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# Panorama

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## SPOTLIGHT

### Average Nigerian needs N786 to eat healthy diet daily, says NBS

By Gloria Nwafor  
A new statistics released yesterday by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has said an average Nigerian adult needed about N786 to eat a healthy diet per day as of December 2023.

The Bureau in conjunction with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), revealed this at the launch of the Cost of a Healthy Diet (CoHD) indicator in Abuja, yesterday. The report said in December, the average CoHD was highest in the Southwest at N979 per adult per day, compared to N663 per adult per day in North West.

Statistician-General/Chief Executive Officer, Adeyemi

Adeniran, said the CoHD is an indicator that points to the least expensive combination of locally available items that meet globally consistent food-based dietary guidelines, used as a measure of physical and economic access to healthy diet.

He said the CoHD is a lower bound (or floor) of the cost per adult per day excluding the cost of transportation

and meal preparation.

The Guardian gathered that the CoHD increased to 5.9 per cent in December 2023, as compared to N742 in November 2023. The report noted that in December, "the National Average Cost of a Healthy Diet was N786."

For November, "the average CoHD was highest in Southeast at N920 per adult per day, compared to N616 per

adult per day in Northeast."

Also, in October, the average CoHD was N703, "highest in the Southeast at N918 per adult per day, compared to N605 per adult per day in Northeast."

The report explained that the CoHD indicator was derived from the "comprehensive food price data" which is a "key component in calculating the inflation rate."



Managing Director, Anchor Heritage, Bidemi Oladipupo (left); Deputy Controller of Corrections (DCC) in charge of Kirikiri Medium Correctional Centre, Micheal Anugwa and Managing Director, Donato Nigeria, Ododo Onawunmi during the coding graduation/competition for inmates at the Correctional Centre in Lagos... yesterday. PHOTO: AYODELE ADENIRAN

## WEATHER REPORT

Moderate dust haze with horizontal visibility range of 2-5km and localized visibility of less than or equal to 1000m anticipated from the northern region down to the inland parts of the South. Early morning mist/fog patches are expected over parts of Lagos, Delta, Bayelsa, Edo, Rivers, Ondo and Ogun states. During the afternoon and evening hours, haziness with patches of cloud is expected over the coastal parts of the country.

### Potential impact

- i) Dust particles are in suspension; use face mask where possible.
- (ii) People with respiratory issues should be cautious of the present weather situations.
- (iii) Children and the elderly should wear warm clothing at Night.
- (iv) Special attention should be paid to your skin, eyes and lips. Moisturize your skin and lips as much as possible.
- (v) Airline operators are advised to get updated weather reports and forecast from NiMet for effective planning in their operations
- (vi) All Airline operators are advised to avail themselves of weather reports/alerts from NiMet for effective planning for their operations.

... DAY 3566

OUR GIRLS STILL MISSING

Tope Templer Olaiya, News Editor



### January salaries of federal civil servants to be 'delayed beyond normal'

THE management of National Mathematical Center, Abuja yesterday announced that the payment of salaries to Federal Government civil servants will be delayed beyond normal.

The center in a memo signed by its acting bursar,

Pius Ukwah, attributed the delay to the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (AGF).

According to the memo, the AGF office is still working on finalising the 2024 Appropriation on the GIFMIS platform and as a result the Personnel Warrant

for the month of January 2024 is yet to be released.

The memo further revealed that the delayed will cut across other MDA's and not just the Centre. The memo further urged their staff to exercise patience as "we await a positive resolution by the OAGF."

### Power Minister pushes for cost-reflective tariff amid subsidy funding concerns

By Waliat Musa

THE Minister of Power, Adebayo Adelabu has called on the Federal government to transit fully to cost-reflective tariffs, raising eyebrows amid concerns over subsidy funding.

He noted that if there's a commitment to subsidy, it must be adequately funded, noting that if government isn't prepared to allocate funds for subsidy, it's more prudent for a transition to a tariff system that fully reflects the costs involved.

He made the call during his visit to the power plants in Ogun and Ondo state on Wednesday.

Adelabu, who reiterated the significant challenge of liquidity in the sector, emphasised that it has resulted in substantial debts being owed power generating companies (GenCos), noting that this financial strain has made it difficult for GenCos to fulfill payments to gas suppliers, creating a cycle where unpaid suppliers are hesitant to provide regular

gas to power plants.

He pledged that he would do everything within his capacity to ensure parts of the outstanding debts of the GenCos is paid which would enable them also pay their gas suppliers.

"As a country, do we want to continue to pay for the real price of power, which is no longer cheap, as it is today throughout West Africa. Nigeria still pay the lowest tariff for power supply, compared to Benin Republic, Ghana, Cote'd Ivoire, Niger and the likes. They pay almost more than double what we pay presently."

## RANDOM FACTS

- Some Japanese researchers have developed a device that will be able to playback your dreams in video sequence.
- Sarcasm makes you mentally stronger. Which is very effective when dealing with emotional stress and frustration.
- If a friendship lasts longer than 7 years, psychologists say it will last a lifetime.
- Hilipilification is the second longest word in the English language. It means an estimation of something as worthless.
- Erotomania is a psychological disorder where the sufferer has delusions that another person is in love with him or her.

## TODAY IN HISTORY

- World Hijab Day
- 2021 - Myanmar  
A coup d'état in Myanmar removed Aung San Suu Kyi from power and restores military rule.
- 2017 - Nigeria  
The verbal war between Governor Rochas Okorocha of Imo and his Anambra counterpart, Willie Obiano, took another dimension with Obiano telling Okorocha to keep quiet when serious governors are talking because Okorocha has nothing to offer.
- 2016 - Nigeria  
The new Multi Year Tariff Order (MYTO) kicked-off amidst protest by consumers and promises by government that the new rate will correct the whole system in the value chain of the power sector.
- The Catholic Church transferred controversial priest, Rev. Father Ejiike Mbaka from Enugu to Emene. The church said the move was to make him more useful not punitive.
- 2013 - Nigeria  
House of Representatives member, Farouk Lawan, who led a probe into fuel subsidy that saw billions of dollars lost through fraud, was charged with his aide, Emenalo Boniface, with soliciting a \$3million bribe from Femi Otedola, chairman of Zenon Petroleum & Gas Ltd
- 2013 - USA  
Hillary Clinton resigned as the 67th secretary of state, capping a four-year tenure that saw her shatter records for number of countries visited.
- 2013 - UK  
The Shard, the sixth-tallest building in Europe, opened its viewing gallery to the public.
- 2012 - Egypt  
72 people were killed and over 500 injured due to clashes between fans of Egyptian football teams Al-Masry and Al-Ahly in the city of Port Said.
- 2009 - Iceland  
The cabinet of Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir was formed, making her the country's first female prime minister and the world's first openly LGBT head of government.
- 2004 - S/Arabia  
251 people were trampled to death and 244 injured in a stampede at Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.
- 1965 - USA  
In Selma, Alabama, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and 770 of his followers were arrested on their civil rights march, protesting voter discrimination.
- 1964 - USA  
The Beatles had their first number one hit with "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

## TODAY'S QUOTE

There's so much more to tell about Africa than the usual stories about war, famine and disease.

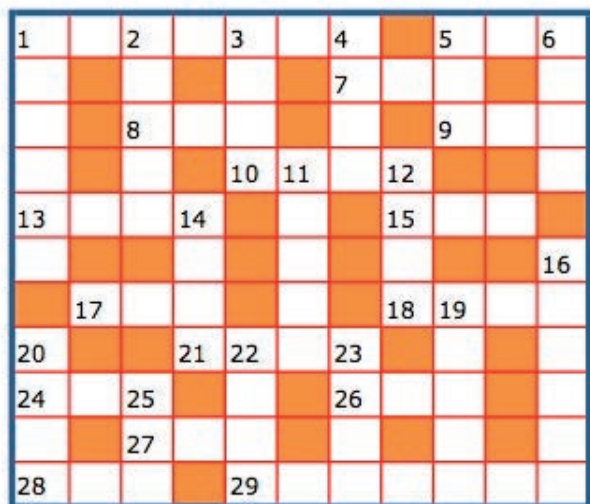
There is only one standard - a global standard. Be consistent and operate at 100% every single time you're given an opportunity.

KOMLA DUMOR

When you hate, the only person that suffers is you because most of the people you hate don't know it and the rest don't care.

MEDGAR EVERS

## CROSS WORD PUZZLE



### ACROSS

- 1. Pain of childbirth, (7).
- 5. Something boring, (3).
- 7. Employ something for a purpose, (3).
- 8. Pointed end, (3).
- 9. University lecturer, (3).
- 10. Move swiftly, (4).
- 13. Area of land, (4).
- 15. Be financially in debt, (3).
- 17. Cosine, abbr., (3).
- 18. Pimple, (4).
- 21. Recedes from the shore, (4).
- 24. Argument for something, (3).
- 26. 2nd Rep. Benue Governor, (3).
- 27. Romanian currency unit, (3).
- 28. Greek's 22nd alphabet, (3).
- 29. Produce saliva, (7).

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### DOWN

- 1. Social division of people, (6).
- 2. Performer in plays, (5).
- 3. High mountains, (4).
- 4. Something outstanding, (4).
- 5. Gave food to, (3).
- 6. Departed, (4).
- 11. Move upwards, (5).
- 12. NAFDAC'S late D.G., (4).
- 14. Lack of difficulty, (4).
- 16. Induce to have sex, (6).
- 19. Small amount, (5).
- 20. Long narrative poem, (4).
- 22. Make curved, (4).
- 23. Town in Oyo state, (4).
- 25. Traditional title in Igbo land, (3)

Check page 29 for Solution to puzzle

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**Binani, APC lose as S'Court returns Fintiri as Adamawa gov**

From Ameh Ochojila (Abuja) and Emmanuel Samaila (Yola)

ALL Progressives Congress (APC) and its candidate in the March 18, 2023 gubernatorial election in Adamawa State, Aisha Dahiru, have lost their legal battle to unseat Umar Ahmadu Fintiri as governor of Adamawa State.

The apex court, in its ruling, yesterday, dismissed Binani's petition for lacking in merit.

In a unanimous judgment delivered by Justice John Inyang Okoro, the Supreme Court held that the Resident Electoral Commissioner (REC), who declared Binani winner of the governorship election, engaged in an act of criminality and irresponsibility.

He said Binani engaged in self-deceit by hanging to the unlawful and unconstitutional acts of the REC to hold herself out as winner of the governorship poll.

The apex court emphatically held that the REC had no power under any known law to declare election results, as he did in the Adamawa governorship case.

Justice Okoro maintained that the only person vested with power to make declaration on election is the Returning Officer (RO), appointed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

The Supreme Court said the mere pronouncement of Binani and APC as winners by the REC was not in any way helpful to them, adding that the REC ought to have appeared before the Adamawa State Election Petitions Tribunal to give evidence, defend and justify the declaration.

Justice Okoro held that Binani and APC did not in anywhere establish with any oral or documentary exhibit that they won majority of lawful votes cast at the election, other than the purported declaration made by the REC.

He warned public officers to always act within the law in the discharge of responsibilities, and not get carried away by greed, adding that acting in contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and the Electoral Act, in the discharge of public duties, is completely illegal.

In the absence of evidence of scoring majority of lawful votes, Justice Okoro dismissed Binani's petition and upheld the concurrent findings of the Adamawa State Election Petitions Tribunal and Court of Appeal, which earlier returned Fintiri.

**EFCC traces N7b to religious bodies, alleges faith leaders laundering funds for terrorists**

From Nkechi Onyedika-Ugoeze and Matthew Ogune, Abuja

FROM Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ola Olukoyede, yesterday, came a revelation that the agency had traced N7 billion suspected to be proceeds of fraud to religious organisations.

Though he hid identities, Olukoyede pointed out that the organisations quickly obtained restraining orders, stopping the anti-graft agency from inviting their leaders for questioning and prosecution.

He pledged that the commission would not give up on investigation. His words: "A religious sect

in this country had been found to be laundering money for terrorists.

"We were able to trace some laundered money to a religious organisation, and when we approached the religious organisation about it, and we were carrying out our investigation, we got a restraining order stopping us from carrying out our investigation. "To our faith leaders, my appeal is that those, who lead our society from churches and mosques, should develop messages that glorify industry, hard work, probity and contentment over riches, irrespective of how it was made.

"We all must stand up and be counted in the efforts to re-

set the mentality of our youths that the fast lane to affluence is fraud."

According to the EFCC boss, with the launch of the fraud risk assessment project for Ministry, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), the agency would keep close tab on 20 extremely vulnerable agencies of government with the aim of drastically closing the space for brazen graft currently ongoing in the agencies.

In his keynote address, President Bola Tinubu, who lamented that Nigerians have been victims of misrepresentation over the years, canvassed a diverse and resilient nation.

Speaking through his

deputy, Kashim Shittima, Tinubu disclosed that the current administration intends to protect the youths, considered heartbeat of the nation and drivers of the innovation the nation seeks to compete globally.

"Our nation comprises hardworking, honest citizens, who contribute significantly to various fields globally, from Artificial Intelligence (AI) to medicine.

"While we reject blanket stereotyping that undermines the majority upholding principles of integrity and diligence, we must face the fact that we function in an interconnected world, where cybercrimes have evolved into a global phenomenon. This poses a threat not only to our nation, but also to the entire world."

Also speaking, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) President, Daniel Okoh, who argued that religion has always played a leadership role in shaping the moral fabric of the country, insisted that it provides a foundation for principles such as honesty, integrity and accountability.

He said: "When my generations of Christians were growing up, we were taught at Church through the scriptures that 'Honesty is the Best Policy', and a virtue that we must not only seek to have, but that it will bring pleasant rewards and ensure a good relationship in the society that enhances peaceful co-existence.

**'We're engaging Nigerian authorities on mitigating military airstrikes'**

By Tope Templer Olaiya

BARELY two months after Nigerian Army airstrike accidentally killed 85 people and injured several others in Igabi area of Kaduna State, the United States has said it would continue to engage with Nigerian authorities on minimising harm to civilians during military operations.

Speaking yesterday during a briefing on outcome of U.S. Secretary of State, Antony Blinken's recent trip to the country and update on U.S. policy with Africa, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Molly Phee, submitted: "As always when we meet with our Nigerian partners, we talk about how to minimise harm to civilians when undertaking complicated operations against the terrorist threat that Nigeria experiences - also the threat from Boko Haram and from bandits.

"The Secretary also had the opportunity to meet with civilian leaders to talk about their engagement to promote the rights and opportunities for different civilian groups. So, this is a topic that remains an ongoing component of our conversation with Nigeria, and we look for ways in both our policies and programmes to support Nigeria's wish to make sure that the country is safe and secure for all its citizens."



Vice President Kashim Shettima (left) and Chairman of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Ola Olukoyede, during the launch of Fraud Risk Assessment Project for Ministries, Departments and Agencies by the anti-graft agency in Abuja... yesterday.

**Northern groups tackle Tinubu over withdrawal of three nations from ECOWAS**

From Saxone Akhaine, Kaduna

PROMINENT northern intellectuals and civil society groups have blamed President Bola Tinubu's 'hard-line' posture as Chairman of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for withdrawal of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso from the bloc.

They said the decision would complicate the fight against insecurity in Nigeria, except government makes effort to urgently return them.

Led by Arewa Research and

Development Project (ARDP) and Centre for Democratic Development, Research and Training (CDDRT), the groups observed: "The current trajectory of ECOWAS, under your leadership, raises serious concerns. It creates the perception that ECOWAS might be implementing a script, influenced by external, imperialist interests, particularly from former colonial powers like France."

Coordinators of ARDP, Dr Kabiru Chafe and CDDRT, Prof

Abubakar Saddique Mohammed, in an open letter to President Bola Tinubu, said the situation "is really troubling," adding: "Such external influences, if true, could compromise the integrity, autonomy and objectives of ECOWAS, potentially leading to decisions that do not align with the collective interests of West African nations.

"The perception that ECOWAS is being swayed by external and non-African influences undermines the

confidence of member states in the organisation's ability to prioritise and protect African interests. It is crucial that ECOWAS remains a body driven by aspirations and needs of its member states, free from the undue influence of external powers."

Chafe continued: "The strategic decisions and policies of ECOWAS should reflect the collective will of West African nations, aimed at fostering regional integration, peace and security. One of the most pressing issues needing to be dealt with seriously is the fight against insecurity in Nigeria, a battle that is intrinsically linked to the stability

and cooperation within the ECOWAS region.

"The withdrawal of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso poses a direct threat to the collaborative efforts required to combat regional security challenges. These countries, particularly Mali and Niger, are critical in the fight against terrorism and insurgency, given their geographic positioning and the nature of cross-border security threats."

The concerned CSOs include Joint-Action Committee of Northern Youth Association (JACOM) and Don faults FG, ECOWAS handling of Niger Coup.

**'\$1.3b ExxonMobil, Seplat divestment 98% completed'**

From Kingsley Jeremiah, Abuja

THE Federal Government, yesterday, insisted that there is a need to bring on stream the controversial Oil Prospecting Licence (OPL) 245, adding that the 28 years of legal battle over the lucrative asset must end.

The \$1.3 billion sale divestment of ExxonMobil asset to Seplat is also 98 per cent completed, and would be finalised in the coming days, the Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil),

Heineken Lokpobiri, has said. He disclosed that the Port-Harcourt Refinery is still undergoing testing, stressing that much work is needed to ensure that the assets address the country's petroleum products' needs.

Speaking on the backlash surrounding government's efforts to resolve the OPL 245 issue, popularly called Malabu Oil deal, Lokpobiri said the Federal Government has no other business than mediate in resolving every dis-

pute, by bringing every party to the table and ensuring that the needed benefits accrue to the federation are secured.

He added that the current administration is interested in attracting investment and opening dialogue on issues that benefit the country's economy at this critical time. Lokpobiri regretted that the Federal Government has virtually lost most cases instituted in the last 28 years against oil deals.

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## 'Nigerians facing depression over biting economy'

From **Adewale Momoh, Akure**

**F**ORMER Special Adviser to Ondo State Governor on Health matters and ex-National President of the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Prof. Dayo Faduyile, yesterday, said the current economic hardship occasioned by the removal of fuel subsidy had begun to have adverse psychological impacts on most Nigerians.

He stated this while delivering a lecture titled, "Existential Realities of Fuel Subsidy Removal and its Effects on the Mental Health of Nigerian Workers, Overcoming the Challenges," at the first Public Lecture organised by Senior Staff Association Of Nigeria Universities (SSANU), Adekunle Ajasin University,

Akungba-Akoko (AAUA), Ondo State.

While examining the positive and negative effects of fuel subsidy on citizens, Faduyile: "The increase fuel pump price and its attendant effects on all aspect of our lives will further cause emotional trauma and torture on the psyche of those who are struggling to feed, broken homes and increase cases of divorce and suicide.

"The psychological effects of fuel subsidy removal and increase on pump price include cases of depression, aggressiveness and possible suicide. WHO has described poverty as the greatest cause of suffering on earth. There are various direct effects of relative poverty on the development of emotional, behavioural and psychiatric problem."

## Clean your house, FCSC chairman tells civil servants

**C**IVIL service needs to clean its house before it can reclaim its lost glory, the Chairman of Federal Civil Service Commission (FCSC), Prof. Tunji Olaopa, has said.

The chairman spoke yesterday during his meeting with the executive councils of Labour unions in the commission in continuation of his interaction with the staff of the organisation.

He disclosed that the commission was broadening and deepening recent and ongoing reforms to address the virtual collapse of the internal management systems and structures that were the pillars of the service in its glori-

ous era in the first decades of independence.

Olaopa identified structural constraints that limit the efficient and effective function of the service, including limited capabilities in planning, policy design and implementation, project management, performance monitoring and evaluation and reporting.

He said he and the Head of the Civil Service of Federation have been working together to prioritise interventions that would beef up policy intelligence, problem-solving, decision quotients, research and analytical work in MDAs.

## Lead City University appoints deputy registrar

**E**RSTWHILE Director of Corporate Communications and Students Services of Lead City University, Ibadan, Dr Ayobami Owolabi, has been promoted to the post of Deputy Registrar, Corporate Communications and Students Services of the University, effective January 2, 2024.

This is contained in a statement signed by the university.

Owolabi holds the following academic qualifications: B.A (Hons) English, Ogun State University, 1991; Professional Certificate in Public Relations,

NIPR, 1995; PGD, Marketing Management, Nigeria Institute of Journalism, 1996; Master in Communication Arts, University of Ibadan, 2003; Master in Peace & Conflict Studies, University of Ibadan, 2005; and PhD. Integrated Marketing Communications, LCU, 2010

He also has professional qualifications, which include Fellow, Institute of Personality Development & Customer Relationship Management; Fellow, National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, and Fellow, Institute of Corporate & Business Affairs.

## Reps sets December 2025 to deliver new constitution

• Receive 40 alteration bills as 1999 Constitution review commences

From **Adamu Abuh and Sodiq Omolayo (Abuja)**

**D**EPUTY Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Okezie Kalu, has revealed that 40 bills have been received for the commencement of the 1999 Constitution review.

He also announced that the review committee would complete its assignment by December, 2025.

Kalu made the disclosures at the pre-inaugural meeting of the House of Representatives Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which he also doubles as the

chairman. The Deputy Speaker also said the Constitution review committee would be officially inaugurated on February 26, 2024.

Recall that the House leadership recently constituted the committee for the 10th National Assembly, making it the sixth time the parliament would be embarking on amendments of the Nigerian Constitution.

The deputy speaker added that the committee would take into consideration the concerns of Nigerians and bequeath to the nation a constitution that would reflect the yearning of the people.

# Poor preparation, logistics stall student loan scheme

By **Owede Agbajileke, Abuja**

**D**ESPITE assurances by the Presidency that Students Loan Scheme would kick off in January, it has failed to do so.

Some of the factors responsible for the failure include non-inclusion of representatives of students on the Students' Loan Board, logistics challenges arising from domiciling the Loans Board at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) instead of Federal Ministry of Education, and the decision by the Presidency to include persons outside the formal school setting.

It was further observed that the website, where students were expected to apply for the facility was yet to be launched.

Signed into law by President Bola Tinubu on June 12, 2023, the Access to Tertiary

Education Act, also known as the Students Loan Act, is expected to provide access to higher education for poor students through interest-free loans.

According to the proponents, it will enable indigent students to access Federal Government loans to fund their tertiary education as done in developed countries.

Sponsored by the Speaker of the Ninth House of Representatives and Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabamila, the Student Loan Act repealed the Nigerian Education Bank Act Cap. N104, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and seeks to create a legal framework for the grant of loans to indigent or low-income Nigerians in order to facilitate the payment of their tuition fees.

Although the Federal Government had, through the immediate past Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Andrew Adejo, disclosed that it was working out modalities to kick-start the process in September/October 2023. This, however, failed to happen as President Bola Tinubu set a new date of January 2024.

Speaking at the 29th National Economic Summit in October last year, President Tinubu said the loan programme "must commence" in January 2024, adding that there would be no more industrial actions in the tertiary institutions.

Other top government officials, who have reiterated the January take-off at public engagements, include the Chief of Staff to the President,

Femi Gbajabamila; Minister of Education, Prof Tahir Mamman; Minister of State for Education, Dr Yusuf Tanko Sununu, among others.

In a chat with The Guardian, the National President, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), Lucky Emonefe described the delay as worrisome.

He urged the Dr Akintunde Sawyer-led Students' Loans Board to get serious and put its house in order.

Emonefe expressed dismay that a meeting called by the board last week to iron out grey areas was called off at the 11th hour.

He said: "It was supposed to commence in January but nothing was done. It was as a result of the inclusion of skill acquisition. There is an expansion of the Students' Loans Scheme to include skills."



Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of Economy, Wale Edun (left); Minister of Works, David Umahi; Controller of Works in Lagos, Federal Ministry of Works (FMW), Olukorede Kesho; Director of Construction, Buildwell Construction Company, George Mohanna; and Director, Highway Construction and Rehabilitation (FMW), Adedamola Kuti, during inspection of the Lagoon Section of Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos ...yesterday. PHOTO: NAN

## NIN-SIM linkage deadline remains 27 days as subscribers flood telcos outlets

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

**N**ATIONAL Identity Commission (NIMC) has distributed additional enrolment systems to all the states as part of steps to ease NIN enrolment challenges and increase operational capacity.

NIMC, which said the Director-General/Chief Executive Officer, Abisoye Odusote-Coker, approved the

distribution, said the provision of additional enrolment devices underscores the commitment of the DG/CEO to streamline operations and enhance overall effectiveness.

The commission said the systems had since been installed and in use across states and had not only resulted in the reduction of time spent by applicants but had also increased the number of applicants attended to daily.

A statement by NIMC Head, Corporate Communications, Kayode Adegoke, yesterday, further informed that Coker-Odusote, has also sent out monitoring and evaluation teams across various centres nationwide to ensure a smooth running of enrolment and modification exercises.

NIMC said the team would also ensure strict compliance with her zero tolerance

stance against all forms of extortion and unethical practices.

According to the Commission, Coker-Odusote has emphasised that her administration will not condone extortion of applicants and has since directed that any staff found wanting would be dealt with in line with the provisions of the constitution and extant Public Service Rules.

## Ban on styrofoam: Pioneer Waste Master advocates recycling as ultimate solution

**A**foremost waste management company in Nigeria has advocated recycling of waste as the ultimate solution to indiscriminate waste disposal and evacuation, while commending Lagos State Government bold initiative on the ban of styrofoam single use plastics.

The Managing Director of the Company and inventor of 'Pioneer Waste Unit' Ambassador Promise Ekpoye Nakus sent the message of advocacy and commendation while speaking on possibilities of transforming waste to wealth and employment during an environmental advocacy programme organized by the company in some communities in Abuja municipal area council of the Federal Capital

### • Commends LASG

Territory, FCT. According to the inventor of Pioneer Waste Unit, other state governments across the country should emulate the Lagos State Government and step up actions on the ban to further embrace recycling of waste in order to solve the problem where some capital cities are littered with garbage heaps.

Promise Ekpoye Nakus submitted that the Lagos States Government's initiative on the ban placed on Styrofoam single use plastic can only yield fruitful results if recycling and partnership is given due attention.

He said the idea of recycling is in line with the modern world wide approach to

changing strategic actions for cleaner cities in view of the coming disaster of plastic pollution hence Pioneer Waste Unit was invented and recycling plants was mapped out and seeking implementation through partnership with the Government.

The managing director stated that Pioneer Waste Master is irrevocably committed to conversion of waste to wealth as the cardinal vision and objective of the company to provide ten million jobs for our teeming youths in Nigeria and use it as well to generate revenue for Government.

Ambassador Ekpoye Nakus stressed that the Company pledged submission and willingness to work with

Government on partnership to setting up recycling plants across the country to solve the problem of now and future danger of pollution on indiscriminate usage of plastics and formulation of strategic policies to make waste recycling an management the ultimate solution as applicable to other nations of the world.

The Pioneer Waste Master Limited and the inventor of Pioneer Waste Unit expressed confidence that responsible Governments always proffer solutions and trust the Government of his Excellency President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR preparedness to address the problem of indiscriminate waste evacuation and disposal in Nigeria.

## PDP group urges govt to refund ransom paid for Aivoji's release, others

From **Seye Olumide**, Ibadan

THE National Mandate Group (NMG), an Atiku Abubakar support organisation for the 2023 presidential election, has congratulated the Lagos State Chairman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), Philip Aivoji, who was freed on Monday after his abduction last week along Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

Lagos State Chairman of NMG, Wahab Sadiq, said that for failing to provide security, the Federal Government must work out a refund and a compensation package for kidnapped victims that paid ransom to regain their freedom throughout the country.

Sadiq said that it took the grace of God for Aivoji to have survived the ordeal of being abducted and subjected to all sorts of psychological torture and physical trauma in the hands of the kidnapers.

The group, which lambasted President Bola Tinubu for abandoning his duty post and taking a vacation at this period of national calamity, recalled that the President left the country for "private visit" overseas soon after the killing of over 50 unarmed Nigerians by terrorists in Plateau and Benue states.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

## Lagos govt says only 24% of 2024 budget meant for infrastructure

Keeps mum on likely PAYE contribution to IGR

By **Gbenga Salau**

Lagos State Government, yesterday, said that only 24.28 per cent (N550.68 billion) of the state's N2.267 trillion 2024 budget would be for the development and maintenance of its infrastructure.

The state's Commissioner for Economic Planning and Budget, Ope George, who disclosed this during the state's 2024 budget analysis at the Bagauda Kaltho Press Centre in Alausa, Ikeja, said the N550.689 billion on infrastructure represents 24.28 per cent of the entire budget but is part of the N1.315 trillion capital budget for the year.

He said there would be continuation of ongoing transportation projects, such as the expansion of the rail network, road construction, and completion of the Blue/Red Line and other metro projects within the state.

George said the budget would also address development of affordable housing schemes and urban renewal projects in addressing the housing deficit in the state by injecting N55.924 billion, representing 2.5 per cent of the entire budget.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

# NANS seeks rescue of Ekiti pupils, teachers

From **Ayodele Afolabi** (Ado-Ekiti), **Adewale Momoh** (Akure) and **Owede Agbajileke** (Abuja)

THE National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has condemned the abduction of six school children and their teachers in Ekiti State and called on the government to ensure their immediate and safe return.

The umbrella body of the Nigerian students also called for increased security measures in schools and surrounding communities to prevent future occurrences.

NANS National President, Lucky Emonefe, in a statement, yesterday, cautioned that if left unchecked, the surge in kidnapping across the country could increase the over 20 million out-of-school children in Nigeria.

RELATEDLY, Ogun State Council of Traditional

- Urges increased security measures for students' safety
- Ogun traditional rulers condemn killing of monarchs
- Ekiti Council of Obas directs kings to flush out kidnapers from forests
- Ondo Amotekun deploys 100 operatives to rescue victims

Rulers also expressed its sadness over the reported killing of two monarchs in Ekiti State.

Akarigbo of Remoland and Chairman of the Council, Oba Adewale Babatunde Ajayi, who spoke on behalf of the traditional rulers, through his Spokesman, Baamofin of Remoland, Bayo Onafuwa, said: "On behalf of all the Obas in Ogun State, Akarigbo wishes to commiserate with the families of the departed. It is, however, a sad commentary on the state of insecurity in the country.

"Kabiyesi urges the government to do its best by protecting the lives of its citizens."

ALSO, the Ekiti State Council of Traditional Rulers, yesterday, directed all monarchs in the state to immediately flush out bandits and kidnapers from Ekiti forests.

This was part of the communique issued at the end of an emergency meeting with the governor on the state of insecurity in the state, yesterday.

The royal fathers, in the communique signed by Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti and Chairman, Ekiti Council of Traditional Rulers, Oba Ayorinde Ilori Faboro, demanded that the state government should empower the traditional

rulers with adequate resources to police and secure their domains.

The monarchs, while calling on government at all levels to apprehend the perpetrators and made them to face the wrath of the law in no distant time, urged the Federal Government to deploy more security personnel to Ekiti State.

MEANWHILE, no fewer than 100 operatives of the Ondo State Security Network Agency, otherwise known as Amotekun Corps, were yesterday deployed to Ekiti State to rescue the pupils that were kidnapped in Emure-Ekiti.



Chairman, Ekiti State Council of Traditional Rulers/Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti, Oba Ayorinde Ilori-Faboro (left); Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Dr Habibatu Adubiaro; Deputy Governor, Monisade Afuye and Governor Biodun Oyejobi, during a meeting with the monarchs to review the security situation in the state in Ado-Ekiti...yesterday.

## Ibadan explosion: Makinde signs executive order on handling, storage of harmful substances

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

OYO State Governor, Seyi Makinde, yesterday signed into law an Executive Order on handling and storage of harmful substances.

This followed the unfortunate incident that claimed innocent lives and destroyed property at Bodija in Ibadan, Oyo State.

Makinde, who spoke with journalists after signing the Executive Order into law at his private office, said the move became imperative in the light of the unfortunate

- Says anyone caught will face full wrath of law
- Malian, Youssouf, denies owning Bodija building, explosives

incident at Bodija where explosives were stored in a residential area.

He said with the new law, such an incident would never reoccur in the state.

Makinde said: "I just signed an Executive Order on handling and storage of harmful substances. If you are caught in Oyo State not following the law, the law will take its full course. There is zero tolerance on handling of harmful substances."

MEANWHILE, the Malian, Sawane Youssouf, suspected to be the owner of the Ground Zero building where explosives were allegedly stockpiled, leading to the explosion that rocked Bodija area in Ibadan, Oyo State, has said that he neither owned nor rented the house in question for any activity.

Youssouf, in a statement he personally signed and titled,

"Bodija Explosion: My own side of the Story," and made available to newsmen in Ibadan, yesterday, said that though the incident was unfortunate, his activities as a miner were legal.

He said that though he resides in Ibadan, he had never rented or owned a house at Dejo Oyelese Avenue in Bodija where the incident happened.

He, therefore, promised to help the security agencies during further investigation into the sad incident.

## S'West seeks partnership with NADF, others to enhance agriculture

From **Seye Olumide**, Ibadan

SOUTH-WEST states, which include Lagos, Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo and Osun, have sought the collaboration of the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN) Commission, National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and Odu'a Investments Company Limited (OICL), to fund agricultural development to boost revenues base in the region.

Commissioners for Agriculture across the six South-West states, who spoke during a two-day stakeholders' meeting facilitated by DAWN, harped on funding as a sure means through which agriculture could be developed in the region.

Lagos State listed its priority in agriculture to include establishment of agro-produce hubs and improving value chains in rice, coconut, red meat, poultry, fishery and piggery, while its Ekiti counterpart placed premium on the case for cocoa, oil

Ogun State spoke of its comparative advantage in the region for production of cassava, poultry, and the cargo airport and needs funding to

increase their output, while Ondo wanted funding support for land development, climate smart agriculture, seedling development, forest regeneration and development of priority value chains.

Osun State, on its part, sought funding support for rural road rehabilitation, upgrading of farm settlement and establishment of new ones, among others, just as Oyo sought funding to support ongoing initiatives by the state government on mechanised farming, viable seed production, climate smart agriculture, processing and storage facilities, and farm

service centres.

In his address, Executive Secretary of NADF, Mohammed Abu Ibrahim, said that the body is focusing on improving agricultural output, import substitution, and employment generation in alignment with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda.

Also speaking, the Director-General of DAWN, Seye Oyeleye, said the organisation is "the best platform to meet the six states of the region" and assured all stakeholders of the body's readiness to ensure best practices are adopted."

## FG pledges to fight against chemicals' utilisation challenges

Ogun holds second chemical handlers, users' workshop

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

THE Federal Government has said that it is making an intentional all-inclusive and properly-contextualised effort to fight the environmental ills brought about by industrialisation to evade their deleterious effects.

Minister of State for Environment, Dr Izaq Kunle Salako, who disclosed this, yesterday, said that achieving the target would not be possible without the circular economy principle, adding that a sustainable and future-focused economy must include its development.

Salako, while delivering his keynote address at the Ogun State Environmental Protection Agency (OGEPA) second chemical handlers and users workshop, said the concept of circular economy is very broad and overarches a range of related topics, including resource efficiency, waste hierarchy, shift to renewable resources both for material and energy purposes and more.

He said that the large volume of waste being generated in the present circular economy business opportunities across the waste management value chain should be properly harnessed for job creation and composting facilities, among others.

In his speech, Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, who was represented by his deputy, Noimot Salako-Oyedele, said Ogun State, being the industrial hub in Nigeria, would do everything possible to reduce chemical pollution and waste management through OGEPA.

## Ondo NDDC representative upbraids Aiyedatiwa over stakeholders' meeting

- Carpets Ondo APC chairman over role
- Says gov goofed in dissolving exco

From **Adewale Momoh**, Akure

AREPRESENTATIVE of Ondo State on the board of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), Otito Atikase, yesterday, faulted Governor Lucky Aiyedatiwa over the stakeholders' meeting of the leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) held at his instance.

Atikase, who described the stakeholders' meeting as factional, said that it ought to have been called by the chairman of the party in the state, Ade Adetimehin, and not Aiyedatiwa, who is also an aspirant.

The former lawmaker, who spoke with newsmen in Akure, the state capital, maintained that as the party's chairman, Adetimehin ought not to have been involved in the meeting for the sake of neutrality.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

# CBN frantically tightens noose on banks' FX operations, speculators

From Collins Olayinka, Abuja

- Lenders to reduce FX exposure today • Experts differ on strategies
- Banned from lending dollar facility in naira
- Cardoso ordered to stabilise market, faces Senate next week

GOING forward, all deposit money banks (DMB) are to disclose their positions on foreign exchange (FX) holdings and draw it down to not more than 20 per cent short of their shareholders' funds.

In a memo addressed to all banks yesterday, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) said the latest move was informed by the need to curb the growth in foreign currency exposures of banks through their net open position (NOP).

The new directive comes on the heels of rising panic in the monetary authority over the fate of the naira, which dipped further to about N1520/\$ at the parallel market as at press time.

It is the latest of the series of policy options the regulator has taken in the past year to stop the free fall of the domestic currency.

Indeed, Cardoso is racing against time to rein in the

free fall of naira. Yesterday, the Senate, through its Committee on Banking, Insurance and other Financial Institutions, summoned the governor to appear before it on Tuesday next week to answer questions on the state of the economy and the sharp depreciation of naira, a currency adjudged the third worst performing last year.

The Committee, chaired by Senator Adetokunbo Abiru, met yesterday as the currency tumbled to N1520/\$ at the parallel market and resolved to summon the CBN governor on the way out.

The apex bank, in the memo, 'Harmonisation of reporting requirements on foreign currency exposures of banks,' said: "The CBN has noted with concern the growth in foreign currency exposures of banks through

their net open position (NOP). This has created an incentive for banks to hold excess long foreign currency positions, which exposes banks to foreign exchange and other risks."

The memo, which was jointly signed by the Director of Trade and Exchange Department of CBN, Dr Hassan Mahmud, and Ijeoma Sike of the Banking Supervision Department, explained that to ensure that the risks are well managed and avoid losses that could pose material systemic challenges, the NOP limit of the overall foreign currency assets and liabilities taking into cognizance both those on and off-balance sheet should not exceed 20 per cent short or zero per cent long of shareholders' funds unimpaired by losses using the gross aggregate method.

The apex bank also said that banks, whose current NOP exceed 20 per cent short and zero per cent long of their shareholders' funds unimpaired by losses have till today to comply with the prudential limit.

The CBN directed that banks are now required to compute their daily and monthly NOP and foreign currency trading position (FCTP) using the attached templates.

The directive, according to sources, is carefully being studied to ascertain its impacts on FX operations and the full consequences for customers' funds. Some said the timeframe required to cut down excess FX holdings leaves too much to be desired and underpins the pressure on the CBN to stabilize the market.

In addition, banks are also required to have adequate stock of high-quality liquid foreign assets, that is cash and government securities in each significant currency to cover their maturing foreign currency obligations. In addition, banks should have in place a foreign exchange contingency funding arrangement with other financial institutions.

There are other requirements such as banks should borrow and lend in the same currency (natural hedging) to avoid currency mismatch associated with foreign currency risk.

The bankers' bank added: "The basis of the interest rate for borrowing should be the

same as that of lending i.e. there should be no mismatch in floating and fixed interest rates, to mitigate basis risk associated with foreign borrowing interest rate risk. Concerning Eurobonds, any clause of early redemption should be at the instance of the issuer and approval obtained from the CBN in this regard, even if the bond does not qualify as tier-two capital.

"All banks are required to adopt adequate treasury and risk management systems to provide oversight of all foreign exchange exposures and ensure accurate reporting on a timely basis. Banks are expected to bring all their exposures within the set limits immediately and ensure that all returns submitted to the CBN provide an accurate reflection of their balance sheets," it stated.

The apex bank warned that non-compliance with the NOP limit would result in immediate sanction and/or suspension from participation in the foreign exchange market.

The *Guardian* learnt the policy stems from a directive by President Bola Tinubu to the CBN boss, Yemi Cardoso, to move ahead with all policies required to shore up the value of the naira and reposition the economy for stable growth.

To this end, the Banker's Committee may have lost out in their efforts to stop the full unification of reform of the FX market.

The source said: "The President has given the CBN governor all the support he needs to ensure the naira stays strong without ham-

pering major reform currently going in the financial space. The Banker's Committee has been against opening the FX space. They want only banks to dominate the space. The banks want to monopolise the FX supply from the CBN. They want to be the only ones who will be able to access FX from the CBN.

"This makes distortions very easy. When they get their allocations from the CBN, they wait for naira to depreciate and then sell. This will result in huge interest for them. This is what has been happening. Now, with the President's backing, there is no one to call in the Aso Rock."

On the safety of domiciliary account holdings following the new policy, Chief Executive Officer of Dairy Hills Limited, Kelvin Emmanuel, said depositors' money is safe, saying, "Dorm accounts are safe. This is to reduce the ability of banks to round trip on FX rate and earn from arbitrage, which is like hoarding of FX. This is a major step because the banks who are primary dealers are a big problem in the FX markets," he said.

Checks showed that since September 22, 2023, when Cardoso assumed office, he has introduced several policies, which include the Authorised Financial Markets Signatories and the Dealing Mandates and Approved Communication Channels for Transaction with the Financial Markets Department. These were issued in December.

Divergent views have trailed the effectiveness or otherwise of the current managed float of the naira.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)



Leader of the Senate, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele (left); German Ambassador, Annett Günther; Senate President Godswill Akpabio; Deputy Senate President Barau Jibrin; Deputy Whip of the Senate, Nwobonyi Onyeka and Chairman, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Production Services and Rural Development, Senator Saliu Mustapha during the envoy's courtesy visit to the Senate leadership in Abuja ...yesterday.

## Monarchs' killing: Ooni, George call for community policing, input of ex-service chiefs

By Kehinde Olatunji

THE Ooni of Ife, Ooni Adeyeye Ogunwusi, has urged the federal and state governments to expedite action on establishing community policing to stem the tide of insecurity across the country. He made this known yesterday while condemning the attack on three monarchs in Ekiti State that led to the death of two traditional rulers.

The gunmen killed the Onimojo of Imojo in the Oye Local Government Area, Oba Olatunde Olusola, and the Elesun of Esun Ekiti in the Ikole Local Government Area, Oba Babatunde Ogunsakin, while the Alara of Ara Ekiti, Oba Adebayo Fatoba in the Ikole Local Government Area, escaped.

Reacting to the killing in a

- Northwest governors adopt common approach in tackling insecurity
- Onanuga: Nigeria safer than U.S., South Africa
- Armed men killed 10 Benue IDPs – Camp commandant

statement signed by his spokesman, Moses Olafare, the Ooni, serving as the co-Chairman of the National Council of Traditional Rulers of Nigeria (NCTR), described the incident as a sacrilegious audacity deliberately planned and executed to undermine the security capacity of Nigeria.

He urged Governor Biodun Oyebanji and President Bola Tinubu to expedite thorough investigations into the killings and ensure that the perpetrators face the full wrath of the law.

According to him, if this could happen to the traditional rulers, what would then become hopes for their

common subjects who look up to them for local security interventions.

He said the recent spate of killings and kidnappings of traditional rulers and school children across the country highlights the urgent need for a robust, community-oriented security system.

The monarch argued that community policing, with its emphasis on local involvement, will be helpful in enhancing intelligence gathering, deterring criminal activities, and ensuring the safety of Nigerians.

The statement read: "Assassinating traditional rulers in cold blood! This is absolutely unacceptable to us. This reprehensible act has not only robbed us of noble leaders but has also left a scar on the fabric of our unity and peaceful coexistence as a nation. Government must stop at nothing to ensure the perpe-

trators are arrested and made to face justice."

Similarly, former Deputy National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Bode George, has urged President Tinubu to leverage modern technology to address the issues of insecurity in the country, saying the country is on the precipice of disintegration.

He also urged the President to put politics aside and invite the old service chiefs and experienced former leaders like General Yakubu Gowon, former president Olusegun Obasanjo, General Abdulsalam Abubakar and General Gusau, among others for discussions, saying the security situation of the country has gone beyond only one man thinking it through.

George, who spoke at his Ikoyi office, also questioned the job of the national security adviser, Nuhu Ribadu,

asking what he was still doing in office if managing the security of the country is beyond him.

He maintained that Amotekun should be given weapons to carry out their jobs, saying the current image of the country is not impacting on the foreigners that want to do business here.

He said: "There are modern equipment the military must buy to address the horrendous security problems in the country. If we are serious, we can train our people to use drones to address the situation. I was a weapon system engineer in the military. Technology has gone a long way. Get our boys to train about the necessary tools. These guys (kidnappers) are all over the place, it's like nobody is secure in the country anymore."

"Can you imagine the trauma the Lagos State PDP chairman, Philip Aivoji, passed through spending three nights with kidnappers in the bush. Recently two Obas

were killed in Ekiti. This is sacrilegious. What exactly is going on?"

"Former governor of Ondo State, Rotimi Akeredolu, will be remembered in the Southwest for being at the forefront of establishing Amotekun but without giving them weapons, what can they do? "The president must invite all the elders who had one thing in the military to come for discussion. The situation has become a national calamity. We assisted Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia. Now that it's our time, we can't do it? This raging storm will be quiet if we are deliberate."

Governors from the Northwest zone have pledged to work together and adopt a common approach in tackling security challenges bedeviling the region. Governor Dikko Radda of Katsina State, said this during the inauguration of the Zamfara State Community Protection Guard (ZSCPG), on Wednesday in Gusau.

Read the remaining part of this story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

**TRUEFACT: BEHAVIOUR OF A CHRISTIAN; IMITATE GOD**  
 Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us[a] and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.  
 [Ephesians 5 : 1-2 ---- NLT]  
 Prayer: Father let us live a life that will attract others to you.  
 Email Address: [g.truefact@gmail.com](mailto:g.truefact@gmail.com)

## Navy destroys three illegal refining sites in Bayelsa

From **Julius Osahon**, Yenagoa

THE Nigerian Navy Forward Operating Base (FOB) FORMOSO, in Brass Local Council of Bayelsa State, has destroyed three illegal refining sites laden with about 50,000 litres of products suspected to be stolen crude oil.

The operation was conducted from Sunday to Tuesday, January 28 to 30, 2024, in Bayelsa.

The operation, which was in line with the recently launched Nigerian Navy Operation Delta Sanity, was to put an end to illegal oil theft and bunkering activities within the maritime domain.

In a statement signed and issued to newsmen, yesterday, by the Commanding Officer Forward Operating Base (FORMOSO), Captain

Murtala Aminu Rogo, the outfit carried out a three days patrol along Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) Tebidaba - Brass pipeline.

He said: "On January 29, 2024, the team located one illegal refinery site and a wooden boat laden with about 20,000 litres of product suspected to be crude oil at Latitude 04°30'38"N Longitude 006°14'51"E, Galubakiri Creek, Nembe Local Council of Bayelsa.

"While in the heat of the patrol, on the same day at about 11: 30 P.M., another illegal refinery site was also located laden with about 17,000 litres of product suspected to be stolen crude oil at position Latitude 04°31'51"N Longitude 006°15'58"E around Mbiakpaba, Nembe Local Council of Bayelsa.

## Obaseki, InfraCorp, others seal N228b deal for reconstruction of Benin-Asaba expressway

THE Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, yesterday, signed a N228 billion agreement with the Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria (InfraCorp) and AAA Infrastructure Nigeria Limited (Triple A Infrastructure) for the reconstruction of the Benin-Asaba Expressway.

The road project is to be funded by Triple A Infrastructure and InfraCorp, supported by the Edo State Government as an equity

investor under the 25-year Highway Development Management Initiative (HDMI) Concession to Africa Plus Partners.

Signing the deal at the Government House, in Benin City, the Edo State capital, Obaseki, who described the partnership as a great financing model for unlocking infrastructure development in the country, urged for sustained partnership between states and the Federal Government.

## Reject aspirants with no track records, Ighodalo tells PDP leaders

• **Group cautions parties against imposition of candidates**

From **Michael Egbejule**, Benin City

GOVERNORSHIP aspirant on the platform of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Asue Ighodalo, yesterday, appealed to the party leaders and delegates to reject aspirants with no track records of development in order not to nominate a mediocre as the party's candidate for the September 21 governorship poll.

Ighodalo made the remark while addressing PDP leaders and members in Oredo Local Council, as part of his ongoing statewide tour in Benin City, the Edo State Capital. The governorship aspirant, who

appealed to the people of Oredo to support and nominate him, said he has the blueprint to develop the state.

He further advised the people to reject aspirants with no track records of development in order not to nominate a mediocre as the party candidate for the September 21 governorship poll.

MEANWHILE, A socio-political group, Concerned Edo Citizens Forum (CECF), yesterday, called on political parties, ahead of the Edo governorship election, to conduct free, fair and credible primaries that will be acceptable to all.

## Maritime industry eulogises late Akinsoji

By **Adaku Onyenuchey**

TRIBUTES have been pouring in from the maritime industry in honour of the late Nigerian representative on the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and former Rector, Maritime Academy of Nigeria (MAN), Oron, Akwa Ibom State, Olu Akinsoji.

The maritime industry practitioners in Apapa, Lagos, on Tuesday, gathered to celebrate the life and times of the late Akinsoji, an industry icon and a former Government Registrar of Ships, who passed away on January 16, 2024 at the age of

79.

Industry stakeholders described the late Akinsoji as a patriotic Nigerian who dedicated his lifetime to the growth of the maritime industry.

The Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Dr. Bashir Jamoh, expressed deep sense of sadness on the death of Akinsoji, describing him as a patriotic Nigerian, consummate professional and a maritime expert who was committed to the growth and development of the nation's maritime industry.

# Court orders arrest of Fubara's chief of staff, five others over alleged terrorism, killing of DPO

From **Ameh Ochojila** (Abuja) and **Obinna Nwaoku** (Port Harcourt)

A FEDERAL High Court in Abuja, yesterday, issued a warrant for the arrest of the Chief of Staff (CoS) to the Rivers State Governor, Edison Ehie, over his alleged involvement in the burning of the state House of Assembly.

Ehie, who is the immediate past factional Speaker of state Assembly, was to be arrested along with five other people for allegedly participating in some criminal activities.

Those to be arrested along with Ehie are Jinjiri Bala, Happy Benedict, Progress Joseph, Adokiye Oyagiri and Chibuike Peter also known as Rambo.

Justice Emeka Nwite granted the order, while delivering a ruling in an ex-parte application brought before him by the Inspector General of Police (IGP).

The ex-parte application was predicated on sections 37, 113, 114, 84 and 184 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 and Section 35 of the 1999 Constitution, as well as 32 of the Police Act 2020.

In the ex-parte application argued by a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Simon Lough, the six defendants were said to be at large.

The senior lawyer submit-

## • Ehie secures restraining order against arrest

ted that the defendants are involved in conspiracy, arson, terrorism, attempted murder and murder of a Superintendent of Police, SP Bako Agbashim, and five other police informants.

HOWEVER, a Rivers State High Court, sitting in Port Harcourt, has granted a motion ex-parte filed by Ehie against arrest by security agencies.

The Chief of Staff to

Governor Fubara had gone to court to restrain the police and other security agencies from arresting, detaining and harassing him over his alleged involvement in the invasion of the Rivers State House of Assembly.

The presiding Judge, Justice Sika Aprioku, after granting the order, adjourned till February 6 for a hearing of the substantive application.

It was gathered that the Martin Amaewhule-led lawmakers had written criminal petitions against Ehie to the Rivers Police Command for masterminding the invasion and burning of the hallowed chambers of the state Assembly on October 29, 2023.

In the petition, the lawmakers had demanded the police to arrest and prosecute Ehie for his alleged involvement in the burning of the Assembly building.



Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki (left) and Managing Director, Triple A Infrastructure, Niran Ajakaiye, after signing an agreement for the reconstruction of the Benin-Asaba Expressway...yesterday.

## Alleged diversion of N280m: Delta suspends agric commissioner, chief accountant, others

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

DELTA State government, yesterday, suspended the Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Omoun Perekebena Perez, while Permanent Secretary, Mr Bennett Ezon-Abode Agamah, Assistant Director, Agricultural Engineering, Oki Preowei Yintareke, and Chief Accountant, Gabriel Idiatacheko, were directed to proceed on compulsory leave over alleged diversion of N280 million Greenhouse

projects of the ministry into private account.

The Guardian learnt that the N280 million was allegedly transferred into the private account of one Oki, an engineer in three tranches of N100 million, N80 million and N100 million, respectively.

Apparently disturbed by the alleged diversion of the government funds, Governor Sheriff Oborevweri constituted a seven-man committee to immediately wade into the matter, consid-

ering that the act is totally against the civil service rules and the financial regulations policy of Nigeria.

The committee, chaired by the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Dr. Kingsley Emu, is to investigate the claims and perceived infractions related to the management of the funds by those involved.

According to a statement signed by the SSG, which was made available to The Guardian in Asaba, yesterday, Oborevweri approved the

immediate suspension of Perez, while Agamah, Yintareke and Idiatacheko are to proceed on compulsory leave until further notice in line with civil service extant rules.

It added that the government's action was in no way "presumption of guilt, but a necessary measure to uphold the sanctity of the investigative processes already instituted, which is to ensure that the investigation is conducted without any potential for undue influence or bias."

## Imo Assembly urges Uzodimma to recover parliamentary buildings

From **Charles Ogugbuaja**, Owerri

THE 27-member Imo State House of Assembly, presided over by the Speaker, Chike Olemgbe, has urged Governor Hope Uzodimma to take necessary steps to recover the parliamentary quarters currently leased out on commercial purpose to yet-to-be mentioned investors.

The member representing Orlu Constituency, Dr. Ikenna Ihezue, moved the motion, yesterday, during a plenary and was co-sponsored by Bernard Ozoemenam, the

member representing Ehime Mbano Constituency, Dominic Ezerioha, Uche Agabige (Orsu), James Esile, Innocent Ikpamezie (Mbaitoli), Chigozie Nwaneri, Kelechi Ofurum (Owerri North) and Bernard Ozoemenam.

The Guardian gathered that the buildings located in Owerri, which were started by the late Sam Mbakwe administration, but were left uncomplicated for decades until the Rochas Okorocho administration, had a co-sponsored by

completion, then converted and renamed it to Heroes Apartments. Ihezue, who is the Chairman, Committee on House Services, said whereas members of the House had no accommodation, but have been operating from hotels, and faced with the problem of settling down, their legal quarters were leased out on commercial basis, illegally.

According to him, he had searched in all the available and relevant files and documents, there were no documented resolutions of the House that the buildings

should be leased out in any form. He condemned the seemingly Gestapo style the then administration used to eject occupants (members of staff and other dependents) from the quarters without enough time to find alternative accommodation.

He urged that members should pressure the governor to recover the buildings the same way he recovered other government property ceded wrongly by previous administrations, re-designating it to parliamentary quarters as originally backed by the law.

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## Police arrest suspected kidnappers, armed robbers, others in Taraba

From Charles Akpeji, Jalingo

TARABA State Police Command, yesterday, paraded suspected kidnappers, armed robbers and others arrested during operations aimed at curbing the surge in criminal activities in the state.

Parading the suspects at Command Headquarters in Jalingo, the Commissioner of Police, Joseph Eribo, said the action was carried out under the directive of Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetukon, who encouraged the command to

intensify its efforts through community-based and intelligence-led policing.

He described the arrest of a syndicate of suspected kidnappers terrorising Jauro Ganah, and individuals involved in the vandalism of a transformer belonging to the Yola Electricity Distribution Company as one of the notable achievements of the command.

Another significant arrest, the commissioner said, involved a notorious kidnapping gang leader, Badon



Suspects

Linus, who confessed to leading a syndicate responsible for high-profile abductions, including that of the third-class chief of Pupule, a pastor,

and others.

Eribo attributed the successes to collaborative efforts with other security agencies, vigilantes, and hunters.

In another operation, the commissioner said the anti-kidnapping squad, in collaboration with vigilantes, arrested suspects connected with the recent kidnap of five victims in Runde village.

He said the operation resulted in the rescue of abducted individuals and the death of one of the kidnappers during a gun duel.

He also said a team of mobile policemen arrested one Aliyu Mohammed with a substantial amount of cash, phones, unused MTN

recharge cards, and amulets, adding: "The suspect attempted to bribe the police but was apprehended."

While commending the efforts of police operatives and acknowledging the support received from the state governor, Kefas Agbu, and other security agencies, stakeholders, vigilantes, hunters, and law-abiding citizens of the state, Eribo assured the public that the command remains committed to ensuring safety and security in the state.

## Fire engulfs Lagos church hours before advertised programme

By Eniola Daniel

THE auditorium of Household of David Church was engulfed by fire, yesterday, few hours before an advertised programme.

The incident at the premises located at Surulere Road, Ikeja Local Council, Lagos State, led to the destruction of property estimated at mil-

lions of naira.

The Guardian learned that the programme, tagged 'Mercy Conference', was to have started yesterday, January 31.

Senior Pastor of the church, Olusola Osunmakinde, described the experience as painful, adding that someone walked into the premises and mockingly asked: "Where was

Jesus when this happened?"

In a video shared on the church's Instagram account, a few hours after the incident, Osunmakinde said air conditioners, chairs, and other equipment were destroyed.

He said: "As we know, Mercy Conference starts today, but something happened, and I just want to put a message out there to people. I came here this morning. Everybody was setting up, everything was going fine. All of a sudden, we started hearing that there was a fire and something was up there on the roof of the church.

"I know there would be reactions, and people will say this and that. But that is none of my concern now. The most important thing is this, we thank God no life was lost and we thank God for everything. We are not too discouraged but we believe in God that we will still go on with the conference.

"To everyone out there, we are not sad. We are happy, for all things work together... The Bible didn't say all good things... all things both bad and ugly."



Debris of the church auditorium yesterday

## NDLEA arrests 198 drug peddlers in Kano's graveyards, nightclubs

From Murtala Adewale, Kano

OPERATIVES of Kano State Command of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) have arrested 198 suspected drug users, following raids at graveyards and nightclubs in the state.

Spokesperson for the agency in Kano, Sadiq Mohammad Maigatari, who confirmed this in a statement yesterday, said 61 of the suspects, including 15 females, were arrested at a popular night club in the city where illicit substances were freely sold.

He said the arrests were carried out during 'operation Hana Maye', recently launched by the state commander, Abubakar Idris, to combat rising cases of drug abuse and trafficking in the

city.

Maigatari said during the course of the operation, the command dislodged 21 drug joints, which serve as hubs for drug trafficking and consumption, posing a threat to the safety and well-being of the community.

He added that the command recovered various drugs such as Exol-5, rubber solution, 'suck and die', cannabis and other dangerous substances.

He said: "The men of the agency successfully dismantled the hideout of drug addicts at the popular Dan Agundi graveyard where 42 suspects were apprehended.

"The operatives also dismantled drug joints in Sheka graveyard and Sheka Obajana. These arrests demon-

strate the command's commitment to dismantling drug networks and eliminating drug trafficking hotspots in the state."

He urged the public to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities related to drug abuse and trafficking to appropriate authorities.

## Three nabbed for swindling students as police unveil cybercrime desk

From AbdulGaniyu Alabi, Kaduna

OPERATIVES of Kaduna Police Command have arrested three internet fraudsters notorious for defrauding unsuspecting students of Kaduna State University (KASU) of their tuition fees.

Spokesperson for the command, ASP Mansir Hassan, in a statement yesterday, identified the suspects as Muhammad Uthman Busari of Nariya Kaduna, AbdulAzeez Hamza of Hayin Danmani Kaduna, and Noel Nims Audiya.

He said the suspects, who are mainly cyber cafe operators, compromised the students' registration portal, and took undue advantage of students who chose to pay

their fees online rather than via normal banking platforms.

According to Hassan, the suspects often collect tuition fees from students in full but pay a lesser amount into the state's Treasury Single Account (TSA), and intercept and manipulate electronic



Suspected Internet fraudsters

transaction receipts from the TSA to read complete payment.

"So far, the suspects have shortchanged over 300 KASU students of about N6 million, which the principal suspect, Muhammad Uthman Busari, used in building and furnishing a house, purchasing a car, electronic appliances, gadgets and plots of lands in Kaduna and Kwara states. The suspects have since been charged to court."

MEANWHILE, the Commissioner of Police, A.D. Ali, has established a unit to investigate cybercrime offences.

The commissioner said the unit would checkmate computer-related crimes in the state.

## Banditry: Kebbi, others launch Zamfara community protection guards

From AbdulGaniyu Alabi, Kaduna

FOLLOWING protracted destruction of life and property by bandits and terrorists in the northern region, Kebbi State Governor, Nasir Idris Kauran Gwandu, has joined his counterparts in northwestern Nigeria to

launch the Zamfara State Community Protection Guards.

Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Ahmed Idris, who disclosed this in a statement, yesterday, said the guards will complement the efforts of security agencies towards

protecting the life and property of Zamfara people.

According to him, the screened youths, who passed out yesterday, were trained on the rudiments of security operations and ways to restore lasting peace across the state.

## Man sentenced to death by hanging for armed robbery

By Yetunde Ayobami Ojo

JUSTICE Olubunmi Abike-Fadipe of a Special Offences Court, Ikeja, has convicted and sentenced a man, Emmanuel Iwuno, to death by hanging for armed robbery.

Iwuno was also sentenced to 21 years imprisonment for conspiracy to commit rob-

bery, after the court found him guilty as charged.

He was arraigned on a two-count charge bordering on conspiracy to commit robbery and armed robbery.

The prosecution said his offences were contrary to the provision of Sections 299 and 297(2) (a) of the Criminal

Laws of Lagos State 2015.

While delivering judgment yesterday, the court held that the prosecution proved the case against the defendant beyond reasonable doubt.

The judge also upheld the testimony of Prosecution Witness (PW1) and victim of the robbery, Obinna Mbah, who told the court that on March 8, 2020, he was approached by four men who robbed him of his car, along Thomas Onyemachi Street, Afromedia Junction, Okoko-maiko.

Mbah had told the court that one of the men, covering his face with a mask, forced him to lie down on the ground, threatened him with a gun, and took his Infinix phone and money while the other robbers drove away in his car.

## Ooni condemns killing of Ekiti monarchs, advocates community policing

By Eniola Daniel

THE Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, has condemned an attack, which led to the death of three Ekiti State monarchs.

The monarchs were ambushed on Monday, January 30, while returning to their respective domains from a meeting in Oke Ako, Ekiti State.

In a statement released by his Director, Media and Public Affairs, Otunba Moses Olafare, yesterday, the Ooni commiserated with families of the deceased, the people, the government, and the Ekiti State Council of Obas and Chiefs. He admonished the Governor Abiodun Oyebanji-led government and President Bola Tinubu to expedite thorough

investigations into the act and ensure the perpetrators face the full wrath of the law.

"Assassinating traditional rulers in cold blood? This is absolutely unacceptable to us. If this could happen to the traditional rulers, what would become of their common subjects who look up to them for local security interventions?" he asked.



## Women protesters in Nasarawa to pay N500,000 bail after 12 days incarceration

From **Abel Abogonye**, Lafia

A MAGISTRATE'S court in Nasarawa State has ordered each of the 38 women protesters arrested by the police over alleged unlawful assembly and public disturbance to bail herself with N500,000.

The protesters, who had been remanded in prison custody for the past 12 days, had applied for a review of

their bail conditions.

Reviewing the conditions in Lafia, yesterday, the magistrate, Mohammed Abdullahi-Lanze, reduced the sum from N2 million to N500,000 per person, and demanded a surety.

The court ordered the defendants to report at the next adjournment date, which is February 27.

Responding, counsel for

the defendants, Ayiwulu Baba-Ayiwulu, expressed hope that the women would be released soon to reunite with their families.

Recall that the police, on January 9, arrested the protesters for allegedly blocking the Lafia/Jos road after a Supreme Court judgment affirmed the victory of Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State.



Some of the women protesters

## Buccaneers confraternity distances self from activities of Brothers Across Nigeria Int'l

By **Bertram Nwannekanma**

THE Buccaneers Confraternity has distanced itself from the activities of a group identified as Brothers Across Nigeria International.

It urged the public, corporate organisations and financial institutions to be wary of the schemes of the group.

The president, Olushola Oyeyemi, who made this known, yesterday, said Brothers Across Nigeria (defunct) and Brothers Across Nigeria (BAN) International are distinctly different organisations.

The Buccaneers Confraternity debunked reports of claims by a certain Azubuike Onowu that he is the Global President of BAN and the Grand Eye of the confraternity.

It advised Onowu to cease and desist from further parading himself as the

Grand Eye of the Buccaneers Confraternity.

He said: "We, the registered trustees of the Buccaneers Confraternity, an association registered in the UK, wish to draw the attention of the public, corporate organisations and financial institutions to a mischievous and erroneous publication on January 19, 2024.

"In the said publication, widely circulated in print and electronic forms online as well as on social media, a certain Azubuike Onowu was reported to have claimed to be the Global President of BAN and the Grand Eye of the Buccaneers Confraternity.

"Due to certain duplicitous events and the aforementioned misleading media publication, we are compelled to issue the following statement of facts to the general public and to those who may be herein addressed, in

particular, Onowu and his band of usurpers.

"Buccaneers' Confraternity (Company number 08293251) is registered to operate in England. The Buccaneers Confraternity has not yet been incorporated in Nigeria. The confraternity was registered as a student's organisation in 1972 at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

"Chapters of the organisation that followed in other tertiary institutions operated under this model until the confraternity ceased operating in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

"The Buccaneers Confraternity has grown from a campus organisation to an international friendship organisation in several countries. The confraternity continues to promote its goals of charity, camaraderie and conviviality among all citizens of the world."

## EFCC secures conviction of 17 Internet fraudsters

From **Rotimi Agboluaje**, Ibadan

THE Ibadan zone of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has secured the conviction and sentencing of 17 internet fraudsters to various jail terms.

They were jailed between January 8 and 28, 2024 after being arraigned before Justice Olusola Adetujoye of the Oyo State High Court, Ibadan, and Justice A.A. Babawale of the Ogun State High Court, Abeokuta, on a separate lone count charge each.

EFCC's Head of Media and

Publicity, Dele Oyewale, who disclosed this in a statement said, the convicts are: Akinbode Abiodun, Samad Tijani Owolabi, Ademola Olabamiji Quadri, Evewiekpoamare Tivere Jackson, Adeagbo Stephen Adegbenro, Adesanya Olamilekan Dare, Yusuf Saka Olaoluwatobi, Akinbode Adedolapo Joshua, Musa Ayinde Olorunnisola and Lawal Mohammed Segun.

The courts also ordered that the convicts retribute their various victims, including Owolabi, who is to pay the sum of N1,749,823.36 million as restitution.

Items forfeited by the convicts to the Federal Government of Nigeria, included: one gold coloured Lexus ES 330 with registration number FKG 184 HZ; one unregistered silver coloured Toyota Corolla 2006 model; one black coloured Honda Pilot 2004 model with registration number LSR 783 HW and chassis number 2HKYF18464H598117; and one black Lexus ES 300 2002 model with registration number APP 27 GT with chassis number JTHBF30G020048119, among others.

## Drug abuse: Youth ministry partners NDLEA on awareness

By **Zainab Hassan**

THE Federal Ministry of Youth Development has expressed its preparedness to partner with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) on raising awareness and providing rehabilitation and skills acquisition for Nigerian youths afflicted by substance abuse.

The assurance was given by Minister of Youth Development, Jamila Bio Ibrahim, when she paid a visit to the Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd), at the agency's national headquarters in Abuja, to discuss areas of collaboration between her ministry and the anti-narcotic body.

The minister said she came on the visit to seek collaboration with NDLEA on advocacy, strengthening grassroots awareness, espe-

cially among youths, on dangers of substance abuse, getting counselling and rehabilitation for young Nigerians struggling with drug abuse or addiction, and providing skills acquisition for youths undergoing rehabilitation in NDLEA facilities.

She expressed optimism that the National Youth Development Bank that will soon be launched by the Federal Government to empower Nigerian youths could also serve as a channel for rehabilitated young Nigerians to get funding for beneficial endeavours, based on skills acquired during rehabilitation, so that they won't go back to the same environment and situations that led them into substance abuse.

In his remarks, Marwa painted a grim picture of the drug situation in Nigeria, es-

pecially as it affects the youth population, stressing the urgent need for all stakeholders, in particular Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), to strengthen partnership with a view to curbing the menace of substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking, given the strong nexus between drug abuse and security challenges facing the country.

The NDLEA boss noted the Renewed Hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration to lift millions of Nigerians out of poverty and make life meaningful for the generality of citizens.

He said the benefits would sooner than later create more jobs for the good of youths and ultimately discourage most of them from going into substance abuse.

## Lagos gives 30-day ultimatum on buildings illegally converted to churches, bars

By **Bertram Nwannekanma** and **Eniola Daniel**

Lagos State government has given a 30-day final notice to owners/occupiers of residential buildings illegally converted, without approval for change of use, to churches, mosques, club houses, lounges and bars across the state.

The ultimatum mandates the owners to revert to the original use of the structure. General Manager of the State Building Control Agency (LASBCA), Gbolahan Owodunni Oki, who gave the notice in his office, said it applies to all structures used as bars, club houses or religious centers located within residential areas, and without requisite permit from relevant authorities.

Oki said the notice was sequel to distortion of the Lagos State master plan, especially residential areas, by some people, who, in gross disregard of regulatory provisions of the law, turned residential areas to club houses and worship centres, thereby constituting a nuisance to the environment.

He said the notice became imperative, following repeated complaints over non-adherence to safety and security guidelines issued to club owners

According to him, owners of buildings in residential areas, which have been converted to churches, mosques, clubs, bars or lounges without requisite approvals, should evict occupants before expiration of the notice.

He warned that the state will give no further notice of sealing but outright removal of such non-conforming buildings at a cost to the owners.

"We are giving them one month's final notice from January 29, to revert all properties converted to churches, mosques, clubs and bars to the original plan or have such buildings removed at their expenses," he said.

### • Moves against sand filling of drainages

Oki maintained that LASBCA had earlier identified illegal and non-conforming structures and had served statutory enforcement notices. But those who were affected either failed or refused to respond to the notices; hence the serving of a final notice.

According to him, people in areas designated as residential, especially the elderly in the Lekki axis and environs, have repeatedly called on the state government to save their souls. This followed the adverse effects illegal conversions of properties was having on their health and the security of the areas.

He advised property owners to take the notice with deserved seriousness, as nobody would be spared in the effort to sanitise the state, in line with the mega city vision of

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

MEANWHILE, the Ministry of Environment and Water Resources has vowed to take action against individuals or real estate firms accused of sand filling canals in the state.

This followed a trending video of sand filling activities at the back of Lakeview 2, on Orchid Road, Lekki.

Recall that there has been sand filling of canals to create more land for estate expansion in parts of Orchid Road, especially at the back of Lakeview Estate.

**CHANGE OF NAME**  
 I, formerly known as Chukwurah Helena Ifeoma now wish to be addressed as Okafor Helena Ifeoma. All former documents remain valid. Public note.



**We**, formerly known as **Prime Atlantic Global Instruments Limited (PAGI)**, would now be known and addressed as **Prime Atlantic Global Engineering Services Limited (PAGES)**.

All existing documents remain valid. The general public, our partners/clients, and all concerned parties should take note.

As we transition to our new identity, we remain steadfast in our commitment to delivering exceptional products/services and exceeding the expectations of our valued customers and partners.


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*...Service per Excellence*

(RC. 10845)

STATEMENT TO THE NIGERIAN EXCHANGE LIMITED AND SHAREHOLDERS ON THE UNAUDITED RESULTS FOR FOURTH QUARTER ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2023

**Consolidated Statement of Financial Position**  
as at 31st December, 2023

	The Group		The Company	
	31-Dec-23 N'000	31-Dec-22 N'000	31-Dec-23 N'000	31-Dec-22 N'000
<b>Assets</b>				
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>				
Property, plant and equipment	7,010,804	6,927,608	7,010,805	6,927,608
Capital work in progress	291,520	67,842	291,520	67,842
Intangible asset	17,459	18,329	17,459	18,329
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	4,444,518	4,444,518
Investment accounted for using the equity method	-	-	798,722	798,722
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>7,319,784</b>	<b>7,013,779</b>	<b>12,563,025</b>	<b>12,257,019</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>				
Inventories	251,446	223,605	251,446	223,605
Trade Receivables	1,285,163	863,604	1,282,984	863,604
Other Receivables and Prepayment	741,884	872,080	741,884	869,787
Loan to related party	9,952,308	9,952,308	9,952,308	9,952,308
Amount due from related parties	-	-	269,832	643,739
Financial investments	-	2,332,655	-	-
Cash and Cash Equivalents	14,639,066	8,605,724	9,238,301	5,494,754
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>26,869,867</b>	<b>22,849,976</b>	<b>21,736,756</b>	<b>18,047,796</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>34,189,651</b>	<b>29,863,755</b>	<b>34,299,780</b>	<b>30,304,815</b>
<b>Equity and Liabilities</b>				
Share Capital	1,081,184	1,039,398	1,081,184	1,039,398
Share Premium	1,432,886	1,381,072	1,432,886	1,381,072
Retained Earnings	6,127,610	5,551,514	6,137,616	5,686,510
Capital Reserve	1,832	1,832	-	-
<b>Equity attributable to equity holders of Parent</b>	<b>8,643,512</b>	<b>7,973,816</b>	<b>8,651,686</b>	<b>8,106,980</b>
<b>Non-Controlling interest</b>	<b>(123,600)</b>	<b>(190,903)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	<b>8,519,912</b>	<b>7,782,913</b>	<b>8,651,686</b>	<b>8,106,980</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>				
Due to Related Parties	11,075,483	9,888,824	11,848,051	10,668,541
Retirement Benefits Obligation	605,114	533,726	604,480	533,726
Deferred Tax	159,133	159,133	159,133	159,133
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	<b>11,839,730</b>	<b>10,581,683</b>	<b>12,611,664</b>	<b>11,361,400</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>				
Trade and Other Payables	2,447,432	2,506,564	1,916,220	2,004,704
Deferred Income	10,733,961	8,742,793	10,591,706	8,600,538
Deposit for Shares	-	93,600	-	93,600
Dividend Payable	-	16,691	-	16,691
Current Tax Payable	648,618	139,511	528,505	120,901
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>13,830,010</b>	<b>11,499,159</b>	<b>13,036,431</b>	<b>10,836,435</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>25,669,740</b>	<b>22,080,842</b>	<b>25,648,095</b>	<b>22,197,835</b>
<b>Total Equity and Liabilities</b>	<b>34,189,651</b>	<b>29,863,755</b>	<b>34,299,780</b>	<b>30,304,815</b>

**Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income For**  
**The Fourth Quarter Ended 31 December 2023**

	The Group		The Company	
	31-Dec-23 N'000	31-Dec-22 N'000	31-Dec-23 N'000	31-Dec-22 N'000
Revenue	11,113,217	12,896,968	11,113,217	8,717,001
Cost of Sales	(7,150,056)	(9,259,364)	(7,150,056)	(5,509,793)
Gross Profit	3,963,161	3,637,604	3,963,161	3,207,208
Other Income	205,062	158,922	198,882	107,301
Sales and Distribution Expenses	(349,329)	(318,194)	(349,329)	(318,194)
Administrative and General Expenses	(1,560,975)	(5,906,130)	(1,405,887)	(1,075,433)
<b>Operating Profit/(Loss)</b>	<b>2,257,919</b>	<b>(2,427,798)</b>	<b>2,406,827</b>	<b>1,920,882</b>
Finance Income	519,680	129,836	76,974	6,464
Finance Costs	(1,188,050)	(1,059,487)	(1,188,050)	(1,077,817)
<b>Profit/(Loss) Before Tax</b>	<b>1,589,549</b>	<b>(3,357,449)</b>	<b>1,295,751</b>	<b>849,529</b>
Income Tax Expense	(790,239)	(581,346)	(688,735)	(581,346)
<b>Profit/(Loss) After Tax</b>	<b>799,310</b>	<b>(3,938,795)</b>	<b>607,016</b>	<b>268,183</b>
<b>Profit/(Loss) Attributable to:</b>				
Equity Holders of the Parent	732,006	(3,953,566)	607,016	268,183
Non-Controlling Interest	67,303	14,769	-	-
<b>Profit/(Loss) for the Period</b>	<b>799,309</b>	<b>(3,938,795)</b>	<b>607,016</b>	<b>268,183</b>
<b>Other Comprehensive Income for the Period</b>				
<b>Total Comprehensive Income for the Period</b>	<b>799,309</b>	<b>(3,938,795)</b>	<b>607,016</b>	<b>268,183</b>
<b>Earnings Per Share (kobo)</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>(189)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>

A copy of the unaudited Financial Statements can be found at [www.ikejahotelplc.com](http://www.ikejahotelplc.com) dated this 30 January, 2024.

OLUBUNMI TADEMA  
FRC/2022/PRO/NBA/002/910787

PUNUKA NOMINEES LIMITED  
Company Secretary

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## TENDER NOTICE

### CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA ON BEHALF OF DMO OFFERS NIGERIAN TREASURY BILLS

Notice is hereby given by the Central Bank of Nigeria on behalf of DMO that the Federal Government of Nigeria Treasury Bills of 91, 182 and 364-day tenors amounting to N4,522,000,000; N1,314,900,000 and N411,227,300,000 respectively would be issued by Dutch auction on Thursday, February 08, 2024.

All Money Market Dealers should submit bids through the CBN S4 WEB INTERFACE between 8.00 a.m. and 11.00 a.m. on Wednesday, February 07, 2024.

Each bid must be in multiple of N1,000 subject to a minimum of N50,001,000. Authorized Money Market Dealers can submit multiple bids. A bid may be for authorized Money Market Dealers own account, non-Money Market Dealers or interested members of the public. The result of the auction would be announced on Wednesday, February 07, 2024. The Bank reserves the right to reject any bid.

Allotment letters would be issued for successful bids on Thursday, February 08, 2024, while payment for the successful bids should be made to your account with Central Bank of Nigeria not later than 11.00 a.m. on Thursday, February 08, 2024.

The Bank reserves the right to vary the amount on offer in line with market realities prevailing as at the period of auction of the Nigerian Treasury Bills.

GOVERNMENT SECURITIES OFFICE  
CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA  
ABUJA.



# CALL FOR APPLICATIONS



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SCAN ME

Please note that application closes on  
**Sunday, 3rd March 2024 at 11:59pm WAT**

📅 14th April - 4th May 2024

🕒 9:00am - 5:00pm daily

For enquiries: 📞 +234 817 943 8972  
+234 817 943 8986

🌐 @nimrfoundation



## CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR BOARD AND MANAGEMENT AT REPTON GROUP ON OUR  
"2023 NATIONAL LARGEST DISTRIBUTOR OF DANGOTE CEMENT AWARD"

We, the entire Staff of REPTON GROUP heartily congratulate our Board and Management on the well-deserved eventual emergence of our business GROUP as the 2023 NATIONAL LARGEST DISTRIBUTOR OF DANGOTE CEMENT in Nigeria through our resourceful cement distribution subsidiary, KAZAB HERITAGE LIMITED, after previously coming second for three consecutive years.

Our special congratulations go to our visionary Founder and astute MD/CEO, OTUNBA ODEYEYIWA KAZEEM OLAYEMI for his exceptional business management skills and effective leadership which have been the catalyst for our outstanding achievements at REPTON GROUP. As the maxim goes, everything rises and falls on leadership.

We want to also specially congratulate our amiable and versatile DIRECTOR, YEYE OTUNBA ODEYEYIWA ADESOLA MUTIAT for her massive contributions to the gigantic success recorded by our reputable GROUP so far.

We see this latest towering achievement as motivation to increase the tempo of our team efforts for greater performance. We will therefore not rest on our laurels.

Finally, congratulations to all of us at REPTON GROUP as we look forward to an impressive 2024.

Signed: All Staff Members

**HEAD OFFICE:** 10, Olorunnimbe St, Wemabod Estate, Ikeja, Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria.

**TEL:** 08020589745, 09087055512, 08020589344  
**EMAIL:** [info@reptongroup.ng](mailto:info@reptongroup.ng)  
**WEBSITE:** [www.reptongroup.ng](http://www.reptongroup.ng)



L-R: OTUNBA ODEYEYIWA KAZEEM OLAYEMI, MD/CEO, REPTON GROUP; HIS WIFE, YEYE OTUNBA ODEYEYIWA ADESOLA MUTIAT, DIRECTOR OF THE GROUP, RECEIVING THE PLAQUE OF THE AWARD OF 2023 NATIONAL LARGEST DISTRIBUTOR OF DANGOTE CEMENT BRAND, WON BY THEIR SUBSIDIARY, KAZAB HERITAGE LTD, FROM ALHAJI ALIKO DANGOTE, PRESIDENT/CEO OF DANGOTE GROUP, IN LAGOS AT THE WEEKEND.

## Dangote refinery: Pathways, prospects and challenges

AT long last, the Dangote Petroleum Refinery Project, Africa's much-talked-about biggest oil refinery, has recently begun operations with the production of Automotive Gas Oil, also known as diesel, and Jet A1 or aviation fuel, thus ending the long years of waiting for a refinery that could boost heavily reliant on imported petroleum products. The big question remains whether the coming on stream of the refinery will translate into lower prices of petroleum products, particularly petrol for Nigerians. But surely, the public enthusiasm greeting the refinery's operation will hardly be sustained if the prices remain high.

The President of the Dangote Group, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, deserves commendation for the actualisation of his long-time dream; but he should not relent in his efforts until the refinery achieves its ultimate purpose and objectives for which it was established. Located in the prestigious Lekki Free Trade Zone on the eastern flank of the commercial city of Lagos, the Dangote refinery is expected to not only make abundant fuel in Nigeria but also to export fuel to neighbouring West African countries, potentially transforming oil trading in the Atlantic Basin.

As the refinery commences operations, the pertinent questions many Nigerians are asking are: Will the pump price of petrol be reduced? Will the Dangote refinery bring an end to the ceaseless, excruciatingly long queues at filling stations? What benefits will the ordinary Nigerian reap from the startup of the Dangote refinery? In answer, some analysts forecast that the startup of the Dangote refinery will not bring down the pump price of fuel. According to them, given the free fall of the naira currency against the U.S. dollar and considering the actual cost of running the Dangote refinery, including the refinery margin, taxes and levies, transportation to various filling stations across the country and the retailers' margins, the Dangote refinery would be paying an average of about N530 per litre of the products it produces. As such, chances that its petrol would cost less than N600 per litre is a bit remote.

Whether or not the Dangote refinery will lead to a crash in fuel prices, it will, at least, contribute to boosting Nigeria's economic growth. The refinery is designed to be the largest single-train refinery in the world, with a refining capacity of 650,000 barrels per day. This increased capacity will contribute significantly to meeting Nigeria's domestic demand for petroleum products, reducing the need for imports. Nigeria has historically been dependent on importing refined petroleum products due to limited domestic refining capacity. With

the Dangote refinery in operation, it is hoped that the situation where someone will come to Nigeria to get our crude oil, take it abroad, refine it, and bring it back to us to buy at a huge cost will be gone.

Already, seven major oil marketers in Nigeria have registered with the refinery for the lifting and distribution of refined petroleum products produced by the \$20 billion refinery. The operation of the refinery is expected to generate a considerable number of direct and indirect jobs, including employment opportunities in the maintenance and ongoing operations of the refinery facility, as well as in the associated supply chain.

It is not unlikely that the Dangote refinery will lead to the development and improvement of infrastructure in the Lekki Free Zone areas of Lagos and its environs. This could include road networks, utilities, and other facilities to support the refinery's operation. The refinery's contribution to meeting domestic demand for refined products and reducing import costs can have a positive impact on Nigeria's overall economic growth. A more stable and efficient energy supply can stimulate economic activities in various sectors in Nigeria.

The surplus refined products produced by the Dangote Refinery could potentially be exported to other countries, providing an additional source of revenue and foreign exchange for Nigeria. It is said that the refinery has so far received six million barrels of crude oil at its two single-point moorings located 25 kilometres from the shore. The first crude delivery was done on December 12, 2023, and the sixth cargo was delivered on January 8, 2024. The refinery can load 2,900 trucks a day at its truck-loading gantries.

It is important to note that the actual impact of the Dangote refinery will depend on various factors, including the refinery's successful operation. There can be various challenges that might impact the smooth takeoff of a refinery. First and foremost, meeting environmental and safety regulations is crucial for refinery operations. Any delays or complications in obtaining necessary permits and adhering to regulations can impact the project timeline.

Alhaji Dangote should understand that the operation of a refinery involves complex engineering processes. Technical issues such as equipment malfunctions, design flaws, or unexpected technical hurdles could pose challenges. The supply chain for materials and equipment needed for operation must be well-managed. Delays or disruptions in the supply chain could lead to project setbacks. Besides, the Dangote refinery's success is closely tied to efficient infrastructure and logistics. Challenges in transportation, storage, and distribution systems can hinder the smooth operation of the refinery.

More importantly, Alhaji Dangote should strictly adhere to local and international laws and regulations governing environmental protection,

labour rights, and other relevant areas. He should ensure that the Lekki Free Zone environment where his refinery is situated does not suffer environmental pollution and expropriation. Apart from assessing the environmental issues of the areas and obtaining the necessary environmental clearances, he should incorporate eco-friendly practices and technologies to minimize the negative environmental impact of the refinery in the area. He should implement measures to control emissions and minimize air pollutants, such as particulate matter and greenhouse gases, to reduce the impact on the health of surrounding communities. Proper wastewater treatment should be ensured to prevent contamination of water bodies with harmful chemicals and pollutants.

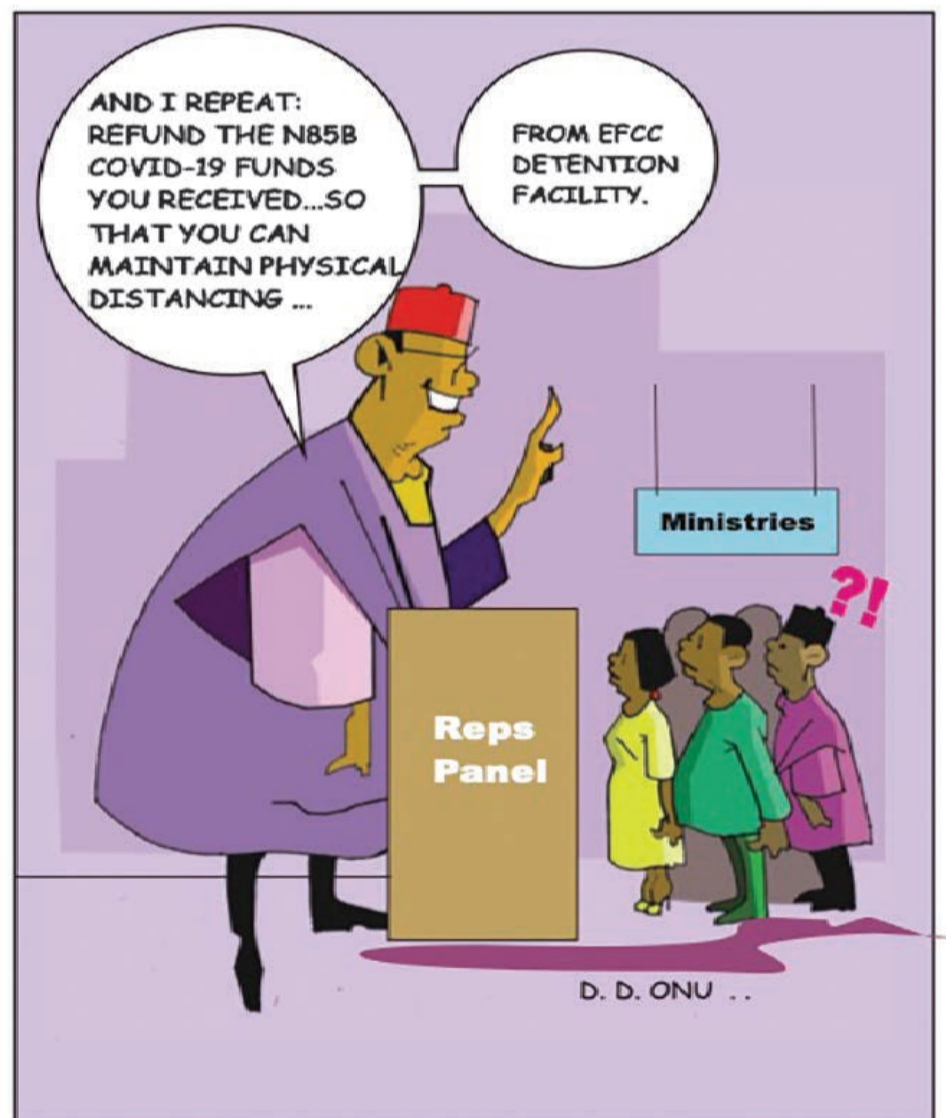
Considering that the access road to the refinery is the only road used by many residents of the Lekki Free Zone area, Dangote should develop a comprehensive traffic management plan specifically for the road leading to the Dangote refinery. This plan should address peak traffic hours, special events, and any potential road closures. This may include widening the road, constructing additional lanes, and ensuring proper signage for directions and safety. Alhaji Dangote could seek the partnership of the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority to enforce strict traffic regulations, including speed limits, no-parking zones, and loading/unloading areas. The Lagos State government, in particular, should ensure that the heavy trucks operating in the Dangote refin-

ery are truly roadworthy. This helps maintain order on the road and prevents unnecessary delays and breakdowns of trucks.

Alhaji Dangote should imbibe the principle of fair competition; he should engage in fair and ethical refinery business practices, avoid anti-competitive behaviour or practices that would harm other businesses and his competitors.

On security, the Dangote refinery should outline measures to significantly enhance its security posture and protect its operations, assets, and the well-being of its personnel and the surrounding community. To start with, the refinery should increase the number of trained security personnel to cover key entry points, patrol critical areas, and respond swiftly to security incidents. Installation of a comprehensive closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance system to monitor various sections of the refinery in real-time is a minimum requirement. It should engage with the local communities in the area to build positive relationships and address concerns they may have regarding the refinery's security measures.

Optimistic Nigerians look forward to the Dangote refinery meeting their expectations that its operations can reduce the country's reliance on fuel imports, which can positively impact the trade balance and foreign exchange reserves; ensure supply of products at all times and ultimately, that the local refining on the Dangote scale will bring down prices of petrol and other petroleum products.



## Climate change and clean energy transition in Nigeria (2)

By Adebayo Alonge

Continued from yesterday

THE 2015 Paris Agreement (COP21) goal is to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 Celsius above pre-industrial level and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

It does not appear that humanity is on track to meet this goal (7). If global CO2 emissions continue on current trend (36.8 Gigatons/year (8)), we are likely to reach 2 to 4 Celsius above pre-industrial levels by the end of this century (9). This will have catastrophic effects for the world and especially for Nigerians.

Under the current trend, the earth will be 1 to 3 degrees warmer than it is now and the average annual daily temperature in Nigeria may be up to 30 Celsius by then. Although this may not look like a lot of change and there may be regional variations with some places even warmer or cooler, given the high humidity in many parts of the country, life may end up becoming very difficult for most people.

More people will need to rely on air-conditioning to live through normal days, less people will remain outdoors for any extended period of time and the risks of heat stroke and other types of heat stresses will increase the care burden on our already overstretched healthcare system.

Some professionals such as in construction may be unable to work given the heat leading to extensive job losses.

Higher temperatures will also lead to drying out of the agricultural lands causing crop failures and evaporative losses of water bodies. Combined with the expected increase in erratic rainfall with some regions seeing lower than expected rain there may be droughts for extended periods that decimate the agricultural industry putting at risk the ability of our farmers to feed their families and the rest of the nation.

Heavy rainfall in some areas will lead to extensive flooding destroying farmlands,

homes, property and potentially killing many people.

In the long term over the next hundred years, several coastal cities such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, Bonny Island may have large swathes inundated by rising sea levels which are projected to rise by up to seven feet globally if the world continues to emit CO2 as per current trends (10). Flooding may contaminate underground water tables and lead to the spread of vector borne diseases. The combination of these adverse climate related events will lead to mass displacement, higher unemployment levels and potentially worsen insecurity and conflict in the country.

**Recommended Climate Adaptation Strategies:**

In order to prevent these identified challenges and so as not to be caught unawares, it is important to develop a comprehensive climate risk assessment report that identifies all potential climate risks across all local government areas in the country. Every local government area will experience climate change impact differently. It is therefore important to know what these risks are so as to develop a national preparedness strategy and to prepare the people ahead of time so that they can know what to expect and also so that they can be prepared to adapt to the problems as they arise.

There are five adaptation strategies I would like to propose - community engagement and education, building resilient infrastructure, agricultural adaptation, water resource management, public health resilience and clean energy transition.

First, every local community needs to be educated about climate change and everyone needs to be engaged in generating the solutions. Climate change is a collective action problem and we need to mobilise our people to help solve it. The people are an important resource to co-generate solutions to this issue as they are the ones experiencing the problem first hand. Local government town halls should be organised to sensitise the population.

Climate knowledge extension officers

should be hired to go door to door to educate people. National media campaigns on television, radio, billboards and digital media should be conducted to educate the people about what climate change is, the risks posed and the opportunities available. Ideas should be solicited for local solutions to address climate change.

Hackathons can be held at universities and polytechnics with funding made available by local banks and guaranteed by the government. This will help to finance local innovations into potential businesses that can then develop products and services that solve local climate change related problems while generating employment and potentially export dollars.

The national preparedness and response strategy that is developed as part of the risk assessment and ideas solicitation should be disseminated to every household so that people know how to identify climate related extreme weather events, what to do, where to go and whom to call when these events occur in their communities.

The National emergency management agency should also have budgetary reserves mandated by law passed by the federal legislature so that they have enough funding to address all climate emergencies as they occur. This reserve fund should be financed directly from a share of government royalties earned from export of crude oil, natural gas and through direct grants from developed countries and multilateral institutions.

Second, infrastructure must be built to be resilient and enforced through building codes passed by state legislatures. In flood prone areas, utility grid transformers and building electric switch boxes must be mandated to be hoisted several meters above ground.

This will ensure that in the event of flooding that there are no widespread power outages and will also reduce negative health risks of electrocutions. Sewers should be enforced to be built as fully closed off so that sewage does not leak into ground water during floods. In the Sahelian north, a tree fence should be planted to keep the soil in place and reverse the encroaching desert. This tree presence

will provide cover reducing the evaporation of surface and underground water reserves.

An ambitious plan can be put in place to pipe in ocean water from the Atlantic to the Lake Chad region and have it desalinated. The desalinated water can then be used to refill Lake Chad and reverse the 90 per cent loss of water that the lake has faced over the last 30 years. This will help preserve the livelihoods of the communities who rely on the lake for food, transportation and commerce.

In coastal cities, slums on the sea should begin to be moved to higher ground with sufficient awareness and alternatives provided to their inhabitants and a clearly defined timeline to complete the migration.

Coastal seawalls similar to the Eko Atlantic great wall should be constructed across the entire length of the southern coast of the country. Financing can be raised through public-private partnerships or by tapping the climate adaptation funds being put together by developed countries.

Third, subsistence and commercial agriculture should be adapted for resilience. Farmlands can be mandated to have rain-water collection towers that run off rainwater into underground and above-ground storage tanks.

This will ensure that there is water supply in the event of droughts. Research labs such as the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) should be mandated to develop new crop varieties that are purpose bred to be resilient in drought and flood conditions. New techniques for farming that preserve biodiversity, soil fertility and climate resilience should be developed and disseminated by agriculture extension workers to all farmers.

Encourage the implementation of AI tools working with satellites and drones to automate the checking of the health of crops and farmlands at scale with recommendations of solutions to apply such as irrigation, fertilizer, organic pesticides etc. This way technology can scale up farming, increasing the responsiveness of farmers to climate change effects and reducing losses.

To be continued tomorrow.

## EU's strategy to tackle Red Sea challenges independently

By Imran Khalid

WHILE trying to assert its commitment to strategic autonomy, the European Union is poised to establish an independent naval operation safeguarding commercial shipping in the Red Sea. This move signifies a divergence from acting solely under the umbrella of the United States, showcasing the EU's desire for self-directed initiatives. Despite past objections, Spain has withdrawn its opposition, paving the way for further deliberations on the plan's specifics.

The EU foreign ministers' meeting on Jan 22 has finally given a green signal to this plan, with Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani emphasising the urgency of creating an operational European mission. Although the final go-ahead is expected at the next EU Foreign Affairs Council, but Tajani appears to be quite enthusiastic about this plan.

"We are proposing along with France and Germany a mission that can guarantee the safety of maritime traffic," Tajani told media. In detailing the forthcoming expansion of the Emasoh/Agenor mission, he further clarified its defensive nature, signaling the EU's strategic commitment to safeguarding vital interests in the Strait of Hormuz.

The use of military force, though incorporated, remains strictly circumscribed within defensive parameters, aligning with the union's nuanced approach to regional security. This development underscores the EU's pursuit of a distinct role in global affairs.

In the aftermath of U.S.-led air strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen, 10 nations, including EU members Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, pledged joint support in safeguarding the vital passage through the Red Sea. However, acknowledging the imperative for the EU to strengthen its influence, a majority of EU member states advocate for a uni-

fied initiative that operates independently, free from the influence of Washington's shadow. This cooperative effort signals the EU's intent to tackle these challenges autonomously.

Factually speaking, committing to a U.S.-led operation in the Red Sea for shipping security implies subordination to U.S. directives. The EU must carefully weigh aligning with U.S. 'interests' against its own priorities in the crisis. A nuanced evaluation of collaboration is crucial, ensuring that joint efforts are driven by shared objectives rather than becoming mere instruments for advancing external agendas. The EU's existing autonomous maritime security initiative, the Atalanta mission in the northwestern Indian Ocean, demonstrates its capability to operate independently.

Choosing not to participate in U.S.-led Red Sea military actions could signal a commitment to resolving tensions stemming from the Gaza conflict through peaceful, political avenues. Addressing the root cause, the Gaza conflict, holds the key to stabilising the Red Sea region. Prioritising diplomatic solutions aligns with the EU's emphasis on peaceful resolutions and reinforces its distinct approach to maritime security challenges.

The Red Sea's vital role in global trade necessitates safeguarding commercial shipping, but the U.S.'s use of force exacerbates risks without addressing the core issue. Resolving the Gaza conflict diplomatically is paramount to ensuring stability in the Red Sea region and safeguarding international trade routes.

The Red Sea's stability is indispensable for sustaining seamless global trade and economic interconnectedness. Amidst rising tensions in the Red Sea, the Houthi rebels' declaration to target ships connected to Israel has triggered a swift and concerning response from the United States. Rather than pursuing diplomatic avenues, the U.S. has opted for escalation, initiating a multinational coalition against the Yemeni mili-

tants. Subsequently, the U.S. and UK militaries took matters into their own hands, launching strikes on Houthi-controlled territories in Yemen.

Unfortunately, these military operations have so far failed to halt the Houthi attacks on shipping, further intensifying the conflict. In an unexpected turn, the Houthi rebels retaliated by targeting a U.S.-owned and operated cargo ship with an anti-ship ballistic missile. This escalation raises critical questions about the effectiveness and strategic rationale behind the U.S. response. Instead of quelling the threat, the escalated actions seem to have fueled further hostilities, underscoring the complexities of the situation in the Red Sea and the challenges in finding a resolution that ensures regional stability and protects international shipping interests.

The tit-for-tat dynamics in the Red Sea are rapidly escalating, revealing a miscalculation of the Houthi's military capabilities by the U.S. and the UK. Experts suggest that containing the Houthis by such haphazard missile attacks on targets in Yemen will pose significant challenges for the U.S., indicating a prolonged and unresolved crisis in the Red Sea.

The ongoing retaliation and counter-retaliation paint a complex picture, underscoring the intricacies of the situation and the difficulty in finding a swift resolution to the growing tensions in this crucial maritime region. By refraining from participation in U.S.-led military endeavors in the Red Sea, the EU signals a preference for peaceful, political resolutions to the tensions stemming from the Gaza conflict. While safeguarding the Red Sea's role in global trade remains paramount, the U.S. reliance on force exacerbates risks rather than offering a comprehensive solution.

A nuanced approach that tackles the underlying issues, particularly the Gaza conflict, is essential for lasting stability and security in the Red Sea region.



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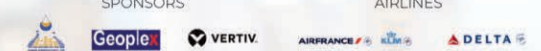
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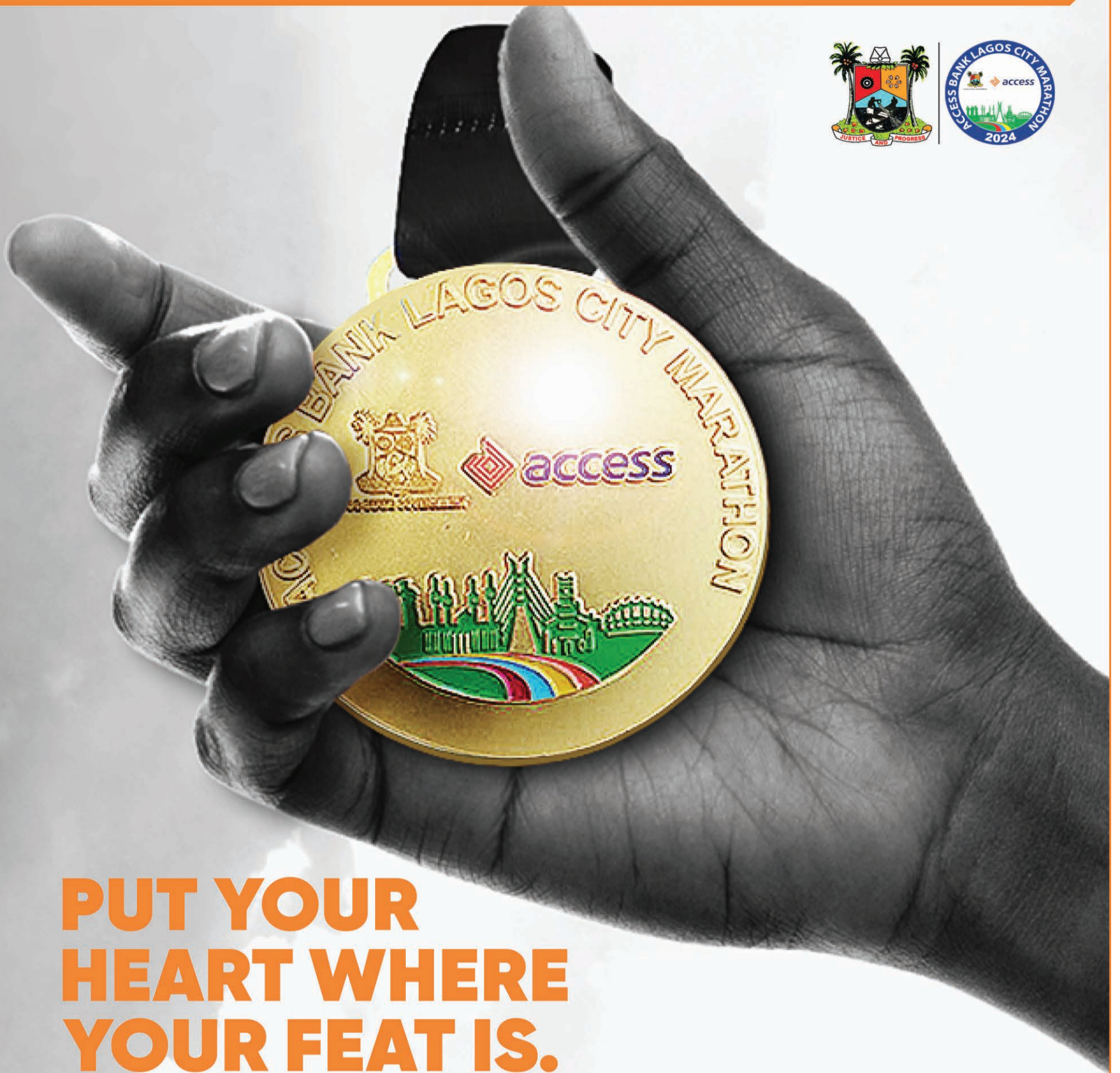
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## One in every 10 extremely poor people live in Nigeria, says World Bank

From **Joseph Chibueze, Abuja**  
It is estimated that about 170.92 million Nigerians are in extreme poverty, according to the World Poverty Clock.

The figure translates to 11 per cent of the world's extreme poor. This means that, at least, one out of every 10 extremely poor people live in Nigeria.

It would be recalled that the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) had earlier in its

report said over 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor.

Professor Sulaiman Adesina Yusuf of the Department of Agriculture Economics, University of Ibadan, related the statistics yesterday in Abuja in his presentation at a one-day public lecture.

The lecture was organised by the Federal Cares Unit of the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic

Stimulus (NG-CARES) programme.

Yusuf, who was the guest lecturer, said Nigeria ranks 163 out of 191 countries in 2021 on the Human Development Index (HDI), and 109 out of 125 countries in 2023 on the Global Hunger Index.

Yusuf said this was not only unacceptable for a country that hopes to compete at the global stage but also calls for concern from policymakers.

While acknowledging efforts made by successive administrations in the country to fund intervention programmes, he said the major challenge has been the lack of political will on the part of the government to fully fund the programme.

The don called for the passage of the Social Protection Bill to generate the political commitment for social protection at the federal and

state levels as well as realign the allocation of resources to scale up social protection.

Earlier, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Atiku Bagudu, commended the work NG-CARES is doing to lift Nigerians out of poverty.

He said the current administration was very passionate about poverty alleviation, a reason President

Tinubu, a few weeks ago, directed a wholesale review of the national social protection scheme.

"Much as you think we have achieved progress, there is a lot that remains to be done," he said.

He promised that the federal government would do all within its power and available resources to ensure that the sad tales of poverty were reversed.



Acting Head Sales and Business Development, Jocar Nigeria Limited, Chukwuemeka Enuma (left); Branch Manager, Mrs Agboma Obidike-Ozor, Chief Operating Officer, Arinze Ezeaku, Executive Director, Lady Adaeze Okafor, Management Accountant, Kingsley Aba-ue, Executive Administrator, Mrs Odemi Atiene-Ugbata, Head Renewable Energy, Chijioko Egbudom, at the company's annual strategy retreat in Port Harcourt.

## AfDB's sustainable hybrid capital order book hits \$6 billion

· UK leads with 51 per cent allocation

By **Geoff Iyatse**

THE African Development Bank (AfDB) has successfully launched and priced its first sustainable dollar-denominated 750 million perpetual subordinated hybrid capital notes.

The transaction, sealed on 30 January, was launched with a coupon of 5.75 per cent until August 2034, with a 10.5-year first-call date, at AfDB's discretion, the bank said in a statement.

The bank achieved a top quality and granular order book with over 275 investors while over 190 were allocated. Investor demand remained upbeat with a peak order book of over \$6 billion.

The largest share of the allocation was taken up by hedge/specialised funds (54.8 per cent), followed by asset managers (27.8 per cent). Central banks and official institutions took 6.7 per cent while pension funds/insurance had 6.6 per cent.

Demand came mainly from the United Kingdom (51.1 per cent) followed by Europe, the Middle East and Africa at 26.5 per cent, Asia (14 per cent) and America (8.4 per cent).

It was the first such bond issuance by a multilateral

development bank, giving AfDB a pioneering role in optimising its balance sheet in line with the G20 Capital Adequacy Framework (CAF) recommendations to boost lending capacity.

Hybrid capital is an innovative form of capital, which increases sustainable lending capacity.

The bank mandated BNP Paribas and Goldman Sachs International as joint structuring agents and Barclays, BNP Paris, BofA Securities and Goldman Sachs International as joint book runners to lead and manage its new perpetual non-call (PerpNC) 10.5-year inaugural USD Global SEC-exempt sustainable hybrid transaction.

Monday's transaction marked a decade of bond issuances in the environmental, social and governance (ESG) space of the pan-African lender.

The notes will be issued in a sustainable bond format, under the bank's 2023 Sustainable Bond Framework and will be leveraged through new green or social bonds.

As a new component of the AfDB's capital base, the sustainable hybrid capital will allow additional lending capacity to fund environmental and/or social projects.

## Broadband penetration drops to 40.85 per cent

By **Adeyemi Adepetun**

BASED on the updated telecoms indicator by the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), telephone density (teledensity) in Nigeria has dropped from 115.63 per cent to 102.3 per cent.

NCC explained that the adjustment became necessary to reflect the latest population growth figures and align with international best practices.

The Commission said the adjustment, which is reflected in the telecoms industry statistical reports of September, October and November 2023 was predi-

cated upon the Nigerian Population Commission (NPC)'s projection of Nigeria's population at 216,783,381, as of 2022, replacing the previously used 2017 projection of 190 million people.

NCC, in a statement signed by its Director of Public Affairs, Reuben Mouka, noted that despite a drop in teledensity, Nigeria witnessed a steady increase in active voice and Internet subscriptions.

"With the consequential adjustment, which is in line with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s calculation of teledensity, the nation's teledensity dropped from 115.63 per cent

to 102.30 per cent in September, while Broadband penetration witnessed a similar drop from 45.47 per cent to 40.85 per cent in the same month.

"However, the active voice subscription statistics witnessed a marginal growth from 220,361,186 to 221,769,883 as of September 2023. In addition, Internet subscriptions also enjoyed a marginal growth, from 159,034,717 in August 2023 to 160,171,757 in September 2023," it stated.

According to NCC, in October 2023 the industry also experienced a 0.19 per cent growth in active voice subscriptions while teledensity stood at

102.49 per cent with Internet subscriptions increasing by 0.6 per cent compared to September 2023.

The telecoms regulator said that in November of the same year, the industry also experienced a 0.46 per cent growth in active voice subscriptions.

In the period, teledensity remained stagnant at 102.97 per cent with a 0.57 per cent increase in Internet subscriptions when compared to October 2023.

Teledensity is an index prescribed by the ITU for the measurement of telephone penetration in a population by a factor of one line per 100 individuals in the population.

## Operators want govt to prioritise security, others as FPI dips by 94.5%

By **Helen Oji**

FEARs around Nigeria's worsening insecurity, foreign exchange (FX) and other macroeconomic challenges have continued to impact the participation of foreigners in the local economy as total foreign portfolio investments (FPIs) declined by 94.5 per cent in nine years.

An analysis of the Domestic and Foreign Portfolio Investment Report of the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) indicates that total foreign transactions, which rose

to N1.4 trillion in 2014, plummeted to N71 billion in 2023.

Similarly, total foreign inflow, which stood at 58.5 per cent of the total market activities in 2014, fell to 16 per cent as of November 2023.

However, total domestic transactions soared within the same period, increasing from N1 trillion in 2014 to N2.9 billion in 2023.

Foreign investors' participation in equities accounted for 80.9 per cent as of November 2014 while domestic patronage stood at 19 per cent.

But as of November 2023, total foreign transactions depreciated to 23.7 per cent while domestic patronage constituted 76.3 per cent.

To restore foreign investors' confidence, operators said security must be prioritised, noting that rising insecurity in the country has hampered economic activities, even as increasing naira depreciation has caused FPIs to shun the Nigerian market despite the reforms in the economy.

They also urged the government to ensure that trapped

funds currently being released by CBN and the FX market must be transparently organised.

Chief Executive Officer of Wyoming Capital and Partners, Tajudeen Olayinka, said the security and FX issues remain major concerns for discerning investors, especially foreigners.

According to him, this is so because the planned exit value of an investment cannot be ascertained with some degree of probability.

"Investors want to see a pre-

dictable foreign exchange rate and a secure business environment before taking both short-term and long-term investment decisions.

"We must understand that these two problems came from mismanagement of the economy by the immediate past regime. It could take time for Nigeria to be out of these problems, considering the current low level of foreign reserves and liquidity challenges in the foreign exchange market, coupled with unsustainable mountains of public debts," he

said.

Vice President of Highcap Securities, David Adonri said declining FPI in Nigeria is not surprising.

According to him, Nigeria's sovereign rating has been negative due to insecurity and trapped foreign investors' funds or capital control for several years.

He added that unless the government becomes more strategic in tackling security and FX issues, foreign investment in Nigeria would continue to wane.

## Stock market closes January with N1.1 trillion loss

By Helen Oji

**F**OLLOWING losses suffered by many highly capitalised stocks, especially MTNN and Conoil, the Nigerian stock market yesterday sustained bearish sentiments, as market capitalisation fell by N1.068 trillion to close trading for the month of January on losses in MTN Nigeria Communications (MTNN) Plc and 56 others.

As a result, the All Share Index (ASI) lost by 1,955.69 points, representing a loss of 1.90 per cent to close at 101,154.46 points. Also, market capitalisation declined by N1.068 trillion to close at N55.358 trillion.

The downturn was impacted by losses recorded in medium and large capitalised stocks, amongst which are; MTNN, Conoil, NASCON Allied Industries, Dangote Sugar Refinery and Guaranty Trust Holding

Company (GTCO).

As measured by market breadth, market sentiment was negative, as 11 stocks gained relative to 57 losers. PZ Cussons Nigeria and Tripple Gee and Company recorded the highest price gain of 9.97 per cent each to close at N33.10 and N3.42 respectively, while Geregu Power followed with a gain of 9.69 per cent to close at N568.

McNichols went up by 9.66 per cent to close at N1.59 kobo, while Veritas Kapital Assurance appreciated by 9.09 per cent to close at 60 kobo, per share. On the other hand, Lafarge Africa, May & Baker Nigeria, Royal Exchange, Transnational Corporations (Transcorp), UPDC, Zenith Bank and Sterling Financial Holdings Company led the losers' chart by 10 per cent each to close at N36.00, N6.21, 72 kobo, N12.96, N1.80, N35.10

and N5.67 respectively, per share.

Conoil followed with a decline of 9.98 per cent to close at N101.00, while Japaul Gold & Ventures depreciated by 9.97 per cent to close at N2.62, per share.

The total volume traded increased by 15.44 per cent to 749.128 million units, valued at N22.492 billion, and exchanged in 14,288 deals. Transactions in the shares of Transcorp topped the activity chart with 79.679 million shares valued at N1.062 billion. United Bank for Africa (UBA) followed with 61.336 million shares worth N1.551 billion, while Zenith Bank traded 61.176 million shares valued at N2.257 billion.

Guaranty Trust Holding Company (GTCO) traded 47.913 million shares valued at N1.839 billion, while Access Holdings sold 43.489 million shares worth N1.044 billion.

## LIRS extends deadline of yearly tax returns filing to February 7

**I**N view of the recent downtime experienced on the e-tax portal, the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) has extended the filing of employers' yearly tax returns by one week to February 7.

The Executive Chairman of LIRS, Ayodele Subair, conveyed the extension in a public notice released by the agency.

Statutorily, filing of annual

tax returns by companies expires on January 31st of each fiscal year and attracts stiff penalties for defaulters. Taxpayers are hereby advised to take advantage of this extension to perform their civic obligation.

This extension is aimed at providing taxpayers with additional time to ensure accurate and timely submission of their annual tax returns, Subair said.

Subair urged employers of

labour to take full advantage of the extension to perform their civic obligation to avoid penalties.

"We understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise, and this extension is intended to accommodate such instances. We implore all employers of labour within Lagos State, who are experiencing difficulties in the filing of their annual tax returns to call our customer service," he said.

## FBN Holdings names Otedola new board chairman effective January 31

By Helen Oji

**T**HE struggle to control assets of Nigeria's oldest bank, FBN Holdings Plc, seems to be over as the bank yesterday, name billionaire businessman and chairman of Geregu Power Plant, Femi Otedola new Chairman of the Board of Directors.

The appointment, effective January 31, 2024, followed a recent meeting of the board where Otedola succeeded Alhaji Ahmad Abdullahi.

Otedola is expected to bring his extensive experience and strategic insight to FBN

Holdings. His leadership is anticipated to drive growth, innovation, and enhanced performance in the company.

In a corporate filing to the Nigerian Exchange Limited, the bank commended the outgoing Chairman, Alhaji Ahmad Abdullahi for his achievements during his tenure, during which he guided FBN Holdings through numerous challenges, maintaining its stature in the Nigerian financial landscape.

"FBN Holdings Plc hereby notifies the Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) and the investing public that at the meeting

of the board of Directors of the company held today (yesterday), January 31, 2024, the board appointed Mr. Olufemi Otedola as the new chairman of the board of Directors. Mr. Olufemi Peter Otedola succeeds the outgoing chairman of the board, Alhaji Ahmad Abdullahi.

"Femi was appointed to the board of FBN Holdings Plc on August 15, 2023 as a Non-Executive Director. He is visionary entrepreneur with a track record of pioneering businesses, growing and transforming corporations," it stated.

## Oyedele seeks fresh efforts to close FX market gap

By Benjamin Alade

**C**HAIRMAN of the Presidential Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms Committee, Taiwo Oyedele, has charged the government to take urgent steps to close the gap between official and unofficial exchange rates, saying this would help boost the economy and raise the confidence of investors.

Oyedele said the foreign exchange (FX) market requires a single market and stability, saying whatever the rate is, "let it not continue to depreciate such that people are discouraged from invest-

ing in the economy.

He stated this in Lagos yesterday at a breakfast meeting organised by the Franco-Nigerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) in conjunction with Stren & Blan Partners.

Oyedele said almost every country has a black FX market.

He said: "I don't know of many countries where they have parallel market rates that they publish every day. What is the parallel rate of Cedis? What is the parallel rate of Rand in South Africa? That is because the govern-

ment through its policies ensures that anybody who is doing anything legitimate can play in one market, which is the official market.

"The only people that would have to go to the black market are people doing illicit transactions. So, that for me is a priority. Once you get that fixed, whether naira appreciates or not, it is not the most important thing," he said.

Oyedele who spoke on the theme, 'A bird's-eye view of the Nigerian 2024 economy', said Nigeria was not where it ought to be as a country even as Nigerians are making sacrifices.

# PUBLIC NOTICE

## IN RESPECT OF THE GRANT OF A SPECIAL CONCESSION TO PROCESS "DOUBLE CONSENT" APPLICATIONS OVER LAND TRANSCATION

1. I, **RAYMOND ADEWALE FALANA** of Block XVII Plot 8A, within Ojumu Chieftaincy Family Land, Aiyedere Village, Lagos State hereby notify the General Public of my intention to process an application for the Grant of Governor's Consent **IN RESPECT OF THE PARCEL OF LAND MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 346.881SQM SITUATE AT AND BEING A PORTION OF BLOCK XVII PLOT 8 (NOW KNOWN AS PLOT 8A) WITHIN THE OJOMU CHIEFTAINCY FAMILY LAND AT AIYEDERE VILLAGE ETI-OSA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA LAGOS STATE** Belonging to OTUNBA SEGUN OGUNWUYI of Ivy Homes, Adedayo Ogunsanya Street, Lekki County Homes, Lekki, Lagos State.

2. Whereas:

a. The property was vested in HRM. OBA TIJANI ADETUNJI AKINLOYE & ALHAJI (CHIEF) YEKINI OLAWALE BAKARE being the Family Head and Principal Member of the Ojumu Chieftaincy Family of Ajiran, Lekki, Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State by virtue of the Official Gazette No. 12, Vol. 35, 2002 dated 29th August, 2002. That HRM. OBA TIJANI ADETUNJI AKINLOYE & ALHAJI (CHIEF) YEKINI OLAWALE BAKARE being the Family Head and Principal Member of the Ojumu Chieftaincy Family of Ajiran, Lekki, Eti-Osa Local Government Area, Lagos State sold to OTUNBA SEGUN OGUNWUYI of Ivy Homes, Adedayo Ogunsanya Street, Lekki County Homes, Lekki, Lagos State, But OTUNBA SEGUN OGUNWUYI who did not perfect his title in line with Land Use Act subsequently sold to me.

b. That it is now expedient that I apply for the grant of Governor's Consent.

c. The Lagos State Government has also required this publication as a Notice to anyone who has an objection against my application for Governor's Consent to do so within 14 days of this publication.

3. That the Lagos State Government shall not be liable in respect of any claim or loss by any Third Party in respect of a refund of money paid in line with the registration **IN RESPECT OF THE PARCEL OF LAND MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 346.881SQM SITUATE AT AND BEING A PORTION OF BLOCK XVII PLOT 8 (NOW KNOWN AS PLOT 8A) WITHIN THE OJOMU CHIEFTAINCY FAMILY LAND AT AIYEDERE VILLAGE ETI-OSA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA LAGOS STATE.**

4. That I shall be fully and sufficiently liable if found that I have misrepresented any facts or information in the application process at any point in time.

5. The Public is placed on notice of my intention to register the transaction between myself; **RAYMOND ADEWALE FALANA** and the previous owner, OTUNBA SEGUN OGUNWUYI.

6. Any objection to this publication should be made to the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Lands Bureau, Governor's, Alausa-Ikeja, Lagos.

Signed:

**RAYMOND ADEWALE FALANA**

# Labour & Appointments

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## Chamber tasks FG on nationwide skill acquisition centres

**By Gloria Nwafor**  
THE Nigerian-British Chamber of Commerce (NBCC) has called on the Federal Government to approve and license more skill acquisition centres across the country. The move, the chamber said, creates training opportunities for Nigerian youths. President and Chairman of Council, NBCC, Ray Ately, said it was time the government placed a moratorium on the approval and licensing of more universities in

Nigeria for 10 years, whether government or privately owned. According to him, with vocational training, Nigeria can also address insecurity and motorcycle menace, giving the youths opportunities they need to be gainfully employed. He lamented that Nigerian youths have a 7.2 per cent unemployment rate, which was far higher than the national average of five per cent. "It means that over 16 mil-

lion Nigerian youths are unemployed. But how many of these lots are employable? This is where the training intervention at all tiers of government in Nigeria has become expedient," he said. He queried what would become of Nigeria in 20 years if

the youths wandered their way into adulthood with no clear direction, filled with bitterness instead of love for their country. The NBCC chief stated that it was time Nigeria stopped importing tradesmen from Benin Republic, Togo and

Ghana while the youths engaged in mischief without future direction. Ately said it was time Nigeria truly invested in the youths and increased their participation in economic activities beyond peripheral roles and borderline opera-

tions. To this, he said the chamber would unveil a women and youth entrepreneurship development centre, to transfer ideas and facilitate the creation of businesses, making a lasting impact on the communities it serves.

## CloD extols professionalism, ethics of late Ijewere

**By Gloria Nwafor**  
THE Chartered Institute of Directors of Nigeria (CloD) Nigeria has eulogised the life of its past President, Emmanuel Ijewere, for his great impact on the country, as well as dedication to professionalism and ethical business practice. In a special session of the governing council held in the honour of the late president at the institute's secretariat, in Lagos, members paid tributes to Ijewere. President and Chairman of the Governing Council, Tijjani Borodo, said Ijewere, who was the institute's sixth president, improved the corporate visibility of the institute, putting it on a deserving pedestal as the premier membership organisation in Nigeria.

He said it was under his leadership that the headquarters of the institute moved to Ikoyi, in Lagos, where it is still located currently. Borodo said Ijewere's passion and selfless service to the CloD Nigeria was unparalleled. According to him, his commitment to the ethos of the institute was an inspiration to members. Borodo added that the institute would continue to cherish his selfless services and commitment to the cause of the institute. A representative and son in the family, Emmanuel Ijewere (Junior), commended the CloD for honouring his late father and his immense contribution to the growth of the institute.

## Centre appoints Johannisson as CEO

**By Anita Ibeachu**  
RACK Centre has announced the appointment of Lars Johannisson as its new Chief Executive Officer. In a statement, the firm said Johannisson is an accomplished leader with extensive experience in transformative industries, who assumed the role effective January 2024. According to the Group Chief Executive Officer of Rack Centre, Jasper Lankhorst, the company is excited to welcome Johannisson into the leadership team with his wealth of experience and strategic leadership skills that will propel Rack Centre to new heights. Speaking on his new role, Johannisson highlighted the company's market leadership and its leading position as a carrier and cloud-neutral tier-III data centre in Nigeria. He expressed his commitment to contributing to the digital ecosystem growth in Nigeria and was delighted to

be part of a team dedicated to launching a new hyper-scale-ready, 12MW data centre facility in Lagos in 2024. He has extensive experience working in telecom, information technology (IT) delivery, managed services and digital skilling. He has been passionate about leading organisations in transformative industries in Africa over the last 14 years and has executed large B2B projects in more than 30 sub-Saharan countries.



Johannisson

## Foundation tasks graduate mentees to imbibe leadership skills

**By Anita Ibeachu**  
FBA Mentoring Programme, a Funmi Babington-Ashaye Foundation empowerment series has challenged new graduate mentees to imbibe good character as a critical tool for thriving in leadership and career progression. Speaking at the cohort two graduation ceremony of the foundation in Lagos, the President of FBA Foundation, Lola Adeleye, described the good character as the invisible thread woven into the fabric of "your being, influencing how you navigate challenges, embrace opportunities and ultimately shape the legacy you leave behind." According to her, the

strength of character will always be a defining factor for one's leadership or professional endeavours in society. While expressing immense pride and excitement for the bright futures that await the graduate, she said, "As you step into the next chapter of life, remember that character will be the bedrock upon which you build success. I have full confidence that each mentee will go on to achieve remarkable things, not only for yourselves but for the betterment of society." Adeleye urged the new mentees to nurture and prioritise character in the face of challenges and let integrity be unwavering when confronted with choices.

She noted that it was not just an educational experience but also a platform for the development of exceptional individuals poised to impact the world positively. The founder, Dr Funmi Babington-Ashaye, who gave the reason behind the programme, said the mentoring programme has grown since it started four years ago and now has around 80 strong alumni members. She said the main idea behind starting the mentoring programme was to give back to society, stating that it is geared towards each person to learn from those who came before them, gaining wisdom and experience. The Managing Director/Chief

Executive Officer, FSDH Africa, Bukola Smith, spoke on the theme, 'Journey to C-Suit and Personal Legacy'. She challenged the cohort two graduates to imbibe the culture of determination, resilience and strategic planning in their career. Smith also urged them to build relationships with key stakeholders in their chosen fields, pointing out that they needed them to overcome challenges in their journey and "this is critical to growth." While encouraging them to learn and invest in knowledge acquisition, she said: "Be a subject matter expert in your field, do not stop learning and invest in yourself."

## FUOYE VC partners UN Agency to establish space research centre

**By Adeyemi Adepetun**  
THE Vice Chancellor of Federal University Oye Ekiti (FUOYE), Prof. Abayomi Sunday Fasina, has begun moves to establish a centre of space research at the university. To actualise this dream, he held talks with Prof. Babatunde Rabi, who is the Executive Director of the United Nations (UN) African Regional Centre For Space Science and Technology Edu-

cation (English speaking), located at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife. The discussions were held when the Executive Director led a team from the UN outfit to present awards to the immediate past Vice Chancellor of Bowen University, Iwo Osun State, Prof. Joshua Ogunwole, for his fear of attracting the world-famous international space research centre, the "VT-NigerBEAR

Virginia Tech Aeronomy Radar," to Nigeria and sited in Bowen, the only one in Africa. The Award ceremony was brought to FUOYE at the request of Ogunwole in appreciation of the university for releasing him on leave of absence to become Bowen's Vice Chancellor, which he completed last July. The FUOYE boss recalled that "this fast-growing university

established just about 13 years ago has the enviable record of not just been first among equals having been coming first in academic growth and infrastructural development, it has also ranked better than some older university, I will be very much delighted and fulfilled to make FUOYE under my watch come first in this regard as done by my brother Ogunwole."

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**Abuja Liaison Office:** Suite 308B, The Capital Hub, 272 Ahmadu Bello Way, Abuja Tel: 09123212605

**Port Harcourt Liaison Office:** 3 East West Road, Rumukwurushii Tanki, Port Harcourt Tel: 08030500006

**Postgraduate College:** 08169413942, 07036164469, 08062352857

**Signed:**  
**Dr. Oyebola Ayeni - Registrar**









# THE NIGERIA PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2024



Entries are hereby invited for The Nigeria Prize for Literature. The yearly literature prize is sponsored by Nigeria LNG to honour the author of the best book by a Nigerian.

The prize rotates among four literary genres - prose fiction, poetry, drama and children's literature. This year, the competition is for **Children's Literature**.

## CALL FOR ENTRIES

### SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

- All applicants must submit their entries accompanied by an application form obtainable online from The Nigeria Prizes website, [www.thenigeriaprizes.org](http://www.thenigeriaprizes.org). Completed forms must be printed and submitted along with the entries. Go to [www.thenigeriaprizes.org](http://www.thenigeriaprizes.org) for more details on submission.
- Twelve (12) copies of entry and an e-copy of each entry, with evidence of Nigerian citizenship (photocopy of Nigerian passport or National Identity Card), may be submitted either by author or publisher. Books should be submitted to Nigeria LNG Limited's External Relations Division, promoters of the prize, by the stipulated deadline.
- No book published before 2021 will be accepted.
- An author will enter only one published work. Unpublished work will not be considered. No book previously submitted for this competition may be re-submitted at a later date, even if major revisions have been made or a new edition published. The prize will be awarded for no other reason than excellence.
- No member of the Advisory Board, Panel of Judges and members of their families can enter their work(s) for the award in the period in which they are serving and two years thereafter. No entries will be accepted from staff of Nigeria LNG Limited and their families.
- No entry submitted after the stipulated deadline will be accepted.
- Failure to meet all stated conditions above will lead to disqualification of the entry.

**The competition is open to only Nigerian writers irrespective of their place of residence.**

#### Entries should be sent to:

The Nigeria Prize for Literature  
External Relations Division,  
Nigeria LNG Limited Corporate Head Office  
NLNG Road, Eastern By-Pass,  
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

### PANEL OF JUDGES

A Panel of Judges has been appointed for The Nigeria Prize for Literature by the Advisory Board for Literature.

The appointment of judges has been done to reflect the genre in competition for the year.

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INTERNATIONAL  
CONSULTANT  
**Dr. Christopher Okenwa**

**The outcome of the process as approved by the Advisory Board shall be final.**

PRIZE MONEY **USD 100,000.00**



### ANNOUNCEMENT AND PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF WINNER

The winner(s), if any, will be announced and presented in **October 2024**

For further information, visit the Prizes' website, [www.thenigeriaprizes.org](http://www.thenigeriaprizes.org) and NLNG website, [www.nigeriaing.com](http://www.nigeriaing.com)



### CLOSE OF ENTRY

All entries must be in by **Tuesday, 2nd April 2024**. Late entries will not be considered.



### ADVISORY BOARD

Professor Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, FNAL, FLSN  
**Chairman**  
Professor Olu Obafemi, FNAL, NNOM  
**Member**  
Professor Ahmed Yerima, FNAL, FSONTA  
**Member**

**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO HIS EXCELLENCY  
 AHMADU UMARU FINTIRI,  
 EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF ADAMAWA STATE  
 ON HIS VICTORY AT THE SUPREME COURT OF NIGERIA BY THE  
 FIVE PDP HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEMBERS FROM ADAMAWA STATE**



HIS EXCELLENCY  
**RT. HON. AHMADU UMARU FINTIRI**  
 GOVERNOR ADAMAWA STATE

On behalf of Adamawa State People, we celebrate with **His Excellency RT. HON. AHMADU UMARU FINTIRI** the Executive Governor of Adamawa State; on the confirmation of His Excellency, as the Governor of our dear Adamawa State by the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

The Supreme Court ruling is a confirmation both of the perfect will of God and of the irrefutable choice of Adamawa people. It also reinforces the confidence our people have in the judiciary. This is a good development for the advancement of democracy in our nation Nigeria and Africa at large as it goes a long way to pattern true democracy for other African nations.

It is time for Adamawa state people from all political parties and all ethnic groups to rise up and support our Governor.

Let Us all rise to the faith of greatness.

*Signed :*



**Rt. Hon. James Shuaibu Barka,**  
 Rep. Gombi/Hong Federal  
 Constituency



**Barr. Kwamoti Bitrus Laori, Rep.**  
 Rep. Demsa/Numan/Lumurde  
 Federal Constituency



**Hon. Zakaria Dauda Nyampa,**  
 Rep. Michika/Madagali, Federal  
 Constituency



**Hon. Kobis Ari Thimnu**  
 Rep. Guyuk/Shelleng Federal  
 Constituency



**Hon. Mohammed Inuwa Bassi,**  
 Rep. Toungo/Jada/Ganyi/  
 Mayo-Belwa Federal Constituency

**FIRST SCHEDULE****4" O.D X 3.8KM OIL PIPELINE FROM EGBAOMA NORTHWEST MINI MANIFOLD TO EGBAOMA FLOWSTATION INLET MANIFOLD LOCATED AT EBEDI IN DELTA STATE.**

The Survey Description of the pipeline is as follows:

All that existing strip of land of approximately 15 meters (49.2 feet) wide on the piece of land starting from Egbaoma-North-west mini manifold location to Egbaoma Flowstation inlet manifold at a starting point PO whose (NTW)-West Belt co-ordinates are 208677.6008mN. 418171.000mE and whose Geographical co-ordinates are latitude 5°53'06.53" N, Longitude 6° 11'33.89E and extending for approximately 112.79M to a point P1.

Thence on a bearing of 133°33' for a distance of 417.47M to a point P2.

Thence on a bearing of 149°59' for 138.80M to a point P3

Thence on a bearing of 132°12' for 1516.51M to a point P4

Thence on a bearing of 066°42' for 1293.43M to a point P5

Thence on a bearing of 034°56' for 242.59M to a point P6,

The beginning of the Test oil pipeline from the Egbaoma North- West Manifold has an elevation of about 21.142 meters above mean sea level. The end of the pipeline which is Egbaoma Flowstation located in Ebedei delta state is about 34.69 meters above mean sea level.

**SECOND SCHEDULE****4" O.D X 3.8KM OIL PIPELINE FROM EGBAOMA NORTHWEST MINI MANIFOLD TO EGBAOMA FLOWSTATION INLET MANIFOLD LOCATED AT EBEDI IN DELTA STATE.**

The physical specifications of the pipeline whose length is approximately 3.8km are as follows:

- Consist of Carbon steel tubes manufactured to American Petroleum Institute Standard 5L, Grade B, manufactured seamless, 6.0" outside diameter.
- Have a wall thickness of 0.432 inch throughout its entire length.
- Welded by electric arc process into a continuous pipeline which is hydrostatically tested to a pressure of not less than 2,150 psi.  
The exterior of the pipeline is protected by the application of three layer of PE coating. The final layer shall be minimum 2.7mm.
- Cathodically protected throughout its entire length.

**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA  
OFFICIAL GAZETTE  
OIL PIPELINE ACT CAP 338 LFN 1990  
APPLICATION FOR AN OIL PIPELINE LICENCE**

- Notice is hereby given in accordance with section 8 of the Oil Pipeline Act. Cap. 338 LFN 1990 that Platform Petroleum Ltd whose registered office is at 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Pactum Towers, Plot 1220, Ahmadu Bello way, Victoria Island, Lagos has applied to the Federal Ministry of Petroleum Resources for the right to enter upon, take possession of and use for transportation of Crude Oil for twenty (20) years, of an a new right of way of approximately 3.82km from Egbaoma North West Well location at Umukwuata to Egbaoma Flow station location at Ebedei, for the purpose of laying a 4.0 inch (outside diameter welded Steel Bulk) Oil pipeline from Egbaoma North west Well Location in Umukwata to Egbaoma Flowstation located at Ebedei, all in Ukwuani Local Government Area of Delta State.

**2. Description**

All that existing strip of land of approximately 15 meters (49.2 feet) wide on the piece of land starting from Egbaoma-North-west mini manifold location to Egbaoma Flowstation inlet manifold at a starting point PO whose (NTW)-West Belt co-ordinates are 208677.6008mN. 418171.000mE and whose Geographical co-ordinates are latitude 5°53'06.53" N, Longitude 6° 11'33.89E and extending for approximately 112.79M to a point P1.

Thence on a bearing of 133°33' for a distance of 417.47M to a point P2.

Thence on a bearing of 149°59' for 138.80M to a point P3,

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Thence on a bearing of 066°42' for 1293.43M to a point P5,

Thence on a bearing of 034°56' for 242.59M to a point P6,

The beginning of the Test oil pipeline from the Egbaoma North-West Manifold has an elevation of about 21.142 meters above mean sea level. The end of the pipeline which is Egbaoma Flowstation located in Ebedei delta state is about 34.69 meters above mean sea level.

The above description is as known in the applicants detained Drawing No: PIGL-PPL-PTS MAP-001-23B.

- A copy of the plan of the Pipeline Route Identifying the area affected can be inspected between the hours of 07:30 and 16:00 hours Mondays to Fridays in Abuja and Warri offices of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, Ministry of Petroleum Resources and between the hours of 07:30 and 15:30 hours at the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development (Lands Department) ASABA, Delta State.
- Any person who considers that his land or interest in the area will be injuriously affected by the grant of the licence should lodge notice of objection orally or in writing, not less than seven days before the hearing date in paragraph 6 below, with the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development (Lands Department), PMB 5017 ASABA, Delta State, starting his interest and ground of objection.
- Any Public Officer who receives verbal objection in the course of his duties should record the name and address of the complainant as well as his interest and grounds of objection and forward such details to the Ministry of Land, Survey and Urban Development (Lands Development) P.M.B. 5017 ASABA, Delta State and/or the nearest office of the Petroleum Resources Department, Ministry of Petroleum Resources.
- The representative of the Land Department in the Ministry of Land, Survey and Urban Development, ASABA, Delta State shall inquire into objections, paragraph 4 and 5 above at his office in the Lands Department in the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development, ASABA, at 10:00am on Thursday 14 March 2024 giving all parties an opportunity to be heard.

A report thereof shall be sent without delay to the Director of Petroleum Resources, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, 7 Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Dated this 14th day of March 2024.

For: Honourable Minister  
Ministry of Petroleum Resources

**FIRST SCHEDULE****6" O.D X 3.8KM OIL PIPELINE FROM EGBAOMA NORTHWEST MINI MANIFOLD TO EGBAOMA FLOWSTATION INLET MANIFOLD LOCATED AT EBEDI IN DELTA STATE.**

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Thence on a bearing of 034°56' for a distance of 242.59M to a point P6,

The beginning of the Bulk oil pipeline from the Egbaoma North- West Manifold has an elevation of about 21.142 meters above mean sea level. The end of the pipeline which is Egbaoma Flowstation located in Ebedei delta state is about 34.69 meters above mean sea level.

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The above description is as known in the applicants detained Drawing No: PIGL-PPL-PTS MAP-001-23A.

- A copy of the plan of the Pipeline Route Identifying the area affected can be inspected between the hours of 07:30 and 16:00 hours Mondays to Fridays in Abuja and Warri offices of the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, Ministry of Petroleum Resources and between the hours of 07:30 and 15:30 hours at the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development (Lands Department) ASABA, Delta State.
- Any person who considers that his land or interest in the area will be injuriously affected by the grant of the licence should lodge notice of objection orally or in writing, not less than seven days before the hearing date in paragraph 6 below, with the Ministry of Lands, Survey and Urban Development (Lands Department), PMB 5017 ASABA, Delta State, starting his interest and ground of objection.
- Any Public Officer who receives verbal objection in the course of his duties should record the name and address of the complainant as well as his interest and grounds of objection and forward such details to the Ministry of Land, Survey and Urban Development (Lands Development) P.M.B. 5017 ASABA, Delta State and/or the nearest office of the Petroleum Resources Department, Ministry of Petroleum Resources.
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A report thereof shall be sent without delay to the Director of Petroleum Resources, Ministry of Petroleum Resources, 7 Kofo Abayomi Street, Victoria Island, Lagos.

Dated this 14th day of March 2024.

For: Honourable Minister  
Ministry of Petroleum Resources

# Tinubu decries labelling of Nigerians as cybercriminals

From **Terhemba Daka, Abuja**

**P**RESIDENT Bola Tinubu has deplored what he termed mislabelling and blanket stereotyping of Nigeria as a country with the highest prevalence of cyber-crime and other forms of corrupt practices.

The development, the President declares, undermines majority of the citizens that maintain the virtues of integrity and diligence.

Tinubu made the observation, yesterday, during a Public Engagement on Youth, Religion and the Fight Against Corruption, as well as the Launch of Inter-Faith Manual and Fraud Risk Assessment Project for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) at Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja.

Organised by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the event is a multi-dimensional stakeholders' involvement in the fight against economic and financial crimes.

He regretted that over the years, Nigerians had been linked with Internet crimes without tangible proof, a development he said is out of tune with typical Nigerians' way of life.

The President, who was represented at the event by Vice President Kashim Shettima, noted that, "on the contrary, Nigerians are meticulous, authentic citizens, who have been making significant contributions" to innumerable fields of endeavour around the world.

He said: "Over the decades, Nigerians have been victims

## Assures of FG's support in combating digital offences

of mislabelling. Such gross misrepresentation fails to reflect the true essence of our diverse and resilient nation. The association of Internet crimes with the entire Nigerian populace lacks statistical evidence and does not align with the sociology of everyday Nigerians.

"Our nation comprises hard-working and honest citizens, who contribute significantly to various fields globally, from Artificial Intelligence (AI) to medicine.

"While we reject blanket stereotyping that undermines the majority upholding principles of integrity and diligence, we must face the fact that we function in an interconnected world where cybercrimes have evolved into a global phe-

nomenon. This poses a threat not only to our nation but to the entire world."

Delivering his speech entitled, 'Youth, Religion, and Our Battle Against Corruption: A Call to Action', the President applauded the EFCC "for remaining a moral compass, persistently rousing the nation's conscience," just as he said through its operations, the commission has remained vocal in "telling the world that Nigeria is neither complicit nor complacent in confronting the menace of corruption."

Earlier in his welcome address, Chairman of EFCC, Ola Olukoyede, said the launch of the interfaith manuals and the Fraud Risk Assessment Project for MDAs

are all geared towards engaging relevant and critical stakeholders in the reinvigorated anti-corruption fight in the country.

In his goodwill message, the Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, emphasised the significance of paying more attention to preventive measures in the renewed fight against corruption.

In separate remarks, President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Archbishop Daniel Okoh; Sultan of Sokoto, Abubakar Sa'ad III, and the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, were unanimous in their commendation of President Tinubu and the EFCC management for the administration's avowed commitment to the fight against corruption in Nigeria.



Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu (right); House Leader, Julius Ihonvbere and Deputy Majority Leader, Abdullahi Ibrahim during the Pre-Inaugural Meeting of the House Committee on the Review of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, at the National Assembly, Abuja... yesterday. PHOTO: LUCY LADIDI ATEKO

# NEMA, UNDRR, others deepen synergy to reduce disaster risk

From **Tina Abeku, Abuja**

**N**ATIONAL Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and the United Nations Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) have agreed to continue working together towards tracking progress, challenges and opportunities in disaster risk management in Nigeria based on the Sendai Framework Monitor (SFM), 2015-2030.

Director-General, NEMA, Mustapha Ahmed, disclosed this at a technical workshop on UNDRR monitoring and reporting of the Sendai Framework, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), yesterday, in Abuja.

He said Nigeria, as part of the global community, faces unprecedented challenges of nature and human-induced disasters made

worse by climate change and extreme weather, which calls for effective management.

"Monitoring and reporting of disaster events remains a pillar in the implementation of the Sendai Framework, which is data-driven. It enables the assessment of progress, identification of gaps and impact analysis of our actions to enable a recalibration of our strategies to address evolving disaster

challenges.

"The Sendai Framework, adopted in 2015, represents a landmark international agreement to chart the course for global disaster risk reduction efforts. Within the context of this workshop, four targets of Sendai Framework on substantial reduction will be given priority on the monitoring and reporting dashboard."

# Wike insists on May 29 delivery date for Abuja light rail

**M**INISTER of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, has expressed satisfaction with the progress made so far on the Abuja light rail project, reassuring that its delivery on May 29 is sacrosanct.

The minister gave the assurance, yesterday, after inspecting the ongoing construction of access roads to the train stations from Metro Train Station in Central Area to Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja.

He reassured journalists, who accompanied him on

the inspection tour, that the rail project would be commissioned on May 29 by President Bola Tinubu to mark his one year in office.

*News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)* reports that the stations visited included Wupa, close to Idu; and Bassanjiwa, close to the airport.

"This is part of our routine inspection of ongoing projects to see what the contractors have been doing. We are working day and night to see that we fulfil the promise we made to President Tinubu and residents of the FCT; that

by May, the President will ride on the Metro line.

"We want to have access roads to the various train stations, because if you do not create access roads to the communities, who will be using the train? Then the aim is defeated," he said.

The immediate past governor of Rivers State acknowledged the seriousness of the contractors to deliver the project.

He added: "You have heard what the representative of the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) Limited said; that

they would be working day and night to see that the project is completed.

"For me, it is a major project, so that it can reduce the influx of vehicles into the city. It is going to help us," he said.

On availability of funds, the minister said the FCT Administration was fully prepared and had secured some funding sources to deliver the projects.

Speaking on insecurity that might affect the workers on site, Wike assured that security had improved significantly in the territory.

## FG resumes delineation of Benue, Nasarawa boundary

From **Ameh Ochojila, Abuja**

**T**HE FEDERAL Government will soon resume demarcation of the boundary between Benue and Nasarawa states.

The exercise was temporarily put off on April 6, 2022 due to security challenges that rocked the two states.

Director-General of National Boundary Commission (NBC), Adamu Adaji, noted that the Federal Government and the states had, many times, intervened in the interstate boundary, over the years.

Adaji recounted that NBC's first intervention was in the boundary in 2016, adding that a joint meeting of officials in December 2021 recommended field demarcation, and only some pillars

## Govs sue for peace

were emplaced before work was stalled.

He, however, regretted that out of the pillars emplaced, three were reportedly destroyed.

"Today's (Wednesday) meeting is, therefore, to consider all issues that affected the progress on the boundary, and to come up with appropriate measures to fast-track the boundary definition and demarcation process," he added.

In his remarks, Governor Hyacinth Alia of Benue appealed for amicable resolution of the boundary issues at the Joint Meeting of Officials, to pave the way for the resumption of the demarcation in earnest.

## Nigeria, UK mull working group on mining

From **Ernest Nzor, Abuja**

**F**EDERAL Government and the United Kingdom (UK) have resolved to form a joint technical working group to harmonise partnership for the development of critical mineral deposits in the country.

UK Deputy Prime Minister, Oliver Dowden, had met Nigeria's Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, on the sidelines of the Mines and Money Conference in London, late last year, and expressed UK's interest in Nigeria's lithium.

Sequel to that parley, a delegation of the British High Commission (BHC) led by Deputy High Commissioner,

Johnny Baxter, visited the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, reiterating Britain's readiness to fine-tune details of collaboration that would culminate in investments in the mining sector value chain.

The minister, while receiving the British delegation, stressed that the President Bola Tinubu administration is improving ease of doing business in the mining sector through new security architecture for natural resources, installing efficient governance structure through the establishment of a private sector-led Nigerian Mining Corporation, among others.

## Kano: Ganduje's invitation to Kwankwaso, gov unnecessary – Shekarau

### Group slams Galadima over comment on APC boss

**F**ORMER governor of Kano State, Ibrahim Shekarau, has described the invitation by the National Chairman of All Progressives Congress (APC), Abdullahi Ganduje, to Governor Abba Yusuf and presidential candidate of New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) to join the APC as an unnecessary move.

Shekarau, a two-term governor of the state and former minister of education, made this known in a video message.

Ganduje, the immediate past governor of Kano, was in

Kano for the APC stakeholders' meeting, last week, when he extended hand of fellowship to Yusuf and other members NNPP to join the APC.

Reacting to the invitation, Shekarau said: "My brother, Ganduje, came to Kano and invited the governor, Kwankwaso and others to come and gather in APC. For me, that is not necessary. What he should have done was to call on the people of Kano to stay peaceful, regardless of who is leading, since the case is over."

## Sambo appointed NAS president

By **Musa Adekunle**

**N**IGERIAN Academy of Science (NAS) has announced the appointment of Prof. Abubakar Sambo as the President-elect.

Executive Secretary of NAS, Dr Oladoyin Odubanjo, stated, yesterday, that Sambo, a Mechanical Engineering scholar and the immediate past Vice President of the academy, is set to succeed Professor Ekanem Braide in

January 2025.

Boasting an illustrious career, Sambo, was Director-General of the Energy Commission of Nigeria, Chair of the Nigerian Member Committee of the World Energy Council's Africa Region and former Vice Chancellor of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU).

He is chairman of the Ministerial Task Force on Power.

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## Cote D'Ivoire 2023 Africa Cup of Nations



The Super Eagles celebrating their round of 16 victory over Indomitable Lions of Cameroon at the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations in Cote d'Ivoire.

### Pundits tip Super Eagles to beat Angola, win trophy

By Christian Okpara

WITH the five highest rated teams out of the ongoing Africa Cup of Nations, bookmakers have installed Nigeria as the new favourites to win the title on February 11. Before the competition kicked off, 2022 FIFA World Cup semifinalists, Morocco and defending champions, Senegal, were the clear favourites for the crown, with Egypt, Tunisia, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria the other expected title contenders in that order. But the second round have thrown the pundits' prediction to the winds, with Mo-

rocco, Senegal, Egypt, Ghana, Cameroon and Tunisia's unexpected early ouster from the competition. In a competition littered with the carcasses of Africa's football giants, such countries as Angola, Cape Verde, South Africa, Guinea, Mali and DR Congo have emerged as potential champions in a tournament noted for the 'reign of underdogs.' Even hosts, Cote d'Ivoire, who were almost down and out after the first round of matches, are now tipped to go all the way by the bookmakers. Leading bookmakers, Hollywoodbets, have installed

Nigeria as the new favourites for the title at 37/20, followed by Cote d'Ivoire at 3/1. Mali (6/1) and DR Congo (10/1) follow next, with Morocco's conquerors, South Africa, installed as potential champions at 11/1. Also predicting that Nigeria would win the 2023 AFCON is Opta supercomputer, which said the Super Eagles have a 28.8 per cent chance of winning the championship. Mali with 14.7 per cent and Cote d'Ivoire with 13.5 per cent, make the top three favourite countries to win the tournament. Read the remaining story on [www.guardian.ng](http://www.guardian.ng)

### Super Eagles'll talk on the pitch, says Omeruo

By Gwon Akpodonor

AS soccer fans across the globe look forward to the epic quarterfinal clash between the Super Eagles and their Angolan counterparts on Friday, defender, Kenneth Omeruo, has declared that the Nigerian team is concentrating on their preparations and not ready to engage in any predictions. Omeruo, along with Ahmed Musa, are dreaming of be-

coming first Nigerian players to win two gold medals at the Africa Cup of Nations. The experienced defender came in to help stabilise the Super Eagles' rearguard in the closing stages of the Round of 16 defeat of five-time champions, Indomitable Lions of Cameroon, at the same venue. Omeruo is confident that the Palancas Negras (Sable Antelope) will bite the dust by the

final blast of the referee's whistle on Friday. "We have absolutely no need to go into back-and-forth chatter with any team. The Super Eagles are in Cote d'Ivoire for serious business. We have not played Angola for a long time, but I remember we played them in 2012 in a friendly and it ended in a draw. I have also read of how previous encounters between the two countries have been quite close.

### 'Inter Lagos to redefine football'

By Gwon Akpodonor

THE Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria National League side, Inter Lagos, Lanre Vigo, has said that one of the cardinal points of the club is to change the lives of young Nigerians. Speaking at the unveiling of Inter Lagos, yesterday, in La-


gos, Vigo stated that the club is out to re-shape the mindset of Nigerian youths to fall in love with the local clubs, instead of choosing foreign clubs like Arsenal, Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool.

"We want a football Club, where people will come, watch good football and go home satisfied. We want a club that is fan friendly. And to do so, you have to get quality players and good technical crew."

### Cote d'Ivoire 2023 quarterfinal matches

- Friday, February 2, 2024
  - Nigeria v Angola - 7:00 p.m.
  - DR Congo v Guinea - 10:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 3, 2024
  - Mali v Cote d'Ivoire - 7:00 p.m.
  - S' Africa v Cape Verde - 10:00 p.m.

SOLUTION												
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF

**Sir EMMANUEL ITOYA IJEWERE**

KSM, FCA, FCTI, DF, IOD

## Celebration OF LIFE

A Gentleman, Philanthropist, and Visionary Leader

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of a distinguished and beloved figure and former Director of Anchoria Investments & Securities Ltd., Sir Emmanuel Itoya Ijewere KSM, FCA, FCTI, DF, IOD. "An icon" in the field of accounting, agriculture, finance, and community service, Sir Ijewere's legacy is etched in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him.

**BURIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

**SERVICE OF SONGS & EVENING OF TRIBUTES**  
Thursday, February 1, 2024  
**Venue:** Habour Point Event Centre, Victoria Island, Lagos.  
**Time:** 5 pm.

**FUNERAL MASS**  
Friday, February 2, 2024  
**Venue:** Church of Assumption, Falomo, Ikoyi, Lagos.

**Anchoria Investments and Securities Ltd ... your trusted wealth creation partner.**

Our Services: Stocks and Bonds Trading Securities Lending Managing Lending Commodities Trading  
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## ASSOCIATION OF ESAN PROFESSIONALS

# *An Exceptional Professional Goes Home*

It is with a deep sense of loss, but with gratitude to God Almighty, that we announce the glorious home call of a member of our Board of Trustees, Past Vice President and a senior member of AEP, Sir Emmanuel Itoya Ijewere, KSM.

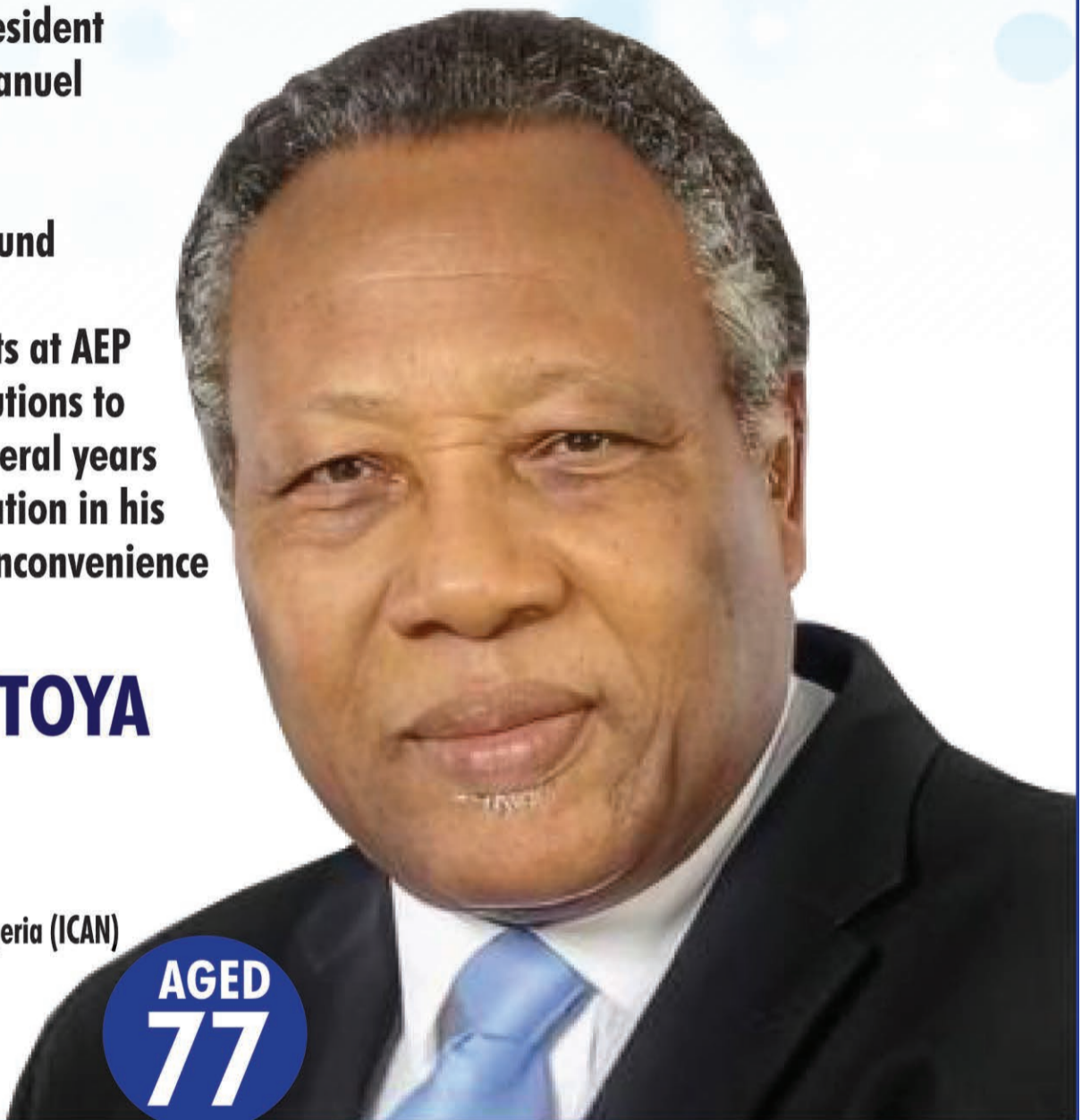
He will be sorely missed for his profound passion towards the development of Esanland, his great ideas and insights at AEP meetings, and his invaluable contributions to the growth of the Association. For several years he hosted the meetings of the Association in his house without minding the cost and inconvenience to his family.

## **SIR. EMMANUEL ITOYA IJEWERE**

KSM, FCA, FCTI, DE. IOD

- 32nd President, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN)
- Past President, Institute of Directors (IOD)
- Past National President, Nigerian Red Cross Society
- President, Nigeria Agribusiness Group (NABG)

**AGED  
77**



# **Adieu! Good night!! Okinbue Owanlen!!!**

### **BURIAL ARRANGEMENT**

**SERVICE OF SONGS & EVENING OF TRIBUTES**  
Thursday, 1st of February 2024  
Venue: Harbour Point Event Centre,  
Victoria Island, Lagos  
Time: 5pm

**Mr. Henry Egbiki**  
*President*

**FUNERAL MASS**  
Friday 2nd of February 2024  
Venue: Church of Assumption, Falomo,  
Ikoyi, Lagos  
Time: 10am

**INTERMENT**  
Strictly Private

**Mrs. Roseline Osemudiamen Adinoyi**  
*Publicity Secretary*

*May the Almighty God grant his soul Eternal rest. Amen!*



# REMEMBRANCE

The Umeoji Family fondly remember their beloved matriarch, mother, grandmother, Aunt, Sister and Mentor;

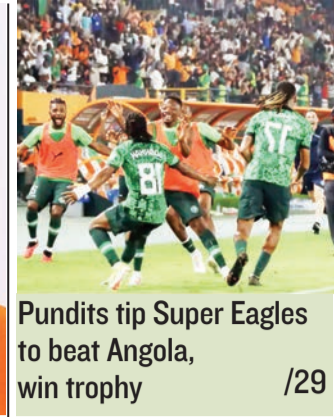
**Chief Lady Ngozi Umeoji KSJI**  
 "Adagbaodu 1" - Née Umezinwa who triumphantly transited to her heavenly abode two years ago.

Her memory and wonderful legacy remain indelible in our hearts.

Signed:  
**Hon. Sir Chukuwuma Umeoji**  
 (Oba Aguata)



**Chief Lady Ngozi Umeoji KSJI**  
*"Adagbaodu 1" - Née Umezinwa*



**Guest Writer** Titilola Obilade

# 2024 and our appetite for self-entitlement

IN the video of Falz' song, *Something Light*; he took a girl to a restaurant and the girl asked for something light. However, the female date's something light consisted of an order of six wraps, meat pie, pizza, and still more packed foods to take away for her sister at home.

It's common and often not frowned upon when you attend a wedding reception and eat. When you look around, you see servers serving plates of food garnished with choice proteins. If you're a silent observer at weddings, you would observe something that is brutish but has become acceptable.

What is no longer shameful is the flagrant diversion of plates of food meant for seated guests to the nylon bags and sacks of some entitled guests who are carting them home. It is not only foods that are packed; bottles of water, soda, wine and all what nots including souvenirs make it into these infamous bags. The foods are hurriedly packed in nylon bags and then buried inside the go-to bags for all things imaginable and unimaginable.

The perpetrators of this ignominious acts are well dressed men and women who have foods in their homes but just choose to ride on the apparent abundance of free food. Some wedding guests come prepared for these *take aways*. They come to the wedding with the popular African polypropylene bags. These go-to bags became popular in Nigeria around the 1980's when undocumented Ghanaians resident in Nigeria were suddenly expelled from the country.

These holdalls come in various sizes and are quite durable and adaptable enough to carry different items including foods. These adaptable sacks also became quite visible on election grounds all over the country as they were handy, non-transparent and had handles that made carrying large amounts of money easily.

Globally, these bags have become ubiquitous and were recently banned by Ethiopian Airlines in December of last year. The African Airline admitted that they damaged conveyor belts. The Ethiopian Airline was not the first to impose a ban on these versatile sack-bags. About six years ago, Air France and KLM Airlines had put a ban on the use of these bags. Nigerians have affinity for extravagance, showmanship and food.

Until Hilda Baci briefly held the Guinness World Record for a marathon cooking time of 93 hours and 11 minutes in May of last year, many more Nigerians had been in the Guinness Book of records but we didn't hear of other people attempting to out shine their records. However, since the chef from Akwa Ibom came into the lime light, Nigerians from all walks of life have been scrambling to get a glimmer of the lime light.

Since May of last year when the 27-year-old chef came on stage, hardly a month goes by without news about another wannabe Guinness World Record holder. She actually cooked for more than 93 hours but the Guinness World Record could only officially recognize 93 hours and 11 minutes. Nigerians and other Africans did not even allow her to sufficiently bask in the euphoria of her noble feat.



However, as soon as Hilda Baci got into the fray, various attempts like sing-a-thon, cry-a-thon, wash-a-thon, fry-a-thon and teaching marathon prompted a veiled message by the Guinness World Record body for prospective candidates to contact them before embarking on their quest to enter their record books.

Previous Guinness World Records held by Nigerians were mainly from sporting events and other Nigerians didn't attempt those. Perhaps because the duration it took to attain those records were longer than the hours in the cook-athons. The late Stephen Keshi had his name in the Guinness Book of Records as the youngest person to win the African Cup of Nations as player and as a coach. We also have other athletes from the Para Olympic games who have their names in the coveted record book.

Recently, at the 10th German-Nigerian Business Forum, Our Commander -In -Chief, quipped that his name deserved to be in the Guinness World Record for his past economic exploits. The exchange rate for one dollar to the naira is more than N1300.

Let's leave the Guinness World Record. If there's a function and you're in charge of gifts, it's not surprising and it's even expected that you'll keep some of the gifts for yourself or perhaps for those who would come late.

If you're an usher and you have special passes, it is also not viewed negatively if you allow those who know you or perhaps those who interact with your pockets are allowed into the special area. It has become an accepted norm that you gain materially from whatever position you're in. We're not saying you should not gain but be considerate.

From primary schools, our children are now involved in politicking for hitherto teacher-nominated positions like class president, class treasurer or even posts that never used to exist but have been created to fit into the caprices of their parents and school administrators. Parents print T-shirts and caps with the faces of their children and provide other token gifts on behalf of their children in a race to win coveted positions while in primary schools!

The textual messages on these shirts could

read "Vote for me, Class President." Such messages are hardly different from what we see on the adult stage of Nigerian politics. The only difference is while one has the image of a child the other is that of an adult. It seems parents are training their children in politics right from primary school.

It's no surprise because in the spirit of self-entitlement, if their child gets into government, they would continue in the entitlement mentality and amass what is meant for the people to themselves alone. Never mind, what the children or parents do once voted in. In secondary schools, the race into politics intensifies and in universities it is superlatively intense. Such coveted positions are not without their rewards. They have their perks.

In our appetite for power, we have become entitled. We have become a nation of entitled people. Our environment celebrates entitlement. In the open-air market, simply asking for direction to where you want to buy an electric cable; the person directs you, goes with you into the shop and eagerly waits for you to make the purchase so that the seller can give him his entitled cut for directing him to his shop. After all, there were many shops selling cable wires and yours was the chosen one. Whatever happened to civility?

Even in comedy skits, the actor that has successfully tricked his victim is usually shown with an extra-large plate of rice topped with a massive chicken thigh, the size that ordinarily he would not eat. If the comedian is not shown eating a large plate of rice, he can be shown lavishly spending money that he fraudulently got from his victim. The juxtaposition of such comedy skits is the reality of our entitlement mentality.

This penchant for entitlements is not new.

**This penchant for entitlements is not new. What is new is that we are all acting surprised and shocked at the magnanimity of self-entitlement in our governments. In our daily lives, from primary school to whatever level we have reached, we have imbibed the spirit of entitlement. In our environment we have been cured to have an unsatiable appetite for entitlement.**

What is new is that we are all acting surprised and shocked at the magnanimity of self-entitlement in our governments. In our daily lives, from primary school to whatever level we have reached, we have imbibed the spirit of entitlement. In our environment we have been cured to have an unsatiable appetite for entitlement.

It's no wonder that the International Monetary Fund is reluctant to write off any more debts from Nigeria. Paraphrasing from Kizz Daniel's song, *My G*; If you get 35 houses, you can only stay in one at a time. Just as Falz' song illustrates a restaurant order of something light turned into a meal that could feed several people.

Young Internet fraudsters who scam unsuspecting, retirees from their life savings justify their selfish actions by the same entitlement mentality that, they are making the unsuspecting love scam victim happy.

In nutrition, what we ingest determines our health several years down the line. As we get older, we need more fibre, less salt, less sugar and less fat. When we constantly eat more sugar or salt than our body needs, the organs suffer for it and can result in non-communicable diseases like hypertension and diabetes.

But these diseases do not appear immediately. It could take years before they finally show up and by then you might not really know what precipitated them. If not discovered on time, the damage might be irreversible.

Similarly, when we divert the monies or other resources meant for other people to ourselves, it indirectly comes back to bite us and the generation yet unborn. The consequences could be irreversible.

When there is institutionalised entitlement, it breeds social injustice, festers unrest and enshrines poverty. It becomes a vicious cycle. It doesn't end there; lack of food, education, employment, social welfare, housing and water are all in the *pot pourri* for insecurity. A country cannot progress without education of the younger generation and without employment of an able work force. Our religious and political leaders should not promote entitlement mentality by their words and actions. Nigeria is blessed with many resources. We have human resources that are excelling all over the world.

Unfortunately, Nigeria is bleeding out most of our youths to the *Japa* syndrome because droves of our productive ones are leaving the Nigerian shores every day. They cannot find employment in Nigeria and when they do, the salary does not meet a fraction of their needs. The ones that cannot leave are attempting to by any means possible.

Yet we have some productive and energetic members of our population that are into kidnappings and all forms of insecurity.

Nigeria! We have to set our house in order before all the employable members of our society leave the country and those that remain are thrown into the abyss of insecurity. Our appetite for entitlement eventually breeds insecurity. God help us.

*Obilade, a Professor of Community Medicine, wrote from Abuja.*

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