto State are evident in the numerous projects and initiatives you have undertaken, aimed at improving the lives of our citizens.

Your leadership has brought hope and renewed confidence in our state's potential for growth and prosperity.

We appreciate your tireless efforts to address the challenges facing our state, from infrastructure development to education, healthcare, and economic empowerment and security. Your commitment to inclusive governance and participatory leadership has created a sense of belonging among our diverse communities.

As you celebrate these achievements, we pray that the Almighty Allah continues to guide and strengthen you as you work towards a brighter future for Sokoto State.

Congratulations once again Your Excellency, on this remarkable milestone. May your remaining years in office be filled with even greater success and achievements.

Sokoto State will continue to prosper under your leadership.

The Lifeline

Day Nigeria Air Force painted Kaduna skies in blazing colours

By Philip Nwosu

THE skies over Kaduna were ablaze with colour and excitement recently as the Nigerian Air Force celebrated its 60th anniversary with a spectacular ceremonial parade and airshow. The event, following the successful conclusion of the African Air Force Forum, showcased the precision, skill and aviation excellence of the Nigerian Air Force.

The celebrations commenced with the arrival of the chief celebrant of the day, Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar, followed by other service chiefs and dignitaries, setting the stage for extraordinary displays and commemorations.

The ceremonial parade was a magnificent showcase of discipline and coordination, demonstrating the high standards and professionalism of the Nigerian Air Force. The aerial display that followed left the audience in awe, with various aircraft performing breathtaking maneuvers, highlighting the prowess and capabilities of Nigeria's airmen and women.

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was represented by the Vice President Kashim Shettima, reiterated his administration's resolve to prioritise issues of security and welfare of the armed forces, insisting that his government would invest more in state-of-the-art aircraft and equipment to combat insecurity in Nigeria.

Tinubu hailed the NAF's six decades of service, sacrifice and patriotism, adding that the government would continue to stand with the armed forces through challenges, triumphs and grief, not as repayment but as an assurance of the nation's unwavering support.

He said: "I bear with me today the gratitude of a nation that has watched your transformation into a formidable and resilient organisation, vigilant of the dynamics and complexities of security threats within and outside our borders for this long."

While praising the critical role played by the Nigerian Air Force in maintaining regional and sub-regional peace and security, the President expressed pride in the institution's formidable and resilient transformation over the years.

He congratulated the Chief of the Air Staff, officers, airmen, airwomen and civilian staff for sustaining the culture of service on the diamond jubilee anniversary and reaffirmed his administration's commitment to prioritising security as development cannot be guaranteed without a secure nation.

"In my inaugural address a year ago, I noted that security would be the top priority of my administration because we can never guarantee the development we have proposed unless each part of this great nation is secure. This is why we have continued to support the modernization efforts of our armed forces to address national and sub-regional security challenges," he said.

To address national and sub-regional security challenges, Tinubu disclosed his



Parade mounted by Nigerian Air Force officers and men during the parade in Kaduna



The Vice President, Ibrahim Shettima being received by Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar



L-R: Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar, Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja and Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral Emmanuel Ogalla, during the ceremony

administration's substantial investments in procuring state-of-the-art multi-role combat aircraft, attack helicopters, sensors, and equipment to enhance the Nigerian Air Force's capabilities.

These acquisitions, including Beechcraft King Air 360 aircraft, Diamond 62 surveillance aircraft, T-129 ATAK helicopters,

Agusta 109 Trekker multi-role helicopters, and M-346 attack aircraft, aim to boost the nation's combat and airlift capabilities.

The President called for a whole-of-society approach to tackling Nigeria's security challenges, even as he acknowledged the socio-economic factors contributing to security challenges.

He expressed confidence in the country's eventual sound economic rebound, adding, "We are confident that this temporary sacrifice will come to an end soon, and the country will be on the sound economic footing we have promised the nation."

Tinubu paid tribute to the surviving members of the first set of pioneer NAF personnel, veterans, and fallen comrades, acknowledging their bravery, commitment, and service to the nation.

Aligning with the event's theme, "Nigerian Air Force at 60: Leveraging Strategic Partnerships in Aerospace Innovations for Regional Security," the President welcomed the participation of various partners and air forces from around the world, particularly from Africa.

He stressed the need for collaboration and developing partnerships with friends and allies to collectively address shared threats in the sub-region and beyond.

Earlier, a representative of Courses 37 and 38 of the Nigerian Air Force who retired from the Force recently, Air Vice Marshall Charles Ohwo, recalled "with nostalgia, the moment they were enrolled into the Airforce about 38 years ago."

He noted that, seeing the journey from then, he could not help but thank God, adding that many of them had gone unceremoniously from the service.

He said while the journey was not devoid of challenges, they are grateful to the officers who encouraged them, especially the Chief of Defence Staff and Chief of the Air Staff.

He also thanked the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, President Tinubu, and everyone who helped them succeed while in the service.

Highlights of the occasion were a series of air displays and the presentation of prizes and awards to deserving officers.

Awards were presented to distinguished personnel in recognition of their outstanding service and contributions to the Air Force. Speeches reflected on the rich history

"Not to have an adequate air force in the present state of the world is to compromise the foundations of national freedom and independence." -Winston Churchill

and achievements of the Nigerian Air Force over the past six decades.

The event concluded with group photographs, capturing the unity and pride of all participants, and a special refreshment session for the dignitaries. The day's festivities ended with a flying-out parade, symbolizing the forward momentum and future aspirations of the Nigerian Air Force.

The 60th anniversary celebration not only honored the legacy of the Nigerian Air Force but also showcased its commitment to excellence and its strategic role in ensuring national and regional security. This memorable event has set a high benchmark for future celebrations and left an indelible mark on all who attended.

Notable attendees included former President of the Senate and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Defence, Sen. Ahmed Lawan; House Committee on Air Force, Hon. Kabiru Alhassan Rurum; Minister of Defence, Alhaji Mohammed Badaru Abubakar; and Minister of State Defence, Alhaji Bello Matawalle. The event was graced by Chief of the Air Staff and chief host, Air Marshal Hasaan Abubakar; Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja; Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Emmanuel Ogalla; Governor of Taraba State, Dr. Agbu Kefas; Emir of Zazzau, HRH Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli; Special Adviser to the President on Political Affairs, Dr. Haroem Baba-Ahmed; members of the Diplomatic Corps; and other senior government officials.

Earlier, following the huge success of the first two editions, the 3rd Africa Air Force Forum was organised as part of the NAF @ 60 celebration.

The Forum which was hosted between May 23-25, 2024 and coincides with the 60th anniversary of the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), honoring its history and accomplishments in safeguarding Nigeria's sovereignty,

ensuring national security, and contributing to peacekeeping missions both regionally and globally.

The forum featured a series of events, including a conference and exhibition with the theme "Nigerian Air Force at 60: Leveraging Strategic Partnerships in Aerospace Innovations for Regional Security." The highlighted the continuous advancement of air force capabilities, technological innovations, and strategic developments that enhance Africa's aerial defense and peacekeeping capabilities.

Keynote discussions and presentations emphasized the importance of unity and collaboration among African nations in leveraging airpower capabilities to promote stability and development of air forces across the continent.

The forum serves as a regional platform for advancing air force capabilities and building bilateral partnerships.

The agenda covers a variety of topics, including the prospects of air power in Africa, its impact on internal security operations, the role of air forces in counter-terror operations, and showcasing key technological capabilities required to optimize missions.

Attendees include Africa's key air force chiefs, top leadership, international and regional industry experts, and government officials. The forum explores avenues for strengthening airpower capacities, fostering cooperation, and addressing common security challenges for the betterment of the entire African region.

This milestone event stands as a tribute to the commitment of the Nigerian Air Force and its strategic role in ensuring national and regional security. The forum is expected to set a high benchmark for future engagements, fostering greater cooperation and innovation in aerospace and defense across Africa.



•Members of the Nigerian Air Force Officers' Wives Association during the ceremony



•Members of Defence Attaché of Asian countries during the event

Cross River govt, varsity disagree over trado-medical intervention



•Sir Jarvis



Dr. Egbe Ayuk

From Aniekan Aniekan, Calabar

FOLLOWING the outbreak of the dreaded corona virus around the world and its devastating impact on health systems, the Federal Government decided to harness the abundant trado medical resources in the country to address health challenges.

The vision was actualized through the establishment of the Department of Traditional, Complimentary & Alternative Medicine under the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. This was approved by the Head of Service in a letter referenced OHCSF/MSO/72/IV/132 and dated 4th April 2018.

The objectives of this memo among others was to develop, implement and monitor compliance of policies and initiate legislation relating to traditional, complimentary & alternative medicine as well as provide related services.

In addition, it aimed to promote development and commercialization of indigenous Nigerian traditional medicine; to integrate traditional, complimentary and alternative medicine into the national health care system.

From the academic point of view, the National University Commission (NUC) already captured Complimentary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) among courses for Faculty of Allied Medical Sciences under to train graduates on how to integrate traditional, complimentary and alternative medicine into the National Health Care System.

In line with the government's plan, the premier private university in Cross River State, the Arthur Jarvis University, which commenced academic activities in 2017 keyed into this. The institution's governing council approved the construction and equipping of a standard Institute of trado-medical research within the University Campus.

Speaking on this recently, the institution's chancellor, Arthur Jarvis, said the institute will utilize the abundant forest resources in its locality.

"We will make use of the wide range of herbs from the surrounding forest resources around the university commu-

nity and the available traditional medical practitioners within and around our locality to treat some of the life threatening illnesses like hemorrhoids (pile), prostate, diabetes, asthma, kidney stone, cancer, fibroid, epilepsy, bone fracture/dislocation/setting, etc.

"We are happy to announce to our community and the world at large that our well-equipped Institute of Trado-Medical Research at our University campus, in Akpabuyo LGA, Cross River State, Nigeria is open for treatment of individuals diagnosed of any of these life-threatening illnesses as mentioned earlier, while we research," the Chancellor said.

However, the state government through the ministry of health has frowned at this development. This follows a public service announcement signed by the state's health commissioner, Dr Henry Egbe Ayuk.

The statement which did not specifically mention the institution by name said the claims are still largely uninvestigated and unpublished.

Ayuk said: "This is to, for the umpteenth time, inform the general public to ignore any information concerning medical practices, be it orthodox or traditional-medical that do not have the seal of the State Ministry of Health.

"Just recently, the public has been inundated with all forms of innuendoes on recent breakthrough in traditional medicine by a particular tertiary institution in Cross River State for the treatment of sundry ailments. These claims are still largely uninvestigated and unpublished."

He emphasized that while government welcomes stakeholders involvement in delivering health services, it will not allow the use her citizens as subjects for research purposes or under any guise without due process and the necessary professional clearances as this portends grave danger for the health of our people.

"Medical breakthroughs are usually empirically tested, scientifically proven and evidence-based. The public is therefore advised to resist persons, groups or institutions in whatever guise and keep away from all medical practices without the seal of government."



Thursday Homily

By Achilleus-Chud Uchegbu
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PERMIT me to go back in time a little bit. In doing this, I want to borrow a popular line from Femi Adesina, Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to President Muhammadu Buhari (as he then was), where he described Nigerians as "wailing wailers". That was in 2016. Adesina had appeared on 'The Osas Show' where he made frantic efforts to defend the policies and leadership of his master. This was against the popular view that his boss was not effective in leading the change he promised during the 2015 electioneering campaign. In responding to a question that questioned Buhari's effectiveness as President, Adesina said, "...whenever the president says something, you just start hearing noise, wah, wah, wah, wah, like a child whose lollipop has been taken away."

This is exactly what the British media, especially, those that tagged themselves 'royal analysts' have been doing since Harry and his wife, Meghan, spent three days in Nigeria and were received by different people including Barr. Allen Onyema, the Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria's largest carrier, Air Peace. The hatred that some British media operators had expressed towards Harry and his wife has now been extended to Onyema, Air Peace and indeed, anyone who had

Harry, Onyema, Air Peace and British cry babies

something to do with the success of their visit to Nigeria.

The butt of the hate narrative was Nigeria itself. These 'royal analysts', so-called, have pulled all the plugs to describe Nigeria in the worst of adjectives for no other reason than granting Harry and his wife their wish to visit Nigeria. In visiting, Harry simply continued a tradition that was begun by his grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, who first stepped foot on Nigerian soil in 1956, at a time when Nigeria lacked the resources to offer her a royal welcome and had to rely on Sir Louis Odumegwu Ojukwu, to make his Silver Wraith LWB Roll Royce available for the queen to be chauffeured in; and again in December 2003. Harry also observed something that his parents, Charles and Diana, did in March 1990, when they landed in Lagos and even participated in an event of Maryam Babangida's Better Life for Rural Women at Tafawa Balewa Square.

In overlooking this history, the British media continually wail "wah, wah, wah, wah, like a child whose lollipop has been taken away" that Harry visited a country that is riddled with corruption, human rights abuses, advanced fee fraud, anti-female sexuality right practices and anti-homosexual rights. The crybabies, who dub themselves 'royal analysts', celebrated their self-delusion of the reality of the fact that the British government maintains a strong relationship with Nigeria despite the flaws that they listed. The 'royal analysts' also deliberately blindfolded themselves to the reality of the fact that corruption may be rife in Nigeria but that Britain has provided a haven for corrupt Nigerian government officials. In doing this, they pretend to be ignorant of the fact of provisions of criminal law jurisprudence which holds the thief and the receiver of stolen property equally liable.

In seeking to pour tar on Nigeria over Harry's visit, one of such 'analysts' blamed King Charles for being unable to rein in Harry when he started exhibiting a rebellious character. Deductively, the analyst is telling us, and the world, that King Charles could not be firm as a father. Further

implication of the 'analysts' comment is that their King is not strong-willed and as such incapable of being firm on issues that could affect both his private family and his Kingdom. What a way to denigrate the British monarchy in the guise of hitting out at Nigeria over Harry.

Besides, those 'analysts' have deliberately refused to accept that Nigeria is an independent nation and as one, would not return to be led by the nose by Britain especially when issues, like homosexual rights, which violate every known culture of the Nigerian people, are involved. Britain, and its media buffs, ought to know by now, that no amount of negative campaign would make Nigeria strike down The Same-Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act (2014) which promised 14 years for those found guilty of same-sex relationships. Like we say in pidgin, 'e no go work'. Put differently, all the flaws that the 'royal analysts' have identified against Nigeria, for which they argue that Harry and his wife ought not to have anything to do with the country, were all present when Harry's grandmother and parents visited. They are still present even as the British High Commission makes a hell of profit selling visas to Nigerians.

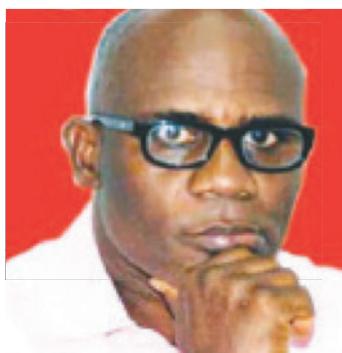
And, like Sir Odumegwu Ojukwu, an Anambra son, did for Nigeria in 1956, Onyema, another Anambra son, rose to the occasion making available one of the aircraft on the Air Peace fleet to fly Harry and his wife around. Now, imagine the cost of that offer. By withdrawing the aircraft from scheduled commercial flight operations, Onyema sacrificed for Nigeria as he had done on several occasions. On all those occasions, Onyema lifted Nigeria and gave its image a very positive boost. He does this not minding how much it costs his airline. Onyema's image and Nigeria's global image also took an upswing as soon as Air Peace began flying the Lagos-London route, said to be one of the most lucrative in the aviation field. That brave-hearted venture broke so many rules as far as pricing was concerned. It also exposed the rip-off that Nigerians suffered on the route and as a consequence forced a price

war which has ignited another phase of aero politics – attempting to use pricing to force Air Peace out among other allegations.

What Onyema and Air Peace did on the Lagos-London route hurt British Airways more than it did other airlines. The Igbo call it mpiawa azu. Before, British Airways dominated the route as its exclusive preserve. Onyema changed the game. Do I expect the British media to be happy? Not at all! And, they showed it by throwing mud at Onyema and seeking to use an allegation which was decided in favour of Onyema in 2022 to taint his image. A report in The Guardian on 30 October 2022 titled "US Court Acquits Air Peace Boss, Fines Mayfield \$4000" refers. The report reads: "After three years of investigation involving five agencies of the American government and subsequent legal fireworks, the District Court of Atlanta, Georgia, has finally exonerated the Chief Executive of Air Peace, Chief Allen Onyema, of any business fraud." (See <https://guardian.ng/news/us-court-acquits-air-peace-boss-fines-mayfield-4000/>).

The British media would have saved their country, and readers, from this self-inflicted pain of willful ignorance if only it had been as thorough as it was thought, or imagined, to be. Attempting to 'fight' Onyema and Air Peace because of their involvement in the Harry and Meghan welcome party, will only cast a heavier slur on the British media, especially, the 'royal analysts'. Those 'analysts' need to stop being 'wailing wailers' and screaming "wah, wah, wah, wah, like a child whose lollipop has been taken away" over Harry's visit to Nigeria and the involvement of Onyema and Air Peace like civil rights leader and the wife of Martin Luther King Jr., Coretta Scott King, said "hate is too great a burden to bear. It injures the hater more than it injures the hated."

Despite the hate from the 'royal analysts' in the British media, Harry and his wife are having the fun of their royalty. Onyema and Air Peace are flying higher unperturbed while Nigeria refuses to genuflect before British crybabies.



SECURITY FILE

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WHEN a homo sapien is under what can be described as spiritual influence and such a person's mind is made to comply to an evil intentioned instruction without any hesitation, then, such a person can be said to be manipulated. According to world Webster Exerting shrewd or devious influence especially for one's own advantage People get manipulated either through spiritual control or with the influence of illicit drugs that can have disorientating effect on the brain or mind. Drugs like marijuana, cocaine or other hard drugs. Investigation reveals that terrorists and other hardened criminals are usually subjected to the use of these illicit drugs that easily affects the brain.

Medical experts believe that whoever is responsible for the ministering of the drug often dictates and even controls the person whose brain functionality has been altered by the drug. No wonder, Carl Max said "Religion is the opium of the people". In the same vein, drug is the opium of criminals. It is the enforcer of every behavioral attitude of criminals. Criminals manipulate each other. Parents, manipulates their children so also, politicians manipulate their

followers so that they can harvest more votes and support. In recent time, it has been discovered that even presidents manipulate their citizens so that they can swallow hook line and sinker every of their unpopular policy. When a President or a preacher start lamenting over the economy, security situation or political upheaval in his country by openly blaming the country's woes on very powerful individuals. Such manipulative intention could be to swing the mind of the people to sympathise with the president's undisclosed intention, which could be to redirect the people attention and frustration towards the alleged "big men." No wonder in his maiden broadcast, President Bola Tinubu while explaining the reasons for the removal of the fuel subsidy regime in the country.

Noted that the fuel subsidy had to end because the country cannot maintain it.

He added that the trillions of naira yearly spent to sustain the subsidy were meant to better the healthcare and transportation sector, schools, housing, and national security, among others.

Speaking in a nationwide broadcast, Tinubu said the money was being funnelled into the deep pockets and lavish bank accounts of a select group of individuals.

"This group had amassed so much wealth and power that they became a serious threat to the fairness of our economy and the integrity of our democratic governance.

In the same vain, Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State was reported to have alleged that some powerful politicians in the state are out to bring his government down.

The governor said the powerful politicians, who hail from the state, are presently resident in Abuja and have sworn to use whichever means to bring his administration down.

The governor made the allegation while ordering investigation into alleged diversion of food items meant for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the state.

A critical assessment of the allegations made by both President Tinubu and Governor Shettima speaks volume. While both politicians point accusing fingers at "Powerful People" one is therefore amazed that in Nigeria as a country,

Blaming the unseen forces

some individual can be described by the president as being "very powerful".

(To Be continued)

Pallitives as security strategy

WHENEVER the free distribution of palliative is announced anywhere around the country since the emergence of insurgency, there is always a noticeable surge of the populace towards the area where the programs are being executed. This is of course a clear indication that all is not well in the society. Lou is the situation where the people pay through their nose to move from one point to another in the country despite God's abundant deposits of mineral resources, this further exacerbates the already growing tension among the people.

A clear indication of the painful circumstances we. A journey around our rural communities, and townships does not portray a satisfactory atmosphere instead, all that is noticeable are gloomy faces with very sad countenances with angry disposition.

The underlying message is that the people had over the years expressed their disappointments on the inability of various governments to appropriately cater for their welfare. Basic necessities like health care are gradually getting out of the reach of the common citizen, as medicine and government hospital charges are no longer affordable. Same with government schools where teachers introduce fees that are to service their pockets, or what has security fees got to do with primary school education?

The lack around the country is gradually drowning the people. When there is lack, hunger is automatically introduced. Lack and hunger are Siemans twins that are inseparable. They reduce human beings to beggars. When people lack and are hungry, they get easily enticed and are prone to criminality.

No wonder the crime rate across the country is on the increase and getting to very ridiculous criminal activities like the Kubwua, Abuja incident where hoodlums brazenly broke into a house and escaped with a pot of food on the fire.

Report indicated that when the hoodlums were arrested, others staged a rescue mission which resulted to a free for all fight which left two persons dead. Hunger is a time bomb waiting to explode if not well managed like the "End SARS" agitation that almost enveloped the country and leaving a sad story behind for historians to capture. According to the 2023 global hunger index, it ranked Nigeria as the 109th out of the 125 countries with sufficient data to calculate 2023 GHI scores. With a score of 28.3, Nigeria has a level of hunger that is described as "very serious".

Unfortunately fortunately, it seems government at various levels are not using palliative as a weapon to redress the ugly situation. Palliative can be used in so many ways to stop Nigerian youths from being recruited into terrorist gangs and banditry and kidnapping by ensuring that this palliatives are adequately and evenly distributed around the border communities, were youths fall prey to unnecessary incentives from terrorists and bad bandit leaders to be recruited. the truth is that terrorist leaders have over the years used by palliative as a tool to lure youths into their gang I recall when I was invited to some via Forest by the former chief of army staff Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai I was launched I met a young man who during my discussion with him revealed that terrorist usually come to their village to distribute palliatives to join the gang by different ways either through foreign currency or raw food if this trend could be reversed by the Nigerian military and government it will go a long to reduce this illegal recruitment

IT was heart warming to witness a social program by an Abuja based religious organization under Peculiar God's Glory ministry lead by Prophet James Kunle Heziba that selflessly provide both cooked food and raw food items like rice, garri, potato, sugar and salt with cash for transportation to over three thousand men and women from the Islamic faith drawn from border areas of northern state and also transferred money for the payment of house rent for over four hundred people with house rent problems in Abuja and its environs. (To be Continued)

NEWS

SKG Pharma hosts' annual trade partners' conference in Lagos

By Brown Chimezie

SKG Pharma recently brought its distributors to Lagos, to strengthen relationships and drive business growth.

Dr. Okey Akpa, the managing director, said: "Our trade partners are integral to our success. We are committed to fostering these relationships to ensure mutual growth and prosperity."

The conference featured various sessions focusing on strategies to improve business relationships and foster growth. Participants exchanged ideas and shared best practices on distribution, customer service, and market expansion.

Trade Partners also expressed their appreciation for the event. Managing Director, Audion Pharmacy, Lagos, Mrs. Edith Nwachukwu, said: "This conference provides an excellent

platform for networking and learning. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead with SKG Pharma."

Similarly, Mr. Steve Ozioko, Managing Director of New Health Pharmacy, Abuja, added: "We value our partnership with SKG Pharma and look forward to achieving greater heights together."

One of the highlights of the conference was the award ceremony recognizing top-performing trade partners. Audion Pharmacy clinched the top prize at the National Awards, a testament to their outstanding performance and dedication.

In addition to the awards, SKG Pharma used the occasion to introduce a new painkiller, Novadex Extra, into the market. Pharm. Victoria Okon, Head of Marketing at SKG Pharma, said:

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)



L-R: Akeem Hassan, Technical Adviser to the Honorable Commissioner, Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology (MIST); Omotayo Fisuyi, SSA on Innovation and Technology, Lagos; Prof Peter Bamkole, COO, Pan Atlantic University; Hon. Tunbosun Alake, Commissioner, MIST; Adeleke Alex-Adedipe, Managing Partner, DOA, all at the stakeholders engagement on the proposed Lagos Innovation Bill recently at the Eko Innovation Centre, Lagos.

ALP wages war against drug abuse, other menace

By Henry Uche

ASSOCIATION of Lady Pharmacists (ALPs) says drug abuse among children and youths and its devastating consequences in the country is giving them concern. They called on parents and government to act decisively to prevent substance abuse amongst to enhance healthy lives of the future generation of Nigerians.

In communiqué issued at the end of its 16th Biennial conference held at Uyi Grand Suites and Event Centre, Edo State and signed by its National Chairman, Pharm Scholastica Lan and National Secretary, Pharm Ngozi Egboh, respectively, the group said it was poised to execute initiatives in tandem with the 2030 sustainable development goals across the various dimensions of health practice.

With the theme: "Pharmacy: Making healthcare impact in tandem with 2030 sustainable development goals," they called for proactive measures by pharmacists to ensure controlled drugs are kept out of reach of children and

street corners, maintaining that ethical drug distribution of Central Nervous System stimulants and other substances of abuse will go a long way in curbing illicit access.

More so, they reiterated an earlier call to government to ensure full implementation of the National Drug Distribution Guidelines (NDDGs) to enable pharmacists fulfill their roles in this implementation.

"We called on Lady Pharmacists and indeed all pharmacists to embrace technological advancements to harness new opportunities for novel practice models for improved health outcomes for the health seeking populations.

"We equally call on government to provide an enabling environment to ensure pharmacists contribute to promoting rational use of drugs, manage chronic diseases, and support public health initiatives within the nation's healthcare delivery system in a manner that will assure positive recognition of these contributions nationwide."

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)

500 get free malaria treatment, ITN in Delta

From Paul Osuyi, Asaba

NO fewer than 500 persons in Warri and its environs in Delta State have benefitted from free malaria treatment and mosquito Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN).

Besides, there was a road walk by health care practitioners round major routes in the oil-rich city as parts of efforts to create awareness on the killer disease and how to prevent it.

The anti-malaria measures were put together by Gilbert Hill Resources Limited, and supported by the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the state Ministry of Health.

The objective, according to the organizers, was to champion the campaign against malaria in Warri and its environs.

Commissioner of Health in Delta State, Dr. Joseph Onojame said the campaign was to commemorate the World Malaria Day which is observed every April 25 with its theme: 'Ac-

celerating the Fight Against Malaria for a More Equitable World.'

Dr. Onojame who was represented by the Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Dr. Julie Amah cautioned against the habit of self medication in treatment of malaria but recommended that people should go for test and treatment from approved healthcare centers.

"World Malaria Day was celebrated on April 25th in Asaba and other parts of the state but NDCC thought it wise to also champion the campaign against malaria in Warri today with the procession around town, talk on malaria, free malaria treatment and distribution of free mosquitoes insecticide treated net.

"The Delta State Government has done a lot in the crusade against malaria in the state but more is still needed to be done.

"Please avoid self medication, always go for test and treatment in approved hospitals and healthcare centers," Amah advised.

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)

The beauty of catnip



NATURE'S SOLUTION

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Nepeta cataria L.

Family – Lamiaceae (mint family)
Common names: catnip, catmint, catswort, field-balm, *odu ngwele* (Igbo) and *egba owo opolo* (Yoruba).

A short-lived perennial, herbaceous plant that can be found in dumps, parking lots, old homesites, field edges, roadsides, railroads, shores, flower beds and disturbed sites. Catnip has green to gray-green foliage on erect, branched stems and a rangy habit. Like other members of the mint family, it has the characteristic square stems of mint plants and opposite leaves with one inch petioles. The light green stems and petioles are covered with fine hairs. The triangular to ovate leaves are up to three inches long with coarse teeth along the edges and are coriander at the base. They emit a mint odor when crushed. Both upper and lower surfaces are covered with fine hairs, and a reticulated network of veins is clearly visible on the upper side. The small, bilabiate flowers are fragrant and are either pink in colour or white with fine spots of pale purple. Plants can grow up to three feet tall and wide under ideal conditions and may form colonies from the short rhizomes.

Though considered a weed for animals, catnip offers many healing gifts to mankind. The plant has been consumed as a tisane, juice, tincture, infusion, or poultice, and sniff.

Part used: leaves, flowers, and roots

The medicinal importance of this plant derives from its active principles such as flavonoids, including caffeic acid, rosmarinic acid, coumaric acid; volatile compounds like nepetalactone, thymol, pinene; iridoid glycosides, etc. Packed with these chemical properties, catnip may have the following health benefits:

Insomnia - catnip with its calming sedative effect can speed your journey to dream land. It makes a relaxing and soothing tea. Whether you're feeling jittery from too much coffee or stress, catnip can help calm this excitable, restless state and release tension in the body. The compound responsible for catnip's effects is nepetalactone. It also contains calcium, magnesium, potassium, selenium, phosphorus, manganese as well as vitamins A, B, and C. Its natural carminative properties are highly beneficial for those who suffer from sleeplessness. Enjoy it in the form of a warm tea before bed with a little bit of honey to get you relaxed, drowsy, and ready for bed.

To make a catnip tea, place 1-2 tablespoons of the dried leaves in a teacup and cover with hot water. Steep for 10 minutes,

covered, and then add honey if you desire. Catnip is also safe for treating irritability and restless sleep in toddlers and babies.

Vomiting- the volatile oil in this minty herb helps relieve spasms and may help allay bouts of vomiting- when the flu sneaks up on you, for example, or when you have over indulged with fatty, spicy foods or too much alcohol. Make a tea by steeping 1 Tbsp of the dried leaves in a teacup of freshly boiled water. Strain, then take small sips while it's still warm.

Upset Stomach - With its ability to relieve spasming and cramping, antispasmodic properties, catnip can ease stomach ache, bloating, gas, and excess flatulence. When gas gets trapped in the intestine, it can really be painful, but you can relieve the discomfort with a simple belly rub containing catnip and other antispasmodic herbs like lavender and mint. Add four to six drops of catnip and lavender/mint tincture to two tablespoons of olive oil, then gradually massage it into your abdomen in a clockwise motion.

Catnip is a carminative, helping to remove air stuck in the intestines by pushing it downwards until it's expelled from the body. The relaxing, anti-inflammatory effects of Catnip's organic compounds can ease the knots and inflammation of the gastrointestinal system and relieve tightness and discomfort.

Pain and menstruation - **cramps** - catnip also eases muscle tension and cramping in the uterus. Pairing catnip tincture with ginger makes for fantastic uterine and muscle cramping herbal formula.

Bug bites- In addition to treating bites and stings, catnip naturally prevents them. Thanks to its powerful oil -nepetalactone, which according to some studies is more effective at deterring insects than most insecticides, which, may even cause rashes, lethargy, muscle spasms and nausea. Nepetalactone is a mosquito and fly repellent.

I reminisced about vacations in my hometown as I wrote this article. My late grandma would place some minty herbs, I believe, consisting of catnip, bush mint (*Hyptis suaveolens*), and basil (*nchuanwu* in Igbo) on our windowsill to repel mosquitoes. Did it really work?

Wounds - the herb possesses antiseptic attributes that are effective in treating skin afflictions. Catnip contains high levels of tannins, which help to accelerate the process of repairing damaged tissues and stop hemorrhages from grazes and cuts. The tannins are also useful in curing burn injuries and scalds, insect bites, piles and skin problems accompanied by inflammations.

Fevers and cold - catnip is classed as a "diaphoretic" herb, meaning it can induce perspiration without raising body temperature to help break a fever. Drinking it hot as a tea will help enhance its effects. A hot catnip infusion works as an excellent antiseptic inhalant and as a remedy for sore throats, coughs, colds and flu, in addition to working as a decongestant to alleviate sinusitis and catarrh as well as taming asthma.

Catnip tea is slightly bitter and has a minty, earthy taste. You may add lemon juice, honey, or sweetener of your choice to improve the flavor. Enjoy!

OKUAMA: BREWING TENSION A KEG OF GUN-POWDER WAITING TO EXPLODE

It is about two months and two weeks, since the infamous killing of 17 officers and men of the Nigerian Army by blood-thirsty and trigger-happy assailants took place in Okuama community (a sleepy riverine settlement in Ughelli South LGA of Delta State), sandwiched by Akugbene and Okoloba communities in Bomadi LGA of Delta State. It is also barely a month and three weeks since the soldiers left Okuama. In our interface with Okoloba people to unearth their concerns, their community stated profusely that there has been an inexplicable array of unpalatable events rocking the trio of Okuama, Okoloba and Akugbene communities. As usual, they reported to the Police, DSS, and Army. They emphasised that if care is not taken, these unwholesome events and under-ground currents brewing tension will eventually snowball into a major catastrophe yet again. According to the community chairman of Okoloba, this is because Okuama which is in the eye of the storm for the alleged killing of the 17 soldiers appears to be repositioning themselves with a renewed vigour in their penchant to perpetrate more havoc as evidenced by the events of April 8, 2024, when they unleashed terror on several persons purported to be Akugbene indigenes with machetes and guns, leading to the death of about three persons, with several others sustaining life-threatening injuries. He further said this has added to the precarious plight of Okoloba community presently wrapped in so much uncertainty. Okoloba community, he said lives in fear of possible attacks by Okuama people who have re-grouped in larger numbers, taken over the entire forest and fishing lakes, and fully armed to the teeth with dangerous arms and ammunition. Okuama, he further alleged, has threatened to carry out mayhem on Okoloba any moment, thereby worsening the already volatile situation on ground. He explained further that the fact remains that Okoloba people had never envisaged involving themselves in any form of fight with Okuama settlers, but for the grave concerns on the over-bearing and violent disposition of Okuama people whom they have repeatedly accused of trespassing on their land and threatening their corporate existence as a people. This precarious situation the Delta State government treated with kid-gloves and is surprisingly still paying lip service to by the unfolding events. This adamant treatment by the State Government undoubtedly led to the unfortunate build up to the ugly incident of March 14, 2024, as will be carefully enunciated below:

I. The Okoloba Plight:

As concerned Ijaw citizens who are critical stakeholders in the overall well-being and peaceful co-existence of Ijaws wherever they may be dwelling and in tandem with our unflinching desire to work with government in resolving the lingering crisis, we engaged the Okoloba people and their leadership with an intent to bringing their complaints to the knowledge of government (state and federal) and of course other non-state actors so as to address them properly—the essence being to dig into the root-cause of the crisis and permanently nip same in the bud. In our engagement/interface, the revelations were quite startling. Okoloba people said they are deeply pained that: whereas,

i. It is Akugbene people that they (Okoloba) have had and maintained direct ancestral boundary with on that Southern flank of the River Forcados from time immemorial, but Okuama people haven migrated from Ewu land in search of safe havens and greener pastures and haven been given land by Akugbene for fishing and farming, have trespassed into Okoloba land. They have crossed the ancestral boundary line between Akugbene and Okoloba (which was undisputedly in existence long before the Okuama strangers arrived, moved deep and aggressively into Okoloba side. The prediction of P. V. Main: A.D.O, Pg 56, pp 284 of his "Assessment Intelligence Report" of the Commission of Inquiry, under the heading "SOBO INVASION" wherein he predicted that stranger SOBO communities might one day claim ownership of the land belonging to the Mein-Ijo, and which formed the bedrock of the landmark 1945 judgement: is coming to fruition. They averred that this is the real bone of the dispute that has traversed several decades and resulted in the inferno that is still burning very fast but unnoticed, especially by the government of the day in Delta state, either deliberately or by error of omission. The Okoloba people informed they want this issue, put in its proper perspective and addressed going forward, to engender genuine and enduring peace:

ii. That though the soldiers were killed in Okuama community and that put Okuama on the radar of the soldiers, it is two communities that are involved in the crisis and as such for a lasting solution to be provided, the state government ought to visit the two communities and/or at least invite the two communities and their leadership to sit down and address the burning issues that led to the impasse. But that was not done. Rather, His Excellency the Executive Governor of Delta state visited Okuama only, and invited its leadership to Government House and promised rebuilding Okuama and resettling them. The burning questions being asked by Okoloba people and they said are contributing to the brewing tension are:

a. As a father to all persons and ethnic nationalities in Delta state, is it fair, right, just and equitable for the governor to visit and/or talk with only one party (Okuama) to the exclusion of the other (Okoloba), which is a major party to the dispute in question?

b. Is it because Okoloba is an ijaw village, and not Urhobo, hence the governor feels comfortable to ignore Okoloba people?

c. On whose land does the Delta State government intend to resettle the Okuama people? Is it on Okoloba land that Okuama people have trespassed and which is the root cause of the crisis and all the attendant negative events that followed?

d. Is it because the state government believes it has the monopoly of power and so it can coerce and arm-twist the Okoloba people to their knees and resettle the Okuama people on Okoloba land against the wishes of the Okoloba people?

e. Even if the government succeeds in suppressing Okoloba now to achieve that goal, using the instrumentality of government power, has the state government really solved the problem on ground that has traversed several decades and several governments? Would the government not be postponing doomsday? What collective good/purpose will that defective conflict resolution strategy serve? With what happened, would it not be advisable the state government is more thorough in charting any course as far as resolving the Okuama/Okoloba quagmire?

f. Why has the state government turned blind eyes and deaf ears to the countless atrocities perpetrated by Okuama youths barely 24 hours after the army departed Okuama community, which Okoloba people said they have been reporting as usual to the security agencies and issuing several SOS calls to government?

g. Why has the state government not deemed it necessary to call the Okuama youths who have formed the habit of dressing in full military regalia, brandishing assorted guns and shooting sporadically in different directions by the entrance of the Mienturuababor creek, carrying out illegal stop and search activities on any boat that passes their community looking for Okoloba people to kill? Why are the Okuama people allegedly sustaining issuance of threats of impending mass killings against Okoloba people, despite the fact that these criminal activities have been brought to the knowledge of the government and the security agencies?

h. Why has the state government not done anything to stem the tide of rising tension caused by the unholy activities of Okuama youths as reported, so as to improve the

security situation in the Okuama/Okoloba axis of the River Forcados to enhance easy passage of passenger and market boats and thus boost socio-economic activities, knowing fully well that, same has grinded to a halt and the people are suffering grave hardship?

i. Is the government of the day in Delta State trying to play a script in favour of one party to the detriment of the other?

These are the burning issues, questions asked and the pains of Okoloba people, as we speak; demanding urgent attention in order to avert a situation where government efforts in putting millions of tax payers' monies in pursuing a resettlement agenda that will not solve the problem and/or stand the test of time. And most importantly to avoid a replay of the events that heralded the ugly March 14, 2024 débâcle.

Your Excellency, we the Concerned Ijaw Citizens are for peace and peaceful co-existence of all ethnic nationalities in Delta state and Nigeria. While acknowledging your untiring efforts at returning peace to Okuama and of course the entire River Forcados area and indeed Delta state as a whole, we are inclined to view the issues and concerns raised by Okoloba people as germane, and state government's inactions as chronicled by Okoloba people herein as unacceptable, and the Okuama resettlement plan as noble but ill-timed, particularly when the indices are not right, on the following premises:

i. Without first unearthing the root-cause of the Okuama/Okoloba crisis and addressing them exhaustively, pursuing a resettlement agenda hurriedly; though a well thought-out and noble idea; will be like embarking on a wild goose chase that will not end well for both the state government and the duo of Okuama and Okoloba respectively in the very long run.

ii. The State Government should first lay a clear and solid pathway to entrenching peace in Delta State by being fair to all, regardless of where and who is involved. And that brings us unavoidably to the DIEBIRI QUESTION.

Your Excellency, Diebiri people (an Ijaw community in Warri South-West LGA of Delta State) have cried out that they were sacked 29 years ago by Aladja (an Urhobo community in Udu LGA of Delta State) in a crisis (Aladja/Ogbe-Ijoh crisis), they never had an input and were not part of, and have been so displaced from their ancestral home since then, and all appeals to successive governments to assuage their plight by resettling them failed till date. The following questions by Diebiri people are begging for answers:

ii. Why has His Excellency ignored the plea of the Diebiri people to be resettled back to their ancestral home, even after personally using their plight as a campaign issue to win votes from them?

iii. Why has His Excellency not even offered any form of statement or explanation as to the Diebiri question till date: a plight they have suffered for almost three decades; but he is in a such a hurry to resettle Okuama whose displacement occurred barely three months ago and moreso, without addressing the root cause of the Okuama/Okoloba imbroglio?

c. Diebiri people are asking: "Is it because Okuama is Urhobo and Diebiri is ijaw community?" What is good for the goose is equally good for the gander, and a stitch in time saves nine.

Your Excellency, as Concerned Ijaw Citizens, we see every ethnic nationality in Delta state as brothers and sisters with a common cause and you, the Executive Governor as father to all. Therefore, any action or policy of government that is seemingly tilted towards one ethnic nationality against another is against the much cherished and preached ideals of equity, fairness and justice as even entrenched in your M.O.R.E agenda, and therefore should be eschewed in its entirety by government and all citizens alike.

In the light of the foregoing therefore, we want to appeal to Your Excellency to graciously use your good offices to do the following which we believe will help in engendering lasting peace in Okuama and other communities along the River Forcados axis and of course the Diebiri people in Warri South-West LGA:

i. Invite Okoloba people and their leaders, give them listening ears and let them bare their hearts on their challenges, pains and fears. Talking to just one party in a crisis situation and ignoring the other could give a sense of apathy instead of empathy and that could be counter-productive in the quest for lasting peace for Okuama/Okoloba crisis

ii. Address those challenges and pains and of course allay their fears, especially as it concerns the alleged threats of mass killings against them by Okuama people, and assuring them of government's equal attention and protection at all times

iii. Get specific terms of commitment from them, particularly, their leaders to continue to cooperate and collaborate with the state government and security agencies in maintaining peace in their community, and of course along the River Forcados as a whole

iv. Listen to the cry of the Diebiri people as far as their resettlement to their ancestral home is concerned and take urgent and specific steps to addressing their plight.

With the above carefully articulated template, Your Excellency, you would have not just shown to Deltans that you are a father to all but you would have laid a solid and immutable roadmap to restoring enduring peace in the state, not just in Okuama/Okoloba case but everywhere else in Delta State.

We congratulate you on the achievements of your administration so far, within your one year in office as Executive Governor, Delta State and pray for God Almighty to continue to guide and strengthen you in the discharge of your onerous responsibility as the Chief Executive and Chief Security Officer of Delta State

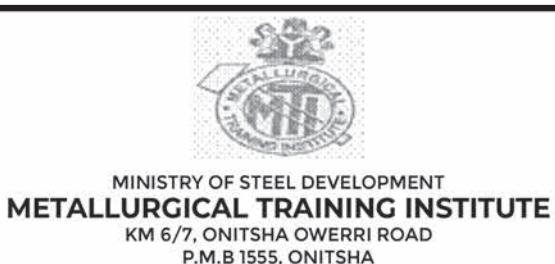
God bless you, Your Excellency.

God bless Delta State and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Signed

Seigha Manager

Coordinator, Concerned Ijaw Citizens



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND INVITATION TO TENDER FOR 2024 CAPITAL AND CONSTITUENCY PROJECTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha is a Federal Government Owned Institute with the mandate to train Low/Middle Level Technical Manpower in Maintenance and Repair works for the Steel and Allied Industries in Nigeria. In compliance with the Public Procurement Act 2007, the Institute hereby invites reputable, competent and qualified companies to tender for Renovation, Procurement and Consultancy Services of the following projects:

2. SCOPE OF WORKS & SERVICES

CAPITAL PROJECTS: INVITATION TO TENDER

CATEGORY A: WORKS

LOT NO	DESCRIPTION
LOT 1	RENOVATION OF SELECTED HEALTH CENTERS IN IMO NORTH SENA DISTRICT

CONSTITUENCY PROJECTS

CATEGORY B: GOODS

LOT NO	DESCRIPTION
LOT 2	ESTABLISHMENT OF SOLAR POWERED STREET LIGHTS IN IHIMADAVI COMMUNITIES OF KOGI CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, KOGI STATE (SUPPLY INSTALLATION AND TESTING)

CATEGORY C: CONSULTANCY SERVICES

LOT NO	DESCRIPTION
LOT 3	TRAINING OF YOUTHS IN ICT AND WELDING FABRICATION
LOT 4	TRAINING OF 1000 EHIME MBANO L.G.A YOUTHS ON THE OPPORTUNITIES IN STEEL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT AND THE NEED FOR THEIR COOPERATION

3. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- a. Evidence of Certificate of Incorporation with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) including form CAC1 or CAC2 and CAC7. Business Name with Form BN1 is also acceptable for Consultancy Services;
- b. Evidence of Company Income's Tax Clearance Certificate (or Personal Income Tax Clearance Certificates of all the partners in case of Business name) for the last three (3) years (2021, 2022 & 2023) valid till 31st December, 2024;
- c. Evidence of Pension Clearance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024 (this requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is 5 and above);
- d. Evidence of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024 (this requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is 5 and above or bidders whose annual turnover is 50m and above);
- e. Evidence of Current Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024;
- f. Evidence of Registration on the National Database of Federal Contractors, Consultants, and Service Providers by submission of Interim Registration Report (IRR) expiring 31st December, 2024 or valid Certificate issued by Bureau of Public Procurement;
- g. Sworn Affidavit:
 - disclosing whether or not any officer of the relevant committee of the Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha or the Bureau of public Procurement is a former or present Director, shareholder or has any pecuniary interest in the bidder and to confirm that all information presented in its bid are true and correct in all particulars;
 - that no Director has been convicted in any criminal offence relating to any fraud or financial impropriety or criminal misrepresentation or falsification of facts relating to any matter;
 - that the company is not in receivership, the subject of any form of insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings or the subject of any form of winding up petition or proceedings;
 - that the company does not have existing loan or financial liability with a bank, other financial institution or third party that is classified as doubtful, non-performance, bad or whose repayment portion has been outstanding for the last four (4) months
- h. Company's Audited Accounts for the last three (3) years - 2021, 2022 & 2023, and the declared turnovers must correspond with those in Tax Clearance Certificate;
- i. Reference letter from a reputable bank in Nigeria indicating willingness to provide credit facility for the execution of the project when needed;
- j. For Training programmes: Evidence of firm's current Registration with the Centre for Management Development (CMD);
- k. Lot 3: firms must register with National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA)
- l. Company's profile with the Curriculum Vitae of key staff to be deployed for the project including copies of their Academic/Professional qualifications such as COREN Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, QSRBN, ARCON, CORBON etc.;
- m. Verifiable documentary evidence of at least three (3) similar jobs executed in the last five (5) years including Letter of Awards, Valuation Certificate and Job Completion Certificate and photograph of the projects.
- n. Works: List of Plants/Equipment with proof of Ownership/Lease Agreement;
- o. Electricity jobs: Evidence of current Licence issued by Nigerian Electricity Management Services Agency (NEMSA).

Note: All documents for submission must be transmitted with a Covering/Forwarding letter under the Company's Letter Head paper bearing amongst others, the Registration Number (RC) as issued by the CAC, Contact Address, Telephone Number (preferably GSM No) and E-mail address. The Letterhead paper must bear the Names and Nationalities of the Directors of the Company at the bottom of the page, duly signed by the authorized officer of the Firm.

4. COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS (CATEGORY A & B)

Interested and Competent Bidders should collect the Standard Bidding Documents from PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT, ROOM 6, Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha on evidence of non-refundable tender fee of 10,000.00 per Lot by using the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) payment gateway platform that can be accessed from the REMITA Website. Please, note that interested firms in Services will not pay at this stage until after shortlisting

5. SUBMISSION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS (CATEGORY A & B)

Prospective bidders are to submit bid for each of the Lot desired, two (2) hard copies each of the technical and financial bids with softcopy of financial bid only in MS Excel format, packaged separately in sealed envelopes and clearly marked as 'Technical Bid' or 'Financial Bid'. Thereafter, put the two sealed envelopes together in a bigger sealed envelope addressed to the Director/Chief Executive, metallurgical Training Institute, km 6/7 Onitsha-Owerri Road, Onitsha and clearly marked with the name of the project and the Lot number. Furthermore, the reverse of each sealed envelope should bear the name and address of the bidder and drop in the designated Tender Box at the Procurement Department of the Institute, Room 6 not later than 12:00 noon on Thursday, 27th June, 2024.

6. SUBMISSION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST DOCUMENTS (CATEGORY C)

Interested firms are to submit two (2) bound of Expression of Interest (EOI) documents separated by dividers and arranged as indicated above. The documents should be submitted in a sealed envelope and addressed to Ag. Director/Chief Executive, metallurgical Training Institute, km 6/7 Onitsha-Owerri Road, Onitsha and clearly marked with the name of the project and the Lot number. Furthermore, the reverse of each sealed envelope should bear the name and address of the bidder and drop in the designated Tender Box Procurement Department of the Institute, Room 6 not later than 12:00 noon on Thursday, 13th June, 2024.

7. OPENING OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND TECHNICAL BIDS

The EOI and the technical bids will be opened immediately after the deadlines for submission at 12:00 noon, Thursday, 13th June, 2024 and Thursday, 27th June, 2024 respectively in the presence of bidders or their representatives in the Institute's Board Room. Please, ensure that you sign the Bid Submission Register at the Procurement Department of the Institute, Room 6 as the Metallurgical Training Institute will not be held liable for misplaced or wrongly submitted bids.

8. GENERAL INFORMATION

- a. EOI/Bids must be in English Language and signed by an official authorised by the bidder;
- b. Arrangement of technical documents in hard copies should follow the order in the list above and appropriately paginated. The technical documents should have a table of content indicating the pages, which these items are to be found. Failure to comply with this directive will result in disqualification of the bidder.
- c. EOs/Bids submitted after the deadline for submission would be returned un-opened
- d. Bidders should not bid for more than two (2) Lots;
- e. All cost will be borne by the bidders
- f. Bid documents can also be collected in soft copies and bidder can submit through post (Courier Service)
- g. Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha reserved the right to verify claims made in the returned tender documents
- h. The EOIs/Technical Bids will be opened in the presence of Bidders or their representatives, CSOs in the areas of Anti-Corruption and Transparency and Private Professional bodies; and will be covered by video recording; invitation link will be sent to bidder who chooses to join the EOI's/bid opening online;
- i. Category A & B: Only prequalified bidders at the technical evaluation will be invited at later date for financial bids opening, while financial bids of un-successful bidders will be returned un-opened;
- j. Category C: Only shortlisted firms will be invited at a later date for collection of Request for Proposals.
- k. The Metallurgical Training Institute is not bound to pre-qualify/shortlist any bidders and reserve the right to annul the Procurement Process at any time without incurring any liabilities in accordance with Section 28 of the Public Procurement Act 2007.

Signed:
Ag. Director/Chief Executive
Metallurgical Training Institute, Onitsha

TRAVEL & TOURISM

Tourism, beyond adversity, suffering from Anaemia



PEOPLE & TOURISM FRANK MEKE

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EXPERIENCE is usually agreed to be the best teacher and looking back to about three decades ago, when opportunities came my way to be part of the story of this industry, it had been a bitter, sweet and cold experience.

If you have been around, I mean within the space mentioned, you would possibly agree that the Nigerian tourism journey is hasted by the media, and I must, in particular, credit uncle Sam Amuka's newspaper, the vanguard newspapers for this presence.

The pictures of travel media we see today were the creative content put together by irrepressible ogbeni Tope Awe. Like Apostle Paul, I drank from that wisdom and am ready and willing to lay my life down for it.

There were also other colleagues' apostles, not necessarily of the vanguard family but who also joined in the crusade to write and speak well about our country. Unsung heroes!

Indeed, and like some latter day saints, many of them couldn't see beyond the glitz and luxury usually associated with the business and disappointingly lost steam due to lack of encouragement and support from government and even the private sector.

Certainly, the Anaemic nature of the sector, despite our sense of knowledge and permutations, is so benumbing that only a few of us could weather the storm, so to speak.

There are no chest beating here, and usually, I refrain from joining the noise makers and buccaneers who come to our space to prat invisibility. It's nauseating, emetic!

Except we shut their mouths and seek for a sense modesty, it is becoming apparent that they want to deliberately rewrite the history of tourism development and including the use of poisonous carrots to lure the innocent pedestrian bystanders to join their hellinist coven.

Like I will always say and may history bear me witness, the Nigerian travel media has contributed immensely to where we are today, and no individual or organisation can hold absolute claim to that intervention. There are many journalists today who individually have contributed to keep the anaemic sector alive, while some selected leaders, particularly government officials, milk the sector dry and tell us all is well.

Between 1991 and 93, vanguard tourism bore developmental pains, paid the price, and



•Tinubu

led courageously the tourism advocacy. Late Pa Ebaboji Da Silva stood with us, and may his tourism soul rest in peace. Then came champion newspapers, and I still remember my good friend Ayo Awojobi. Then followed Daily Times with Tijjani Adebisi, a polygot of immense knowledge, and even the present Olota of ota is part of the evolution.

I won't waste my space to join issues with 'Buharidists' or 'Jagabandists' and/or motor garage sycophants who want to score themselves with marks for whatever fanciful achievements. I really do not blame them, though, because some people come to the marketplace to shout to attract attention to their babalawo incantations and not to sell their all curing medicinal herbs.

It could be irritating when an ostrich with its long neck thinks it could occupy the animal kingdom space where lions reign. I should think it's suicidal and a disease of hormonal imbalance for anyone to think he is far better than others. It is just crazy and no wonder, Judas represents treachery and betrayal spirit.

We are not out of the woods, in the anaemic hangover in the sector, because the industry has been betrayed by the merchants of divide and rule. To these characters, their game is to hogwash whoever comes to the system with transactional self-worth, belittling and running down others who refused to join their solo herodian team.

No one is good except them, and as custodians of blemish and strife trajectory, they fly around like witches and wizards, intentional to lie against the truth and stab others in the back.

We have said it in the open and secret places that our new madam in tourism will just mark time and leave like others before her because the confusionists had lured her with their bait.

The propellers of industry set backs prants her space, cleverly using her "newness" and disposition to learn the tourism ropes to market themselves. Not Nigeria, not her people.

Nigeria tourism is not at the centre stage of this mission, and you ask me who is beating the drum? Last week, the madam minister gathered commissioners of culture and tourism in Abuja. Behind the game is hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy beats the drums, and the new commissioners and possibly new permanent secretaries just wondered why they must believe the deliverers at the centre who in seven years plus four couldn't lift a finger to donate blood to the anaemic sector.

In 2006, when Otunba Segun Runsewe came to our tourism space, he informed our numerous tourism baggage carriers that talk shows are over and birthed practical verifiable tourism deliveries.

He killed fly by night portfolio operators and flew all the tourism and culture commissioners to South Africa for a week to practically see the transformation gains of the sector. Is seeing not believing?

Runsewe gave the tourism media eyes to the global tourism reportage ecosystem and helped blossom the positive escalation of travel and tourism reporting in Nigeria, even birthed the industry reportage on radio and television.

That's deliberate collaboration with the media and not the latest divisive press releases in vogue and focal to killing tourism reportage and interpretation by government tourism agencies. Of course they can't give what they don't have!

It is sad that the drummers of new dance drama in tourism today have surrounded themselves with Croynists whose only usefulness is to massage the ego of their masters.

It's difficult to owe any tourism obligation to our nation and people when the government, in its wisdom, will force down our throat ministers and agency heads whose mission and vision are at variance to the good of our cultural tourism advantages.

A minister or agency head who deliberately roll out its hosted buyers ecosystem to the media with intent to mute their suggestions or observations can only breed zombie reporters.

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)

**FEMI ADEOTI**

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YESTERDAY came the way it came. And it went the manner it went. One certainty is certain: It's gone forever. Never to be seen again.

It was another year added to our ugly history. That past will continue to trail us. We fervently pray. It will not hurt and/or hurt us.

Yesterday, flatterers took the centre stage. They occupied every space. They did what they know how to do the best. All in the name of one year in office.

Everywhere was awash. We just took time off. And we did enjoy the hero-worship. And its accompanied self-adorations. We were marvelled. Who would not?

What would they not flaunt as "laudable achievements?" Everything that crossed their crude imaginations came handy. All that in just one odd year! Wonderful wonders shall never end.

We were forced to ask aloud, but not amiss: Do our rulers really know our needs? Great doubt. They are out of tune with our aspirations. The stark reality that stares us in the face does not bother them. We are at a huge loss. What manner of leaders! What goes on in their minds? We can't comprehend.

From our pool of life threatening challenges. The National Assembly (NASS) searched all night long. Its species of members dug real deep. And they opted for

the ridiculous.

What they found was amazing and amusing. They pretended to be courageous. And ended up displaying negative patriotism. What would anthem change put on our table? And in these perilous times. How did they settle for the frivolous? When we're neck-deep in legion of predicaments.

Aren't these characters sensitive enough? Our plight is attitudinal. It's not anthem change, but attitude change. It's as simple as that. We don't need a prophet or a soothsayer to tell us this undecorated truth. It's bare, plain to us all.

That national anthem change is a naked deceit. We're pained to the marrows. Our distinguished senators and honourable members did us in this way!

Imagine, the federal lawmakers just came from the blues. Unannounced, they rudely jumped on us. Our fragile peace was disturbed and distorted. They insisted we must sing a new song. Not in a strange land, but in our own land.

What's wrong with the song we sing presently? The song we sang for 46 years. Suddenly became obsolete, horrible to their listening. It no longer had substance. It lost its vital vibes. Not pleasing to their ears anymore.

It's characteristic of them. They ignore policies that will be beneficial to us all. And expend energy on what is strictly selfish to them. And they start running after nothingness, emptiness. Chasing their ugly shadows.

They are never realistic in their actions and inactions. Their attitude is awkward, absurd. Old or new, what does it matter? We will gladly sing any of the anthems. Attitudinal change is it!

It was a callous. The manner the National Assembly made utter display of its own brand of patriotism. They were propelled to return to old anthem. Its reason: The current one was forced down our throats by the

military.

Let's salute their feigned courage and bravery. Let us urge them on. They shouldn't stop at that. That would be cowardice. They should roll further back into our beautiful past. And bring those old, good days alive again. Our golden era so to say.

They can do it if they want it done. They should have the audacity to dismantle all the states created. That will start from May 27, 1967. That was the day General Yakubu Gowon broke the four old regions of West, East, Mid-West and North. And he pronounced them 12 states.

Yes, by military fiat. They were: Lagos, Lagos; West, Ibadan; Mid-West, Benin; East Central, Enugu; South East, Calabar; Rivers, Port Harcourt; Kwara, Ilorin; Benue Plateau, Jos; North Central, Kaduna; Kano, Kano; North East, Maiduguri and North West, Sokoto.

The authentic local governments were equally military adoptions. They need to be erased from our blurred memories. Then

throw away this Constitution completely.

All these would naturally drop on our laps parliamentary system of government. Our restructuring prayers would have been effortlessly answered. On gold platter!

All these would naturally drop on our laps parliamentary system of government. Our restructuring prayers would have been effortlessly answered. On gold platter! But they won't do that. Instead, they keep on reviewing the constitution over and over again.

Each NASS that come would vote enormous resources. None of the reviews has seen the light of the day. They are at it again. Shame. Constitution review is now a veritable cash cow. What a lucrative sub-sector of the National Assembly.

See the speed they applied on the old national anthem. In a jiffy, it passed through the first, second readings. Just in a sitting, it landed in the third reading. Without strains

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

The Kano debacle

THE judiciary is adamant one more time. It chooses not to learn good lessons from its controversial past. Sordid and pathetic.

It has voluntarily made itself available again for bashing. And Kano retains its epicentre status. The emirship is the subject of focus. It is fast running into the unthinkable.

The manipulators remain the enfant terrible politicians. They are the prowling and devouring. Pity. The traditional institution fell flat to its deadly machinations.

Revered throne is being torn apart recklessly. And the centre cannot hold. The ancient stool is roughened, bastardised. And dragged along in the muddy muds. All by the politicians who never meant well!

Who will rescue these embattled emirs?

It is a house divided against itself. One family too many crises. The shenanigan is getting more complex and complicated. An interesting but clearly ridiculous climax.

It is imminent. Something, somehow will cave in. But who knows? Perhaps, reason may prevail. Even at the last minute. The great fear: None of the characters involved is ready to concede. Not even an inch of his territory.

Obviously, the deadly politicians are enjoying the power show. Plots, intrigues, playing out violently. From Abuja to Kano; Kano to Abuja. Deadly missiles are flying.

The politicians are united in their eerie motto: The means justifies the end. The end justifies the means. Whatever first suitably applies.

It's a crossroads of horrifying cobwebs.

Setting agenda for presidential climate envoy

"IN 2078, I will celebrate my 75th birthday. If I have children or grandchildren, maybe they will spend that day with me. Maybe they will ask me about you. The climate crisis is both the easiest and the hardest issue we have ever faced" –Greta Thunberg

Development does not happen in abstract or absentia, there must be someone taking responsibility for its execution. Acknowledging our achievements as a people has continued to remind us to pay impeccable attention to the future and Fahrenheit of our dear nation. This has similarly sent a persuasive message of moral restoration and responsibility to the documents that binds us in fate and history.

I'm writing this letter to you, Chief Ajuri Ngelale, from my point of view, having lived through policy events that have so far shaped the climate security architecture of this administration. I am aware of what sceptics usually miss: the feel of the time, the specificity of episodes, the polemical temperature of all ideological debates about green finance and climate diplomacy, the ace of verification, the exposition of those vital contextualisation that we have crafted with the strategic intention of amplifying policy messages of this government.

In February, Abuja was the hottest capital in West Africa. Abubakar Evuti, Special Assistant, Media, to the Minister of Environment, brought this to my knowledge, which made me to immediately revisit some statistics at the MeteoGroup, with a rising fear of what the future may hold for our cities.

As the reality becomes clearer, I took further inquiry into few texts and classics like, "The Revenge of Geography" by Robert D Kaplan, "Power and Progress" by Professor Acemoglu and Johnson, "Commonwealth: Economics For a Crowded Planet", by Prof. Jeffrey Sachs and "The End of Ice: Bearing Witness and Finding Meaning in the Path

of Climate Disruption", by Dahr Jamail. With these findings and conceptualizations, I came to agree better why we must bring to the centre of this administration, the new national question "climate change."

Nearly 30 million households in Nigeria depend on wood as a source of fuel for cooking. By 2030, traditional cooking with firewood will lead to 97,000 deaths annually, with women and children bearing a disproportionate burden of diseases. Presently, emission from cooking contributes over 55 million tonnes of CO₂ representing about 16% of total national greenhouse gas emissions. Nigeria has 3.5% annual rate of deforestation and loss approximately 350,000- 400,000 hectares per year. The widespread use of wood for cooking contributes a sizeable share of deforestation.

Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) to the Paris Climate Change Agreement has set a target of switching about half of the population to Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and 13 per cent to improve cook stoves by 2030. Nigeria has an estimated population of 218.5 million people (World Bank and U.S Census Bureau 2022 estimate) and will become the world's fourth largest country by population size by 2050. Twenty per cent of all households in Nigeria use kerosene. About 10.5 per cent use charcoal, about three per cent use other improved biomass forms. Only one per cent uses electricity for cooking.

President Tinubu is aware of the climate change challenges and the ameliorative efforts put together so far to achieve a net zero target has been plausible. The Tinubu green economics saw the development of the Nigeria Carbon Market Activation Plan with Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Zacch Adedeji and Director-General, National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), Dahiru Salisu, as co-chairs.

**Ngelale**

In a press statement you (Ajuri) signed, I'm bringing it up here as a recapitulation or reminder to crystallise the above standpoint, the President said: "We recognise the imperative of fostering an environment that not only attracts investment but also upholds standardized and sustainable industrial practices.

"As a manifestation of our forward-thinking approach, we are actively looking to implement robust, enabling policies and frameworks that will serve as the catalyst for the burgeoning growth of the carbon market within our national borders.

"This initiative stands as a testament to our dedication to environmental stewardship as clearly exemplified through our collaboration with the Africa Carbon Market Initiative. Our visionary plan is a strategic guidepost, directing Nigeria towards becoming an investment-friendly destination for carbon market investments.

"In this pursuit, we acknowledge the pressing need for comprehensive global col-

laboration. We reiterate our commitment to being an active participant in international efforts."

Climate change tends to mean different things depending on where you are coming from. I was listening to Ajay Banga, in his speech at the IMF-World Bank 2023 Plenary, when he was emphasising this.

If you discuss climate change as being only the avoidance of carbon-intensive growth, as in the emissions from energy generation principally, but also transportation and construction material, then that's one definition.

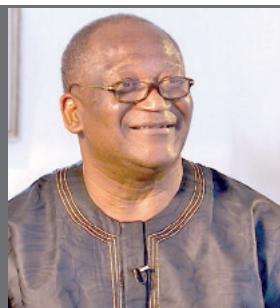
But when you live in the global South that's not their definition. Their definition is loss of biodiversity, forest cover, less rainfall, challenges with the soil degradation. That's their visual. That's their issue of climate change and it gets exacerbated with crisis events of hurricane and weather events they can't deal with.

As the Presidential Envoy on Climate Change, Tinubu has set the pace for you and other members of the Presidential Committee on Climate Solution to ensure the green target has been met by 2030. The task is definitely a Herculean one.

Remember, history will recall all the efforts you mustered at home and at international fora as an attempt to pitch the Renewed Hope Agenda as a new force in the global climate security architecture. Projecting our green agenda at the world stage will require an extensive and concerted strategic communication, bringing all the stakeholders into the fold of our renewed climate solution narrative.

I wish you all a successful national and global engagement.

• **Ahmed is Technical Assistant, Research and Strategy to the Minister of Information and National Orientation.**



NEWTON JIBUNOH

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Subsidy: A plus or a killer? (1)

IN this two part essay (Subsidy: A Plus Or A Killer) allow me to remind all those toying with the issues of subsidies who have deliberately refused to look back at the history of subsidies and how they started, or they are too young to understand why they started in the first place. The economy of Nigeria was very robust before and immediately after independence. Then came the military coups and the civil war.

Subsequently, the leaders of the country were unable to justify the reasons for the coups and war, so the country needed a magnificent bribe in the form of subsidies such as free education, free healthcare, free power supply, free telecom, and free infrastructure. Considering the mismanagement of the population, which was over sixty million, and the need to compete with other oil-producing nations that offered so many things for free to her citizens, Nigeria had to adopt similar measures.

Most of these oil-producing nations were monarchies or one-party systems, speaking one language, not divided by religion, and with a controlled immigration system despite their small populations. In contrast, Nigeria was practicing an elementary political system, extremely expensive and fantastically corrupted. We speak over 300 languages, follow different religions, and have diverse cultures and traditions. We also had an open border arrangement system leading to the ECOWAS free movement protocol. Since we had cheap oil and other free amenities, we were fast developing, which attracted neighboring countries that started migrating to Nigeria.

In the early years after independence, Nigeria's economy was characterized by its agricultural strength and burgeoning industrial sector. However, the discovery of oil in the late 1950s and its subsequent boom in the 1970s shifted the economic focus dramatically. The newfound oil wealth promised prosperity, but it also led to complacency and a dependency on oil revenues. During the 1970s, the government, buoyed by high oil prices, introduced various subsidies as part of a social contract to distribute the wealth among its citizens without accountability and good governance.

Subsidies were implemented to cushion the economic hardships caused by the civil war and to promote national unity. These subsidies included free education, free healthcare, subsidized power supply, subsidized the naira and extensive infrastructure projects. The idea was to provide immediate benefits to the populace and create a foundation for long-term development. However, these initiatives were funded through borrowed money, and this is where the problems began.

The initial economic boom allowed Nigeria to embark on ambitious projects. Car and motor assembly plants were established through joint ventures with East and West European countries, aiming for Nigeria to produce its own vehicles within 15 years.

These plants were strategically located in Kaduna, Bauchi, Lagos, and Enugu,



reflecting the government's vision of industrial decentralization.

However, these projects and the free services were built on borrowed money from international financial institutions like the World Bank, Paris Club, IMF, and London Club. Despite the loans being cheap, Nigeria failed to service them adequately. The oil wealth, which could have been used to diversify the economy and create sustainable revenue streams, was instead used to fund these subsidies. This led to a cycle of borrowing and debt accumulation.

By the 1980s, the global oil market saw a significant downturn, and Nigeria's economy was hit hard. The revenue from oil, which had been the backbone of the economy, plummeted. The inability to service debts led to mounting interest and penalties, compounding the economic crisis. The subsidies, which were meant to be temporary measures, became permanent fixtures due to political pressures and public expectations.

The economic mismanagement continued, leading to inflation, unemployment, and a decline in the quality of public services. Free education and healthcare systems, initially of lofty standards, deteriorated due to lack of funding. Infrastructure projects stalled, and the industrial sector failed to take off as expected. The once-promising economic outlook turned grim.

The dependency on oil revenues also stifled other sectors of the economy. Agriculture, which was once a major contributor to the GDP, suffered neglect. Manufacturing industries struggled to compete due to the inflated cost of imported raw materials and the lack of domestic production capabilities. The over-reliance on oil created a mono-economy, making Nigeria vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices.

During President Olusegun Obasanjo's tenure, significant efforts were made to address the debt crisis. Alongside his finance minister, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Obasanjo managed to negotiate debt rescheduling and achieve partial debt forgiveness. This move was pivotal in stabilizing Nigeria's economy and restoring some level of fiscal discipline.

The reforms initiated during this period included privatizing certain state-owned enterprises, reducing government spending, and increasing transparency in

dress the root causes of its economic challenges.

This includes diversifying the economy away from oil dependency, improving governance, and reducing corruption. Investment in education, healthcare, and infrastructure should be strategic and sustainable, not reliant on fluctuating oil revenues or perpetual borrowing.

Good governance and effective policy implementation are crucial for the successful management of subsidies. The government must ensure that subsidies are targeted towards those who need them the most, and not misappropriated by elites or lost through corruption. Transparent and accountable systems must be put in place to monitor subsidy distribution and impact.

Furthermore, there should be a clear plan for gradually phasing out subsidies while simultaneously building social safety nets to protect the vulnerable. This could involve direct cash transfers, support for small and medium enterprises, and investment in renewable energy sources to reduce dependency on oil.

Subsidy removal has significant social and political implications. The government must engage in comprehensive public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the long-term benefits of subsidy reforms. Building trust between the government and the populace is essential to gain public support for such measures.

Moreover, political will is needed to resist the pressure from interest groups that benefit from the status quo. Leaders must prioritize the nation's long-term economic health over short-term political gains. This requires a collaborative approach involving all stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, and international partners.

Nigeria can learn from other countries that have successfully managed subsidy reforms. For instance, countries like Indonesia and Iran have implemented subsidy reforms with relative success by combining gradual subsidy removal with robust social protection programs. These examples show that with careful planning and execution, subsidy reforms can lead to economic stability and growth.

The history of subsidies in Nigeria is a complex tale of initial good intentions marred by economic mismanagement and political expediency. Subsidies, in theory, can provide significant benefits if well-managed and sustainable. However, in Nigeria's case, they became a double-edged sword. They provided short-term relief and long-term pain, contributing to economic instability and mounting debt.

For subsidies to be a plus rather than a killer, Nigeria must undertake comprehensive economic reforms. This involves making tough political decisions, improving fiscal discipline, and fostering a culture of accountability. Only then can subsidies serve their intended purpose without compromising the country's economic future. For this to work we must first review the past government and weigh it against the present.

To be continued.



By the 1980s, the global oil market saw a significant downturn, and Nigeria's economy was hit hard. The revenue from oil, which had been the backbone of the economy, plummeted. The inability to service debts led to mounting interest and penalties, compounding the economic crisis. The subsidies, which were meant to be temporary measures, became permanent fixtures due to political pressures and public expectations."

Maritime

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Seme Customs intercepts 8 petrol-laden tankers, 428 wild animals

• Arrests 18 suspects with contraband worth N840m

By Steve Agbota

THE Seme Command of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), on Tuesday, said that it intercepted eight tankers loaded with petrol, 428 wild animals, 10 trailer loads of rice, other contraband and generated over N2.634 billion revenue in the first quarter of 2024.

The Command also arrested a notorious smuggler, thus ending his reign of terror in the area as he will be visited with the full weight of the law to serve as a deterrent to other criminals.

The command also arrested 18 suspects linked to smuggling and other crimes.

The Customs Area Controller, Seme Kraken Joint Border Post, Comptroller Timi Bomodi, made these disclosures at a media briefing held at the Command.

According to him, efforts in tackling various crimes have led to 474 interception of various contraband items within the period under review.

"These items includes; PMS: 12,448 Jerrycans x 30 liters each which is equivalent to eight tanker loads, rice: 6,467 bags of 50kg, which is equivalent to 10 trailer loads, 15 used vehicles, 1,251 parcels of cannabis sativa. We note that there has been a marked increase in the illegal importation of Cannabis from Ghana and different methods have been used by criminals in their effort to beat our officers all of which has been neutralized."

"Others are wild animals, which include, 20 live parrots, two Honey badgers, Pelican birds, 404 live tortoises, 3,023 items of general merchandise, 149 packages of Codeine, 45 pieces of used tyres. All with a combined Duty Paid Value (DPV) of N840,003 million only," he said.

Conversely, he said the Command has continued to sustain the tempo in the area of revenue generation, saying in the period under review, the command collected a total sum of N2.634 billion and the amount surpasses that of 2023 for the same period by 272 per cent.

On export, he said the Command facilitated 143,468 metric tonnes of export produce, with FOB value of N35.199 billion, which is equivalent to \$38,461 million.

According to him, the NESS value paid is N174.518 million, adding that a total of 406 SGDs were utilised from January to May 26 2024 for export alone.

"In compliance with the directive of the Comptroller-General of Customs that Commands give periodic reports of their activities to members of the public, and in the spirit of open governance, we at Seme-Krake Joint Border Post are delighted to present the successes recorded thus far this year," he said.

He revealed that the Command has also set-up a complaint desk to address issues concerning the molestation of females on this corridor.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Maritime operators push for stable exchange rate

THE Customs Consultative Committee has urged Federal Government to review the Nigerian Customs Law to cushion the effect of naira exchange rate volatility against the dollar.

At a Stakeholders meeting held at the Lagos Continental Hotel, Victoria Island yesterday, the nascent body said this has become imperative to protect local businesses engaged in import and export.

According to the body made up of various stakeholders in the maritime sector including top customs officers, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN), business owners and active players in the industry, the new law has the potentials of increasing Africa's volume of trade which currently stood at two percent globally.

CCC also resolved to partner with government through institutional support aimed at ensuring the workability of the policies enunciated in the new Act.

It said, good as the new law was, government at the center needs to ensure the implementation of the Act with the Act with the necessary political will it deserved.

According to the body, government needs to incentivize good corporate governance and absolute compliance to the laws governing the maritime sector, while not sparing infractions to serve as deterrent.

"It marks of duplicity to encourage violators of laws in the maritime sector by not punishing infractions, while those who out of compliance with government policies continue to suffer huge loss," the body said.

The Consultative Committee said efforts must be geared towards making Nigeria Ports more efficient and profitable in line with global practices.

"Ports, anywhere the world do not sleep. It works 24hours. This is the only way to go. Ports do not close businesses at all. However, it is not the same as Nigerian port who works like the Ministry in Nigeria. This must be addressed," it said.

While advocating improved trade facilitation among critical stakeholders, the committee said digitalization of the ports would reduce down time as well as encourage improved trade relations targeted as raising the accrueable revenue to government.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Tinubu @1: FX flunctuations, obsolete infrastructure stunt shipping sector growth

Stories by **Steve Agbota**
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EXPECTATIONS in the maritime industry were sky-high when President Bola Tinubu, in his inaugural address, promised to urgently transform the nation's ailing economy through diversification with strong focus more on the non-oil economy.

Shortly after he assumed office, the President created the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy to oversee the affairs of maritime industry. While inaugurating his cabinet, the President made the ministry official and also announced Adegboyega Oyetola as the Minister to head it.

However, hopes waned when a number of peppery economic reform initiatives were unveiled that upset the economy.

One year down the line, lamentations from players in the maritime ecosystem have reached a crescendo, as what was promised and what played out are at variance.

Much of the expectations in the maritime sector were not met by Tinubu's administration. The Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy is still struggling to find its feet as some of its departments have not been delineated, while is still sharing the same office and staff with the Ministry of Transportation.

Today, Nigeria is still missing in the global maritime space as none of the nation's ports makes top 100 busiest ports in the world in the latest ranking.

The Nigerian ports are still synonymous with poor infrastructure such as poor roads, rail, quay, buildings, equipment, yard, insecurity and pilferage and delays in cargo clearance.

The floating of foreign exchange rate has been one of the major obstacles hampering the development of the industry.

In the last one year, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has adjusted the Customs import duty more than 35 times, which has forced some importers to abandon the nation's ports for the neighbouring ports of that Togo, Ghana, Benin Republic in search of stable and cheap exchange and a generally conducive space to operate.

Stakeholders who spoke to Daily Sun lamented that due to unstable foreign exchange rate, importation into the country has dropped drastically to about 30 per cent as clearing agents lamented that there are not much activities at the ports.

They added that the harsh operating environment, coupled with the challenges of high cost of doing business at the ports, have led to mass shutdown of businesses as job losses spike.

Stakeholders pointed out that a large chunk of Nigerian cargoes have been snatched by neighbouring countries who provide cheaper and better operating space.

Speaking with Daily Sun, the former acting National President of Association National Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Dr. Farinto Kayode, said: "Even though I'm aware that this present government is trying its best to put the economy in order but we have not felt their impacts in the maritime industry positively. And this is courtesy of the fluctuating of exchange rate."

He said that government has not come out categorically to address this issue as it relates to cargo clearance.

"And that is why within four days in a week, we have more than five different exchange rates and that is not too good for the economy and that is why the economy is not moving. I have subjected severally that there is need for government to look inwardly and let



• President Tinubu

us have predictive exchange rate and these are not really being addressed," he added.

According to him, the maritime industry is actually stagnated, while the volume of import is drastically dropping on a daily basis.

He said the government was not really looking inwards.

"Talking about the economy, I know the government is trying her best to look at how to fix the economy. You cannot fix the economy in the absence of the maritime industry. Everywhere in the whole world, there is no country that plays with her maritime industry.

"Where are the policies? There is no policy in place for now and there is nothing to work with coupled with the fact that we have a somersaulting foreign exchange rate on a daily basis. Even now, we have a very stubborn CBN Governor and that is not going to help the economy," he added.

"We need a young vibrant person that will rejuvenate the maritime industry. When the Marine and Blue economy was created, we all said it is good for the country. We all recommended it but almost one year now, nothing is in place. I'm of those defending them that the ministry has not been delineated even up till now," he said.

On Blue Economy Ministry, he said the ministry has not really delineated from the various departments of ministry of transportation, saying everything is stagnated and Nigeria as a country is not moving forward.

He said the ministry ought to be generating money for Federal Government now but they lack ideas and that is why they need a replacement by appointing a young vibrant person to man the ministry.

Speaking with Daily Sun, Advisory Head/CEO, Kamany Marine Services Limited, Charles Okorefe said: "Anyway, I don't think I felt any impact. I don't think there is anything different from what have been within the one year of this administration from what we have always known especially with the creation of Marine and Blue Economy."

"We have thought that by now, a template would have been produced that will give us something to look out for what we will call a roadmap or blue print to follow in the Marine and Blue Economy sector but that is yet to materialise. To that extent, I cannot say that much has been achieved in this sector in the last one year," he said.

He said there is nothing much different from what the stakeholders have always known, saying stakeholders expectations in that ministry and the shipping sector are not yet met within one year in office of Tinubu's administration.

Meanwhile, the National President, National Council of Managing Director of Licensed Customs Agents (NCMDL-

CA), Lucky Amiwero said that maritime industry is an industry that has to do with import and export, shipping and all the rest, adding that import and export is time because of the exchange rate.

He added that due to floating of exchange rate, fuel subsidy and the rest, a lot of people are losing their jobs in the maritime industry even outside the maritime industry.

"So the maritime industry is not moving the way we expected it to move. People are losing their jobs and cargo throughput is going down, exchange rate is not stable. So there is nothing to show for the maritime industry in the last one year of the current administration.

"Importation has dropped drastically. You cannot import when your exchange rate is not stable. Look at the price of commodity in the market is escalating. Something you buy today and tomorrow the price has changed. So how do you expect the country to be better? One year is gone. And we have the blue economy ministry that is there and not doing enough. Many things are not going well," he explained.

The Managing Director of Sula Marine Global Limited/foremost freight forwarder, Sulaiman Ayokunle, said

However, the creation of the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy out of the Ministry of Transport is a welcome idea but expectation was so high that the creation of that ministry will take maritime stakeholders to Eldorado but stakeholders have not felt any positive impact.

"Maybe because our expectation was so high or because the Minister himself was never a maritime person and he was a maritime person, that will have been an added advantage because we need a professional in marine even aviation is it goes required professionals. The person must not just be a politician even in transport and logistics is for professionals. It is just like taking non-lawyer to be the attorney general of the federation.

"You can imagine what that will spell! It will spell doom for country. So that is just the way we should look at it under marine and blue economy. You don't bring someone who is not a core professional to man that very important ministry and to head a ministry, it takes a lot.

"To move away from that, let's talk about the Comptroller General of Customs, Wale Adeniyi. Honestly, the reformation he will put to place is per excellence. He was a former PRO of the Service and he is bringing in a lot of technology to replace direct human contact. You can see despite all what we are going through, the revenue keeps going up. Of course, that one has its own adverse effect on the importers and economy.

"Importation is very low because you can imagine floating exchange rate. This is not something we should find ourselves into. Floating exchange rate at this time of the economy, in fact, it is one of the minus and negativity of what we are witnessing now," added.

He said that the floating exchange rate is not ideal because it does not creates room for predictability, saying one can't predict as a businessman.

"As a businessman, forecasting and budgeting is one of cardinal points in order to determine your profit or survival level but because of that floating exchange rate the reverse is the case.

Tech & Gadgets

Tinubu @ 1: Network shutdowns, NIN-SIM saga, costly data, major headache of telecoms sector

By Chinene Anuforo
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NIGERIA'S telecommunications sector in the past one year under President Bola Tinubu is akin to a roller coaster ride. It had its ups and downs. Nonetheless, the sector has witnessed significant changes, driven in large part by government's policy decisions. These policies have had a mix of positive advancements and disruptive measures, leaving the industry with both opportunities and uncertainties.

The NIN-SIM Saga

The most dominant theme during the period was the National Identification Number NIN-SIM card linkage policy. Facing rising security concerns, particularly around SIM-enabled kidnappings, the government mandated linking phone numbers to verified NINs. "The policy's intention is undoubtedly positive," said Engr. Bisoye Coker-Odusote, Director-General/Chief Executive Officer of National Identity Management Commission (NIMC). "Linking SIMs to NINs strengthens security and helps combat criminal activities."

However, the rushed implementation of the policy caused significant disruption. Mass confusion and a tight deadline for compliance led to network shutdowns as millions scrambled to register their NINs. "The short timeframe and lack of clear communication created unnecessary panic," lamented Kunle Olusanya, a businessman based in Lagos. Industry estimates suggested subscriber decline of around 9 million data users by the end of 2023, highlighting the immediate negative impact.

Despite the temporary setbacks, the long-term benefits of the NIN-SIM policy cannot be ignored. Increased security in the telecom space fosters trust and encourages wider adoption of mobile financial services, a crucial aspect of financial inclusion in Nigeria.

Data takes center stage

The most significant trend within the year was the undeniable shift towards data services. Voice calls, traditionally a major revenue stream, faced a decline. Mobile internet access and data bundles have become the primary source of income for major operators like MTN, Airtel, Globacom, and 9mobile. This trend reflects Nigeria's growing digital landscape, with a surge in smartphone usage and increased reliance on online services for everything from banking to entertainment.

Analysts predicted this data-driven growth will continue. Afrinvest, a leading Nigerian research firm, highlighted the rising internet penetration rate and the growing young population, comfortable with technology, as key factors propelling this trend.

Here, government policies have played a mixed role. On the positive side, initiatives like the National Broadband Plan



• President Tinubu

2020-2025 aim to increase broadband penetration across the country is fostering a data-driven economy. However, concerns remain about Right of Way (RoW) charges levied by government agencies on operators for deploying infrastructure, which can inflate service costs and hinder data affordability for some Nigerians.

Building infrastructure for 5G and beyond

While the NIN-SIM policy dominated headlines, positive developments were recorded. The government's continued focus on spectrum allocation and infrastructure investment provided a much-needed silver lining. This spurred telecom operators like MTN Nigeria and Airtel to upgrade networks and expand their reach, particularly in previously underserved rural areas.

"The focus on infrastructure development is critical for long-term growth," said Gbenga Adebayo, Chairman of the Association of Licensed Telecommunications Operators of Nigeria (ALTON). "These investments not only improve connectivity across the nation but also pave the way for future technologies like 5G."

The potential of 5G technology was a major talking point throughout last year and up till now. With its promise of ultra-fast speeds, low latency, and enhanced network capacity, 5G has the potential to revolutionize various sectors, from healthcare and education to manufacturing and agriculture.

Artificial Intelligence

While 5G grabbed headlines, another emerging technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), quietly began to make its mark on the Nigerian telecom sector. Telecom operators are exploring the potential of AI to automate network management, optimize resource allocation, and personalize customer experiences. "AI has the potential to transform the way we operate," said a tech expert, Jide Awe from Jidaw Systems Limited. "From predictive maintenance to enhanced cy-

bersecurity, AI can significantly improve efficiency and service delivery."

However, concerns remain about the ethical implications of AI in the telecom space. Issues like data privacy, algorithmic bias, and job displacement require careful consideration and proactive policy frameworks.

Challenges and uncertainties

Despite the advancements, significant challenges remain. The digital divide or gap between those who have access to the internet and those who don't, persists as a major hurdle. While government initiatives like the National Broadband Plan aim to bridge this gap, concerns linger about their effectiveness and funding.

Another major concern is the decline in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the telecom sector. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) shows a staggering 70.5% decrease in FDI in 2023 compared to the previous year. "The uncertain regulatory environment and economic instability are discouraging foreign investors," explained Muyiwa Lukman, an economic analyst with Lagos-based firm. "Creating a more predictable and investor-friendly environment is crucial for attracting the capital needed to fuel further growth."

Looking ahead

"As Tinubu advances into his tenure, navigating through this evolving landscape, collaboration between policymakers, telecom operators, and the public will be paramount," Adebayo stated.

"Striking a balance between security measures, promoting innovation, and fostering an environment conducive to foreign investment will be key to unlocking the sector's full potential. Open dialogue and a focus on long-term planning are essential," Awe suggested.

"We need a more inclusive and collaborative approach. By working together, we can build a secure, innovative, and inclusive telecom sector that benefits all," Jidaw Systems boss concluded.

Nigeria's internet domain name records 215,000 registrations

NIGERIA'S internet domain name, ".ng," is gaining traction with over 215,000 registrations recorded as of February 2024. This surge was announced by the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA) during its 16th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos.

Mr. Adesola Akinsanya, the president of the Nigeria Internet Registration Association (NiRA), dropped the hint in his message to stakeholders who gathered [physically and virtually] for the AGM.

Akinsanya highlighted the increasing popularity of ".ng" for websites and email addresses. This growth represents a significant rise from the 212,890 domains reported in December 2023 and 183,792 recorded in December 2022.

He commended the government's support for the digital economy, particularly President Bola Tinubu's "Renewed Hope" agenda, and Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani's advocacy for ".ng" adoption. He emphasized the crucial role ".ng" plays in strengthening Nigeria's digital space.

Akinsanya averred that, "The need for both the government and private institutions to switch-over to .ng brand is no longer negotiable in view of the significant role it plays in the country's digital economy agenda".

He said that NiRA supports the Minister in his efforts to 'promote transparency in governance, protecting the Nigerian cyberspace, and promotion of the Digital Nigeria agenda'.

Speaking further, the NiRA chief said that a total of twenty-two new registrars were accredited last year, "showing the collective efforts of NiRA Accredited Registrars and their Resellers, which we duly acknowledge and appreciate.

"Our commitment to nurturing a robust partnership with our accredited registrars remains unwavering. The establishment of the Registrar's Relationship Manager position exemplified this dedication, as it provides a specialized resource to address registrars' needs and to cultivate stronger bonds among stakeholders.

Alpha-Geek founder bags awards

OLUWASEUN Dania, founder and lead consultant of Alpha-Geek Technologies, a prominent figure in Nigeria's digital space, was crowned Digital Entrepreneur of the Year 2024 at the prestigious Africa's Beacon of ICT Merit and Leadership Awards held in Lagos during the weekend.

Considered the most respected annual event in Nigeria's ICT industry, the Awards ceremony recognized Alpha-Geek's outstanding contributions. Mr. Dania, a serial entrepreneur and investor, was commended for his exceptional role in shaping the nation's digital landscape.

"A distinguished selection committee," announced Mr. Ken Nwogbo, founder of event organizer Nigerian CommunicationsWeek, "acknowledged your consistent delivery of innovative ICT solutions and services fostering a thriving digital economy. We are honored to present you with the Digital Entrepreneur of the Year 2024 award."

Adding to the night's triumphs, Alpha-Geek Technologies also secured the coveted IT Solutions and Consulting Company of the Year award.

Reacting to the double win, Oluwaseun, who also heads Tradefada, a leading digital currency exchange platform, reiterated Alpha-Geek's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional IT solutions that empower both businesses and individuals.

"We recognize the critical importance of staying ahead in this age of rapid technological evolution," he declared. "At Alpha-Geek Technologies, we don't merely adapt, we lead the charge, setting new benchmarks for cutting-edge solutions that transform our clients' experiences."

Industry

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PMI rebrands conference to reflect continent's role in global business

PROJECT Management Institute (PMI) has announced the evolution of its flagship PMI Africa Conference into PMI Global Summit Series |Africa.

The refresh will better align the continent's biggest gathering of project professionals with the prestigious PMI Global Summit, offering attendees a unified and consistent experience to uphold the high standards and interactive environment expected at major PMI events.

The jewel of Africa, Rwanda, will host the PMI Global Summit Series | Africa at the Kigali Convention Centre from November 18 to 20, 2024.

Last year, the event was held in Nairobi, Kenya and attracted over 700 project professionals from Africa and many parts of the world.

Now in its ninth year, PMI Africa's flagship event brings together project managers from diverse backgrounds to share critical insights and foster enhanced collaboration. It serves as a vibrant platform to exchange knowledge and best practices.

As PMI Global Summit Series | Africa, it will continue this rich tradition aimed at advancing the field of project management. By creating an environment that encourages networking, dialogue, and partnership, the Summit will continue to play a crucial role in shaping the careers of project managers and elevating the standards of project execution.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Ajinomoto visits Mushin, Aba markets to deepen sensitization on healthy living

AJINOMOTO Foods Nigeria (AFN), manufacturers of AJI-NO-MO-TO®, DeliDawa and MaDish® seasonings, recently embarked on market visits to Ojuwoye Market, Mushin and Cemetery Market, Aba as part of efforts to sensitize and educate the public about hypertension in celebration of World Hypertension Day.

The team visited Ojuwoye Market, Mushin, Lagos State and Cemetery Market, Aba, Abia State on May 17 and May 21, respectively.

According to the management of AFN, the visit was to educate the audience on hypertension, the impact of excessive salt intake and the benefits of using AJI-NO-MO-TO® in reducing the risk hypertension, particularly the presence of Monosodium Glutamate (MSG).

Glutamate (Umami substance and source of MSG) is present in most natural foods such as meat, seafood, vegetables, cheese, tomatoes and milk and also, in our local food seasoning like Ogiri, Daddawa and Iru. AJI-NO-MOTO® seasoning is approved by global and local health authorities including NAFDAC.

While on the visit, the team embarked on other line of activities that include a health drive, where free checkups on blood pressure, sugar level, as well as weight and height, were carried out by specialized medical practitioners, particularly to people over the age of 40. The management equally used the opportunity to reassure Nigerians about the safety of AJI-NO-MO-TO® food seasoning stating that it has been validated by food scientists, nutritionists, researchers, national and global regulatory bodies. The management further stressed that the food seasoning promotes low salt intake, healthy living and enhances the flavour of foods.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

PBAN seeks better incentives for bakers

By **Bianca Iboma-Emefu**

THE Premium Breadmakers Association of Nigeria (PBAN) has reiterated its commitment to tackle the challenges confronting the baking industry.

This was disclosed during its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and the election of New leaders to pilot the association affairs in the next one year.

The AGM, was an hallmark event in the bread making industry, where key stakeholders were brought together, including esteemed members and industry leaders to reflect on the achievements of the past year and chart the course for the future.

Also, during the meeting, various issues were discussed, including the challenges by bread bakers in the industry, the importance of upholding high standards of breadmaking, and the need for collaboration among members to address common issues.

However, the bread-making industry requires necessary government protection given its crucial importance in the value chain of foods availability to the mass populace."

The association also welcomed new members who have demonstrated a passion for baking and a commitment to quality, craftsmanship, and innovation in the bread industry.

As an association, we recognize the vital role that bread bakers play in providing essential food products to the Nigerian population and supporting local economies. We are committed to supporting our members through training, advocacy, and networking opportunities to help them thrive and grow their businesses.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com



L-R: Acting Chief Executive Officer, NGX, Jude Chiemeka; Managing Director, International Breweries Plc (IBPLC), Carlos Coutino; Finance Director, IBPLC, David Tomlinson; Company Secretary/Legal Counsel, IBPLC, Marian Reginald-Ukuoma, and MD of Investment Banking, Chapel Hill Denham, at International Breweries 'Facts Behind the Rights Issue' session at the Nigerian Exchange Group in Lagos following IBPLC's rights issue listing on the Nigerian Stock Exchange, recently.

Again, MAN begs FG to establish Manufacturers' Bank

...Says businesses crumbling, employment growing

Stories by **Merit Ibe**
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MANUFACTURERS

Association of Nigeria (MAN) has, for the umpteenth time, urged the Federal Government to establish a manufacturers' bank that will see to the peculiar needs of local producers.

President of MAN, Francis Meshioye, who made the plea recently while presenting the Manufacturers CEOs Confidence Index 2024, also decried the declined production levels, a development that has led to decreased competitiveness of the sector and low unemployment level.

Mespioye said the manufacturing sector "is a peculiar sector which requires a specialised bank like we have for Bank of Agriculture and the Bank of Industry."

Explaining that it was difficult for any manufacturing concern to break even with the current two digits interest rate, the MAN boss said the commercial banks preferred to give loan facilities to traders as opposed to manufacturers.

He said the commercial banks do not really under-

stand what manufacturing entails, that is why they prefer to give loans to traders rather than to manufacturers.

"They prefer to station their staff at the trader's outlet where they would start recouping their money from daily sales."

The MAN boss, however, advised that if the Federal Government cannot establish a bank for manufacturers, it could establish manufacturers desks in commercial banks with consultants to guide them on the peculiarities of the manufacturing sector and the interventions required to revive the sector in terms of funding.

"The consultants will also fashion out modalities for the recovery of the loan."

In the same vein, the MAN's Director of Research and Advocacy, Oluwasegun Osidipe, while analysing 2024 MCCI said manufacturers were forced to cut production and jobs in the first quarter of the year due to macroeconomic-related headwinds.

Despite slight optimism which saw MCCI points record a marginal increase above the 50 points confi-

dence threshold, current business condition and current employment remained low, below 50 points.

MAN associated this with the lingering effects of rising inflation, escalated energy prices, exchange rate instability and Customs duty rates.

According to the report, production and distribution costs surged further by 20 per cent in the first quarter of 2024 while "capacity utilisation declined further by 9.7 per cent.

"The volume of production slid further by 10.14 per cent in Q1 2024 from a contraction of 4.6 per cent recorded in the previous quarter.

"Manufacturing employment further declined by 5.27 per cent in Q1 from the 4.46 per cent contraction recorded in the preceding quarter."

Sales volume also fell 7.16 per cent in the first quarter of the year, compared to the 1.6 per cent declined witnessed in the previous quarter.

On the report, Meshioye noted that forex, inflation and energy crises impacted negatively on the manufac-

turing sector. He decried the declined production levels, a development that led to decreased competitiveness of the sector, urging government to address the cost-push factors driving inflation and also fast-track the recapitalisation of the banks.

"Undoubtedly, the manufacturing sector remains the most sustainable driver of steady economic growth, inflow of foreign exchange and enduring shared prosperity."

"MAN is therefore expectant that the government will intentionally prioritise the manufacturing sector by implementing the sector-specific recommendations contained in this report and providing the required policy support and incentives."

"This is the surest way of revamping the sector and repositioning the economy towards sustainable growth and development."

Manufacturers have remained vocal about their inability to operate at optimum capacity due to various challenges confronting the economy.

In March, the association said 767 manufacturers shut down operations while 335 became distressed in 2023, leading to higher unemployment rate.

Tinubu @1: Economy still on adjustment mode -LCCI

THE Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) is advocating a systematic review and evaluation of Federal Government policies to achieve the best-desired outcomes in the coming years, lamenting that the economy was still on adjustment mode one year after.

The chamber made the call following President Bola Tinubu's one year in office, noting that while policy choices have been liberal on the sides of the monetary and fiscal authorities, expected outcomes have not been recorded yet..

In the chambers executive summary on the scorecard for the Tinubu administration after one year, Director General of the chamber, Dr Chinere Almona viewed that the

economy has been in an adjustment mode with several variables like stubborn inflation, persistent weakening of the Naira, supply

chain disruption driven by insecurity and weak production base, defining the outlook.

Noting that some bold decisions were taken at some point like removing fuel subsidies, harmonizing official and parallel exchange rates and adopting a cost-reflective electricity tariff, among others with sincere intentions of fixing structural deficiencies, Almona however pointed out that there was need for a systematic review and evaluation of these policies to achieve the best-desired outcomes.

Making a comparison between the GDP recorded in the first quarter of 2024 (2.98 per cent) and 2.31 per cent in the corresponding period of 2023, the DG said to meet the target of 3.37 per cent., the government must address issues around power supply, rising cost of production, Forex illiquidity and its impact on imported raw materials for

manufacturers, making better choices of monetary instruments and dealing with the security challenges that have impeded agricultural production and supply chain disruptions.

She emphasised on the rising inflation which has not been successful, as the prices of goods keep an upward trend, with the inflation rate rising from 22.22 per cent in April 2023 to 33.69 per cent in April 2024, recording more than a 10 per cent leap in twelve months.

To this end, she said the chamber would continue to advocate concessionary interventions for SMEs in Nigeria in the face of shrinking credit to the private sector.

She pointed out that the Manufacturing sector in Nigeria has shown resilience and growth amidst recent reforms and government's interventions aimed at fostering economic development and industrialization.

"As outlined in the data

provided, the sector has experienced fluctuations in growth rates throughout the quarters of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, reflecting both challenges and opportunities."

The DG urged the government to fix the FOREX crises, adopt a lower exchange rate for import duties on imported raw materials for manufacturing, offer manufacturers concessionary interest rates in the face of shrinking credit to the private sector, and ensure the policy environment is stable and predictable.

To address low agricultural output, the chamber recommended that the government address the country's high level of insecurity and the exchange rate crisis. In addition, the government must incentivize agricultural processing and invest in vital infrastructure such as power and transportation.

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Yetunde Oni, Managing Director, Union Bank of Nigeria; (Centre) and other senior bank executives commemorating International Children's Day with various kids at Union Bank's Children's Barnyard Fiesta held at The Stable, Bode Thomas, Surulere, Lagos, recently.

Aig-Imoukhuede wins African Banker Lifetime Achievement Award • Visits Kenyan President, Ruto

AIGBOJE Aig-Imoukhuede, Chairman of Access Holdings PLC and Coronation Group, has been honoured with the prestigious African Banker Lifetime Achievement Award. This distinguished accolade was presented at the African Banker Awards gala dinner and awards ceremony held in Nairobi, Kenya, on the sidelines of the 2024 Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank.

Aig-Imoukhuede's journey epitomises his dedication to transforming the African banking and financial landscape. His illustrious career, spanning over three decades, has been marked by exceptional leadership and transformative accomplishments. As the Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Access Bank from 2002 to 2013, he led the lender's transformation from a minor player into one of Nigeria's top five banks, extending its presence to nine other African countries and the United Kingdom. With a vision to democratise wealth creation opportunities for millions in Africa, Aigboje established Coronation Group – a conglomerate

encompassing most aspects of investing, lending, and insurance with a presence in Nigeria and other African countries.

Speaking on the award, Aig-Imoukhuede said: "This award honours the collective efforts of over ten thousand talented individuals, mostly Africans whom I have had the privilege to work with throughout my journey. As professionals, recognition spurs us to strive for greater levels of excellence. I am deeply humbled and motivated to continue contributing to Africa's growth and development."

"We would like to honour your remarkable career achievements as a leader in Africa. Today, Access Bank stands as a behemoth in African banking. As brilliantly described in your book, "Leaving the Tarmac" Access bank started its life as a third-tier bank, but your visionary leadership, as well as that of the late Herbert Wigwe, transformed it into an institution that commands immense respect and admiration," said Omar Ben Yedder, Group Publisher & Managing Director, African Banker.

As part of the celebra-

tion of his lifelong contributions to the African financial markets, Aig-Imoukhuede had the distinct privilege of a visit to His Excellency, President William Ruto, at the state house in Nairobi. Their discussions centred on strengthening financial markets, enhancing public sector effectiveness, and fostering sustainable economic growth across Africa. This visit exemplifies Aigboje's belief in the power of collaborative leadership and the pivotal role that strong financial institutions play in nation-building. I look forward to continuing our collective efforts to create a prosperous future for our continent."

Reflecting on the courtesy visit to President William Ruto, Aig-Imoukhuede stated that, "In meeting with President Ruto, I was inspired by our shared commitment to driving economic growth and fostering sustainable development across Africa. Our discussions reinforced the critical role that collaborative leadership and robust financial institutions play in nation-building. I look forward to continuing our collective efforts to create a prosperous future for our continent."

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

NBDN to launch App for people with disabilities

By Chukwuma Umeorah

THE Nigerian Business Disability Network (NBDN) is set to launch a mobile app designed to bridge the gap between employers and the community of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

The Chairperson of NBDN, Omobolanle Victor-Laniyan disclosed this during the Nigeria Diversity and Inclusion Conference 2024 held in La-

gos on Wednesday. She said that the mobile app is in its final development stages.

Victor-Laniyan, who is also the Head of Sustainability at Access Corporation, highlighted the significant challenges faced by Nigeria's estimated 30 million PWDs, who are often marginalized due to factors such as gender and poverty, as reported by the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities.

She stated, "The app will link PWDs to employers who are looking to employ talent from the community of PWDs. These employers can post vacancies and advert there, search for potential candidates. Persons with disability on their part can utilize to see various vacancies and apply for jobs. There is also a training component which teaches people how to write their CVs properly."

Victor-Laniyan also addressed the issue of the lack of reliable data sources, stressing that this should not hinder the progress toward providing equal opportunities. "Whether it is 5 persons or a million people with disability, everyone has a right to equal opportunity. Regardless of the fact that we have data challenges in Nigeria, we are not going to stop our wait until we have the right data."

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

We've paid N4.8trn out of N7.3trn Ways & Means advances -Edun

AS activities marking the celebration of the first anniversary of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu continues, the Federal Government has disclosed that it has taken bold steps towards reducing the N7.3 trillion Ways and Means it inherited with the payment of the sum of N4.8 trillion.

The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun stated this today in Abuja during the Ministerial Press Briefing on the achievements of his Ministry in the one year administration of the President.

He informed that in addition to having paid the N4.8 trillion, another N2.5 trillion will be paid in the second quarter of 2024.

On debt servicing Without recourse to Ways and Means,

the Minister informed further that due to improved fiscal discipline, the Government has largely financed debt service obligations, including foreign debt service, without resort to Ways and Means account.

Such payments, he added, included outstanding commitments/shareholding to multilateral development banks (MDBs) and international organizations, including over \$200 million to Islamic Development Bank.

On the National Single Window project, he said it has the potential of annual economic benefit of \$2.7 billion.

Edun added that the Presidential Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms Committee (PPTRC) was in the process of tax Harmonization and streamlining of tax collection

processes which he said has come up with strategies for broadening tax net as well advanced in the single-digit tax system to reduce the number of taxes in the country.

Oil revenue increases, the Minister noted that Oil revenue of N1.1 trillion was achieved in the first quarter of 2024, as against N460 billion in the same period of the preceding year (2023).

The Minister maintained that the oil revenue flowed from an impressive increase in oil production, which recorded 1.7mbpd in the first quarter of this year, up from 1.3mbpd in June 2023.

The Minister said that Federal Government revenues from (GOEs) also substan-

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Retail participation at NGX drops by 10%

• Institutional inflows rise by N73bn
By Chinwendu Obienyi

RETAIL participation in Nigeria's equities market is slowly disappearing, a development experts said could hamper the growth of Africa's biggest economy. Recent statistics revealed that its participation in the market fell by 10 per cent at the end of April 2024.

According to the Domestic and Foreign Portfolio Investment Report of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) for the month under review, the participation of retail investors in the market stood at 45 per cent while institutional investors' participation stood at 55 per cent.

Specifically, a comparison of domestic transactions in the current and prior month (March 2024) revealed that retail transactions decreased by 54.89 per cent from N223.37 billion in March to N100.77 billion in April 2024.

Although, the institutional composition of the domestic market decreased by 43.58 per cent from N220.91 billion in March 2024 to N124.63 billion in April 2024, inflows of institutional investments stood at N73.40 billion compared to N57.14 billion recorded by retail investors.

The report further revealed that while retail outflows stood at N43.63 billion in the month under review, institutional outflows stood at N51.24 billion.

For context, retail participation in the market has been on a downward trend, which has been a source of concern to capital market stakeholders.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Firm crashes cooking gas price by 30% to celebrate Mbah • 4,000 residents benefit

By Adewale Sanyaolu

AN Enugu-based LPG marketing company, Second Coming Nigeria Limited, has offered 30 per cent rebate in cooking gas price in commemoration of the one year in office of Enugu State Governor, Mr. Peter Mbah.

Declaring the reduction of prices of cooking gas open at the company's plant on Wednesday in Abakpa-Nike, along Enugu-Nsukka Road, Mbah said that the gesture by Second Coming Nigeria Limited was a testament of the thriving business environment in Enugu State.

The company slashed the price of cooking gas from N960 to N672 per kilogramme, amounting to over N20 million subsidy for 4,000 residents with 12kg gas cylinders across its four branches within the state.

Mbah, who was represented by the Commissioner for Information and Communication, Mr. Aka Eze Aka, said that the current administration had de-risked business environment and improved in all indices of Ease-of-Doing-Business in the state.

"Security for both investors and customers have been achieved as the State ranks as one of the safest states in the country; where everybody move around and engage in their business endeavour without fear of harassment and molestation."

As a Governor that understands the nature of business having been a businessman himself, The Governor has gone ahead to remove all bottlenecks that constitutes threat to business growth and survival by investing massively in road, water, electricity and other infrastructure for business to flourish in the state.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Vivajets CEO backs call for deeper intra-Africa trade, integration

By Merit Ibe

THE Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian business aviation firm, Vivajets, Chukwuerika Achum, has supported calls for more integration across Africa whilst emphasising the benefits of business aviation as a crucial success enabler for leaders on the continent.

Achum made the remark at the 2024 Africa CEO Forum, an annual conference that gathers thousands of business leaders and policymakers from across Africa and beyond, where the company recently exhibited.

The event, which was held in Kigali, Rwanda, featured over 2,000 participants representing 73 countries. It also attracted more than 1,000 CEOs, 75 presidents and ministers and over 200 journalists. The issues of leadership, integration, finance and technology dominated discussions.

Despite progressive collaborative policies like the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), business integration is still a challenge in Africa as language, political and geographical barriers limit collaborations. Ambitious leaders on the continent are increasingly leveraging on business aviation to overcome these obstacles.

"Business aviation is a success enabler for the 21st century African leader. It bypasses the common barriers that hinder mobility and collaboration in Africa whilst facilitating connectivity for business and policy leaders across boundaries," said Achum.

Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com

Biafra Day: Enugu govt warns IPOB against disrupting WAEC exams

From **Jude Chinedu**,
Enugu

THE Government of Enugu State has warned the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) against disrupting the ongoing West African Examination Council (WAEC) examination on May 30.

Commissioner for Information and Communication,

Aka Eze Aka, gave the warning in a statement, yesterday.

Aka, who warned that the state would not tolerate the illegal activities of IPOB in the state, urged students to go about their exams and normal activities on May 30, assuring them of adequate security.

He said the state government noted with deep con-

cern the statement credited to IPOB directing WAEC to postpone the General Mathematics examinations scheduled for May 30, the day IPOB designated as "Biafra Heroes Day."

"We note with particular concern IPOB's statement that the WAEC board should not endanger the lives of students because the day is

not safe for any individual in Biafra territory.

"This is unacceptable to us, not just because of the well-known position of the Enugu State Government on illegal sit-at-home orders, which have dealt a great blow on the socio-economic life and fortunes of the South East region, but because of the far-reaching consequenc-

es of a whole generation of Enugu children failing to sit for a fundamental subject such as mathematics in one year," Aka said.

The commissioner stressed that the Igbo excel on the wings of industry, education, and human capital development, saying that any pronouncement or action that tends to deny the children their rights to education, which is their ticket to the future, is offensive.

"Most of the architects of such an unjust and evil agenda live in the comfort of civilised societies, where they go to work and their children go to school every workday.

"The Enugu State Government recognises the sacrifices of our gallant forebears, who gave their all, including their lives, to defend Igboland.

"But, we also recognise

that we may not just have life, but have the best of it, which can only come from developing our human capital to be able to excel in all that we do as individuals, and collectively, as a people.

"The government will not sit by and watch the future of our children aborted by such ill-conceived pronouncements intended to keep them at home.

"WAEC, as the name implies, is a regional body not just in Nigeria, but across West Africa. The subregion will certainly not wait for us."

He said the state government, therefore, advised candidates sitting for the ongoing WAEC exams in Enugu State to feel free to go to their respective centres to sit for their papers on May 30, without any fear.

FG intervenes as Nigerian students in UK face deportation

From **Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye**, Abuja

THE Federal Government of Nigeria has stepped into the issue of a group of Nigerian students at Teesside University in the United Kingdom facing possible deportation, amid financial struggles.

The situation highlights the challenges faced by international students navigating the complexities of studying abroad.

The issue came to light on May 22, 2024, when the affected students took to the streets, staging a protest in response to directives from the university authorities. The university had instructed the students to leave the UK, citing non-payment of school fees by some of them.

The Federal Government of Nigeria through a delegation led by a representative of the Nigerian Embassy in the UK, Christian Okeke, along with leaders of the Nigerian Students Union in the UK, set to meet with the university's management.

The goal is to seek a

Tinubu signs bill returning old national anthem into law

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu has signed the National Anthem Bill, 2024 reverting to the old national anthem of "Nigeria We Hail thee".

Senate President Godswill Akpabio announced this yesterday, during a joint session of the National Assembly to mark 25 years of uninterrupted democracy.

The joint session sang the new anthem before the arrival of President Tinubu and Vice President Kashim Shettima with other top government

officials.

Addressing lawmakers before Tinubu came in, Akpabio said the session's main purpose was to launch the new national anthem and that the president would not be making a speech as he was to depart to launch the Abuja metro line.

The Senate and the House of Representatives had already passed the bill in separate sessions.

The "Nigeria, We Hail Thee" anthem now replaces "Arise, O Compatriots" adopted in 1978.



L-R Chairman/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency and Chairman on the occasion, Mohammed Marwa, presenting the Insurance Company of year 2023 Award to Babatunde Daramola, CFO of Consolidated Hallmark Holdings, during the Champion Newspapers Awards at Eko Hotel in Lagos. With them are Katherine Itua, executive director, Finance and Investments, and Jimalex Orijako, executive director, Operations of the company.

'EFCC recovered N156bn, secured 3,175 convictions in 1 year'

From **Fred Itua**, Abuja

THE Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has secured 3175 convictions and recovered N156, 276,691,242.30 between May 29, 2023 and May 29, 2024 when President Bola Ahmed Tinubu assumed office.

Chairman of the commission, Mr. Ola Olukoyede, stated this in Abuja at the launch of Zero Tolerance Club in University Abuja, Gwagwalada, Abuja.

Olukoyede, who spoke through the Secretary to the Commission, Mohamed Hammajoda, said the EFCC also recovered \$43,835,214.24, £25,365.00, €186,947.10, 51,360.00, ₦3,750.00, A\$740.00, ¥74,754.00, R35,000.00, 42,390.00 UAE Dirhams, 247.00 Riyals and 21,580, 867631 Crypto Currency.

He stated that, though the EFCC put up impressive performance within the year, involvement of youths in internet fraud continued to pose serious concerns to every stakeholder in the anti-graft war.

"In spite of this commendable performance, the Commission is deeply worried about the increasing involvement of young people, including students, in cybercrime, popularly called yahoo yahoo. Hundreds of suspects are arrested monthly, with many of them ending up in jail."

He called on students of the University to stay away from internet fraud, stressing that conviction for fraud "is a burden that will leave a life-long scar on the fortunes of these youths."

He further stated that

there was no justification for cybercrime anywhere.

"There is no justification that will make yahoo yahoo acceptable. Contrary to the impression in some quarters, being a fraudster is not synonymous with creativity or being smart.

As students, you are expected to channel your creative energies into useful engagements and not get entangled in cheating others of their resources," he said.

Director of Public Affairs Department of the Commission, Wilson Uwujaren, said the Commission was at the University not only to inaugurate Zero Tolerance Club, but also to mobilise youths against the ills of corruption.

In his welcome address, the Vice Chancellor of the

University of Abuja, Professor Abdulsheed Na'Allah charged the youths to be productive and avoid doing anything that would destroy the good name or image of their families. He further tasked them to be productive like their counterparts in the developed nations where talents are used for creativity and innovation rather than indulging in internet fraud. He commended Olukoyede and management of the Commission for finding the University of Abuja worthy for a Zero Tolerance Club.

In his presentation on the ills of cybercrime, Assistant Commander of the EFCC, ACEII David Ife advised youths to channel their energy towards productive and beneficial purposes for themselves

and the nation at large, pointing out that criminality offered no gain to anyone.

Head, Enlightenment and Reorientation Unit of the Commission, ACEII Aisha Mohammed said the essence of the launch of the club in Universities was to develop, nurture and empower future leaders to be proactive and be "ambassadors of the Commission through education and by guiding them to propagate the core-values of anti-corruption in their family, neighbourhood, schools, communities, societies and the country at large."

The launch was concluded with the presentation of the Manuals and Magazines of the Commission to the Patron of the Club. A signage was also presented to the School.

Abiodun vows to sustain infrastructural transformation in Ogun

OGUN State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun has assured residents of the State of his administration's determination to sustain the present tempo of infrastructural development across the State.

He made the pledge while commissioning a newly constructed hospital road in Ogijo, Sagamu Local Government on Tuesday, as he promised the people of the area more projects to enhance economic development.

He said that his administration has constructed over 600 kilometres of road across the state in the last five years, adding that more roads would be commissioned at Iperu and Ilaro during the week.

According to the governor, the Ogijo community is

one of the industrial areas of the state as it enjoys gas articulation, stating that his administration has solved the electricity challenges that affected the community for decades through the provision of transformers and other electric accessories.

Abiodun noted that constructing the road was in keeping with his promise when he visited the area about a year ago, saying despite the difficulty faced by the contractors in the course of construction, they were able to surmount and deliver the project on time.

Road infrastructure, the governor said, is one of the key catalysts that engendered development, positing that the commissioned road would boost commercial activities in

the area as it leads to several communities.

"This community is very important to us, apart from being a border town, it is also an industrial area. I can assure you that this community will experience more development. I call on the Kabiyesi to work with the local government chairman, community development associations, and all relevant stakeholders and come up with projects according to their priority for immediate execution," he said.

While emphasizing that his administration would not make empty promises, the governor said the commissioning of the road was to kickstart a series of projects commissioning to mark the first year of his second term in office.

Kano emirate tussle: CJN summons FHC CJ, Kano CJ over conflicting orders

From Godwin Tsa,
Okwe Obi and Fred
Ezech, Abuja

THE Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Olukayode Ariwoola, has summoned the Chief Judge of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho and the Chief Judge of Kano State High Court, Justice Dije Aboki to appear before him over conflicting interim injunctions

• NBA seeks punitive action against lawyers, judges involved

regarding the Kano Emirate tussle.

In the wake of the prevailing tussle over the emirate stool, Justice Simone Amobeda of the Kano division of the Federal High Court issued an order for the eviction of Emir Muhammadu Sanusi II from the Kofar Kudu Palace, reinforcing the authority of the 15th Emir of Kano, Aminu Ado Bayero.

This was shortly after Justice Amina Adamu of a High Court of Kano State had issued an injunction to protect Muhammadu Sunusi and other key figures from potential harassment by state authorities. This order prevents any interference with the Emir's autonomy and the seizure of key symbols of his authority, such as the twin spear,

the Royal Hat of Dabo, and the Ostrich-feathered shoes.

These conflicting orders have led to significant confusion regarding the rightful authority and protection of the emirs in Kano. The State High Court's case is set for further hearing on June 13, while the Federal High Court has adjourned its case to June 4.

In a bid to address the judicial aberration, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Ariwoola who doubles as the Chairman of the National Judicial Council (NJC), has summoned the two principal judicial officers for a meeting in his chambers today.

There is strong indication that the NJC will conduct an emergency meeting next week where the subject Judges are likely to be invited and subjected to serious investigations.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has called for punitive actions against lawyers and Judges involved in the issuance of conflicting orders in the Kano Emirate legal tussle.

The umbrella body of lawyers in the country opined that the actions of lawyers and judges have brought utter disgrace and shame to the profession and have exposed the entire legal profession in Nigeria to public ridicule and opprobrium.

In a statement by its President Yakubu Maikyau in Abuja, the NBA vowed to drag any lawyer found culpable in the matter before the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee LPDC for deserved appropriate sanctions.

The NBA boss called on the Chief Judges of the Federal High Court and his counterpart in the High Court of Kano State to identify the judicial officers involved and drag them before the National Judicial Council NJC for disciplinary action.

• APC fueling crisis

The New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP) has accused the All Progressives Congress (APC) of fueling the crisis in Kano State as a result of the emirship tussle between Lamido Sanusi and Ado Bayero.

The party claimed that the APC plans to nudge the Federal Government into declaring a state of emergency and take over the state government, as a result of the crisis.

NNPP National Publicity Secretary, Ladipo Johnson, in a statement yesterday, said the APC leadership was behind what he called "spurious court orders", especially, Federal High Court, which is exclusively precluded from Chieftaincy matters, in order to let the confusion continue and spiral out of control.

Johnson claimed that the APC was attempting to practice "minority rule" in Kano with the support of federal institutions with the hope that the resultant crisis will lead to the declaration of a state of emergency in the state, hence the resort to "forum shopping for spurious judgement."

"The curious involvement of the Federal Police, the military and other security apparatus of the Federal government beggars belief even in a civil case."

"Isn't it an aberration that a judge of the Federal High Court would be directing the military to participate in evicting a person from a property in a civil or chieftaincy matter? This is shameful, no doubt. What is

wrong with us in this country? What is wrong with some parts of our Judiciary?", he asked.

According to him, the alert was to notify Nigerians of the plot by the APC to achieve a "dubious goal," adding that the Supreme Court stopped them from achieving it through the courts, when after "losing woefully to NNPP in the last Governorship election in Kano, they (APC members in Kano), attempted to snatch the State through the back door.

"And since then, APC has threatened to make the State ungovernable for Engr. Abba Kabir Yusuf."

He also labelled the leadership of the APC and the Federal Government as the "proverbial ostriches" with heads buried in the sand in their "unholy bid" to wrest Kano State from the NNPP through the back door.

"The NSA and military say they are not involved, so if they are not involved, who instructed the military guys on ground? Shouldn't they be withdrawing their men rather than letting them be used as tools by unscrupulous politicians?"

He added that it was apt that the crisis occurred "as we mark the first year of this administration, as it shows that the administration has undemocratic tendencies that must be brought to the notice of Nigerians."

• NSCIA warns

Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) has cautioned Ulama and other Islamic scholars in Kano against making unguarded utterances or delving into the traditional leadership crisis in the state.

The Council, in a statement, on Wednesday, said it has noticed the contradictory statements being made by some Ulama in Kano concerning the traditional leadership crisis in the state which, according to them, might cause more disunity in the state.

The statement signed by Prof. Salisu Shehu, on behalf of the Secretary-General, noted that it was a trying period for the people of Kano, hence it is needless to make unguarded statements that might trigger unrest in the state.

"As a result, we call on Islamic scholars, who are custodians of Islamic learning, values and guidance, to exercise caution and refrain from making statements that can further exacerbate tension and polarise the Ummah."

"Ulama within and outside the state should prayerfully allow the current traditional leadership conflict in Kano to be handled and resolved by the political, judicial and customary authorities."

The Council, however, called on state's political, traditional and judicial authorities to resolve the current traditional issue with the fear of Allah, fairness and justice.

It also called on Kano people to sincerely seek the Face of Allah, remain calm and avoid taking laws into their hands, thus praying that Allah grant the people sustainable peace in the State and entire country.



L-R: Professor of Ethics and Intercultural Studies, Godfrey Okoye University, Monsignor Obiora Ike; Auxiliary Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Enugu, Ernest Obodo; state Deputy Governor, Ifeanyi Ossai; Governor Peter Mbah; and the Bishop of Enugu Diocese, Calistus Onaga, during a Holy Mass to commemorate the governor's first anniversary at the Government House, Enugu, yesterday.

We inherited 34 uncompleted projects valued N225.279bn -Fubara

From Tony John, Port Harcourt

RIVERS State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, has revealed that his administration inherited 34 uncompleted projects, valued at over N225.279 billion spread across 13 local government areas of the State.

The governor also disclosed that under his watch, the Rivers State Government has awarded nine new road projects, valued at N534.332 billion.

This is even as he described as vicious and existential in nature, the political crisis that was waged against his administration, barely three months after take off on May 29, 2023.

The governor, however, said that the worst was over because his administration has successfully defended the rights and privileges to govern the State and advance its progress in liberty and freedom without compromise.

Governor Fubara said this

while presenting an Account of Stewardship and Scorecard to mark One Year Anniversary of his administration at Dr. Obi Wali International Conference Centre in Port Harcourt on Wednesday.

The governor said: "We started this journey with a bang. We were focused. We were determined to make the change we promised with a sense of urgency.

"But, then, somehow, we suddenly found ourselves in the cesspit of crisis barely three months into our tenure. It was not just an ordinary political crisis. It was a vicious existential crisis.

"But thank goodness, the worst is over. We have successfully defended our rights and opportunity to govern our State and advance its progress in freedom, and we will continue to prevail."

Governor Fubara stated that since then, a lot has changed in the political landscape, adding that he remains committed to the covenant taken a year ago to put Rivers State first, defend her interest,

and ensure that the people get the dividends of democracy and good governance.

He said: "For us, any government worth its name must be accountable, responsive, and responsible for the security and well-being of the people.

"Having managed the affairs of our State for one year, including dispensing public resources, it is only proper that we render an account with a public presentation of our performance record.

"I am, therefore, pleased to stand before you to present our Scorecard for the first year we have been in office as the Executive arm of the Government of Rivers State."

Governor Fubara reflected on his promise to deliver on the core priorities of economic growth, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and agriculture, as contained in his Blueprint as a resolve to building a virile, resilient, and progressive State that caters to the needs of the people.

The governor said, he was

proud to report that, despite the unprecedented challenges, his first one year in office has witnessed significant achievements visible to everybody.

The governor particularly said that he inherited a State, whose economy was on a declining trajectory despite its growth potentials, but within one year of his administration, the negative narrative has changed for the better.

Fubara revealed that he set up an Internally Generated Revenue (IGR)/Investment Advisory Committee that he chairs to coordinate activities in the sector that has increased inflow of economic investments to the State.

He said: "We also needed to attract investments into the State and increase our internally generated revenue base as too much reliance on federal allocations was a challenge to the realisation of our development goals.

• Continued on www.sunnewsonline

Benue SUBEB commends Gov. Alia's infrastructural reforms

By Chukwuma Umehorah

BENUE State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) has commended Governor Hyacinth Iormem Alia for his substantial infrastructural reforms within the state as he marks his first year in office.

Executive Chairman, Benue SUBEB, Grace Adagba, in a congratulatory message, yesterday, praised the governor's visionary leadership and transformative achievements.

According to her, "Alia's administration has significantly enhanced the education sector through com-

prehensive reforms implemented by SUBEB. Key developments include operational advancements at SUBEB feature data verification, an automated payroll system, and the training of 150 head teachers."

Adagba added that the establishment of a state-of-the-art Digital Resource Centre, equipped with modern technology and 120 KVA solar panels for a 24-hour power supply, ensures uninterrupted operations and enhanced educational resources.

She further highlighted improvements such as "the provision of a borehole for uninterrupted water supply, construction of a new office

complex for the executive chairman, the remodelling of a block into a digital resource centre, and extensive renovations of multiple office blocks."

"Under Governor Alia's leadership, students from UBE Junior Secondary Schools in Benue achieved international recognition by winning a bilateral debate competition in Indonesia. These initiatives underscore Governor Alia's commitment to revitalising the education sector and fostering economic growth."

"Congratulations, your excellency, on this milestone anniversary. We look forward to greater successes as we journey together towards a prosperous future for all," she said.

streetlights, procurement and donation of hummer buses to Benue Links Company, the renovation of the Benue State secretariat, and the construction of an interchange underpass at High Level Roundabout in Makurdi and Gboko."

Adagba commended Governor Alia's efforts in enhancing security, promoting agriculture, and fostering economic growth.

"Beyond education, Alia has embarked on construction of standard roads, installation of

I inherited pockets of crises, conflicts in Ebonyi – Nwifuru

GOVERNOR Francis Nwifuru, yesterday, said his administration inherited pockets of crises and conflicts in different parts of Ebonyi State.

He stated this at the Abakaliki township stadium during his one year anniversary celebration.

Nwifuru said most of the crisis have appeared intractable and defied all solutions and that he has come up with a more tactical approach to ensure that lasting peace returns to the troubled communities.

He warned that his administration would no

longer allow killings, maiming and destruction in the communities.

"We have come up with a more tactical approach to ensure that peace returns to affected areas."

"As a road map to achieving lasting peace, white papers have been issued in

respect of the Abaomeghe/Ishinkwor, Ohaukwu/Amanra and Effium crises to achieve peace.

"Implementation committees have been set up to ensure strict implementation of the white papers and with the calibre of people in the committees. We are confident that peace will soon return to the affected communities," he said.

Nwifuru said his administration has taken its place of distinction among the comity of states that has emerged with wise and far-reaching plans for the socio-economic well-being of the people.

The governor disclosed he has procured and distributed 100 vehicles to security agencies as support for them to secure the state and remain one of the safest states in the country.

In their remarks during the celebration, former governors of the state, Anyim Pius Anyim, Sam Egwu, Martin Elechi and David Umahi lauded the governor for his leadership style.

The former governors said Nwifuru has been running inclusive, purposeful and pragmatic leadership since one year which they said has brought peace, unity and development in the state.

They urged him to continue the way he is ruling the state to take it to the desired destination.

Anyim, who is a former Senate president of the country, said: "For the last one week, Ebonyi has been agog with activities and today we are here to celebrate the grand finale of the first year anniversary of your purposeful and pragmatic leadership."

•Continued on www.sunnewonline.com

USA Mayor declares day in honour of Anosike

A mayor in the United States of America has declared a day in honour of the spiritual and humanitarian work of Senior Pastor of the Spirit Revelation Ecclesia, John Anosike.

The Mayor of Buffalo, Byron Brown, gave the declaration in Anosike's recognition and also named May 23 after him in honour of his works.

Anosike in a recent visit to the United States held a conference where a lot of Americans and other nationals gathered with about 5,000 people in total.

The mayor said his works were exemplary and that informed the recognition and

the day dedicated to him.

Anosike ministered to them, counselled them, gave speeches of hope and faith, prayed for the prosperity of the State of New York, and USA at large.

He also prayed for peace and prosperity. The people were so blessed and inspired.

"I never saw that coming. I am so humbled because I went on a normal spiritual tour, but the mayor of Buffalo gave me an award of recognition and he also declared a day in my honour. I don't know what else to say. Glory to God Almighty," Anosike said.

Marwa, Dabiri-Erewa, Iheakanwa task Nigerians on nation building

By Vera Wisdom-Bassey

CHIEF Executive Officer of National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Mohammed Marwa, has called on parents and Nigerians to join hands and rebuild the country.

Marwa, who was the chairman of the Champion newspaper award that took place at the Convention Centre of Eko Hotels and Suites on Victoria Island, Lagos, said: "We need to recover Nigeria from the drug scourge and say no to drugs."

He said illicit drug scourge in the country had continued to destroy youths, families and communities and called

on parents to set the right examples and pay more attention to their children by bringing them up properly like in the times of old.

The NDLEA boss said illicit drug scourge aided kidnapping, banditry and other crimes and urged parents to bring up their children properly.

According to Marwa all the awardees deserved the awards, because the purpose of awards, he said, is to encourage the citizens to do more in their areas of expertise and callings and to let Nigerians and the entire world know there is reward for hardwork.

Abike Dabiri-Erewa, chairman/chief executive officer

of Nigerian in Diaspora Commission who received 2023 Excellence in Service Award, said: "Let's work together to make Nigeria great, Nigeria is a great country, among the best in Africa, we don't have another country, 'don't japa, pada,'" she said."

Managing Director of Champion Newspapers Ltd., Nwadiuto Iheakanwa, said the awards were about Nigerians' responsiveness to the things that held the citizenry together.

"For Nigeria to get better and bigger, we will need more of this calibre of people and institutions that we set out to honour this evening because they constitute an integral part of the best."

PCNGI launches nationwide mass transit conversion programme

THE Presidential CNG Initiative (PCNGI) in collaboration with its core partner, Rolling Energy, has announced the launch of its PCNGI conversion and refuelling site in Ilorin, Kwara State.

According to a statement from PCNGI, the state-of-the-art facility will play a crucial role in supporting the transition to cleaner energy by offering comprehensive conversion and refuelling services for vehicles.

Ighodalo's campaign gets boost

By Sunday Ani

IN continuation of her regular distribution of the Benedicta's Market Women Money, Chairman of Etsako East Local Government Area, Edo State, Benedica Attoh, along with members of Team Dr. Uyi Igbinadolor for Asue/Ogie, stormed the Agenebode Main Market, yesterday, to distribute N10,000 each to traders in support of their businesses.

While handing over the money to each of the beneficiaries, including vegetable, 'pure water', fuji, fish sellers, hawkers and others at the market, the National Coordinator of Team Dr. Uyi Igbinadolor for Asue/Ogie, Jude Ogbekile, urged the beneficiaries to plant the financial support from the

US-based donor as a seed by adding it to their micro-businesses.

He thanked the council chairman for the good report about her human capital development activities as seen and heard during the tour in the market.

Addressing the women, the council boss introduced Dr. Uyi Igbinadolor as the donor of the N300,000 for 30 women as a lifeline to support for the poorest of the poor in the society due to the high level of hunger caused by the inhumane policies of the Federal Government.

More of the women will be captured in other zones of the local government in the next few days.

She described the lifeline support as one that is offer-

ing hope, dignity, reducing poverty, promoting self-sustainability and development.

She called on public-spirited men and women to emulate the Edo-born medical practitioner, Igbinadolor, by extending helping hands to those that need help the most in the society.

Attoh also thanked Sir Tonna Okei, a brother and friend also based in the United States, who she said facilitated the donation, saying Igbinadolor has a track record of always putting smiles on the faces of the downtrodden in the society.

She assured the distribution of financial support to the downtrodden across various markets in Etsako East Local Government would continue in Okpekpe, Ijegba and Okpella Markets.

Emenike, AGCare launch state-of-the-art hospital

By Sunday Ani

THE grand opening of a 40-bed Emenike Hospital by Emmanuel Emenike and AGCare recently in Owerri, Imo State, was celebrated with immense enthusiasm and pride.

Implementation committees have been set up to ensure strict implementation of the white papers and with the calibre of people in the committees. We are confident that peace will soon return to the affected communities," he said.

Nwifuru said his adminis-

tration has taken its place of distinction among the comity of states that has emerged with wise and far-reaching plans for the socio-economic well-being of the people.

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•Continued on www.sunnewonline.com

Sterling Bank, expressed the bank's excitement to partner on the project, stating, "Sterling Bank is proud to support AGCare in its mission to provide exceptional healthcare services. Our partnership is rooted in a shared vision of making quality healthcare accessible to all, through collaborative efforts."

AGCare's founder, Chukwu Monye, said: "Our commitment to operating Emenike Hospital is driven by our passion for improving healthcare standards and ensuring every individual receives the care they deserve."

Commissioner for Health who represented Imo State governor, reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to health and well-being of its citizens by creating an environment where healthcare thrives

Iheoma Emenike, co-founder of the hospital, spoke about the hospital's mission, saying: "Emenike Hospital is built on compassion, excellence, and a relentless commitment to quality healthcare, ensuring everyone has access to the best possible care."

The launch of Emenike Hospital marks a milestone in the region's healthcare landscape, bringing hope and improved health outcomes to countless individuals. The event concluded with a tour of the hospital facilities, showcasing the advanced medical equipment and modern amenities designed to provide patients with a comfortable and healing environment.

CMO Umuogor Aba marks Father's Day June 2

SACRED Heart Catholic Church, Umuogor Aba in Aba South LGA will, on Sunday, June 2, celebrate Fathers' Day

urged registered or non-registered men of the church to embrace the occasion as there will be lots of fun to kill stress.

A statement by the organising committee said there will be a raffle draw, football match and fashion parade by the CMO. On Saturday June 1, there will be a football match with kick off by 4pm

The grand finale on Sunday will be the Pontifical High Mass to be celebrated by the priest in charge, Rev. Fr. Brenda Obijii while reception would follow immediately.

New Telegraph Editor, Juliet Bumah, loses husband

THE Editor of New Telegraph Newspaper, Juliet Bumah, has lost her husband, Mr. Obum Bumah-Onunkwo.

Bumah-Onunkwo, who hails from Alor in Idemili South Local Government Area of Anambra State, died on Friday, May 24, after a brief illness at the age of 60.

An astute businessman

of many decades, the late Bumah-Onunkwo until his death, was respected for his philanthropic and kind-heartedness which endeared him to most people, including his kinsmen.

He is survived by his widow and two children. Burial plan will be announced later by the family.

Politics & Power

Internal crisis blights PDP's opposition role

From Ndubuisi Orji, Abuja

IN the aftermath of the 2023 general elections, and inauguration of the President Bola Tinubu's administration on May 29, 2023, expectations were high that the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will provide an effective opposition for the country.

However, one year after, the question is how well has the PDP done in discharging its role as the major opposition party in the country? In the last one year, the PDP has been consistent in blaming the All Progressives Congress (APC) for the challenges bedevilling the country.

For instance, the PDP in a recent statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, dismissed the policies of the government as anti-people.

Ologunagba had noted that "APC is insensitive to the fact that because of its policies, more than 104 million citizens have sunk deeper into poverty; Nigerians can no longer afford their daily meals with families now going to bed on empty stomach as poverty rate soars to over 46%.

"Since President Tinubu took office on May 29, 2023, no fewer than 5000 Nigerians have been killed by terrorists apparently emboldened by the laidback attitude and body language of Mr. President who has failed to show seriousness on issues of security or empathy to victims either by words or action."

However, pundits say beyond the statement, the PDP has offered little hope as an opposition party, especially in offering alternatives and galvanizing its members in the parliament to oppose government policies. Not a few say that the opposition party has largely been distracted by its internal crises, which has made it impossible for the opposition party to actually play its role effectively.

Recall that prior to the last general election, the nomination of former vice president, Atiku

Abubakar and former Delta governor, Ifeanyi Okowa as presidential and vice presidential candidate respectively, had created a division in the PDP. Consequently, the group of five governors consisting of former Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike; his counterparts in Benue, Samuel Ortom; Enugu, Ifeanyi Ugwuanyi; Abia, Okezie Ikpeazu and incumbent governor of Oyo State, Seyi Makinde, alongside their supporters, broke rank with the opposition party to form the G-5.

One year after the inauguration of the Tinubu administration, the division in the party still persists. The sack of former Senate President, Iyorchia Ayu as chairman of the party and the politics of his replacement has continued to deepen the gulf within the PDP.

Presently, Atiku and Wike loyalists are still at dagger drawn over the control of party machinery, ahead of the 2027 general election. Pundits say the inability of the party leaders to close ranks has continued to militate against its ability to discharge its role as an opposition party effectively.

A former PDP presidential aspirant, Cosmos Ndukwu, in a recent interview with Daily Sun, captured development in the opposition party thus: "they, PDP leaders are arguing over who should be the national chairman and who would not be. The camp that will produce the national chairman and the camp that will not produce the national chairman; the camp that will produce the secretary and if the secretary that left to contest in Imo State should stay or would not".

A public affairs analyst, Mr Jide Ojo, told Daily Sun that the PDP has underperformed as an opposition party, to the delight of the ruling APC.

Ojo said "It is for us to say that PDP has been distracted as an opposition party. It is beleaguered with a leadership crisis. Don't forget that Dr Iyorchia Ayu mid-wifed PDP through the 2023 election. But today, he has been shoved



• Damagum

aside. And in his place, Ambassador Damagum has been appointed in acting capacity. PDP has not been able to hold a convention to replace Ayu.

"Even the recent NEC meeting that was held is still the various interest that were poised for war. The Atiku camp, the Wike camp, those who want Damagum to go, those who want Damagum to stay. So, these have been much of a distraction. Remember there was even a time the issue of national secretary of PDP was contentious.

"By and large, I will say PDP has underperformed as an opposition. It is of interest to APC that the more PDP is distracted, the more they will get away with non-performance in governance."

The convener, National Political Equity Movement, a Civil Society Organization (CSO), Ambassador Chibuzor Okereke, told Daily Sun, that the PDP apart from issuing press statements has not been strategic in its approach to opposition politics. Okereke said this is especially as

the PDP has not been able to offer the citizen a clear alternative to the policies of the present administration.

According to him, "PDP has not been strategic in its roles or positioned itself as an alternative. People could say APC made this decision. If it were to be PDP, it would have been this, so in the next round of election, we need to try this. So it is from that standpoint of alternative government and not only from criticism of policies. You have to use the opposition platform to gain voters confidence and then prepare for the next one."

He added that, "there is a grumbling across the party line down to the ward level. If you want to be a political party that offers opposition, you need to deal with internal democracy. You can't be divided amongst you and be able to offer comprehensive and robust opposition that gives the citizen alternative policy."

"But whether the leaders of the PDP are ready to sacrifice personal interest or ego remains to be seen."

A top official of the PDP, who pleaded anonymity said that apart from the usual press statement by the PDP National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, criticising the policies and programmes of the President Tinubu administration, the opposition party has failed in its duties in the last one year.

According to him, "Democracy thrives on effective and strategic opposition. Apart from the action of the national publicity secretary, who has tried as much as possible to engage the ruling party, the opposition is almost absent, in the last one year. The PDP has not been alive to its responsibilities."

"The failure of the executive is attributed to the inability of the lawmakers, especially the legislators to put them on their toes. The opposition is completely cold and is perceived more or less as an appendage of the ruling party."

Besides, Daily Sun gathered that there is also lack of synergy between the PDP and members of the National Assembly. The disconnect, which is attributable to the schisms in the opposition party, has its roots in the emergence of the leadership of the minority caucuses in the two chambers of the National Assembly.

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)

'How Muttwang has changed the narrative in Plateau'

By Mani Imman

IT has been a year of good tidings for citizens of Plateau State since the State Governor, Caleb Muttwang took over the reins of leadership on May 29, 2023.

Despite the initial challenges due to the divisive court case and insecurity, the governor remained focused on delivering on the social contract he has with Plateau citizens who voted for him overwhelmingly.

As he clocks a year in office, citizens testify that Plateau has moved forward in the last year compared to what was obtained in the recent past. From transport to health to education, to road network, among others, the governor has spread development to the admiration of all.

In the transport sector, Governor Muttwang introduced the Tin City Metro project to address the transportation needs in the urban centres with 15 units of modern MAN-Diesel buses. Twenty units of Toyota Sienna vehicles were purchased and branded with security features and trained new drivers for the Jos-Abuja route. Twenty units of 14-seater Toyota Hiace buses were refurbished and fully equipped with enhanced security features like tracking devices with audio-enabled devices and launched into service.

In the health sector, to ensure a centralized body to oversee the procurement, warehousing, distribution, and monitoring of drugs and medical supplies in the state government-owned hospitals and clinics, Governor Muttwang revived the comatose Plateau State Drugs and Medical Commodities Agency (PS-DMCMA) to ensure the availability, accessibility, and affordability of essential drugs and medical commodities.

To improve the aesthetics and tourism potentials of the state, the governor has begun revamping abandoned monumental buildings dotting the state which have become eyesores.

He stated, "We need to do something to



• Muttwang

rescue these buildings and make sure that their dignity is restored and we also put the buildings to very effective use. We cannot allow government assets to keep wasting."

Insisting on the need for everyone to make the land of Plateau green through agriculture, he directed the cultivation of 900 hectares of land for farmers in Mangu, Riyom, and Barkin Ladi local government areas of the state; distributed N3.6 billion worth of fertilizer for dry-season farming. To drive the agroforestry, the administration also introduced the Coconut and oil palm plantations.

The gains in gardening are also being harnessed as florists are engaged to expand horticulture and floriculture to increase the export potential of the state.

With the determination to create road networks across the 17 local government areas of the state, the governor directed the resumption of construction works across several kilometres of roads.

There has been the remobilization and resumption of work on the 6.9km road network from the Rukuba Road Satellite Market-Tudun

Wada-Sabon Gari with a spur to Mado; Wildlife Park. Work is ongoing on the 5.65km Utonkon-Nunku-Keana link road with the extension to the Akila Machungwa road.

Excited citizens appreciate the construction of a 7.14Km road network at Chwelnyap, linking to Three Container, Yan Trailer, Main Market, Sarki Street, St. Michael Street, Dutse Uku, and St. Michael's Loop behind Baptist Church Nasarawa Gwong.

The rehabilitation of the 24.10km road network within Jos South Local Government Area and upgrading of major slum areas within Raku Belleng, Ramun Gyal, Rohol Kak, and Gyal Bukuru totaling 13.5 km in the Jos South LGA and others are ongoing.

In the last one year, there has been a stable payment of salaries and monthly pension; implementation of Salary Table, implementation of Hazard allowance for Medical Doctors, Nurses, and Health Workers (CONMESS/ CONHESSE).

Lost hope was revived as the governor approved the payment of gratuities, Death Benefits, and Pension Arrears from 1986 to 2009 and the verification of the next phase of beneficiaries from 2010 to 2018 is ongoing while the minimum pension for retirees has been increased from N5,000 to N20,000.

In January 2024, the implementation of the upward review of monthly Pension commenced and the implementation of Promotions has also been done to motivate staff. There is a constant payment of Checkoff dues to the respective unions. The payment of Overhead to MDAs has been restored.

On Social welfare protection, there has been the establishment of the Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission to drive the processes of the implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition, VAPP Laws, and Child Rights Laws.

In education, the governor ensured Aca-

demic Courses are accredited for the State-owned institutions which include the Plateau State University, Bokkos; College of Health Technology, Pankshin; College of Nursing and Midwifery, Vom; College of Agriculture, Garkawa; College of Education, Gindiri.

There have also been the payments for 2022, 2023, and 2024 IJMB Examinations for College of Arts, Science, and Technology, Kurgwi; settlement of 2023 and 2024 Law School Students Fees for Plateau State indigenes; 300% upward review of Scholarship for Plateau State Students studying in Higher Institutions in Nigeria.

Through the Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment (AGILE) project, this administration has so far intervened in 170 schools with widespread renovation, WASH facilities, ICT equipment, and school furniture.

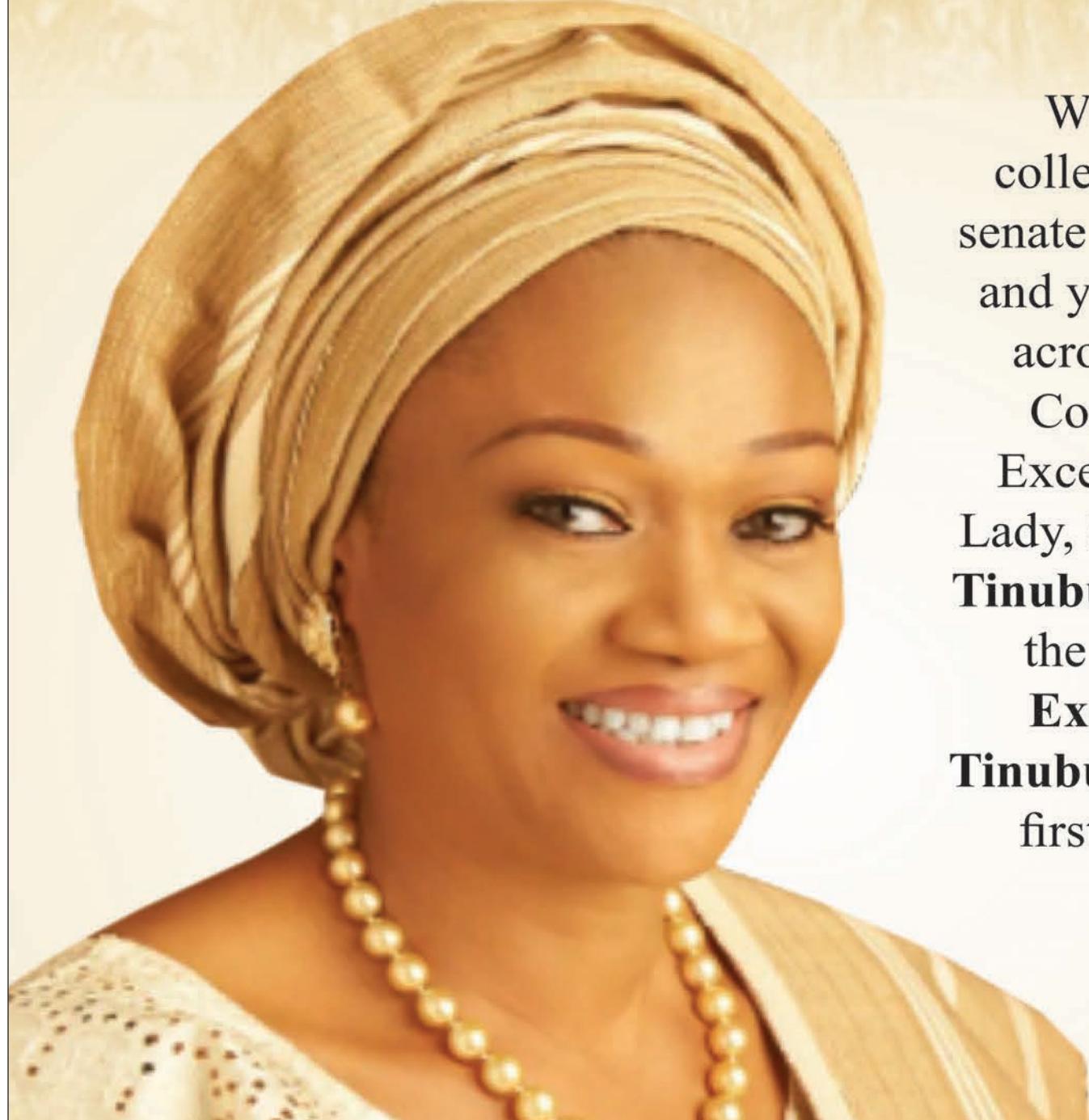
There has been the renovation of 682 classrooms, drilling of 385 motorized boreholes, construction of 578 VIP toilets, and the provision of furniture, etc.

There have also been special grants of over N100 Million which were distributed to 15 secondary schools for projects like Perimeter fences, construction of new classrooms, renovation of blocks of hostels, block of classrooms and provision of wash facilities, and in most cases, work has reached 98 percent completion, and some have been commissioned by the governor.

There has been the restoration of employment of 989 Teaching and 200 non-teaching staff to fill existing shortages in manpower in the public schools and a backlog of school fees for six years amounting to Forty Million, Six Hundred Thousand Naira (N40,600,000=00) for Plateau State indigenes schooling at National Mathematical Centre Abuja has been paid.

With all these and more in the offing, citizens commend the governor's efforts and charge him not to relent in delivering good governance to the people.

Felicitation



We your female colleagues of the 9th senate join all Nigerians and your well-wishers across the world to Congratulate Her Excellency, the First Lady, **Senator Oluremi Tinubu** and her husband the President, **His Excellency, Bola Tinubu, GCFR**, on their first year in office.

**Her Excellency,
Sen. Oluremi Tinubu
First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria**

SIGNED:

Senator Biodun Olujimi
Senator Stella Oduah
H.E, Senator Akon Etin-Eyakenyi
Senator Betty Apiafi

Senator Uche Ekwunife, PhD, CON
Senator Aishatu Dahiru Ahmed
Senator Nora Daduut



OGBUAGU ANIKWE

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A question for the military

RECENTLY, the army announced a shutdown of an Abuja commercial complex over alleged assault of “soldiers in uniform.” Army spokesperson, Onyema Nwachukwu, a major general, unpacked quite a bit in one defensive statement to justify the action. According to him, two unarmed soldiers, engaging in no form of aggression and posing a threat to no one, were suddenly laid upon and brutalised by hoodlums at Banex Plaza in the Wuse II area of Abuja FCT. He variously described the attack as “cruel,” “unwarranted,” and “unjustifiable.”

The statement exposed a three-pronged military reaction to the incident. First, the top brass “convened a meeting with the management of Banex Plaza to identify and apprehend the hoodlums who beat up military personnel.” Then they retaliated against the attack “by temporarily shutting down activities in the plaza” to apprehend the hoodlums... Finally, the army launched an “extensive investigation... at the scene to determine both the immediate and underlying causes of this mayhem.”

The army statement drew a parallel between the Banex incident and the recent civilian murder of 17 military personnel in Delta State: “This investigation ultimately aims at ensuring the security of the Federal Capital Territory and to prevent such unwarranted attacks on our personnel and other security operatives, as has been observed in other areas, such as the unfortunate attack in Okuama, Delta State.”

This military reaction, like others before it, exposes a question that we constantly avoid whenever the nation discusses violent civilian-military conflicts.

Here is the question: What were the uniformed military personnel doing that emboldened or provoked civilians into attacking or killing them in public places? Or should we accept the explanation that, in the case of Banex Plaza, they were unarmed, engaged in no form of aggression, and posed no threat to anyone?

It is a no-brainer that when two people fight, each will present a defence that exonerates them as the aggressor. Again, in most Nigerian military-civilian conflicts, what the public hears (and therefore judges) are loud voices of military spokespersons and subdued whimpers of civilians after they are served an equal or more brutal retaliation. Both loud and subdued voices never align on the crucial question of motive, which reduces the conversation to the crime of daring to confront military personnel in uniform.

The conversation on the Banex Plaza incident has consequently narrowed to the crime of attacking military personnel in uniform. But can it be broadened to accommodate



• Lt. Gen Lagbaja, COAS

the question of what the military officers were truly doing at Banex Plaza in their uniform and why civilians violently descended on them? We need to know not only to educate civilians on proper conduct but also because the military personnel themselves may benefit from the answers. We need to know why military personnel (officers and other ranks alike) routinely appear in public in their uniforms and attract unfriendly reactions rather than admiration from civilians. This knowledge could assist the military top brass in managing what may turn out to be welfare issues at the root of these

intermittent conflicts.

Here is a clue. On 13 December last year, Defence Minister Abubakar Badaru approached the National Assembly to plead for urgent review of the defence personnel and overhead costs in the 2024 budget. He quoted N78.5 billion as budget provision for personnel and overhead costs. Compared to the number of Nigerian military personnel published by Global Firepower, this budget figure is laughable; it implies that a serving military personnel, including the Generals, goes home with average monthly salary and allowances of about N28,000!

What is even more concerning is that this paltry provision was found embedded in a proposed handsome defence budget of N3.25 trillion! This indicates that some people are more interested in acquiring the tools for defending Nigeria than the welfare of the defenders. It is this sort of disparity that creates two classes - the haves and the have-nots - in the military. While the have-nots depend entirely on laughable personnel and overhead costs, the haves feast on the humongous balance to “defend” our nation.

Happy 1st Anniversary

YESTERDAY, 29 May 2024, made it one year since President Bola Tinubu and 31 State Governors took office. Each has shown the stuff they are made of and some kinds of congratulations are in order - even if it is a back-handed salute for many.

Expectedly, we hear quite a bit of chest beating and self-congratulations from the chief executives at federal and subnational levels.

While congratulating them on reaching this milestone, it is important

This may be why the answer to the question of why uniformed military personnel appear in civilian spaces to be beaten up or killed may be found in their welfare provisions.

So that I am not misunderstood, nothing here should be interpreted as supporting civilian attacks on military personnel. Far from it. It is sad that there are civilians who forget that our military is composed of a group of citizens willing to sacrifice their lives to defend our country. During the civil war, they paid the supreme sacrifice in their hundreds of thousands. In the fight against insurgency, military personnel have been dying in their thousands since 2009. Our military personnel should be held in high honour wherever and whenever they are seen and recognized in public places. Each one of them earns the right to our undying gratitude for their voluntary decision to sign their own death warrants to save us from external aggression and internal insurrections. It should therefore be a matter of concern each time that civilians assault our people in uniform.

Getting this out of the way, the question of why non-duty military personnel show up in civilian spaces to be assaulted or killed should return for proper interrogation. One way to get to the root of the matter is to set up independent judicial enquiries any time that the military forces a bitter medicine down the throats of civilians who attack them. Without this, we leave the answer to the question of motive to speculations and educated guesses.

One such guess is the defence provision in the 2024 federal budget which reinforces the suspicion that top military brass know the embarrassing answer to the question. One suspects that this question goes to the roots of issues around welfare, which may be the driver for desperate military personnel diving into civilian spaces in their uniforms to hustle for a living.

Have we not read or heard pathetic stories of retired military personnel and families of fallen soldiers thrown out of barracks into the cold world of poverty and deprivation while society looks the other way? Enough said.



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to let them know that these fantastic achievements have not translated into a positive impact on the people. The condition of living of the average Nigerian has not improved; it has depreciated alarmingly. Our people are not adjusting well to the hyperinflation instigated by the infamous twin policies launched by the President during his swearing-in ceremony.

Hopefully, the second year will bring us better tidings. Our fingers are crossed.

Voice of The Nation

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024 *VOL 20 NO. 5506

OGBUAGU ANIKWE

A question
for the
Military

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LOOKMAN MAKES AFRICAN
TEAM OF THE SEASON P. 30

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NASENI

NATIONAL AGENCY FOR SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING INFRASTRUCTURE (NASENI)

The Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive of NASENI,

Mr. Khalil Suleiman Halilu

on behalf of Management

welcomes

His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
and Chairman NASENI Board, **Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR**

**TO THE COMMISSIONING OF
NASENI-PORTLAND COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS (CNG)
REVERSE ENGINEERING CENTRE, UTAKO, ABUJA**

Tomorrow, Friday, May 31, 2024



**EVC/CEO, NASENI,
Mr. Khalil Suleiman Halilu**

DATE: Friday, May 31, 2024

VENUE: NASENI Reverse Engineering Centre,
Plot 18, A.E. Ekukainam Street,
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Published by The Sun Publishing Limited, 2, Coscharis Street, Off Happyhome Avenue, Kirikiri Industrial Layout, Apapa, P.M.B. 21776, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria. Ikeja City Office: 1A, Odégbami Street, Off Talabi Street, Adeniyi Jones, Ikeja, Lagos. Advert Hotline: 08094459262, Abuja Office: Orji Uzor Kalu House, Plot 322, Adjacent Banex Junction Flyover, Wuse-Jahi-Gwarimpa Expressway, Mabushi, Abuja, Phone: 09-8700273-6. ISSN 0795-7475. All Correspondence to the above mail addresses.

Website: www.sunnewsonline.ng •Printed simultaneously in Lagos, Aba & Abuja Editor: IHEANACHO NWOSU