

Naira Strengthens, as Bank CEOs Pledge Support for New CBN FX Policy

● Apex bank to refund pending licensing fees to BDC promoters ● Says no going back on ban of FX sale to BDCs ● Bureau de Change operators: we are still in business

James Emejo in Abuja, Nume Ekeghe and Ugo Aliogo in Lagos

The naira appreciated to N520

to a dollar on the parallel market on Thursday, stronger than the N525 to a dollar it closed the previous day. The appreciation came as Chief

Executive Officers (CEOs) of banks promised to support the new foreign exchange (FX) measures of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the

regulator's effort to achieve FX stability.

On the Investors and Exporters' (I & E) FX window, the naira closed at N411.67 to

a dollar yesterday.

CBN also said it will commence the refund of capital deposits and licencing fees, where applicable, to Bureau

De Change (BDC) promoters who had pending licence applications before Tuesday's

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NSIA to Invest \$200m in World-class Hospital, 20 Other Projects Nationwide... Page 6

THIS DAY

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Hushpuppi: IG Orders Review of FBI's Allegation Against Abba Kyari

● US court orders arrest of top cop ● Force headquarters rattled by development ● My hands are clean, says Kyari

Chuks Okocha and Kingsley Nwezeh in Abuja

Apparently stunned by

the scale of allegations of corruption, abuse of power and torture of suspects, levelled against one of

Nigeria's most decorated police officers, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Abba Kyari, by Federal

Bureau of Investigation, FBI, the Inspector General of Police, Usman Alkali Baba, has ordered an internal review

of Kyari's involvement, in a series of crimes committed by a notorious internet fraudster, Ramon Abbas otherwise called

Hushpuppi. Baba's order followed a

Continued on page 41

APC in Jeopardy Over Buni's Continued Stay as National Chair

● Presidential aides want him sacked ● Omo-Agege insists his stay is legal

● Uba's candidacy in Anambra uncertain

Chuks Okocha in Abuja

Wednesday's Supreme Court judgement in the Ondo State governorship election might have opened the Pandora's box within the All Progressives Congress (APC) and exposed the ruling party to a bleak political future.

If legal experts' analyses of the judgment were anything to ponder, then, the fate that befell the APC in Zamfara State after the 2019 elections would be a child's play by the time the consequences of their current choices began to manifest before and after the 2023 polls.

Even more, stakeholders are currently divided over the matter with the party congresses still going ahead as scheduled. While a majority of party members were convinced

the situation portended serious crisis for the party, a few others were of the view that the party was on the right path.

In its split judgment of four against three by the seven member-panel, which sat on the Ondo governorship election petition, the Supreme Court had contended that the reason it did not sack Governor Rotimi Akeredolu of the state, was because the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and its governorship candidate in the October 10, 2020 election, Eytayo Jegede, failed to join the National Chairman of the party's Caretaker Committee and Governor of Yobe State, Mai Mala Buni, even when the issues revolved around him.

Expectedly, this development had immediately divided the stakeholders in the APC over

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GLOBAL EDUCATION SUMMIT...

President Muhammadu Buhari (left) with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, during a bilateral meeting at the sidelines of the Global Education Summit on Financing Global Partnership for Education (GPE)...yesterday

Terrorism: Buhari Assures British PM of Non-interference With Judicial Process... Page 6





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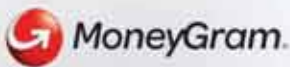




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BOOSTING OGUN'S ECONOMY...

L-R: Managing Director of Med-In Pharmaceuticals, Tola Awosika; Minister of Health, Dr Osagie Ehanire; Ogun State governor, Dapo Abiodun; his Ondo State counterpart, Rotimi Akeredolu and Chairman, Med-In Pharmaceuticals, Olubayode Awosika, during the official commissioning of the company's factory by the Ogun State governor at Sagamu Interchange, Ogun State...yesterday

Private Sector Owns 70% of N12.7tn Pension Fund, Says PENCOM

● FG to review 2014 Pension Act

Olawale Ajimotokan in Abuja

The National Pension Commission (PENCOM) has revealed that private sector workers own 70 per cent of the N12.7 trillion in the Retirement Savings Account (RSA) under the contributory pension scheme. The Commissioner, Administration, at PENCOM, Dr. Umar Aminu, disclosed this yesterday in Abuja at a Town Hall meeting on effective pension administration in the public service organised by the Office of the Head of Civil Service of the Federation. That was as Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Dr Folashade Yemi-Esan, said the federal government was considering a review of the Pension Reform Act, 2014. Aminu said the money was a contribution that belonged to 9.3 million people working in the private sector as well as the federal and state governments. The commissioner, who stood in for the Director General of PENCOM, Aisha Dahir-Umar, put the number of private sector workers, who owned the bulk of the contribution at 5.8 million. His remarks followed reservations against a proposed use of the pension contributions for the payment of pensions of federal government retirees. Aminu stated, "When we talk of the N12.7 trillion I mentioned today, this money is a contribution that belongs to 9.3 million people, including people who

are working for the federal government, the states and, largely, private sector. "About 5.8 million are actually people from the private sector. The private sector owns over 70 per cent of this money because they contribute more. When we remove the state, we can see that the amount that belong to the federal government employees and contributors is generally less than 10 to 20 per cent. So we need to put this thing into perspective: that you can't take private sector money for the public sector because when we were talking about reform initially, there were contentious issues that we were confronted with by the private sector that we were going to take their money and use it for the public sector." The commissioner also stated that PENCOM had not been able to carry out a review of the pension retirement benefits because it was still awaiting the 33 per cent from the consequential adjustment benefits following the implementation of the N30, 000 minimum wage. In addition, he said the commission had cleared all pension arrears up till December 2020 from the N100 billion, which was approved last month by President Muhammadu Buhari. Speaking also at the town hall meeting, Executive Secretary, Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD), Dr. Chioma Ejikeme, said the directorate had fully liquidated the 33 per cent arrears for the 2010 pension

increment. Ejikeme said over N7.2 billion was paid as a result of arrears and to pensioners not on payroll in addition to payment of entitlement to next of kin of verified deceased pensioners. Meanwhile, Yemi-Esan said the federal government saw review of the Pension Reform Act, 2014, as a major task that must be accomplished. She explained that the government had received submissions from the Contributory Pensions Union of Nigeria and a number of officers urging the review to enhance the welfare of workers. Yemi-Esan disclosed that her office had paid over N2.4 billion to over 594 beneficiaries as death benefits to the next of kin of deceased officers from the N2.5 billion released by the federal government. **NERC Bars TCN from Dealing with Unlicensed Eligible Customers** **● National power grid restored after collapse** **Emmanuel Addeh** in Abuja The Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) has warned the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) against dealing with unlicensed individuals and business concerns on the eligible customer basis. Speaking during the "Power Dialogue" for July, organised by the "Electricity Hub", Vice Chairman, NERC, Dr. Musiliu Oseni, explained that the TCN could not continue to deal directly with the so-called eligible customers when they had not met the requirements for eligibility. In a related development, TCN said yesterday that it had restored the national electricity grid after a total system collapse that occurred Wednesday afternoon. TCN's General Manager, Public Affairs, Mrs Ndidi Mbah, said in a statement in Abuja that power was fully restored at 4:59 pm on July 28, after the grid collapse triggered by a sudden drop in system frequency to 47.21Hz. The eligible customer regulation was developed by NERC to facilitate competition

and access to electricity supply for unserved or underserved high-end users in Nigeria. Introduced in 2017, it specifies the classes of end-use customers that will be able to directly purchase electricity from licensees other than the sole incumbent distribution licensees, the Distribution Companies (Discos). NERC said TCN should deal with only those who had fulfilled the eligibility conditions. Oseni said, "What we have had so far is that there are some of the transactions that are already being recognised as eligible customer transactions by the TCN without the commission's approval. That was why the commission said, stop recognising them as eligible customers, not that the commission said, stop supplying them, because we said let the billing be done the way it was being done prior to that recognition, when the commission had not issued the permits." He stated that currently NERC had only approved one eligible customer, which is Phoenix in Ogun State, explaining that all the remaining eligible customers

recognised by the TCN have not secured approval. While stressing that the rules must be followed strictly, he noted that if NERC had not conferred eligibility, any entity doing that was operating illegally. He said the commission had been fair to all parties. Oseni further stated that NERC was in the process of approving self-reporting apps being developed by vendors that would be able to confirm the number of hours of electricity received by customers. Meanwhile, giving details of the power situation, Mbah said in the statement that reports available to TCN showed that about 12:20 pm, two generating units tripped in one generating station while four equally tripped in another generating station, causing a loss of 261MW and 350MW, respectively, bringing the total loss of electricity on the grid to 611MW. "It is suspected that the sudden loss of 611MW from the grid caused system instability and its eventual collapse," the TCN spokesperson explained. After the collapse, the company said its system operators

immediately commenced the restoration of the grid and by 12:46 pm, power supply in Abuja was fully restored from Shiroro generating station. "At 1:05 pm, TCN equally commenced grid restoration from the Delta Power Station, and at 4:59 pm, a full restoration of the entire grid was achieved," the statement said. While appreciating the government, electricity customers nationwide, and its international customers for their patience, TCN noted that it would continue to work hard to expand and maintain the stability of the national grid. Nigeria's fragile national power grid had collapsed on Wednesday, leaving parts of the country without power supply from the system controlled from Osogbo by the wholly federal government-owned TCN. Industry players insist that a spinning reserve, which is the generation capacity that is online but unloaded and can respond within 10 minutes to compensate for generation or transmission outages remains the immediate solution to the incessant grid collapses.

NSIA to Invest \$200m in World-class Hospital, 20 Other Projects Nationwide

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

The Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA) has concluded plans to build a world-class hospital in Abuja, as part of efforts to strengthen the country's healthcare system. NSIA is also developing 20 other health projects in the areas of cancer, radiology, and diagnostics nationwide to support Nigeria's comatose health sector as part of its health intervention initiative. Managing Director of NSIA, Mr. Uche Orji, stated this on Thursday while speaking at the weekly media chat by the presidential media team, at State House, Abuja.

Orji said, "Our flagship programme is our world-class hospital that we are building here in Abuja that will be a centre for advanced medicine."

According to him, "Our objective now is to build 20 more of these centres across the country. We are starting this year with three; next year will be seven, and then another 10 the following year. This is everything from cancer, to radiology to diagnostics."

The managing director added that NSIA had already built one world-class cancer centre at the Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) and two radiology and diagnostics centres in Kano and Umuahia. He stated that NSIA's health care investment company was managing the health sector initiatives.

Orji stated, "I am happy to report that those centres are working successfully. At the moment, these three projects are doing quite well."

Commenting on the country's infrastructure development, Orji said the \$1.7 billion Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) was being channelled into the execution of the on-going Lagos-Ibadan expressway, Second Niger Bridge, Abuja-Kano road, and the Mambila hydropower projects.

He explained that NSIA's project considerations were driven by four major parameters: nationwide importance, ability to attract local and international capital, projects with strong commercial and social returns, and conducive legal environment for such investments.

He disclosed that the first phase of the Second Niger Bridge and the Lagos-Ibadan expressway would be completed in July 2022, while the Abuja-Kano road would be completed later this year.

Orji said, "These roads have nationwide importance. We are looking to bringing in other commercial capital contributors,

including pension funds.

"These projects will be commercial, profitable over time, because they are economic assets. That's the only way they are going to be maintained."

On the Presidential Fertiliser initiative, the NSIA managing director disclosed that the

agency had revived domestic fertiliser production, raising the blending plants from the initial four in 2016, to 47 blending plants across the country currently.

He stated, "The NSIA has grown fertiliser blending plants in Nigeria from the

four available in 2016, to 47 blending plants, currently, while also crashing prices from about N13,000 in 2026, to the current average cost of about N7,000."

According to him, government has, through the domestic initiatives, created employment opportunities

for many Nigerians.

NSIA was established by the federal government in 2012 as a multi-purpose investments vehicle to manage the country's sovereign wealth fund. The federal government had also in 2016 saddled the agency with the responsibilities of managing

its Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) with a total contribution of \$1.7 billion, made up of initial contributions of \$650 million, \$265 million, and the recently recovered \$311 million Abacha loot, which was transferred to the agency.

FG: \$2.3 Trillion Required to Achieve Nigeria's Infrastructure Master Plan

Emmanuel Addeh in Abuja

The federal government said yesterday that it would require about \$2.3 trillion cumulatively or \$150 billion annually to upgrade the poor state of Nigeria's infrastructure.

Speaking at the Business Hallmark Public Policy Forum titled: "Nigeria's Infrastructure Revolution; Road to a New Future", hosted by Mr. Marc Wabara and anchored by Dr. Alex Otti as well as Adesuwa Onyenokwe, Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Mr. Boss Mustapha, noted that the private sector is expected to fund about 56 per cent of this sum.

According to him, even with dwindling resources, the federal government is committed to putting in its own 44 per cent to ensure that the nation's infrastructure stock which he said the Muhammadu Buhari met at 35 per cent is upgraded.

"It is important that we appreciate where we are coming from, where we stand, what we need to do to get to our desired destination and most importantly, what government is doing to facilitate reaching that destination."

"At inception, in May, 2015, President Buhari's administration was confronted with a monster that is a huge infrastructure challenge, indicated by infrastructure stock that was estimated 35 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), he stated.

Mustapha stated that this number was grossly inadequate for a country that was in dire need of inclusive growth and was far below the 70 per cent international benchmark already attained by some emerging markets.

He stated that in the light of limited resources worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic, government needed to explore other financing options, which necessitated a greater focus on public private partnerships.

"For this, \$2.3 trillion would be required, translating to about \$150 billion annually and the private sector provides 56 per cent, while federal government and states will have to provide 44 per cent of the share of

investment. Therefore, private sector participation becomes more compelling if Nigeria is to implement this particular master plan," he argued.

In recent years, the SGF stated that Nigeria has conducted several important infrastructure sector reforms, including extending and upgrading the nation's railway network and introducing locomotive coaches, building quality roads and setting up several initiatives like Infracore which will soon take off.

In his remarks, former National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Mr. John Oyegun, explained that after six years of service in a tenure of eight years, it was necessary to sit back and review achievements and engage the populace so as to obtain feedback on impact.

He added that the outcome of the meeting will enable government to recalibrate and

refocus its efforts to deliver on its agenda, noting that the general election of 2015 that brought APC to power was based on campaign promise to accelerate economic development, enhance security and a robust fight against corruption.

"Six years into the life of the administration, any impartial observer can see that the performance of the government has been mixed. There have been areas of soaring successes, as in the infrastructure development and programmes.

"But there are also areas where we have fallen a little short. Many reasons have been adduced for the not so successful stories. Obviously, more work needs to be done in order to end with an overall positive narrative at the end of the tenure of this administration and to justify the massive hope and confidence invested in the president and the APC," he said.

The former Edo state governor

stated that while Buhari places strong commitment on infrastructure development, despite the challenges of funding, there have also been missed opportunities.

He argued that a vibrant economy could not be achieved without security of life and property of the people in the country, stressing that every emphasis must be laid on the provision of adequate security.

Also speaking, Minister of Water Resources, Mr. Suleiman Adamu, said that as far back as 1992, 30 per cent of the Nigerian population was enjoying pipe borne water and as at 2015, it had dropped to 7 per cent.

According to him, in 2015, Nigeria had 68 per cent national coverage for access to water, but noted that with government effort, this has risen to 70 per cent and is further expected to jump to 72 per cent by the end of 2021.

"We have developed new programmes in the last six years to improve access to water in rural areas. We are working on rehabilitation and expanding the irrigation infrastructure by 50 per cent. We have launched the National Irrigation Development Programme (NIDP) and by 2030, we hope that we can have 1.5 million hectares and 50 per cent of our irrigation potential developed," he stated.

Minister of Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola, stated that despite the fall in crude oil price, the federal government increased the budget for roads from N18 billion to N260 billion, an over 1,300 per cent increase.

"This spend has resulted today in 895 ongoing contracts across the country for roads and bridges, covering 13,552 kilometres of construction, rehabilitation and renovation across the length and breadth of the country," he said.



REPOSITIONING THE GAMING INDUSTRY...

L-R: Chairman, Governing Board, National Lottery Regulatory Commission, NLRC, Alhaji Abdulfatai Ibikunle; Minister, Special Duties and Intergovernmental Affairs, George Akume; and Director-General, National Lottery Regulatory Commission, Lanre Gbajabiamila, during the opening session of the maiden National Gaming Conference with the theme: Repositioning the Gaming Industry for Better Performance and Enhanced Revenue Generation for Stakeholders in the 21st Century, in Lagos on Wednesday

Terrorism: Buhari Assures British PM of Non-interference with Judicial Process

● Britain, Commonwealth pledge security assistance

Deji Elumoye in Abuja

President Muhammadu Buhari has assured the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, that he would not interfere with the judicial trial of terrorism suspects in Nigeria.

In reciprocity, Britain too has pledged to assist Nigeria to tackle security problems facing all the regions that make up the country.

This is as the Commonwealth has also indicated its readiness to assist Nigeria to solve the

myriad of problems including terrorism, general insecurity, climate change, facing it.

Media Adviser to the President, Femi Adesina, in a release disclosed that President Buhari and PM Johnson Thursday appraised the war against different forms of terrorism in Nigeria, and agreed that the judicial process be allowed to run its course.

Holding bilateral talks at the sidelines of the Global Education Summit in London, the two leaders said it was important

that the judicial process ran without interference, no matter who was involved.

President Buhari briefed the Prime Minister on Nigeria's power needs and efforts being made, as well as initiatives geared at achieving food security.

He also reviewed the security situation in the different regions of the country, while PM Johnson pledged Britain's preparedness to lend a helping hand.

"We are available to help,"

Johnson said.

The two leaders equally discussed how to increase trade between the two countries, develop solar and wind power, leadership of the Commonwealth going forward and other matters of mutual interest.

Relatedly, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Baroness Patricia Scotland, pledged the help of the Commonwealth on Thursday during a bilateral meeting with President Buhari at the sidelines of the summit.

Adesina, in yet another

release, listed the areas the Commonwealth Scribe promised to assist Nigeria to include countering violent extremism, trade, and modalities to implement the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

She stressed that since President Buhari was the Champion for Anti-Corruption in Africa, the Commonwealth has developed anti-corruption benchmark tools, and would like to work with Nigeria in both public and private sectors.

Baroness Scotland said the Commonwealth had developed programmes on agribusiness, adding value to agriculture products for young people to get involved, climate change, criminal justice reforms, police reforms, and security, inviting Nigeria to benefit from technical assistance that could be provided.

Buhari, while responding said, Nigeria would be glad to receive support from the Commonwealth in diverse areas of needs and challenges.



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NAIRA STRENGTHENS, AS BANK CEOS PLEDGE SUPPORT FOR NEW CBN FX POLICY

announcement of the end of FX sale to the currency dealers. The apex bank insisted it would not rescind the ban on FX sale to BDCs. Director, Monetary Policy Department, CBN, Dr. Hassan Mahmud, said this yesterday when he featured on “Arise Xchange,” a programme monitored on Arise News Channel, a THISDAY sister broadcast station. Meanwhile, President, Association of Bureaux De Change Operators of Nigeria (ABCON), Aminu Gwadabe, reacted yesterday to the CBN’s policy announcement. Gwadabe said the association would engage with the banking sector regulator to address and resolve all the issues that led to the ban on FX sale to its members. CBN Governor Godwin Emefiele had disclosed the end of FX sale to BDCs while briefing journalists at the end of a two-day meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in Abuja on Tuesday. He directed all commercial banks to immediately create designated branches for the sale and disposal of FX to eligible customers for legitimate purposes. He also said the CBN will no longer process or issue new licences for BDC operations in the country, adding that all licences being currently processed, regardless of the stage, had been suspended. The CBN governor said the bank would now channel weekly FX allocations, hitherto meant for BDCs, to commercial banks. Speaking yesterday during a virtual media briefing, Chairman, Body of Bank CEOs, Herbert

Wigwe, said authorised financial institutions in the FX market would ensure full compliance with the CBN directives in order to ensure FX stability. Wigwe said customers could walk into their banks to purchase dollars for legitimate transactions. He noted that the banks had agreed that the process would start immediately following a meeting with the CBN. Wigwe, who is also Group Managing Director of Access Bank Plc, said the banks were ready to meet the mandate of the CBN, adding that they have more than enough capacity to deliver. He explained that the process would be centralised to avoid abuse. The Access Bank GMD pledged that the banks would ensure that the measures that had been put in place were not disrupted and abused, saying, “We will also be doing verification of the Bank Verification Number (BVN).” In addition, Wigwe said banks yet to adhere to the mandate by the regulator to create a forex desk would be sanctioned. According to him, “The banking industry is willing and ready to carry out this function. As you are aware, the bank has very strict compliance measures in terms of Know Your Customer (KYC). For us at Access Bank, we will ensure that all our branches meet the requirements. “If you look at all the banks, you would agree with me that the banks have more than enough capacity to deal with the mandate of the CBN. “If we see non-compliance issues,

we will report to the CBN and the law enforcement agencies. So if people intend to do things, such as coming with a second passport and other things, we will report them to the law enforcement agencies.” He added, “We feel that what the CBN has done is worthy of commendation because people will have access to different channels to collect their BTAs and school fees required for their children. “The banks have a lot more channels to assist the customers get access to forex, depending on where they are, even if they are in Enugu or Port Harcourt.” In his remarks, Chief Executive Officer, Guaranty Trust Bank, Segun Agbaje, expressed the readiness of the bank to begin implementation of the mandate given by the CBN. Agbaje assured customers that the banks had the resources to fund the process, adding that they have collectively agreed to start immediately. He also stated that different banks had different processes, therefore, banks should examine their controls, and what worked for them. Agbaje said, “There is a lot of abuse around FX, so you will find out that some of the better controlled systems are centralised, while some are decentralised. Customers should not panic, there would be availability of forex, and the banks will run a very transparent process.”

CBN to Refund Pending Licencing

Fees to BDC Promoters CBN said it would immediately commence the refund of capital deposits and licencing fees, where applicable, to BDC promoters who had pending license applications with the bank. CBN in a circular to BDC promoters and all banks, dated July 29, 2021, and signed by the CBN Director, Financial Policy and Regulation Department, Mr. Ibrahim Tukur, advised the affected promoters to forward their requests for refund in writing to the Director, Financial Policy and Regulation Department. It added that the requests should be accompanied with telex copy of initial deposit of N35 million and account details of the refund, which should be the same as the account from which the capital deposited originated, including bank name, account name and number, as well as copy of the bank draft/telex for payment of licencing fee of N1 million, if any. CBN further directed all deposit money banks to henceforth stop accepting instructions from customers to transfer capital deposits of N35 million to the designated CBN account for the purpose of applying for BDC licenses. Similarly, the banking sector regulator, in another circular, directed all banks to set up teller points at designated branches across the country to fulfil legitimate FX requests for Personal Travel Allowance (PTA), Business Travel Allowance (BTA),

tuition fees, medical payments, and SMEs transactions, among others. In the letter to all banks, signed by the Director, Banking Supervision Department, Mr. Haruna Mustafa, the bank explained that the directive was part of the fallouts of the MPC meeting, which had also authorised the commercial banks to begin accepting cash deposits of foreign exchange from their customers. The circular directed the banks to adequately publicise the locations of designated branches and make necessary arrangements to sell FX to customers in cash and/or electronically in compliance with extant regulations. CBN strongly advised banks to ensure that no customer was turned back or refused FX, provided documentation and all other requirements were satisfied. The apex bank further warned against undue delays, rationing and diversion of FX, and directed commercial banks to establish electronic applications and alert systems to update customers on the status of their FX requests. It reminded banks that a toll-free line had been set up at the apex bank to enable bank customers to escalate unresolved complaints related to their FX requests. The statement added that the CBN would continue to closely monitor banks’ conduct and compliance with the directive in order to ensure an efficient FX market for all legitimate users, adding that any breach of the directive will be severely

sanctioned. **ABCON to Engage CBN** President, Association of Bureaux De Change Operators of Nigeria (ABCON), Aminu Gwadabe, yesterday said the association would engage the CBN to address the ban on FX sale to its members. Gwadabe said the planned engagement would, among other things, seek to identify and sanction earring BDCs. In a statement, he clarified that the association was still providing FX services, in spite of the central bank’s action. Gwadabe said the pronouncement by the CBN did not stop BDCs from providing FX services as allowed by their operating licences and in their operating guidelines. Gwadabe said, “BDCs are licenced to provide retail FX services, including buying from the public and also selling to end-users for allowable transactions, namely, PTA, BTA, payment of medical, and school fees.” He said while the CBN had stopped dollar sale to BDCs, it did not cancelled their operating licences, or ban them from providing FX services to members of the public. According to him, “While the dollar sale from CBN had helped in enhancing supply, the fact remains that BDCs are empowered to source FX from other sources and also to provide various services to members of the public.

APC IN JEOPARDY OVER BUNI’S CONTINUED STAY AS NATIONAL CHAIR

Buni’s continued stay, both as national chairman of the party and governor of Yobe State. Section 183 of the 1999 constitution unequivocally forbids a sitting governor from combining his office with any other job, both as executive positions, same as Article 17 (iv) of the APC constitution. Interestingly, this aspect of the judgement, though simplified by the Supreme Court justices, has since ruffled feathers in the APC as it has the capacity to also affect the party in the forthcoming November 6 governorship election in Anambra State as well as the ward congresses of the party expected to commence Saturday nationwide. For instance, the fate of Senator Andy Uba, candidate of the APC is currently uncertain as the party, as was the case in Zamfara, might be unable to field any candidate for the election. And despite the party’s seeming attempt to brush off the grave implications of the judgment, top echelons of the APC are worried of the potential minefield it has set itself up against. The majority decision of the Supreme Court delivered by Justice Emmanuel Agim, clearly held that the failure of the appellants to include Buni as a party was fatal to their case, because all the issues in the appeal revolved around Buni and ought to have been made a party. Although Justice Mary Odili, in a dissenting minority verdict, upheld Jegede’s appeal that the nomination of Akeredolu, which was signed by Buni was not valid under Section 183 of the 1999 Constitution. Thus, many of APC’s big wigs couldn’t believe how close they came to losing Ondo to the PDP and that the only saving grace was that, the appellant – either by providence or commission – failed to include Buni as a party in the suit. Already, the APC in Zamfara State has taken the party to court asking it to declare as illegal, the fact that Buni has continued to

combine the two of offices of governor and national chairman being executive positions, adding that it contravened both the constitution of APC and the country, the 1999 constitution as amended. It was against this backdrop, that some aides of President Muhammadu Buhari called for the sack of the national caretaker committee of the party and a suspension of tomorrow’s congresses in the immediate. Soon after the judgement, Minister of State for Labour, Festus Keyamo (SAN), was the first to advise the APC to halt all preparations and conduct of congresses nationwide forthwith, having analysed the implications of the judgment. “The planned congresses across the country slated for this weekend must immediately be suspended, because it will be an exercise in futility as analysed above. The competence of Governor Mai Mala Buni to organise the congresses has been called to question by the Supreme Court. “The NEC of the party can urgently meet and consider and reconstitute the CECPC to exclude, not only Governor Buni, but anyone holding any executive position in any government establishment as stipulated in Article 17 of the APC Constitution,” Keyamo said. Apart from Keyamo, two senior officials in the presidency, the Special Adviser to the President on Political Matters, Senator Babafemi Ojuda and Senior Special Assistant to the President on Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Ita Enang have also joined the call for the Buni committee to be disbanded. Ojuda and Enang, in a joint statement, also said the judgement appeared to have swept the carpet of legality off the committee, rendering it illegal, null, void and of no legal capacity to undertake any action on behalf and in the name of the party. They said it has also brought to question, the legality of all

the actions taken by the Buni-committee since inception. “Accordingly, in view of the impending ward, local government, states and zonal congresses and indeed the national convention (which the CECPC was primarily set up to do), it is our view that the ward and other congresses scheduled for July 31, 2021 be paused, suspended and put on hold pending the determination of the legal status of the CECPC to undertake all the activities it so far has, and indeed jurisdiction to conduct the congresses and convention. “That the party carefully and dispassionately cause her team of legal experts to review, appraise and give considered opinion on the import of the majority and in extreme particular the reasonings in the minority judgment of the Supreme Court as to the legal Status of the CECPC to proceed further with any activity in the name of the party or otherwise. “That option, including painful ones be recommended to perfect the party leadership in the eyes of the law with legal capacity to do what it ought to do. That the team also recommend measures to perfect matters in respect of pending elections and matters to rescue challenged pending processes. “That Time being of the essence, very limited timelines be set for each of the proposed steps. One cannot put something on nothing and expect it to stand. “Finally, this being a Supreme Court judgement, we should be thankful that it has come very early that it will guide our Party to victory in 2023 as we mind carefully the legal Status of our systems, guiding us on avoidable actions as we approach the 2023 tape to brace successfully,” the statement read. But the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ovie Omo Agege, has objected to the position of the aides of the president and others. In his legal opinion, he said, “Wednesday 28th, July, 2021, the Supreme Court delivered its

judgment dismissing the appeal initiated by Eytayo Jegede against the election of Governor Rotimi Akeredolu. Surprisingly, mischief-makers for obviously nefarious intensions, resort to misinterpret the said judgment vis-a-vis the purport of section 183 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), as it affects the APC Congresses scheduled for Saturday. “Without much ado, it is important to state that the majority decision of the Supreme Court in Jegede’s case, emphatically dismissed the appeal and did not consider the issue of the provisions of Section 183 of the 1999 Constitution, neither did the majority decision make any comments on the competence of Governor Mai Mala Buni as the Chairman of the APC Caretaker Committee. The appeal was dismissed on the ground of competence or lack thereof for the non-joinder of a necessary party to the suit at the lower court. “It is, therefore, disingenuous, unsound and mischievous to attempt to misinform the reading public of what was not the ratio decidendi of the judgment of the court. Even if the apex court had considered the provisions of Section 183 of the 1999 Constitution, the majority panel would still have dismissed the appeal. “Having established the above point, it is necessary to proceed to clear the gross misconception of the provisions of section 183 of the 1999 Constitution. “The sole question that begs for consideration is whether the appointment of Governor Mai Mala Buni as the APC Caretaker Committee Chairman offends the provisions of Section 183 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended)? “In answering the above question, it is pertinent to reproduce the provisions of Section 183 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) as follows: the governor shall not, during the period when he holds office, hold any other executive office or paid employment in any capacity

whatsoever. “In view of the foregoing constitutional provisions, the question becomes: Is the appointment of a Governor to Chair a Caretaker Committee of his political party, same not being an ‘Executive Office’ in respect of which he is to be paid remuneration, incompetent? “Can it be said that a State Governor, who is the Chairman of the Governors Forum of Nigeria is occupying an “Executive office”? Can it also be argued that the President cannot be appointed as the Chairman of Africa Union? “From the explicit provision of Section 183 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), it is absolutely impossible and untenable to argue that the provisions of Section 183 bars a Governor from being a Chairman or member of a Caretaker Committee set up by his or her political party. “More so, the position of the Chairman of a Caretaker Committee cannot by any sense of imagination, logic or simple common sense be classified as a being a salaried Executive office. “It is important at this point to restate the fact, that the Caretaker Committee was duly constituted by the NEC of the party and given a specific mandate to put necessary measures in place to conduct a seamless elective National Convention. “There is no law under our legal jurisprudence that bars or prohibits a Governor who is a member of a political party and won elections under the political party from carrying out specific assignments on-behalf of his party. How this will amount to holding an Executive office is beyond every stretch of human comprehension. “In the light of the foregoing exposition, it is humbly and firmly stated that Section 183 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) only bars a Governor from holding Executive positions like being a Minister, or any other executive positions for

which he shall be paid for. “It does not by any scintilla of imagination, render the appointment of Governor Buni as APC Caretaker Committee Chairman incompetent and will not in anyway, affect the legality or competence of the APC scheduled Congresses.” Omo Agege stated For the record, however, Article 17 (iv) of the APC constitution is clear and states that no official of the party shall at same time hold any executive position in any government institution. Therefore, the argument that being party chairman is not an executive position may not apply here in the case of the APC constitution, which states clearly that, “no official of this party can hold any position in any government institution.” In other words, even if supporters of Buni were interpreting Nigeria’s constitution upside down, they cannot do the same to the party’s constitution, which states that no official of its shall hold any position in any government. That, of course, is considered clear enough. By implication, if the APC goes ahead and holds the congresses, it might turn out an effort in futility. Unfortunately, the first casualty of this poor choice by the APC might be the party’s candidate in the Anambra State governorship election, Senator Andy Uba. While some members have conceded Uba’s fate to time, others, who were convinced about the position of the law in the case have concluded that the APC has no candidate in the Anambra election. “Let’s forget it, we are only wasting our time. The Supreme Court has spoken, so, what do we want again? All what Senator Ovie Omo-Agege is saying is rubbish,” a top member of the party and government, held last night.



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A VOICE TO TRAFFICKING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS

Franz Celestin canvasses the need to create human rights-based and victim-centred anti-trafficking interventions

On 30 July 2021, we commemorate the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The plight of millions of children, women, men suffering coercion, exploitation and humiliation is real. Driven by the demand for cheap labour and commercial sex, trafficking rings across borders and within countries take advantage of economic, social and political vulnerabilities to exploit their victims.

The number of persons who have been trafficked is on the rise everywhere, and Nigeria is not an exception. As a country of origin, transit and destination for victims of human trafficking, the giant of Africa records the highest number of human trafficking victims. In 2018, the Walk Free Foundation estimated that almost 1.4 million individuals were living in modern slavery in Nigeria. Research also shows that two-thirds of Nigerian victims of trafficking are victims of domestic human trafficking. Criminals of such a highly profitable business model have devised ways to hide their traces and increase gains.

This year's World Day against Trafficking in Persons theme "Victims' Voices Lead the Way" highlights the importance of listening to and learning from survivors of human trafficking. Sadly, often unheard, victims and survivors' voices are key to developing and implementing strategies, policies, and measures to prosecute perpetrators. In worst cases, they face re-victimisation and punishment for seeking help for the crimes they were forced to commit by their traffickers. We call upon our partners to put victims and survivors at the centre of our collective responses, learning from their stories and gaining inspiration from their courage and resilience.

The ongoing pandemic has exacerbated vulnerabilities of potential victims of trafficking, made them more susceptible to exploitation, and brought to the surface existing societal inequalities. With the attention of governments focused on how to strengthen the health systems and cope with soaring loss of jobs, the victims are often left with no chance to be heard. Provision for essential services and support mechanisms has been extremely limited as countries struggle to respond to all challenges posed by COVID-19.

At the International Organization for Migration (IOM), we are concerned about the severity and dimensions of this issue. This is why our counter-trafficking work strongly focuses on providing assistance and protection to victims of human trafficking including other vulnerable migrants and conducting awareness-raising activities.

IOM works closely with the National Agency for



HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS A CRIME AND A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. IT HAS NO PLACE IN OUR WORLD. VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS MUST BE HEARD

Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) to build and strengthen the capacity of state and non-state actors across the board to provide protection support using a victim-centred approach.

Nigeria has made laudable efforts through the work of NAPTIP to counter trafficking in persons with the implementation of new policies and interventions like the creation of a new National Action Plan against Human Trafficking, operationalization of the national referral mechanism through the development of identification and reporting tools aimed at ensuring that there is a standardized approach to victim identification, referral and reporting. In addition, the creation of multiple state task forces on human trafficking and "legal hubs" for trafficked persons has enabled access to justice and strengthened cross border coordination.

We recall the commitments made by the federal government of Nigeria in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to facilitate the access of trafficked persons to justice, to allow them to safely report experiences without fear of detention, deportation or penalty, and to provide migrants who have become trafficking victims with protection, assistance and redress.

We call on government partners, civil society organisations and the UN community in Nigeria to: one, give a voice to trafficking victims and survivors – make them powerful agents of change in our societies. Let us benefit from their experience and knowledge to create human rights-based and victim-centred anti-trafficking interventions.

Two, enhance international, regional and local cooperation – to monitor migration routes to prevent trafficking, collaborate in cross-border investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, and to provide protection and assistance to those in need at any stage of their migration journey. Three, identify, refer, and assist victims of trafficking promptly – to protect their rights and dignity and foster their psychosocial recovery and reintegration into society.

Four, implement a whole-of-society approach to address trafficking in persons –reaffirming the key role of frontline actors, including victims and survivors-led initiatives, to inform effective responses to the needs of trafficking victims.

Human trafficking is a crime and a violation of human rights.

It has no place in our world. Victims and survivors must be heard.

Celestin is IOM Chief of Mission

APC NATIONAL CHAIR: WHO WEARS THE CROWN?

Senator Sani Musa has what it takes to lead the party, argues **Olakunle Abdusalam**

The final countdown to the APC Congresses is on. The commentaries, reports and opinions circulating in the media especially on who will become the All Progressives Congress (APC) National Chairman will hasten the polarization or coalition of political forces and the composition of the teams for the party's two highest political and government positions respectively.

The initial surveys on the race of who occupies the office of the National Chairman have shown how former governors, senators and party chieftains are scheming and pushing for support to actualise their ambitions.

Bitter and deep differences have rocked both the administration and opposition quarters in our country's political journey. The political parties are violating democratic procedures and the leadership are fighting each other. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) considered the main opposition party under the present regime, has failed to unite the various opposition groups and critics of the administration. The PDP no longer looms large as the most viable opposition party, it has not been combative as the opposition party as the party itself is neck deep in leadership conflict. Instead of being critical of the APC administration in matters of policy direction, the party seems to have been liberal in their

accusations and criticisms dwell mainly on the person of President Muhammadu Buhari.

But time pressure will force the party to finalize ongoing negotiations and shifting alliances. The most probable serious candidates for the party leadership are already visible in the political landscape. Until the aspirants officially declare their candidature, the final political equation will remain uncertain. What will further delay the polarization process are the rivalries, differences, self-importance, and the conflicting principles of the principal players.

The likes of Umaru Tanko Almakura, George Akume, Abdullahi Adamu, Ali Modu Sheriff and former Abdulazeez Yari, Salihu Mustapha, Mohammed Danjuma Goje, Isah Yuguda and most recently Mohammed Sani Musa have all indicated their interest to lead the party for the next four years. At the early stages names of Almakura, Adamu and Akume popped up as leading the pack of former governors over the other opponents. Not until the name of Senator Mohammed Sani Musa appeared and became the dark horse.

As at the moment Senators Tanko Almakura and Sani Musa seem to enjoy a wide range of support, but looking at various scenarios Senator Musa is better placed especially because he does not belong to any of the interesting blocks

scheming for the party's nomination for the presidency. His position and the support he is garnering at the moment will certainly raise his confidence and those of his supporters, yet it is hardly comfortable considering that the party have not yet decided on its zoning formula and this has made many of the aspirants yet to formally announce their decision to run for the office.

With all the permutations going round, Senator Sani Musa seems to have an upper lead in the initial surveys. Musa stands as the man to beat in this early race. He is determined to run. He is not identified with any interest group within the party, he has good credentials for the position, a remarkable record of accomplishments as a business executive, technocrat and legislator; a strong-willed and unbiased person, and he has a hands-on style of leadership, implicit influence and judicious use of resources wherever he administered.

Senator Musa is the serving senator representing Niger East Senatorial District in the ninth Senate; he has excellent professional and educational credentials. He has passion for ICT and digital technology. To his credit, he contributed to the development and promotion of Electronic Voting for the first time in Nigeria, which brought about the introduction of Card Reader and Permanent Voter Card (PVC), the revolutionary steps instrumental

to the entrenchment of largely credible elections in Nigeria by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 2015 and 2019. If Musa has the opportunity to lead the party he will benefit from the still high performance and acceptance of technology in our electoral process, as he will introduce for the party far reaching innovations and more digital-oriented policies that will make a difference in political party administration in Nigeria.

But whoever becomes the national chairman will inherit some of the sins and shortcomings of the Adams Oshiomhole's administration even if he was not involved in these transgressions.

The thousands of victims of nomination abuses, and corruption during the Adam's administration will most likely welcome a new leader that is not a former governor because of their concern for the way former governors that were once party chairmen acted with high-handedness and ruthless mis-governance. The downtrodden members of the party may draw more support for a non-former governor to clinch the office.

Even with all the formidable odds against most of the party leadership getting elected as its stands Senator Musa seems to be a strong and hard-to-beat candidate. What might make a big difference between victory and defeat is the party's zoning formula.

Abdusalam wrote from Lagos



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THE VULNERABILITY OF RURAL DWELLERS

The authorities are not doing enough to secure the countryside

The spate of attacks on rural communities in Northwest Nigeria has gradually brought the average citizen to the Hobbesian state where life has become nasty, brutish, and short. That operatives of the various security agencies usually arrive scenes of attacks only after many people had been killed has only heightened the sense of foreboding. Meanwhile, the inability to bring attackers to justice, according to Amnesty International, only helps to fuel dangerous conspiracy theories that escalate the violence. It is therefore incumbent on the authorities to find solution to the growing lawlessness across the country but most particularly in the north.

The failure to protect the people is put squarely at the doorsteps of the federal government that has lost the capacity to rein in sundry cartels of gunmen who now terrorise rural areas of the country. “The Nigerian authorities have left rural communities at the mercy of rampaging gunmen”,

A GOVERNMENT THAT CANNOT GUARANTEE THE SECURITY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY FOR CITIZENS AND RESIDENTS IN A COUNTRY HAS FAILED

said an Amnesty International report published last year. “Terrifying attacks on rural communities in the north of Nigeria have been going on for years,”

added Osai Ojigho, director of Amnesty International Nigeria. “The ongoing failure of security forces to take sufficient steps to protect villagers from these predictable attacks is utterly shameful,” she added.

To make matters worse, where members of these marauding gangs are arrested, the impunity in the justice system works to set them free. This gives the impression of a conspiratorial nexus between the invaders and rogue operatives within the security agencies. For most of these cases, that the perpetrators have never been brought to justice leaves rural communities feeling completely abandoned to their fate. The impact on their means of livelihood compounds the situa-



tion. Since it is impossible to carry out farming activities under an insecure environment, it is also no surprise that domestic agricultural production has been stifled while access to regional markets remain blocked.

Forced to flee their communities, many of these people are now being further traumatised to learn that their tormentors are considered more important than them. For many Nigerians, particularly those in the North-east, life has never been so brutal. With the maimed, the orphans, the widows, widowers and the tides of refugees in IDPs camps practically left to their own devices, the preoccupation with making some killers happy is not lost on them. Inmates of Kuchingworo and Durumi camps in Abuja recently threatened to join Boko Haram should federal government continue to romance terrorists and ignore their victims. This followed a revelation that hundreds of ‘repentant’ Boko Haram insurgents who had completed the de-radicalisation programme would be reintegrated into the communities. With the federal government expending huge resources on these insurgents, their victims who have been condemned to the IDP camps now wonder whether their lot would not be better if they also carry arms. It is criminal to ignore these most vulnerable citizens and then begin to pamper those who put them in the situation they are in.

We align with the call on the federal government to urgently deploy security forces into the hinterlands, including consistent aerial surveillance to track down the purveyors of the carnage and consequently end the wanton waste of lives and property. Government at the federal and state levels should also muster the courage and political will to halt the incursion of non-state actors who have now decided to make the education space unsafe by the alarming rate at which they storm schools to abduct students for ransom. The urgent imperative therefore is for President Muhammadu Buhari to realise that a government that cannot guarantee the security of life and property for citizens and residents in a country has failed.

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THE AKK AS GAME CHANGER

The Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano gas pipeline, otherwise known as AKK, promises to be a game changer in the economic development of the country, especially Northern Nigeria. Its game-changing impact is encompassed in its designed purpose of delivering Natural Gas for multiple uses.

The gas pipeline spans a length of 614 kilometres, running from Ajaokuta to Kano. The project cost is estimated at \$2.8 billion. And it is a segment of the Trans-Nigeria Gas Pipeline (TNGP) and the Trans Saharan gas pipeline project.

The AKK represents a practical manifestation of the concept of public sector collaborating with the private sector in a partnership to achieve a major national goal. The project is being implemented through a Build and Transfer (BT) Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. The contractor is providing 100 per cent funding.

The pipeline project transverses four states namely Kogi, Niger, Kaduna, Kano and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It will pass by Zaria, an important city the inhabitants of which will equally benefit from the over 2.2 billion cubic feet of gas it will deliver daily for domestic consumption.

The AKK is a game-changing project given the countless benefits it will bring to Nigerians. The promoters of the project said in a document that it “will provide gas for generation of power and for gas-based industries which would facilitate the development of new industries.” Another benefit is that, “It will ensure the revival of moribund industries along transit towns in Kogi State, Abuja (FCT), Niger State, Kaduna State and Kano State.”

One more benefit is that “it has significant job creation potential both direct and indirect, while fostering the development and utilization of local skills and manpower, technology transfer and promotion of local manufacturing.” While flagging off the AKK project 13 months ago on June 30, 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari emphasised one of its critical benefits thus, “When completed, the AKK Gas Pipeline Project will provide gas for generation of power and for gas-based industries which would facilitate the development of new industries and also the revival of moribund industries along transit towns in Kogi State, Abuja (FCT), Niger State, Kaduna State and Kano State.”

The details on the power generation aspect mentioned by President Buhari indicate that the power generation will be at three new thermal power generation plants which will be located in Abuja, Kaduna and Kano, with 1,350 MW, 900 MW and 2,350 MW capacity respectively.

The pipeline “would enable the injection of 2.2 billion square cubic feet of gas daily into the domestic market. And, as stated earlier, it will facilitate additional power generation capacity of 3,600MW.”

When these three power generation plants become operational, some of the factories that were forced to scale down their operations or shut down completely due to poor on-site and national grid power supplies, are likely to come back to life. And this implies the return of economic activities, with all the benefits that brings.

Yet another value from the AKK project is its potential to support the development of industries based on petrochemicals, fertilizer production, methanol processing and more gas-based industries that are capable of generating job opportunities and boosting economic growth

in the country. This is after reducing gas flaring in the Niger Delta area of our country.

Being part of the strategic 4,128 kilometre Trans-Saharan gas pipeline designed to deliver Nigerian gas to the European Union markets via Algeria, its intra-African economic and technical cooperation status is equally of immense value toward integrating African economies. It is believed that the pipeline will compete favourably with other gas pipelines which feed the West European market.

The scope of the project shows that the total length of the Trans-Saharan gas pipeline from the Nigerian start-point to the terminal in Spain is 4,400km. The segment within Nigeria is 1,037 kilometres; the portion in the Republic of Niger is 853 kilometres while its length in Algeria is 2,310 kilometres plus 220 kilometres from the Algerian border to the terminal in Spain. Its initial cost was estimated at 10 billion USD.

The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) says on its website that, “It (the pipeline) will have an estimated annual capacity of 30 billion cubic litres of natural gas.” For Nigeria it means another pipeline for earning foreign exchange to finance development in Africa’s biggest economy and largest democracy.

AUDA-NEPAD explains other dimensions of the project, “The pipeline will be built through a partnership between the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Algeria’s Sonatrach, together holding 90% of the shares, and the Niger National Oil Company holding 10%. The pipeline will ensure closer co-operation and integration between neighbouring countries.”

Salisu Na’inna Dambatta , Abuja

FELICITATIONS



Senator Hadi Sirika (M.Sc., FRAeS)

Hearty congratulations to my formidable boss, mentor, friend and brother,
Senator Hadi Sirika (M.Sc., FRAeS)!!!!*

Sir, I offer my sincere congratulations to you on this occasion of your double
celebration of great success, and a very well-deserved award.

I express my unfettered admiration for the conferment on you, of the highest
award, Fellow, Royal Aeronautical Society United Kingdom, in recognition of
your outstanding contributions to the aerospace community.

Sir, your achievement is truly commendable, coming in tandem with you
obtaining a Masters in Air Transport Management from the prestigious City
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I am honoured and proud to be associated with you.

Signed:

AKIN OLATERU (M.Sc., FCILT, FRAeS, FNSE)

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Olatunde's One Year of Dynamism as Clerk of the N'Assembly

Adesoro Tolu Austen, Special Adviser on Media and Labour to the Clerk to the National Assembly celebrates some notable achievements of his principal

One year ago, precisely on the eve of 17th of July 2020, the National Assembly Service Commission (NASC), made a shattering announcement on network news across the electronic media, that sent shock waves to those who did not believe in administrative dynamism and paradigmatic shift in the leadership of the National Assembly. Like wild fire the social media went agog to echo it louder and clearer across the globe that a new sheriff has indeed arrived to take charge of the bureaucratic arm of one of sub Saharan African most populous parliament. The pronouncement laid to rest the high voltage drama, maneuvers and avoidable power struggle that engulfed the bureaucracy of the National Assembly which many observed with trepidation. It was a defining moment for the NASC as it summoned their nationalistic nature and zeal, conquered parochial interest of few in favour of primary collective interest

But, those who believe in scientific and magical leadership, in running the highest bureaucratic system of the nation's legislative body, jumped up to celebrate and welcome the official elevation of Ojo Olatunde Amos, to the Acting Clerkship of the National Assembly.

In picking the first ever professional architect to run the affairs of the National Assembly, as the Chief Accounting Officer, the Engr. Ahmed Kadi Amshi led National Assembly Service Commission, saw something terrific about Ojo Olatunde Amos, which his ardent critics could not fathom. God truly has reason why he created man in different ways for different purposes with divergent gifts which Ojo is not an exemption.

And given the torrents of opposition to the candidature of Ojo Olatunde Amos by those who were determined absolutely to rob and deny him the Clerkship to the National Assembly, his eventual emergence proved the wise saying that: "Any man destined to wear a crown must definitely wear it at the appointed time."

Apart from the fact that Ojo Olatunde Amos, is a record breaker being the first architect that has succeeded, to the top echelon of the National Assembly, he had been an incredible man of excellence, energy and vision right from his elementary school days. Ojo was created a leader who has never hidden the passion and commitment in distinguishing endowments demonstrated in service with impeccable credentials and decorum.

It was via a onetime dynamic American President, who was an extraordinarily brilliant mind, and passionately patriotic, John Quincy Adams, that we have this endlessly motivated words: "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more to do more and become more, you are a leader."

Perhaps, the Chairman and members of the National Assembly Service Commission, had the words of ex-President John Quincy Adams in mind in October 2020, When they resolved to cement the Clerkship of Ojo Olatunde Amos, by making him the substantive Clerk to the National Assembly.

In trying to situate or describe the one year of purposeful, dynamic and inspiring leadership of Ojo Olatunde Amos, in the saddle at the National Assembly, it is right to say that, since July 2020, his actions have inspired his colleagues and staff to dream more, to become more responsive to the challenges confronting the nation's highest Legislative body.

This fact could be filtered out in the multiple strategies he has initiated in carrying the entire staff of the National Assembly along.

How do I mean? In his proactive han-



dling of the industrial action declared by Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN) early in the year, an historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoOU) has been generated, which has brought peace and stability to the National Assembly.

Talking about inspired leadership, coming from Ojo Olatunde Amos, within the first six months of assuming the headship of the National Assembly bureaucracy, he

went ahead without any promptings from members of PASAN and legislative aides, to trash out critical outstanding allowances.

Under the watch of Ojo Olatunde Amos, for the first time in the history of the National Assembly bureaucracy, financial loopholes were blocked, via drastic cut in overhead costs, in order to meet up with pressing staff demands.

It must quickly be said that for over 10

years now, the budgetary allocations to the National Assembly has remained static, in spite of the increasing huge administrative cost of running the system.

But, the Clerk to the National Assembly has been up to the task of making things work, given the known financial crunch that has befallen the National Assembly.

Training programmes for the benefit of qualified staff have been going on, the welfare of staff and aides has been a constant issue on the dashboard of the current management.

In order to professionalise and expand the system, the Clerk is putting machineries in place to establish new directorates and departments, so that staff can have proper work schedules.

As a renowned architect with the highest professional honour in Nigeria, Ojo Olatunde Amos is finalising elastic and attractive housing programmes for the benefit of staff; his relationship with PASAN has been very cordial as against the past, as a result of the open door approach and general flexible administrative mechanism in place today.

His dynamism and pragmatism has necessitated the most cordial relationship between him and the political leadership of the National Assembly. What of the extraordinary working relationship he has deliberately established with the Chairman and members of the National Assembly Service Commission (NASC), a great development that has in no small measure contributed to the industrial harmony and peace being enjoyed in the National Assembly today?

Talking about dynamism in leadership, Ojo Olatunde Amos, has imbibed creativity, confidence and pragmatic strategies in piloting the affairs of the National Assembly in the last one year.

Indeed, the staff and legislative aides of the National Assembly have seen renewed strength, genuine ambition, persistence, capacity and behavioral courage in leadership, especially during the last Labour unrest within the National Assembly.

The point being made very clear here, is that Ojo is a man of vision, who knows where he wants to go, and how he will navigate his way to his desired destination. In rainfall, windstorm or sunshine, he stands firm to defend what he believes as right before God, humanity and the society.

No stakeholder within the National Assembly today will say that the sitting Clerk to the National Assembly has not dramatised and practicalised passion, empathy, decisiveness and uncommon optimism in his approach to the health of the National Assembly in the last one year. This has earned him the nick name "Mr. Alert" considering the waves of arrears paid since he assumed duty.

When a great American patriot, John Fuhrman said that: "Once you take action, even if it's a single, small step, you have set things in motion." Architect Ojo Olatunde Amos, who has taken more than a single step in running the bureaucracy of the National Assembly, since July 2020, must be commended for taking drastic actions where necessary; and for setting things in motion for greater harvest soon to come to the staff of the National Assembly.

Given the difficult unprecedented financial challenges cum circumstances, that came to play within the National Assembly, in the last one year, it is clear without any form of ambiguity, that Ojo Olatunde Amos's sojourn, so far, has been decorated with imaginative, creative, intuitive and responsive leadership.

-Adesoro is the Special Adviser on media and Labour to the Clerk to the National Assembly.

Why Buni Should Step Down Now

Kayode Ajulo, an Abuja-based lawyer and former National Secretary of Labour Party justifies his call on the Acting National Chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Governor Mai Mala Buni of Yobe State to quit his role as chief executive of the ruling

It's no news that the Supreme Court by a split of 4-3 dismissed the petition filed by the People's Democratic Party's (PDP) aspirant for the 2020 Ondo State governorship election, Eyitayo Jegede (SAN) against the incumbent Governor of Ondo State, Mr. Oluwarotimi Akeredolu (SAN) and the All Progressives Congress.

Without prejudice to the ratio decidendi of the majority decision of the court, it is imperative to state pressistimo and very clearly too that with the unanimous position of the Apex Court that it appears the actions of the All Progressives Congress in permitting a sitting governor as the Interim Chairman of the party is in violation of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it is my sincere view that the Interim Chairman of the All Progressive Congress should immediately step down.

My humble but cosmic review of the judgment comes with an indication that the Governor of Yobe State, Mai Mala Buni has to vacate his seat, as the Chairman of APC with immediate effect.

The provision of Section 183 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) is clear and unambiguous to the effect that "The Governor shall not, during the period when he holds office, hold any other executive office or paid employment in any capacity whatsoever."

As a former National Secretary of

Labour Party, I am quite aware and it is unassailable that the National Chairman and the National Secretary are the alter egos of a political party chartered with the day-to-day running of the party.

It is therefore incontrovertible that the continuous stay of the Governor as Chief Executive Officer of the All Progressives Congress runs contrary to provision of the Constitution and as such may be an albatross on the party, as all he had done before would be null and void, including nomination of candidates within the period of his so called Leadership of the party.

In lending my two cents, it is apposite to assuage and hint the leadership of the party by reminding same of the decision of Lord Denning of over five decades in the case *Macfoy v. UAC Limited* (1961) 3 ALL E.R. where the Learned Jurist held that: "If an act is void, then it is in law a nullity. It is not only bad but incurably bad. There is no need for an order of court to set it aside."

Whichever way this issue is being tilted, permitting a Governor of a state to hold other executive office may create cravings in some governors to become the State Chairman of their political parties as being recently tinkered by some of them.

In order to nip this looming inglorious kismet in the bud, I thereby admonish that the acting Chairman of the All Progressives Congress should immediately step down as a stitch in time saves nine.

THE VIEW FROM
AMERICA
CHIDO NWANGWU



Why U.S Warns Buhari is Drifting
Toward Authoritarianism

Chido Nwangwu, Publisher, USAfricaonline.com draws attention to the alarm from Western governments and international human rights organisations against the Nigerian military's role in deadly crackdowns on protesters



The influential magazine, Foreign Policy, established since 1970, first reported on July 27, 2021 that some U.S. lawmakers are holding-up a proposed sale of the attack helicopters to Nigeria due to “mounting concerns about the Nigerian government’s human rights record as its military grapples with multiple security crises at once.”

Operationally, that position is bipartisan. Consequently, the top Democrat and Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee have “delayed clearing a proposed sale of 12 AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters and accompanying defense systems to the Nigerian military, pausing a deal worth some \$875 million.”

The FP adds that the behind-the-scenes controversy over the proposed arms sale illustrates a broader debate among Washington policymakers over how to balance national security with human rights objectives.”

Also, it is important to note that the powerful U.S. lawmakers want “to push the Biden administration to rethink U.S. relations with Africa’s most populous country amid overarching concerns that Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari is drifting toward authoritarianism....”

Until the past few weeks, even in the face of brutal and steamy evidences and actions unacceptable to democratic societies, the multiple autocratic overreach by Buhari, a retired General who led the overthrow of a democratically-elected government of Nigeria in December 1983 (of President Shehu Shagari and Alex Ekwueme). In fact, as a matter of law, the overthrow of any democratically elected government in Nigeria is a treasonable offense! But as we all know and have seen Nigeria is a country where impunity and raw power determines who is right however briefly the intoxication of power might be!

Essentially, for these giddy, corrupt folks who, in amusing religious piety drenched in sheer hypocrisy and unrelenting condescensions toward the truly hard-working folks, it’s their say of finality who should govern — after they decide when and especially If....

It does not matter what those who daily, wake up before the cock crows at dawn, to trade and create and toil and hustle until that son or daughter of

a plantain hawker, gari distributor or groundnut seller graduates as a software coding engineer, or graduates as a Zoologist, like Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, who served, almost, as a reluctant President. He was uncomfortable with deploying power in the face of potential complications and problems. Dr. Jonathan wanted to get along with everybody, and was afraid of Buhari’s threats during the election campaigns. Now; here we are!

Sadly, the same divide-and-rule power mongers from the far “north” and their pawns in the “south” want to mislead and ruin his reputation by pushing and calling on him to run again as president of Nigeria after a controversial and certainly corrupt Presidency!

Evidently, the goal is to divide the unity of those who insist that for equity and proven competence and capacity that the Igbo geo-political zone should get the consensus harmonization to bring forth the next president of Nigeria in 2023!

It is not the same distortion of what has been spun as an “Igbo president/presidency.”

An Igbo as president, will be drawing from the wells of equity and because of proven capacity and identifiable investments and residences in the Nigeria project, otherwise, it will prove IPOB saw the game ahead.

Foreign Policy magazine points, too, to the fact that Buhari’s “government is besieged by multiple security challenges, including a jihadist insurgency. Nigeria is on the front lines in the battle against Boko Haram, one of the world’s deadliest terrorist groups, and plays a role in U.S. and international efforts to roll back extremist groups in the Sahel region of West Africa. But Western governments and international human rights organisations have ramped up their criticisms of the Nigerian government, particularly in the wake of its ban on Twitter, systemic corruption issues, and the Nigerian military’s role in deadly crackdowns on protesters after widespread demonstrations against police brutality last year.”

Buhari governed as a military dictator in the 1980s and imposes that same temperamental fuse and shortness of spirit to issue which, necessarily, must allow a thousand flowers to bloom! His henchmen and agencies of security and enforcement traumatize those who disagree with his nepotistic, insular, inadequate and, it must be said, incompetent composition of the majority of appointments, tedious limiting of the rights of Nigerians.

Without any doubt, retired Gen. Buhari continues to deal with Nigerians in a manner that is reflective his instinctive disdain and disregard for freedom of expressions and diversity in the composition of the covenants, protocols and representational givens of any modern, multiethnic country.

Will Biden, the U.S Senate and Congress awaken to the realistic events inside Nigeria or dull through what has become a choice between a loaded, potential catastrophe or a titanic struggle for a perilous redemption?

Reviewing the
Statesmanship of Senator
Theodore Orji

Eddie Onuzuruike commends Senator Theodore A. Orji for his firm assurance to bow out from public service after the 9th Senate ending in 2023

The life of man may be phased into 3, 4, or more stages depending on the school of thought. Thomas Manson postulated 12 stages in his work, the human odyssey. Other notable authorities like Mark Manson and Integris Health, an Oklahoma based thinktank projected differently. For the sake of this article, let us work with the infancy stage, teenage, youth, adulthood and the aged.

Nature has made it that man should retire, play lesser active roles, by teaching, mentoring and directing others.

From a rich observatory point, people in present day Nigeria, especially the adult and the aged find retirement scary. Even those in the civil and public services who hitherto had a well-structured retirement template now crave for more active roles even when it is obvious that they are not physically and medically fit. Look at the spate of changes in retirement ages of judges and teachers. The growing trend can be as a result of unpaid and unsteady pensions, disloyalty and faithless followership coupled with challenging financial realities and not having reliable successors to fall back on where necessary.

In the history of Nigeria, the sixties, seventies and eighties saw youths leading in Nigeria. Recall Matthew Mbu, Okotie Eboh, who were youthful ministers in the First Republic. M. I. Okpara, Premier of Eastern region and his counterparts in the north and west were relatively young. Ironsi who emerged as the first military leader, followed by Yakubu Gowon, Ibrahim Babangida, Sani Abacha were scarcely 50 years old, especially Gowon who married in the State House in Lagos as a military leader.

Sadly, gerontocracy took root and has refused to shift grounds even with the ‘Not Too Young to Run policy of the Buhari-led government. Even Obasanjo who was widely acclaimed for being the first military officer to hand over unconditionally to civilians regretted when he surreptitiously worked on

One of such men today is Senator T.A. Orji who has been a constant personality in national affairs and like the old wine is seasoned enough to chart a new direction. Coming from a staunch civil service background, he served as Chief of Staff for eight years, Governor for eight years, now in the Senate for six years and still counting. You can say, 22 years of uninterrupted political service and leadership of his people. He has sworn to bow out after the 9th Senate ending in 2023

regime elongation, seeking to change the constitution in the scandalous Third Term Agenda that many worked against and made the National Assembly uproarious then.

Hear him as he argued and bemoaned his predicament with Atiku, his deputy. In a book by Dr Fresh Onuoha titled ‘Atiku is the Answer,’ page 114, Obasanjo said, ‘I left power 20 years ago, I left Mubarak in office, I left Mugabe in office, I left Eyadema in office, I left Omar Bongo, and even Paul Biya and I came back and they are still in power, and I just did eight years and you are asking me to go, why?’

Contrary to all these fears of the sit-tight mentality and despite the distractions, it is cheering that some Nigerians are still principled and disciplined, resolute in mending this disorientation of sit-tight mentality, even when irrelevant.

One of such men today is Senator T.A. Orji who has been a constant personality in national affairs and like the old wine is seasoned enough to chart a new direction. Coming from a staunch civil service background, he served as Chief of Staff for eight years, Governor for eight years, now in the Senate for six years and still counting. You can say, 22 years of uninterrupted political service and leadership of his people. He has sworn to bow out after the 9th Senate ending in 2023.

His recent activities are indicators of a fulfilled man exiting the scene and stepping into the super statesmanship category, practically bowing out when the ovation is loudest.

On June 30, 2021, he was in Port Harcourt with his entourage as the guest of Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State who invited him to inaugurate some of his multiple projects that have earned him the sobriquet of Mr. Projects. Not far from his Rivers State encounter, he was at his constituency where one of his ardent followers, Hon. Darlington Nwokocho, Representing Isi Ala Ngwa North and South Federal Constituency who lined out projects to be inaugurated and named the legislative building he constructed after Senator T.A. Orji.

In his speech in Port Harcourt, he thanked the Rivers strongman for the recognition and urged him to continue his good works of project multiplication, fierce protection of his people and touching lives at home and abroad. He added new names to Wike as action governor and Governor Ho-ha, a man who is brave enough to say the truth, no matter whose ox is gored but harped on Wike to intensify efforts in grooming a successor who will continue in his speed and energy of founding more projects so that the people of Rivers State now used to performance will not fall into an antithetical mentality and tempt Wike into regrets in retirement or push him into dreaming of a comeback.

For Senator Orji, the political nightmares may not be much as he already has a successor in Rt. Hon. Chinedum Orji now the Speaker of Abia State House of Assembly who is doing wonderfully well in his sworn political mission to make the best of our disgruntled youths of Nigeria in making a legislative foray. His residence and office have become Mecca of sorts as they throng these places for solace and survival.

We plead that many of our leaders should emulate this nationalistic gesture of Senator Orji making the political waters navigable for the youths.



caverton
CAVERTON OFFSHORE SUPPORT GROUP

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED RESULTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

The Board of Directors, ("the Board"), of Caverton Offshore Support Group, ("the Group"), hereby announces the following Unaudited Results for the Period, ended 30 June 2021:

	The Group		The Company	
	January to June 2021	January to June 2020	January to June 2021	January to June 2020
	N 000	N 000	N 000	N 000
Revenue	18,069,104	16,079,074	-	-
Operating expenses	(11,700,351)	(10,455,238)	-	-
Operating Profit	6,368,753	5,623,836	-	-
Administrative expenses	(2,477,980)	(2,438,775)	(73,054)	(76,204)
Net Exchange Difference	(650,000)	(603,670)	-	-
Other operating income	1,332	105,460	-	297
Total Operating Profit	3,242,105	2,686,851	(73,054)	(75,907)
Net Finance cost	(2,432,347)	(1,831,104)	-	-
Share of (loss)/profit of an associate	114,752	33,390	-	-
Profit before income tax expense	924,510	889,137	(73,054)	(75,907)
Income tax expense	(144,494)	(123,121)	-	-
Profit for the year	780,016	766,016	(73,054)	(75,907)
Other comprehensive income that may be reclassified to profit or loss in subsequent periods (net of tax):	-	3,682	-	-
Share of other comprehensive loss of an associate	-	-	-	-
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	-	659	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	4,341	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	780,016	770,357	(73,054)	(75,907)
Profit attributable to:				
Owners of the Company	772,811	757,597	-	-
Non-controlling interests	7,205	8,419	-	-
	780,016	766,016	-	-
Total comprehensive income attributable to:				
Owners of the Company	772,811	761,938	-	-
Non-controlling interests	7,205	8,419	-	-
	780,016	770,357	-	-
Basic Earnings per share (N)	0.23	0.230	(0.010)	(0.012)
Number of Shares in issue	3,350,509,750	3,350,509,750		

Comments:

The results show increases in Revenue, Profit-Before-Tax, Profit-After-Tax and Earnings-Per-Share, respectively. The Profit-Before-Tax for the period is N925M, while the Profit-After-Tax is N780M. Revenue increased by 12% to N18B, when compared to the same period in 2020.

The result shows our continued determination to re-focus our operations in the face of the challenging economic conditions, to ensure continued business survival and profitability. To boost revenue, the marine service sector of the Group, has also been re-strategizing to position the company towards exploring further opportunities within and outside the oil and gas sector. Our Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility and our Simulator Training facility, both in Lagos, have officially commenced business operation in the 2nd half of 2021. This heralds a new age in the Nigerian aviation sector and better fortune for the Group. As expected with new projects, the income stream from these two new projects will gradually grow over the years ahead.

Dated the 30th day of June 2021.

By order of the Board



Amaka P. Obiora
Company Secretary
1, Prince Kayode Akingbade Close, Victoria Island, Lagos.

The detailed Financial Statements for the period are available on the company's website, www.caverton-offshore.com

AGUSTO AFFIRMS PARTHIAN PARTNERS LTDs 'Bbb' CREDIT RATING WITH A STABLE OUTLOOK

Rating agency, Agosto & Co. affirmed the "Bbb" credit rating of Parthian Partners Limited, a financial service firm and Nigeria's foremost indigenous interdealer brokerage firm, duly licensed by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) of Nigeria.

According to Agosto, the rating, with a stable outlook attached, reflects the good capitalisation and profitability of Parthian Partners Limited. In 2020, net earnings grew by 95% year-on-year and translated to a pre-tax return on average equity (ROE) and pre-tax return on average assets (ROA) of 69.1% and 34.1% respectively. Parthian Partners grew its shareholders' fund by 48% in FY'2020 owing to improved financial performance and increased accretion to retained earnings. Parthian Partners' pre-tax ROE is noted to have compared significantly better than the average return on one-year FGN Treasury certificates in 2020.

The rating exercise also acknowledged the experience of the management team, as well as support from owners. As noted favourably by Agosto, some of the Parthian Partners largest shareholders have extensive experience in the financial services industry. Parthian Partners' shareholding is also considered to be moderately diversified, with no shareholder having a majority control on the affairs of the Company. There is a good representation of non-executive directors and independent members on the Company's Board. Agosto, by this rating exercise, posits the management team of Parthian Partners to be qualified and experienced.

The fixed income market has continued to grow unperturbed by the economic difficulties in Nigeria. The pension fund administrators, bound by regulation, have continued to invest in the fixed income markets. Also, investors not compelled by regulation such as asset managers and insurance fund managers continue to drive the demand for Eurobonds in an attempt to hedge against Naira devaluation and low yields. This has ensured that the market remained active for inter-dealer brokers. Parthian Partners seeks to leverage its balance sheet and technology to compete favourably in the onboarding of domestic and international clients and continue to deliver excellent service and value as has been the case in the past nine years of existence as a market maker in the fixed income market.

2021 HALF YEAR UNAUDITED TRADING RESULT



do more
feel better
live longer

GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Nigeria PLC (GSKCEN)

The Directors present the summarised consolidated and separate financial statements of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Nigeria PLC for the period ended 30th June 2021. These summarised consolidated and separate financial statements are derived from the full consolidated and separate financial statements for the period ended 30th June 2021 and are not the full consolidated and separate financial statements of the Company.

	Group	
	As at 30 June, 2021	As at 30 June, 2020
	N'000	N'000
Statement of Financial Position		
Assets		
Non-current assets		
Deferred tax asset	450,956	80,845
Property, plant and equipment	1,705,964	1,901,827
Right of use assets	75,610	64,520
Investment property	152,676	154,449
Other assets	-	-
	2,385,206	2,201,641
Current assets		
Inventories	4,419,017	5,946,937
Right of return of asset	-	-
Trade and other receivables	5,638,263	4,732,458
Other assets	398,165	218,689
Cash and bank balances	10,665,833	7,532,575
Assets classified as asset held for sale	-	-
	21,121,278	18,430,659
Total assets	23,506,484	20,632,300
Equity and liabilities		
Equity		
Issued share capital	597,939	597,939
Share premium	51,395	51,395
Retained earnings	8,051,210	8,809,695
Total equity	8,700,544	9,459,029
Non-current liabilities		
Liability for share-based payments	30,730	-
Total non-current liabilities	30,730	-
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	14,616,462	10,871,547
Contract liabilities	56,220	54,404
Lease liabilities	38,139	-
Bank overdraft	-	-
Income tax payable	64,389	247,320
Total current liabilities	14,775,210	11,173,271
Total liabilities	14,805,940	11,173,271
Total equity and liabilities	23,506,484	20,632,300

	Group	
	Six months ended 30 June, 2021	Six months ended 30 June, 2020
	N'000	N'000
Statement of Comprehensive Income		
Revenue	9,862,411	10,431,524
Cost of sales	(7,087,471)	(7,862,727)
Gross profit	2,774,940	2,568,797
Investment income	25,277	45,937
Other gains and losses	(102,065)	58,684
Finance costs	(3,573)	-
Selling and distribution costs	(1,599,530)	(1,537,675)
Administrative expenses	(1,006,360)	(887,894)
Profit before tax	88,689	447,849
Income tax expense	(28,784)	(143,311)
Total Profit after tax for the year	59,905	304,538
Other comprehensive income net of income tax:		
Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss:	-	-
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	59,905	304,538
Profit for the year attributable to:		
Shareholders of the Company	59,905	304,538
Non-controlling interest	-	-
	59,905	304,538
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to:		
Shareholders of the Company	59,905	304,538
Non-controlling interest	-	-
	59,905	304,538
Basic and diluted earnings per share (Kobo)		
From continuing operations	7	25
From continuing and discontinuing operations	7	25

	Group	
	Six months ended 30 June, 2021	Six months ended 30 June, 2020
	N'000	N'000
Statement of Cashflows		
Cash flows from operating activities		
Profit for the year	59,905	304,538
Adjustment for:		
Income tax expense recognised in profit or loss	28,784	143,311
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	180,906	180,757
Loss/(gain) on disposal of property, plant and equipment	(3,202)	(2,896)
Interest on term deposits	(25,277)	(45,937)
Finance costs	3,573.00	-
Other adjustments to property, plant and equipment	15,015	32,636
Share based payment expense	-	-
Working capital adjustments:		
Changes in inventories	(1,136,578)	(422,022)
Changes in trade and other receivables	(988,309)	2,112,397
Changes in other assets	(24,390)	(151,896)
Changes in contract liabilities	(49,386)	(102,431)
Changes in trade and other payables	1,036,819	2,158,436
	(902,140)	4,206,893
Income tax paid	(747,318)	(408,782)
Net cash generated by operating activities	(1,649,458)	3,798,111
Cash flows from investing activities		
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment	3,202	2,896
Interest received	25,277	45,937
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(48,375)	(26,605)
Net cash flows generated by investing activities	(19,896)	22,228
Cash flows from financing activities		
Statute barred dividend received	-	1,424
Final dividends paid to shareholders of the Company	(478,351)	-
Lease liability paid	(72,044)	-
Net cash flows used in financing activities	(550,395)	1,424
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents	(2,219,749)	3,821,763
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 January	12,885,582	3,710,812
Cash and cash equivalents at 30 September & 31 December	10,665,833	7,532,575

The consolidated and separate financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 28 July 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr. Edmund C. Onuzo
Chairman
FRC/2015/000N/0000001038



Mr. Kunle Oyelana
Managing Director
FRC/2020/003/00000020395

R A T E S A S A T J U L Y 2 9 , 2 0 2 1							
MONEY MARKET		REPO		S & P INDEX		S & P INDEX	
OBB	27.50%	CALL	4%	INDEX LEVEL	535.12%	1/4 TO DATE	0.40%
OVERNIGHT	28.75 %	1-MONTH	6%	1-DAY	0.13%	YEAR TO DATE	-20.10%
		3-MONTH	10%	MONTH-TO-DATE	0.40%		
						EXCHANGE RATE	
						N411.50/1US DOLLAR*	
						*AS AT LAST FRIDAY	



NGX VISITS NCC...

L -R: Head, Primary Markets, Nigerian Exchange Limited, Mr. Tony Ibeziako; Director, Legal and Regulatory Services, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Ms. Josephine Amuwa; Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Exchange Limited, Mr. Temi Popoola; Director, Public Affairs, NCC, Dr. Ikechukwu Adinde; and Head, Government Relations, Nigerian Exchange Limited, Mr. Soji Akimuele during a courtesy visit to the Nigerian Communications Commission in Abuja... recently

Despite Local Content Policy, Nigeria Loses \$4bn, 25,000 Jobs Annually to Foreign Ship Chandlers

Eromosele Abiodun

Despite the local content policy, Nigeria has lost a whopping \$60 billion in the last 15 years, an equivalent of \$4 billion annual loss due to the dominance of ship chandling business in the country by foreigners. Ship chandling, a business established in Nigeria through an Act in 1958, is made up of retail dealers who specialise in the supply of equipment

ECONOMY

and goods for ships, known as ships' stores. By law, ship chandling business is meant for local operators who are made up of retail dealers who specialise in the supply of equipment and goods for ships, known as ships stores. The local chandlers supply items such as: ship hardware

items, chemicals, galley equipment and supplies, charts and binoculars, paint and varnish, chipping hammers and scrapers, lubricants, foods and beverages, spare parts, water and other allied services to make the next trip smooth for the ship's master and its crews. In laymen's language, a ship chandler is a person (or sometimes a group/agency) that totally deals in supplying required commodities for a

shipping vessel and its crew. A ship chandler supplies all the necessary and requisite commodities to a ship when at port. THISDAY checks revealed that over 5000 direct employment and 20,000 indirect employment are lost yearly due to the dominance of chandling business by foreigners. Experts say this is happening due to the inability of Nigeria to design policy that will favour

local operators. For instance, a ship of 5,000 Gross Registered Tonnage (GRT), would require about \$50,000 monthly to take foods, pharmaceuticals, oil, lubricants and other things for it to go to sea and return to the port. Numbers obtain at the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) showed that there are more than 10,000 ships, oil platforms, rigs and barges operating in the oil gas and port sectors every year

that need essential provisions and services to maintain their crew on board the ships. However, the services has been hijacked by foreigners while Nigerian chandlers are operating as a third party even as over 400 of them are being chased out by the foreign counterparts. THISDAY checks revealed that less than 1 per cent of

Continued on page 22

Stakeholders Decry Stringent Regulation Stifling Growth of Aviation Sector

Chinedu Eze

Aviation stakeholders have expressed the view that besides the negative impact of Covid-19 in the industry, stringent laws that tend to frustrate investment

have stultified the sector in Nigeria. They therefore called for the review and liberalisation of some of these laws that do not suit the modern dynamics in the industry.

Other countries, the stakeholders stressed, have found ways to accelerate growth while maintaining efficient and safe air transport sector by doing away with policies that restrain the growth of the sector.

Speaking on the state of the aviation industry in the country, the Chairman, West Link Airlines, Capt. Ibrahim Mshelia lamented that the Nigerian aviation industry is battling too many oppressive

forces, including processes that lead to the acquisition of Air Operator Certificate (AOC). Mshelia who was the Chairman of the League of Airports and Aviation Correspondents (LAAC) organised conference

held in Lagos observed that a situation where an operating airline was compelled to renew its AOC every two years was anti-progress and a setback to

Continued on page 22

MARKET DATA AS AT THURSDAY JULY 29, 2021															
FGN BONDS				BILLS				OTC FX FUTURES				CPs			
DESCRIPTION	Price	Yield	Change (%)	MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)	CONTRACT TENOR (MONTH)	Contract	Current Rate (₦/₦)		MATURITY	Discount	Yield	Change (%)
11.668 FGNSB 15-AUG-2021	100.37	3.62	-0.35 ▼	NTB 26-Aug-21	3.75	3.76	-0.32 ▼	1	NGUS AUG 25 2021	420.93		CMBL CP XI 2-AUG-21	4.41	4.42	-0.37 ▼
10.301 FGNSB 16-AUG-2021	100.32	3.63	-0.35 ▼	NTB 9-Sep-21	3.95	3.97	-0.30 ▼	2	NGUS SEP 29 2021	422.38		MREP CP XXXI 13-AUG-21	9.41	9.44	-0.35 ▼
11.150 FGNSB 11-SEP-2021	100.84	4.02	-0.30 ▼	NTB 16-Sep-21	4.05	4.07	-0.29 ▼	3	NGUS OCT 27 2021	423.83		UNCP CP III 27-AUG-21	4.90	4.92	-0.33 ▼
12.364 FGNSB 12-SEP-2021	101.01	4.03	-0.30 ▼	NTB 30-Sep-21	4.25	4.28	-0.26 ▼	4	NGUS NOV 24 2021	425.28		VAAG CP I 27-AUG-21	10.81	10.90	-0.33 ▼
12.175 FGNSB 10-OCT-2021	101.51	4.46	-0.25 ▼	NTB 14-Oct-21	4.45	4.50	-0.24 ▼	5	NGUS DEC 29 2021	426.73		TTNG CP II 31-AUG-21	5.30	5.32	-0.32 ▼

**DESPITE LOCAL
CONTENT POLICY,
NIGERIA LOSES
\$4BN, 25,000 JOBS
ANNUALLY TO FOREIGN
SHIP CHANDLERS**

Nigerian chandlers were engaged by the multinationals in the nation's petroleum upstream sector to provide supplies for more than 2000 vessels and other oil facilities, which operate in the sector as against the 95 per cent allocated to Nigerians by the Nigerian Local Content Policy.

Previously, Nigerians were the forefront of ship chandling business. Ship chandelling being an international business and dollar-denominated around the world used to be one of the subsectors of the maritime sector generating foreign exchange into the nation's coffers.

The business, which was described as a most lucrative one in the maritime sector, hardly contributes 2 per cent in terms of foreign exchange to the economy.

Stakeholders are worried that the law guiding ship chandelling has not been effective.

They are worried that Section 24 of the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA), which regulates the business, has not been reviewed since 1968 to reflect new trends.

Speaking on the matter, maritime expert, Jafar Malik said ship chandling is a local business because there is a supplying of stocks to the ship, which has International connection and dollars domination.

According to him, foreigners have chased the local operators out of chandling business adding that hardly can one see Nigerians in the chandling business today.

He faulted the Customs and Exercise Management Act, which has remained stagnant for decades.

OML 46: Ekeremor Community Kicks As Bayelsa Govt Opposes License to Indigenous Oil Firm

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

The people of Ekeremor Constituency 11, host community to OML 46, have kicked against the opposition by Bayelsa State Government to the licence recently granted an indigenous oil firm lamenting that non-exploration of Atala oil field since 2003 is hindering the development of their community.

They therefore warned that their patience is running out and cannot guarantee peace in the community having waited for 18 years for the commencement of exploration of the Atala oil field, also known as OML 46, which in turn will hasten development of Ekeremor community.

Lawmaker representing Ekeremor Constituency 11 in Bayelsa State House of Assembly and Deputy Minority leader, Hon. Wilson Ayakpo Dauyegha, in a statement on behalf of the community berated the Bayelsa State Government for opposing the licence granted the indigenous company having failed to utilize the earlier exploration license granted the state oil company.

He also lambasted the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) for throwing its weight behind the stance of Bayelsa State Government's opposition to the renewed licence to the indigenous oil firm noting that the youth body is now being seen as a tool of government.

Going down memory lane, Dauyegha recalled that Atala Oil Field was discovered in 1982 and that Bayelsa State owned oil company (BCOL) was first awarded exploration licence in 2003, which had

exclusive exploration rights.

He said the state oil company failed to harness the potentials of the Oil Field up till 2010 when the Federal Government graciously granted an extension of its license for five extra years for its Farm-Out Agreement for the purpose of bringing it to production.

"At the expiration of this extension in 2015, again another

gracious offer was made by the Minister of Petroleum Resources to the BOCL to renew its license within 18 months effective from 1st May 2016, which again expired on December 2017.

"For 17 years, the good people of Ekeremor constituency 2 and other Host Communities, without agitations, waited patiently with diminishing expectations over these wasted years. Not only did we frown at the

recklessness of its Handling, over the years by the BOCL, we also anticipated a response from the Federal Government who set benchmarks and regulate the activities within the upstream sector where Atala Oil Field is residual", he said.

The lawmaker disclosed that, early this year, the Federal Government, through the Department of Petroleum Resources and the Ministry of

Petroleum Resources reawarded the Atala Oil Field to an indigenous Oil Exploration Company but expressed surprise that Bayelsa State Government is now opposing the move.

"When the Federal Government granted the license to the indigenous firm, this was met with huge sighs of relief and belief that the fading hopes of the Host communities will be renewed and achieved.



CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP...

L-R: Special Adviser to Director General, Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), Mr. Emeka Duru; Director General, SON, Mallam Farouk Salim; Director, Standard Development Directorate, SON, Mrs. Chinyere Egwuonwu and Deputy Director/Head, Public Relations, SON, Mr. Bola Fashina during SON capacity building workshop for journalists in Lagos...recently

STAKEHOLDERS DECRY STRINGENT REGULATION STIFLING GROWTH OF AVIATION SECTOR

commercial airline business in Nigeria.

Besides, he lamented that in Nigeria, irrespective of the mode of operations and specifications, airlines are made to undergo the same rigorous processes, stressing that nowhere else in the world are operators given such stringent conditions before they could commence flight services.

"With the lopsidedness in the procurement procedures and the operational limits of AOC holders in Nigeria, there is an urgent need to amend our Act and policy in this area, to empower the civil aviation to also break down the certification

process of our commercial operations. The word AOC has been so over-valued like a village masquerade that appears once in five years. This is not supposed to be so. Operation specifications in this regard are the masquerade and not the certificate.

"Today, we have an unhealthy situation where there is a blanket issuance procedure of AOC for big, small, or large operations. Under this system, the roles of other segments of operators that are also entitled, by law, to operate commercial operations, unfettered as guaranteed by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), is not spelt out. By ICAO standard, small, large and medium operations, including; Air Taxi, Air Charter, Cargo Only, nonscheduled and scheduled operations and others are recognized," he said.

Mshelia said that instead of subjecting airlines to the rigour of renewal of AOC every two years, the regulatory authority should have robust and efficient inspection and oversight team that scrutinises the activities of airlines.

"One recommendation which has managed to dodge government action is a thorough overhaul of the inspectorate division of our civil aviation agency. This has to be done quickly, to galvanise the Nigerian aviation industry achievements. The staff of the agencies has done well so far but the new and desired NCAA will require a change of attitude as well.

Minister Seeks Proper Sensitisation of MSMEs on AfCFTA Opportunities

James Emejo in Abuja

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Mr. Adeniyi Adebayo has called for the sensitisation of the Medium, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) on the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to enable them benefit from the continental market.

The minister, while commenting on a report on, "Continental Integration and the Nigerian Economy," during a roundtable on AfCFTA agreement, which was organised by the Nigeria's

Employers Consultative Association (NECA) in Abuja, reiterated the need to fill the knowledge gap on the possible effects of AfCFTA on the economy.

The report was based on the surveys conducted for 1,800 MSMEs in five states, covering multiple sociocultural zones, to evaluate the awareness and preparedness of MSMEs for the implementation of the agreement.

Adebayo said: "The survey results disclosed that the majority of MSMEs are unaware of the existence of the trade agreement, especially smaller

businesses. This is an important finding for the nation, as this lack of knowledge will prevent their successful utilization of the agreement.

"The key takeaway is that more needs to be done to adequately disseminate information to our MSMEs to ensure that they are effectively prepared in the post-integration era."

He said AfCFTA had the capacity to boost intra-African trade and is expected to deliver an integrated continental market, consisting of 1.27 billion consumers with an aggregate GDP of \$3.4 trillion.

He pointed out that Nigeria, as the largest economy in Africa, has the potential to greatly increase its trading volumes, production capacity and generation of foreign investments.

The minister said: "However, as a country, we can only fully benefit from this opportunity if we are adequately prepared for the impending changes that will affect our business environment. It is necessary that we understand the full-scale impact that AfCFTA will have on all people and businesses, especially in terms of job creation and economic activities.

INTELS Graduates 11th Batch of Women Empowerment Scheme

Nigeria's oil and gas logistics giant, INTELS Nigeria Limited has graduated 34 beneficiaries of the 11th Batch of its flagship women development programme popularly known as the Women Empowerment Programme Scheme Synergy (WEPSS).

The graduation of the 11th Batch brings the total number of beneficiaries in the popular women empowerment scheme to 1,500.

WEPSS is a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative established by INTELS in 2013 to empower 5,000 Nigerian women over a 20-year period through

training in fashion design and tailoring.

The beneficiaries, drawn from various parts of the country, are trained in two batches every year.

The beneficiaries undergo intensive tuition-free trainings for four months. They also enjoy free transportation to and from the training venue, free medical services and monthly stipends.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony for beneficiaries of the 11th Batch (also known as the 2021 Batch A) at the Federal Lighter Terminal, Onne Port, Rivers State, the Managing Director of INTELS Nigeria

Limited, Mr. Pasquale Fiore, said, the scheme symbolizes the collaborative efforts of the trainers, participants and the entire INTELS family.

He commended the WEPSS trainers and beneficiaries for their "resilience and determination", while urging the beneficiaries to use their newly acquired skills to "earn a living and contribute to the growth of the Nigerian economy".

Represented by the company's Human Resources Manager, Dominic Onwujekwe, the INTELS Managing Director said, "This is one of our many empowerment

schemes for the communities around us and we are very happy that over the years, so many people have graduated from this scheme and we are also aware that many of them are doing well."

Also speaking at the graduation ceremony, WEPSS Project Manager, Nancy Freeborn commended the management of INTELS for its commitment to the empowerment of women, promotion of Nigerian content and support for local communities despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the present economic challenges.

THE BUSINESS TEAM

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Air Peace Crew Bags Awards for Aborting Theft Onboard Flight

Air Peace crew have been recognised with five Awards of Excellence for thwarting an alleged attempt by one Mr. Eze Kelvin to steal a considerable amount of money belonging to Adedeji Adeniyi, the managing director of Toptech Engineering Limited.

Spokesperson of the airline, Stanley Olisa said the incident occurred on about 7:40am on Accra-Lagos flight on July 17, 2021.

The crew who operated the flight have been conferred with awards by the management of Toptech Engineering Limited, in recognition of their outstanding customer service and extra-vigilance in ensuring protection of items on-board

as well as customer safety.

The award recipients were Captain Otobo Ogheneochuko (Pilot-in-Command); First Officer Phina Uzama-Okpalaek; Olufemi Basanya, Lead Crew; and Amira Nwagui (Cabin Executive).

A separate Award of Excellence was also bestowed on Air Peace.

According to Olisa, "Our crew noticed Kelvin taking an envelope of money from Adeniyi's laptop bag in the overhead cabin. Aware of the former's theft antecedents, our crew subtly questioned him about the ownership of the bag, which he claimed was his. But when Adeniyi

returned from the lavatory, it was confirmed that the bag belongs to Adeniyi. He later disclosed that the envelope had a significant sum, which was still intact when Kelvin returned the envelope."

Olisa stated that the incident was immediately reported to the Airport Security Officials who were still handling it adding that the alleged culprit has been blacklisted from flying with Air Peace.

"Also in June this year, Air Peace crew demonstrated commendable security alertness and vigilance as they prevented the trafficking of two babies by a couple," he said.

Marriott to Host Aviation, Cargo Conference in Nigeria

The Lagos Marriott Hotel has announced that it will play host to the first AviaCargo event in Nigeria.

The upscale Marriot was opened to the public in May 2021. Located in the heart of Ikeja GRA near the airport, it is well positioned to host aviation events.

This was the view of the Managing Director of Macfolly Hospitality Limited the owners of Lagos Marriott, Mr. Chike Ogeah when he led the organisers round the function suites of the hotel.

He said the Lagos Marriott is allied to the aviation sector and looks forward to hosting more aviation conferences.

"Aviation and Cargo are part of the heritage of the owners of this hotel and we are happy to be a part of this maiden edition" Ogeah said.

Organisers of the event ATQnews said more stakeholders are signing up for the first Aviation, Cargo and Export Conference in Nigeria.

The Nigeria Export Promotion Council, the apex body in charge of promoting export in Nigeria would be participating in the 2-day event.

"They will be making a presentation on how exporters can be assisted to do more through aviation. NEPC is at the heart of all projects to lift aviacargo in Nigeria. The gazetting of four airports as export processing zones brings to

fore the importance of the Nigerian Export Processing Zones Authority NEPZA to the growth of Aviacargo in Nigeria.

"NEPZA will be at chinet to showcase the opportunities available to investors at the Airports. NEPC and NEPZA will be joining the Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and Ethiopian Airlines as major partners of the first Aviacargo event in Nigeria. The two leading Aviation Cargo and Logistics companies in Nigeria NAHCO and SAHCO will be major players at this event along with many airlines, logistics and global financial service companies," he said.

Since 1935, aviation has been growing in Nigeria. With so many Airlines and Airports it is expected that Aviation should and would contribute more to the nation's economy. The conveners of this event ATQNews, a global Pan African Travel News organisation says that the conference is long overdue. It says in its introductory message that "Nigeria a country with over 200 million resourceful people depends a lot on imports this has been eroding the national wealth. A lot of airlines bring freighters daily to Nigeria and most of them fly out empty. There is therefore a need to change this dysfunctional scenario. Nigeria needs to export more and Aviation should be the key to increasing exports.

To this end Atqnews

seeks to convene an annual conference that brings all potential Exporters, Cargo managers, Logistics firms, Airlines, Airports, Customs and everyone in the Aviation and Cargo ecosystem to chart a pathway that enables Nigerians export more. As the importance of oil wanes, the value and volume of non-oil export should be growing and Aviations should be driving it," the organiser, Ambassador Ikechi Uko, publisher of ATQnews said.

"The Conference, which would have an exhibition part would be broken into three Parts over two days, Aviation, Cargo and Exports. The Aviation aspect would have a Presentation and Panel Discussion on 'Airlines, Airports and Aviatio.' Experts including airline CEOs, past airport CEOs and aviators will discuss the reasons why our airlines and airport systems have not delivered the best possible outcomes for aviation in Nigeria.

"The Second Section on Cargo will be presentations and panel Discussions on the Cargo and Logistics Value Chain the Challenges of Scale and the Opportunities available. The third Part will be on Export. How do we scale our Export Capacity? How do we remove the impediments and improve our access and market Penetration Globally. There will a Support Session on Insurance and Financing of Aviation, Cargo and Export in Nigeria," Ambassador Ukoh said.

Boeing Sees Pathway Back to Recertification of the MAX in China

Boeing's executives discussed the rebound of the 737 MAX program in 2021. The company has delivered 130 aircraft since the ungrounding as of July 25th. Around the world, 30 airlines have brought the aircraft back into service and flown over

95,000 commercial revenue flights. All of this comes as 175 countries have reopened their airspace for 737 MAX operations, including in key markets like the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, and Europe.

According to the online medium, simple flying, one

country remains a sticking point: China. The country has been slow to move forward on the return of the Boeing 737 MAX, and analysts, industry professionals, and Boeing have been keenly watching the moves made in this space.



Aviation Industry's Slow Recovery from Covid-19 Devastation



Chinedu Eze

At the League of Airports and Aviation Correspondents (LAAC) conference held on Wednesday in Lagos, the Managing Director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), Captain Rabiú Yadudu said that it would take a long time before the aviation industry would recover from the devastating effect of Coronavirus pandemic.

He said that the pandemic stifled the operational funds of aviation agencies, stripped airlines of capital and left the handling companies and other service providers writhing in abject need of credit from financial institutions.

Yadudu said that the aviation industry is in need of financial support, saying that the industry needs financial engineering.

"It will still take some time for the aviation industry to fully recover. We must focus on financial engineering. The aviation agencies are feeling the negative impact of the pandemic. Financial support must come our way," he said.

He said that the devastation of Coronavirus is global and affects every country with tremendous negative impact on the air transport sector, adding that in terms of competence, experience and operational efficiency, the industry in Nigeria can compete with any other country in the world.

Yadudu said that the industry is still in distress and in dire need of funds, stressing that without financial help the possibility of recovery in the foreseeable future is slim.

"We are still in distressed because we need relief. Without financial help I don't see any recovery," he said.

The FAAN Managing Director said that there are good policies that would guide the industry effectively but the challenge is implementation of these policies to achieve desirable results.

He added that in addition to formulating good policies for the sector, there is still more to be done, adding that to make the industry move forward, there is still much to be done, so policy implementation is very important.

"We should make sure that we grow all areas of the industry so we must keep on working together and we should not allow divergent opinions and views to tear

"We are seeing movement in the right direction, particularly in some key domestic markets. But the situation for international travel is nowhere near where we need to be. June should be the start of peak season, but airlines were carrying just 20% of 2019 levels."

us apart. So we should work together. We must spearhead the change that we want, so moving at different directions at this time will have damaging effect on the industry, so it is very important that we work together," Yadudu said.

The Chairman of Senate Committee on Aviation, Senator Smart Adeyemi also called for financial support of the industry, saying that it would take a long time for the sector to make a positive turnaround.

"The aviation industry has improved significantly and the sector is very critical in the economy of this nation, so whether the economy is good or not, the aviation industry plays very key role, but the industry needs palliative, especially the airlines. It takes a lion heart to invest in airline business," he said.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) said that COVID-19 virus has spread worldwide without acknowledging borders.

"It has impacted all industries, all sectors and all aspects of our lives with devastating economic and financial losses and significant uncertainties.

Also, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has announced that passenger demand performance for June 2021 showing a very slight improvement in both international and domestic air travel markets, noting that demand remains significantly below pre-COVID-19 levels owing to international travel restrictions.

IATA disclosed that as comparisons between 2021 and 2020 monthly results are distorted by the extraordinary impact of COVID-19, unless otherwise noted, all comparisons are to June 2019, which followed a normal demand pattern. The record is as follows: total demand for air travel in June 2021 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) was down 60.1% compared to June 2019. That was a small improvement over the 62.9% decline recorded in May 2021 versus May 2019.

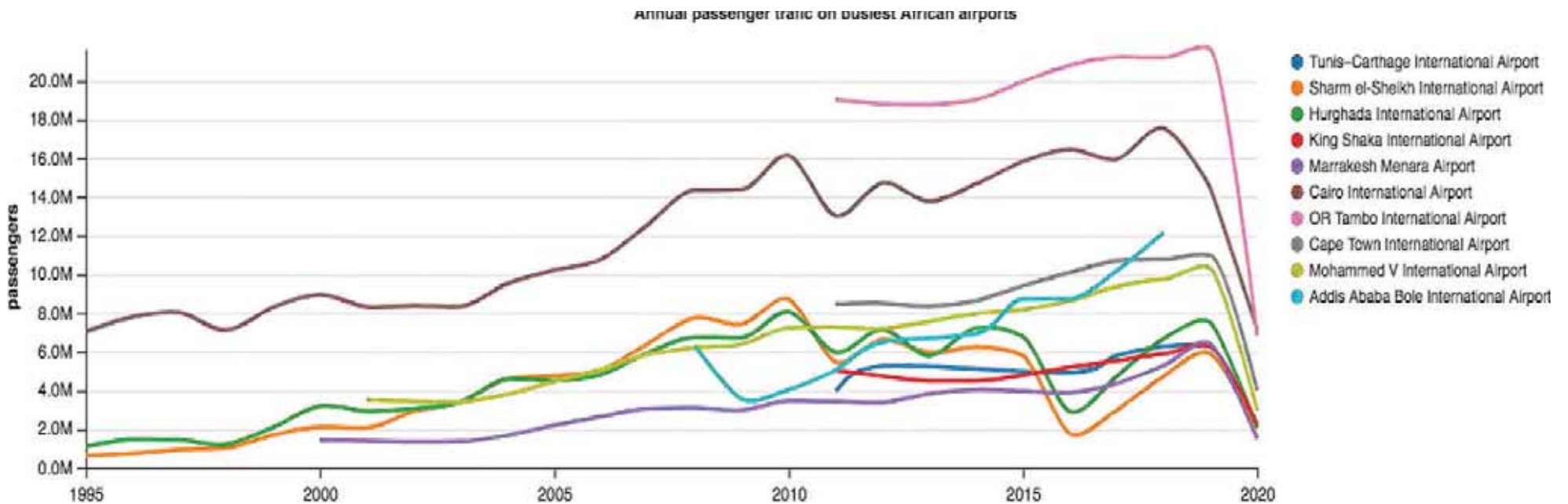
International passenger demand in June was 80.9% below June 2019, an improvement from the 85.4% decline recorded in May 2021 versus two years ago. All regions with the exception of Asia-Pacific contributed to the slightly higher demand.

Total domestic demand was down 22.4% versus pre-crisis levels (June 2019), a slight gain over the 23.7% decline recorded in May 2021 versus the 2019 period. The performance across key domestic markets was mixed with Russia reporting robust expansion while China returned to negative territory.

"We are seeing movement in the right direction, particularly in some key domestic markets. But the situation for international travel is nowhere near where we need to be. June should be the start of peak season, but airlines were carrying just 20% of 2019 levels. That's not a recovery, it's a continuing crisis caused by government inaction," said IATA's Director General, Willie Walsh.

Dimming Expectation over National Carrier

About three years ago the federal government unveiled the logo and livery of national carrier in London and still assures that the project would be realised next year. The federal government also plans to concession the major airport facilities before the end of next year. **Chinedu Eze** examines the prospects of the national airline operating under concessioned major airport terminals.



There is something nostalgic about national carrier in Nigeria. This is because the Nigeria Airways Limited, which was established on 23 August, 1958 and was liquidated in 2004 remains the most successful airline in Nigeria. Under the defunct airline, Nigeria developed enviable manpower in aviation, attained the height of conducting C-check on certain aircraft types and developed the aviation infrastructure that is being rehabilitated and expanded after its demise.

So most aviators who are seasoned professionals benefitted directly and indirectly from the airline and the crops of professionals who are still manning the sector today are inexorably linked to the national carrier.

This is one of the reasons why the industry was aroused when the Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika in 2016 declared that one of the programmes of President Muhammadu Buhari administration was the berthing of a new national carrier. Not a few were expectant. Today, that expectation is beginning to fade, considering the responses of industry observers who spoke to THISDAY. The Minister also said that before the end of the current administration, the four major airports terminals in Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port Harcourt would be given out in concession to private investors in a public, private partnership arrangement. These are the two key programmes of the Buhari administration. Others are the establishment of a leasing company and the establishment of Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) hangar. These projects are aimed to support the national carrier that was supposed to have taken off, at least by end of this year, if not for the economic devastation of the Coronavirus pandemic.

NATIONAL CARRIERS

According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), a national flag carrier is an airline, which is subsidised or owned by the country in which they are registered. The airline often seeks preferential rights or privileges by the government for international operations.

In the past, the term national airline or national carrier was known to be airlines, which were owned by the government, and therefore associated with the national identity of the country. However, these days, it can refer to any airline with a strong connection to its home country, regardless of if it is government-owned. Therefore, not all flag carriers are owned by the government, as many have become private companies. Examples are British Airways, Air France, KLM, Lufthansa; but it has to be noted, however, that due to the devastating impact of Covid-19, some countries are injecting funds into the hitherto national airlines through equity holding in order to give them a lifeline. One example is Lufthansa.

IATA also noted that flag carriers hold a certain amount of significance in the aviation industry, in terms of both financially and symbolically. Previously, the airlines that were owned by the government were considered great for international trade and national defence. The global body rightly observed that some passengers would still opt to fly with their national flag carrier for the sense of pride that it gives them when they see the familiar tail of the aircraft on the runway. Also, some passengers will sometimes choose to fly with flag carriers over other airlines, due to the image that they are safer and less likely to encounter financial difficulties. This is one of the reasons why many Nigerians still long for a national carrier and why they expect that the federal government fulfill its promise of establishing a nation carrier.

Sirika assured the realisation of the project while addressing state house correspondents after the weekly federal executive council meeting in Abuja recently and reiterated that the national carrier would be realised with huge stakes of the company owned by the private investors. In 2018, the Minister had unveiled the name and logo of the new national carrier, Nigeria Air, at the Farnborough International Airshow in London. The project was later suspended indefinitely. "I regret to announce that the Federal Executive Council has taken the tough decision to suspend the National Carrier Project in the interim. All commitments due will be honoured. We thank the public for the support as always," he had tweeted. But recently Sirika said the new national carrier was long overdue and the private sector-run airline would be in operation by early 2022, noting that the new national carrier was expected to be a viable airline and is potentially poised to cater to millions of travellers in Nigeria and Africa. Sirika said the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of the planned date for the establishment of the national carrier initially planned for the end of 2021.

CONFLICT

But many industry pundits are of the view that for a national carrier to be successful it ought to have the control of the major airport terminals in that country. In fact, successful airlines in Africa own or control the major airport terminals where they operate. Industry experts are of the view that if the terminals of major airports are given out in concession, the national carrier might not be given a head start. Besides, if a national carrier owns and earns revenue from the terminal of its

operational hub, it would help the airline's sustainability. This is because airports largely earn more revenues than airlines. So airline revenue would support an airline that owns it and helps it to become profitable.

Airlines generate revenues through aeronautical and non-aeronautical and the latter is elastic because airports could be home to a range of revenue sources including special product areas (Duty-Free, Souvenir shops, bookstores and banks), food and beverage areas (restaurants, cafeterias), travel services (car rental, insurance services), personal service areas (showers, hairdressers, beauty centres but airlines generate revenue mainly from ticket sales and charter services.

Travel expert and organiser of Akwaaba African Travel Market, Ambassador Ikechi Uko told THISDAY that it might be difficult for the planned national carrier to be profitable if it does not have control of the terminals at its operational base. He cited examples with airlines that have control of the airport facilities, which revenues are at their behest and others that their airport facilities are managed by a different entity, which also control their revenues.

"Personally, I support the establishment of a national carrier, but I listened to a presentation from an official of African Airlines Association (AFRAA), which indicated that airports make more money than airlines and that airlines that make profits are those that control their airport facilities.

"Now, I wonder why Nigeria wants to have a national carrier and at the same time wants to concession major airport terminals. Kenya is at the verge of merging the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and Kenya Airways. Ethiopia Airlines, which is the most profitable airline in Africa, merged the airport facilities to the airline.

"So in that paper delivered by Aaron Monetsi of AFRAA, who was a guest speaker at Akwaaba African Travel Market, he noted that African airlines that do not have control and the revenues of their operations hub may not be able to be profitable. Emirates is in charge of its operational hub in Dubai, South Africa Airways (SAA) is floundering largely because its major airport facilities are managed independently. So the question is, which model is the Nigeria copying? How does it want to concession its airports and at the same time have a national carrier? This is where I have misgivings about the planned national carrier.

"Our model is different. I don't know where it has survived in Africa. Airlines that survived in Africa worked with their

airports. SAA failed because their airports are independent. Kenya Airways is merging with the airport because Kenya Airways generate about 60 per cent of the traffic and 83 per cent of the revenue of the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport," he said.

He also noted that in the last 10 years many airlines have collapsed in Africa, but no airport has collapsed during the given period. The national carrier must have to partner with the airport because that has been the most successful model so far," he said.

AIRPORT TERMINALS

The Chief Operating Officer of Ibom Air who is also former Managing Director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN), George Uriesi, told THISDAY that airlines could manage their operational terminals but not the airports. He noted that US mega carriers, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines have their terminals, adding that each airline can design its own terminals to suit its vision.

"But airport is expensive infrastructure, so no airline can go into it; if they do they will be stretched. Ethiopian Airlines has to design what it wants. But if the national carrier operates in airport terminals that are managed by concessionaire it may not affect its profitability. This is because the concessionaire will not charge itself out of the market. If the concessionaire introduces outrageous charges the airline can leave the airport and move over to others. There must be a balance in the pricing. Any airline that will have a terminal dedicated to it must have to be a big airline," he said.

Speaking in the same vein, the industry consultant and CEO of Belujane Konsult, Chris Aligbe said the national carrier that would be floated by the federal government would be private sector driven and therefore should be given a level playing field with other airlines. In that case, no airport terminal will be dedicated to it but would utilise the same facilities as other carriers.

"As people talk about level playing field, the planned national carrier will not be publicly owned. It will be private sector driven. If the major airport terminals are concessioned, the operators should be willing to give the national carrier a position in the terminals. Except if such agreement are excluded, the national carrier can be given its own space. The airline and the concessionaire can agree on terms. But if you assign a terminal to the national carrier, there won't be equal playing field anymore. So the airlines should be given equal opportunities and should be left at the mercy of the concessionaires," Aligbe said.

Many Nigerians are waiting and hoping that a national carrier will come before the end of this administration. But that hope is ebbing.

The Place of PEF(M)B in the Petroleum Industry Bill

The Senate passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) on Thursday, July 1st, 2021, predictably, brought to fore, the dissension of some stakeholders on certain extant provisions in the much-anticipated document. The Upper House decision to peg the allotted funds to host communities at 3 per cent (to be sourced from the operating expenditure of oil and gas prospecting companies), for instance, generated a lot of furore in the hallowed Senate chambers, as that resolution drew the ire of some Senators representing the Niger Delta region.

Even though the Senate President, Ahmad Lawan had remarked that, with the bill passage, "...PIB demons have been defeated...", it became instantly clear that the "demons" may have been weakened, they are certainly, not down and out!

The Senate Joint Committee on Petroleum Sector - Downstream, Upstream, and Gas - had inputted a 5 per cent provision for host communities in the Bill. This was even a 5 per cent decrease from the 10 per cent for which the community leaders had been clamouring.

Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo Agege, even momentarily, shed his toga as the Number 2 man in the Senate, and appealed to his colleagues in the normal garb of a fellow Distinguished Senator (he represents the good people of Delta Central Senatorial District), to uphold the 5 per cent earlier earmarked by the Committee, all to no avail. Ditto for James Manager (representing Delta South Senatorial District. His reconsideration plea of the 3 per cent provision, fell on deaf ears.

Others such as Bassey Akpan (Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District), and George Sekibo (Rivers East Senatorial District), invoked similar sentiments, but it appeared the die is cast, at least for now, until the two Houses decide otherwise, when they converge for the harmonisation of the Bill, sometime in the foreseeable future.

Some other key provisions of the Bill read:

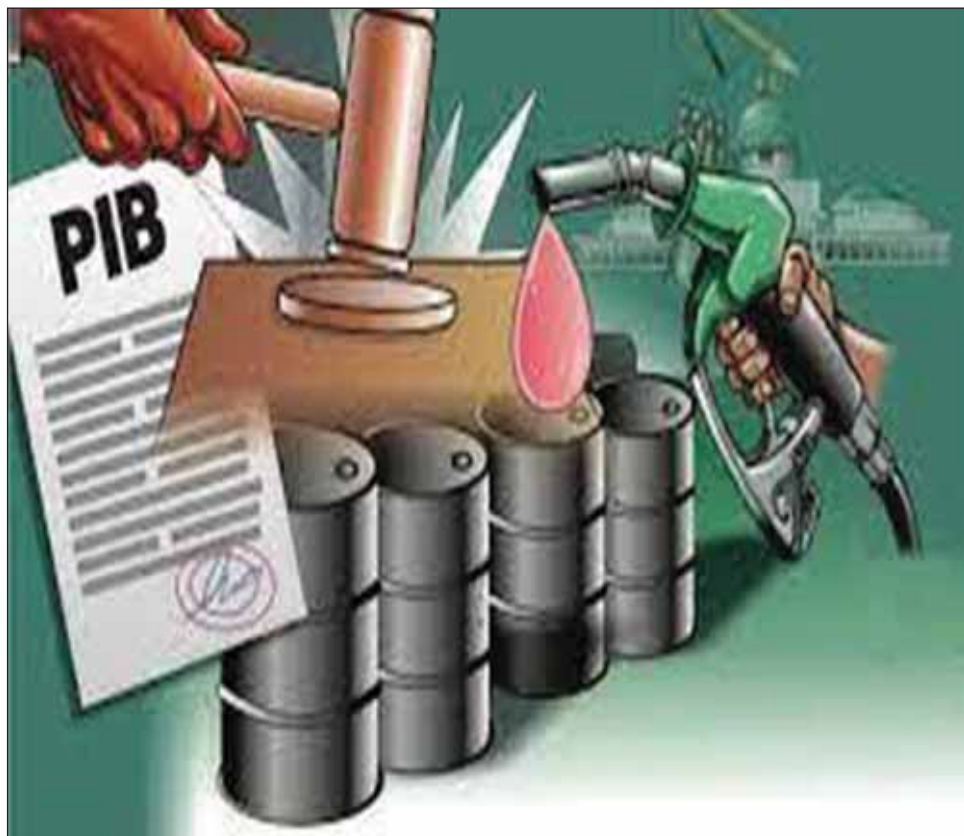
- NNPC to be reworked as a limited liability company
- Approval of 30 per cent fund from NNPC Limited profits to fund exploration in 'frontier basins'.

For weeks, as the quest for signing the much-awaited Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) into law, by the National Assembly gathered momentum, not a few were worried that its passage, would again, be kicked down the road due to some unresolved issues by various stakeholders.

Part of the issue threatening the bill passage (which had been in the works for 2 decades), was the demand by community leaders for an increase in revenue allocation from the proposed 2.5 per cent to 10 per cent for host communities. The leaders believe this is the only way that the standard of living of the people in their domains (most of whom are already suffering immense economic deprivation, due to the flip side of various oil exploration activities), could be improved upon. Other stakeholders were seeking a public sale of some shares of the National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), whilst some still, believe market-based prices should be charged for gas earmarked for power generation; a move which will, definitely, further impact adversely, the disposable income of the average Nigerian.

However, something more germane, urgent, and worrisome to industry watchers long before the recent Senate bill passage, was the idea of merging some Government Agencies such as the Petroleum Equalisation Fund (Management) Board (PEF(M)B), Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), and the Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA) in the PIB.

The Senate Joint Committee, in its report, had proposed that the three Agencies be merged under an entity to be known as "The Authority". This new organ is to be saddled with tackling the onerous responsibilities



“The Federal Government is currently saddled with finding solutions to the seemingly intractable insecurity bedevilling the country apart from other problems such as power paucity, burgeoning youth unemployment...”

of the three agencies and it is expected to run efficiently and effectively.

To be sure, some of the Agencies do have a few overlapping functions but it's important to weigh their roles in getting premium motor spirit (petrol) to the final consumer and how that plays into the socio-economic stability of the nation at large before any pruning and/or aggregation are even considered.

Out of the three Agencies, the one that has a direct impact on the day-to-day life of the ordinary person is PEF(M)B. Today, the fact that petrol is being sold at a uniform price all over Nigeria is due to the 'equalisation' activities of PEF(M)B. The system of price uniformity, put in place since the inception of this all-important organisation in 1975, has been hugely modernised and is working perfectly. Incidences of losses and phoney claims by marketers have been largely plugged through immense investments in Information Technology and Truck Tracking.

To dig deeper, PEF(M)B has the most accurate data on activities in the downstream sector according to industry watchers. Its robust Downstream Automated Fuel Management Information System (DAFMIS) puts it in a pole position to provide near real-time information on vessels, refineries, pipelines, tank farms, depots, trucks, and filling stations. This unique system is structured to cut waste, improve efficiency, and plug loopholes in the petrol distribution chain.

Also, DAFMIS, modelled after the procedures and processes, guiding and guarding the operations of the highly regarded Saudi Arabian oil company, Aramco, accommodates an Operations Control and Command (OCC) Centre

that monitors field operations round the clock, year in, year out, thereby ensuring that untoward incidents are dealt with immediately.

The socio-economic benefits of DAFMIS are multifarious. The system provides for on-time data that is germane to making critical decisions in the downstream segment of the petroleum sector. It provides a veritable plank for the nation's economic planners, lends itself to the maintenance of energy security and the promotion of local content among other functions, all in line with best global practices and management systems. PEF(M)B's position in the Petroleum Industry Bill should therefore be unambiguous.

For PPPRA, a body that determines the prices of petrol products within the polity, it's the vision of running a smooth and resilient downstream sub-sector of the petroleum industry, with the ultimate goal of engendering self-financing and sustenance, should not be muddled by a merger.

Also, the DPR has its job cut out. The Department functions cut across the upstream and downstream activities of the petroleum sector.

Lately, DPR has been working overtime to ensure that wanton and widespread crude oil theft is reduced drastically. In February this year, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) affirmed that crude theft had risen to an average of 200,000 barrels per day. That works out at 6 million barrels per month or 72 million barrels per year. That is mind-boggling and the economic losses, quite colossal.

The activities of the oil thieves is a dampener, direct threat and also runs counter to the avowed mission of the

current Petroleum Minister, Chief Timpriye Sylvia, to shoring up crude production to some 3 million barrels per day during his ongoing tenure.

Aside that, the DPR is responsible for licensing and monitoring Filling Stations' activities. Even carrying out these functions is not without drama. For instance, there was a strike action carried out recently by an arm of the Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), at Suleija, Niger State. Some members of the association had accused DPR Officials of unethical practices. The strike action was resolved later when the IPMAN Abuja Chairman, Alhaji Ahman Yahaya Alhassan was quoted as saying "the suspension is sequel to an understanding we had with the Department of Petroleum Resources", according to Daily Trust Newspaper of June 24, 2021.

In effect, merging the three Government Agencies of PEF(M)B, PPPRA, and DPR under an amorphous juggernaut tagged "The Authority", is bound to worsen the already straining socio-economic fabric of the nation.

Everyone is familiar with the problems the nation had been experiencing over the years with government bureaucracy. Merging these entities is bound to create strife, engender unnecessary bottlenecks, and hamper efficiency. Needless to say, everything that will threaten the prevailing tranquillity of petrol supply all over the nation, should be nipped in the bud straight away. A popular Yoruba adage posits that one starts avoiding a sharp object hitting one's eye, right from afar.

Nearly everyone is keenly aware of the galloping prices of food items all over the country at the moment. Housewives and even the unmarried, are scrambling on how to work their food budget to last the long haul. Many cannot even afford to feed themselves anymore. The other day, a clip, showing a long line of able-bodied individuals of both sexes queueing for food being shared by a Church in Surulere, Lagos, circulated widely on social media. The situation is that dire.

A program segment on Arise TV- The Morning Show - recently conveyed that Nigeria had the highest percentage -17.5 per cent - of headline inflation (year-on-year), among four African nations polled for May 2021. Others such as South Africa, Ghana, and Senegal recorded only single-digit inflation of 5.25, 7.5, and 1.3 per cent in that order. Anyone could easily sum up that all is not well with the economic well-being of our dear nation at the moment.

Merging PEF(M)B therefore with other agencies, or the emergence of "The Authority", will no doubt bring in its wake, an inefficient system that is guaranteed to disrupt the smooth supply of petrol with attendant consequences, in tow. These consequences do not require further elucidation. Anything that will further depress the already parlous and pitiable economic condition of the average man on the street, could result in a public disorder of cataclysmic proportions.

James Baldwin, the world-renowned essayist, poet, and activist got it right when he affirmed that "the most dangerous creation of any society is the man who has nothing to lose".

The Federal Government is currently saddled with finding solutions to the seemingly intractable insecurity bedevilling the country apart from other problems such as power paucity, burgeoning youth unemployment, and lately, various and persistent agitations for self-determination by some indigenous groups, all of which are quite daunting! Merging PEF(M)B with other agencies would therefore be "adding petrol to fire"; something the nation cannot afford at this moment in its history.

• **Eniola Olakunri, a Director of Oats Global Energy and public sector analyst writes from Abuja**

Obaseki Unveils Plan to Make Edo One of Africa's Top 20 Economies, Rallies United Nations

Daramsimi Adebisi

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has unveiled the Making Edo Great Again (MEGA) vision to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Nigeria, outlining the

government's audacious plan to make Edo State one of the 20 top economies in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Africa by 2050.

The governor, in a presentation titled, "The Edo Vision: From Who We Are To Where We Want

To Be by 2050," at the United Nations House, Abuja, noted that the state is harnessing its human and natural resources to place it as a leading destination for investment in Nigeria.

According to the governor, "We envisage an Edo State which will be the fastest in GDP growth in Nigeria, and by 2050, must be top 3 in terms of GDP ranking in Nigeria and top 20 in largest economies on the African continent."

Obaseki said the state government has undertaken reforms to place Edo at a vantage position to meet a number of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also attract investment in energy and power, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), agriculture and processing industries, among others, to realise its vision.

He added: "With an estimated population of 10 million residents by 2050, our educational

system must be the best in Nigeria and we should boast of one of the best workforce on the continent.

"This will be achieved through rigorous planning in regional and urban planning, which will point to and emphasize what we must do to attain double-digit growth over the next three decades, and socio-economic master plans to complement the physical master plans.

"The government will ensure

the sustenance of its massive investment in infrastructure to take advantage of the location of Edo. We must build the Benin River Port to lighten up to 30 percent of the cargo from Tin Can and Apapa Ports."

"We would also build a rail link to all parts of the country with Edo as a hub; build an international airport, and ensure that Edo is the technology and innovation hub in Nigeria," Obaseki noted.

NPA Pledges to Enthroned International Standards at Ports

Eromosele Abiodun

The Acting Managing Director of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Mohammed Bello Koko has restated the commitment of the management of the authority to enthrone international standards and best practice in the handling of ships and cargo in all seaports in the country.

Bello-Koko made the remark while addressing members of the Senate Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation led by Senator Theodore Orji, on a visit to the NPA, in line with their oversight responsibility.

The NPA, Bello Koko stated, has created the enabling environment for a well-structured inter-modal system for seamless connectivity of the water ways, rail and road transportation, to foster improved service delivery as well as increase in revenue to the nation's purse.

He noted that the various reforms rolled out by the federal government have had a significant positive impact on Port productivity, stressing that

the dividends are evident in the areas of reduced cargo dwell time, improvement in cargo throughput, ship turn-around time and drastic reduction in security incidents within and around the Port environs.

He called for better synergy with Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) and other agencies of government involved in the examination and clearance of cargo, to drive efficiency in Port operations.

While expressing the appreciation of the authority to the lawmakers for their visit, Bello-Koko assured that NPA would work tirelessly at ensuring the sustenance of service excellence across the nations Ports.

He solicited the timely intervention of the committee on efforts to end the perennial traffic gridlock plaguing vehicular activities along the Port access roads.

Earlier, the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Theodore Orji stated that the Committee would work collaboratively with the NPA Management with the view to resolve all bottlenecks militating against ease of doing business at the Ports.



L-R: MD/CEO, Med-View Airlines, Muneer Bankole; DG, Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) Captain Musa Nuhu, MD, Finchglow Travels, Mr Bernard Bankole; Representative of Minister of Aviation and Commissioner/CEO, Accident Investigation Bureau Akin Olateru; Rector, Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Captain Alkali Modibbo, at a conference in Lagos...recently

PHOTO: KOLAWOLE ALLI

Arik Air Reconnects Warri with Abuja, Lagos

Arik Air has announced that it would resume flight services to Warri from both Lagos and Abuja effective Tuesday, August 3, 2021.

The airline said flights between Abuja and Warri as well as between Lagos and Warri will operate four times weekly on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Similarly, Arik Air will be moving its Benin and Warri flights from the Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminal 1 (otherwise known as GAT) to

Murtala Muhammed Airport Terminal 2, MMA2 effective Monday, August 2, 2021. All Arik flights departing to and arriving from both Benin and Warri will operate from MMA2.

The Chief Executive Officer of Arik Air, Captain Roy Ilegbodu said: "We are delighted to announce the resumption of services to Warri to serve our esteemed customers. Our decision to move Benin and Warri flights to MMA2 is to give customers a seamless check-in experience."

Mouka Launches New Campaign, Rewards Consumers with Bedroom Makeover worth N1 Million

Mouka, Nigeria's leading brand of mattresses and pillows has launched a new campaign to encourage consumers to buy the right Mouka mattress based on their unique needs.

The "Get the Mouka for You" campaign seeks to educate consumers about the need to consider their age, body build, lifestyle and budget before choosing the right Mouka mattress. The campaign also features the leading associations in the bedding industry, Nigeria Society of Physiotherapy (NSP) and National Association of Orthopaedic and Manual Therapists (NAOMT).

According to these experts, sleeping on the right mattress

is paramount for proper body alignment, support and relief from pressure points. These are all needed for quality sleep to enable the individual to wake up refreshed the following day.

To further entrench this "buy right" behaviour, Mouka has rolled out a competition in which one lucky consumer gets to win a bedroom makeover worth up to N1 million.

To participate, consumers visit the Mouka website to fill an online questionnaire that tells them the right Mouka mattress for them. Afterwards, they take a screenshot and post it on social media using the hashtag #IFoundMyMouka.

'ENGIE Battery Recycling Partnership will Minimize Environmental Pollution'

Peter Uzoho

Nigeria's clean and sustainable energy solutions provider, ENGIE Energy Access has stated that its newly executed partnership with the Hinckley Group to recycle old and end-of-use batteries will minimize the incidence of environmental pollution caused by inappropriate disposal of old Lithium-ion (li-ion) batteries and the consequent harm it poses to Nigerians.

Speaking during the official signing of the partnership agreement held in Lagos, Managing Director of ENGIE

Energy Access Nigeria, Bankole Cardoso said Hinckley, will following the agreement, pick up old batteries from ENGIE Energy Access' Lagos warehouse for reprocessing.

He listed various benefits the partnership will yield, both as individuals and as a nation including environmental protection, economic development, cost reduction, amongst others.

According to him, "This partnership will be to the benefit of Nigeria, both as individuals and as a nation. It will minimize environmental pollution that could occur through inap-

propriate disposal of waste batteries, make for recovery of non-renewable materials used in the making of batteries, reduce cost of new batteries, reduce the risks of fire and explosion, among others," he said.

"We have been operating in Nigeria since 2019 as Fenix International and have had great success, impacting the lives of over 200,000 Nigerians who lack access to energy. Our new integration into The ENGIE Group has allowed us to scale even faster and wider across Nigeria allowing us to bring our clean, reliable, and affordable energy to millions

of Nigerians over the next 5 years. With this growth comes the need to implement sustainable methods of recycling and disposing end-of-use batteries and this partnership with the Hinckley Group addresses the issue."

He added, "ENGIE Energy Access is the only energy player that can offer a fully integrated renewable energy solutions, that provides full end-to-end off grid energy solutions. This position is what drives our commitment to being an environmentally conscious and responsible solution to the communities that we serve" he further said.

Ex UK-Based Glencore Trader Pleads Guilty over Bribery Scandal with NNPC Officials

Peter Uzoho

with agency report

A former United Kingdom-based trader for Glencore Plc, Mr. Anthony Stimler, has reportedly pleaded guilty over his alleged role in a scheme to bribe unnamed officials of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) in exchange for favorable oil contracts from the corporation.

US prosecutors said Stimler made the guilty plea on Monday at a New York court in the United States.

The case is referred to as US, v. Stimler, US. District Court, Southern District of New York, No. 21-cr-00471.

Stimler admitted to conspiring

to violate the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and also commit money laundering at a hearing in Manhattan federal court conducted by video, as shown by court records

Glencore is an Anglo-Swiss mining company and one of the world's largest commodity traders.

Stimler worked on Glencore's West Africa desk from around 2002 to 2009 and again from around 2011 to 2019, court papers showed.

Prosecutors said millions of dollars in bribes were paid to officials in Nigeria and elsewhere, in exchange for NNPC awarding oil contracts and providing "more lucrative grades of oil on more favourable delivery terms."

However, no particular name from the NNPC had been mentioned in the report as an accomplice in the bribery scam.

But court papers referred to seven alleged co-conspirators from several countries in the bribery scheme, which prosecutors said ran from 2007 to 2018, and none was charged or identified by name.

The Justice Department has been investigating Glencore's business dealings in Nigeria, Venezuela and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Glencore reportedly confirmed in a statement that Stimler had been an employee of the organization and that it has cooperated with probes by the US Department of Justice

and other authorities.

"The conduct described in the plea is unacceptable and has no place in Glencore," Reuters quoted the company to have said.

Stimler will remain free in the United Kingdom on \$500,000 bond and his lawyers did not immediately respond to requests for comment, Reuters said.

UK and Swiss authorities have also been examining possible corruption involving Glencore, and various governments have investigated other large oil traders.

In March, former Glencore oil trader, Emilio Jose Heredia Collado reportedly pleaded guilty in San Francisco to manipulating a key oil price benchmark.

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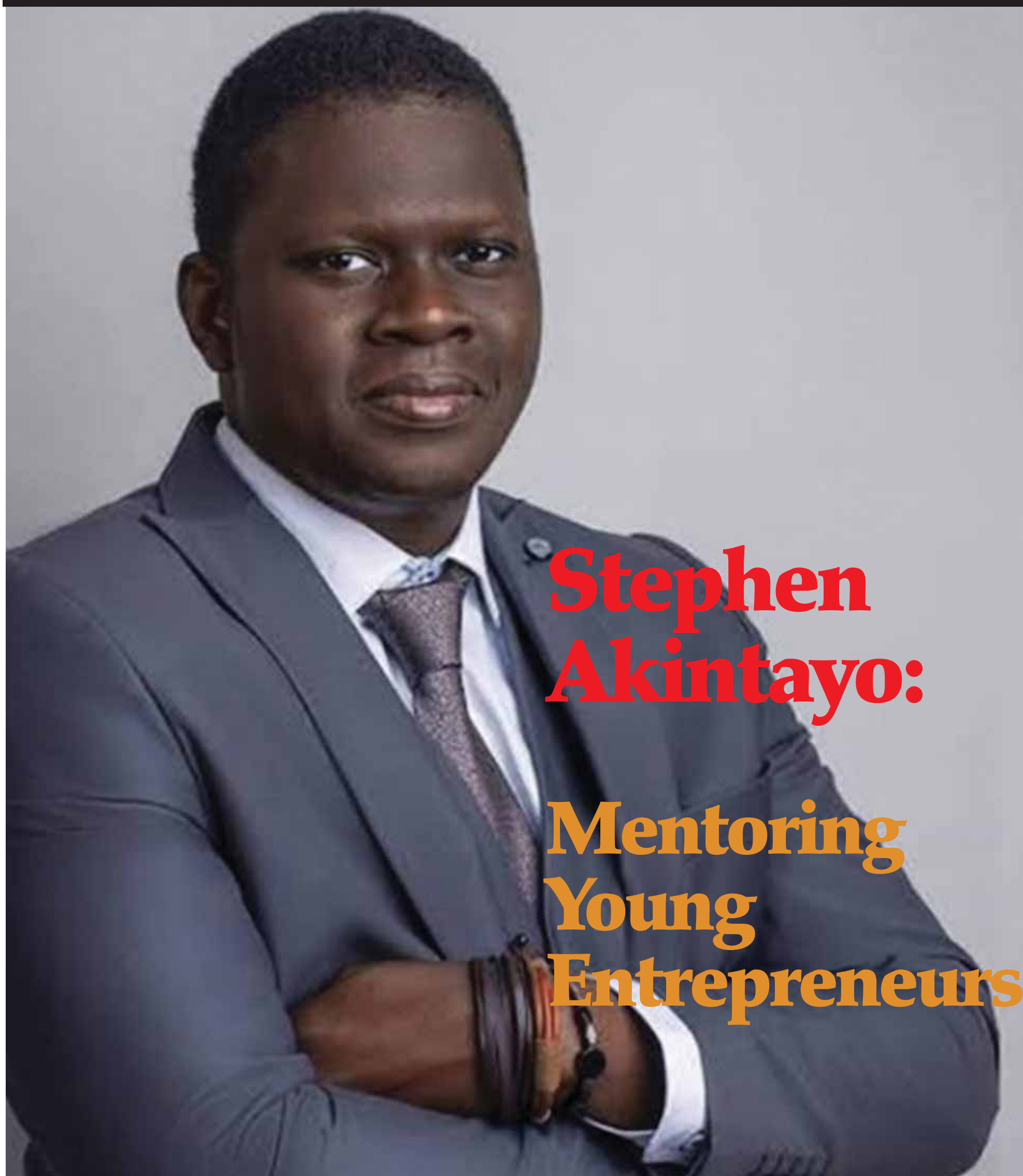
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WEEKEND



**Stephen
Akintayo:**

**Mentoring
Young
Entrepreneurs**

Stephen Akintayo: Mentoring Young Entrepreneurs

Chief Executive Officer, GtextHomes, Dr. Stephen Akintayo, is often described as a man with a heart of gold given that he has over the years empowered over 15,000 Nigerian youths. He is also very committed to charitable programs. In this interview with **Ayodeji Ake**, he revealed how he has been creating more jobs for young Nigerians and his mission to uplift the real estate business through the ‘Smart City’ initiative

What inspired your entrepreneurship journey?

I started business on campus. My mother was a civil servant and my father’s business had crumbled before I was born. My mother was left alone to raise five children. Each time I was going to school, my mother would knock on doors for help. This is the reason why we invest a lot in kids’ tuition fees and so far, we have paid over 5,000 tuition for them. I grew up being pained and this was not normal. I was lucky I had a cousin who started a business immediately after I completed my secondary school education. That was how my entrepreneurship journey started.

Can you share a painful experience you have suffered as an entrepreneur?

The biggest single loss was N120 million in the real estate sector but that was the single loss that made me say in this business we will build billions. Land ownership is still a big problem in Nigeria. We purchased our land in bulk and the day we were to take possession of the land, the whole family came out and said who sold the land to you, we don’t know him, and that was how we lost the money. We have learned and made success in acquiring properties through the appropriate agencies.

What are the interventions by GTextHomes to reduce the burden of unemployment?

We are taking 100,000 and between last year and now we already have over 5,000 people in our programs. Recently, we had a broker’s conference where we empowered over 15,000 people through what we are doing so we are getting close because our goal is 100,000 for five years. We can say through our program, Nigerian youths have been empowered to become real estate brokers. In terms of unemployment that is why we made our event open so other companies can plug in the system so as to reduce unemployment. This definitely will force down the unemployment rate.

How can we address the issues of unemployment and insecurity?

Presently, insecurity is one of the major challenges we are facing in Nigeria. You can’t just tackle insecurity issues with bullets. I was in Maiduguri in 2019, I went to one of the IDP camps at Gubio IDP camp. I was born there so we went to do some charity work, the place that was supposed to take 3,500, we have 35,000 people there with no job, the health centre with no enough medicine there. So, tell me why if Boko haram is saying I can give you more money and all other promises to commit atrocities, they won’t fall for it? For us, if we don’t want security issues to continue to be a serious problem, particularly here in the south and it’s here in the south too right now, even as private sector, we have to find a way to create jobs. Some were here last year when we announced that we were creating a platform to help employ 100,000 people in the real estate sector and we are committing 15 per cent of our income into that and when we launched our programs, we invited the best in the world, Ryan Serhant is the number one property broker in the world, he is based in New York. He has done over four billion dollars in property sales, every year he sells more than one billion dollars worth of property. You do not need money to become a broker all you need is your credibility, social media, your connections, your network and you don’t even need to quit your existing job to do that. If you look at one of the best things God has endowed us with, it’s real estate. We hope that this movement will help to reduce unemployment in this country, it will solve issues of security as more people can learn to know they can make it legitimately.

You plan to empower people in the next five years, do you have the buyers?

As much as people keep coming, reproduction keeps coming in. The land doesn’t finish. If you have to check, that’s one of the things you begin to wonder that just in case this horizon has been finished, you realise before you come back, the horizon is gone again, that it has expanded and if you keep watching, Ibeju Lekki, before you know, it expands and expands, the land doesn’t finish in as much as reproduction



Akintayo

You do not need money to become a broker all you need is your credibility, social media, your connections, your network and you don’t even need to quit your existing job to do that. If you look at one of the best things God has endowed us with, it’s real estate. We hope that this movement will help to reduce unemployment in this country, it will solve issues of security as more people can learn to know they can make it legitimately

keeps happening, the product keeps coming in the market keeps going. The market doesn’t finish nor does the product finish, it’s big enough for everybody.

Can you tell us about some of the work that Gtexhomes is doing in the Nigerian real estate industry?

Gtexhomes has been doing a lot in the country’s real estate industry. This year, we are building one thousand housing units and we have started already, a lot of contractors are already mobilised, and we are getting more on board, and also by the end of the year, we would be having more than 20 branches in the country. People have been asking why we are expanding despite the rising insecurity in Nigeria, but again the concept of entrepreneurship is solving

problems. That is why we are investing a lot in conferences and training because we just need to start changing the mindset of Nigerians. There are applications that some of our brilliant young Nigerian can come up with that will solve these issues, that will give you satellite imagery where kidnappers are keeping people with the coordinates, you just need to tap into that youthful, young energy.

Tell us about the Smart City concept?

Right! The United Kingdom has said that it will reduce its CO2 emission by 78 per cent by 2035. So, we are having countries give 15years deadline, 20years deadline, so everything is becoming smart, green but Africa is not even having that conversation. I wanted to change the narrative, so I said

to myself, we have to be ahead. So, we started this concept of green smart homes wherein our estate and in the houses, we have built, with your phone you can handle everything about the house. In fact, for some people from the wristwatch you can see what is going on in the house, you can even talk to those at home, so a lot of security gadget, a lot of smart gadget but more importantly green. So, we are not connecting any of our estates to the national grid, we are not interested, everything is renewable, we are doing a hybrid of solar and recycling on the waste we are producing in the environment, using hybrid biogas and solar.

Is this project going on right now or are you talking about projection?

We are already on site, buildings have commenced, we are just making sure that our estates are self-sustainable, it’s in line with the millennium development goals, and like I said, it’s just that Nigeria keeps shifting the goal post, all these things are the things that the world has agreed that we need to start moving in this direction but we know how we do our things.

Can the real estate industry diversify the Nigerian economy away from oil?

The answer is definitely yes. To achieve this is solely in the hands of the government. The Dubai government made an intentional decision by the sheikh to develop its real estate industry. The country was deliberate to diversify its economy from oil by going into real estate and tourism among others. To do this, they started building the right infrastructures to enable other industries to thrive. It was a decision the government chose to make. The Nigerian government can also decide to diversify the economy through the real estate sector. It will happen but I honestly see the private sector doing it and not the government. Do you know the most expensive land in the world is in Nigeria-Lagos; Banana Island, in New York, they sell floors they don’t sell land, I would have said maybe New York will top them, it is only in Lagos that you buy land 600 square metres for two million dollars. There is no place else in the world, that is why even the private sector has jumped in and they are making this thing mega, so all we just need is a little government support to make things easier. Look at what is happening with Ogun and Oyo State, investment is moving to those places because it is easy to get your Certificate of Occupancy, so those are little things the government can do to create the much-needed jobs for the economy. There is no other bigger employer of labour in any sector than real estate.

Don’t you think that the real estate policies of other governments are friendlier?

Before there was no government policy guiding them, just now they are trying to control the sector, take for instance the social media, when it started there was no policy, some people started it without law from scratch and built it to what it is today. We must sell the same narrative in Nigeria. Young people should go and pick a sector and hustle it out. I am not saying it easy. I also started small, I trekked Ikeja along to Sango for many days because I couldn’t afford N200 then to go back to Sango. I often slept in my office with mosquitoes. I use to paste postal, do photocopy and buy bulk SMS at 70 kobo per SMS. So, it wasn’t easy but we can do it.

What has been your comfort resolution strategy?

Elders! The wisdom of elders, my uncle sold most of the lands in Omole, Berger, you know I didn’t know him until I got into real estate, but later on, I went into real estate. These are the people you go to for advice, you are having these issues and how do we handle such, we have had to leverage not just him but several people.

What are the things that Gtexhomes is putting together aside this event to inspire the Nigerian youths?

One of the things we have started doing is to mentor intentionally; media men, celebrities, actors, and actresses. So what is missing is a role model, it is not that the Nigerian youth can’t be patient. They need to be inspired and supported to tap opportunities across industries.

Our Students are Trained to be God-fearing, Law-abiding – Pastor Adeboye

Stories by Mary Nnah

Proprietor of Redeemer's College of Technology and Management (RECTEM) and General Overseer, Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adeboye, has said students at the institution are trained not just to be skilled workers and employers of labour, but also to be God-fearing and law-abiding, presenting themselves as responsible employers, employees, family members and citizens of Nigeria. Speaking during the convocation of the first set of graduates from the college at the school premises in Mowe, Ogun State recently, Adeboye who was represented by Prof. Fola Aboaba, said RECTEM remains committed to raising exemplary citizens, as it has instilled values in the graduating students.

Adeboye said further that workplaces and the nation in general, require skilled individuals who fear God as they are assets that will not only help develop the country's economy but also move the nation forward as a whole.

"While some may see any mention of Christianity as a disadvantage, it is an advantage for every company to have a Christian in their midst. He or she is not only responsible to the company but also to someone higher who sees all, knows all and equally requires total com-

mitment" the cleric noted.

Speaking further he said, "A lot of people draw an imaginary line between physical and spiritual things, but we don't believe that in RCCG as the Lord is the source of wisdom both in the secular and spiritual world."

This belief, he said, "forms the bedrock of this institution for our students to be skilled workers and employers of labour impacting the technological development of this country."

As the graduating students were sent forth to face the world, the RCCG G.O advised that "Though you are in the world, you are not of the world. Carry and conduct yourself with the dignity that comes with the children of God. So, press on and work harder, do not rest on your oars, this is not the end, it is simply the beginning", Pastor Adeboye advised.

RECTEM's Rector, Dr. Stella Mofunanya, said the rate at which the school has grown is remarkable, explaining that the level of performance of the students continues to justify the decision of the college from inception.

Mofunanya recalled that following the challenges of last year's COVID-19 pandemic, the college did not only embark on online lectures in response to the pandemic but also designed and fabricated integrated sanitizer dispensing machines to fight the virus.

She was quick to add that the College Entrepreneurship Centre has been engaging all the students in various vocational training.

The Rector of Yaba College of Technology, Lagos, Mr

Obafemi Omokungbe, who gave the convocation lecture titled, "Raising champions for the next phase of technical innovation in Nigeria", said "people should change our orientation of seeing those

who attend technical colleges as dropouts", adding, "they are not. It is a chosen profession because there are carpenters and electricians who can earn more than a PhD holder".

Omokungbe therefore stressed the need for the government to fund technical education as well as revive the old technical colleges that have been abandoned for so long.



Former MD of Nigerian Breweries and Chairman, RECTEM Maiden Convocation Lecture, Felix Ohiwerei with the Rector of RECTEM, Dr Stella Mofunanya during the event

Mayowa Owolabi Consulting Commences Institutional Trading Course for Investors in Financial Market

The Institutional Trading Course which is a subset of the Mayowa Owolabi University has begun registration of yet another set of individuals interested in trading in the Financial Market (Forex, Cryptocurrency, Stocks etc).

The ongoing online registration aims to take applicants on a professional journey of hands-on experience and astute practicality on how top financial institutions trade.

The Institutional Trading Course is virtual and is being managed by Africa's most

sought-after financial market coach, serial entrepreneur and an alumnus of the prestigious Lagos Business School, Mayowa Owolabi, referred to by many as "The Authority" on System Trading.

Owolabi has also been honoured with the award of the "Best Independent Business Partner" by a top notch Silicon Valley Forex broker called Hot Forex in 2017.

With an extensive knowledge in trading in the financial market, Mayowa is determined to transmit his

trading mastery knowledge and best practices to interested individuals through the Institutional Trading Course.

The institution, which has embarked on its vision to train and raise Ten Thousand (10,000) millionaires in US Dollars, is bent on not just creating a course for individuals, but a community of traders who are willing to learn and earn together.

The course has been structured in a way that empowers applicants to trade with precision and dexterity.

In a session on what the course tends to offer to applicants, he said, "Everything in the financial market starts and ends with supply and demand which is the basis of institutional trading."

He said also any enquiry about the Institutional Trading Course, would be found on the website www.itctrading.info, adding that the Institutional Trading Course training has been designed with various preferential packages that suit diverse applicants.

Vatebra, UNDP Lead the Way With CEWERS Kaduna Launch

Tech Company, Vatebra Limited has teamed up with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Kaduna State Peace Commission (KSPC) in the deployment of the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System (CEWERS) solution, an innovative security-tech solution initiated by KSPC, sponsored by UNDP and developed by Vatebra Limited.

The CEWERS application allows people in conflict areas in Kaduna State to properly capture and channel feedbacks by enabling security monitoring groups and individual citizens to provide feedback on the progress of elections, security situation, and crisis within the state, both positive and negative, to assure timely counter-response by appropriate authorities to avert violence or conflicts.

The CEWERS application developed by Vatebra Limited will facilitate the gathering, analysis and visualisation of data with geo-tagging capabilities to represent the level and the weighting of the risks, conflicts, and responses.

It is an integrated web, mobile app and SMS based system that is compatible with Android devices and tablets, and can be downloadable through the play store.

Speaking at the launch of the CEWERS application; Kenneth Omale, a Key Business Manager at Vatebra

Limited gave an executive insight of CEWERS and its benefits; which includes: a holistic view of the incident map of Kaduna State, engage communities to report early, warning signals, initiate timely response to reported warning signals, control fake news spread, and generate data for informed decisions and policy making.

Furthermore, the Regional Head, Abuja Branch, Vatebra Limited, Elsie Njoku spoke about the CEWERS governance structure.

She explained that CEWERS will be an avenue for the general public who will pose as anonymous to escalate incidents. She gave insights on the roles of the various stakeholders in crisis reporting and management.

Participants at the launch included the Executive Governor of Kaduna State Mallam Nasir El-Rufai, Deputy Governor of Kaduna State Hadiza Balarabe, Vice Chairman, Kaduna State Peace Commission, Priscilla Ankut, representatives of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Embassy of Norway, Director Plateau State Peace Building Agency, Commissioner of Police, Kaduna State, Secretary to Kaduna State Government, representative of Civil Society Organisations, representative of traditional leaders and religious leaders.

Lord's Chosen International Crusade Begins Tomorrow

The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Church is set to hold its annual power packed international crusade tagged, "God Has Sworn to Bless You" beginning from tomorrow Saturday, July 31, to Sunday August 1, 2021 at The Chosen Revival Ground, Along Oshodi-Apapa Expressway, by Ijesha-Bus Stop, Lagos from 8am daily. The programme, which is interdenominational, the church said, is meant to address all the hues and cries occasioned by COVID 19 pandemic and its attendant economic, social and health upset, not overlooking the threat of insecurity in the country.

A press release signed by

the Public Relation Officer of the Church, Pastor Louis Chidi, noted: "Through the programme, God will assert the fact that He is still the Almighty God, Omniscience and custodian of blessings."

"Having seen our despondency, He took an oath to bless us through the programme. He knows there would be a time of public outcry and a time to intervene and deliver His people."

"He has time for everything, time to weigh the burden of His Children on the balance and time to relieve them from that burden."

Chidi in the statement, noted further that the present time is time for God to

bless His people and cause them to have unspeakable joy, adding, "It does not matter how frustrated the enemy has made you to be or the level of poverty you have been subjected to, what I can assure you is that God has sworn to bless you and nobody can reverse it. No amount of conspiracy can scuttle the blessing of God upon your life comes this programme".

The programme which will be presided over by the icon of revival evangelism, Pastor Lazarus Muoka, the release stated, will witness salvation, sanctification, Holy Ghost baptism, deliverances from spiritual limitation, demonic possession, barrenness of the

womb, intellectual and financial barrenness, to deliverance from physical challenges such as paralyses of all kinds, diseases, sicknesses, economic and political challenges.

Free transport arrangement has been made by the ministry to convey participants to the venue from any location within the Lagos metropolitan city.

Also given the pandemic challenges, the Church's task force on COVID-19 is standing by to ensure all the government protocols are observed during the programme.

Most importantly, provision has been made for a digitalised security measure that will address any breach of order.

BBNaija is Back, So is Celebrity Culture Rave

Vanessa Obioha writes that the new season of Big Brother Naija is already setting off a celebrity culture rave, a trait that has become very synonymous with the show

Big Brother Naija returned last weekend with two sizzling launch shows: Saturday for the male housemates and Sunday for the females. Expectedly, the show paraded an array of dashing and appealing housemates who will for the next two months battle for the grand prize of N90 million and the treasured crown of Big Brother Naija winner for the season.

Fans of the show have already settled for their favourites, campaigning aggressively on social media with hashtags, memes, and of course a fascinating name for their fan clubs. Previous seasons have seen outstanding fan club names. Cee-C's controversial antics during the 'Double Wahala' season led to the birth of the Spartans.

For the 2019 winner Mercy Eke, her fans were simply known as Mercenaries. In 2020, fans pitched their tents with either Laycon — who won the season — and Erica, and the outcome was the emergence of two of the fiercest fan clubs in BBNaija history: the Icons and the Elites.

The evolution of the show has undoubtedly influenced celebrity culture in Nigeria and impacted the nature of interactions on social media.

This parasocial relationship — a term for an individual's emotional relationship with a media personality, in this case, a TV reality character — helps build the celebrity stature of the contestants.

With the wide reach of Big Brother Naija, arguably Africa's biggest reality TV show because of the premium entertainment it provides for viewers across the continent, individuals looking to achieve celebrity status see the platform as a quicker route to fame.

A survey conducted by Plaqaad in 2019 found that Big Brother Naija is the most-watched show in Africa. Data from Keyhole and ID Africa showed that the show generated over 55 billion media impressions from July 19 to September 23, 2020, with the word 'BBNaija' appearing over 20 million times on Twitter alone.

In the 2017 edition of Big Brother Naija tagged 'See Gobe', over 170 million SMS votes were recorded in the course of the season. In 2019, the show polled over 240 million votes during the season, with 50 million of those



BBNaija housemates

votes in the final week alone. In 2020, that figure was almost quadrupled. The 'Lockdown' season attracted 900 million votes across all platforms.

With these figures, one can arguably say that

Big Brother Naija has made instant celebrities out of the participants. Former housemates enjoy substantial social media followings and leverage their popularity to make something for themselves.

A good number of the housemates from the show's inaugural season have gone on to have successful careers. A notable example is Ebuka Obi-Uchendu who currently hosts the show and is one of the biggest media personalities out of Africa and a style icon. The success stories of former housemates give young Nigerians the impetus to dream of becoming famous.

Yet, many are called, but only a few



BBNaija Diary Room

ever make it to the house; the main feature of the show where all the top-notch drama, excitement, banter and talking points take place.

Since production began in Nigeria in 2019, each season sees the house transformed. With the catchy theme 'Shine Ya Eye', the house is given an opulent and colourful look this season.

Now that the game has kicked off, the 22 housemates — Saga, Boma, Yerins, Liquorose, Arin, Emmanuel, JayPaul, Maria, WhiteMoney, Jackie B, Angel, Princess, Sammie, Cross, Niyi, Beatrice, Saskay, Peace, Nini, Yousef, Pere and Tega — will have to use their creativity to woo millions of viewers across the continent and the UK where viewers can watch the show via streaming service Showmax to vote for them.

Like the theme boldly indicates, they have to 'shine their eyes' and find out who the wildcards are by Sunday if they are to stay in the game because, at the end of the day, everyone is eyeing the coveted prize and BBNaija crown. But most importantly, getting that celebrity status.

For Esther, The Voice Nigeria S3 Winner, Hard Work Pays Off

Vanessa Obioha

At first, Esther Benyeogo, winner of the First Bank-sponsored music reality TV show The Voice Nigeria, had no intention to audition for the contest. Not that she wasn't interested but having participated in other competitions where she had equally won, the young songstress somehow felt at ease.

Then the calls began; everyone wanted her to be on the show. Friends, loved ones and family members sent the audition link to her and encouraged her to go for the competition. She would eventually give in.

"I just saw it as an opportunity to express myself and I also saw the platform as an avenue to spread the gospel," she said in a recent chat.

Indeed, Esther was known for her faith during the competition. There was hardly a time when she didn't attribute her performances to the Supreme One. Anytime she was asked how she felt after a performance, her answer was always "It is God." It was only a matter of time before fans began to laud her for taking the gospel to the stage.

Esther's journey into music started in the children's church. At age 13, she participated in her first music competition but didn't emerge the winner. However, while studying at the University



FirstBank CEO, Adesola Adeduntan and Esther

of Benin, she contested in a vocal competition and took home the crown. In 2017, Esther was crowned the winner of the talent hunt show God's Children Great Talent.

In all of these wins, only one thing stood out for Esther: feedback.

"It is how people tell me they connect with my singing, the emotions they feel. It's the highlight and gives me the most amazing feeling when I get all this feedback," she said.

She evoked similar reactions on the coaches when performed 'Rise Up' by Andra Day during

the blind auditions. The coaches were so loved by her rendition that they all turned their chairs for her. She ended up choosing Darey as her coach.

"Esther's performances are magical," said Darey in a chat. "When she sings, it's not for the show. It's just the way she makes you feel."

Throughout the season, her performances never wavered. She was always saved from elimination, even when the audience had the power to vote, Esther stayed on top. On YouTube, fans had watched some of her performances more than 100,000 times.

For the finale, she performed three songs. The first was a duet with her fellow team member KPee. The duo sang Nigerian female singer Simi's 'Duduke'. She would later perform American singer Josh Groban's 'You Raise Me Up' and English musician Adele's 'Hello'.

Reflecting on that moment before she was announced the winner of the season, Esther said that a lot was going through her mind.

"Moving from the blinds to knockouts to battles and the live shows, was enough tension, most especially at the live shows where your stay on the show was subject to the votes of the audience and fans. So, standing on that big stage already brought a lot of tension. When you consider the life-changing opportunity of becoming a winner, that is more tension than I have ever experienced. It was so much that I didn't even realise that my mouth was moving."

Though she has contested in other music competitions, none have been outstanding to her like The Voice Nigeria.

"It is the only competition that I know that even if you are not really up in your game, there were no negative comments about your attempts. Rather, the coaches give constructive criticism that pushes you to be better. It's amazing to see the

connection between the coaches and the talents which is really remarkable."

What is more remarkable to Esther is that First Bank supported the season and has pledged to do so in the next season.

"It's great to see so much support from a financial institution even during a period like this. First Bank's commitment to showcasing and supporting talents from Nigeria is very commendable."

Known for its commitment to foster the economic empowerment of thousands of people in the creative industry, First Bank's presence on the show was conspicuous. From the weekly inspirational quotes to the fans giveaways, the Bank showed that it was dedicated to providing financial stability to young creative persons with a passionate appetite for success.

While she is indebted to God for her success on the season, Esther is not ignorant of others' contributions. She is grateful for the training offered by coaches and considered each stage of the season memorable.

"From the training to the winning point has really shown that hard work pays off."

The 23-year-old walked home with a cash prize of N10 million, a recording contract with Universal Music Nigeria and a car.

NOWA President Charges Graduands to Work Harder to Succeed



National President, Naval Officers Wives Association (NOWA), Mrs. Aisha Gambo with the graduands



Mrs. Gambo and FOC Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Jason Gbassa

Chiamaka Ozulumba

The National President, Naval Officers Wives Association (NOWA), Mrs. Aisha Gambo, recently charged graduands of NOWA Nursery and Primary School, to work harder so they can succeed in their respective endeavours.

She gave this charge to the 115 graduands of NOWA Nursery and Primary School, Mobile Road, Apapa, just as she urged them to remain

focused in their studies. Also at the occasion was Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Western Naval Command, Rear Admiral Jason Gbassa, who alongside NOWA president donated several plastic chairs and tables, as well as a giant size photocopying machine to the school for use.

While 38 pupils graduated from kindergarten 2 to Nursery one, 40 pupils graduated from Nursery 2 to Primary 1 while 37 primary pupils graduated

to secondary school.

In her speech, Gambo urged the graduands to continue to work hard and be determined to succeed no matter what as more challenges were bound to come their way in secondary school. She said: “Our lovely babies proceeding to nursery sections and those that would be moving to primary classes, I trust that I will see you in your next class by September.

“Having conquered the challenges that came with each of

the stages, we are gathered here today to celebrate your achievement.

“I am sure that your parents who have believed in you through every phase of your academics for the past couple of years cannot be prouder.”

She said the academic performance and moral conduct of the pupils have been impressive and encouraging.

“I encourage parents to kindly continue to support us in the training and upbringing

of our future generation,” she added. Gambo applauded the efforts of all the teachers, saying that they all played a role in shaping the destiny of the children.

She specifically recognised Mrs Robert Rosemary and Mrs Adankó Rose (kindergarten 2 teachers), Mrs Otejiri Eunice and Miss Okezie Ngozi (Nursery 2 teachers) and Mrs Oyedoyin Titilayo and LED Isaac (Primary 5 teachers).

Also, the NOWA Parents,

Teachers Association (PTA) Chairman, Mr Musa Wakawa, urged the graduands to focus on building character and not just intelligence.

“Your character is your identity not your intelligence. You can memorise and comprehend encyclopaedias but without the right character your chances in life are limited. “With the right character there is no limit to what you can do, where you can go and who you can meet in the journey of life,” Wakawa said.

Actress, Oghenekaro Itene Delves into Charity with The Agnes Fikieme Foundation

Yinka Olatunbosun

Keeping up with her love for humanity, the US-based Nigerian Actress, Oghenekaro Itene is embarking on her charitable cause with her organisation, The Agnes Fikieme Foundation. The foundation is a non-profit organization with the aim of engaging in life-changing events and immeasurable community services.

The mission of the foundation is to enhance the standard of living in the community and increase its efficiency through advocacy, mentoring and creat-

ing access to basic necessities. According to Itene, the drive to create The Agnes Fikieme Foundation came during the time when Covid-19 was raging hard in the country. Out of her genuine care and love for those in this disadvantaged position, The Agnes Fikieme Foundation was birthed to reduce homelessness and hopelessness in the community. Also, her late mother whom she named the foundation after was a very charitable person and one who was always concerned about the livelihood of everyone around her and in her

community, hence, the need to keep her legacy on.

“When the lockdown started, the first people I thought of was the homeless folks. In my heart, I had wondered how they will survive cos this is a time we all needed to stay home, stay safe. No home for the homeless. I wept for them and prayed for direction and discernment. And I got an answer, “The Agnes Fikieme Foundation”.

The foundation was named after her mother because when she was alive, she helped strangers, the homeless and devoted time towards building

businesses for many women and men. “She was awarding scholarships to those that wanted to be educated but had no means to fulfill that dream. I want to continue the work she did while she was here. The Agnes Fikieme Foundation is aimed at reducing homelessness, educating and empowering girls. Every homeless person has a story. We want to hear it and see what can be done to help the situation. Our vision is to have a future where everyone have equal access to a resourceful and sustainable society,” she said.

Softcom Rolls Out New Products to Empower African Entrepreneurs

Vanessa Obioha

With its mission to continually accelerate inclusion and growth for African entrepreneurs and businesses through ingenious tech products, innovation and technology company, Softcom Limited, recently held a pre launch event themed ‘Unveiling X’, to announce its array of new products which is now available.

The event which was held at Softcom’s headquarters in Ikeja GRA assembled entrepreneurs and influencers from different sectors that cut across tech, fashion, beauty, lifestyle, food, and retail, to deliver an in-depth lecture on the purpose, functionality, benefits of the products, and how it will improve transactions and evaluate progress easily.

In an onboarding session on the company’s rise in the tech landscape, the CEO of Softcom, Yomi Adedeji, elaborated on the company’s earliest innovative phases since its inception in 2007, and the subsequent growth it achieved amid crushing challenges it faced. He ended the lecture by explaining the purpose and ideologies that inspired the company to design and build solutions to enable growth for entrepreneurs in Africa.

The company’s Chief Operating Officer, Seindemi Olobayo in a highly engaging discussion session, said that

the company has a reputation for solving complex business problems. “X represents answers to the problems of entrepreneurs on all growth levels and our steps in empowering them with an ecosystem of tools to succeed and reach their full potential.”

He continued: “When you have the tools that you need, you can identify people better, you can sell better, you have an account of your money. In a lot of cases, it is just being able to understand how to combine different elements. In the innovating process, we built around critically looking into our journey and carrying out extensive researches to properly reflect it on businesses to figure out when to start, stop, or continue a particular process with these products”

Furthermore, the company says its products will enable people and businesses to address the need to exchange value and data collation on consumer behaviours.

Executive Secretary of the MTN Foundation, Nonny Ugboma expressed confidence in the company’s ambitious moves.

“Watching them grow over the years as a team of young brilliant people, I have just been in awe. I believe that X is just going to be something else, I am fully on board with them because I know they are dreamers and thinkers.”

Schneider Electric Proposes Digital Solutions to Maximise Value Creation, Sustainability

Chiamaka Ozulumba

Schneider Electric has identified five key areas that can help energy companies to maximise value creation, profitability and sustainability through digital transformation.

The areas identified are Process Optimisation; Digital Planning & Operations; Digital Workforce Knowledge Capture & Retention; Improved Safety & Regulatory Compliance; and Digital Asset Performance.

General Manager Sub-Saharan Africa for Schneider Electric Process Automation, Mr. Ajibola Akindele, stated this at the just concluded 2021

Nigeria Oil & Gas Conference and Exhibition, which held in Abuja with the theme, “Fortifying the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry for Economic Stability and Growth”.

In his presentation titled “Driving Operational Profitability Through Digital Transformation”, Akindele stated that the current market dynamics have increased the need to improve operational efficiency at Oil & Gas companies.

Other challenges including an aging workforce, and the need for upstream producers seeking to produce crude safely and economically, amid increasing environmental pressures,

and security threats; are driving the need to innovate with digital solutions.

With all these challenges, he said that the primary concern of most operating companies is to ensure safe, reliable, and compliant operations - while managing energy costs and other operational costs.

He noted that producers in the upstream market, pipeline operators in the midstream market and refineries in the downstream market can make the right technology investments, while maintaining global competitiveness through digital transformation.

He averred that digital

transformation is an enabler; which makes design, commissioning, and implementation easier across the entire asset lifecycle, while improving productivity and operations across the digital value chain.

Akindele enjoined oil & gas companies to start small in their strategy and adoption; but start now to maintain and improve their competitive market and industry position, adding that digital transformation is part of an ongoing journey involving the collaboration of people, processes, and assets through digital technology and it should be done in phases rather than all at once.

THISDAY

ART WEEKEND...For pure art enthusiasts

Ighiwiyisi Jacob Ignites Lagos with Debut Solo Exhibition

From being an interior designer to shouldering the responsibility of being the daughter of the legendary artist, Erhabor Emokpae, the co-founder of the Gallery at the Landmark, Ighiwiyisi Jacobs makes a debut on the Lagos visual art scene with her solo show. **Yinka Olatunbosun** reports

Ighiwiyisi Jacobs is many things to many people: a great speaker, lawyer by training, writer and entrepreneur. But not everyone could have thought of her as an artist some years ago. An emerging visual and spatial artist, she is the creative director of Hermosa Boda, a spatial design service that has run successfully since 2015. A graduate of Law at the University of Lagos, she began her journey in visual arts as a child surrounded by the art of her father, Erhabor Emokpae, the visual flair of her mother, Ikpakpa Emokpae and her brother Isaac Emokpae, himself a well-established artist and confidante for her.

Apart from being the Creative Director of a custom production design company, she enjoys shopping. Once, she was submerged in surround merchandising at a shopping mall for hours. She was curious as to how she lost the sense of time and then discovered that the visually-appetizing art designs for the window displays could have been the reason. Hence, she developed a keen interest in window merchandising. Part of her work had been to build a production set design in lieu of the usual balloon-themed backdrops at parties.

Her name-Ighiwiyisi bears a burden of history tied to her late father. The name was given to her by her father at about a period when he travelled away from Nigeria.

"Ighiwiyisi means I will not be lost in a strange land," she said as she explained why that was the select title for her debut show.

The show is a personal journey for this budding artist whose father is regarded as one of the pioneers of modern arts in Nigeria.

"There are many moments of my life captured on canvas. The idea is to find specific things that are common to humanity. Everyone understands grief, heartbreak, promises and prophecies," she continued.

Her father died a year after she was born. Fast-forward to August 8, 2018 which became



Ighiwiyisi at work

her eureka moment, she recalled how she began to make drawings that she ordinarily would have paid an artist to make.

"We were fully booked and there was no one to do the artwork. I needed to put the design down for the production. I sat down to sketch. On that day, I sat down at the table and I was just drawing. I didn't want to miss that moment. This is why the exhibition will open on August 8. I call it an impartation. I don't see myself as an artist but as a channel-God draws through me," she said.

With eight works on panel and four

works on canvas, she explores impasto and expressionism amongst others. With emphasis on female portraits, art is her long-awaited catharsis.

"I want people to see themselves and appreciate the journey. I want people to use my journey to appreciate theirs. We want people who are almost giving up on life to see that it gets better. You can be gifted and be mediocre. You must treat that gift properly apply yourself to it daily. If you are gifted and you put in dedication, there's no telling where you'd go," she added.

Nigeria-Norway Co-production 'The Lost Café' Comes to Netflix

Yinka Olatunbosun

On Saturday 31 July, Netflix will release *The Lost Café*, a film directed by Kenneth Gyang and produced by Regina Udalor. A Nigeria and Norway co-production, *The Lost Café* is an intensely realist depiction of the struggles faced by Nigerian immigrants—as filtered through the experiences of a young woman.

Udalor makes her Netflix debut with the film, starring Tunde Aladese and the Norwegian actor Anders Lidin Hansen alongside Terje Bruun Lien and Nigerian actor Omatta Udalor.

While reflecting on the production, Udalor said she hopes it is the start of more collaborations between Nigeria and the European country as both countries can learn from each other.

"As a resident of Norway for over a half decade, I have observed several similarities between Norway and Nigeria; many differences, too. And I think there are things Norway can learn from Nigeria and vice versa. *The Lost Café* is our way of bridging the gap that currently exists between both countries," Udalor said.

While Udalor is optimistic about the film attracting audiences in both producing countries, filming for *The Lost Café* was hardly smooth. The Nigeria-based crew hit a snag when they had their visas refused by the European authorities, leading to an improvisation that saw Udalor recruit local personnel to shoot the film's Norway scenes.

"It was a difficult process that required us to think up solutions to problems we likely would not have had if we had filmed in one country," she said. "We are thankful that we could get it done and now the film can be seen by anyone with a Netflix account."

The film follows a Nigerian graduate student who has come to Norway to study to become a film director. Overwhelmed by loneliness in the new country, she begins to visit a café where she finds and befriends a nice elderly man who serves her coffee but may be hiding a secret. He becomes her confidant—but it is not long before she must confront her own fears and the secret held by her new friend.

The Lost Café is Gyang's third film on the American streaming platform and comes after his widely seen and highly acclaimed film, *Oloture*, which was released as a Netflix Original in 2020. According to Nollywood insiders, Gyang is currently involved in an unnamed project, which might also surface on Netflix.

For her part, Udalor is working on the *Golden Brush* show, a reality TV project featuring make-up artists selected from across Nigeria. "We will announce the show when we are through with one or two touches," she said. "For now, we are focused on *The Lost Café*, which every lover of film—and anyone contemplating immigration—should definitely see."



The movie poster for 'The Lost Café'

hFACTOR Unveils Earth-shaking Docu-film on Evictions for Development Industry

Yinka Olatunbosun

hFACTOR in partnership with Heinrich Boll Stiftung is set to screen an earth-shaking documentary film in Lagos. The docu-film is centred on the social impact of evictions with a view to question whether the developmental goals behind demolitions and evictions are indeed in the interest of the public.

Titled, "Dispossess: Evictions for Development?" the documentary reveals how Lagos state government, in its bid to build a mega-city had executed major evictions of people from their homes and places of work to make room for such developmental projects. On Friday July 30, the exhibition hall of the National Museum, Onikan will be populated by stakeholders drawn from the real estate developers, Lagos State government, traders' associations, advocates and journalists as there would be conversations after the film exhibition. For over ten years, market places and informal settlements in Lagos had been demolished and replaced with real estate or ultra-modern market structures that are hard to attract traders and customers.

To this end, a presentation titled "Four Myths on the Lagos Land and Real Estate Market will feature an Associate Professor of Urban Planning, University of Lagos, Dr. Taibat Lawanson as well as the Founder and Director of research and policy at Spaces for Change, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri. In addition, a panelist session will discuss the concept of



A view of Badia-east Demolition Exercise

development in the context of economics and public interest. The movement artist, Hermes Iyele, who featured in the documentary would also stage a performance on the abuse of public and private landownership after the screening.

"It is going to be an on-going campaign. We have a one-year agenda," the legal officer, hFACTOR, Dolapo Osunsina said. She further remarked that the real estate development in Lagos is tilted towards the elite. "It is not about how do we generate social values. A lot of people don't have access to these infrastructures. How do we ensure that the private and public sectors are working together to ensure that social values are generated? In developing these structures, government have to complement what is on ground. It is about consulting the

residents, the users and letting them have a say in developmental matters."

The Space Manager, hFACTOR, Tushar Hathiramani noted that creative thinking is necessary in the process of real estate development that matches the needs of the people. Citing the crisis of land as an example, he said one of the objectives of setting up hFACTOR is the artistic transformation of unused public spaces and engage local communities. hFACTOR is a collective made up of Tushar Hathiramani, Dolapo, Bubu Ogisi and Osione who collaborate with people everywhere to uncover creative possibilities from under-utilised physical and conceptual spaces. The collective is concerned with issues such as youth empowerment, employability, education programme and FRAT, that is a biennial art incubator programme and festival.

Prodigy of Dayo Akinbode, an iPhone Photographer

With no formal education or training in photography, popular marathoner and cyclist, Dayo Akinbode, who recently held a three-day ‘Colours and Flavours’ photo exhibition in Lagos State, spoke to **Sunday Ehigiator** on what led to her sojourn in photography, even so with a mobile device

What else should we know about you?
I am 54 years old. I am not a professional photographer. I was trained to be an engineer, then along the line I became a Chartered Accountant, and then along the line I studied supply chain. So, I had no formal training in the act of photography

How did you become interested in photography?
I think it has always been in me but it didn't come out until I started to travel. And after I retired, I was no longer in the rat race. When I came out of the rat race, I was able to stop, smell the coffee, smell the roses, admire my environment, and see the beauty in the whole world.

There is beauty in the whole world, but then in other places, I see beauty and the way it's embraced. But this beauty isn't as good as the one back in my country. So I decided to start capturing and documenting the beauty in Lagos.
Because when people talk about Lagos, what comes to mind is traffic, heap of rubbish, fraudsters, and that's what few of them would tell you. However, every city has the good, the bad and the ugly.
So I said to myself, I'm a proud Nigerian. Let the CNN's and the BBC's talk about the bad and the ugly if they want to, I am going to showcase the good of my city. That's why I started documenting this and sharing.
Some people then saw my work and said no, you can't keep this to your phone just for yourself, you need to show the world especially Lagosians, so they see the beauty in their city and appreciate their city better.

How long have you been into this?
Since COVID-19 Pandemic struck; I have traveled a lot. In a whole year, I hardly spend up to 30 days in Nigeria. But when COVID came, I couldn't go anywhere.
And being that I love to turn lemon into lemonade, I decided to put myself together and see what I can do, and that was how it began.

What has been the reaction to your works from the exhibition?
I'm even surprised because I did not expect the kind of reaction or feedback I'm getting. When I sit with people and show them pictures on my phone, they are always amazed and short of words. They say they never knew those places were these beautiful.
So this kind of feedback makes me go out more to take more pictures and want to show the world.

Why photography with a phone?
Actually, I have all the big cameras that you can ever think of. But these cameras are heavy. And my pictures are mostly unaware pictures. They are candid.
I am a marathoner and cyclist, so while running or cycling and something catches my attention, I stop and record it.
Even this morning, I was running through a dirty drainage and I saw these little flowers growing inside the dirty pond, I stopped and took the shot. And I titled that, Beauty in the Gutters.
You can't carry those heavy cameras everywhere, but I go everywhere with my phone. So the phone is easily conveyed without anyone noticing you snapping unlike the big cameras. So that's what gave birth to the idea.

How fulfilling has this been for you?
I believe in God and I don't believe in coincidence. I believe that you have a part, and even though you have rigmaroled and gone, you will eventually come back to your path.
So I believe I have been out of my part for 50 years with good pay. This doesn't give me money, but it gives me fulfillment and gives me satisfaction.
It makes me feel, finally, I am pursuing what makes me feel fulfilled. Yesterday we had a group of trained photographers who came here to see my work, and they told me that they want to learn from me.
But I told them, you have nothing to learn from me because I didn't learn anything and don't have anything to give you. So it makes



Dayo Akinbode standing by some of the works she did with her iPhone

There is beauty in the whole world, but then in other places, I see beauty and the way it's embraced. But this beauty isn't as good as the one back in my country. So I decided to start capturing and documenting the beauty in Lagos.

me see myself in a different light.

What is so attached with water that is common with most of your works?
Beaches are my favorite places. Anywhere I am in any part of the world, I wake up in the morning, and I ask where the closest river or ocean is. I even know the smell without even asking. And I can trace it. I am very adventurous. So I walk towards where the water is and finally stumble on it.

And if I get to a place the first thing I'm asking is, when sunrise is, and what time is sunset, because it differs from place to place, seasons to seasons. Even in Nigeria, it changes.
So my normal routine is, I wake up in the morning, go to the beach which is about 1.5km from where I stay. I want to get there just before the sunrise. I also target the blue hour which is just before the sunrise, and just after sunset.

It's only a 15 minutes window within the sunrise or sunset. If you miss it, you have to wait for another day. So I love the water, I love the sound of the waves, so I can just sit there and listen to the sound of the waves.

How do you feel when Nigerians fail to see the beauty in their country?
It makes me feel very upset, because God has really blessed us with a lot of things. Good weather, beautiful landscapes, and flowers etc. Just peep through this window. It annoys me when you ask a youth what's next, and his next thought is how to leave the country.
You see, that place you want to go, the people embraced what they had, nurtured it and made it what it is today. We have what it takes. We cannot wait for the government.
Everyone in your own little corner, do something that you can do. Little drops of water eventually make a mighty ocean.
I don't wait for the government. In my little space, I do what I can and try to showcase the good side of my country. So I would encourage youth to take a clue from this as well, and together, let's make Nigeria great again.

Engineer Turned Marketer Becomes Chancellor of University of the West Scotland

Renown for strategy, sales and marketing, with a background in engineering, the Co-founder and Executive Director, Doqaru Limited, an Aberdeen-based sales and marketing consultancy, Yekemi Otaru is on the next flight to greater heights with her appointment as the new Chancellor-elect of the University of West Scotland. **Yinka Olatunbosun** writes

The announcement of Yekemi Otaru as the Chancellor-elect of the University of Scotland was received with so much excitement by Nigerians across the globe. Otaru is expected to take up the role on September 1, succeeding Dame Elish Angiolini. Described as a “tireless passionate supporter of women in business,” the Nigerian-British entrepreneur has been a trailblazer in innovative business marketing practice. The first of three children of Dr Raphael and Mrs Sarah Awoseyin of Ayedun in Oke-Ero Local Government Area of Kwara State, her younger siblings are Mrs Adenike Onyia, a geologist and educationist based in the UK and Raphael Segun Awoseyin, a software professional based in France.

Named of 40 under 40 business innovators by Scottish Business News in 2016, Otaru is a B2B Marketer with a strategic focus. She works with start-ups, SMEs and large corporate organisations in the Software, IT, Engineering, Business Support, Recruitment and Oil & Gas sectors. She ran her first marketing consultancy company, YO! Marketing, for nearly three years and served over 20 clients before launching Doqaru Limited, the product of a merger in November 2018.

Otaru had always had a knack for creativity. Weaned on poetry and prose, she was encouraged to study engineering by her parents. She obtained her first of four degrees in Chemical Engineering, worked in an oil and gas company as a petroleum engineer while she was still trying to figure out what she really wanted to become. She got curious as to why people sell certain products to certain customers. She was an atypical engineer- extroverted and creatively-inclined. Many engineers thought she was different, if not annoying. Fortunately for her, she had very accommodating managers who allowed her to explore other areas of business. That was the birth of her passion for marketing. With that background in engineering, she approaching marketing with technical knowledge and an analytical mind. In time, she developed her expertise around marketing.

“I was always looking for new ways of doing things,” she said in a televised interview. “I was interested in designs. I am a communicator and I had always written. I don’t think I would have got that opportunity anywhere else.”

Nonetheless, that transition was a very difficult for her but equipped with an MBA (distinction) with a specialty in change management and marketing in a high tech company. She deployed her data-driven tools into sales and marketing consultancy. Otaru is on the board at Interface, a public sector backed establishment helping Scottish businesses work more closely with academic institutions to drive innovative projects. She has over 14 years of experience in petroleum engineering, technical sales and strategic marketing roles.

Having previously worked for Schlumberger, GE Oil & Gas and Lloyd’s Register with an added panache of MSc (Distinction) in Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, Otaru is also a best-selling author on social networks. She is passionate about supporting girls in STEM, mentoring business owners in the poorest countries, photography and creative writing. She is interested in mentoring women with a technical background who want to develop business and commercial acumen as part of their career progression plan.

One of the challenges for her back then as an engineer was that she didn’t see a role model- a formidable female engineer at the helm of innovative solutions or anything within that perimeter. But today, her career progression has been inspirational for many women professionals, especially the younger generation.

As chancellor, she will hold formal powers to confer degrees, diplomas and other academic distinctions, and will represent UWS at key events as an advocate and dignitary.

She said: “I am honoured to have been appointed chancellor-elect of University of



Otaru

I am honoured to have been appointed chancellor-elect of University of the West of Scotland, following in the footsteps of a remarkable individual in Dame Elish Angiolini...I eagerly look forward to being part of the university, as it continues to carry out world-class research and knowledge transfer initiatives such as in the areas of healthcare and sports science

the West of Scotland, following in the footsteps of a remarkable individual in Dame Elish Angiolini.

“We are all living through challenging times, and higher education plays a vital role in society and for our economy.

I eagerly look forward to being part of the university, as it continues to carry out world-class research and knowledge transfer initiatives such as in the areas of healthcare and sports science.”

Professor Craig Mahoney, principal and vice-chancellor at UWS, added: “Yekemi’s values very much align with those of UWS, from her passion for advancing equality, diversity and inclusion to her commitment to enterprise, and her appointment is reflective of our strategic mission to make a positive difference to wider society.

“Yekemi is a remarkable example of entrepreneurship and a tremendous role model for our students and wider university community. I am delighted to welcome her to the UWS family.

“I would also like to pay tribute to Dame Elish Angiolini, who has been an outstanding chancellor and ambassador for the university. I am deeply grateful for the committed and inspirational role she has played in our UWS community.”

Celebrating Emmanuel Udom

Peter Adobamen

He was born into the family of Mr. Gabriel Emmanuel Nkenang, a native of Awa Iman in Onna Local Government, on Monday, July 11, 1966. Mr. Gabriel Emmanuel Udom, the 4th democratically elected Governor of Akwa Ibom State had his secondary school education in Secondary Commercial School, Ikot Akpan Ishiet, Onna LGA of Akwa Ibom State, from where he obtained his West African Examination Council’s Certificate (WAEC). From there, he went on to attend the School of Arts and Science, Uyo, where he received his Advanced Certificate of Basic Studies (CBS) and a Higher School Certificate (HSC). He thereafter proceeded to University of Lagos, Nigeria, for his tertiary education, where he obtained his Bachelor’s degree in Accounting, in 1988, with a Second Class Upper Honours. Going forward, he obtained his advanced management program from Institut Europeen d’Administration Des Affaires (INSEAD) in Fontainebleau, France, and a Master’s Degree in Corporate Governance from Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom.

In the 1990s’, Mr Udom worked in Price Water House Coopers, a multinational professional services network of firms, where he served as an audit manager, before proceeding to work with the then Diamond Bank Plc, now Access Bank Plc. At the age of 30, from Diamond Bank, he moved Zenith Bank in 1996, being the pioneer manager of its Lagos Central Branch. In the 17 years Governor Udom worked in the Bank, he occupied the post of Non-Executive Director in Zenith Bank Sierra Leone, The Gambia and United Kingdom. He held the same post in other sister companies of the bank such as Zenith Pension & Custodian, Zenith Trustees, Zenith Insurance, Zenith Registrars and Zenith Securities.

Governor Udom was thereafter elevated to the post of Executive Director. His job description entailed direct supervision of Foreign Subsidiaries of Zenith Bank, overseeing Infrastructure and Power Sector, Corporate Financial Advisory Services and Control. It also included Business Development, International Investors’ Relations, Oil & Gas Sector, Corporate Strategy and Planning, Multilaterals, Conglomerates and Private Banking (MCP) as well as the Telecommunications sector.

In 2013, he journeyed into the world of politics, when he was appointed Secretary to the State Government, by former Governor and former Senate Minority Leader, Mr. Godswill Akpabio, who is the current Minister of Niger Delta Affairs. Following the gubernatorial primaries held in December 2014 where he defeated 22 other governorship aspirants, Governor Udom was elected overwhelmingly into office on April 11, 2015, with a total of 999,071 votes, defeating APC’s candidate Umana Okon Umana who scored 89,865 votes. He repeated the same victorious feat in 2019 when he was elected for a second term.

His first tenure was anchored on a 5 point agenda. His areas of focus were Wealth Creation, Economic and Political Inclusion, Poverty Alleviation, Infrastructural Consolidation and Expansion, as well as Job Creation. In his interview with Business Day News Editor, Osa Victor Obayagbona, His Excellency rated himself highly in the implementation of his 5 point agenda. He said” I think given the dire economic circumstance that welcomed us in our first term, given the depression we had experienced, the fluctuating rate of the naira against other foreign currencies, the dip in oil prices which affected our allocations, that we were able to achieve as much as we did... I think without sounding boastful, I will score us 85%”.

In the agricultural sector alone, some notable achievements of the Udom Emmanuel led administration, include Establishment of large hybrid rubber nursery at Ebighi Anwa, Okobo L.G.A in partnership with Rubber Research Institute of Nigeria, for distribution to rubber farmers at highly subsidized rates; the refurbishing of Cassava Processing Factories at Ikot Okudom, Eket L.G.A; Nung Udoe, Ibesikpo/Asutan LGA and Ikot Ekang in Abak L.G.A and leasing to private operators for the production of high quality garri, odourless fufu and cassava flour; Procurement and distribution of 30,000 Hybrid Plantain Suckers to 700 farmers as well as Installation of Maize Preservation/Shelling Machine at Nung Udoe. Establishment of demonstration plots on various agricultural technologies for transfer of improved technologies to farmers through Akwa Ibom Agricultural Development Programme (AKADEP); Planting of 500 citrus seedlings, 600 hybrid plantain suckers and 1,000 pineapple suckers at the Horticulture Garden in Uyo LGA amongst others.



Governor Emmanuel Udom

It is our earnest belief that at the end of the budget year, the state will have moved very close to actualising the dreams and aspirations of this administration, which is to transform this state from a ‘civil service’ state to an industrialised one

In furtherance of entrepreneurship development, the Udom led administration undertook the construction of Akwa Ibom Traders ultra-modern market, Mbak Ikot Oku, with 25,000 shops, a Bank, Clinic, Fire and Police Stations, and trained 200 Akwa Ibom youths trained on solar panel installation/maintenance. It also provided over N2,000,000,000 interest free loan for small scale entrepreneurs and traders.

As regards infrastructural consolidation and expansion, the Emmanuel Udom administration has delivered on its promises. Some of the completed projects include the dualization of the 19.5km Eket – Ibeno Road, 12.742 km Awa Iman – Asong – Ikot Edim – Ikot Emem road with 2No Bridges in Onna and Mkpat Enin Local Government Areas, Emergency Rehabilitation of Okopedi Road By Community Health Centre through Oti – Oron in Okobo Local Government Area, Construction Of Gully Erosion Control Facilities at Oron/Isangedighi Road. Other completed projects include the 6.1km Atan Offot Road in Uyo Local Government Area, the 5.1km Internal Roads in Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa, as well as the 4.6km School of Arts and Science Road, Nung Ukim, Ikono Local Government Area.

In his second term, the agenda of Governor Udom was anchored on 8 points: Industrialization, Aviation Development, Rural and Riverine Area Development, Agriculture, Human Capacity Development, Security, Infrastructure, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. In terms of industrialization, the drive of Governor Udom is fueled by his desire to transform the state from a civil

service state to a fully industrialized state. While presenting the 2021 budget tagged the ‘Budget of Economic Reconstruction’, His Excellency stated that “It is our earnest belief that at the end of the budget year, the state will have moved very close to actualizing the dreams and aspirations of this administration, which is to transform this state from a ‘civil service’ state to an industrialized one”.

Two projects that stand out are Jubilee Syringe Manufacturing Company and Metering Solutions Manufacturing Services Limited. With a production capacity of 350 million, the Jubilee Syringe Manufacturing Company is the largest syringe company in the entire Africa. The company which is located in Awa, Onna Local Government Area, was established in 2017, for the purpose of producing disposable syringes of different sizes, 2mL, 5mL, 10mL. It should be noted that the syringes are made from the best quality raw materials. Little wonder that the company, just recently, bagged the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) certification for quality, having conformed with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 13485:2016, International Standards. Located also in Awa, Onna Local Government Area, is the wholly-owned indigenous company, Metering Solutions Manufacturing Services Limited, whose goal is to meet the metering needs of Nigeria. Working one shift, the company currently has the capacity to produce 1,200,000 electricity metres annually. Its capacity will increase to 3,600,000 electricity metres annually if the production shift is increased to two

shifts. As a result of its high quality, there is so much demand for its electricity metres, which it supplies to Eko, Kano and Port Harcourt Electricity Distribution Companies. Furthermore, the company exports its metres to The Gambia and Liberia. The company is exploring exports to Niger Republic and Zambia. The establishment of these companies will inevitably lead to the creation of more jobs, and positively impact the health and power sector.

In terms of aviation, Akwa Ibom is the only state in Nigeria with an airline company, Ibom Air. Commencing operations in 2019, Ibom Air currently has a fleet of seven bombardiers CRJ 900 aircraft, and currently covers 6 destinations (Uyo, Lagos, Abuja, Calabar, Port Harcourt and Enugu). The airline which has an unmatched record of schedule reliability and on-time departure, has employed Akwa Ibomites not just in low and entry level to senior positions, but in the very highly skilled aviation professions of Piloting, Cabin Crew and Aircraft Maintenance Engineering, numbering over 200. According to Aniekan Essienette, Group Manager, Marketing and Communications of the Airline, Ibom Air’s direct and indirect impact on Akwa Ibom’s livelihood and businesses amounted to over one billion naira, just in its first year of operation. No doubt, Ibom Air has come to stay, and its contribution to the industrialization of the state cannot be overlooked. His Excellency has also made great in the health sector, education sector, sports sector, among others, too numerous to be listed in this article.

Governor Udom is a Christian and serving Deacon the United Evangelical Church (QIC) (formerly known as Qua Iboe Church). He is happily married to his beautiful wife, Her Excellency, Mrs. Martha Udom Emmanuel, whose pet Project is Family Empowerment and Youth Reorientation Programme (FEYReP). Some of the objectives of the initiative include empowering women to provide economic and emotional support to their families, advocacy for the prevention of teenage pregnancies, education for the girl child, promotion of moral values and economic excellence, as well as providing support to government efforts towards sustainable development. Their union is blessed with four children.

•Adobamen wrote in from Lagos.

Overland Champions Call for Investment in Dominican Republic

Precious Ugwuzor

For those interested in investing in real estate or own homes abroad, Managing Director of Overland Investment Properties Ltd, Adebiyi Modile, has revealed that investing in the Dominican Republic is attractive because it guarantees higher returns.

He spoke in Lagos at a real estate breakfast meeting on "how to own a residential home and investment properties in

the Dominican Republic".

Overland Properties is in partnership with Punta Cana DineCaribe Realty, a property firm in the Dominican Republic, and Aftermath Solicitors, a Lagos law firm.

On the benefits of investing in the Caribbean country, Modile said: "If you buy a four-bedroom duplex in Lekki for instance, it will cost you about N250million and the return on investment for a rental is N7million annually.

That means you're making less than \$10,000 for an investment of N250million.

"With N250million, you can buy almost five properties in Punta Cana, and the return on each property there is \$10,000 annually after tax. Where would you rather invest in?"

Principal Partner of Aftermath Solicitors, Mr Tunde Koya, said there are real estate investment opportunities in the Caribbean country of the Dominican Republic that Ni-

gerians can take advantage of.

He said: "These opportunities offer freehold titles with secure and guaranteed returns of investment. Moreso, because it offers great tourism potential, this offers a huge attraction for investors from across the globe.

"The Caribbean nation also offers good tax incentives not only for real estate investment but for potential corporate bodies who wish to give their business a global flavour.

"The option of a dual citizen-

ship opportunity is a possible advantage open to individuals who meet certain investment criteria as prescribed by the government as incentives to credible investors and investments in the Dominican Republic."

A representative of Punta Cana DC, Mr Liemier Laba, said Dominican Republic has direct flights from 26 major countries, while the major currencies of the world are accepted there "If you buy a property in the

Dominican Republic, you own it forever. The annual property tax is one per cent. In 15 to 20 days you will have a title of ownership of the property," Laba said.

A property developer in the Dominican Republic, Mr Isaac Funis, said the country offers something different.

He said: "Nigerians traditionally like to invest in US, UK and Dubai. We want to present to them something a little bit different and new.

TigerWit Africa Trains 840 Nigerians in Financial Market in PH

Rebecca Ejifoma

Determined to bridge the knowledge gap in financial market, a brokerage firm that offers Forex, TigerWit Africa, has successfully trained over 840 Nigerians in a two-week workshop in Port-Harcourt, the Rivers State capital.

The two weeks training, facilitated by the Head of Education, TigerWit Africa, Mr. Davies Babalola and his team through the TigerWit Academy, was to save Nigerians from losing income in this time of bleeding economy and global pandemic.

In an interview with THISDAY, Babalola said TigerWit Academy has been passionate about helping people after it noticed a knowledge gap in the industry.

"A lot of people lose money blindly which is unnecessary. If we can help them trade longer, we can be guaranteed a sustained client-base in the long run, a win-win situation," he added.

According to the head of education, one good thing is in times like this, COVID-19 has taught "us that you can't depend on one source of income; you need a source of income that is not dependent on the economy of your nation".

The forex expert also bemoaned how naira is degrading while conceding that "we are in a very tough situation. That naira is degrading doesn't mean the whole world is also.

"So can we take advantage of technology? COVID-19 taught us that what if the whole world



Cross section of participants during the workshop in Port-Harcourt, Rivers State recently

is on lockdown everybody can't go out how do you make money and feed?"

During the heat of the chaotic lockdown, Babalola confirmed that Forex trading had the largest Google search keywords. "Search like Forex trading online business, home trading,

digital marketing. That was what everybody was doing."

He, however, listed some advantages of the forex business. "You don't have any overhead. The only thing you need is to set up an account with your broker, then put in 100 or 200 dollars."

To begin the business, the expert said one needs a laptop, mobile phone you use for WhatsApp, and must be above 18. "We have been able to channel them to alternate way of making income with no risk of entry, no barrier, no unnecessary overhead, no staff

payment," hinting that some of them are even doing much better than what banks can give them in a year.

In his views, it is known that the interest rates on fixed deposits from banks are not enticing enough. "That is not so in Forex; you become profitable from the start."

"However, we dissuaded beginners from going for big profits. Two, three or five per cent on a monthly basis is okay for you, not going for 20 or 30 per cent. Let it compound for six months or one year, you will see a whole game change."

With half of the total participants as female, the head of education described women as very enterprising. Others included retirees, pensioners, and students.

Gov Obaseki's Wife Organises State Wedding Reception for Stranded Couple

Adibe Emenyonu in Benin City

Wife of Edo State Governor, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki, recently organised a wedding party for Mr. and Mrs. Abel Eromosele Ugiagbe, the couple whose marriage ceremony was disrupted by the absence of the Registrar of the Federal Marriage Registry, in the state capital, Benin City

The wedding reception which held at the New Festival Hall of the Edo State Government House, had in attendance, the Wife of the Deputy Governor of Edo State, Her Excellency Maryann Shaibu; wife of the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, PDP Party chieftains among others.

The Edo First Lady, in her remarks explained that her decision to host the event for the couple was borne out of the desire to soothe the pain they experienced, following



L-R: Wife of Edo State Governor, Mrs. Betsy Obaseki; the couple, Mr. Abel Ugiagbe and Mrs. Mariam Ugiagbe at the wedding reception at the new Government Festival Hall, Benin City

the disappointment on their wedding day.

She added that the compassionate nature of Mr. Abel Eromosele Ugiagbe, as expressed through his regret of the Registrar's compulsory retirement, endeared her to the couple. "After I confirmed

the report as true, I called my friend and wife of the Minister for Interior, Mrs. Aregbesola who briefed her husband about the development. The minister ordered immediate investigation into the matter, recalled the errant officer and apologised to the couple."

Chairman of the occasion and Chief of Staff to Edo State Governor, Honorable Osaigbovo Iyoha, congratulated the couple on the success of their marriage ceremony despite the disappointment they experienced over the inexcusable absence of the Registrar.

Fun, Renewed Unity as Itsekiri Nation Celebrates Late Ikenwoli at Final Rites

Sylvester Idowu in Warri

Activities marking the final funeral rites for the late 20th Olu of Warri, Ogiame Ikenwoli held recently at Ode-Itsekiri in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State with entertainment and homages in honour of the departed monarch.

The 14 days final rites, which began with a vigil, turned out to be a gathering of the Itsekiri nation as natives, joined by neighbours and well-wishers, trooped into the Itsekiri ancestral home to share the joy of the event. The significance of the occasion was all about entertainment and sharing in honouring the departed monarch as the interment was already done during the Iken rites. However, it is the belief of Itsekiris that the soul of the late monarch does not journey to final rest until all the rites are performed. Therefore, the final rites were the reason they

gathered.

The unique event however was held amidst heavy security presence and lasted from the dusk of Saturday till the dawn of Sunday with guests and Indigenes thoroughly frisked before being allowed into the town hall.

THISDAY learnt that the heavy security presence was to forestall any form of unrest, following the tension that has accompanied the succession process for the stool, and more recently the development at a High Court sitting in Warri, where a party is challenging the choice of Prince Tsola Emiko as the then Olu-designate.

The ceremony, presided over by the regent, Prince Emmanuel Okotie-Eboh, began with some rituals performed at the catafalque, a spiritual home that the corpse of the departed monarch lives throughout the 14-day spiritual exercise.



Nnamdi Kanu is in for a Long Night



Nnamdi Kanu

There is no doubt that the separatist agitator and self-acclaimed leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Mazi Nnamdi Kanu, is perceived as the enemy of state, by the Federal Government. If there was any iota of doubt before now, the pattern and manner of his trial, which began last Monday, would have cleared any fog of doubt.

The commencement of the trial which was given so much media hype plus the very heavy security presence at the Federal High Court in Abuja, turned out a faux pas. Nnamdi Kanu was not brought to court.

And the laughable, lousy excuse by the Department of State Services (DSS) is “logistics”! In plain language, the DSS could not find a vehicle to bring the accused to court. The point has even been made that the locational difference between the DSS headquarters where Nnamdi is being kept, and the Federal High Court, is a mere shouting distance, less than a Sabbath day journey. Such an unintelligent lie! How can the entire DSS organ not have a vehicle to bring the accused to court? This was the same DSS that not only had a well thought-out plan on nabbing Nnamdi Kanu in a far away land—Kenya, but also had a stationed private jet at the Nairobi airport which flew the nabbed (some say kidnapped) Kanu straight to Nigeria. That is the DSS that could not arrange even a shuttle bus to bring Kanu to court.

It is clear there is a complex script to keep Kanu out of circulation, perhaps till the end of this administration. That way, his trouble-making capacity is not only contained, but he and his wild supporters would have been reined-in, no matter the high decibel of the aftermath noise.

The judiciary may have been corralled into the scheme, willy-nilly. The long adjournment of the case till October 21, for instance, is seen as a measure to sufficiently douse the tension that the trial is bound to cause. This is regardless of the fact that the courts are on vacation, and the Judge, Justice Binta Nyako, had stressed the point that she is not a “vacation judge” and that she can only preside over the case during the vacation if there is approved fiat that will allow her preside over the case. That fiat is not likely to be granted especially as it is the Chief Justice of the Federation (CJN) that has to grant the said fiat.

It is also instructive that the Judge

refused the application of Kanu’s lawyer to transfer Kanu from the DSS detention facility to the Kuje Correctional facility, although she granted that Kanu’s lawyers be allowed to see him in twice a week in the DSS custody.

Clearly, Nnamdi Kanu is on board a long judicial drive.

The market- size crowd which turned out at the court was clearly an indication that the trial is essentially a major legal battle, with a huge political undertone.

In a way, the Nnamdi Kanu trial has been presented to look like the Federal Government versus the Igbo nation. The large turn-out of Igbo leaders and elite, including a full representation by the Ohaneze Ndigbo, the foremost Igbo socio-cultural group, led by their lawyer, Chief Goddy Uwazurike, shows that the push has come to shove, and the supposed sins of Kanu (even to the Igbo organizations and leaders) are no longer as offensive, and so he must be defended and rescued by his kinsmen from the grip of a regime, rightfully or wrongfully perceived to be anti-Igbo.

It is remarkable that the same Kanu, whose style of agitation and violent activities have been condemned even by notable Igbo leaders, is now being declared to be “my son” by the former Anambra State governor, Dr Chukwuemeka Ezeife, who stressed that “no matter what, he is my son!”

The huge following Nnamdi Kanu commands is also very significant. The mammoth crowd at the court, last Monday is remarkable. Anambra State was practically shut down on account of the failed arraignment of Kanu. Markets in Owerri, the Imo State capital, were shut down. The exultant feeling among IPOB members and sympathisers is dazzling. Some have even said the huge following he attracts should encourage him to run for the nation’s presidential election in 2023. That, however, is if he gets out of the present noose before then.

It is the African protectionist ideology of seeking to first rescue your own from an ‘external assailant’, before blaming him in the closet, if need be.

This was also on manifest display in the trial of the other “trouble maker” Sunday Igboho, whose trial also opened in Cotonou, Benin Republic during the week.

His trial suddenly took the form of Federal Government versus the Yoruba nation, as very prominent Yoruba leaders have suddenly brushed aside the insults, vituperations of

Igboho against Yoruba leaders and Kings, and risen in strong solidarity to defend their son. The Ooni of Ife and Olubadan of Ibadan, for instance, sent powerful delegations to Cotonou as a show of solidarity for Igboho. What’s more, the Onakakanfo of Yoruba, Chief Gani Adams, had also gone to Benin Republic to mobilise many Yoruba Kings and chiefs there to give a huge ethnic support to Igboho. The result is that there was a massive crowd in Cotonou on the day Igboho was arraigned.

On both matters (Nnamdi Kanu and Sunday Igboho’s trials) there are evident cases of ethnic chauvinism at the expense of national integrity and cohesion.

Analysts are of the opinion that both Kanu and Igboho will be given the El Zazaky treatment.

That is why the federal government is determined to extradite Sunday Igboho into the country, even though there is no extradition treaty between Republic of Benin and Nigeria. Many believe that the Buhari administration has a penchant for locking-in all those who have tendency for making the government uncomfortable. They cite the long years former National Security Adviser (NSA) Col Sambo Dasuki was kept in detention despite several court orders granting him freedom. El Zazaky, the leader the Shiite Movement, is another example. The latter is even still in detention with his wife. All these are regardless of the huge noise being made in the media and in diplomatic circles.

Perhaps it would even be worse for Nnamdi Kanu who had not only severely taunted the government with his secessionist agitations, he had also jumped bail over two years ago. His case is likely to be treated with greater viciousness, after all, once beaten, twice shy.

He probably would have been allowed to be, if he kept a low profile in the United Kingdom, where he fled to after jumping bail in Nigeria. But Kanu was pulling all the strings of his agitation from outside the country, plus all the mayhem that followed in recent months.

In all, the October appearance in court will see the government judicially baring all its fangs in an attempt to nail Nnamdi Kanu as a secessionist and separatist fighter, and not a freedom fighter as Kanu’s supporters and sponsors are wont to present him.

Surely, it will be a long judicial drive to the shore of justice.

Canticles....

James Manager: He Has Stooped, Will He Conquer?



James Manager and Ibori in the viral photo

Did you see that despicable and humiliating picture that went viral last week? Despicable and humiliating picture? Picture of who or what?

The picture of that so-called Distinguished Senator from Delta South senatorial district, James manager. Honestly, it was grossly extinguishing of the status of a federal lawmaker. And not a few people were disgusted and actually embarrassed.

Oh, oh, are you referring to the picture where Senator James Manager was humbly kneeling (with both knees) before former governor of Delta State, James Ibori?

Yes, of course!

What’s humiliating about it? How can that be said to be embarrassing? A younger James came to greet a senior James....And you say it is embarrassing? Do you know that one of the virtues of the Biblical James is that they have very strong character? In any case, when Yoruba politicians go to pay homage to their leaders and go all flat on the ground, is it considered embarrassing? So, why should this show of humility and loyalty by Senator Manager to his former boss and leader be wrongly interpreted as embarrassing? Or don’t you know that James Manager was a commissioner under the governorship of James Ibori, almost 20 years ago? You can see that the ruckus noise about the visit is only a vacuous hoopla by idle politicians.

You don’t understand the point. We are talking of a serving Senator, a Distinguished member of the Red Chamber of the National Assembly kneeling so meekly like a timid schoolboy, after committing a misdemeanor. And please don’t tell me about culture or humility. Since when did you ever associate an Ijaw man with such abbreviated personality? Is it not the same James Manager we see everyday with some choking air of arrogance around him? Look, James Manager is not a humble man. That subservient surrender is not part of his nature. It is a gimmick to sell a wrong message.

Gim-mick? Wrong message? What message?

It is to sell the impression that he is a faithful and loyal follower of Ibori. And it is all to hoodwink the former governor so that the latter can endorse him as the governorship candidate of the PDP come 2023, forgetting that false humility is true pride.

Nobody said he came to seek endorsement for governorship race. The report says he came to pay homage. Don’t forget it was during the Sallah holiday.

Don’t twist the narrative. Neither

Ibori nor Manager is a Muslim, so, what’s the talk about Sallah homage? In any case, why the homage? Don’t you know that a man who sets a trap with a goat knows what he is expecting to catch? We are not ignorant of the devices of politicians. Ibori has been out of prison for over two years now. Why did James Manager not come for any solidarity all along? He is coming now because the echoes of 2023 are a few miles away. Can’t you understand that he came to do “ground wetting”? And people are asking that now that Senator James Manager has stooped down, even to his knees, would he conquer? Does he have the pedigree and the capacity to win the governorship of Delta State?

The so-called video and photograph that went viral has nothing to do with politics. A man came to greet his boss, a former boss. As for capacity to govern, go and check out the CV of Senator Manager, and you will realise that he was not named Manager for nothing. He has twice been a commissioner, first as Sports Commissioner under late former Governor Felix Ibru, then Commissioner for Works under Ibori and in 2003 he was elected a Senator representing Delta South. And has held on to that office for five solid terms. It can only be a reward for a diligent manager of men and materials.

So you are saying that this Senator Manager has been in and out of government for almost 30 years! Are you saying he is the only competent person in the entire Delta South Senatorial district? How can one man seize and dominate the political space with such a tight grip? I think it smacks of political greed, a typical vice of mercantile politicians. And you think Ibori will be carried away because of kegs of palmwine and a table-full of alcoholic drinks? Look, Ibori is a true son of Urhobo land. He will not betray his people. When the time comes to decide who should occupy the Government House, Asaba, it will not be a function of kegs of palmwine or lobes of kolanut. Governorship in Delta is not that cheap and commonplace.

Politics is a function of consensus. When a consensus has been built around someone, there is nothing bystanders will do, beyond running roadside commentaries.

One thing sure is that politics or no politics, James Manager remains a leader. But as you know, Jaguda get Oga. He has stooped. He can conquer!

Hmmmmmm. Delta governorship is not for jagudas. It is for a responsible and resourceful persons. You talked about being in government for nearly 30 years. Gash! So what are his achievements? What development did he bring to his people? What is his political value to his constituents? Modern politics is beyond the backwaters of godfatherism. Yes, he has stooped. Will He Conquer? We watch. We wait!

AfCFTA: FG Calls for Stronger Collaboration Among ECOWAS Members

Dike Onwuamaeze

The federal government has called on members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to build strong collaboration among themselves so as to take advantage of benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The charge was given by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Mr. Niyi Adebayo, during a virtual event organised by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) to commemorate the 46th anniversary of the ECOWAS .

Adebayo described the theme of commemorative event, which is, “Optimising Sustainable Trade, Investment and Regional Economic Integration through Effective Partnership between ECOWAS Institutions and the Organised Private Sector,” as apt and timely because, “it emphasises the need to work together as a bloc to leverage and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the AfCFTA.

“Collaboration across societal sectors has emerged as one of the defining concepts of international development in the 21st century. In a part response to the limitation of traditional state-led, top-down development approaches, partnerships have become an essential paradigm in sustainable development.

“I would like to commend the LCCI for organising this international webinar to provide a unique opportunity for the stakeholders in the sub-region to showcase the ongoing trade and investment programmes as well as for initiating discussions on how member states can leverage the ECOWAS Platform to benefit from the AfCFTA.”

Adebayo identified the ECOWAS’s Trade Liberisation Scheme (ETLS) and the protocols of free movement of persons, capital and goods as the most important protocols of the ECOWAS for providing the principle for a progressive elimination of obstacles to free movement of persons

and right of residence and establishment among others.

He said: “The most important protocols for deepening the integration of the sub-region is the ECOWAS Trade Liberisation Scheme and the protocols of free movement of persons, capital and goods. The ETLS provisions constitute an important mechanism for deepening trade integration and are considered as a cornerstone to the effective economic integration of the region.”

The President of the LCCI, Mrs Toki Mabogunje, said that the webinar would create a unique opportunity for stakeholders to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of economic integration in the West African sub-region, discuss the emerging opportunities for member states in the African Continental Free Trade Area and deliberate on the role of the organized private sector in promoting economic integration and investment partnership among the member states.



Adebayo

MARKET INDICATORS

MONEY AND CREDIT STATISTICS (MILLION NAIRA)	
	JANUARY 2021
Money Supply (M3)	38,779,455.43
-- CBN Bills Held by Money Holding Sectors	1,039,129.55
Money Supply (M2)	37,740,325.88
-- Quasi Money	21,779,302.69
-- Narrow Money (M1)	15,961,023.19
---- Currency Outside Banks	2,364,871.13
---- Demand Deposits	13,596,152.06
Net Foreign Assets (NFA)	7,414,275.50
Net Domestic Assets(NDA)	31,365,179.93
-- Net Domestic Credit (NDC)	42,916,586.63
---- Credit to Government (Net)	12,304,773.44
---- Memo: Credit to Govt. (Net) less FMA	0.00
---- Memo: Fed. and Mirror Accounts (FMA)	0.00
---- Credit to Private Sector (CPS)	30,611,813.19
--Other Assets Net	3,892,112.74
Reserve Money(Base Money)	13,264,585.14
--Currency in Circulation	2,831,167.19
--Banks Reserves	10,433,417.96
--Special Intervention Reserves	317,234.17

• Source- CBN

Money Market Indicators (in Percentage)	
Month	March 2018
Inter-Bank Call Rate	15.16
Minimum Rediscount Rate (MRR)	
Monetary Policy Rate (MPR)	14.00
Treasury Bill Rate	11.84
Savings Deposit Rate	4.07
1 Month Deposit Rate	8.82
3 Months Deposit Rate	9.72
6 Months Deposit Rate	10.93
12 Months Deposit Rate	10.21
Prime Lending rate	17.35
Maximum Lending Rate	31.55

• Monetary Policy Rate - 13%

OPEC DAILY BASKET PRICE AS AT THURSDAY, 15 JULY 2021

The price of OPEC basket of thirteen crudes stood at \$73.15 a barrel on Thursday, compared with \$75.29 the previous day, according to OPEC Secretariat calculations. The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Djeno (Congo), Zafiro (Equatorial Guinea), Rabi Light (Gabon), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Merey (Venezuela).

Cardoen: Fundamentals of Presco Remain Strong, Resilient

The Chairman of Presco Plc, Mr. Paul Cardoen has said the company’s fundamentals remained strong and resilient despite numerous challenges in the country.

Speaking to shareholders at the company’s 28th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Edo State, the chairman maintained that the company achieved improved operational that led to dividend payout to shareholders.

At the meeting, the shareholders of the company approved request by the Board of the company to pay 200 kobo per share dividend for the financial year ended December 31, 2020, amounting to N2billion.

Earlier in his address to shareholders, the Chairman of Presco said: “But we are happy that the fundamentals of our business remained strong which enabled us to emerge a better business

for it and achieve the improved operational and financial result we present to you.”

He explained that revenue for the year was N23.89billion, a 21 per cent increase on N19.72billion of 2019. According to him, “We realised a gross profit of N16.088billion, a 26 per cent increase on N12.72billion of 2019 and 37 per cent increase in Profit after tax (after accounting for changes in fair value of biological assets).

Nwabuko also used the opportunity to assure shareholders and other stakeholders of a better future in terms of growth and profitability. Addressing the shareholders, he said: “In the same period, fresh fruits bunches harvested was 214,872 tons (2019:200,163 tons), Crude Palm Oil (CPO) produced was 45,467 tons (2019:43,757 tons), Refined, Bleached and Deodorized Oil (RBDO) produced was

19,486 tons (2019:20,594 tons) and Olein and Stearin produced was 7,352 tons (2019:7967 tons).

He said, “Average unit selling prices of crude palm oil and crude palm kernel oil achieved increased marginally by 1.59 per cent and 1.15 per cent respectively year on year. “Average unit selling prices of bulk sales of refined product (Olein, Stearin and RBDO) achieved in 2020 improved marginally by between 1.05 per cent and 1.37 per cent compared to 2019 while that of package refined products (Olein and Stearin) also improved marginal by 1.13 per cent and 1.27 per cent respectively.”

Speaking on behalf of shareholders, Chairman, Onitsha Zone Shareholders Association, Goodluck Akpore, commended efforts by the board and management of Presco Plc to boost the company’s operations.

Multichoice Targets Corporate Organisations with DStv Business

Dike Onwuamaeze

The MultiChoice Nigeria has launched new and simplified DStv Business packages for businesses and corporate organisations in Nigeria.

The company in a statement said the DStv Business packages, which contain curated content at great value, were designed to suit various businesses and ensure that their owners, workers and clients would enjoy the ultimate television experience.

Commenting, the Chief Executive Officer, MultiChoice Nigeria, Mr. John Ugbe, said: “We always ask ourselves how we can make our customers experience better for businesses. We have revamped our DStv Business packages, offering business owners the right mixture of entertainment to enhance the experience of guests and staff. At the end of the day, your

guests will always remember how you made them feel.”

On his part, the Head, DStv Business, Multichoice Nigeria, Mr. Yomi Famakinwa said the DStv Business is targeted on anything that has to do with the DStv’s non-residential customers, especially those who work, stay or visit corporate offices, hotels, and bars etc. as part of its innovative way of ensuring that it is able to meet and manage its customers’ needs. Famakinwa said: “The DStv Business is about ensuring that we are able to all our customers. So, anything that has to do with non-residential customers sit under the DStv Business portfolio for organisations such as pubs and clubs, bars, restaurants and hotels and the likes fall under the DStv Business portfolio. In a nutshell the DStv Business is all about any customer who is outside of consuming DStv contents

residentially.”

He explained during the product launch that the DStv Business packages comprised of the DStv Work, the DStv Play and the DStv Stay, adding that each package is tailored to enable subscribers to get the package that will suit the particular needs of their offices, bars, clubs, restaurants, hotels and much more.

Famakinwa said that offices should go for the DStv Business in order to keep their staff up to date through the best world views with the latest news and entertainment headlines on the DStv.

He said: “The DStv Work package offers the latest news headlines from around the world, sports, weather updates and other work related entertainment, which sets the tone for a stimulating work environment and keeps everyone including staff well informed.

MARKET NEWS

Union Bank Records 1.4% Increase in Profit Before Tax

Daramsimi Adebisi

Union Bank of Nigeria Plc has announced a profit before tax of N11.5billion for the half year ended June 31, 2021 indicating a 1.4 per cent increase over N11.3billion reported in prior half year unaudited result and accounts.

The increase in profit was driven by higher noninterest income. The results made available to the Nigerian Exchange

Limited (NGX) yesterday showed a 6.1 per cent drop in gross earnings to N75billion in in the period under review compared to N79.9billion recorded in the comparable period of 2020. This reflect a low interest environment.

The group’s total assets inched up by 0.9 per cent to N2.2trillion as at June 30, 2021 from N2.19 trillion it closed full year ended December 31, 2020.

The group thus reported 5.6 per cent increase in gross loans &

advances to N778.1 billion as at June 30, 2021 from N736.7billion reported in 2020 FY as customers’ deposits rose by 3.6 per cent to N1.17trillion as at June 30, 2021 from N1.13trillion reported in 2021 FY

The CEO, Union Bank of Nigeria, Mr. Emeka Okonkwo in a statement said: “I am pleased that our business has remained resilient in the face of a persistently challenging economic environment.

“The Bank delivered a 1.4per cent growth in Profit Before Tax (PBT), recording N11.5 billion in H1 2021 compared to N11.3 billion in H1 2020. This steady performance reflects our successful efforts in turbo charging transaction volumes, which have delivered higher net fees and commission income, as well as a concerted focus on debt recoveries.

“While the industry continues to be impacted by lower inter-

est rate environment, we have reinforced our branches and the network to aggressively mine opportunities and value across our entire geographic footprint. This is part of a deliberate shift towards being closer to the customer.

“Consequently, we have seen our Retail loan book and revenues grow by 14per cent and 10per cent respectively and expect to continue to see robust growth across all business segments

as this new structure becomes further entrenched.

“In June, we launched the “Save & Win Palli Promo,” a nationwide campaign to reward new and existing customers with up to N55 million. During the promo period (June to December), customers who save a minimum amount of N10,000 monthly will be eligible to win cash prizes and gifts to encourage a savings culture even in the current economic climate.

PRICES FOR SECURITIES TRADED AS OF 29/07/2021

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
1 ACCESS BANK PLC.	325,238.81	9.15	-1.61 ⬇️	191 9,233,371
2 UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC	259,915.60	7.60	-1.30 ⬇️	144 10,310,598
3 ZENITH BANK PLC	767,644.27	24.45	0.20 ⬆️	242 6,014,703
BANKING				577 25,556,672
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
4 FBN HOLDINGS PLC	265,625.17	7.40	-0.67 ⬇️	115 10,124,650
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				115 10,124,650
FINANCIAL SERVICES				692 35,663,322
ICT				
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
5 MTN NIGERIA COMMUNICATIONS PLC	3,340,175.59	164.10	0.37 ⬆️	51 500,774
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				51 500,774
ICT				51 500,774
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				
S/N BUILDING MATERIALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
6 DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	4,226,045.84	248.00	- ⬇️	63 69,061
7 LAFARGE AFRICA PLC.	368,868.52	22.90	0.44 ⬆️	115 3,349,199
BUILDING MATERIALS				178 3,418,260
INDUSTRIAL GOODS				178 3,418,260
OIL AND GAS				
S/N EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
8 SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	453,102.31	770.00	- ⬇️	38 221,999
EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION				38 221,999
OIL AND GAS				38 221,999
CONGLOMERATES				
S/N DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
9 CHELLARAMS PLC.	1,619.35	2.24	- ⬇️	0 0
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES				0 0
CONGLOMERATES				0 0
CONSUMER GOODS				
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
10 MCNICHOLS PLC	251.56	0.77	- ⬇️	0 0
FOOD PRODUCTS				0 0
CONSUMER GOODS				0 0
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
11 LIVINGTRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	3,350.00	0.67	- ⬇️	0 0
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				0 0
FINANCIAL SERVICES				0 0
ICT				
S/N TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
12 BRICLINKS AFRICA PLC	62.50	6.25	- ⬇️	0 0
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES				0 0
ICT				0 0
Price List (Equities)				
S/N WASTE MANAGEMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
13 THE INITIATES PLC	418.29	0.47	- ⬇️	0 0
WASTE MANAGEMENT				0 0
SERVICES				0 0
GROWTH BOARD TOTALS				0 0

PRICES FOR MAIN BOARD SECURITIES				
AGRICULTURE				
S/N CROP PRODUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
14 ELLAH LAKES PLC.	8,500.00	4.25	- ⬇️	0 0
15 FTN COCOA PROCESSORS PLC	1,078.00	0.49	-7.55 ⬇️	54 3,621.
16 OKOMU OIL PALM PLC.	104,930.10	110.00	- ⬇️	18 33.
17 PRESKO PLC	70,000.00	70.00	- ⬇️	14 11.
CROP PRODUCTION				86 3,666.
S/N LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
18 LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	6,930.00	2.31	-3.75 ⬇️	71 1,892.
LIVESTOCK/ANIMAL SPECIALTIES				71 1,892.
AGRICULTURE				157 5,559.
CONGLOMERATES				
S/N DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
19 JOHN HOLT PLC.	291.86	0.75	- ⬇️	2 7.
20 S C O A NIG. PLC.	1,267.16	1.95	- ⬇️	0 0
21 TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATION OF NIGERIA PLC	37,802.63	0.93	-1.08 ⬇️	75 8,898.
22 U A C N PLC.	29,389.23	10.20	-8.93 ⬇️	95 2,178.
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				
S/N BUILDING CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
23 ARIBICO PLC	152.99	1.03	- ⬇️	0 0
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION				0 0
S/N INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
24 JULIUS BERGER NIG. PLC.	36,000.00	22.50	- ⬇️	22 134,579
INFRASTRUCTURE/HEAVY CONSTRUCTION				22 134,579
S/N REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
25 UPDC PLC	22,086.36	1.19	-5.56 ⬇️	36 3,251,108
REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT				36 3,251,108
CONSTRUCTION/REAL ESTATE				58 3,385,687
CONSUMER GOODS				
S/N AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
26 DN TYRE & RUBBER PLC	954.53	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
AUTOMOBILES/AUTO PARTS				0 0
S/N BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
27 CHAMPION BREW. PLC.	17,616.37	2.25	- ⬇️	16 170,518
28 GOLDEN GUINEA BREW. PLC.	829.98	0.81	- ⬇️	0 0
29 GUINNESS NIG PLC	69,325.62	31.65	- ⬇️	27 107,610
30 INTERNATIONAL BREWERIES PLC.	136,996.55	5.10	- ⬇️	30 454,617
31 NIGERIAN BREW. PLC.	463,820.32	58.00	- ⬇️	72 546,286
BEVERAGES-BREWERS/DISTILLERS				145 1,279,031
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
32 DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	221,073.18	18.20	-1.62 ⬇️	106 1,044,394
33 FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC.	123,011.39	30.00	-2.44 ⬇️	99 2,304,096
34 HONEYWELL FLOUR MILL PLC	12,688.32	1.60	-4.76 ⬇️	56 2,775,396
35 MULTI-TREX INTEGRATED FOODS PLC	1,340.10	0.36	- ⬇️	0 0
36 N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC.	1,095.93	6.15	- ⬇️	10 36,643
37 NASCON ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	38,284.38	14.45	-3.67 ⬇️	16 136,259
38 UNION DICON SALT PLC.	2,706.05	9.90	- ⬇️	0 0
FOOD PRODUCTS				287 6,296,788
S/N FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
39 CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	16,903.82	9.00	- ⬇️	21 84,898
40 NESTLE NIGERIA PLC.	1,220,690.63	1,540.00	- ⬇️	18 5,460
FOOD PRODUCTS-DIVERSIFIED				39 90,358
S/N HOUSEHOLD DURABLES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
41 NIGERIAN ENAMELWARE PLC.	1,231.72	16.20	- ⬇️	0 0

MAIN BOARD	DEALS	MARKET PRICE	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE TRADED (N)
CONSUMER GOODS				
S/N HOUSEHOLD DURABLES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
42 VITAFOAM NIG PLC.	19,388.08	15.50	-1.27 ⬇️	56 1,917,688
HOUSEHOLD DURABLES				56 1,917,688
S/N PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
43 P Z CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC.	25,014.01	6.30	5.00 ⬆️	70 2,279,456
44 UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	80,430.08	14.00	-1.06 ⬇️	54 1,985,880
PERSONAL/HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS				124 4,265,336
CONSUMER GOODS				651 13,849,201
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
45 ECOBANK TRANSNATIONAL INCORPORATED	98,170.10	5.35	-0.93 ⬇️	39 1,607,017
46 FIDELITY BANK PLC	88,090.77	2.35	-2.49 ⬇️	94 14,392,578
47 GUARANTY TRUST HOLDING COMPANY PLC	854,975.76	29.05	-1.69 ⬇️	428 15,287,119
48 JAIZ BANK PLC	18,267.83	0.62	1.64 ⬆️	56 14,898,700
49 STERLING BANK PLC.	44,337.24	1.54	- ⬇️	41 2,680,681
50 UNION BANK NIG.PLC.	151,427.91	5.20	-3.70 ⬇️	39 621,362
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N BANKING	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
51 UNITY BANK PLC	6,896.71	0.59	- ⬇️	8 36.45
52 WEMA BANK PLC.	32,788.30	0.85	-5.88 ⬇️	87 12,215.08
BANKING				792 61,739.01
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
53 AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC	4,117.00	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
54 AICO INSURANCE PLC.	22,847.32	1.11	3.74 ⬆️	19 1,303.66
55 AXAMANSARD INSURANCE PLC	34,920.00	0.97	7.78 ⬆️	51 5,256.17
56 CONSOLIDATED HALLMARK INSURANCE PLC	6,315.66	0.59	9.26 ⬆️	14 960.18
57 CORNERSTONE INSURANCE PLC	9,809.85	0.54	1.89 ⬆️	3 216.36
58 CORONATION INSURANCE PLC	12,955.51	0.54	-1.85 ⬇️	41 2,123.99
59 GOLDLINK INSURANCE PLC	909.99	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
60 GUINEA INSURANCE PLC.	1,228.00	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
61 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY INSURANCE PLC	487.95	0.38	- ⬇️	0 0
62 LASACO ASSURANCE PLC.	3,025.42	1.65	- ⬇️	30 712.89
63 LINKAGE ASSURANCE PLC	8,400.00	0.60	-7.69 ⬇️	37 5,458.80
64 MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC.	7,824.63	0.39	5.41 ⬆️	17 4,422.59
65 NEM INSURANCE PLC	20,065.91	2.00	- ⬇️	9 220.37
66 NIGER INSURANCE PLC	1,547.90	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
67 PRESTIGE ASSURANCE PLC	6,493.76	0.49	8.89 ⬆️	17 1,064.25
68 REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	3,000.94	0.45	9.76 ⬆️	9 976.71
69 SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	3,295.70	0.29	7.41 ⬆️	16 5,639.87
70 STACO INSURANCE PLC	4,483.72	0.48	- ⬇️	0 0
71 STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC.	2,582.21	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
72 SUNU ASSURANCES NIGERIA PLC.	2,847.29	0.49	- ⬇️	4 103.99
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
73 UNIVERSAL INSURANCE PLC	3,200.00	0.20	10.00 ⬆️	35 11,335,730
74 VERITAS CAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	3,328.00	0.24	- ⬇️	8 1,423,225
INSURANCE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				310 41,218,745
S/N MICRO-FINANCE BANKS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
75 NPF MICROFINANCE BANK PLC	4,001.62	1.75	6.06 ⬆️	33 1,736.872
MICRO-FINANCE BANKS				33 1,736,872
S/N MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
FINANCIAL SERVICES				
S/N MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
76 ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	6,138.46	0.95	- ⬇️	0 0
77 ASO SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC	7,370.87	0.50	- ⬇️	0 0
78 INFINITY TRUST MORTGAGE BANK PLC	5,505.00	1.32	- ⬇️	0 0
79 RESORT SAVINGS & LOANS PLC	2,265.95	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
80 UNION HOMES SAVINGS AND LOANS PLC.	2,949.22	3.02	- ⬇️	0 0
MORTGAGE CARRIERS, BROKERS AND SERVICES				0 0
S/N OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
81 AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	12,700.00	6.35	1.60 ⬆️	34 894,810
82 CUSTODIAN INVESTMENT PLC	36,761.65	6.25	- ⬇️	30 912,628
83 DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	300.00	0.20	- ⬇️	1 5,000
84 FCMB GROUP PLC.	59,210.11	2.99	-0.99 ⬇️	52 6,275,972
85 ROYAL EXCHANGE PLC.	2,829.95	0.55	- ⬇️	0 0
86 STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC	531,236.88	41.00	- ⬇️	30 168,910
87 UNITED CAPITAL PLC	40,800.00	6.80	-1.45 ⬇️	107 3,749,801
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS				254 12,066,221
FINANCIAL SERVICES				1,389 116,700,857
HEALTHCARE				
S/N HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
88 EKOCORP PLC.	2,941.75	5.90	- ⬇️	0 0
89 UNION DIAGNOSTIC & CLINICAL SERVICES PLC	994.88	0.28	- ⬇️	0 0
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS				0 0
S/N MEDICAL SUPPLIES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
90 MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	1,384.83	1.40	- ⬇️	0 0
MEDICAL SUPPLIES				0 0
HEALTHCARE				
S/N PHARMACEUTICALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
91 FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	13,561.34	6.50	- ⬇️	19 227,765
92 GLAXO SMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC.	7,593.82	6.35	- ⬇️	52 472,363
93 MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	8,108.60	4.70	-0.64 ⬇️	32 1,161,928
94 NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARMACEUTICALS PLC	3,323.52	1.75	- ⬇️	9 43,632
95 PHARMA-DEKO PLC.	236.33	1.09	- ⬇️	1 900
PHARMACEUTICALS				113 1,906,588
HEALTHCARE				113 1,906,588
ICT				
S/N COMPUTER BASED SYSTEMS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
96 COURTEVILLE BUSINESS SOLUTIONS PLC	816.96	0.23	-4.17 ⬇️	12 749,843
COMPUTER BASED SYSTEMS				12 749,843
S/N COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME
97 OMATEK VENTURES PLC	588.36	0.20	- ⬇️	0 0
COMPUTERS AND PERIPHERALS				0 0
S/N IT SERVICES	MARKET CAP(Nm)	PRICE	%CHANGE	TRADES VOLUME

A **Mutual fund (Unit Trust)** is an investment vehicle managed by a SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission) registered Fund Manager. Investors with similar objectives buy units of the Fund so that the Fund Manager can buy securities that will generate their desired return.

An **ETF (Exchange Traded Fund)** is a type of fund which owns the assets (shares of stock, bonds, oil futures, gold bars, foreign currency, etc.) and divides ownership of those assets into shares. Investors can buy these ‘shares’ on the

floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

A **REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust)** is an investment vehicle that allows both small and large investors to part-own real estate ventures (eg. Offices, Houses, Hospitals) in proportion to their investments. The assets are divided into shares that are traded on the Nigerian Stock Exchange.

GUIDE TO DATA:
Date: All fund prices are quoted in Naira as at 28-Jul-2021, unless otherwise stated.

Offer price: The price at which units of a trust or ETF are bought by investors.

Bid Price: The price at which Investors redeem (sell) units of a trust or ETF.

Yield/Total Return: Denotes the total return an investor would have earned on his investment. Money Market Funds report Yield while others report Year- to-date Total Return.

NAV: Is value per share of the real estate assets held by a REIT on a specific date.



DAILY PRICE LIST FOR MUTUAL FUNDS, REITS and ETFS

MUTUAL FUNDS / UNIT TRUSTS			
AFRINVEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			
aaml@afrinvest.com			
Web: www.afrinvest.com; Tel: +234 818 885 6757			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Afrinvest Equity Fund	158.31	159.88	-2.14%
Afrinvest Plutus Fund	100.00	100.00	4.64%
Nigeria International Debt Fund	308.18	308.18	-23.61%
Afrinvest Dollar Fund	111.44	111.44	-0.59%
ALTERNATIVE CAPITAL PARTNERS LTD			
info@acapng.com			
Web: www.acapng.com, Tel: +234 1 291 2406, +234 1 291 2868			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ACAP Canary Growth Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
ACAP Income Funds	N/A	N/A	N/A
AIICO CAPITAL LTD			
ammf@aiicocapital.com			
Web: www.aiicocapital.com, Tel: +234-1-2792974			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AIICO Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	7.31%
AIICO Balanced Fund	3.24	3.40	-4.58%
ANCHORIA ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			
info@anchoriaam.com			
Web: www.anchoriaam.com, Tel: 08166830267; 08036814510; 08028419180			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Anchoria Money Market	100.00	100.00	6.54%
Anchoria Equity Fund	135.89	137.46	2.16%
Anchoria Fixed Income Fund	1.10	1.10	-17.36%
ARM INVESTMENT MANAGERS LTD			
enquiries@arminvestmentcenter.com			
Web: www.arm.com.ng; Tel: 0700 CALLARM (0700 225 5276)			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
ARM Aggressive Growth Fund	19.88	20.48	9.64%
ARM Discovery Balanced Fund	430.32	443.30	7.48%
ARM Ethical Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
ARM Eurobond Fund (\$)	1.09	1.09	-1.00%
ARM Fixed Income Fund	0.97	0.97	-7.79%
ARM Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	7.85%
AVA GLOBAL ASSET MANAGERS LIMITED			
info@avacapitalgroup.com			
Web: www.avacapitalgroup.com			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AVA GAM Fixed Income Dollar Fund	105.38	105.38	3.61%
AVA GAM Fixed Income Naira Fund	1,012.53	1,012.53	1.25%
AXA MANSARD INVESTMENTS LIMITED			
investmentcare@axamansard.com			
Web: www.axamansard.com; Tel: +2341-4488482			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
AXA Mansard Equity Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
AXA Mansard Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CAPITAL EXPRESS ASSET AND TRUST LIMITED			
info@capitalexpressassetandtrust.com			
Web: www.capitalexpressassetandtrust.com ; Tel: +234 803 307 5048			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CEAT Fixed Income Fund	2.00	2.00	-12.82%
Capital Express Balanced Fund(Formerly: Union Trustees Mixed Fund)	2.12	2.16	-9.01%
CARDINALSTONE ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			
mutualfunds@cardinalstone.com			
Web: www.cardinalstoneassetmanagement.com ; Tel: +234 (1) 710 0433 4			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
CardinalStone Fixed Income Alpha Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CHAPELHILL DENHAM MANAGEMENT LTD			
investmentmanagement@chapelhilldenham.com			
Web: www.chapelhilldenham.com, Tel: +234 461 0691			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Chapelhill Denham Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Paramount Equity Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Women's Investment Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
CORDROS ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			
assetmgteam@cordros.com			
Web: www.cordros.com, Tel: 019036947			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Cordros Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	6.98%
Cordros Milestone Fund 2023	118.71	119.47	
Cordros Milestone Fund 2028	N/A	N/A	
Cordros Dollar Fund (\$)	107.24	107.24	
CORONATION ASSEST MANAGEMENT			
investment@coronationam.com			
Web: www.coronationam.com , Tel: 012366215			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coronation Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Balanced Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coronation Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
EDC FUNDS MANAGEMENT LIMITED			
mutualfundng@ecobank.com			
Web: www.ecobank.com Tel: 012265281			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class A	100.00	100.00	6.73%
EDC Nigeria Money Market Fund Class B	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00	3.98%
EDC Nigeria Fixed Income Fund	1,134.12	1,148.85	-1.54%
FBNQUEST ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			
invest@fbnquest.com			
Web: www.fbnquest.com/asset-management; Tel: +234-81 0082 0082			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
FBN Fixed Income Fund	1,394.63	1,394.63	11.25%
FBN Balanced Fund	192.39	193.75	2.51%
FBN Halal Fund	111.47	111.47	7.72%
FBN Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	9.45%
FBN Nigeria Eurobond (USD) Fund - Retail	126.34	126.34	3.35%
FBN Smart Beta Equity Fund	158.38	160.61	4.77%
FCMB ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED			
fcbmbamhelpdesk@fcbm.com			
Web: www.fcmbassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 462 2596			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Legacy Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	5.12%
Legacy Debt Fund	3.96	3.96	2.33%
Legacy Equity Fund	1.59	1.62	4.60%
Legacy USD Bond Fund	1.18	1.18	3.94%
FSDH ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			
coralfunds@fsdhgroup.com			
Web: www.fsdhaml.com; Tel: 01-270 4884-5; 01-280 9740-1			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Coral Balanced Fund	3,729.89	3,783.72	-0.41%
Coral Income Fund	3,358.16	3,358.16	2.50%
Coral Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	5.57%

GREENWICH ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED		assetmanagement@gtlgroup.com	
Web: www.gtlgroup.com ; Tel: +234 1 4619261-2			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Greenwich Plus Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nigeria Entertainment Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT ASSET MANAGEMENT LIMITED		assetmanagement@gdl.com.ng	
Web: www.gdl.com.ng ; Tel: +234 9055691122			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
GDL Money Market Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
INVESTMENT ONE FUNDS MANAGEMENT LTD		enquiries@investment-one.com	
Web: www.investment-one.com; Tel: +234 812 992 1045,+234 1 448 8888			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Abacus Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	7.75%
Vantage Balanced Fund	2.92	2.99	2.26%
Vantage Guaranteed Income Fund	1.00	1.00	4.50%
Kedari Investment Fund (KIF)	151.75	151.03	-2.73%
Vantage Equity Income Fund (VEIF) - June Year End	1.29	1.33	2.54%
Vantage Dollar Fund (VDF) - June Year End	1.09	1.09	0.11%
LOTUS CAPITAL LTD		fincon@lotuscapitallimited.com	
Web: www.lotuscapitallimited.com; Tel: +234 1-291 4626 / +234 1-291 4624			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Investment Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lotus Halal Fixed Income Fund	N/A	N/A	N/A
MERISTEM WEALTH MANAGEMENT LTD		info@meristemwealth.com	
Web: http://www.meristemwealth.com/funds/ ; Tel: +234 1-4488260			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Meristem Equity Market Fund	11.56	11.61	10.38%
Meristem Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	8.09%
PAC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD		info@pacassetmanagement.com	
Web: www.pacassetmanagement.com/mutualfunds; Tel: +234 1 271 8632			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
PACAM Balanced Fund	1.66	1.69	7.17%
PACAM Fixed Income Fund	11.46	11.52	-5.53%
PACAM Money Market Fund	10.00	10.00	4.87%
PACAM Equity Fund	1.66	1.68	5.20%
PACAM EuroBond Fund	112.48	114.21	2.34%
SCM CAPITAL LIMITED		info@scmcapitalng.com	
Web: www.scmcapitalng.com; Tel: +234 1-280 2226,+234 1- 280 2227			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SCM Capital Frontier Fund	133.13	135.42	9.71%
SFS CAPITAL NIGERIA LTD		investments@sfsnigeria.com	
Web: www.sfsnigeria.com, Tel: +234 (01) 2801400			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
SFS Fixed Income Fund	1.01	1.01	10.07%
STANBIC IBTC ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD		assetmanagement@stanbicibt.com	
Web: www.stanbicibtassetmanagement.com; Tel: +234 1 280 1266; 0700 MUTUALFUNDS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Stanbic IBTC Balanced Fund	3,287.80	3,322.79	2.37%
Stanbic IBTC Bond Fund	231.72	231.72	3.06%
Stanbic IBTC Ethical Fund	1.22	1.24	4.24%
Stanbic IBTC Guaranteed Investment Fund	304.97	304.97	3.50%
Stanbic IBTC Iman Fund	224.71	228.10	2.97%
Stanbic IBTC Money Market Fund	100.00	100.00	8.00%
Stanbic IBTC Nigerian Equity Fund	10,404.04	10,550.12	-0.87%
Stanbic IBTC Dollar Fund (USD)	1.26	1.26	3.14%
Stanbic IBTC Shariah Fixed Income Fund	114.92	114.92	3.46%
Stanbic IBTC Enhanced Short-Term Fixed Income Fund	102.60	102.60	-
UNITED CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT LTD			
Web: www.unitedcapitalplcgroup.com; Tel: +234 01-6317876			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
United Capital Balanced Fund	1.30	1.32	1.60%
United Capital Bond Fund	1.90	1.90	3.77%
United Capital Equity Fund	0.87	0.89	9.90%
United Capital Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	10.17%
United Capital Eurobond Fund	119.25	119.25	4.19%
United Capital Wealth for Women Fund	1.06	1.07	3.72%
United capital Sukuk Fund	1.06	1.06	5.76%
QUANTUM ZENITH ASSET MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENTS LTD		service@quantumzenithasset.com.ng	
Web: www.quantumzenith.com.ng; Tel: +234 1-2784219			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Zenith Equity Fund	12.98	13.09	9.34%
Zenith Ethical Fund	14.30	14.43	17.11%
Zenith Income Fund	24.23	24.23	1.04%
Zenith Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	6.71%
REITS			
Fund Name	NAV Per Share		Yield / T-Rtn
SFS REIT	124.53		10.25%
Union Homes REIT	51.79		2.65%
EXCHANGE TRADED FUNDS			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Lotus Halal Equity Exchange Traded Fund	13.48	13.58	1.97%
SIAML Pension ETF 40	127.85	130.93	6.28%
Stanbic IBTC ETF 30 Fund	100.94	103.08	1.70%
MERGROWTH ETF	18.08	18.18	
MERVALUE ETF	18.42	18.52	
VETIVA FUND MANAGERS LTD		funds@vetiva.com	
Web: www.vetiva.com; Tel: +234 1 453 0697			
Fund Name	Bid Price	Offer Price	Yield / T-Rtn
Vetiva Banking Exchange Traded Fund	3.95	3.99	4.59%
Vetiva Consumer Goods Exchange Traded Fund	5.96	6.04	4.76%
Vetiva Griffin 30 Exchange Traded Fund	17.68	17.78	8.87%
Vetiva Money Market Fund	1.00	1.00	5.55%
Vetiva Industrial Goods Exchange Traded Fund	19.98	20.18	-2.63%
Vetiva S&P Nigeria Sovereign Bond Exchange Traded Fund	151.56	153.56	-30.82%
INFRASTRUCTURE FUND			
Fund Name	NAV Per Share		Yield / T-Rtn
Chapel Hill Denham Nigeria Infrastructure Debt Fund	107.40		13.11%

The value of investments and the income from them may fall as well as rise. Past performance is a guide and not an indication of future returns. Fund prices published in this edition are also available on each fund manager's website and FMAN's website at www.fman.com.ng. Fund prices are supplied by the operator of the relevant fund and are published for information purposes only.



MOTIVATING NDLEA COMMANDERS...

Chairman/Chief Executive of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohamed Buba Marwa (Retd) (middle) in a group photograph with newly decorated Deputy Commanders General of Narcotics, DCGNs at the Agency's National Headquarters in Abuja

Jonathan Congratulates New Olu of Warri Designate, Emiko
● Says family background puts him in good stead to serve the Itsekiri with dignity

Sylvester Idowu in Warri
Former President Goodluck Jonathan has congratulated the new Olu of Warri, Omo Oba, Tsola Emiko noting that his family background has placed him in good stead to serve the Itsekiri people with dignity and diligence. In a congratulatory message personally signed

and dated July 23, 2021, the former President prayed for wisdom and courage for Omo Oba Emiko to defend the rich legacy that comes with the responsibility of being the Olu of Warri kingdom. The letter read: "I congratulate you on your coronation as the 21th Olu of Warri. Your ascension to the throne of your forefathers

comes at a time when our nation is in need of vibrant and transformational leadership owing to the different challenges we are facing as a people. "It is my hope that you will use the opportunity provided by this divinely ordained appointment to contribute your quota to the assignment of national

development," he said. The Itsekiri Kingdom, Dr. Jonathan stated, was renowned for rich and colorful history, one that has lasted for hundreds of years, adding, "The royal stool to which you have been found worthy is a national treasure, an emblem of patriotism, that has produced notable leaders in our country."

Jonathan recalled that as President, he met with his father during his reign as the 19th Olu of Warri and expressed confidence that his family background placed him in good stead to serve his people with dignity and diligence. "Leadership is sometimes a difficult cocktail of hard choices and personal

sacrifice. I pray the good Lord provides you with the wisdom and courage to defend the rich legacy that comes with the responsibility of being the Olu of Warri Kingdom. "May your reign be long and fruitful and may it signal a new era of great prosperity for your people," he concluded.

HUSHUPPUI: IG ORDERS REVIEW OF FBI'S ALLEGATION AGAINST ABBA KYARI

United States Court order of arrest of Kyari, issued by a District Court of California. The IG's order did not, however, come as a surprise as competent police sources had earlier hinted THISDAY that the police authority was rattled by the development and might soon issue a statement to state its position. "We are concerned but we are working on something (response)", one of the sources claimed. But, unfazed, Kyari had also denied the allegations in a statement posted on his Facebook page, where he insisted that, "my hands are clean". That notwithstanding, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has demanded a full investigation of the alleged involvement of Kyari in the fraud allegations against Abbas. In a two-paragraph statement issued by the IG, tagged: "Alleged Indictment of DCP Abba Kyari: Inspector-General Of Police Orders A Review of the Information" and signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, Commissioner of Police Frank Mba, Baba assured the Nigerian people of justice at the end of the day. The statement read: "Sequel to the receipt of allegation and indictment processes from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) against one of the personnel of the Nigeria Police Force, DCP Abba Kyari, the Inspector General of Police IGP Usman Alkali Baba psc (+), NPM, fdc has ordered an internal review of the allegations. "The Nigeria Police Force reaffirms its commitment to the pursuit of justice

and the strengthening of its professional relationship with the FBI and other international partners. Further developments on this case will be communicated to members of the public accordingly." THISDAY gathered that Otis Wright of the United States District Court for the Central District of California ordered the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to arrest Kyari and produce him in the United States for his role in a \$1.1million fraud. Some US Court documents further showed that American prosecutors had first sought a court warrant to arrest Kyari on February 12, 2021, while another request was made on April 29, 2021. But Judge Wright's permission for the FBI to arrest Kyari and hold him in US custody, it was further gathered, was unsealed on July 26, 2021. Hushpuppi had narrated to the US court how he allegedly bribed Kyari to arrest and jail one of his rivals in Nigeria over a disputed sharing formula of \$1.1million scam of a Qatari businessman. The US court papers also revealed that Yusuf Adekinka Anifowoshe, a.k.a. "AJ," 26, of Brooklyn, New York, allegedly played a role in the fraud, assisting Abbas with a call to the victim posing as "Malik." Special agents with the FBI, however, arrested Anifowoshe in New York on July 22. The conspirators allegedly defrauded the victim of more than \$1.1 million. The proceeds of the fraud were allegedly laundered in several ways. According to the indictment, Abbas was assisted in laundering the proceeds of the

fraud by Rukayat Motunraya Fashola, a.k.a. "Morayo," 28, of Valley Stream, New York, and Bolatito Tawakalitu Agbabiaka, a.k.a. "Bolamide," 34, of Linden, New Jersey. These two defendants also were arrested on July 22 by FBI agents. Court documents outlined a dispute among members of the syndicate, which allegedly prompted Vincent to contact the victim and claim that Abbas and Juma were engaged in fraud. After this contact, Abbas allegedly arranged to have Vincent jailed in Nigeria by DCP Abba Kyari, 46, of Nigeria. According to the affidavit, Kyari, a highly decorated deputy commissioner of the Nigeria Police, was alleged to have arranged for Vincent to be arrested and jailed at Abbas' behest, and then sent Abbas photographs of Vincent after his arrest. Kyari also allegedly sent Abbas bank account details for an account into which Abbas could deposit payment for Vincent's arrest and imprisonment. Anifowoshe, Fashola and Agbabiaka were arrested in New York and New Jersey on July 22, and were expected to be arraigned in Los Angeles in August. The all three are currently free on bond. The court maintained, however, that the indictment "contain allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. "Both conspiracy counts alleged in the indictment carry a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison. Aggravated identity

theft carries a mandatory two-year prison term. "The FBI is investigating this matter as part of Operation Top Dog. The FBI thanks the government of the United Arab Emirates and the Dubai Police Department for their substantial assistance in this matter. "The FBI also thanks the Kenyan Office of Attorney General, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, and Directorate of Criminal Investigations for their substantial assistance. "This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Khaldoun Shobaki of the Cyber and Intellectual Property Crimes Section. The Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs provided substantial assistance in this matter", it said. Meanwhile, Kyari has denied the allegations in a statement posted on his verified Facebook page. Kyari said, "Abbas, who we later came to know as Hushpuppi called our office about two years ago that somebody in Nigeria seriously threatened to kill his family here in Nigeria and he sent the person's phone number and pleaded we take action before the person attacks his family. "We traced and arrested the suspect and after investigations, we discovered there wasn't an actual threat to anyone's life and they are longtime friends, who have money issues between them hence we released the suspect on bail to go and he was not taken to any jail", he said. "Nobody demanded for a kobo from Abbas Hushpuppi. Our focus was to save people's lives that were purported to have been threatened. Later, he

saw some of my native clothes and Caps on my social media page and he said he likes them and he was connected to the person selling the clothes and he sent about N300k directly to the person's account. "The native clothes and caps (5 sets) were brought to our office and he (Hushpuppi) sent somebody to collect them in our office. "Nobody demanded any money from Abbas Hushpuppi and nobody collected any money from him. We responded to a distress call he made on threat to his family and released the suspect, when we discovered there was no life threat from the Suspect. This is the true story. Vincent is alive, he can be contacted", he said. Kyari therefore maintained that there was no such transaction between him and Hushpuppi. "For those, who are celebrating that this is an indictment on us and mentioning some fictitious big money, they will be disappointed once again as our hands are clean and our record of service for two decades is open for everybody to see. They will continue seeing us serving our fatherland and we will continue responding to all distress calls from all Nigerians provided they are life threatening. "For good Nigerians, who appreciate our service, please, don't worry as our hands are clean and they should please not respond to those celebrating and creating many false narratives without any evidence. We are used to such types of people and false newsmakers and distributors", he said. Meanwhile, the PDP

has demanded a forensic investigation into reports that FBI has linked head of IGP Intelligence Response Team, Kyari, to international fraudster, Abbas. In a statement by its National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, PDP claimed the revelation of the involvement of Kyari, the head of Nigeria's intelligence response unit, as a receiver of proceeds of international fraud was worrisome, disturbing and a stain on the integrity of the nation. "It is indeed disquieting that the integrity of our nation has fallen so abysmally low under the corrupt and fraud-patronizing President Muhammadu Buhari-led All Progressives Congress (APC) administration, to the extent that the head of its police intelligence unit is being charged in connection with international fraud. "Our party demands that the APC administration should not sweep this matter under the carpet given the manifest rapport between Kyari and some top APC leaders. We urge President Buhari not to 'ease out' this case of corruption but should immediately restore the integrity and image of our nation by allowing for a forensic investigation on the suspect," the PDP stated. The PDP, however, warned that, "if this Abba Kyari matter is not well handled, it will be a permanent stain on the reputation of our police, security system and our nation at large. It, therefore, asked President Buhari to direct the Inspector General of Police to take in Kyari for questioning and if found culpable, should be handed over to the FBI.

How FBI Unmasked Nigeria's 'Super Cop' DCP Abba Kyari

● Providing Police Services to Criminals

Until Thursday July 28, 2021 when news of how Deputy Commissioner of Police Abba Alhaji Kyari, was indicted in international multi million naira fraud, only very few Nigerians would doubt the integrity and the zeal the police officer many tipped to someday occupy the office of the Inspector General of Police in his fight against crime and criminality.

Although some questions were raised few weeks back when he was spotted at the burial ceremony for the mother of great socialite Obi Cubana in Oba, Anambra State; an occasion where millions in various currencies were freely lavished as 'spray money'.

Also while some have at one time or the other accused him of extorting people under arrest, hardly would anyone link him to notorious fraudster Ramon Olorunwa Abbas, popularly known as 'Ray Hushpuppi', who is just pleaded guilty to a host of criminal charges and currently sentencing in the United States upon conviction of cybercrime and money laundering offences.

Kyari was on Monday indicted in a \$1.1 million fraud and money laundering charge during the unsealing of a Criminal Complaint by the U. S. Justice Department. The complaint dated February 12, 2021 has Abbas, Abdulrahman Imraan Juma, a Kenyan, Vincent Kelly Chibuzo, Abba Alhaji Kyari, Rukayat Motunrayo Fashola and Bolatito Tawakalitu Agbabiaka as first to sixth defendants respectively.

They were specifically fingered in an International Scheme to Defraud the Qatari School Founder and then launder over \$1 Million in Illicit Proceeds. "messages obtained from ABBAS' phone and online accounts pursuant to federal search warrants, combined with bank records, other records, and information from victims, indicate that ABBAS and the other Defendants participated in a scheme to defraud a person (the "Victim Businessperson") who was seeking a lender to invest \$15 million in a project to build an international school in Qatar (the "Qatari Victim Company"). The scheme defrauded the Victim Businessperson of more than \$1.1 million" said the FBI agent in an affidavit he deposed to in support of the allegations.

According to an affidavit deposed to by one Andrew John Innocenti, an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, there are strong documentary evidence against the defendants leading to the arrest and prosecution of hushpuppi earlier in the year. Abbas AKA Hushpuppi was also said to have pleaded guilty to the charges on April 2020, this year.

While Abbas, Juma, Chibuzo, Fashola and Agbabiaka were said to have played very crucial and specific roles leading to the defrauding of the victim of over \$1.1 million, Kyari was said to have on the behest of Abbas kept Chibuzo in custody when he attempted to blow the lid off the deal. According to Innocenti, "KYARI, a Deputy Commissioner of the Nigeria Police Force, arranged the arrest of CHIBUZO at the request of ABBAS to prevent CHIBUZO from interfering in the scheme defrauding the Victim Businessperson. KYARI had CHIBUZO held in custody for a month and also facilitated payments from ABBAS to the Nigeria Police Force personnel who arrested CHIBUZO, in order to ensure CHIBUZO's continued arrest, thereby preventing CHIBUZO from notifying the Victim Businessperson of ABBAS' and JUMA's fraudulent scheme and preventing CHIBUZO from hijacking the scheme for his own benefit.

"KYARI's knowing involvement in the scheme allowed ABBAS and JUMA to continue defrauding the Victim Businessperson undetected and receive money obtained from the Victim Businessperson after it was laundered.

Speaking on the relationship between Kyari and Abbas, the FBI agent noted that Abbas appears to have first interacted with KYARI in September 2019, when KYARI traveled to the U.A.E. he said their conversation indicated that Abbas sent a car and driver to drive Kyari during that trip. He said, "Soon thereafter, KYARI sent ABBAS a video slideshow which showed some personal photographs of KYARI, some of which appeared to have been taken in the U.A.E. Later in September, after KYARI sent ABBAS an article that discussed him arresting



Hushpuppi

alleged kidnappers, ABBAS wrote, in part, to KYARI, "Am really happy to be ur boy," and later, "I promise to be a good boy to u sir."

Going to the genesis, Innocenti said the victim planned building an international school (the Qatari Victim Company) in Qatar, and therefore hired the Financial Advisor to find a lender who could invest \$15 million in the project.

"Around October 1, 2019, the Financial Advisor began reaching out to business contacts and conducted searches online to secure an investor to provide the \$15 million loan for his client. As a result of the online search, the Financial Advisor came into contact with Coconspirator 1, who claimed to live and work in the Philippines. Coconspirator 1 referred the Financial Advisor to a company in Kenya—Westload Financial Solutions Limited ("Westload")—to facilitate the loan.

"On November 12, 2019, the Financial Advisor and the Victim Businessperson travelled to Kenya to meet in person with JUMA and another person. As noted in paragraph 17, JUMA's business card identified him as the "Chairman" of Westload, while the business card of the other person stated he was the "Funding Officer."

"During this meeting, the Victim Businessperson signed a contract with Westload. The contract stated that the Victim Businessperson was responsible for paying a "consultancy fee" of \$225,000 through the law firm Okatch & Partners ("Okatch"), which was located in Kenya. The payment was to be made in two installments—an initial payment of \$157,500 and a second payment for \$67,500. Westload also provided two initial invoices; one for \$157,500 for the first installment and another for \$6,900, for purported legal and initial engagement fees.

"Concurrently, on about November 12, 2019, the Victim Businessperson began communicating with JUMA over WhatsApp. On around November 13 and 14, 2019, the Victim Businessperson wired approximately \$164,450 to Okatch in four separate transactions. On about December 1, 2019, JUMA provided the Victim Businessperson a wire transfer confirmation—which was forged and fraudulent—showing a transfer of \$15 million from a Barclays Bank PLC account in the United

Kingdom to the Qatari National Bank ("QNB") account of the Qatari Victim Company, dated November 28, 2019. Shortly thereafter, on about December 5, 2019, JUMA told the Victim Businessperson that another "payment of release order" was needed to secure the loan, and requested an additional payment of \$150,000. On around December 6 and 7, 2019, the Victim Businessperson wired approximately



Kyari

USD \$150,000 to Okatch in four transactions".

The agent stated that problem however started between January 9 and 10, 2020, when Chibuzo complained to Abbas that he had not paid for the work that was being done on the fake website. He added that Chibuzo while feeling been underpaid for the job decided to knock Abbas and Juma out of the deal and corner it to himself.

Innocenti said both Abbas and Juma learnt on January 13, 2020, that CHIBUZO had contacted the Victim Businessperson directly to tell him/her that ABBAS was "fake.", a situation which prompted Abbas to contact Kyari to deal with Chibuzo as well as keep him off the way.

"On January 13, 2020, the Victim Businessperson contacted JUMA about a person who had contacted the Victim Businessperson about the loan, stating "This number is calling me but I didn't answer." The Victim Businessperson also provided JUMA a screenshot of and forwarded additional conversations between the Victim Businessperson and CHIBUZO, who was using the U.S. phone number 3054405586. That phone number was the same phone number used by CHIBUZO to send ABBAS information about the fake Wells Fargo website described earlier. In the messages, CHIBUZO sent the Victim

Businessperson's passport, and claimed to be "trying to help" the Victim Businessperson.

"JUMA forwarded these messages from the Victim Businessperson to ABBAS, who responded, "I will deal with him." At approximately the same time, ABBAS asked CHIBUZO for a phone number on which to call him. Two minutes later, ABBAS sent the phone number on which he contacted CHIBUZO (which

CHIBUZO had previously also sent to ABBAS) to KYARI without providing any additional context. Just before forwarding the phone number to KYARI, ABBAS placed a nearly five-minute call to KYARI, using the phone number described in paragraph 136.

"A short time later, ABBAS told JUMA, "setting him up already [!] He will learn." JUMA replied, "He almost messed it up bro," to which ABBAS responded "They are working on it already. Approximately an hour later, CHIBUZO responded to ABBAS' message requesting his phone number by providing another phone number. ABBAS also sent this number to KYARI without providing any additional context in the message", Innocenti stated.

He further averred that on January 15, 2020, this time using WhatsApp, ABBAS sent an audio recording to KYARI, stating, essentially, that he wanted to remind KYARI about what they discussed earlier.

On January 16, 2020, ABBAS sent the following

threats to CHIBUZO: I dey always tell people to think well before they offend me and make them make sure they fit stand the consequences when the time comes. I won't say more than that but very soon, very very soon, the wrath of my hands shall find you and when it does, it will damage you forever. At this point I no get discussion with you, u have committed a crime that won't be forgiven, that is punishable and you shall receive die punishment in due time I swear with my life you will regret messing with me, you will even wish you died before my hands will touch you".

According to the affidavit, Abbas again on January 16, 2020, sent a message to KYARI on WhatsApp, and then placed five calls to another phone number (+2348060733588) that was listed as "Abbas Kyari." He claimed that call records show that the last three of the calls were answered and that one of the calls lasted more than two minutes. Innocenti said that shortly after that, ABBAS received a message from KYARI, confirming "We would pick him today or tomorrow." ABBAS wrote, "I will take care of the team also after they pick him up." KYARI confirmed "Yes ooo."

"Based on the conversation described in paragraphs 143 to 145, ABBAS planned to pay the Nigeria Police Force officers who arrested CHIBUZO for that service. This was not the only time that ABBAS arranged payments with KYARI. On May 20, 2020, ABBAS sent KYARI transaction receipts for two transactions from accounts at Nigerian banks (GTBank and Zenith Bank) of a person ABBAS knew in the U.A.E.—a person also arrested with ABBAS in ABBAS' apartment in the U.A.E. by Dubai Police on June 9, 2020—to the Nigerian bank accounts of another person in Nigeria. The amounts on the transaction receipts totaled 8 million Nigerian Naira, which was approximately \$20,600 based on publicly available exchange rate information", he added.

Also the affidavit stated that Chibuzo attempted to reason with Abbas on January 18, 2020, but recounted all the assistance he had provided in the scheme to victimize the Victim Businessperson, including creating the "power of attorney" document.

Kyari was also said to have sent to Abbas on January 20, 2020, biographical, identifying information for CHIBUZO, along with a photograph of him. He said in a conversation immediately following, ABBAS confirmed "that is him sir." KYARI stated, "We have arrested the guy . . . He is in my Cell now. This is his picture after we arrested him today."

He was said to send the biographical

HOW FBI UNMASKED NIGERIA'S 'SUPER COP' DCP ABBA KYARI

information about, and photograph of, CHIBUZO to Abbas using two different WhatsApp numbers—the second of which KYARI said was his “private number.” From that point on, KYARI and ABBAS primarily discussed the arrest and detention of KYARI through WhatsApp on this “private number.”

He said, “After receiving the photograph of CHIBUZO, ABBAS stated, ‘I want him to go through serious beating of his life.’ KYARI responded, ‘Hahahaha,’ and ABBAS replied, ‘Seriously sir.’ KYARI then asked for details about what CHIBUZO did ‘on audio,’ which KYARI said was ‘So that we will know what to do. In response to KYARI’s question about what CHIBUZO had done to ABBAS, ABBAS sent KYARI an audio message, which is transcribed here, describing how CHIBUZO had tried to steal away a fraud victim (i.e., ‘the job’) from him: What he did is, I have one job. The job want to pay me 500, umm, 75,000 dollars [i.e., \$575,000]. He went to message the job behind me because I told him to help me make one document for me to give the job. Then he went—he has a—I gave him the details. Then he went to message the job behind my back and try to divert the money and in this process he tell the job because of the documents he gave me that I gave the job, he tell the job, ‘These document they sent to you before. These people are fake. This money—is me who can help you to get it. Come to me le—bring this money you want to pay these people to me. I’m the only one who can help you,’ and all these things to divert the job for himself.”

“After listening to the message, KYARI wrote, ‘Ok I understand [¶] But he has not succeeded.’ ABBAS claimed CHIBUZO had taken some money, and provided KYARI with two screenshots, one of which contained the phone number 3054405586 (the phone number CHIBUZO used to contact the Victim Businessperson). The screenshots showed a person contacting the Victim Businessperson and stating that he was providing information to try to ‘help[¶]’ the Victim Businessperson. KYARI responded, ‘Yeah I understand.’ KYARI did not request other information or evidence relating to CHIBUZO’s role in the scheme, ask questions about the nature of the transaction, or ask about why CHIBUZO told the Victim Businessperson that ABBAS was ‘fake.’

“ABBAS then told KYARI, ‘Now the [Victim Businessperson] was skeptic to pay me the money cos he keep attacking the [Victim Businessperson] from his end. Now I can handle the [Victim Businessperson] correctly.’ ABBAS further told KYARI that he wanted to pay money to send CHIBUZO to jail for a long time, stating ‘Please sir I want to spend money to send this boy to jail, let him go for a very long time.’ KYARI responded, ‘Ok bro I understand I will discuss with my team who arrested him . . . And handling the case [¶] We will do something about it.’

“ABBAS responded, ‘Let me know how I can send money to the team sir[.] let them deal with him like armed robber.’ KYARI responded, ‘OK I will send their account details to u.’ ABBAS further wrote, ‘He betray me and try to take food out my mouth, this is great punishable sin,’ and KYARI responded, ‘Yeah bro.’ ABBAS then continued, ‘I want him to suffer for many years.’ KYARI responded, ‘Hahahaha [¶] Hahahaha.’

“Approximately six minutes later, KYARI provided the account information for a bank account at a Nigerian bank, Zenith Bank, in the name of a person other than KYARI himself. ABBAS responded ‘Ok sir, tomorrow by noon,’ indicating that he would make the payment to KYARI’s team by the next day.

“On the same day, ABBAS sent JUMA the photograph of CHIBUZO in custody, which KYARI had sent. Approximately a month later, on February 19, 2020, KYARI sent a message to ABBAS, saying, ‘Hello hush with [sic] need to talk about the subject under detention with me.’ ABBAS asked ‘Should I call u on this number sir?’ to which KYARI replied, ‘Yes call me. The following day, KYARI sent ABBAS multiple photographs of CHIBUZO to ABBAS, including close-up photographs showing a rash or skin disease on CHIBUZO’s torso and arms. ABBAS responded, ‘I don pity am, make them leave am from Tuesday.’ KYARI wrote, ‘Ok bro, they just brought him from hospital. The fever and the rashes is giving him serious Wahala [¶] He got the disease from other suspects in the cell.’ ABBAS responded, ‘I see am, I no too pity am [¶] That’s what people like him deserve but I go forgive am for God sake.’

In other words, based on my training and experience with Nigerian Pidgin, ABBAS was essentially stating, in part, ‘I don’t pity him. That’s what people like him deserve, but I will forgive him for God’s sake.’



JUMA



Morayo



Bolamide



Chibuzo

Innocent stated that based on the date of the messages and later discussion, Abbas on February 20, 2020— requested that KYARI should not release CHIBUZO until Tuesday, February 25, 2020. He added that Abbas then told KYARI that CHIBUZO’s girlfriend messaged him, trying to raise one million Naira to secure CHIBUZO’s release, adding that ABBAS promised to contribute 100,000 Naira. He said Kyari responding said, ‘They were thinking it’s normal arrest that is why they think money can remove him . . . No money can remove him here [¶] Hahahaha.’ ABBAS added, ‘But it’s better for them to think that way, I like it like that,’ and KYARI responded, ‘Yeah. ABBAS then said, ‘No problem sir from Tuesday he can go,’ apparently giving KYARI his blessing to release CHIBUZO from custody. KYARI responded, ‘Ok bro [¶] We will also keep his phone and other gadgets for some weeks.’ ABBAS responded, ‘Yes those ones they should not give him again, those ones are gone . . . Make he no see those ones again for life,’ instructing KYARI not to return CHIBUZO’s electronic devices. KYARI responded, ‘Yes he will not see it [¶] Again,’ indicating that he would accede to ABBAS’ request.

The Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s Los Angeles Field Office, Kristi Johnson, disclosed that Hushpuppi, who he said is among the most high-profile money launderers in the world, “has admitted to his significant role in perpetrating global BEC fraud, a scheme currently plaguing Americans.

“His celebrity status and ability to make connections seeped into legitimate organizations and led to several spin-off schemes in the U.S. and abroad. Today’s announcement deals a crucial blow to this international network and hopefully serves as a warning to potential victims targeted with this type of theft.”

Approximately \$230,000 of the stolen funds allegedly were used to purchase a Richard Mille RM11-03 watch, which was hand delivered to Abbas in Dubai and subsequently appeared in

Hushpuppi’s social media posts. Other illicit proceeds from the scheme were allegedly converted into cashier’s checks, including \$50,000 in checks that were used by Abbas and a co-conspirator to fraudulently acquire a St. Christopher and Nevis citizenship, as well as a passport for Abbas obtained by creating a false marriage certificate and then bribing a government official in St. Kitts.

The agent concluded by saying “Based on the foregoing, there is probable cause to believe that ABBAS, JUMA, CHIBUZO, KYARI, FASHOLA, and AGBABIKA participated in a conspiracy to fraudulently obtain and launder money obtained from the Victim Businessperson, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349 (Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud) and 18 U.S.C. § 1956(h) (Conspiracy to Engage in Money Laundering):

“ABBAS directly interacted with the Victim Businessperson, falsely claiming to be a Wells Fargo banker named ‘Malik.’ ABBAS also orchestrated the receipt and laundering of funds from the Victim Businessperson to and through bank accounts in the United States, as well as the creation and use of the Canoga Park Wells Fargo Account. ABBAS ultimately received the proceeds of the fraud scheme in a variety of ways, including as cash into the Nigerian bank account of another person, purchase of a luxury Richard Mille watch, and purchase of St. Kitts citizenship and a passport. After the Victim Businessperson began to suspect that JUMA had defrauded him/her, ABBAS purported to work with the Victim Businessperson to report JUMA’s fraudulent conduct to the FBI, but, in reality, defrauded the Victim Businessperson out of additional funds, which ABBAS then laundered.

“JUMA worked closely with ABBAS to defraud the Victim Businessperson, interacting directly with the Victim Businessperson and directing the Victim Businessperson to make payments to bank accounts in the United States and Kenya. In particular, JUMA received initial payments from the Victim

Businessperson and then involved ABBAS in

the fraud scheme. JUMA received and laundered the money that the Victim Businessperson sent to the Okatch bank account in Kenya.

“CHIBUZO interacted directly with ABBAS, as he worked with ABBAS and JUMA to create various artifices—including a fraudulent website and “phone banking” system—that would induce the Victim Businessperson to make additional payments to the coconspirators. CHIBUZO was to be compensated by ABBAS for his involvement in the scheme. At one point, CHIBUZO felt that he was not being paid enough or in a timely manner, and contacted the Victim Businessperson directly, saying that ABBAS and JUMA had scammed the Victim Businessperson, in an attempt to get the Victim Businessperson to make future fraudulent payments to CHIBUZO and not to ABBAS and JUMA.

“KYARI, a Deputy Commissioner of the Nigeria Police Force, arranged the arrest of CHIBUZO at the request of ABBAS to prevent CHIBUZO from interfering in the scheme defrauding the Victim Businessperson. KYARI had CHIBUZO held in custody for a month and also facilitated payments from ABBAS to the Nigeria Police Force personnel who arrested CHIBUZO, in order to ensure CHIBUZO’s continued arrest, thereby preventing CHIBUZO from notifying the Victim Businessperson of ABBAS’ and JUMA’s fraudulent scheme and preventing CHIBUZO from hijacking the scheme for his own benefit. KYARI’s knowing involvement in the scheme allowed ABBAS and JUMA to continue defrauding the Victim Businessperson undetected and receive money obtained from the Victim Businessperson after it was laundered.

“FASHOLA and AGBABIKA knowingly assisted ABBAS in receiving money from the Victim Businessperson into bank accounts in the United States and then laundering the funds received in a variety of ways, including through cash withdrawals, wire transfers, use of illicit money exchangers, and purchases of items and other things of value.

WE LOST A CHARISMATIC LEADER

The board, management and staff of Super Network
mourn the tragic loss of our Co-founder & CEO

Funeral
arrangements
as announced by
the family

Michael Usifo Ataga

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NEWS

DSS Fails to Produce Detained Igboho's Aides in Court

Alex Enumah in Abuja

The Department of State Services (DSS) yesterday failed to produce 12 of Sunday Igboho's aides held in their custody in line with the order of a Federal High Court in Abuja.

Justice Obiora Egwuatu had last week ordered the DSS to produce the detainees on July 29, and also appear before the court to show why the applicants should not be released unconditionally.

The order was sequel to an

exparte application argued by applicants' lawyer, Mr Pelumi Olajeingbesi, wherein he informed the court that the applicants have been in custody of the DSS since July 1, 2021.

Meanwhile, The Ooni caucus, a group set up by the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Ogunwusi, Ojaja II, to pursue the Yoruba agenda in a civilized manner, has warned certain elements sympathetic to Igboho to stop denigrating the group and the monarch over their misconstrued

positions.

The detained agitators were arrested during a midnight raid on Igboho's residence in Oyo State and subsequently brought to Abuja.

When the matter came up on Thursday, DSS' lawyer, Idowu Awo, informed the court that the detained applicants could not be produced in court, because of the nature of their arrest adding that investigation was still ongoing.

Awo stated that he had filed a counter affidavit to explain the

dimensions and sophistication of the investigation being carried out on the detainees.

He added that the DSS obtained an order of court permitting the detention of the applicants for 14 days to interrogate them.

Besides, the counsel submitted that some names on the Federal High Court order were at variance with the list of those being detained adding that only 4 out 12 names corresponded with that of DSS.

Responding, Olajeingbesi urged the court to sanction the DSS for disrespecting its lawful order to produce the detainees in court. He faulted the detention order tendered by DSS, adding that the order was not certified as required by law for public documents.

The counsel argued that it was wrong for the DSS to have detained the applicants for 25 days without charging them to court or granting them administrative bail.

Lagos under Severe Stress of Third Wave of COVID-19, Says Commissioner

Mary Nnah

Commissioner for Health, Lagos State, Prof. Akin Abayomi, has said that the state is presently under severe stress and strain of a third wave of COVID-19 as it diagnoses between 100 and 300 cases daily.

Speaking during the official launch of an ultra-modern intravenous (i.v) fluids production factory near Sagamu, in Ogun State, by Med-In Pharmaceuticals Limited, Abayomi revealed that the state's estimation facilities were filing up.

The commissioner, who represented the Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babatunde Sanwo-Olu, at the event, said Lagos State was creating more space to accommodate patients.

While appealing to the general public and neighbouring states to take precautions as that COVID-19 is not over, he added: "We have quite a long way to go and we do not know how many more waves we are going to experience, so it important that we stick to the non-pharmaceutical intervention and continue to build this kind of capacity, so that we have the indigenous capacity to be less vulnerable and more resilient to these kinds of shocks."

He urged the public to stop hugging and shaking hands and maintain the elbow greetings, which he said is appropriate for this time. "COVID-19 is a contact contagion, so if you continue to shake someone's hands, you are in a position of either transmitting or receiving the various."



BOOSTING AGRICULTURE...

L-R: The Oniru of Iruland, Oba Gbolahan Lawal; Lagos State Commissioner for Agriculture, Ms. Abisola Olusanya; Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu; his deputy, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat; Ayangburen of Ikorodu, Oba Kabiru Shotobi; and Elegushi of Iate-Elegushi Kingdom, Oba Saheed Elegushi, during the cutting of the tape of the 2021 Agricultural Value Chains Enterprise Activation Programme at Police College, Ikeja, Lagos... yesterday

SON Bursts Syndicate Adulterating Lubricants in Lagos

Sunday Okobi

A team of the Surveillance, Investigation and Monitoring (SIM) unit of the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) has uncovered a lubricant adulterating syndicate at a residential building in the Alaba International Market area of Lagos State.

The sting operation team swooped on the location and arrested the prime suspect, Mr. Chizoba Emmanuel, who was found in the premises with various items suspected to be drums of base oil and an empty drums used for mixing and repackaging of the substandard lubricants.

Speaking to journalists at the scene yesterday, the Director-

General of SON, Mr. Farouk Salim, who was represented by the Coordinator of the SIM Unit, Mr. Suleiman Isa, described the discovery as shocking, stating that it is indeed a wake-up call for Nigerians and particularly the organisation that there is still work to be done.

Salim said: "Despite SON's several arrests in the past, deviant Nigerians still persist in the act of adulterating engine oil and selling same to unsuspecting Nigerians, which has destroyed machinery and engines."

"The SON will not relent in the ongoing fight against unscrupulous elements that persist in defrauding unsuspecting Nigerians through their dubious acts."

USA Firm Donates N6bn Medical Consumables to Bauchi

Segun Awofadeji in Bauchi

An American donor, MAP International of United State (US), has donated medical consumables worth N6 billion to the Bauchi State Government for distribution to health care centres across the state.

Speaking while receiving the drugs, Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed appreciated MAP International USA and UPS for their remarkable support to his administration.

He assured stakeholders that the state government would distribute the donated medicine to secondary and tertiary health care facilities in the state for timely and appropriate utilisation.

The governor directed the State Ministry of Health and its agencies to set up a strong

committee to ensure equitable distribution and rational utilization of the medicine to the target beneficiaries as failure to do that will attract appropriate disciplinary action.

"This is an important life-saving medicine that is rarely available in pharmacies and medicine stores in Nigeria, because of its cost and increased demand globally."

"Our colleagues in the medical profession have confirmed to us that this medicine has proven efficacy in the treatment of life-threatening heart diseases," he said.

According to him, his administration from its inception, prioritized the wellbeing of the citizens of the state by providing them with equitable, accessible and affordable health care services.

18,000 JAMB Candidates to Sit for Mop-up Exams

Kuni Tyessi in Abuja

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has announced that no fewer than 18,000 candidates would sit for its mop-up examinations across the country on Friday, August 6.

The JAMB said that would be conducting the examination to make up for minor hitches, which were recorded during the 2021 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination

(UTME).

It said that affected candidates have been notified through text messages on their designated phone numbers and their JAMB profiles.

The board also said that candidates could check using their registration number on <http://www.jamb.gov.ng/2021mopup>.

A statement that was released yesterday by the Spokesperson of the JAMB, Dr. Fabian Benjamin, said that for the avoidance of

doubt, no candidate whose result has been duly released would be rescheduled for another examination contrary to the sponsored fake news being circulated on social and few mischievous conventional media.

Benjamin said that the affected candidates included those that could not be initially scheduled for examination owing to their inability to procure and supply their mandatory NINs or profile codes before the close of the registration exercise,

and few candidates that either encountered peculiar biometric verification problems or failed biometric verification on the examination date.

He said that the affected candidates also include those who were unable to sit for the UTME owing to the clash of timetables of the UTME and the then ongoing NABTEB examinations and whose particulars have been verified and supplied directly to JAMB by NABTEB.

2022: Allow the Best to Govern Ekiti, Ex-Deputy Gov Tells PDP

Victor Ogunje in Ado Ekiti

Former Deputy Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Sikiru Lawal, has told the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to adopt him as a candidate for the June 18, 2022, governorship election in the state.

Lawal boasted that he has better chances of defeating the All Progressives Congress (APC) and return the PDP to power than any other candidate, including his former boss and

aspirant, Mr. Segun Oni.

Lawal, who was Oni's Deputy between 2007 and 2010, advised those canvassing for zoning to drop the agitation, describing Ekiti as a homogenous state without political boundaries.

He made these statements when he formally declared interest in the 2022 governorship on the platform of the PDP.

He said: "My relationship with my former boss, Mr. Segun Oni is very cordial. He will forever remain my

boss. We worked together in government without rancour and we delivered. But that doesn't mean I can't have my own ambition.

"That I was his former deputy doesn't mean I can't have ambition. My ambition is to govern this state. My governorship project is not because of him (Oni). I am not doing this to galvanise support for him, but to serve the people of Ekiti.

"It is sad that Ekiti hasn't got

the correct leadership. We need a leader that understands the concept of leadership. Ekiti is very unique and peculiar, so we need someone who understands our homogeneity and who can make the best use of it.

"Zoning is a mere political demarcation. Ekiti is one by history and politics. I want a situation whereby the best candidate would be allowed to govern, whether from the South, Central or North for quick development."

Unizik Lecturer to Face Disciplinary Panel for Flogging Female Student

David-Chyddy Eleke in Awka

A lecturer at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, (name withheld) would face a disciplinary panel for allegedly flogging a female undergraduate of the school for not wearing a prescribed uniform.

The student, who was said to be in the Department of Economics, was allegedly beaten up by the lecturer for not wearing

an ankara uniform prescribed for her department.

The lecturer, it was gathered also seized personal effects, including shoes, of other students for not complying with the ankara dress code. Students of the institution say the matter was generating tension on campus, as most of the students were not comfortable with the situation.

A source said: "There is pressure on the students' union

government to take action on the matter or we (students) will paralyse academic activities in the university for days.

"Can you imagine! Where has this happened before that a lecturer would flog an undergraduate for any reason? Are we in nursery and primary school? This is unacceptable; this is unheard of. We must get to the root of this.

"The girl in question is still in

pains because of the beating she received from this callous lecturer, which left her body swollen and bleeding with injuries."

When contacted, the Dean of Faculty of Social Science of the University, Professor Uche Nwogwugwu, said: "A thorough investigation shall be conducted on the matter and if the allegations are true, the lecturer will definitely face the wrath of the Vice Chancellor.

NEWS XTRA

Presidency: House Leadership Told Buhari to Ignore Summon over Insecurity

Adedayo Akinwale and Udora Orizu in Abuja

Senior Special Assistant (SSA) to the President on National Assembly Matters (House of

Representatives), Hon. Umar El-Yakub has said it was the leadership of the House that told President Muhammadu Buhari to ignore its summon during one of its debates on

the protracted security crisis in the country. The House had summoned Buhari over the killing of 43 rice farmers in Zabarmari community in Borno State sometime ago. After the summon, the Speaker, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, who met with the

President, said the president had agreed to address the National Assembly. The following day after the assurance given by Gbajabiamila, the House Spokesperson, Hon. Benjamin Kalu, also disclosed that Buhari might appear before the lawmakers on Thursday, December 10, 2020.

However, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, said the National Assembly did not have the power to summon the president, but the House insisted that the invitation extended to the President was not aimed at ridiculing him over

security matters, adding that the president was rather invited for engagement with the House on ways to address security challenges in the country. Addressing journalists on Thursday in Abuja, El-Yakub revealed that the leadership of the House changed its mind over the President's summon.

Marwa Charges Newly Promoted NDLEA Officers to Crush Drug Cartels

Michael Olugbode in Abuja

Chairman and Chief Executive of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Brig. Gen. Mohammed Buba Marwa (rtd) has charged all the newly promoted officers and men of the anti-narcotic agency to go all out and crush all the drug cartels across Nigeria. Marwa gave the charge during a ceremony to decorate newly promoted Deputy Commanders General of Narcotics (DCGNs) and Assistant Commanders General of Narcotics (ACGNs). Marwa had on Thursday June 17, approved the immediate promotion of 3,506 officers and men to their next ranks, breaking the jinx of long years of stagnation in the Agency. He described drug as the number one public enemy of Nigeria, saying there was no community in the country where drug abuse or the effect of drug

trafficking has not manifested. He reiterated, however, reiterated that the NDLEA is now ready to mobilise all Nigerians in the war against illicit drug. Marwa's promotion order followed a report by the harmonisation committee he instituted soon after assuming leadership of the agency in January to address the issues of low morale and stagnation in the career path of personnel. After due consideration of the recommendations by the committee, he approved the immediate promotion of 2910 officers between the rank of Narcotic Assistant I and Superintendent of Narcotics while 596 others between Chief Superintendent of Narcotics and Assistant Commander General of Narcotics were recommended to the Board of the Agency for elevation to their next ranks, a recommendation that was approved by the Board on Wednesday June 16, 2021.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formally known and address as OLUWATOYIN OLUMUYIWA SOLOMON OLUFEMI, now wish to be known and address as ADEMUYIWA SOLOMON OLUFEMI. All former documents remain valid. The general public take note.

I, formerly known as ENADO SOFIA EMETITIRE now wish to be known and addressed as IWEGBU SOFIA EMETITIRE. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

I formerly known as MMADU CHIAMAKA LILIAN, now wish to be known and addressed as IGWE CHIAMAKA LILIAN CLARE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as AKUEWANBHOR MARK, now wish to be known and address as OKUDUWA MARK. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as NAOMI OLACHI EZEH, now wish to be known and address as NAOMI OLACHI AHIZECHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as OLOWU CHRISTIANA IYABO, now wish to be known and address as IBRAHIM CHRISTIANA IYABO. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as OKODOGBE ODIANOSEN MONDAY, now wish to be known and address as OKODOGBE ODIANOSEN. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME

I formally known and address as AYOBAMI OLUGBEMISOLA OLU-SANYA, now wish to be known and address as AYOBAMI OLUGBEMISOLA ENIOLA - OLAITAN. All former documents remain valid. The general public take note.

I formally known and address as OKERE IFUNAYA BLESSING, now wish to be known and address as EBIJEH IFUNAYA BLESSING. All former documents remain valid. The general public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as PRINCE NWAKAIBEYA CHUKWU-KADIBIA UDEBUANI, now wish to be known and address as PRINCE CHUKWUKA UZOEGBU. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as AJITE OLUBUNMI ELIZABETH, now wish to be known and address as ABEGUNDE OLUBUNMI ELIZABETH. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as MFON GRACE DAVID AKPABIO, now wish to be known and address as GRACE MFON DAVID AKPABIO-OKUMBOR MRS. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

I, formerly known and addressed as ANYINA EGWU CHINYERE, now wish to be known and address as ANYINA CHINYERE. All former documents remain valid. Please public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME

This is to notify the general public that OWABOR MICHAEL SATURDAY and OWABOR FRANK is the same person, and now wish to be known as OWABOR FRANK. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

Fake News Deadlier than COVID-19, Says Lagos Information Commissioner

Segun James

Lagos State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Gbenga Omotoso, has said that fake news, especially on the social media, is deadlier than the COVID-19 pandemic. The commissioner stated this in his welcome address at the three-day 2021 annual retreat for public affairs officers in the state civil service.

He implored all stakeholders in information management to join in the fight against fake news, saying that the aftermath of the menace is ravaging the world like the COVID pandemic. Omotoso maintained that the moment officers, as custodians of government news dissemination should take charge and move with trends, adding that after then, the issue of prevalent

fake news would be a thing of the past. "I can tell you that no disease is afflicting the world more than the issue of fake news and this is the time all practitioners should rise up and phase it out. I know that if our information officers should start moving with trends, it would be of great advantage". Stating that the theme of the retreat, "Managing Information through the new

media in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous and Disruptive(VUCAD) World", has a lot of relevance in the world today, the commissioner congratulated the organisers as well as the participants of the retreat. According to him, this year's edition is the second ever to be organised by Lagos State Government for its entire public affairs management team.

2023: Senate Chief Whip Urges INEC to Hold All Elections Same Day

Goddy Egene

The Chief Whip of the Senate and former Governor of Abia State, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, has called on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to consider holding 2023 general elections same day in order to reduce cost and rigging.

Kalu said that presidential election as well as the National Assembly, governorship and State House of Assembly elections could be concurrently taken care of on the same day rather than having staggered dates for them. He said in a statement that was personally signed by him yesterday that holding 2023

elections on the same day would minimise cost, give the electorates opportunity to vote their genuine choice and protect their votes. Kalu also cited the United States, Ghana and Sierra Leone as countries indulging in same day election, adding that Nigeria will not be out of place to do same.

The statement reads: "The INEC should conduct the 2023 elections same day as staggered elections are unnecessarily expensive. The conduct of the elections in different days gives room for rigging, tuggery and several vices. It also puts the lives of the voters and INEC officials on intense danger.

Enugu Court Remands Siblings for Alleged Murder of Make-up Artiste

Gideon Arinze in Enugu

An Enugu State High Court presided over by Justice I. K. Okpe yesterday remanded two siblings allegedly involved in the murder of a makeup artist, Ijeoma Nneke, 27, in Enugu Correctional Centre. The two siblings are alleged to have conspired to kill Nneke in November 2020 in Enugu. They were said to have compelled her to drink a poisonous substance, and

thereafter, allegedly poured corrosive chemicals all over her body. The offence is contrary to Sections 494 and 274 of the Criminal Code, Cap 30, Vol.11, Laws of Enugu State 2004. In a suit number: E/67C/2021 between the state vs Chiamaka Ifezue and Chukwuemeka Ifezue, Okpe adjourned the matter till August 25, 2021, following applications for the amendments of the charges.

The prosecuting counsel, Mrs. Ngozi Ikem-Okoye, informed the court about an oral motion as well as a pending application for the amendment of the charges when the matter was called up. Ikem-Okoye said the oral motion to amend the charge was brought pursuant to Section 313 (3) of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law. She said the prosecution also had an application that sought the leave of the court to call

additional witnesses in the matter, noting that the application was brought pursuant to Section 283 of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law. While responding, the defence counsel, Mr. C. U. Okafor, said he would not oppose the oral motion to correct the typographical errors on the charges, however, he said the application that sought the leave of the court to call more witnesses was unnecessary as the accused had yet to take pleas.

A'Ibom Condoles with Families of Deceased Corps Members Involved in Fatal Accident

Okon Bassey in Uyo

Akwa Ibom State Government has condoled with families of the five deceased National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members who died in a fatal motor accident. The state Commissioner for Youth and Sports, Sir Monday Uko, commiserated with the families of the deceased in a statement issued yesterday in Uyo.

Uko noted that the dead corps members passed away in an accident on the Abaji/Kwali expressway en route to Katsina State where they were posted for the mandatory NYSC orientation camp programme. An 18-seater bus conveying the prospective corps members from Uyo in Akwa Ibom State to Katsina State was reported to have run into a stationary trailer in the wee hours of July 28, which led to their deaths. Others who sustained various

decree of injuries in the accident were hospitalised at a nearby hospital. While describing the incident as a colossal loss, the commissioner noted with regret and despair that four of the

deceased persons, comprising three males and one female, were proud indigenes of the state, who had distinguished themselves in character and learning in their academic pursuit.

Again, Unknown Gunmen Abduct Popular Night Club Owner in Bayelsa

Olusegun Samuel in Yenagoa

Just a week after the abduction of 90 years old mother of Bayelsa State Secretary to the State Government, Madam Betinah Benson, unknown gunmen once again invaded Yenagoa, the Bayelsa State capital, and abducted a popular night club owner, identified as Mr. Tari Ajanami. Ajanami, an indigene of Ayamasa town in Ekeremor Local Government Area of the state, was abducted at about 6 p.m. on Wednesday at his building project site along Otio Road in the state capital. Ajanami, who is 43 years old, is the owner of the popular night club known as Club 64 along the Bay ridge area of the state capital and also work as a cash officer with

Wema Bank. It was gathered that the victim was at his building site to pay workers when the gunmen invaded the place and whisked him away to an unknown destination. While some eyewitnesses claimed the abduction may be connected to the lavish manner he celebrated his birthday recently, others argued that he might have been kidnapped for ransom demand. Meanwhile, the kidnappers of the mother of the SSG are yet to release her after over one week in captivity. Though the family has since kept mute over negotiations with the kidnappers, the state government said efforts is in top gear to fish out the kidnappers and bring her back home safely.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We, the underlisted are trustees of OZUZU LEAGUE OF FRIENDS, a Community Based Organisation of select Sons of Ozuzu community in Etche Local Govt. Area of Rivers State working together for our common good and the good of our community and humanity;

NOW, wish to inform the general public of our desire to formally register the above mentioned organisation with the Corporate Affairs Commission. Any individual or group who is genuinely opposed to the registration of THE INCORPORATED TRUSTEES OF OZUZU LEAGUE OF FRIENDS should forward a letter of objection to the Corporate Affairs Commission within 28 days from the date of this publication

TRUSTEES:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Mr. Sampson Ordu

Engr. Sunday Amadi

Dr. Peters Nwagor

Mr. Sunday Nsirim Ordu

Mr. Kingsley Oporum

Mr. Williams Olobo

Sir Humphrey Nwechefom

TOKYO 2020 OLYMPICS

Okagbare Blames Power Tussle in AFN for Ban of 10 Nigerian Athletes

"They were busy fighting over power, exercising their pride over PUMA contract/ kits forgetting their major responsibility THE ATHLETES"

Duro Ikhazuagbe

Nigeria's sprint Queen, Blessing Okagbare has lambasted sports administrators involved in the power tussle in the last board of the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) for the banning of 10 Nigerian athletes from the ongoing Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

On Wednesday, Nigeria accounted for half of the 20 athletes disqualified by Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) arm of the World Athletics from seven countries on the account of AFN officials unable to understand the application of Rule 15 of AIU which has been in operation in the last three years.

Nigeria had 10 athletes banned while Belarus (3), Ethiopia (1), Kenya (2), Morocco (1), Ukraine (3), and Bahrain (0) complete the list of countries whose athletes missed three Out of Competition Tests (OCT).

Okagbare who won a women's long jump bronze medal at the Beijing 2008 Olympics (later upgraded to silver following the banning of a Russian jumper), took to Twitter yesterday to appropriately put the blame on the doorsteps of the AFN board members that were involved in the fight to control the federation to the detriment of the athletes.

"They were busy fighting

over power, exercising their pride over PUMA contract/kits forgetting their major responsibility THE ATHLETES. It's sad that this circle keeps repeating itself and some people will come out to say I am arrogant for speaking my truth. It is my CAREER," observed the double sprint gold medalists at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Scotland in 2014.

Okagbare who made her fourth appearance at the Olympics running in the women's 100m heat early this morning, further blamed men who lacked knowledge about sports running track & field in the country.

"I have said it before and I will say it again: If you do not know the sport, not passionate about it/Us (the athletes), then you have no business there as an administrator," stressed the Sapele-born speedster who also have a World Championships silver and a bronze to show from the Moscow edition in 2013.

She decried the situation where athletes are made to bear the brunt of ineptitude of failed administrators.

"The sport system in Nigeria is so flawed and we athletes, are always at the receiving end of the damage," Okagbare recalled with sadness.

Meanwhile, Okagbare is leading the other 11 Nigerian athletes cleared to feature in

the track & field events starting today in Tokyo.

Also cleared to contest are sprint hurdler, Tobiloba Amusan who is ranked number four in the 100m hurdles; long jumper Ese Brume who tops the world list in her event coming to the games and Grace Nwokocha, the home-based sensation who clocked 11.09 seconds in March at the MOC Grand Prix in Lagos to seal her qualification for the Tokyo Games.

Others are the trio of Divine Oduduru, Enoch Adegoke and Ushoritse Itsekiri who will be competing in the men's 100m while Oduduru will also race in the 200m, an event he holds the national record of 19.73 seconds which he set two years ago in Austin, Texas in the USA to win the NCAA gold.

Shot putter Chukwuebuka Enekwechi who made it to the event's final at the World Athletics Championship in Doha, Qatar in 2019 is also cleared to compete.

The 4x400m mixed relay quartet of Imaobong Nse Uko, Patience Okon-George, Nataniel Samson and Ifeanyi Ojeli are also cleared to compete and will be in action today in the first semifinal heat.

Athletics accounts for 13 of the 25 medals won by Nigeria so far at the Olympic and two of the three gold medals.

Chioma Ajunwa won the country's first and only individual gold medal at

Atlanta in 1996. Her winning 7.12m jump was only this year earned by Ese Brume who is aiming to repeat the feat in Tokyo.

Nigeria's 4x400m relay team of Sunday Bada, Enefiok Udo-Obong, Clement Chukwu, Nduka Awazie, Jude Monye and Fidelis Tafida Gadzama won the silver that was later upgraded to gold after USA was disqualified for dope infraction.

BANNED

Favour Ofili
Ruth Usoro
Chidi Okezie
Chioma Onyekwere
Annette Echikunwoche
Rosemary Chukwuma
Knowledge Omovoh
Yinka Ajayi
Glory Patrick
Tima Godbless

CLEARED

Enoch Adegoke
Tobi Amusan
Ese Brume
Chukwuebuka Enekwechi
Patience Okon George
Ushoritse Itsekiri
Samson Nathaniel
Grace Nwokocha
Divine Oduduru
Emmanuel Ojeli
Blessing Okagbare
Nse Imaobong Uko

BASKETBALL

D'Tigress Clash with France with Eyes on First Win

Nigeria's D'Tigress will be back in action in the women's basketball event this morning as they take on France at 9.20am Nigerian time.

Both sides will be hoping to finish on a winning note and bag their first win of the Tokyo Olympics after losing their respective tournament openers.

France lost 74-70 to Japan on Tuesday in a game the host nation churned out a gritty defensive display accompanied by some ruthless shooting from beyond the arc.

It was a performance the French would want to forget in a hurry, but if D'Tigress begin Friday's match the same way they started and ended Tuesday's 81-72 loss to Team USA, then it might just be déjà vu for the Europeans.

Nigeria raced to a 20-17 first-quarter lead against Team USA, but they surrendered that lead and were behind 70-50 at the end of the third quarter.

However, D'Tigress dominated the defending Olympic Games champions in the fourth quarter, outscoring

them 22 points to 11.

And if they re-enact that first and fourth quarters' performance in Saitama, France would be in a lot of trouble.

D'Tigress' have a reputation of forcing opponents to commit turnovers and translating those turnovers into easy offence. It was a strategy the Japanese deployed on Tuesday.

France struggled to get into their offence as the Japanese looked to trap their guards with double and triple teams while also capitalising on defensive lapses in the French team to knock down 3-point shots. In all, Japan made 11 three-pointers against the French.

With a team not dependent on a single player for scoring, D'Tigress can make it two losses in a row for France.

But if they go about their business as lethargically as they did in the second and third quarters of that loss to Team USA, then it just might be the Nigerians having the feeling of déjà vu at the end of the game.



AITEO CUP: Eunisell Backs Rivers Utd for Final

Eunisell, sponsor of Nigeria Professional Football League side, Rivers United, has backed the Port-Harcourt-based team to reach the final of the 2021 AITEO Cup.

Rivers United and neighbours, Bayelsa United, will contend for a place in the finals, when they clash in the semi-finals today at the Agege Stadium.

"Eunisell is confident Rivers United has the quality to reach the finals and win the Cup. Victory in the semi-final will set the stage for the finals. It is an opportunity to showcase the Eunisell values.

"Rivers United have the players and coaching crew to reach the finals of the AITEO Cup. The team has displayed

strong character in previous matches," Eunisell said in a statement yesterday.

Head Coach, Stanley Eguma, won the knock out tournament in 2001, in his first attempt.

It promises to be a titanic clash as Rivers United play in the top flight and is tipped to overcome the second tier campaigners.

Rivers United has a strong record in Nigeria's Cup history with victories in 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2007, respectively, when it was known as Dolphins.

Eunisell, West Africa's largest independent chemical as well as oil and gas engineering solutions company, has been sponsor of Rivers United since its formation in 2016.

...AFN Appoints Anugweje Head of its Medical and Anti-Doping Commission

The Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) President Tonobok Okowa has announced the appointment of Professor Ken Anugweje as the federation's head of its Medical and Anti-Doping Commission.

Okowa made the announcement Thursday in Tokyo after the federation took responsibility following the clearance by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) of 12 out of the 22 athletes registered for the track and field events of the ongoing Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo, Japan.

"The federation has taken this proactive step to avoid future occurrences by appointing Professor Ken Anugweje as the head of the Medical and Anti-Doping Commission of the Federation," Okowa said in a statement issued by the

federation yesterday.

The AFN president assures stakeholders that the federation has put in place appropriate measures to comply with Rule 15 of the Anti-Doping Rules of World Athletics and explained why 10 of the athletes did not receive the clearance to compete at the game from the AIU.

"All our athletes resident in Nigeria and who qualified for the Olympic Games completed the three mandatory tests. Most of our top athletes resident in the USA also completed their tests," Okowa said in the statement and gives reasons why the 10 athletes, seven of whom are based in the United States of America (USA) failed to get the clearance needed.

"A few athletes in the American collegiate system were tested, but those tests were

deemed not to have complied with WADA sample collection and analysis standards. It must be noted that no Nigerian athlete tested positive to prohibited substances," stressed Okowa who took over as President just last month.

The Delta Sports Commission Chairman also assured all that the 12 athletes cleared for the Games are in high spirit and will strive to rewrite the unwanted records recorded at the last two Olympics when the team failed to win any medal.

Enyimba FC Stand by Oladapo Despite Dope Case

Femi Solaja

The management of Enyimba FC has throw its weight behind its Captain, Austin Oladapo, who was this week banned for one year by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) for failing dope test.

Last Monday in its ruling, CAF found the Nigerian star to

have tested positive to banned substance prednisolone in the Confederation Cup quarter final first leg match against Pyramids FC of Egypt on May 16th, 2021.

The Aba Elephant said in a statement yesterday that it will stand by their player in this trying time and would also not wish to stand toe-to toe against the continental body.

CAF found Oladapo guilty of a failed dope test and banned him from playing for the next calendar year when the Disciplinary Committee met to take decision on several matters affecting football in all its competitions.

But yesterday, Enyimba Chairman, Felix Anyasi Agwu, stated that "while the club still have the option to appeal

the decision, it is pertinent to first clarify that as a club, we have a strict code of conduct that shows zero tolerance to hard drugs or any banned substance.

That is why there had never been any record of a positive dope test for any of our players, either in the domestic or international competitions.

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MISSILE
PDP to Buhari

"It is disheartening that while Mr. President is spending tax payers' money relishing the expertise of London doctors and the luxury of medical facilities in that country, millions of Nigerians are dying in decrepit medical facilities at home" – PDP National Publicity Secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, berating the President for his recurring medical trips abroad, at the expense of impoverished Nigerians.

THIS DAY
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years
OF ROBUST JOURNALISM
SINCE 1995

PATUTOMI
GUEST COLUMNIST



Fola Alade, a True Iroko Found the Turf

The evidence that Nigeria needs redemption is everywhere. It's not normal that pigmies exit and their cohorts shout us deaf about the great exit of an icon but we cannot find what they built and the lives they touched. Yet Irokos fall in the forest and the Forest Ranger feigns deafness, as if Bandits are waiting to kidnap anyone who gives away their position with a cough. This paradox of the Nigerian condition kidnapped my faculties when a true Iroko, builder of Architectural complexes, and of men and women, and of the Nation, waved goodbye, with the same gentle dignity he lived a life of impact, and I did not hear the expected thunderous roar from those he served so diligently, for so long, in several roles.

Even though I was out of the country when Chief Fola Alade took his last curtain call and bowed deeply for the last time on this side of the great divide, I expected his impactful life, with the glow of his accomplishments would have generated a thunderstorm of salutes. Even with the show of his works so glaring, and still breathing so stoutly in facilities large and small, edifices quaint and monumental, and lives big and small, our failing to acknowledge true greatness persisted.

It was normal to assume that the rumble in the jungle, as the strike of the earth by the great branches of the Iroko, with the passing of Architect Fola Alade, if not as earth shaking as Alli/ Foreman rumble in the jungle from Ziare in 1974, should have loud enough that I should have felt the tremors of praise from Chicago where I was. Is it probably because we failed to pay enough regard to history, or is it because we banned it's being taught in schools that this generation should respond to such a landmark as a farewell wave by so grand a personage, not withstanding the tempering of the grandiose state of his standing by the deliberate humility of his mien, and so does not seek the attention. One of our earliest and foremost Public Sector Architects, he left his imprimatur on buildings around the then Federal Capital of Nigeria, Lagos, and beyond into the country.

As young people with limited interest and exposure to Architecture we still used to be able to look at a Federal building and see, feel, and almost smell a Fola Alade touch. But many of my friends were not as lucky as I was. I actually got to know the man and to enjoy his delightful charming and warm company. One of the first things that struck me when I heard of his departure, at the



Chief Fola Alade

age of 87, was a word association with the man, his legend, and his reality, which unveiled the person behind the persona. The words tumbled out without effort; decent, jovial, straight in your face frank talker, dignified, draped in integrity

, unbound by age, tribe, or tongue. Not many who served at senior positions, superintending building development, and construction, at a time we were in a construction frenzy so loud the importation of cement for the purpose created a cement

One of the first things that struck me when I heard of his departure, at the age of 87, was a word association with the man, his legend, and his reality, which unveiled the person behind the persona. The words tumbled out without effort; decent, jovial, straight in your face frank talker, dignified, draped in integrity, unbound by age, tribe, or tongue

Armada, and made the wait to berth at our ports a multiple month affair, would finish into modest dwelling as Chief Fola Alade did. I met him when his Allen Avenue home was like building a house in Sangotedo on the Lekki-Epe Axis, today.

He seemed happy enough living there when many of his subordinates found themselves homes in Ikoyi and Victoria Island. Even in his simplicity, he created the Fola Alade brand. His dress sense was avant-garde and unique. Whenever I saw him in his Beret and boy scout necktie, I was usually reminded of Pablo Picasso. Clearly, his Zaria School Artists contemporaries at the Nigeria College of Arts Science and Technology, that was precursor to Ahmadu Bello University would be green with envy at his fashion sense. With a little touch of the eccentric to his fashion statement Architect, Fola Alade must have made the Zaria nobels of the Arts school slightly envious of this Zanny Architects gear up.

Even at that, he would prove to be the disciplined Federal Permanent Secretary, the first from his stock, playing John the Baptist for current day NIA President, Architect Sonny Echeno who is Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Education? As I scope the problems of today's Nigeria, I realize that more than 80 percent of the problems flow from simple matter of not finding leaders who can engage objectively with strangers, people they do not know but manage to build preconceptions about. As Malcolm Gladwell notes, in his book on Talking To Strangers, this problem has dogged humanity throughout history. With Chief Fola Alade who talked easily with strangers, that was not an issue. I had a group of American friends, who were his neighbours on Allen Avenue. With them, and stranger s both American and Nigerian, we spent many pleasant moments.

There was hardly a dull moment with this pleasant and simple icon who could make you laugh and cry at the same time. Surely Peter Enahoro (Peter Pan) was right to write that you galta cry to laugh. This patch of God's Real Estate will surely miss Architect Fola Alade, the Chief of esteem and profound dignity who had a common touch and universal appeal, yet was simple to the end. We urge safe travels past the many rivers and hills on the way to the gate of paradise and the escort of bubbly angels. Farewell.

•Patrick Okedinachi Utomi
Founder, Centre for Values in Leadership