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#200

NIGERIA'S POVERTY RISK HEIGHTENS



- CBN's tightening policy fails to stem inflation tide
- 26m Nigerians to further go down poverty threshold - Experts
- Analysts predict rise in headline inflation to 32.40% in September
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APC's Okpebholo wins Edo governorship election

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Citizens lament hardship in Nigeria, say it's becoming unbearable



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How, when next Owa Obokun of Ijesaland will emerge - Chief priest 13

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Monday, September 16, 2024

Nigeria lacks 'real' political parties – Analysts



Major stakeholders across political parties in Nigeria have lamented the lack of real political parties in the country. They identified greed for power and money as enablers of indiscipline and lack of principles and ideologies within party structures in the country.

Tuesday September 17, 2024

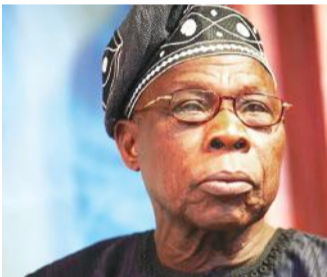
EDO GOVERNORSHIP POLL: Tension, legal battles heighten political temperature



With less than four days before the September 21 governorship election in Edo State, the political landscape is becoming more intriguing and chaotic. The battle line is getting heightened as the division between political leaders and parties is widening, while the approaching contest is taking a do-or-die colouration.

Wednesday September 18, 2024

How to make Nigeria work, by Obasanjo



Former Nigeria President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, has said that there is enough money to develop the country if the government is ready to make the right decisions.

Thursday September 19, 2024

Yahaya Bello honours EFCC invitation



The former Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, on Wednesday morning honoured the invitation of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, at their office in Abuja. A statement by the Director of his Media Office, Ohiare Michael, said the decision was made after due consultations with his family, legal team and political allies.

Friday September 20, 2024

Tinubu cancels UNGA79 trip to address national challenges



President Bola Tinubu will not attend the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York this year. In his stead, Vice President Kashim Shettima will lead Nigeria's delegation to the annual summit.

Saturday September 22, 2024

Daniel Dubois beats Anthony Joshua: IBF world heavyweight title fight



Daniel Dubois beat Anthony Joshua in an IBF heavyweight boxing title bout on Saturday, September 21

Top stories



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Sunday September 22, 2024

#EdoDecides2024: Obaseki loses LG to APC



Governor Godwin Obaseki of Edo State has lost his local government, Oredo Local Government Area, to the All Progressives Congress in the governorship election results declared by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



L-R: President Bola Tinubu; Agunwa Anaekwe; Salisu Buhari; Patricia Olubunmi Etteh; Sabur Oladimeji Bankole; Yakubu Dogara and Senator Obarisi Ovie Omo-Agege, during the President's meeting with the Forum of Former Presiding Officers of the National Assembly on Friday.



Access, Zenith, four other banks paid N453.71bn levies, insurance premium to AMCON, NDIC in six months

BRIGHT JACOB

The audited/unaudited reports of Access Holdings Plc and five other publicly-listed Nigerian banks revealed that they paid N453.71 billion as banking sector resolution costs and deposit insurance premiums to the Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria and Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation, respectively in the first half of 2024 that ended in June 2024.

The N453.71 billion represents about a 57.2 per cent increase from the N288.6 billion the six banks paid in the first half of 2023.

The other banks are Zenith Bank Plc, FBN Holdings Plc, Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc (GTCO), Stanbic IBTC Holdings Plc, and FCMB Group Plc.

The banking sector resolution cost represents the AMCON's levy, which applies to the total balance sheet size of the bank.

The current applicable rate based on the AMCON Act of 2015 is 0.5 per cent of total assets plus total off-balance sheet assets.

AMCON was established in 2010 in a bid to stabilise the Nigerian banking system by efficiently resolving the non-performing loan assets of the banks in the economy.

Currently, it is being funded by a combination of loan recoveries, contributions from the Central Bank of Nigeria, sales of pledged assets, and a sinking fund assessed to the banks.

The Federal Government established AMCON with a 10-year mandate in response to the mounting bad loans and the requirement to prevent the banking sector's impending collapse.

The AMCON Act 2019 (Amended) gives the corporation broader authority to pursue obligors for unpaid debts.

Additionally, helping eligible financial institutions efficiently dispose of eligible bank assets in compliance with the Act's rules is one of the key objectives of the Act.

Initially, banks were required to pay 0.3 per cent of all assets into the sinking fund.

In 2013 it was raised to 0.5 per cent of total assets (and 0.3 per cent of contingent liabilities).

The six banks' total assets hit N114.16 trillion as of June 2024, representing a growth of 37 per cent from N83.3 trillion in the 2023 financial year.

The breakdown of the reports showed that Access Holdings paid the highest amount of N134.41 billion

to AMCON and NDIC in H1 2024, about a 58 per cent increase from the N84.96 billion reported in H1 2023; followed by Zenith Bank, which paid N117.85 billion to AMCON and NDIC in H1 2024, about 66 per cent growth from N70.96 billion declared in H1 2023.

In the period under review, Access Holdings declared an AMCON levy of N112.2 billion in H1 2024, representing an increase of 63 per cent from the N68.81 billion reported in H1 2023, and N22.19 billion deposit insurance premiums in H1 2024, about 37.3 per cent increase from the N16.16 billion reported in H1 2023.

Access Holdings' N112.2 billion AMCON levy was due to a significant increase in the asset value of the newly restructured bank, which grew on the back of multiple mergers and acquisitions.

As of June 2024, Access Holdings reported N36.6 trillion in total assets, up from the N26.69 trillion reported in 2023 to emerge as the largest financial institution by total assets in Nigeria.

For Zenith Bank, its AMCON levy stood at N92.2 billion in H1 2024, which was about a 61 per cent increase from the N57.38 billion in H1 2023.

Zenith Bank had closed June 2024 with N27.6 trillion in total assets, a growth of 35 per cent from N20.4 trillion reported in 2023FY.

FBN Holdings announced a total N97.99 billion as AMCON and NDIC expenses in H1 2024, about 58 per cent increase from the N61.9 billion in H1 2023, just as GTCO declared N49.2 billion as AMCON and NDIC expenses in H1 2024, up from the N35.9 billion declared in H1 2023.

According to GTCO, the AMCON levy increased by 33.6 per cent to N36.6 billion in H1 2024 from N27.4 billion in 2023 due to the growth in the underlying total Asset and contingents base at the bank level to N7.33 trillion in 2023 from N5.46 trillion in 2022.

"Also, Deposit Insurance premium increased by 48.3 per cent (N12.5 billion in H1 2024 vs. N8.4 billion in H1-2023) due to a 26.3 per cent increase in underlying customers' deposit volume to N5.26 trillion in 2023 from N3.55 trillion in 2022 (Deposit Insurance Premium is calculated on preceding year's customers' deposits)," the bank explained in a presentation to investors and analysts.

While Stanbic IBTC Holdings declared N33.8 billion as AMCON and NDIC expenses in H1 2024, up from N20.37 billion in H1 2023, FCMB Group posted N20.45 billion as AMCON and NDIC expenses in H1 2024, representing a growth of 40 per cent from the N14.58 billion declared in H1 2023. ●

FaceOff

“THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LABOUR PARTY IS MIFFED BY THE ACTIONS OF OUR LEADERS INCLUDING OUR FORMER PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PETER OBI AND THE ONLY LABOUR PARTY GOVERNOR, ALEX OTTI WHO SHOULD BE DEFENDING THE PARTY AT THIS AUSPICIOUS AND TRYING MOMENT.

— OBIORA IFOH, LABOUR PARTY'S SPOKESMAN

“WE ARE ON A RESCUE MISSION, NOT JUST FOR THE LABOUR PARTY, BUT I TELL YOU FOR OUR DEAR NATION

— CHAIRMAN, LABOUR PARTY'S NATIONAL CARETAKER COMMITTEE, NENADI USMAN.

Kogi women protest alleged persecution of Yahaya Bello

TIMOTHY AGBOR

A huge crowd of women in Kogi State took to the streets at the weekend to protest what they described as the alleged persecution of a former governor of the state, Alhaji Yahaya Bello, by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission.

Calling on President Bola Tinubu to call the EFCC to order, they insisted that the former governor had done more than any governor of the state for the people since its creation.

The women, led by various community leaders and party faithful, converged on the state capital, Lokoja, to condemn what they also described as a "witch-hunt" by the EFCC.

They called on the President to urgently intervene in the matter by

POINT

We stand with our leader, Yahaya Bello in this trying time

directing the EFCC to allow the courts to do their jobs.

They argued that with the actions of the EFCC on Wednesday, it was clear that the agency's allegations against Bello were politically motivated and aimed at tarnishing his reputation, adding that they would not fold their arms and watch him lose his life.

"We stand with our leader, Yahaya Bello in this trying time. We believe he has been targeted unfairly and we demand justice. We won't watch him lose his life," one of the protesters, identified as Hajija Halima Abass, said.

"The EFCC should focus on

genuine cases of corruption, not political vendetta," another protester, who simply identified herself as Mrs. Boluwaji, added.

The various women group leaders, who spoke in their local dialects – Igala, Ebara, Yoruba and others, urged the EFCC to be professional in its "handling of the case against the state leader, Alhaji Yahaya Bello."

They chanted songs, saying that Kogi people were fearless people and reiterated that they would not stand by and continue watching what they called a show of shame, especially after the former governor had made himself available to EFCC.

They wondered why the EFCC refused to interrogate or detain him while he was in their office but rather went shooting at night at the Kogi Government Lodge to arrest a man who had voluntarily

walked up to them earlier in the day.

"We Kogi people of Ebara descent cherish what our son, Yahaya Bello, did for us as governor. That is why we're out on the streets to ask EFCC to leave him alone.

"We are not giving him out to anyone to crucify. He will come back to us hale and hearty," one of the women leaders from Ebaraland, who simply identified herself as Hajija Fatima, said.

"We, the Igala people from Kogi East, we are here because of our leader, Alhaji Yahaya Bello. He has never done anything bad to us. To those people that are looking to take him, please leave him alone. We have never seen this kind of government before. He did well for the state," another women leader who identified herself as Mrs. Deborah said. ●

L-R: First Lady of Lagos State, Mrs. Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu; wife of the Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Mrs. Oluremi Hamzat; her husband/the celebrant, Obafemi Hamzat; Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu; former Deputy Governors of the State, Mrs. Sarah Sosan and Femi Pedro, during the cutting of the cake at the special prayer in commemoration of the 60th birthday of Hamzat, held at the Lagos Community Secretariat Central Mosque, Alausa, Ikeja, on Thursday.



APC's call for state of emergency, insult to Zamfara people, says PDP

BRIGHT JACOB

The Zamfara State chapter of the People's Democratic Party has described as pedestrian the recent call by a factional All Progressives Congress group in the area for a declaration of state of emergency in the state.

"This is a clear indication that they are intimidated by the developmental strides made under Governor Dauda Lawal's leadership," the PDP said in a statement in Gusau on Sunday.

The statement signed by the party's publicity secretary, Halliru Andi, said that, "the PDP administration is focused on rectifying the maladministration that characterized 25 years of APC governance and it is evident that the APC fears the scorecard of Governor Lawal. Their attempts to undermine his efforts reflect a desperate need to salvage their political careers as the 2027 elections approach.

"The call for a state of emergency is unfounded and deeply disre-

spectful to the resilient people of Zamfara State.

"The APC conveniently overlooks the troubling legacy of former Governor Bello Matawalle, whose misguided approach to banditry involved cozying up to warlords.

"His administration's failure to ensure security was characterized by a disturbing pattern of accommodation, including providing Hilux vehicles and substantial financial rewards to bandits while allowing them unrestricted access to the Government House.

"As a result, the citizens of Zamfara experienced the dire consequences of this recklessness, with bandits attacking communities and finding refuge within the very corridors of power.

"The unfounded claim that Governor Dauda Lawal is sabotaging the fight against banditry in Zamfara State is a political move to undermine our ongoing efforts to address insecurity in the state.

"Governor Lawal is the first in

our state's history to prioritize security with genuine commitment, contrasting sharply with the previous APC administrations.

"Unlike the APC, which has politicized the serious issue of insecurity, the PDP's administration is committed to the peace and stability of Zamfara state.

"The successes we've seen against banditry are direct results of Governor Lawal's steadfast approach, refusing to engage in reconciliation with criminals.

"This principled stance has set a clear and firm direction in our fight against banditry.

"The PDP administration led by Governor Dauda Lawal has taken significant steps, including the establishment of Community Protection Guards (CPG) and the creation of a Security Trust Fund to support conventional security forces.

"Just a few weeks ago, Governor Lawal distributed vehicles to enhance the operational capabilities of our security agencies, demonstrating his unwavering

dedication to this critical issue.

"The APC's allegations are nothing more than desperate propaganda.

"At no point did former Governor Matawalle express willingness to collaborate with Governor Lawal in addressing insecurity in the state.

"Furthermore, Matawalle, now Minister of State for Defence, has shown a lack of competence and empathy for the people of Zamfara.

"His secret negotiation with bandits, conducted without Governor Lawal's knowledge, directly undermines the current administration's firm stance against reconciliation with bandits.

"Following the failure of these negotiations, he falsely claimed that Governor Lawal approved N1.3 billion in a fabricated memo for reconciliation processes, a baseless assertion.

"We call upon President Bola Tinubu to sack Bello Matawalle from his position as Minister of State for Defence. ●

Abdulrazaq congratulates Kwara's new council chairmen, councilors as PDP protests result of LG poll

FESTUS OKOROMADU

Kwara State Governor Abdulrahman AbdulRazaq has congratulated all the newly elected 16 local government chairpersons and 193 councillors on their deserving victories at Saturday's election.

According to a statement by the Chief Press Secretary to the governor, Rafiu Ajakaye, the governor also congratulated all the leaders and members of the All Progressives Congress on the successful outing at the polls, which he links to the strides of the government, the support of every party member and stakeholders, and sustained relationships that the party has built with the people of the state.

Abdulrazaq commended the Kwara State Independent Electoral Commission and the security agencies for the peaceful and hugely successful exercise.

The governor said he is confident that insights and experiences from the exercise will help to improve future elections in the state and across the country, especially that leadership of other states' electoral commissions observed the exercise across the state.

Abdulrazaq again commended Kwarans for their large turnouts for the election, their support for the APC, and their decent conduct while it lasted.

He thanked all the political parties for their impressive participation and sportsmanship.

PDP MEMBERS PROTEST

RESULT OF KWARA LG POLL

Meanwhile, a man was reportedly beaten in Ilorin, the Kwara state capital, on Sunday during a protest against the results of Saturday's local government elections by members of the state chapter of the People's Democratic Party.

The man, identified as Ibrahim Suberu, who said that he is a civil servant in the state, was beaten mercilessly near the Kwara State Independent Electoral Commission office, Fate Road, Ilorin, by the irate crowd who pulled him down from his motorcycle.

The PDP members, as early as 8 am on Sunday, started the protest against the results of the local government elections released in the early hours of Sunday by KWASIEC.

The KWASIEC Chairman, Mohammed Baba-Okanla, in a statement made available to the press on Sunday morning, said that APC won the chairmanship and councillorship elections in the 16 local government areas and 193 wards of the state, respectively.

During the protest, a bonfire was made at strategic locations on Fate Road before they marched on to Zango/ Maraba Road to the General Post Office and Challenge areas of Ilorin Metropolis wielding placards with different inscriptions condemning the election results declared by KWASIEC.

The victim said that he was coming out of a shopping mall, where he went to buy something for his children on his motorcycle when he ran into the mob. ●

Access Holdings grows revenue to N2.2trn in H1 2024

BAMIDELE FAMOOFO

Access Holdings Plc, a leading global financial institution, has reported revenue growth to the tune of N2.2 trillion for the half-year audited financial period ended 30 June 2024.

The results, according to the bank, underscore the company's continued resilience, focus on delivering sustainable performance and commitment to creating long-term value for shareholders.

In half year 2024, total assets and shareholders' equity stood at N36.5 trillion and N2.8 trillion, respectively.

This represents a year-to-date growth of 37.1% and 29.8%, respectively.

Customer deposits increased by 31.3%, from N15.3 trillion in December 2023 to N20.1 trillion by half year 2024.

Gross loans and advances also saw an increase of 37.6%, growing from N8.9 trillion in December 2023 to N12.3 trillion by half year 2024, from organic loan growth and the impact of foreign curren-

cy-denominated loans.

Access Holdings reported triple-digit growth across all profitability metrics, with gross revenue rising by 133.5% year-on-year, from N940 billion in half year 2023 to N2.2 trillion in the half year 2024.

This increase was supported by higher interest and non-interest earnings in the period. Interest income surpassed the N1 trillion mark, from the expansion of risk assets and effective pricing, leading to a 142% growth from N606.8 billion in the half year 2023 to N1.47 trillion by half year 2024. Non-interest income also grew by 117%, rising from N333.4 billion in half year 2023 to N723.6 billion in the half year 2024.

Profit before tax increased by 108.2% year-on-year, from N167.6 billion in half year 2023 to N348.97 billion in the half year 2024, while profit after tax rose by 107.7%, from N135.4 billion to N281.3 billion over the same period. This resulted in a 103% growth in earnings per share (EPS), which increased from N3.74 in half year 2023 to N7.58 in half year 2024. ●

Darkness hits Maiduguri as terrorists bomb newly repaired power transmission line

FESTUS OKOROMADU

Barely three weeks after it was restored, Boko Haram terrorists have reportedly destroyed Damaru-Maiduguri 330 Kilovolt transmission line in Borno State.

Sources said the terrorists blew up the Transmission Company of Nigeria's infrastructure with improvised explosive devices in the early hours of Sunday.

The development had plunged Maiduguri and the surrounding environment into complete darkness.

"The attackers used improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to blow up the facility around 2 a.m., plunging Maiduguri and surrounding areas back into darkness. This marks a repeated targeting of the critical infrastructure by insurgents," the source said.

The incident comes weeks after TCN restored the line on September 4, 2024, following its earlier destruction by terrorists. ●

Terrorist kingpin, Bello Turji, only buying time, we'll get him - CDS

TIMOTHY AGBOR

The Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa, has assured Nigerians that notorious bandit leader Bello Turji is only buying time, vowing that security operatives will soon apprehend him to pay for his crimes.

General Musa gave the assurance during the 38th anniversary dinner of the Nigerian Defence Academy's 38 Regular Course in Kaduna, where he was also honoured as a member of the same course.

The CDS, who acknowledged the security challenges facing the country, particularly in the North West, emphasised that the Armed Forces and other security agencies are making progress in tackling the situation.

He lamented that insecurity is now a new world order despite improved technologies.

Specifically mentioning the efforts to track down the bandits kingpin Turji, the CDS reiterated that getting him is just a matter of time, noting that security agencies

are working together to ensure that he is brought to justice.

"The security challenges we are facing are not only Nigeria's alone; it's a global phenomenon," General Musa stated.

He added, "We are standing up to the occasion, and we are getting there. The security situation is improving, and we will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that Nigeria is safe and secure."

He however appealed to Nigerians to support the security agencies by reporting suspicious moves, stressing the importance of community engagement in combating insecurity.

General Musa stressed that this cannot be done alone, saying, "It's a teamwork. We need the cooperation and collaboration of all Nigerians to tackle the security challenges facing our nation."

"Don't allow these guys to stay in your communities, don't trade with them nor give them support. Report any suspicious activity to the authorities, and together, we will defeat these criminal elements."

Tinubu orders crackdown on cybercrime, car theft syndicates

BRIGHT JACOB

Nigeria will continue to work with its international partners to ensure that cyber criminals and organised crime groups involved in transnational car thefts are deprived of the benefits of their illegal activities.

To this end, President Bola Tinubu has directed security and law enforcement agencies — including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, the Nigeria Customs Service, the Nigeria Police Force, and the Nigerian Ports Authority, to intensify efforts in cracking down on

POINT

Nigeria is not a destination for stolen vehicles

individuals in possession of and trafficking in stolen vehicles.

In a statement by Presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, on Sunday, the President noted that one of the most effective tools available to law enforcement agencies is depriving criminals of the proceeds from their illicit activities.

He acknowledged the recent handover of 53 vehicles

and \$180,300 by the EFCC to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, on behalf of two Canadian citizens who were victims of cybercrimes perpetrated by Nigerian nationals.

While expressing concern over the involvement of transnational organised criminal groups in exporting stolen vehicles to Nigeria, President Tinubu commended the Commission for collaborating with partners to ensure a coordinated and professional response to the menace.

The President further directed all relevant agencies, particularly the anti-corruption agencies, to protect Ni-

geria's economic and financial integrity from organised crime infiltration.

He also demanded that the value of seized and confiscated moveable assets be preserved for the state, society, and victims in line with existing legislation and international conventions.

The president strongly affirmed, "Nigeria is not a destination for stolen vehicles and a haven for illicit wealth from foreign countries."

President Tinubu affirmed that his administration remains committed to tackling money laundering, cybercrime, and other financial crimes. ●

Soldiers kill vandals, destroy 13 illegal refineries in Niger Delta

BRIGHT JACOB

The 6 Division, Nigerian Army, says its operatives have neutralised two armed vandals involved in illegal oil bunkering during a gun duel and recovered two AK-47 rifles while 18 suspects were arrested across various states in the Niger Delta region.

Also, the Army said the troops destroyed 13 illegal refining sites, seven boats, uncovered eight illegal connection points and impounded over 60,000 litres of stolen products across the region.

The acting Deputy Director, 6 Division Army Public Relations, Lit-Col. Jonah Danjuma disclosed this in a statement

issued in Port Harcourt, the Rivers State capital, on Sunday.

Danjuma said the feat followed the Army's consolidation on the ongoing anti-illegal bunkering operations, saying it had recorded enormous successes in the crude oil and gas-rich region.

The statement read, "In the latest feat recorded, troops neutralised two armed vandals, recovered two AK-47 rifles, arrested 18 suspected oil thieves, destroyed 13 active illegal refining sites, seven boats, discovered 8 illegal connection points and confiscated over 60,000 litres of stolen products across the region."

"Following credible intel-

ligence on a criminal attempt to vandalise the Nigerian Agip Oil Company pipeline, traversing Upatabo Community in Ahoada West Local Government Area of Rivers State, troops swiftly mobilised to the scene.

"On getting to the scene, the criminal elements engaged troops in a firefight. In the gun duel that ensued, troops neutralised two of the criminals, recovered two AK-47 rifles, eight magazines and 69 rounds of 7.62 mm (Special) ammunition, while others fled in disarray. Efforts are ongoing to apprehend the fleeing suspects.

"At Bille in Degema LGA, troops deactivated four illegal refining sites, two wooden boats and handled over 6,000 litres of stolen products. Likewise at Odagba village, at the fringes of Imo River, troops intercepted two wooden boats with over 5,000 litres of stolen products, destroyed

one oven and received each within the swampy area of Odagba village."

The statement further noted, "In Akwa Ibom, troops acting on credible intelligence intercepted six drums of premium motor spirit estimated to be 1,500 litres at Ibaka water-side in Mbo LGA."

"The products were being primed for onward smuggling to a neighbouring country through the waterways. All the persons arrested have been handed over to the prosecuting agency, while products confiscated are handled appropriately in compliance with subsisting mandates in the region."

The division's General Officer Commanding, Maj-Gen. Jamal Abdussalam, while commending troops for the successes recorded, reassured all that the division would continue to sustain ongoing operations across the Niger Delta region. ●

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OLAYINKA-DAVIDS OLUWADAMILOLA CHRISTIANAH**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OLAYINKA-DAVIDS OLUWADAMILOLA CHRISTIANAH**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **IBRAHIM FATIMO**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **IBRAHIM FATIMOH ABOSEDE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known and addressed as **SOYOMI WASIU**, now to be known and addressed as **SOYOMI ABDUL WASIU OLALEKAN**. All former documents remain valid. ZENITH BANK and the general public to please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
Formerly **MISS ONIFADE MARIAM OMOTOYOSI** now to be known addressed as **MRS OLUBUNMI MARIAM OMOTOYOSI**. All former documents remain valid general public take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAMES
That, I am the same person bearing **OLADIPO FAUSATI KEPO** and **AJAKAYE FAUSATI KEPO**. Now to be known and addressed as **MRS. SHITTU FAUSATI KEPO**. All former documents remain valid. ACCESS, ECO, GT BANKS and the general public to please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **SOBOLA JUMOKE SOLA**, Wrong Date of birth is 24/12/1953. Now wish to be known and addressed as **SOBOLA OLUWAJUMOKE ADESHOLA**, Correct Date of birth is 24/12/1960. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ALEXANDER AUGUSTINA NDFREKE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AKANIYENE NDFREKE JIMMY**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **MOSHOD ADEWALE IBRAHIM**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MOSHOD ADEWALE IBRAHIM OLUWAFADEREMI**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **USMAN MOHAMMED HAMMED**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **USMAN MUHAMMED AHMMED**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ALEKE BEATRICE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **PHILLIP BEATRICE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

Addition of middle name to My BVN
I formerly known and addressed as **OLAIFA AMOS**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OLAIFA AMOS OLANIYI**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **AKINYODE NURUDEEN**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AKINYODE NURUDEEN ALOWOLE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
SUCCESSFUL ELEGANT LADIES ASSOCIATION, LAGOS NIGERIA
THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE ABOVE NAME HAS APPLIED TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION FOR THE REGISTRATION UNDER PART 'F' OF THE COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT 2020.
TRUSTEES:-
FASUYI TINA LOLA - TRUSTEE CHAIRMAN
IBEAUJUCHI FUNMILAYO OLAYIDE - TRUSTEE
OREKOYA EBUDOLA FUNMILAYO - SECRETARY
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
TO PROMOTE OUR GENERAL IDEALS AND LIFE INTEREST OF MEMBERS
PROVIDING FUNDS AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS TO THE LESS PRIVILEGE IN THE CONGREGATION AND AMONG MEMBERS OF OUR ASSOCIATION
TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER
ANY OBJECTION TO THIS REGISTRATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION PLOT 420, TIGRIS CRESCENT, OFF AGUIYI IRONSI STREET, MAITAMA, ABUJA, NIGERIA. WITHIN 28 DAYS OF THIS PUBLICATION.
SIGNED-CHAIRMAN

Citizens lament hardship in Nigeria, say it's becoming unbearable

● Economic experts proffer quick fixes, maintain current economic policies will lead nowhere

TIMOTHY AGBOR AND
BRIGHT JACOB

Nigerians have expressed worry over their worsening predicament, saying the more they show understanding and make hard sacrifices in the face of the economic crisis, the harsher their living conditions become.

They said about sixteen months after the removal of fuel subsidy by President Bola Tinubu, their woes have been compounded and that they are yet to experience any positive outcomes from the economic policies of the Federal Government.

Some of the nation's citizens who spoke with The Point in separate interviews queried President Tinubu who doubles as the Minister of Petroleum, Wale Edun, the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy of Nigeria and Olayemi Cardoso, the Central Bank of Nigeria Governor on their economic policies which they said have been making life unbearable for the common man.

As the Naira continues to fall both in the Nigerian Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market, it is also declining in the parallel market, prices of goods and services in the country have been hitting the roof.

The Nigerian Economic Summit Group had said recently that the present economic situation in the country is scary.

Private sector led-think tank group said the country needs to take bold and decisive steps to address the challenges.

According to the chairman of the NESG, Niyi Yusuf at a news conference in Abuja, one of Nigeria's pressing concerns now is translating economic growth into improved lives and livelihoods for all its citizens.

Bemoaning difficulty in paying his children school fees for the 2024/2025 academic session, a father of three, Isaac Adelowokan said he did not know how he used the money he saved for his children's school fees for the family upkeep.

"I am in a difficult situation now and I am losing it. Our Naira is miserable to the extent that when you have N200,000 in your savings, you discover you have nothing the moment you dip your hands in spending it. I had been saving for my children's school fees when they resume this September but look at me now, just in a matter of weeks, foods and other family needs have consumed it. My children are yet to resume school.

"Still, our President will ask us to be patient. The question is, for how

long are we going to endure this terrible situation? We are making sacrifices but nothing appears to be getting better. More taxes are being invoked by the government and prices of fuel are on increase almost on a daily basis. For how long should we sacrifice because we are tired? President Tinubu should act fast because things are already worse," Adelowokan, a tricycle rider in Osogbo said.

Another citizen, Mrs. Ige lamented hunger and financial distress across the country, saying the policies of President Tinubu have claimed

many lives and subjected several others into miseries.

She said, "When I say things are getting difficult, I mean it. We are losing people to this economic crisis and starvation is everywhere. If you go to our hospitals, many are very sick and they are becoming hypertensive. The government is asking us to be patient but our public office holders appear not to know what we, the common masses are passing through. Asking us to make more sacrifices while the prices of things are increasing on a daily basis is tantamount to suicide and people are suffering."

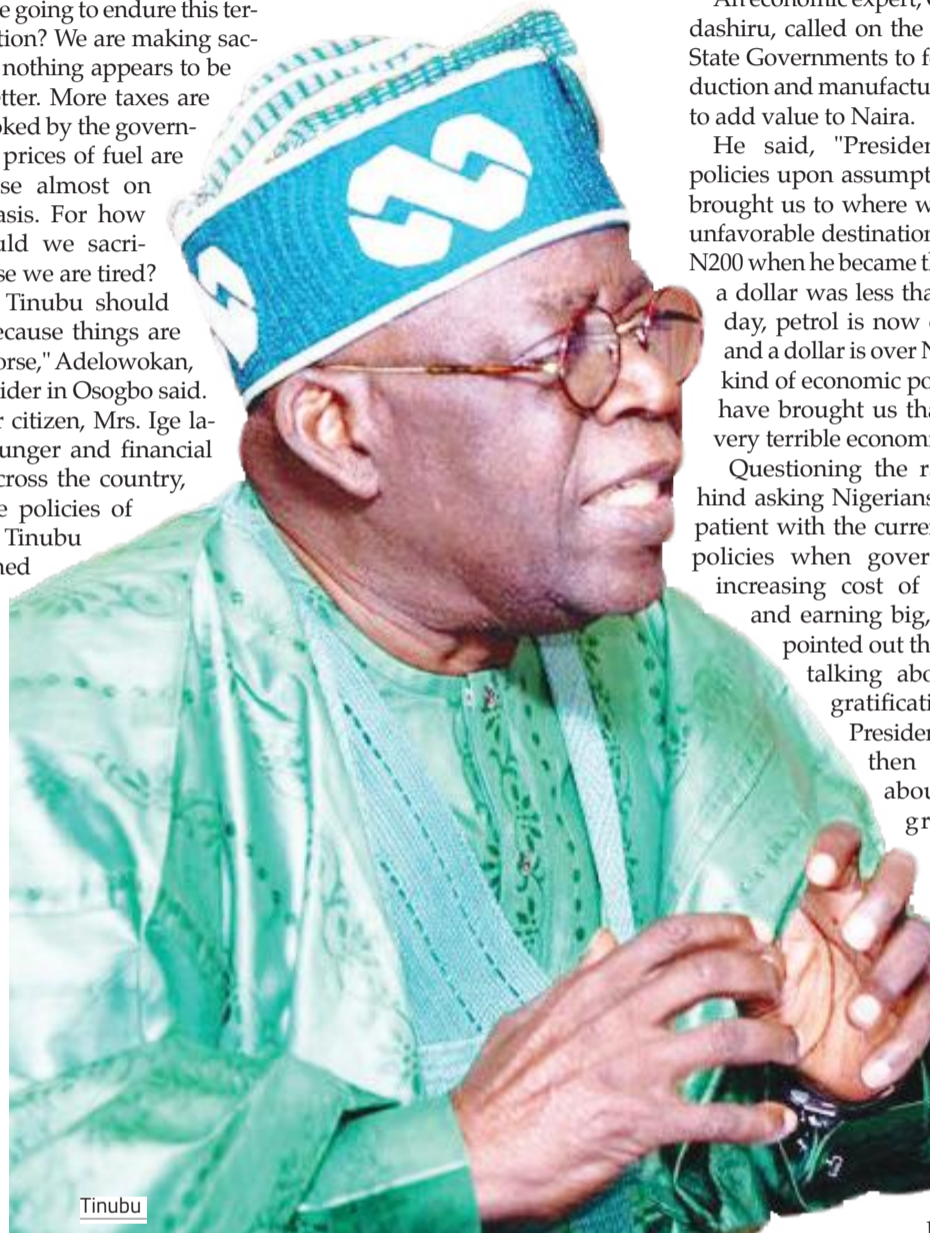
Meanwhile, some public affairs analysts have accused President Tinubu, governors, members of the National Assembly and other public office holders of living in extravagance while citizens who voted them into power languish in poverty.

They berated Tinubu, especially for purchasing expensive vehicles, yachts and embarking on costly trips with taxpayers' money, while his policies are worsening the pains and woes of Nigerians.

A former Dean of Student Affairs,

long are we going to endure this terrible situation? We are making sacrifices but nothing appears to be getting better. More taxes are being invoked by the government and prices of fuel are on increase almost on a daily basis. For how long should we sacrifice because we are tired? President Tinubu should act fast because things are already worse," Adelowokan, a tricycle rider in Osogbo said.

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Tinubu

An economic expert, Oludare Mudashiru, called on the Federal and State Governments to focus on production and manufacturing in order to add value to Naira.

He said, "President Tinubu's policies upon assumption of office brought us to where we are at this unfavorable destination. Petrol was N200 when he became the President; a dollar was less than N740. Today, petrol is now over N1,000 and a dollar is over N1,600. What kind of economic policies would have brought us that far, it is a very terrible economic policy."

Questioning the rationale behind asking Nigerians to be more patient with the current economic policies when governments are increasing cost of governance and earning big, Mudashiru pointed out that, "If we are talking about delayed gratification that the President promised, then let us talk about delayed gratification across the strata. You cannot be talking about delayed gratification for the larger population and you are not delaying gratification for the minutest population that is consuming the resources of the country.

"Delayed gratification is supposed to be across. The government should have cut its spending, it should have reduced their portfolio, should have reduced the cost of governance and that is what is delaying gratification. He should have used all of those cuts to expand the economy, grow the economy and then later, if they like, double the cost of governance. So, if you are talking about delayed gratification, how far can you ask Nigerians to be patient? For how long can you ask Nigerians to remain patient in the face of this suffering? Have the incomes of Nigerians grown within that same period? The price of fuel is growing from less than N200 to over N1000?"

On devaluation of the nation's currency, the agro-preneur submitted, "I don't know why our economy has to be dollar dependent and if our economy is a dollar dependent economy, what should be the economic policy of the government to ensure

that our own currency is not stumbling everyday against that benchmark currency. If you ask me, have Nigerians not been patient enough? Like I said before, a day will come when Nigerian leaders will realise that Nigerians should be applauded for being fantastic followers even in the light of their prevailing challenges."

Emphasising on the need for trade and production to be prioritised by governments in the country, Mudashiru stated, "The relationship between currencies has to do with the purpose of the currency. Trade is a fundamental reason for means of exchange and the volume of trade you do is a determinant factor in considering how much comes to you is trading."

He added, "Foreign exchange is not just a function of sitting around the table and deciding how much of a particular currency you need as a country or how much of a particular currency you need as a country. What we should be talking about is if currencies are the means of exchange for goods and services, then, our fundamentals as a country is to produce those goods and services that will bring about the earnings of whatever currencies that we pretend to earn. And if the Nigerian currency is more important to us than other currencies, then we should do more of our trading in that particular currency. But, like I would always say, every country is supposed to always think about their comparative advantage. What puts us at advantage is when we now exploit the particular currency that we are looking for.

"It is a very simple rule of economics, the more goods you produce, the more services you render, the more the earnings you get and if you have become a country that has not been producing goods, that is not rendering services, then you will always be a deficit and that is what is happening to Nigeria and that is what we are battling as of today. It is all about production and service rendering that you are able

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



THE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND WE NEED TO START FROM SCRATCH. WE NEED TO FIX THE BIG ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM AND THAT IS THE EXCHANGE RATE.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

to get as much as you are determined or as much as you need as a country and for us, as at today, we are at our zero base considering our capacity, potential, natural resources, they are not close to getting us anywhere. You can see we are in a lot of debts right now."

Mudashiru argued that President Tinubu, Yemi Cardoso and Wale Edun have not been able to perform because they are using the style of which they deployed in governing Lagos State for Nigeria's economy.

"Lagos is a centre of trade and commerce, Lagos is not a centre of production, so, if you are bringing somebody who is used to selling things that he doesn't know how they are produced, they are just selling, then it will be difficult for the person to talk about production. Sometimes, they even sell reproduced goods and bring the same set of people to come and manage a system that is production oriented, it won't work.

"They are only bringing their rent seeking idea of which they ruled Lagos into governance. Having these Lagos guys at the helms of affairs has been the greatest challenge for Nigerians. They are putting the cart before the horse. We expect them to strengthen production first, add value and then trade and commercialise. We know that the oil and gas sector is the power in which this production is going to happen and if we are truly production centric, we won't just be hiking the price of energy. You have removed subsidies on everything in Nigeria and that is what we are suffering now," he stated.

An economic expert, Paul Alaje, urged President Tinubu to start from scratch, saying, "The foundation has been destroyed and we need to start from the scratch. We need to fix the big elephant in the room and that is the exchange rate. Naira should weigh above N1,000 to the dollar. And if we do that, the money going to the FAAC will reduce. But do the people in FAAC want their money reduced or do they want Nigeria to have more value for their money?"

"The reports of the Bureau of Statistics came with a level of concern for growth in naira terms. The growth we witnessed across the sector was very marginal. Population growth rate takes between 2.6 to 3 per cent. So, there is in the real sense no growth."

He agreed with earlier experts that Nigeria needs to focus on manufacturing if the economic crisis would be ameliorated.

"What we should concern ourselves with now lies and ends with manufacturing. We cannot sandwich



Edun



Cardoso



Abubakar Kyari

the manufacturing sector. From the recent report, service provided over 60 per cent. So, we need to focus on how we boost manufacturing and to boost manufacturing, you have to look at the cost of governance. If we don't reduce spending and reduce what is called Ways and Means and keep it less than two percent, then we may not head anywhere," Alaje said.

A public affairs analyst, Ikenna Ofor, told The Point that he was skeptical about Tinubu's economic policies working as "advertised."

Ofor explained that it was so because policies of past governments in Nigeria did not address the country's economic challenges.

He also added that in Nigeria, preceding governments usually fare better than succeeding governments.

He said, "I understand that the President has been insisting that his economic policies will soon begin to bear fruits and that Nigerians will have reason to rejoice very soon.

"But I beg to differ. I am skeptical about the present administration's economic policies working as advertised. And this is because most of the economic policies that were implemented by past governments we have had in Nigeria have not rescued Nigerians from the brink.

"Recently, there was a discussion on social media that centred on an unverified observation that in Nigeria, preceding governments always fared better than the governments that succeeded them.

"For the sake of clarity, the argument is that Obasanjo's govern-

ment is expected to be better than Tinubu's government, but God forbid that it happens that way.

"My prayer notwithstanding, I am still worried. The economic policies should by now have at least been showing early signs of recovery. The government sometimes says that prices are going down but, alas, in the markets and other places, prices of goods and services are still not reasonable and affordable for the common man."

About what more sacrifices Nigerians should make, Ofor advised, "About sacrifices Nigerians should make, I think the people have already made more than enough sacrifices. They have been paying for the little things they need way more than necessary.

"Salaries are no longer reliable and have remained static. They can't even be called take-home pay anymore. So, it will be wicked to ask Nigerians to make more sacrifices.

"Meanwhile, the only good thing Nigerians can do now is to ensure that they save more. If they can, the insignificant fees they pay to subscribe for cable television should be reviewed.

"Internet subscriptions should also be slashed. If you make N10,000 subscriptions, for instance, you can cut it down to about N5,000.

"And for those who love driving to work come rain, come shine, they should look at public transportation for now. It will go a long way in helping them to manage their depleted finances."

WHERE'S FG'S N40,000 RICE?

Meanwhile, Nigerians have again expressed frustration over the difficulties in accessing the Federal Government's N40,000 subsidised rice launched on September 6, 2024, in Abuja.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, had asked interested Nigerians to be ready to provide their National Identification Numbers with an Automated Teller Machine card as the only means of payment.

However, many Nigerians have complained that the sales points are inaccessible.

On September 15, an official from the agriculture ministry, in an attempt to address public concerns, said that sales to non-civil servants would begin on Monday, Septem-

ber 16.

"We started with civil and public servants because they possess the necessary credentials. Before purchasing, one must present a valid identity card and National Identification Number.

"Sales points were set up at the Office of the Head of Service of the Federation, Ministry of Agriculture, and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission," the official, who spoke in confidence due to lack of authorisation to speak on the matter, explained.

He assured Nigerians that sales to the general public would begin on September 16, reiterating the government's commitment to ensuring everyone benefits from the initiative.

"Now that many civil servants have benefited, we are moving to the general public," the official added.

While the sales did begin as promised, citizens are lamenting the challenges of traveling from the outskirts of cities to urban centres, particularly in the Federal Capital Territory, to access the sales and collection points.

Many persons outside the FCT have reported being unable to locate any sales points at all.

In the Kubwa area of the FCT, a resident, Blessing Ameh, said, "Not at all. I have not seen any sales point in my area in Kubwa."

The situation was similar in Oyo State, where another resident, Deborah Johnson, remarked, "We have not seen even a single bag here."

Experts have suggested that for the initiative to be effective, the government must decentralise the payment and collection points, allowing people to purchase the rice without incurring additional transportation costs.

An agricultural economist at the Centre for Agricultural Development and Sustainable Environment, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Tobi Awolope, said, "Accessibility is a crucial component of food security. Issues around the supply chain, particularly the high cost of transporting food, have posed a major threat to societal welfare, especially for rural dwellers.

"Access to food—both in terms of proximity and affordability—is a fundamental human right. Therefore, collection centers should be located where all social groups can easily reach them."

While Nigerians appreciate the government's efforts to alleviate the impact of rising food inflation, they are urging authorities to ensure that the rice distribution reaches areas where the majority of the population resides.

A resident of Karu, Ibrahim Abdullahi, said "I was at the sales point located at the Nigerian Agricultural Insurance Corporation until the close of business yesterday (Thursday), but I couldn't make a payment due to the overwhelming crowd.

"Today (Friday), I've been trying again, but to no avail. The government should decentralise the collection points so we can access the rice in our local areas."

I AM SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION'S ECONOMIC POLICIES WORKING AS ADVERTISED. AND THIS IS BECAUSE MOST OF THE ECONOMIC POLICIES THAT WERE IMPLEMENTED BY PAST GOVERNMENTS WE HAVE HAD IN NIGERIA HAVE NOT RESCUED NIGERIANS FROM THE BRINK.

ment was better than Yar'Adua's government that succeeded it, and Yar'Adua's government was better than Jonathan's government that succeeded it.

"And then Jonathan's government was better than Buhari's government that succeeded it, and finally it has been predicted that the trend will continue and Buhari's govern-

Why I fell apart with Tinubu – Former Lagos deputy governor, Bucknor-Akerele

Senator Kofoworola Bucknor-Akerele, a former deputy governor of Lagos State, had represented the Lagos Central Senatorial District in the National Assembly between 1992 and 1993. In this interview, the lawyer, broadcaster and politician speaks on her years in politics, why she fell apart with President Tinubu, what she wants the Federal Government to do for Nigerians, among others. Excerpts:

How did you get into politics? How did you become the deputy governor to former Governor Bola Tinubu who is now the president?

Politics runs in my family. I came into politics because my father, too, was a politician. He contested on the platform of the Action Group and lost to the late Joseph Modupe Johnson (JM), but he and JM remained friends until their deaths.

In fact, my father's clinic on Apapa Road was in one of JM's houses. So, you see how the politics of that time was. My father encouraged me to go into politics. He felt that women were not represented enough.

You got along fine with Tinubu when he was governor of Lagos State and you were his deputy until things went sour between the two of you. How did the relationship get frosty?

We were on cordial terms at the start. When we were campaigning, all the food we were eating and everything was from my house in Victoria Island. So, as you said, it started okay. Where things went wrong was when Tinubu wanted to take over the Alliance for Democracy from the leaders and elders of the party. He wanted me to join him in the quest but I refused. That was when we fell apart.

I felt the leaders and elders of the party were the ones who supported us to get to where we were. They also were the founders of the party on whose platform we contested. I said it was wrong; that we should not plot to take over the party from them.

Have you spoken to Senator Tinubu since he assumed office as the president?

No, I haven't. I have no reason to speak to him. We are not in the same party; I am in the PDP and a member of the party's Board of Trustees. I have no reason to speak to him.

So, you two have not spoken to each other for a very long time?

It's been several years.

Have things remained like this since you were removed as his deputy in 2002?

Well, we spoke, I think, when we met at one occasion when the Mobolaji Johnson Stadium was being dedicated. He greeted me and I greeted him.

That was all? No conversation?

That was all; no conversation, none, at all.

The prevailing economic situation is bad and Nigerians are

complaining bitterly. What consolation would you offer the suffering citizens at this time?

Well, I don't know whether I would go for consolation. There is no consolation I can give them because I don't see any light at the end of the tunnel. The situation is bad. In fact, it is appalling. People cannot eat. Even I have to watch my finances now because there are so many people that I have to help. When my phone rings in the morning, it is somebody asking for financial assistance. When the situation is like this, it is really terrible.

I will give you an example: Yesterday, I had to buy some medicine for one of my relatives. I usually buy his medicine. Two weeks ago, the medicine cost N14,000, but when I went to buy it yesterday, it was N20,000. You see, the price of items goes up by the day.

Any day you go to the market, you find that the price of commodities has increased. The situation is really terrible and I don't think the government is trying hard enough to face the situation and make things better for the ordinary man.

The president has been asking Nigerians to be patient, that with his reform policies, things will soon change for the better in the country. What do you make of his policies?

I don't even know exactly what the policies are because he has not articulated them. All we know is that the fuel subsidy is gone. That's what he said and some people say that the subsidy is not

gone. So, we really don't know what the true situation is in the country right now.

Still on the economy, a former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar said that palliatives are not the solution?

Yes, I agree with him. Palliative is not the answer. The answer is to make sure that people have jobs so that they can earn an income. The answer is that there should be security in the land so that people will not be afraid to invest in the country. That's the answer, not palliatives. We have to do something; we have to have a rethink, and then the reliance on crude oil should not be so. This country is blessed with so many mineral resources, so what is happening? Are we marketing our mineral resources? Those minerals should be bringing in money apart from crude oil, but it seems we are not doing anything about it.

We have gold. If you go to Beirut or Dubai, you will see people selling gold. They will ask you: which kind of gold do you want? Why can't we have gold stores in Kano, for instance, or in Sokoto? We are mining gold, what is happening to the gold? Why are we not having value added to it? Why are we not bringing people in to add value to our gold? We have other minerals, precious stones, what are we doing to develop the minerals? We have a variety of sources of income.

There is this controversy involving indigenous Lagosians and non-indigenes, especially politicians. These non-indigenes are being accused of systematically

taking over Lagos from the real indigenes. What is your take on this?

I am an indigenous Lagosian and, therefore, I feel very strongly about it because I think it is being purposely done. It is being purposely done that non-Lagosians should take over the most important positions from indigenes of Lagos State.

We started noticing it when Tinubu and I were in power. Let's face it. Whatever anybody says, Tinubu is not a Lagosian and I feel because of that, he wanted to put non-Lagosians in power to support him. I think he knew that with his background and antecedents, it would be difficult for him to do maneuvers in Lagos State and so he started promoting non-Lagosians into positions of power.

You obviously love Lagos so much, where do you want it to be in the next 10 years?

Lagos is a fantastic place, it is my hometown. And I have travelled to various parts of the world. In fact, I would say that there is hardly a continent that I have not been to.

When we look at places like Dubai, why can't Lagos be like that? When we look at places like Miami in the United States, why can't Lagos be like that? That is where I expect Lagos to be. That is where I expect those who are in positions of authority to be taking Lagos, not the shambles that Lagos is now, with heaps of rubbish and chaos virtually everywhere.

There is a popular belief that Tinubu was a strong performer when he was

governor of Lagos State. But under him as president, Nigerians have been groaning. What do you think is happening?

I don't know what he did in Lagos. Lagos has become a big slum. That is what I can see. He says he saved the Bar Beach or Victoria Island from being swallowed by the Atlantic Ocean, but all that he did was to push erosion further down the coast to Alpha Beach. What kind of saving is that? I cannot attribute any development in Lagos to him.

Let's talk about women. The clamour for stronger presence of women in politics has been on for some time. What advice would you give women as regards how to achieve this goal?

Well, I think a lot of women are deterred from going into politics because they fear violence which they think is associated with politics in Nigeria.

Is this phenomenon not present all over the world?

Definitely not. It is more prevalent in Nigeria and Africa. We saw the British election. We all watched it on television. People debated; they knocked on people's doors to campaign and I don't think there was violence. Even if there was violence, it is not tolerated. But here, we seem to actually condone it; we take it as if it is part of the system, and it should not be.

Of course, the financial aspect is also another thing because politics in Nigeria has become very expensive now. Most women don't have the financial strength to go into politics where you need millions of naira to be able to even contest to become a councillor. How many women have millions of naira at their disposal to be able to contest? This wasn't always so, but it became worse each time we had elections.

What then should women do to break this barrier and claim their place in governance?

Well, I will advise women not to be deterred. First of all, I think it is important that you are educated before you go into politics. If you are not educated, I don't think you can contribute much as a legislator or in any other capacity in the political terrain.

I urge them not to be deterred. They should fight for more positions in the political parties. The problem really is that the political parties are male-dominated and because of this male domination, women are pushed aside; they are given the position of women leader. I believe that the position of the women leader should be cancelled in all political parties. Why don't they have the position of male leader? It just shows you the attitude of the political parties; they (the men) are not

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



“WHERE THINGS WENT WRONG WAS WHEN TINUBU WANTED TO TAKE OVER THE ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY FROM THE LEADERS AND ELDERS OF THE PARTY. HE WANTED ME TO JOIN HIM IN THE QUEST BUT I REFUSED. THAT WAS WHEN WE FELL APART



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Mr. President, relieve yourself of Petroleum Minister role

Lawal Dahiru Mamman

The late sage, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, in his bestseller, *The People's Republic*, said that "The primary responsibility of leadership is catering for and promoting its people to the end so that they may live a full and happy life."

This means a government should recognise the dignity of its citizens and work tirelessly to improve their lives.

Currently, it seems Nigerians are far from living a full and happy life, given the hyperinflation, rising cost of living, and the embarrassing chaos in the oil and gas industry.

President Bola Tinubu assumed office with a promise of renewed hope. Nigerians supported him, even after the unceremonious declaration at Eagles Square on May 29, 2023, and the subsequent call for patience.

Many questioned the rationale behind this call when the government showed no intent

to reduce the cost of governance or stop the misuse of public funds on unnecessary activities.

Nigerians' patience wore thin by August 1, 2024, leading to nationwide protests. But that was just the beginning. The situation could worsen if the government does not address the confusion in the petroleum industry.

How can Nigerians pay over N1, 000 for fuel and still struggle to obtain it? In Tinubu's Nigeria, people spend hours queuing at filling stations and spend up to N50, 000 for fuel, only to find themselves back on the queue after two days. This is unsustainable and unacceptable.

Nigerians are deeply frustrated. They feel that nothing is working and do not believe the problem rests solely with the president. Many believe that most of the president's aides are either unfit for their roles or unwilling to perform them effectively.

Tinubu started by creating and renaming ministries, including appointing himself

THE PRESIDENT NEEDS TO RELIEVE HIMSELF OF THE ROLE OF MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND APPOINT A COMPETENT INDIVIDUAL TO MANAGE THAT ROLE

as Minister of Petroleum - the largest cabinet in the country's history.

This is where the housecleaning should begin. The president needs to relieve himself of the role of Minister of Petroleum and appoint a competent individual to manage that role.

"I thank the cabinet members for their efforts, but I will relieve any of them of their duties anytime I feel that they

are failing Nigerians," the President had said in May.

It seems the Tinubu cabinet is in a race to failure. The national grid has collapsed a record five times this year alone, supply remains erratic, projects from previous administrations are abandoned, more contracts are awarded, food insecurity and malnutrition persist despite agricultural initiatives, and security is nearly non-existent. The list of needed improvements is extensive.

Reshuffling the cabinet is necessary, and the President may need to start with himself as Minister of Petroleum. Presidents should focus on their strategic administrative roles and avoid holding ministerial positions.

The awkward norm began with former President Olusegun Obasanjo and continued with former President Muhammadu Buhari, and now, the current President, all due to the 'sensitivity' of the sectors.

Our petroleum industry is in disarray. The upstream sector, including exploration and pro-

duction, is plagued by oil theft, undermining our OPEC quota and attacking our revenue base.

The midstream sector, responsible for transportation and processing, is struggling with outdated facilities.

The shocks in the downstream sector are evident in the current fuel crisis across the country.

The Dangote Refinery, touted as a definitive solution to the country's energy crisis, has been plagued by countervailing forces.

Ending the subsidy regime had potential benefits, but the increased federal allocation to states has left many more confused. The dividends have not trickled down to the common man.

The problem is immense and seems too great for a President who also chairs the Economic Community of West African States.

Mr. President should exit from the role and appoint an excellent technocrat to handle the petroleum sector comprehensively.

Obviously, there is a lot on the table of the president. Nigeria's economy requires his full attention.

As commander-in-chief of the armed forces of Nigeria, he needs to be on the driver's seat to tackle the hydra-headed insecurity, banditry, terrorism and criminality in the country. Terrorists and bandits have grown bold, attacking monarchs and publicising their acts on social media.

Nigeria's infrastructure is largely comatose. Hunger pervades the land, the Food and Agricultural Organization reports that over 26.5 million people are experiencing acute hunger this year, with predictions that between 82 million will face severe food insecurity by 2030.

The only way out of this stalemate is for the President to take decisive action against non-performing ministers, aides, and heads of agencies, starting with stepping down as Minister of Petroleum. ●

*Mamman writes from Abuja

Akinkuolie Rasheed

The floods that periodically sweep across the banks of Rivers Benue and Niger down to the Atlantic Ocean in Bayelsa State emanate from the Lagdo Lake in Northern Cameroon.

This occurs seasonally, whenever excess water is released from the lake to protect the dam from bursting, inundating, and overwhelming the surrounding towns and villages.

The Lagdo Dam was built in 1982 by a Chinese company to provide electricity and potable water and irrigate farmlands in Garoua and the northern provinces of Cameroon.

The flood flashes experienced in Nigeria today were expected to happen; hence, in 1982, a feasibility study was conducted to build a water withholding dam at Dasin Hausa in Furore Local Government Area of Adamawa State.

Unfortunately, this project did not proceed further, and after over three decades of dilly-dallying, the plan is still on the drawing board.

The dam in Nigeria would have stopped the incessant floods along the banks of the Benue River and further downstream to the sea. It would in addition, generate electricity, irrigate at least 150,000 hectares of farmlands, create jobs, and attract tourists to the location and Adamawa State.

While the torrents of water continue to wreak havoc in Nigeria, the people of Northern Cameroon are enjoying the resources derived from the lake.

I can still recall my visit to the

The terror from Lagdo dam

dam when I accompanied officers from the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, during their 1992 world tour, and my mission, the Nigerian High Commission, Yaounde, hosted the group. The government of Cameroon organised a guided tour of the dam complex for the delegation.

The lake is the source of potable water and irrigation of cotton, maize, millet, and sorghum animal food, grazing fields, and fishing in and around Garoua. The electricity generated powers the Northern provinces of the country with excess capacity.

Cotton produced is processed into clothing materials in textile mills in Garoua, where there is a river port through which goods are transported in barges on the River Benue tributary to Douala seaport over 1000 kilometres away. The climate around the lake is temperate, scenic, and a good holiday destination for tourists.

The Dasin Hausa dam, if built, would, in addition to the benefits mentioned above, prevent the floods that have caused extensive damage in Nigeria.

The abandoned project is not the only one in this category. The Federal Ministry of Water Resources has identified over 100 of them. Some of these are the Kashimbila dam in Taraba State, the Ikere-Iseyin dam in Oyo State, the Dadin Kowa dam in Taraba State, and the Goronyo dam in Gombe State, among several others.

These projects have passed



through 10 different administrations in Nigeria from 1982-2018.

The successive governments and the institutions in charge of the projects, which are the Water Basin Authorities and the Federal and State Ministries of Water Resources, should be blamed for their lack of foresight and lackadaisical attitude towards a critical national project.

If these state institutions had been strong, up and doing, they would have circumvented the challenges by proposing alternative solutions with convincing arguments on the urgent need to build the Dasin Hausa dam for its economic value and as the only solution to the seasonal floods in most parts of Nigeria.

According to the National Emergency Management Agency and other reliable sources, 6000 houses were destroyed and 7 million people displaced during the 2012 floods, with losses put at over \$12 billion. The floods have con-

tinued to devastate communities every year without any known action taken to achieve a definite

THE FUNDS FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE DAMS SHOULD BE SOURCED FROM NIGERIA'S FOREIGN RESERVES, WHICH REMAIN STRONG AT OVER \$40 BILLION. THIS SHOULD START THE DASIN HAUSA AND OTHER FLOOD-CONTROL DAMS

solution other than the efficiency displayed by NEMA in the evacuation of victims.

The following measures are hereby suggested to break this intractable problem. The dams should be handed over to the state governments in which they are located.

The funds for the completion of the dams should be sourced from Nigeria's foreign reserves, which remain strong at over \$40 billion. This should start the Dasin Hausa and other flood-control dams.

Also, the oil for the project solution should be emplaced as a viable option. This is also called counter-trade, a situation where oil wells in exchange for capital projects is another option.

This arrangement was discussed with the Chinese government during the administration of late President Yar'Adua. The details of the deal are elaborated in Segun Adeniyi's book, *Politics, Power and Death*.

The insights gleaned from the book highlighted the lost opportunity to safeguard lives from deaths and loss of properties by building dams and irrigation units.

The loan option is another possibility, in which case the funds obtained cannot be used for any other purpose other than the designated projects.

While Public-Private Partnership, alias PPP, is another possibility to facilitate the projects, it has unfortunately failed to achieve far-reaching results in Nigeria.

This will create unnecessary delays because the 'investors', in most cases, do not have the funds or anything to offer other than influence in high places.

In conclusion, the root causes of the flash floods in Nigeria are known, and the solution and sources of funding have been identified.

The gravity of the situation is also known, and the enormous benefits to the economy are obvious.

It is a national embarrassment that, year after year, the effects of the floods are handled efficiently, but the obvious solution is glossed over or even ignored. ●

*Ambassador Rasheed was the Director of Trade and Investments at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Government should defeat hunger in Nigeria

The latest data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed that Nigeria's headline inflation rate decreased to 32.15 per cent in August 2024 despite the recent hikes in the pump prices of petrol nationwide. This figure represents a 1.25 percentage decrease from the 33.4 per cent recorded in July 2024 and the second consecutive monthly slowdown in inflation after a persistent rise in nearly two years.

The NBS in its Consumer Price Index report said the drop also signaled a slower pace in the increase of the average price level compared to the previous month.

For far too long, Nigerians have been under torment by the astronomical rise in the prices of basic foods and services in the marketplace. This gives room for a huge concern as the steep prices have battered the purchasing power of citizens, leading to uncertainty, an increase in poverty, and an unpalatable cost of living.

With food as a primary resource for human survival, the disruption caused by rising food inflation has further decimated their low wages.

At 87 million people, the World Bank said Nigeria's poverty rate hit 38.9 in 2023. This is the second highest in the world behind India's. A 2022 survey by the NBS said 133 million Nigerians are living in multidimensional poverty.

The 2023 Global Hunger Index said that Nigeria's hunger level is "serious." Nigeria ranks 109 out of 125 countries with a score of 28.3 per cent in the hunger index. This is a dismal outlook that should be improved on by the government at the grassroots, state, and federal levels.

High energy prices constitute another shambles. When the raw food finally arrives, citizens face another harsh reality to cook it.

Nigerians are feeling the strain as the cost of refilling cooking gas continues to rise, putting additional pressure on household finances. According to the latest data for July 2024, the average price of a 12.5kg cylinder of cooking gas has climbed to N14, 287.

Despite being a major oil-producing country, Nigeria still relies heavily on imports for its LPG supply.

The current foreign exchange challenges have made it increasingly difficult for importers to access the necessary funds, leading to higher costs for consumers.

The situation is very unfortunate. Prices are going higher, and Nigerian consumers are going through very difficult times because they can no longer afford gas and are now resorting to firewood, charcoal, and sawdust for cooking.

The Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dele Alake, disclosed recently that President Bola Tinubu gave each of his ministers 1,200 bags of rice for distribution as palliatives.

According to him, his own bags will be given to the aged in his state.

The Lagos State Government commenced Phase II of its 'Ounjé Eko' Food Discount Market on September 1.

These interventions help but only scratch the surface.

First, without adequate security, Nigeria cannot have food sustainability. The country is grappling with banditry, wanton killings, kidnapping, criminality, Islamic terrorism, and violent Fulani herdsmen attacks on farmers.

Consequently, farmers have abandoned their farmland for fear of bandits and herdsmen, thereby contributing to food shortages across the country.

In March, the Cocoa and Plantain Farmers Association of Nigeria said that despite the presence of security operatives, many farmers have abandoned their farmland due to incessant killing, kidnapping, and destruction of farms.

The situation is rampant in Benue, Plateau, Adamawa, Na-

sarawa, Kaduna, Katsina, and Borno, where violence plagues the states often regarded as Nigeria's food belt.

In Niger, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, and other states, bandits and terrorists hold sway, collecting levies or tributes from farmers before they can plant or harvest their crops.

SBM Intelligence said 2,134 persons were killed in the first quarter of 2024 under President Bola Tinubu. In December, about 150 villagers were massacred by bandits in Bokkos and Barkin Ladi local government areas in Plateau State during the Christmas festivities.

Resembling an annual ritual, Boko Haram Islamists beheaded 15 rice farmers harvesting the crop in Borno State last November. In November 2020, the Islamists had similarly beheaded 76 rice farmers in Zabarmari in the same state.

Unfortunately, the situation is compounded by poor rural roads across the country. Out of its 200,000km road network, 87 per cent is in a deplorable condition, according to the World Bank.

In contrast, India built 300,000km of roads between 2000 and 2010, thereby reducing farm losses from 80 to 20 per cent and encouraging citizens to return home to farm.

The roads are a death trap, leading to farm losses and a bulwark to the movement of food and raw materials in the country. The state governments should stop making excuses for this; they should prioritise the development of rural roads to ease the agriculture business.

They must tackle the menace of 'nuisance taxes' on the roads. These taxes, collected by amorphous non-state actors, hinder the evacuation of produce

and add to the final prices of food items.

The Federal Government, which had earlier stated that it would collaborate with states to reduce the number of taxes from over 80 taxes to nine, should unveil its plans on this quickly.

To ensure food security, Tinubu and his National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu, the police, and other security agencies, must be in the driver's seat of Nigeria's security architecture.

Urgently, intelligence gathering, coordination, and technology must be deployed to combat the ugly descent into anarchy.

This calls for the urgent establishment of state police across the country. It will go a long way to place proactive measures to combat crime while quickly responding to vicious attacks on farmers and citizens. State governments and the federal and state parliaments should invoke the 'doctrine of necessity' to realise state police.

With its high population - estimated at 223 million - Nigeria needs a robust agriculture system to feed the populace. Therefore, it must develop infrastructure to hold excess rainwater for dry-season farming.

The government at the three tiers should support farmers with accountable and transparent incentives while encouraging farming by enabling farmers to secure mechanised farming tools in farm clusters. Low-interest loans should be made available to participants in these clusters.

The Presidential Livestock Reforms Implementation Committee co-headed by Professor Attahiru Jega has recommended the adoption of both ranching and open grazing, at least in the short term, to halt the recurring clashes between farmers and pastoralists across the country.

According to Jega, abandoning pastoralism abruptly for ranching without consideration for those huge populations who have their lives built around the system would not be advisable.

Nigeria should explore efficient and successful agriculture models within and outside the continent to reduce its high food inflation.

The government at every level should undertake tangible programmes to defeat hunger in the land. ●

THE CURRENT FOREIGN EXCHANGE CHALLENGES HAVE MADE IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR IMPORTERS TO ACCESS THE NECESSARY FUNDS, LEADING TO HIGHER COSTS FOR CONSUMERS.

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• CRIME • COURTS MARRIAGE PALAVER

Nigerian surrogate mothers narrate gains, pains of carrying pregnancies for fellow women



TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

Ever since 34-year-old woman, Grace Edema parted ways with her husband, she has been battling a great challenge in fending for the two children she had for her estranged husband.

Grace said she was a salary earner and was making people's hair but the money she realised in the businesses was not enough to take care of herself and her two children.

She explained how she got introduced to the surrogacy business, saying she accepted the offer after meeting the requirements because "I am tired of suffering."

At a time the economy of Nigeria is severely challenged, some citizens have been striving hard to beat the hardship.

Grace recalled how her transportation fare to work in a month was almost the same amount she was earning as salary, hence her decision to quit the job.

She said poverty forced her into carrying pregnancies for fellow women.

According to her, after she was

delivered of her second child, her husband abandoned her and it has been difficult for her to fend for herself and her two children. Hence, she became a surrogate mother in order to keep body and soul together and meet other extended family needs.

Grace was one of the surrogate mothers who revealed the intrigues in the so-called business of surrogacy during their separate interviews recently.

They said aside from being a means of putting food on their table, surrogacy also avails them the opportunity of solving couples' childbearing challenges not minding the painful experience.

It is the joy of most women, especially the married ones to have their own babies after the wedding ceremony. However, in some cases, some couples battle childbearing delay and other fertility challenges. Some even don't want to go through the rigour of pregnancy, preferring other women to carry their pregnancies and give birth to their children for them. Others who may not want to adopt children are embracing surrogacy.

Checks by The Point revealed that some surrogacy agencies recruit women who are interested in becoming surrogate mothers and after meeting the criteria set by intending parents such as height, weight, complexion, beauty and so on, the egg of the intending parents are inserted into the surrogate mothers following series of medical tests.

It was gathered that intending parents or individual women who seek the services of surrogate mothers pay the latter huge amounts of money for carrying their pregnancies and giving birth to their children for them.

"I must confess that this surrogacy thing is not easy. The insertion process is very painful. But, I am tired of suffering and I can't watch my mother and siblings go hungry, that is why I decided to be a surrogate mother," Grace said.

She explained further how hardship made her realise the economic potentials in assisting her fellow women carry pregnancies and give birth to their children.

"God gave me children but I can't even feed them well not to talk of raising them properly.

This is why I decided to undertake surrogacy because aside from the money I get there, it is an opportunity for me to put smiles on the faces of those seeking to have children of their own," she explained.

Another surrogate mother, simply identified as Ramota, said it was the need to cater for the needs of her mother, siblings and child that provoked her interest in the endeavour.

According to her, her father gave birth to 24 children but the man did not take care of them. She revealed that it was the various mothers of her siblings that took the responsibilities for their upkeep.

"I am determined to end the kind of poverty that my mother is facing. So, when the surrogacy business came, I had to grab it," Ramota stated.

For Grace, only her elder sister and mother know she is into surrogate business.

"I have to make mine a secret because many of my friends won't believe I can become a surrogate mother. Their thinking is that one becomes pregnant and sells babies to inter-

ested women. But, my mother and my immediate elder sister know I am a surrogate mother.

"I am pleased with the job and I am better off than when I was a salary earner, making hair for people and doing house maids. I never made the gains I am making now as a surrogate mother in my previous works," the mother of two added.

Also, Ramota believed that being a surrogate mother is better than going into crime or prostitution.

The founder of a surrogate agency, Meet Surrogate Mothers, Olaronke Thaddeus, said they keep surrogate mothers in their care for weeks so that they would not have sexual intercourse with any man that may impregnate them and discard the egg planted into them.

She said it was during the period that surrogate mothers get sensitised and also sign necessary papers to formalise the deal.

According to her, the process, including the tests to be carried out on the intended surrogate mother, is tedious while the In vitro fertilisation, popularly known as IVF, is "very painful."●

How, when next Owa Obokun of Ijesaland will emerge - Chief priest

• Says rams, not human beings, used for Oba Aromolaran's burial

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

The Chief Priest of Ijesaland, Ifagbemiga Ajilore, has denied speculations that the late Owa Obokun of Ijesaland, Oba Gabriel Adekunle Aromolaran, was buried with human beings.

According to the Baba Awo of Ijesaland, the rumour that some persons were caught during Oro festival that took place in Ilesa recently is baseless and lacks truth.

Chiefs in Ijesaland had declared a seven days curfew for funeral rites of the deceased frontline monarch across the towns affected.

During the curfew period, the Oro festival took place last week. Traditional priests who wore white clothes and walked about empty streets of Ilesa were seen chanting some dirges and making some incantations.

Shortly after movement resumed in the ancient town, rumour started flying that some non-indigenes were abducted for some rituals and burial of the late monarch.

Debunking the insinuation in an interview, Ajilore, who is also the Asiwaju Awo of Ijesaland, claimed no one had ever been buried with a late king and that only rams were used for the burial of Oba Aromolaran.

He said the whole rams in Ilesa were

bought for the rituals and that when the town ran out of stock, some people were sent to Osogbo, capital of the state, to purchase more rams for the rites.

An Ifa High Priest, Ifayemi Elebuibon, had said rituals traditionalists perform after demise of Oba are not usually for the dead monarchs, he said they are for the safety of the family and the next Oba because the one that has passed on has gone to be with his ancestors, adding that, "the only prayer they offer for the dead is for them to have a good passage to heaven. Other rituals are for the new Oba and the family so that there won't be deaths in quick succession. They are done so that the successors of the late monarch won't be dying prematurely, one after the other. That is why they perform the rituals."

Ajilore insisted that no human parts were used for the burial rituals of Oba Aromolaran, saying, "We also heard the rumour and I want to tell you that it is not true. Some people talk carelessly so that people can say they know what is going on in the town while others do that to tarnish the image of our tradition and its adherents. Some people have been announcing on social media that strangers should not walk about in Ijesaland and that strangers are used to bury Owa."

"I am assuring everyone that there is

nothing like that. Since we conducted the Oro rites for our royal father, how many people have been declared missing in Ijesaland? So, it is not true that we make use of human beings to bury our kings. All that we have been doing is in the full glare of security operatives in the state. Those making rumours are doing that to gain attention and to cause tension. There is peace in Ijesaland and no one has been used. We have been doing the rites peacefully. I challenge the person making the rumour to come out in public and say it and tell us the person we allegedly used. The person saying such things deserves to be cursed."

On the items used for rites on the late traditional ruler, the chief priest said, "We only used rams. In fact, we bought all the rams in Ilesa and later went to Osogbo to buy more. If we used human beings, shouldn't they have declared people missing? Those making this rumour might be Ilesa cultists who have been killing themselves to count scores and they might have been causing this tension in order to kill themselves more. No one should use this incident to commit any crime."

The chief priest explained the reason why curfew was declared for the Oro rituals, saying, "Obanla of Ijesa led the Oro ceremony to wipe out evils that may arise in Ijesaland. If we didn't declare a curfew, mo-

torists and motorcycle riders would have rammed into participants of the festival but due to the curfew, everything went well."

On how and when Oba Aromolaran's successor will emerge, he said the selection process would kick start after final burial rites of the monarch, disclosing that the Ifa oracle would choose a new Owa Obokun of Ijesaland and not the government.

"We believe that Ifa will choose a good king for us. It is our hope to have a good monarch that will lead well. Ifa is still active and reckoned with in Ijesaland. Some Obas saying rubbish about our tradition are those who were not chosen by Ifa in the first place. Those denigrating our culture were not chosen by Ifa. Some Obas identifying with other religions have lost it. I have consulted Ifa for many towns and it chose their kings, our

own in Ijesaland won't be different. "It is Ifa that will pick the next Owa of Ijesaland and not the governor or money. The funeral ceremony of our Kabiyesi will happen soon and it will be announced in the media. We should expect it.

"In choosing our next king, I assure you that royal families won't have a problem. It is after the funeral ceremony that we can go into selection of a successor. There are families that will produce candidates. Once Ifa picks and people say otherwise, then it is left for them," Ajilore declared. ●



Oba Aromolaran

Come to our aid, we lack sufficient operational vehicles, ICT gadgets - NSCDC urges governments, corporate bodies

AGNES NWORIE
ABAKALI

With a view to continue to fulfill its constitutional mandate, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, Ebonyi State Command, has requested the intervention of governments, philanthropists and cooperative bodies in the areas of provision of some operational equipment.

The state commandant, Elijah Etim Willie, made the call at the command's headquarters in Abakali during an interview with The Point on the activities of the command between the first and second quarters of 2024.

Reeling out the achievements of the agency, Willie identified some areas of challenges where stakeholders needed to assist the command.

He mentioned insufficient operational vehicles, diesel, Information Communication Technology gadgets as some of the challenges facing the command in the line of fulfilling its core mandates in the state.

"Some of the challenges we are facing in Ebonyi command is lack of operational vehicles and diesel for quick response/surveillance, ICT gadgets for digital security among others," he disclosed.

Notwithstanding the challenges, the commandant noted that NSCDC under his watch has recorded sever-

al achievements in the period under review.

He said the command recorded 40 cases of vandalism of public facilities in Ebonyi State between January and June this year.

Out of the 40 cases, he said the command was able to secure the conviction of two persons while others are still pending in various courts of competent jurisdictions.

"In collaboration with other sister agencies, we midwived the Onicha Senatorial election, carried out a series of training for personnel to guarantee efficiency in service delivery. We have been able to protect all the critical national assets in the state. We are very much proactive in this area as well as protection of lives and property.

"Between the first and second quarters of 2024, we have recorded 40 cases of vandalism, secured two convictions in court. Some matters are still under investigations while others are still pending

before courts of competent jurisdictions in the state," he explained.

The Commandant lamented the negative impact of vandalism on the populace and enjoined youths to shun all forms of crimes especially vandalism and make good use of their youthful time.

"I advise youths to look for legal means of income. If I lived the way some of them live, I wouldn't be here (as NSCDC Commandant) and you (The Point correspondent) wouldn't have been here today too. It is all about developing the right mentality," Willie stated. ●



Elijah Etim Willie

Four arrested for mutilating teenager's corpse in Ogun



BRIGHT JACOB

The Ogun State Police Command has arrested four persons including one Ogidan Mustapha and three others (names undisclosed) for allegedly exhuming and mutilating the body of a teenager who died of electrocution.

According to the state Police Public Relations Officer, Omolola Odutola, in a statement on Friday, the suspects were arrested near a river in Igbosoro village, on Friday.

Odutola noted that some officers of the Vigilante group had noticed suspicious activities around the bush around 1:30 am which prompted them to search the area.

She added that the search led to Mustapha's arrest with the corpse of the teenager wrapped in a mat with both hands amputated.

The PPRO said, "Upon closer inspection by vigilante operatives, it was discovered that the corpse was a young girl, one Oriyomi Gboyega 'f' 13-year-old with both of her hands amputated

and wrapped in a mat before being discarded near the river.

"Upon contacting the mother, one Peace Adegboyega 'f', she stated that her daughter had died from electrocution on September 19, 2024, at about 10:20 am, and arrangements were being made for her burial the following day.

"She expressed shock upon learning that their neighbour, Ogidan, was found with the amputated body of her daughter in the bush."

Odutola added that upon further search of the suspect's house, ammunition and local charms were recovered while he allegedly confessed during interrogation that the father of the deceased teenager had contacted him to assist with the burial.

The state PPRO added that three other suspects who assisted in the digging of the grave were also arrested.

"A search warrant was executed at Ogidan Mustapha's residence by the Divisional Police Officer and the Vigilante group. Two English pump action rifles and various local charms were recovered in his house.

"During police interrogation and questioning, the suspect denied amputating the 13-year-old girl but confessed that the girl's father, one Sunday Adegboyega, had asked him to help bury the deceased far from home.

"Three other suspects of northern origin who assisted in digging the grave were also arrested."

Odutola noted that the case had been transferred to the command's Criminal Investigation Department for onward investigation. ●

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

Nigerian lecturer shot dead by sibling at aunt's burial ceremony as irate youths set suspect ablaze

Some irate youths of Solo Street, Iyekhei Heritage Zone of Auchi town in Edo State have reportedly lynched a young man simply identified as Omoh for allegedly killing his elder brother, Rasheed Braimah.

Braimah was, before his tragic death last Friday, a lecturer at the Department of Accounting, Auchi Polytechnic.

Omoh allegedly attacked and killed his brother days after returning to Nigeria from Libya. The duo were said to be members of the Osigwe family of Iyekhei Heritage.

However, witnesses gave different accounts of how the siblings died and what led to their deaths.

The Point gathered that Braimah was at Auchi burial ground for the burial of their aunt when Omoh, his younger brother phoned him and asked him to come and meet him somewhere, claiming he wanted to show him something.

Braimah reportedly left the burial ground to meet Omoh and that was how the Libya returnee shot him and ran away.

Youths of the community got wind of the incident and searched for Omoh, brought him to the spot he shot his brother and burnt him to ashes.

"They are three boys of the same parents. One is aboard but in prison and that was one of their misunderstandings. Omoh claimed that his elder brother, Rasheed, was not doing anything to release their brother. He went to native doctor and he was told that Rasheed is progressing because he used their destiny. That was how the family lost two young men in a space of hours," a witness said.

Another source corroborated the witness'

claim saying Omoh is a twin and wanted Braimah to help facilitate an exercise that he thought would get his twin brother identified as Odion out of jail in Europe but owing to the uncooperative tendencies of Braimah, Omoh decided to end the lecturer's life.

Meanwhile, some other sources said Braimah sold the only land their late father left for them and gave a paltry amount to Omoh.

"Rasheed sold their family land and used the money and gave them peanuts. Omoh is a very nice boy. He just came back from Libya and Rasheed could not even settle him with his own share of money to start life.

"When Omoh was brought back from Libya last month, he travelled to Auchi so he could get something from his brother. All he got was a peanut. Omoh just wants to get his

money from their dad's land that Rasheed sold. My problem is where he even got the gun because if you know Omoh, you will understand he is a humble person. One of their family members is my best friend

here in Europe.

"The truth is that their family has a problem. Their parents died the same day. Even their sister, Abrome's death was questionable. Also, their uncle, Apakava's

death was something else. They went to bury their aunt that just died and ended up dying the same day. The family lost three souls in a day," a source identified as Chika said. ●

Experts seek concerted efforts to avert looming health risks in flood ravaged Nigerian states

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

Health and sanitation experts have called for intensified efforts by concerned stakeholders to avert possible disease outbreaks in states battling flood challenges.

According to them, if Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues are not prioritized immediately in Maiduguri, Borno State capital and its environs that were recently ravaged by devastating flood, residents might have to be inflicted with deadly diseases.

Already, Borno State is one of the states in Nigeria that still contend with the issue of open defecation.

Experts noted that it was possible for the recent flood to have swept human faeces and urine into the body systems of the survivors of the disaster of which if they are not

quickly treated, they may be struck with Neglected Tropical Diseases.

A World Health Organisation report on NTDs had shown that Nigeria and 15 other countries have the highest burdens of the diseases. NTDs are a diverse group of 20 conditions that are mainly prevalent in tropical areas, where they affect more than one billion people who live in impoverished communities.

The diseases are caused by a variety of pathogens, including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi, and toxins.

Aside from the fact that the flood has displaced residents, killed some and also destroyed property, experts said there are health risks such as water borne diseases and sanitation crises that should be given emergency attention to prevent more loss of lives in affected areas.

Even though the Federal Government had warned Borno residents to apply cautionary measures, as

drinking water may be contaminated, a Sanitation and Hygiene Manager for Water Aid Nigeria, Dare Oduluyi told The Point in an interview that the Federal and Borno State Governments should do more than warning in securing the lives of the people.

At a press briefing in Abuja last week, the Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, Prof. Joseph Utsev said that while the Federal Government sympathised with the Borno State government and the displaced residents, it was important to inform people on the need to beware of their source of drinking water.

Utsev stated that there is a possibility of an outbreak of waterborne diseases following the devastating flooding.

He said, "It should be noted however, that as we try to recover from this disaster, the water we drink may

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



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NDLEA intercepts N16.1bn opioids, arrests octogenarian, community leader's wives, son

Iran-bound drug mule excretes 76 wraps of cocaine at Kano airport

BRIGHT JACOB

Operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency have intercepted a total of N25 million pills of tapentadol, an opioid three times stronger than tramadol and 350,000 bottles of codeine-based syrup at the Tincan port complex in Lagos.

NDLEA spokesman, Femi Babafemi, said in a statement on Sunday that the seizures were made on Tuesday 17 and Friday 20 September 2024 from three containers which had been on the watch list of the Agency following processed intelligence.

As a result, he said the NDLEA had requested for 100% joint examination of the shipments with men of the Nigeria Customs Service and other security agencies.

The N25 million pills of tapentadol have an estimated street value of N13.725 billion while the codeine consignment has an estimated street value of N2.450 million, bringing the total value of the seizures to N16.175 billion.

The tapentadol consignment packed in 500 cartons was discovered in one of the containers on Tuesday 17th September while another container examined the same day contained 175,000 bottles of Barcadin cough syrup with codeine packed in 875 cartons.

Babafemi said the third container containing 175,000 bottles of CSC cough syrup with codeine was examined on Friday 20th September.

Meanwhile, he added that operatives of the Lagos State Strategic Command of the Agency on Friday 20th September arrested an 80-year-old grandfather, Aremu Shojobi with 14 kilograms of cannabis at his home in Iyana Ipaja area of the state.

In his statement, Babafemi said the octogenarian claimed he has been in the business of selling illicit drugs for 25 years. He further claimed he gets his supplies from the Benin Republic, and sells to his customers from his residence between 7am and 10pm every day.

In the same vein, he said NDLEA operatives in Lagos on Wednesday 18th September raided the two homes of a community leader and Sarkin Yamma of Badagry West LCDA, Alhaji Bashir Mohammed Talba, where a total of 226kg of cannabis was recovered from his two wives and son. Though Alhaji Talba is currently at large, a search of his house in Ashipa area of Seme Badagry led to the recovery of 93 compressed blocks of cannabis sativa weighing 57.6kg from his first wife, Asma'u Bashiru, 35, and son, Sadat Bashiru, 22, while another

search of his house at Aketegbo area of Seme Badagry led to the seizure of 302 compressed blocks of cannabis weighing 168.6kg from his second wife Hauwa Bashir, 42.

Not less than 720 blocks of Arizona, a strain of cannabis weighing 390kg were also recovered from a

Mitsubishi delivery van marked MUS 720 XH at Ojo area of Lagos on Monday 16th September.

At the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano, NDLEA operatives on Sunday 15th September arrested a 38-year-old drug mule, Okafor Ifeanyi Anthony

while attempting to board a Qatar Airlines flight to Iran via Doha with 76 wraps of cocaine in his stomach.

After three days in excretion observation, Okafor excreted the 76 pellets of the ingested cocaine weighing 1.267kg.

In Kogi State, NDLEA officers on patrol along Okene-Lokoja-Abuja expressway on Tuesday 17th September recovered 700,000 pills of exol-5 coming from Lagos for distribution in Kano and Kaduna, while a suspect Udemefuna Chibuike, 23, was arrested by operatives on Friday 20th September along Mokwa-Jebba road, Niger state, in possession of 49,000 tablets of tramadol, 20,000 tablets of diazepam, 100 ampoules of tramadol injection and 50 bottles of cough syrup with

codeine.

Babafemi explained further that a total of 451 blocks of cannabis weighing 213kg were intercepted along Azikiwe road, Port Harcourt, Rivers state on Wednesday 18th September, by NDLEA officers who apprehended a suspect Ogochukwu Paul, 33, conveying the consignment to a notorious drug haven in Borikiri.

While operatives in Plateau State on Friday 20th September arrested a wanted suspect Jonathan Ali Abutur, 46, at Agingi-Rukuba road Bassa LGA in possession of 808kg of cannabis sativa concealed in 68 bags of sugar and fertilizer, their counterparts in Kwara also nabbed Shaibu Musa with 28kg of the same psychoactive substance. ●



Police raid criminal hideouts, recover firearms, vehicles in Anambra



TIMOTHY AGBOR OSOGBO

The Anambra State Police Command says it has raided a criminal hide out in Lilu, Mbosi in Isseke, Ihiala Local Government Area of the state.

In a statement on Saturday, the spokesman for the state police, SP Tochukwu Ikenga, said the raid was following security intelligence gathered over time, adding its joint security forces carried out the operation. Ikenga said three unexploded

improvised explosives, two abandoned vehicles, some explosives materials like copper wires, fuel and other dangerous materials were recovered during the raid.

The statement read, "Following the security intelligence gathered over time, the Joint Security Forces in a planned and coordinated operation busted a criminal camp in Lilu, Mbosi and Isseke areas of Ihiala LGA, recovered three unexploded improvised explosives, two abandoned vehicles, and some explosives materials like copper wires, fuel and other dangerous materials.

"The Commissioner of Police, Nnaghe Itam, while charging the operatives to sustain the tempo of the operations assured the good people of the state, the commitment of the Police and other security agencies to continue to dominate and deny the criminal elements the space they enjoy to commit havoc in the State.

"The joint operations are still ongoing and further development shall be communicated."

Some yet-to-be-identified assailants on Monday attacked the Umunze Police Station in Orumba South Local Government Area of the state. ●

Experts seek concerted efforts to avert looming health risks in flood ravaged Nigerian states



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

be contaminated, we should please be mindful of this, so as to avoid further outbreak of waterborne and communicable diseases."

But, Oduluyi said residents of Borno are also threatened by the sanitation crisis because the flood has washed some toilets away, a situation that may worsen the open defecation practice in the state.

"Though a lot of emergency response is happening in Borno, sanitation matters should be given priority. We have been talking about water resilient facilities, climate resilient WASH but the truth is that most of the facilities right now cannot stand the test of this flood. Water sources have been contaminated, some will even be outrightly destroyed, toilets have been submerged and as a result of that, even the neglected tropical diseases like diarrhea will surface.

"People drinking contaminated water will spark another concern," the water expert said.

He said, "Water disaster or flooding, for me, is sometimes worse than insecurity. If someone wants to attack you, you still have the oppor-

tunity to run somewhere or hide but for water, you can't. So, the effect is enormous.

"In Borno State now, they have closed down the schools for the next two weeks. That is one significant effect. Students will miss those periods and the entire country will not wait for them. The uniform examination they do will not wait for them because they have flood that is already a loss for them. When they resume, they will either rush or just skip those parts.

"Another thing that we have to look at is life and property.

People are dead and properties have been destroyed, houses and cars have been submerged. The water from Alau Dam is not the kind that could enter a car engine and the engine will work well again. People will get displaced and they will lose their houses and before you know it, they go back to being internally displaced people. More serious and urgent actions should be taken to address the health hazards that are threatening the lives of the people in Borno," Oduluyi stated.

Reacting to the disaster, A WASH specialist with United Nations Children's Fund, Chioma Adimorah, said UNICEF is supporting the Federal Ministry of Water Resources in building toilets to the displaced residents in Internally Displaced Camps in the state with a view to tackling the impending sanitation and hygiene crisis.

She said two IDP camps have been established and more would be constructed, adding that there is a committee for cholera outbreak in place.

The specialist disclosed that efforts are on for disinfection of contaminated water. ●

Politics

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APC's Okpebholo wins Edo governorship election

● PDP, governors kick, insist Ighodalo won, petition INEC chair

TIMOTHY AGBOR AND BRIGHT JACOB

After months of intense politicking in Edo State, the Independent National Electoral Commission on Sunday night declared Monday Okpebholo of the All Progressives Congress as the winner of the keenly contested Saturday 21, 2024 governorship election in the state.

Okpebholo secured 291,667 votes to defeat Asue Ighodalo of the People's Democratic Party who got 247,274 votes and Olumide Akpata of the Labour Party who came a distant third in the race with 22,761 votes.

Fourteen other candidates contested the seat but got less than the three front-line candidates.

"That Okpebholo Monday of APC having satisfied the requirement of the law is hereby declared the winner and is returned elected," INEC's Returning Officer for the poll, Prof Faruk Kuta, said at exactly 09:27 pm, to delightful cheers from APC supporters at the collation centre in Benin City, the state capital on Sunday.

Kuta, the Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology, Minna, in Niger State, declared the winner of the poll after a series of recesses.

The APC candidate cleared over 10 of the 18 local government areas, leaving the PDP candidate with marginal victory in the other local councils.

The APC gained control in two of the three battleground senatorial districts in the state.

Okpebholo, the Edo Central Senator, leveraged significant influence in his senatorial district, and joined forces with his colleague in the National Assembly from Edo North, Adams Oshiomhole, to defeat Ighodalo, the anointed candidate of the outgoing governor.

Okpebholo's victory could also be attributed to his alliance with Dennis Idahosa, his running mate who is a federal lawmaker; and Obaseki's estranged deputy, Philip Shaibu.

The declaration on Sunday evening brought Okpebholo closer to achieving his goal of becoming governor of the state and placed his party, the APC, on the cusp of a return to power at the Dennis Osadebe Government House.

The APC lost power in the state in 2020 after the incumbent, Godwin Obaseki, defected from the party to the PDP in the heat of an intra-party squabble and fallout with his predecessor, Oshiomhole.

After he was denied the APC governorship ticket, Obaseki joined the PDP and clinched the ticket to defeat APC's Osagie Ize-Iyamu to seal his second term which will end on November 12, 2024.

Obaseki campaigned strongly for Ighodalo, while Oshiomhole was a focal



Okpebholo



Ighodalo

figure for Okpebholo's campaign, attending rallies and interviews on behalf of the APC candidate.

Okpebholo was declared winner of Saturday's election amid protests by sup-

porters of the PDP who strongly posited that the results were fabricated and did not represent the will of the people.

There were protests in parts of the state capital and outside the INEC collation cen-

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OKPEBHOLO'S
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DEPUTY, PHILIP
SHAIBU

tre, which was heavily guarded for the collation exercise.

Governor Obaseki had earlier stormed the collation centre to protest the exclusion of PDP agents from the venue but was escorted out of the premises by armed security agents.

At the collation centre, PDP agent, Tony Iyoha, called for the suspension of the entire election over alleged irregularities.

Similarly, the party's chairman in the state, Anthony Aziegbemi, explained that the discrepancies between figures on the EC8 form don't tally with those on INEC's IReV platform.

The PDP Governors' Forum also asked the electoral umpire to respect the will of the people of Edo State and let their votes count. The Forum alleged that the exercise was fraught with electoral malpractices.

The PDP governors led to Edo by Adamawa State Governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, faulted some of the results announced, saying they don't tally with those on IReV.

According to INEC, 2,249,780 persons with Permanent Voters' Cards decided Obaseki's successor on Saturday, September 21, 2024.

Edo is one of the eight states where governorship elections are held off-season due

to litigations and court judgements. Others are Anambra, Bayelsa, Ekiti, Imo, Kogi, Osun and Ondo.

PDP, GOVERNORS BACK FINTIRI, INSIST IGHODALO WON

However, the People's Democratic Party and its Governors Forum have expressed support for the Chairman of the Edo State Governorship Election National Campaign Council, Adamawa State Governor, Ahmadu Fintiri, who stated that the PDP candidate, Asue Ighodalo, clearly won the state governorship election.

On Sunday, Fintiri stated that the Independent National Electoral Commission should be held accountable for violating the Electoral Act.

In a statement on Sunday, the National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, responded by explaining that Fintiri presented results from the polling units showing Ighodalo in a clear lead.

Ologunagba claimed that this was before the state collation exercise being taken over by the APC, which allegedly conspired with some dishonest INEC and security officials to alter and replace the authentic results with falsified figures favouring the defeated APC candidate.

The statement read, "The People's Democratic Party stands by the results of the Edo State governorship election as garnered by its polling agents across the state and echoed by the Chairman of the Edo PDP National Campaign Council, Governor Ahmadu Fintiri of Adamawa State which indicate that the PDP candidate, Dr. Asue Ighodalo, clearly won the election.

"The PDP asserts that the rush, venom and hauling of insults with which the All Progressives Congress attacked Governor Fintiri only confirms APC's violent desperation to cover its manipulations and steal the mandate freely given to Dr. Asue Ighodalo by the people of Edo State as reflected in the genuine votes cast at the Polling Units.

"As Governor Fintiri presented, the results collated from the Polling Units have Asue Ighodalo in clear lead before the state collation exercise was hijacked by the APC which, in connivance of some unscrupulous INEC and security officials, engaged in blatant alteration and substitution of the genuine results with fabricated figures in favour of the defeated APC candidate.

"The PDP had on several occasions alerted Nigerians of this sinister plot by the APC which will be firmly resisted as the APC and its candidate Monday Okpebholo were thoroughly defeated in the election."

The PDP spokesman warned that any attempt to alter the results of the governorship election and award victory to a defeated candidate will lead to serious

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repercussions.

The statement added, "The PDP in the strongest terms cautions the APC and INEC not to announce or declare any result that does not reflect the will of the people as expressed at the Polling Units. Such will be a recipe for a huge crisis in the state as the people of Edo State will never allow their mandate in illegitimate hands.

"Our party again cautions INEC not to lose sight of the violent protest that trailed the criminal attempt by the former Adamawa State Resident Electoral Commissioner, Mallam Hudu Ari to alter the outcome of the 2023 governorship election in that state which nearly led to the death of some INEC officials.

"Any attempt to change the results of the Edo State governorship election and allocate victory to a defeated candidate will provoke worse consequences."

In a related development, the PDP Governors Forum, led by Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, praised the people of Edo State for turning out in large numbers to fulfill their duty in choosing their governor for the next four years.

The PDP Governors Forum clarified that Fintiri only shared the results from a few local government areas that were already collated and available on the INEC IREV portal.

According to the forum this was intended to prevent manipulation by dishonest individuals and to protect the integrity of the election process.

The statement read in part, "We have no doubt that given the laudable achievements of the exiting governor, His Excellency Godwin Obaseki, and the qualities of our governorship candidate, Dr. Asue Ighodalo, the enlightened Edo electorate would have had no difficulty in making the right choice, particularly given the hardship that the APC Administration is spreading nationwide.

"We note with immense pride and satisfaction, the role being played by the PDP Governors, His Excellency Governor Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri of Adamawa State, His Excellency Governor Duoye Diri of Bayelsa State, His Excellency Governor Dr. Agbu Kefas of Taraba State and His Excellency, the Rt. Hon. Sherif Francis Oborewori, Governor of Delta State who has painstakingly monitored the exercise in accordance with the law and guided the electorate to remain calm and law abiding throughout the entire process.

"We are satisfied that our colleagues as led by His Excellency Governor Ahmadu Fintiri simply stated the results of a few local government areas as were already collated and captured on the INEC IREV portal, with a view to forestalling any manipulation by unscrupulous elements and, ultimately, averting a situation that could throw the exercise into disrepute and the nation into political jeopardy. Therefore, the public is advised to disregard the mischievous accusation by the APC that anyone usurped INEC's responsibility, let alone distinguished Nigerians who are governors in their respective states."

PDP-elected governors urged INEC to announce results that accurately reflect the wishes of the Edo people as expressed through their votes on Saturday.

It added, "As the process runs its course, we wish to remind the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, of the need to live up to the oath of office of the Commission's principal officers and the expectations of the people, to serve as an impartial umpire committed to deepening our multi-party democracy and the survival of our country.

"As the country perches on the horns of grave economic and security challenges, it is our expectation that INEC and ev-

eryone involved in the Edo Governorship Elections will respect the sovereign wishes of the people of Edo State and spare the nation the unpredictable consequences of a disputed result at this time.

"This becomes more imperative, especially in the face of the threat to democracy by the total state capture inclination of the Tinubu-led All Progressives Congress, APC government.

"The PDPGF unequivocally reiterates its commitment to democratic best practices, and the peace and stability of a united Nigeria in which the citizens are not only spared the contrived ordeal of the moment but, more importantly, provided alternative opportunities to realise their legitimate dreams.

"Finally, we stand with our Governors, H/E Fintiri, H/E Diri, H/E Agbu Kefas and H/E Oborewori of Adamawa, Bayelsa, Taraba and Delta States respectively, on all the actions and positions that they have taken on our behalf, with respect to maintaining the sanctity of the elections."

PDP PETITIONS INEC CHAIR, DEMANDS REVIEW OF ELECTION RESULTS

Meanwhile, the Edo State chapter of the People's Democratic Party has petitioned the chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, over alleged "massive irregularities" in the collated governorship election results from 16 local government areas of the State.

Chairman of the party in the State, Tony Aziegbemi, made the demand in a protest letter addressed to the INEC chairman.

The PDP chairman, in a letter titled, "Protest against manufactured vote entries and unjust deduction of PDP votes in the collation of results of Edo State governorship election", alleged that the electoral officers appointed by INEC for

the election "made entries that are totally different from the actual results as uploaded on the INEC IREV, thereby unjustly inflating votes in favour of the APC and deducting the votes of the PDP."

He cited discrepancies in the votes recorded for his party in local government areas where the APC won with wide margins.

Aziegbemi said, "a simple collation of

all the votes recorded in the polling unit (Akoko-Edo) results uploaded on the IREV shows that the APC obtained 25,010 votes while 34,847 votes was recorded in the EC8C declared by the LGA Returning Officer.

"While for the PDP, a collation of the votes from the results uploaded on the IREV is 18,620 but 15,865 was returned on the EC8C declared by the LGA Returning Officer.

"It would interest you that in Ward 9 Akoko Edo LGA, from the 36 Polling Unit results uploaded on the IREV, the total votes obtained by APC is 2,350 while 9104 was entered into the EC8B result for APC. The total votes for PDP is 1,359 while 633 was entered in the EC8B.

"Also, in Ward 6 Akoko Edo LGA, where elections did not hold in Ward 6 Units 12, 17, 15, 18, 14 and 16, results were returned for the said polling units in the Ward Result sheet (EC8B)."

He went further to explain that a simple collation of all the votes recorded in the polling unit results uploaded on the IREV shows that the APC obtained 10,972 votes while 16,760 votes were instead recorded in the EC8C declared by the LGA Returning Officer.

He said, "While for the PDP, a collation of the votes from the results uploaded on the IREV's 14,485 but 14,658 was returned on the EC8C declared by the LGA Returning Officer.

"It would interest you to note that the collation of the Egor LGA was not done at the designated LGA centre but was moved to the INEC State HQ and the PDP agent was not allowed access to be part of the exercise."

The Edo PDP chairman also cited examples of alleged deductions of votes from his party's scores "recorded for Etsako West LAG on the IREV shows that the APC obtained 29,858 votes while 32,107 votes was recorded in the EC8C declared by the LGA Returning Officer."

He explained, "While for the PDP, a collation of the votes from the results uploaded on the IREV is 16,712 but 17,483 was returned on the EC8C declared by the LGA Returning Officer.

"The above highlighted irregularities which are very apparent are extremely scandalous and a brazen attempt to steal the mandate of the PDP and also a terrible embarrassment to the commission.

"We therefore demand the immediate re-collation and recomputation of the actual results for the various polling units in the above highlighted Local Government Areas in compliance with the INEC guidelines and regulations which mandates that votes from various units and wards be properly collated."

ELECTION OBSERVERS EXPRESS CONCERN OVER TRANSPARENCY

Election observer groups have also raised concerns about the transparency of the Independent National Electoral Commission in the governorship election in Edo State.

The election observer groups made their position known in a statement jointly signed by the Nigerian Civil Society Situation Room, Yiaga Africa, Impact Development Initiative, Nigerian Women Trust Fund, ElectHER and TAF Africa on Sunday.

The statement read, "We, the undersigned accredited civil society organisations observing the 2024 Edo Governor-

ship Election, express concern over the transparency of the ongoing results collation by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

"Reports of disruptions at ward and local government collation centres, including intimidation of INEC officials and attempts to collate results contrary to the provisions of the Electoral Act and INEC guidelines, raise significant concerns about the credibility of the results collation process.

"We acknowledge INEC's recent statement recognising reports of result mutilation and its commitment to investigate and address any proven violations."

It added, "In light of this, we urge INEC to invoke its powers under Section 65 of the Electoral Act 2022 to review any declarations and returns where results were not declared voluntarily or violated provisions of the Electoral Act and INEC regulations, and guidelines.

"We further call on security agencies to refrain from interference in the collation process and to ensure that accredited party agents, the media, and election observers are granted full access to collation centres. We wish to emphasise that the role of security agencies in the election is to safeguard the process and not to create a situation that will undermine the transparency of the process and thus impact negatively on the credibility of the outcome of the election."

SEE YOUR VICTORY AS CHALLENGING CALL TO SERVICE, TINUBU TELLS OKPEBHOLO

Meanwhile, President Bola Tinubu has congratulated Senator Monday Okpebholo, the All Progressives Congress candidate in Saturday's Edo State governorship election, on his victory at the polls.

The President's Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, said Tinubu commended APC national leaders, Edo State leaders, and party governors for working hard to achieve victory.

He said the victory testified to the people's support for the ruling party, its progressive ideals, its economic reengineering programme and its commitment to improving the lives of Nigerians.

Tinubu urged the governor-elect not to gloat over his victory but to see it as a challenging call to service.

He encouraged him to demonstrate magnanimity by reaching out to his political rivals and uniting the people of Edo State to ensure its development.

Tinubu also praised other candidates who participated in the election for their contributions to advancing Nigeria's democracy, saying peaceful political contests, such as the one on Saturday, portray Nigeria as a stable democracy.

The President urged all those aggrieved by the election outcome to seek redress through the legal channels.

In addition, the president commended the people of Edo State for their orderly and peaceful conduct during the election, underscoring the maturing of Nigeria's democracy after 25 years.

"I commend the INEC and our security agencies for working round the clock to conduct a successful, peaceful and largely hitch-free exercise.

"INEC has once again demonstrated that it is committed to organising a free and fair election in our country", President Tinubu was quoted as saying. ●

APC's Okpebholo wins Edo governorship election

THE PDP HAD ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ALERTED NIGERIANS OF THIS SINISTER PLOT BY THE APC WHICH WILL BE FIRMLY RESISTED AS THE APC AND ITS CANDIDATE MONDAY OKPEBHOLO WERE THOROUGHLY DEFEATED IN THE ELECTION



Akpata

BRIGHT JACOB

Election debates, which should naturally be an integral part of the electoral process, have continued to receive negative reviews in Nigeria and could be thrown into the gutter when the fight for political supremacy commences in the build-up to the 2027 presidential elections.

An indication of the diminishing value of election debates in Nigeria came to the fore on September 15 in Edo State, Nigeria, after governorship candidates of the All Progressives Congress and the People's Democratic Party failed to show up for a debate.

The South South state went to the polls on Saturday, September 21, 2024, to elect a new governor and eventually capped off a difficult off-cycle election that saw so much bad blood between three of the main candidates and their backers.

Monday Okpebholo (APC), Asuerinme Ighodalo (PDP) and Olumide Akpata of the Labour Party, were supposed to use a debate stage to sway voters into voting for them before the hotly contested election took place, but the APC and the PDP men decided to rain on people's parade.

Thereafter, disappointed organisers of the debate, the Nigerian Union of Journalists and the Broadcasting Organisation of Nigeria, including would-be viewers on the all-important day the debate should have held, were left reeling in bemusement.

It, therefore, led the Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Elections Debate Group, Eddie Emessiri, to condemn the last-minute withdrawal and then appeal to Edo voters to demand accountability from those seeking political offices in the state.

Besides Emessiri's criticism, a famous political activist from Edo state, Aisha Yesufu, who was also frustrated by the action of the APC and PDP candidates, had a few choice words for them.

Yesufu told Edo people at the venue of the abandoned debate, "Let me tell you something, the people that you have (in government), the APC and the PDP, are ready to give us bad governance.

"They are ready to suppress us. Their parents suppressed our parents. They have suppressed us and we must not allow them to suppress us and oppress our children.

"This Nigeria belongs to all of us and we must get a country and a state where the child of nobody can become somebody without knowing anybody."

Some political commentators have said that the likes of Okpebholo and Ighodalo should not be entirely blamed for their flagrant decision to skip the debate.

According to these commentators, political leaders in the country, especially the ones that graced the polity since the start of the Fourth Republic in 1999, are notorious for not attending debates even if their lives depended on it.

Astoundingly, practically every Nigerian leader that contested and won a presidential election has, one way or the other, avoided a debate or two.



Okpebholo



Ighodalo



Akpata

Diminishing value of election debates in Nigeria

From Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan, Muhammadu Buhari and even incumbent President, Bola Tinubu, the story is the same.

In 1999, Obasanjo blamed his failure to turn up for a presidential debate on "lack of proper invitation."

At the time, the former military Head of State, who left his opponent, Olu Falae, to debate alone, denied having "shied away" from the debate.

By 2007, Obasanjo's successor, Umaru Yar'Adua, also missed the debates. Only the defunct All Nigeria Peoples Party's candidate, Buhari, and Pat Utomi of the African Democratic Congress, slugged it out.

In 2011, Jonathan and Buhari could not spar on the debate stage because Buhari had attended the first of two debates organized for presidential candidates and Jonathan did not.

When it was time for the second debate, Jonathan was present at the venue but Buhari and other opposition candidates were absent.

Buhari later said he did not attend because Jonathan failed to attend the first debate.

In 2015, Buhari declined the offer to attend any debate. His party, the APC, said some Nigerian media organisations were compromised. The party also questioned the "independence" of some organisers of the debate.

Although Buhari won the election in 2015, he did not attend any debate in 2019. His rival, PDP's Atiku Abubakar, said he would not attend the debates Buhari failed to honour.

Before the last presidential election in 2023, opposition presidential candidates, Atiku (PDP) and Peter Obi (LP) called for a debate with the candidate of the APC, Tinubu, but that request was not granted.

Tinubu's team resolved, because of the many radio and television networks in Nigeria that indicated to

WHO HAS DEBATES HELPED IN NIGERIA? I THINK DEBATES ARE A WASTE OF TIME IN NIGERIA. I STAND TO BE CORRECTED, BUT NO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WHO EVER TOOK PART IN A DEBATE WON AN ELECTION ON THE STRENGTH OF THAT DEBATE

host such debates, not to give any TV station preference. They also said the hectic campaign schedule was another reason why Tinubu would dodge the debates.

Concerning the Edo State governorship election debate boycott, a political affairs analyst, Kizito Opara, said that the disposition of political leaders to past debates influenced the decision of the APC and PDP candidates.

However, he said that in President Tinubu's case, debates were actually avoided during the presidential race for "strategic reasons." Opara also said that other candidates would gain some advantages over the former Lagos State Governor because he was not a "fast speaker."

"I concur with those who have been saying that it is because of the action

of the President and other notable politicians who are accused of not laying a solid foundation for debates attendance that candidates in Edo State decided to act like scared kittens

"However, if you ask me, I will earnestly tell you that President Tinubu avoided the debates during the last general elections for strategic reasons.

"Every Tom, Dick and Harry knows that the President is not a fast speaker. Against other faster speakers, he would have capitulated and found it really difficult to keep up with them. In fact, time will always be against him when he is putting his thoughts together into words on the debate stage.

"His handlers, during the campaign, knew this and so they vetoed every outing that involved a debate.

"Very soon, the election will be upon us, and we will still see the same proceedings in 2023 play out in 2027. Anyone thinking of seeing the President on a debate stage then should thrash the idea. It will not happen.

"And if it happens, it would be very remarkable.

"I know the likes of Obi and Atiku will be very eager to debate the President. Unfortunately, they should look for other means of beating Tinubu. It certainly won't be through a debate.

A seasoned socio-political commentator, Chidi Egbule, told *The Point* that debates have never helped candidates during presidential elections in Nigeria to clinch victory.

In his assessment, Nigerians only vote for political parties and not what a candidate would articulate during a debate.

"Who has debates helped in Nigeria? I think debates are a waste of time in Nigeria. I stand to be corrected, but no presidential candidate who ever took part in a debate won an election on the strength of that debate.

"Let me repeat myself, no presi-

dential candidate has ever won an election based on what he articulated to Nigerians during a debate. It has never happened. And do you know why? It is because people only vote for political parties in this part of the world.

"On the contrary, in many foreign countries, candidates have used debates to gain much-needed lead in opinion polls and used that momentum to win elections. In Europe and America, how you perform in a debate can change the course of your candidacy for the best.

"Look at, for instance, what Donald Trump of the Republican Party and Kamala Harris of the Democratic Party did with their own debate.

"Over 61 million viewers watched it because it could either make or mar any of the two candidates.

"Here in Nigeria, nobody cares about what you plan to do for the country. Nobody also cares about what you say. We were here when they asked a particular candidate in Edo State to come to a debate and pass his message on the debate stage using Pidgin English.

"You see, as long as you can distribute 10kg bags of rice to our people, you are the best debater," he said.

Egbule also said that another way to determine candidates' fitness was through a debate.

"The debates, too, would have helped us to know which candidates are healthy and fit. The debate between Trump and Harris also told us a lot about their staying power.

"Both American candidates stood up for more than 90 minutes. Trump who is 78 years old was also noted to be agile, sharp and fit. Through that debate, we saw that he was healthy and rearing to go.

"Can we say all that for our leaders? We surely have a long way to go," he submitted. ●

Hot Seat

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I'm a PDP man, if tomorrow Plateau people tell me to move, I'll move – Governor Mutfwang

In this interview, the Governor of Plateau State, Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, speaks on numerous topical issues including his relationship with President Bola Tinubu, the forthcoming local government election in the state, how to improve infrastructure in the state and payment of backlog of pensions, among others. Excerpts

What has been the story since you came on board as Governor of Plateau State?

You know that governance continues daily. It keeps improving; it's like a football club, every season, you see clubs buying new players because they need to improve the competitiveness of the squad.

I am happy with my squad; but I'm always looking for ways of improvement. As soon as we find ways in which we can improve, we will bring in the best hands that can be recruited.

Recently, you suspended two of your commissioners. When that was done through your Director of Press, you didn't tell the world why you did it. May we know why it was done?

Well, let me say that we suspended them in order to reinforce discipline within the cabinet. Where we see some bit of lackluster disposition, we try to rein them in and make sure people sit up to their responsibilities. We can't for political reasons, allow anything and everything to go. But I am sure those we suspended have learnt their lessons; and we will keep reviewing those suspensions.

There was an appointment you made recently which generated a lot of fuzz. I'm sure you saw the reactions even from the Jama'atu Nasril Islam about a Senior Special Assistant on Indigenous Muslims. There seems to be too much hues and cries. I don't know if you want to explain anything in that light?

I really don't like generating storms out of tea cups. It's not necessary. I didn't create the idea of "Indigenous Muslims". I met it on the ground as governor. It has been in existence, and even registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission as indigenous Muslims.

I don't know what motivated them; but they are definitely a defined group within our space. And so I didn't create them. I only said, "Okay, look, you guys exist, let's see how you can relate better with government". That's all we did. Therefore, I don't see why anybody should deny them the right of existence. Some of them are Berom, some of them are Mwangha-vul, some of them are Ngas, and others are Tarok.

They want their own identity. And there is freedom of association guaranteed under the constitution. So there is no need to deny anybody that right. So, we simply recognised what is in existence. We didn't create it. What we have done in trying to recognize the various groups is to give everybody a sense of inclusion so that

we don't just throw something at the large group and some people within that group feel disenfranchised, feel disintegrated, and feel not included. That is why you can see for the first time in the history of Plateau we recognised different groupings and gave them a channel of relating with the government. We are running on this mantra of inclusion, equity, and fairness to all. Now, if you are getting your own, don't deny somebody the opportunity to get his own. That's all we are saying.

It appears you have a smooth relationship with Mr. President; to the extent it is feared that you may want to possibly jump ship someday. Are you thinking in that direction?

First of all, let me appreciate Mr. President for accepting me and opening his arms of fellowship to me. After all, he is the father of the nation. For instance, as the Governor of Plateau State, I cannot discriminate against any Plateau citizen. And so, for me to have that access to Mr. President, I believe it's for the good of Plateau people.

Let me say this, I'm a PDP man to the core. My politics has always been dictated

by God and the people. And I know that Plateau people own PDP. They see it as their own. If tomorrow Plateau people tell me to move, I'll move. But if they tell me we want you to stay where you are, that's where I will stay. So, I will always move with the people. Let me assure the people about this; I will always move with the people. I relate well with Mr. President; but I don't forget where I come from.

Just a few days ago, the APC stakeholders on the Plateau met. Since you have this good relationship with the President, do you have any information to give us in the light that Plateau has been without a minister for a very long time, even though you don't belong to the APC?

The federal cabinet is a right, as enshrined in our constitution. And I've had to engage Mr. President on this. He has asked me to be patient. He is trying to re-jig his

government and certainly has not forgotten about Plateau.

He is considering a lot of options. Of course, we will keep engaging him on this matter. Presently, the National Assembly is in recess – the Senate, particularly. I'm sure that when they resume, we are likely to hear something positive in this regard.

May we know what your administration is doing to address the quality of taxes imposed in the state?

On the issue of tax on land tenancy agreements, it's not something that we created. I know that the Joint Tax Board – which is a national body of all the states – usually has all the tax heads in charge come together. Normally, if you have a tenancy agreement, it's supposed to be registered with the government; and you are supposed to pay something on it.

But I'm not sure that many landlords in operation today have tenancy agreements; and I can assure you, they are not paying anything to the government. So, if they are charging you extra, it is not because they want to pay the government. But we will soon be dealing with all the issues around tenancy rates in Plateau State. We are not going to leave it for landlords to take advantage of people. We are going to come into that space quite soon.

Recently, the government moved against the location of certain parks. What is the motive behind that action?

On the issue of illegal parks, let me say it loud and clear that we are going to regulate motor parks. We have started; we shut down the one in NTA because unregulated motor parks are dens for

criminality. We are not going to allow it to continue. We want to encourage those who were shut out of NTA Park to make use of the one in Jos South.

It's for your good and safety, because we want to make sure that both passengers and motorists are not put in danger. We want to appeal to people who are operating those motor parks to know that their days are coming to an end. We'll definitely get them out of those spaces. But let me also assure you that we are going to create decent motor houses all over the city for people to have access to.

Again, on the issue of parks, we are also making arrangements to construct modern parks into the city gates from the Riyom, Bukuru, Mangu-Foron-Barkin Ladi, Zaria and Bauchi road axis.

We are looking at how to be able to bring modern facilities in that regard. Again, we like this to be private sector driven. That's why it's taking us a little bit of time because we want to cross the T's and dot the I's.

What is the deal for pensioners in the local and state governments? Do they have reason to smile under your government?

Pensioners at the local government are something that has challenged this administration dearly. We have a backlog of over N15 billion at the local government; another, close to N20 billion at the state level. We are looking for ways on how to clear those pension liabilities as much as we can. It's not going to be easy; but we've started discussions with our financial advisors. And, so, we are looking at various options to deal with the pension issues with the local government autonomy that is upcoming. It's going to be a challenge; but we'll look at it, and see how to navigate it.

What are your plans for the provision of water in the Jos/Bukuru metropolis?

We have already started to take a look at the issue of water supply on the Plateau, especially in the metropolis. It is a huge challenge on the ground. But we are working on it. What we have done is to reorganize the administrative machinery in the water sector. You may have heard that I appointed a Special Adviser on Water Management recently. It's because of the kind of plans we have. We cannot sustain urban water supply with boreholes. We have to have a comprehensive water scheme that can supply the city

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LET ME SAY THIS, I'M A PDP MAN TO THE CORE. MY POLITICS HAS ALWAYS BEEN DICTATED BY GOD AND THE PEOPLE. AND I KNOW THAT PLATEAU PEOPLE OWN PDP. THEY SEE IT AS THEIR OWN. IF TOMORROW PLATEAU PEOPLE TELL ME TO MOVE, I'LL MOVE”



Mutfwang

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'Plateau is a model in terms of conducting local government elections'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

effortlessly. It is going to be challenging.

With all the dams we have, we should be able to have sufficient and quality water supply on the Plateau. But the pipes to carry the water from Lamingo and Shen dams, and all the other dams, we have already put together; we are equally working on them. It is not a one-day solution. But we hope that will really improve urban water supply by God's grace.

There are some grant-aided missions and other private schools giving quality education, but they are limited. May we know if you are thinking of their sustainability?

I am a product of a grant-aided school. I went to Gindiri, as you know, which is a quasi-public school because it's not an individual that owns it; and it's not for profit. So, it's something desirable. But we are working, trying, to first of all improve our financial capacity. Once we do that, we are going to look at how to be able to aid those schools. I believe in that policy; but we will look at it within the limits of our resources.

It may not be immediate; but we will certainly attend to it at some point in time. On the issue of scholarships, certainly we have improved on the scholarship scheme we met on ground because when we came in, I think every student was being given N4,000, which was owed as at last year. I remember that I approved close to N300 million to be shared to students. We have also reduced the school fees for Plateau students in the tertiary institutions owned by Plateau.

We are always looking at how to improve that for the Law School students. Maybe because I'm a lawyer, you know, we're able to pay some of their fees. And we are looking at how to encourage professional development of our students.

There are health concerns at the Jos Abattoir. What can you do to bring it to standard using best practices?

I've listened to the pleas about the abattoir. One of the projects that are dear to me is that abattoir. We are going to rebuild the abattoir to a modern facility. We are making arrangements to do that. You need to know this, presently big hotels like Transcorp import meat from South Africa. Because they claim that our meat production is not up to international standards. There are countries that are waiting to even import beef from Africa. And they have identified Plateau State as one of those states they can import beef from.

Therefore, we are making plans to set up a modern abattoir which would mean that all the butchers will have to be trained and retrained. Some of them may have to run other ancillary facilities linked to the abattoir. They need to also know that the butchery business is no longer going to be for those who didn't go to school. So, they need to start improving on themselves now.

The local government elections are just a few days away. You have repeatedly said you created a space where it would be a level playing ground for everybody. The people don't believe that what you're saying is going to happen. Your party had a bit of a stormy ride in the primaries. The other party seemed to be very quiet. They did their primaries and everything went on smoothly.

Did they do primaries? They didn't do primaries. I can tell you that for free. Let them challenge me hereafter. Let them tell us where they did primaries. They didn't do primaries for governorship. Names were just written; they didn't do

for local government elections either. But let me say this, we are going to prove to Nigerians that Plateau is a model in terms of conducting local government elections. We are bringing international observers to observe our local government elections. The reason APC is participating is because we have provided a level playing field. You remember the shameful local government elections conducted in 2021 where they excluded the PDP on a very frivolous and scandalous basis, which was decided in the Government House, not even by PLASIEC.

We witnessed situations where before results could be counted, people were already announced and sworn in. That is not going to repeat itself on the Plateau. By the grace of God, we're going to conduct credible local government elections. I was a beneficiary of such credible elections in 2014, when I became a local government chairman. I cannot go below that standard.

Plateau people should be reassured that we'll do the best we can, to ensure that we have credible local government

elections.

For us in the PDP, we had hiccups here and there. Truly the party belongs to the people, if we had situations where communities' members emerge as consensus candidates rather than by the party itself; because communities took ownership of the party. And we are glad about that.

But let's not exaggerate it. We had a few skirmishes in two or three local governments out of 17. And what I can tell you is that we brought everything under control. Of course, when you have a contest, some people will be aggrieved – it's normal; but we are addressing it. And I am sure before the elections everything will be well, and we are going to go into the elections, as far as the PDP is concerned, as one happy family

It appears that some of the people you started with in your journey through your campaign appear not to be getting your attention anymore – they have been left in the cold. What is your position on this issue?

You know, the government does not begin and end in one day. People have expectations that once you come into government, everybody is going to get an appointment. Everybody is going to get one thing done or the other. It doesn't happen in one day. People have to learn to be patient. There is no way I can cut myself into pieces and give everybody. When I was chairman of Mangu, I had this very naive idea that I could be seeing everybody. So I created two days in the week. The first two weeks, I almost died because there was no way I could see everybody. Now,

I have to attend to issues in Abuja, and also attend to issues here locally.

I'm going to get journalists to keep company with me for a week and see my schedules. I believe that among many governors, I'm doing my best to be able to allow access to me as a person. I answer phone calls when the time allows; reply text and WhatsApp messages. I engage people, when I have the freedom.

But when somebody calls you, maybe you are even having a state executive council meeting; he wants you to answer his call. So let me appeal to those who feel they haven't been carried along to continue to be patient.

We'll continue to look out for that. And people who know me know that I have no enemies or friends when it comes to governance.

If you have any value to add to Plateau people, we'll bring you on board. Some of those who competed with me during elections are in different offices today. Appointments were facilitated, you know, so we'll continue to do that. I appeal to people who have such feelings, let them continue to be patient.

What measures are you putting in place to help get sponsors for Sport teams in Plateau State, especially through companies existing on the Plateau? What are the companies giving back to the state as it will lessen the general burden on your government in funding these local teams?

We are trying to reorganize sports from the grassroots and look at various aspects of the administration of sports as it is presently. Government is bearing the burden for virtually all the teams, whether in football, basketball, badminton, every aspect of sports, because when we got on board, the Sports Council was almost dead.

We've been able to bring in one of our veteran sports administrators, Professor Ezra Gunnen. We brought him from Abuja to become Director of Sports. He was a record holder in 1500 meters here on the Plateau. We are thinking of how to be able to rebuild from the base.

Of course, part of the critical thing that was coming was the contributions of the private sector. But before you ask the private sector to give, you must first of all also give them.

So we are looking at what the enabling environment is. What is the enabling environment for the private sector to thrive? They don't do Father Christmas; they do what is called corporate social responsibility – which is done after they have made profit. ●



Mutfwang

PLATEAU PEOPLE SHOULD BE REASSURED THAT WE'LL DO THE BEST WE CAN, TO ENSURE THAT WE HAVE CREDIBLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

'I can't attribute any development in Lagos to Tinubu'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

yet taking women as equals and so they have to create a special position for them in the parties.

The president has been in office for 16 months, what is your assessment of his administration?

I am sorry to say that I think it has been a disaster. It has been a complete disaster because Muhammadu Buhari's government was bad enough and one would have expected that Tinubu would have tried to turn things around, but he has not done

that. He has been playing in the gallery. He has, in fact, been spending money on himself and his cronies, instead of actually doing something to better the life of the ordinary man.

What do you have to say about security?

Well, security is worse than ever because before, terrorists were in the North ravaging the place. Now they have moved down South and now we are having kidnapping in virtually every corner of Nigeria. I believe he has to make sure that the security apparatus is overhauled.

Some people are saying that the terror-

ists are in Sambisa forest. Why can't the army go into Sambisa forest and get rid of them. They know where the terrorists are. These terrorists are phoning people.

Somebody is using the phone, you can locate him wherever he is. Whenever I get to London, I get a welcome message on my phone saying, 'Welcome to London.'

So once you have a phone, you can be traced anywhere. In fact, I was watching a television this morning and one of the things being said was that all these people, those who were fighting in Lebanon, the terrorists in Lebanon, they don't use phones, that's why they were using pag-

ers because they knew that they could easily be traced by the use of their phones. So, how is it that terrorists can phone people and ask for ransom and the police and the military cannot trace them and deal with them?

If you had the opportunity to meet the president, how would you advise him to address the situation in the country?

I don't think the president would want my advice. I don't think he is the kind of person that takes advice. After all, I was his deputy. I don't believe he is the kind of person that takes advice. He seems to

have the mindset that he knows it all.

But for the benefit of the doubt, what kind of advice would you give him?

Well, I would advise him to look around the country; we have qualified and capable people in this country who can give him the right advice and show him the way as to how to run the country.

My advice is that he should look into the security situation in the country very seriously because as long as there is no security, we would not have development because people would not invest in an unsecured country. ●

Probe spending of ecological funds by Borno, SERAP tells Tinubu

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project has called on President Bola Tinubu to promptly investigate the spending of billions of naira from the Ecological Fund collected by Borno State since 2001, including the N816 million collected by the state between January 2024 and June 2024.

In a statement on Sunday signed by SERAP's Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, the organisation maintained that suspected perpetrators of corruption and misman-

agement of ecological funds should face prosecution if sufficient admissible evidence is found and that any proceeds of corruption should be fully recovered.

SERAP also urged Tinubu to direct the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Lateef Fagbemi, and appropriate anti-corruption agencies to urgently identify and ensure access to justice and effective remedies for affected victims in Borno State.

"Your government has a legal obligation to address the prevalence of flooding across the country and its effects on people, and to ensure that the money meant to mitigate flooding is not lost to

corruption," the statement read.

SERAP further urged Tinubu to instruct the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, George Akume, to collaborate with appropriate anti-corruption agencies to track and monitor the spending of the Ecological Fund by the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, all 36 state governors, the 774 local government areas, as well as all emergency management agencies across the country funded through the Ecological Fund.

SERAP stated, "There is a legitimate public interest in ensuring justice for the victims of Borno's floods

and accountability for the spending of the monthly ecological funds collected by the state through the Federal Account Allocation Committee.

"Although ecological funds are shared across the three tiers of government and emergency management agencies, the funds are managed and supervised by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation.

"The devastation in Borno highlights your government's obligation to promote and ensure transparency and accountability in the spending of ecological funds by all tiers of

government and emergency management agencies.

"SERAP notes that Borno State receives millions of naira monthly through the Federal Allocation Committee as its share of the Ecological Fund."

SERAP added that other states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, also receive monthly funds from the Ecological Fund, noting that trillions of naira have been budgeted over the years through the Ecological Fund to tackle

floods and other ecological problems.

"SERAP is concerned that the ecological funds collected by Borno State over the years may have been diverted, mismanaged, or left unaccounted for."

CHANGE OF NAME

I formerly known and addressed as **ADEBAYO ADEWUNMI OMOTOLA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEBAYO ADEWUNMI OMOTOLA**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

ABOTO ALFA YOUTHS FORUM

This is to inform the general public that the above name has applied for registration to Corporate Affairs Commission under part C of the Companies And Allied Matters Act No 1 of 2020.

TRUSTEES

1. AWEDA AKEEM ADEMIYIWA - CHAIRMAN
2. MUHAMMED NUHUGANIYU - SECRETARY
3. NUHU FOLORUNSHO TAJUDEEN
4. ABDULRAHEEM ABDULHAKEEM AJAO
5. FATAI KAYODE YAHYA

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. TO DEVELOP THE COMMUNITY YOUTHS THROUGH ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP VOCATIONAL TRAINING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT.
2. TO INCULCATE IN THE YOUTHS THE CULTURE AND HABIT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SELFLESS SERVICES.
3. TO DISSUADE THE COMMUNITY YOUTHS FROM ENGAGING IN VICES SUCH AS CULTISM, GANGSTERISM, HOLOGANISM, DRUG ADDICTION ETC.
4. TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE COMMUNITY USING THE YOUTHS AS THE DRIVING FORCE.
5. TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES ON YOUTHS DEVELOPMENT.

Any objection to registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, 420 Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, PMB 198, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days from the date of this publication.

SIGNED-MUHAMMED NUHUGANIYU - SECRETARY

PUBLIC NOTICE

OTITOLOJU COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, IMAGBON

This is to inform the general public that the above name has applied for registration to Corporate Affairs Commission under part C of the Companies And Allied Matters Act No. 1 of 2020.

TRUSTEES

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| AKINBOSOLA JIBAYO PHILIP | CHAIRMAN |
| WASIU RABUI ISHOLA | SECRETARY |
| OLUKOGA MUKAILA | |

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. TO UNITE THE MEMBERS TOWARDS ACHIEVING A COMMON GOAL.
2. TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF CHAINSAW BUSINESS.
3. TO DEFEND AND ADVANCE THE INTEREST OF MEMBERS
4. TO ENSURE MEMBERS COMPLY WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

Any objection to registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, 420 Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, PMB 198, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days from the date of this publication.

SIGNED-TRUSTEES

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **AMARACHI ONYEKACHI NANCY**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **IBEMERE ONYEKACHI NANCY**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **KEHINDE KAREEM TOAFEEK** now wish to be known and addressed as **KEHINDE KAREEM TOAFEEK AGBOOLA**. All former documents remain valid. Banks, General public and concerned authority please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **AYODELE BAMIDELE JOSEPH** and **AYODELE BAMIDELE** now wish to be known and addressed as **BAMIDELE AYODELE**. All former documents remain valid. General public, please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **DANIEL IFEDAYO SHAMANI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **DANIEL DAYO IFE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME
FORMERLY **OLADEINDE BILIKISU DUN AND OLADEHINDE BILIKIS OLADUNNI** NOW TO BE KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS **OLADEINDE BILIKISOLADUNNI**. ALL FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID, NSCDC AND GENERAL PUBLIC TAKE NOTE.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OYEDELE KABIRAT BOLAJI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **GIWA BABALOLA KABIRAT ADEBOLA**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **SHOBERU ORIYOMI ADEJUGBAGBE** Wrong Date of birth is 17/03/1977. Now wish to be known and addressed as **SHOBERU ORIYOMI ADE**, Correct date of birth is 13/06/1977. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **EKPE PATRICIA EKEMA**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **EKPE PATRICIA DAMION**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ESENE IZINEGBE RUTH AYOKUNLE** Now wish to be known and addressed as **ESENE IZINEGBE RUTH**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
Formerly **MISS ONIFADE MARIAM OMOTOYOSI** now to be known addressed as **MRS OLUBUNMI MARIAM OMOTOYOSI**. All former documents remain valid general public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OJO MUJIDAT BUSAYO**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEDIRAN MUJIDAT BUSAYO**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly **JAMES IDONGESIT** now wish to be known and address as **JAMES IDONGESIT USEN**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OYEDARE DUPE FEYISHARA**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OYEDARE MODUPE ELIZABETH**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **DIALA GODSWILL NKENJIKA**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **EMMANUEL GODSWILL NKENJIKA**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
That my name was wrongly written on BVN as **ADEKUNLE KAUSARAT MOTUNRAYO**, Wrong Date of birth is 09/09/1998. My correct names on NIN is **TAOFIQ KAUSARA ABENI** with correct date of birth 09/09/1999. All former documents remain valid. General Public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OLADUNNI IBIRONKE BADMUS**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **OLADUNNI IBIRONKE AKINTOYE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly Akinwande **QUADRI ALABI, KADIRI AKINWANDE, AKINWANDE KADIRI** now wish to be known and address as **AKINWANDE QUADRI AKINLABI**. All former documents remain valid general take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
FORMERLY **ADEDEJI OLUWAYEMISI BOSE** NOW TO BE KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS **ADEDEJI OLUWAYEMISI ABOSEDE**. ALL FORMER DOCUMENTS REMAIN VALID, NSCDC AND GENERAL PUBLIC TAKE NOTE.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OKEKA SHALLOM UCHECHI**, now wish to be known and addressed as **IDAHOSA SHALLOM UCHECHI**. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **CLEMENT KELECHI BRIGHT**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ADINDU KELECHI CLEMENT**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME
I, formerly **ADEOYE OLUWAKEMI**. Now to be known as **ADEOYE OLUWAKEMI ABOLAJI**. All former documents remain valid. KEYSTONE BANK, POLARIS BANK and the general public to please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly **MISS YUSUF DHIKROH OPEYEMI**. Now to be known and addressed as **MRS. BUSARI DHIKROH OPEYEMI**. All former documents remain valid. **POLARIS BANK, ACCESS BANK** and the general public to please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **OGUNJIMI ZAINAB**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AHMED-EDU ZAINAB OLUWASHINDARA**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ADERIBIGBE OLUWAYEMISI OLUWATOSIN**, wrong date of birth is 6/5/1989. Correct date of birth is 6/5/1989. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ILEBIYI YORI BABATUNDE**, Wrong Date of birth is 10/02/1980. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ILEBIYI YORI GBENGA**, Correct date of birth is 4/10/1980. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ARMSTRONG MARY OLUWAKOREDE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ARMSTRONG ROSEMARY OLUWAKOREDE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I was formerly known as **OLADIJI MAYOWA OLUWAROTIMI** on the BVN registration, but now wished to be addressed as **ADEYANJU MAYOWA OLUWAROTIMI** as written on my NIN registration details with documents bearing former names remained valid. General public to take notice and authority concerned.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **AFOLABI YEMI OPEYEMI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AFOLABI YEMI OPEYEMI**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **MUSA WILLIAMS**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MUSA WILLIAM**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **JOY. SHOLA**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEBAYO JOY. OLAMIDE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **MISS AREMU OMOWUNMI OLUWATOYIN**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS HAMZAT OMOWUNMI OLUWATOYIN**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known and addressed as **Miss OWOYE OLUWATOYIN CHRISTIANAH**, now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. OBAH OLUWATOYIN CHRISTIANAH**. All formal documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **IBIBIYI YORI BABATUNDE**, Wrong Date of birth is 10/02/1980. Now wish to be known and addressed as **IBIBIYI YORI GBENGA**, Correct date of birth is 4/10/1980. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **ARMSTRONG MARY OLUWAKOREDE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ARMSTRONG ROSEMARY OLUWAKOREDE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I was formerly known as **OLADIJI MAYOWA OLUWAROTIMI** on the BVN registration, but now wished to be addressed as **ADEYANJU MAYOWA OLUWAROTIMI** as written on my NIN registration details with documents bearing former names remained valid. General public to take notice and authority concerned.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **AFOLABI YEMI OPEYEMI**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AFOLABI YEMI OPEYEMI**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **MUSA WILLIAMS**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MUSA WILLIAM**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known and addressed as **JOY. SHOLA**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEBAYO JOY. OLAMIDE**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
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CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known and addressed as **Miss OWOYE OLUWATOYIN CHRISTIANAH**, now wish to be known and addressed as **Mrs. OBAH OLUWATOYIN CHRISTIANAH**. All formal documents remain valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
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PUBLIC NOTICE
ABOTO ALFA YOUTHS FORUM
This is to inform the general public that the above name has applied for registration to Corporate Affairs Commission under part C of the Companies And Allied Matters Act No 1 of 2020.
TRUSTEES
1. AWEDA AKEEM ADEMIYIWA - CHAIRMAN
2. MUHAMMED NUHUGANIYU - SECRETARY
3. NUHU FOLORUNSHO TAJUDEEN
4. ABDULRAHEEM ABDULHAKEEM AJAO
5. FATAI KAYODE YAHYA
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
1. TO DEVELOP THE COMMUNITY YOUTHS THROUGH ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP VOCATIONAL TRAINING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT.
2. TO INCULCATE IN THE YOUTHS THE CULTURE AND HABIT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SELFLESS SERVICES.
3. TO DISSUADE THE COMMUNITY YOUTHS FROM ENGAGING IN VICES SUCH AS CULTISM, GANGSTERISM, HOLOGANISM, DRUG ADDICTION ETC.
4. TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AMONG THE INHABITANTS OF THE COMMUNITY USING THE YOUTHS AS THE DRIVING FORCE.
5. TO SUPPORT GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES ON YOUTHS DEVELOPMENT.
Any objection to registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, 420 Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, PMB 198, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days from the date of this publication.
SIGNED-MUHAMMED NUHUGANIYU - SECRETARY

PUBLIC NOTICE
OTITOLOJU COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, IMAGBON
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WASIU RABUI ISHOLA - SECRETARY
OLUKOGA MUKAILA
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
1. TO UNITE THE MEMBERS TOWARDS ACHIEVING A COMMON GOAL.
2. TO MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS OF CHAINSAW BUSINESS.
3. TO DEFEND AND ADVANCE THE INTEREST OF MEMBERS
4. TO ENSURE MEMBERS COMPLY WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS.
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SIGNED-TRUSTEES

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **AJAYI OLUWASEYI OLAJUMOKE**. Now wish to be known as **IBILORO OLUWASEYI OLAJUMOKE**. Due to marriage. All former documents remain valid banks and general public should please take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **MISS NZEKWE GLORIA NWAKAEGO**. Now wish to be known as **MRS ANIEBONAM GLORIA NWAKAEGO**. All former documents remain valid banks and general public should please take note.

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CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **ADEGBIJI MOJISOCA ADEKEMI**. Now wish to be known as **ADEGBIJI MOJISOLA ADEKEMI**. All former documents remain valid banks and general public should please take note.



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funds in 24hrs

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Economy

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Nigeria's poverty risk heightens

- CBN's tightening policy fails to stem inflation tide
- 26m Nigerians to further go down poverty threshold - Experts
- Analysts predict rise in headline inflation to 32.40% in September
- Highlight challenges facing CBN



Cardoso

BAMIDELE FAMOOFO

Nigeria's annual inflation has remained elevated despite varying reforms by the Central Bank of Nigeria targeted at easing the 28-year-high consumer price index.

As a result, the country's poverty risk heightens because the CBN's tightening policy has failed to stem inflation tide.

According to analysts interviewed by *The Point*, inflation remains a herculean task for the apex bank despite the numerous achievements of the Cardoso-led bank in tackling economic challenges that have be-deviled Nigeria in the last one year.

Inflation which measures the standard of living of a people, depending on the number, has remained one of the biggest undoing of the Nigerian people as the cost of living has skyrocketed in the past few years.

Although inflation has dropped in the last two months, financial analysts said it is not yet 'Uhuru' as the figures might spike in September.

According to a report sighted by *The Point*, over 26 million Nigerians will further go down the poverty threshold due to food insecurity.

As the CBN Monetary Policy Committee prepares for its September 23-24 meeting, businesses across

Nigeria are anticipating another potential interest rate hike.

Under Cardoso, the CBN has already increased the Monetary Policy Rate four times this year, raising it to 26.75 per cent.

These hikes, totaling 800 basis points, have been driven by persistent inflation, particularly in core and food sectors.

With inflation reaching 24.08 per cent in August 2024, many financial analysts believe another rate hike could be imminent.

An economic analyst, Okechukwu Eze, pointed out that while these increases help combat inflation, they also burden manufacturers who rely on loans.

He noted that while the increases are necessary to control inflation, they pose challenges for manufacturers relying on loans to fund operations.

"The elevated rates increase the cost of production, which may eventually be passed on to consumers," Eze said.

Another financial analyst at Vetiva Capital, Nneka Okezie, said that "The financial pressure on companies is immense."

He added that "Businesses that rely on credit for working capital or expansion projects are finding it harder to justify taking out loans

BUSINESSES THAT RELY ON CREDIT FOR WORKING CAPITAL OR EXPANSION PROJECTS ARE FINDING IT HARDER TO JUSTIFY TAKING OUT LOANS WITH INTEREST RATES EXCEEDING 25 PER CENT. MANY HAVE EITHER SLOWED DOWN GROWTH OR LOOKED FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES, INCLUDING EQUITY FINANCING

with interest rates exceeding 25 per cent. Many have either slowed down growth or looked for alternative funding sources, including equity financing."

He noted that manufacturers are particularly impacted, as banks offer varying lending rates.

"Prime rates for the most credit-worthy borrowers range from 7.00 per cent to 22.00 per cent, while maximum rates can reach up to 48.00 per cent, making borrowing costly for businesses," Okezie added.

Another expert at the Lagos Business School, Bamidele Akanbi highlighted the challenge facing the CBN.

He said, "While inflation is the primary concern, higher rates will further strain businesses already grappling with rising costs and limited credit access."

"Inflation remains stubbornly high, and without more action from the Central Bank, the risk of inflation spiraling out of control is significant. But the trade-off is that higher interest rates will further burden businesses already struggling with rising costs and limited access to affordable credit," he said.

The chief economist at ARKK Economics & Data Limited, Samson Simon, said inflation will remain elevated throughout the year while

growth in price level may cool off on the back of bumper harvest and the president's tariff-free food importation.

"The economy will remain largely overheated for the foreseeable future," Simon said.

He noted that raising interest rates might not have been effective in tackling high inflation thus far, cautioning that instead of aggressively hiking rates, the impact of previous increases should be observed.

"As monetary policy has a long and variable lag, the CBN should not be too hawkish and for too long," the Abuja-based economist said.

The managing director, Time-Line Consults, Shuaib Idris, said a further hike in the MPR will not have the desired effect in reducing inflation, noting that the government should find ways to mop up excess liquidity in the economy.

"If the CBN doesn't reduce the rates, they should leave it as it is. The quantum leap in the MPR is too high, and it is strangulating the business environment."

"The actual value of a dollar in naira terms should be about N900. But because of this excess liquidity, we are now working with about N1560/\$. What we need is a liquidity

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squeeze, to remove the excess liquidity in the system," Idris added.

The analysts have therefore called for more fiscal measures to complement the reforms of the monetary authorities to stem the tide of accelerating inflation.

"Even though the CBN's main focus is tackling inflation, it cannot do that alone as the main driver of inflation is food inflation. And the production of food is not within the CBN's remit," Simon said.

He noted that to come out of the woods, there is a need to tackle insecurity for farmers to go back to their farms, which will in turn increase agricultural yield through affordable and improved farm inputs.

Nigeria recorded a drop in inflation for two consecutive months of July and August 2024. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics published in September showed that the Consumer Price Index stood at 32.15 percent in August. It is the lowest level since March.

Cardoso had said in January this year that he will bring inflation down to 21 percent in 2024, and considering the two months drop recently achieved, the belief in some quarters is that inflation might continue to taper.

However, some other schools of thought have warned that inflation might spike as a result of the decision of the government to further worsen the accessibility of fuel by further increasing pump price from N617 per litre to N897 per litre as announced by the NNPC in September.

As a result of the shocking increase, fuel prices have risen above N1, 000 per litre in some states in the country, further impoverishing all Nigerians.

The Chief Executive Officer, Financial Derivatives Company Limited, Bismarck Rewane, in a post-inflation review report, warned that a decline in inflation for two months does not suggest that it will continue to go down as expected in some quarters.

He noted that inflation risks remain elevated. Rewane further stated that it was not the tightening policy of the Monetary Policy Committee of the CBN that aided the current drops witnessed in CPI but the harvest season and base effect.

"Noteworthy, two readings are not a trend, especially as inflation risks remain elevated. A breakdown of the data showed that the continued moderation in inflation is largely due to the harvest season and base year effects. Year-on-year food inflation moderated to 37.52% from 39.53% in July," he said.

Since drop in food inflation is the main reason why the CPI moderated for two months, FDC hopes the MPC will mellow down on its tightening stance to allow for output growth in the economy.

"The ease in inflationary pressures and the expansion in Q2 real GDP growth (albeit due to base year effects) will likely empower the MPC to opt for a pause in the tightening cycle. The aim will be to support output growth further and complement the federal government's fiscal stimulus efforts.

"In the real sense, core annual inflation and monthly inflation rates (all

Nigeria's poverty risk heightens

items less farm produce and energy) increased to 27.58 percent and 2.27 percent, respectively, from 27.47 percent and 2.16 percent.

"The increase suggests that inflation is more structural than transient and could be attributed to currency pressures amid forex scarcity.

"The naira depreciated by 4.2 percent in August at the official market compared to 3.1 percent in July. Additionally, the upward movement in the core inflation rate indicates that underlying price pressures are building. If this trend continues, it could counteract any short-term improvements in the headline inflation trend.

"Recent occurrences like the 50% rise in PMS price with its knock-on effect on logistics and food prices, the 62.66% growth (y-o-y) in money supply (M3), and exchange rate volatility are factors that could potentially reverse the disinflationary direc-

tion," Rewane argued.

Also, analysts at Futureview Research Ltd have predicted a rise in headline inflation to 32.40 percent in September.

"Regarding core inflation, we foresee a further increase driven by higher energy costs, increased naira volatility, and rising transportation expenses. As a result, we forecast core inflation to climb by 12bps to 2.39% m/m, pushing the y/y rate higher to 26.76% (August: 26.36% y/y). Accordingly, we project the headline inflation to increase by 2.29% m/m in September, cascading to a y/y inflation rate of 32.40% (August: 32.15%

y/y)," they stated.

CBN'S TIGHTENING POLICY

When Cardoso assumed office as governor of the CBN on September 15, 2023, inflation was 26 percent.

Despite the tightening measure of the CBN which led to the base lending rate rising to 26.75 percent in July, inflation grew steadily to over 33 percent.

Precisely, in its fourth consecutive hike since February, the CBN recently increased the MPR by 50 basis points to 26.75 percent in July, from 26.25 percent.

"Inflationary pressures are ex-

pected to decline in 2024 due to the CBN's inflation-targeting policy, which aims to rein in inflation to 21.4%," Cardoso said in a speech, a copy of which the CBN shared by email.

He added that improved agricultural output and the easing of global supply chain pressures would boost consumer confidence and purchasing power.

The CBN is expected to pursue a more conventional monetary policy approach under Cardoso after years of unorthodox policies pursued by his predecessor, Godwin Emefiele.

In November 2023, Cardoso announced the adoption of an inflation-targeting framework.

President Bola Tinubu made a series of reforms after becoming the president last year, including scrapping a petrol subsidy and easing currency trading restrictions.

However the country still has a shortage of forex and suffers as a result of a wide gap between the official and parallel market exchange rates.

Nigeria has been battling a serious economic crisis due to the removal of petrol subsidies and a raft of measures adopted by the Federal Government, which the Cardoso-led CBN has deployed all monetary policy tools to fight.

Experts argued that the tightening policy of the CBN has not achieved its desired impact in reducing currency in circulation aimed at curbing inflation.

Data from the CBN showed that rather than the currency in circulation shrinking, it's expanding more.

Currency in circulation exceeded N4 trillion in June 2024, the first time in history.

The latest data from the CBN shows that the currency in circulation reached a year-high of N4. 05 trillion in June 2024, up by 56 percent from N2. 6 trillion in the same month of the previous year.

HUNGER THREAT

Nigeria is expected to see about 26.5 million people grappling with high levels of food insecurity, as disclosed by the Federal Government and its partners.

Moreover, approximately 9 million children are at the risk of suffering from acute malnutrition or wasting. Of these, an alarming 2.6 million children could face Severe Acute Malnutrition and require critical nutrition treatment.

PREDICTABLE MPC OUTCOME

As the MPC is set to meet on September 23-24, the committee will consider the disinflation and expansion in Q2 GDP growth.

Experts expect a hold decision to support output growth and complement fiscal efforts. They expect that the moderation in inflation will become noticeable at the end of the year. ●

IF THE CBN DOESN'T REDUCE THE RATES, THEY SHOULD LEAVE IT AS IT IS. THE QUANTUM LEAP IN THE MPR IS TOO HIGH, AND IT IS STRANGULATING THE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT



Tinubu



Rewane



Adeniran

Nigeria's GDP climbed to N60.93trn in Q2, 2024 - FG

STORIES: FESTUS OKOROMADU

The Federal Government has disclosed that Nigeria's economy recorded substantial growth in the second quarter of 2024 as the country's nominal Gross Domestic Product hit N60.93 trillion during the period.

The government has attributed the development to its dedication to the implementation of economic policies aimed at identifying inefficiencies and ensuring that resources are effectively utilized.

The Permanent Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Finance,

Lydia Jafiya, disclosed this during a sensitization programme about the upcoming implementation of quarterly citizens and stakeholders engagement, held at the ministry headquarters in Abuja last week.

Jafiya highlighted that the programme represents a crucial step towards enhancing the transparency and accountability of financial policies and strategies.

She said the ministry has spearheaded several reforms aimed at improving revenue generation, reducing leakages, and ensuring fiscal discipline which has in turn improved the nation's GDP.

She noted that Nigeria's nominal GDP reached N60.93 trillion,

marking a 16.94 percent increase from the N52.103 trillion recorded in the same quarter last year.

Expatriating on the development, Director of Information and Public Relations, Mohammed Manga, in a statement on Friday said the GDP growth in Q2 was primarily fueled by the services sector, which experienced a 3.79 percent growth and accounted for 58.76 percent of the total GDP.

The agriculture sector grew by 1.41 per cent from 1.50 per cent recorded in the second quarter of 2023, while the industry sector grew by 3.53 per cent, an improvement from -1.94 per cent recorded in the second quarter of 2023.

The statement read, "It is pertinent to note that despite the challenging economic outlook, economic growth strengthened in the second quarter of 2024, with GDP growth by 3.19 per cent (year-on-year) in real terms.

"This growth rate is higher than the 2.51 per cent recorded in the second quarter of 2023 and higher than the first quarter of 2024 growth of 2.98 per cent. The performance of the GDP in the second quarter of 2024 was driven mainly by the services sector, which recorded a growth of 3.79 per cent and contributed 58.76 per cent to the aggregate GDP. The agriculture sector grew by 1.41 per cent, from the growth

of 1.50 per cent recorded in the second quarter of 2023.

"The growth of the industry sector was 3.53 per cent, an improvement from -1.94 per cent recorded in the second quarter of 2023. In terms of share of the GDP, the industry and services sectors contributed more to the aggregate GDP in the second quarter of 2024 compared to the corresponding quarter of 2023. In the second quarter of 2024, aggregate GDP at the basic price stood at N60,930,000.58 million in nominal terms."

She further informed that "This performance is higher when compared to the second quarter of 2023, which recorded aggregate GDP of N52.1tn indicating a year-on-year nominal growth of 16.94 per cent."

Mrs Jafiya reiterated the Federal Government's commitment

to boosting economic growth through collaboration with stakeholders, emphasizing the need for transparency, accountability, and inclusive dialogue in financial management and policy-making.

The launch of the Quarterly Citizens and Stakeholders Engagement by the Central Delivery Coordination Unit aims to foster better communication between the government and its citizens. This initiative is a significant step towards enhancing transparency and accountability in financial policies and economic strategies.

In his earlier remarks, Uyi-Aivinhenyo Osagie, Delivery Manager of the Central Delivery Coordination Unit, noted that the sensitization session was designed to inform citizen groups about the ministry's progress in achieving the eight priorities set by President Bola Tinubu. ●

R-L: President Bola Tinubu; President/global leadership team of Coca-Cola Company, John Murphy; and CEO of Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company, Zoran Bogdanovic, when the Coca-Cola team visited Tinubu at the State House, Abuja, on Thursday.



CBN targets N50bn from Cybercrime tax

Economic analysts have projected that the Central Bank of Nigeria will generate about N50 billion by the end of 2024 through the newly introduced 0.005 percent cyber security levy on electronic transactions.

Speaking on the development, an economist and investment expert, Vincent Nwani, said, "The CBN is expected to raise N50 billion from the cyber security levy before the end of 2024."

Data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System indicates that electronic payments totaled N987 trillion between 2022 and 2023.

By applying the 0.005 percent levy to this amount, the estimated revenue comes to about N49.35 billion.

He added that in 2022, electronic payments totaled N387trn, generating N19.35bn from the levy, while in 2023, with transactions soaring to N600trn, the revenue from the levy reached N30bn.

"For instance, we saw a remarkable 55 per cent surge in the total electronic payments, from N387trn in 2022 to N600trn in 2023 and the 2024 figure is projected at N999.9trn. At 0.005 per cent cyber security fees, the Nigerian government will earn N19.5bn for 2022, N30bn for 2023; 2024 will be equivalent to N50bn [projected figure] from its citizens," he expounded.

Nwani also highlighted an increase in point-of-sale transactions, which surged by 27.85 per cent from N8.39trn in 2022 to N10.73trn in 2023, noting that PoS transactions cost Nigerians N214.6bn in 2023 due to the N100

fee on every N5,000 withdrawals.

"On the other hand, in 2023, the total value of PoS transactions surged to N10.73trn, up from N8.39trn in 2022, marking a notable 27.85 per cent increase. Additionally, a fee of N100 is charged for every N5,000 withdrawn via PoS, equating to two per cent of the withdrawal amount.

"POS transactions cost Nigerians a total of N214.6bn in 2023 and N167.8bn in 2022. This growing reliance on PoS and the associated charges reflect the broader economic effects of the cashless policy on the population," the economist stated.

David Adonri, the Vice Chairman of Highcap Securities, also added, "The increase in electronic payments is driven by the CBN's cashless policies and naira redesign. Despite the CBN's contractionary monetary policy, the money supply continues to expand, which might push electronic payments even higher in 2024.

"With the projected rise in electronic payments to N999trn, the levy could indeed generate as much as N50bn for the government."

Enacted under the Cybercrime (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) (Amendment) Act 2024, the 0.005 per cent levy, applies to all electronic transactions and is intended to fund the National Cybersecurity Fund managed by the Office of the National Security Adviser.

Despite initial resistance from President Bola Tinubu and the House of Representatives, who had called for a suspension and review of the policy, the CBN has restated its resolve to enforce the levy. ●

ICPC recovers N4bn stolen funds in 24hrs

The Chairman of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, Musa Aliyu, SAN, has disclosed that his team recovered a whopping N4 billion in stolen funds within 24 hours.

He stated this while addressing participants at the One-Day National Anti-Corruption Coalition, Members Hybrid Interactive

Forum held at ICPC headquarters in Abuja at the weekend.

"We recovered close to N4 billion from public funds, within twenty-four hours (from 18th to 19th September 2024), which has left the government coffers in private custody," he said.

According to the ICPC boss, "It's alarming to see how much money is being misappropriated, and some individuals have bil-

ions of naira in their possession for personal gain. It's a shocking reality that people are hoarding public funds instead of using them for the benefit of the nation."

The ICPC boss also reiterated the need to invest more in technology which will help minimise the challenges of corruption, particularly in public procurement.

"By implementing tech-driven processes, we can reduce practices

like contract inflation.

"And as a commission, we are utilising technology and management systems to restore confidence in the fight against corruption. We are committed to ensuring transparency in this endeavour.

"Also, using technologies like block chain can help eliminate manipulation, ensuring the integrity of public procurement," he added. ●

Financial experts have attributed the continuous climb of short-term interest rates in the Nigerian money market to liquidity pressure within the financial system, noting that, although there have been outflows from auctions conducted by the Central Bank of Nigeria, inflows from maturing instruments have remained limited.

A report by Cowry Assets Limited noted that "Significant amounts have been withdrawn from FX auctions and the sale of Nigerian Treasury bills to local deposit money banks, which typically invest in short-term securities.

These and other related outflows have kept the liquidity balance in the negative for an extended period.

"As a result, several authorized dealer deposit money banks faced liquidity shortfalls, prompting market participants to seek funding through the Central Bank of Nigeria's Standing Lending Facil-

Liquidity crisis driving up interbank interest rates - Experts

ity.

"This decision kept interbank rates elevated in the double-digit range ahead of anticipated inflows from Federal Account Allocations, with no additional payment receipts from maturing instruments," the report says.

It further stated that "Following the apex bank's removal of restrictions on banks accessing liquidity through its standing lending facility at a high rate, local deposit lenders have begun to utilize this

option to bridge funding gaps."

According to the financial advisory firm, Nigerian interbank borrowing rates increased across all tenors, reflecting a weakened liquidity balance in the financial system.

Data from the FMDQ platform indicates that the open repo and overnight lending rates remained in the double digits, largely due to a lack of significant inflows to stabilize the financial system.

The open repo rate increased by

17 basis points to approximately 31.45 percent, while the overnight lending rate rose by 27 basis points to settle at 31.83 percent, according to reports from various investment banking firms.

Meanwhile, the Nigerian Interbank Treasury Bill's True Yield showed a general downward trend across all maturities. Consequently, the average secondary market yield for T-bills increased by 0.45%, reaching 18.63%, driven by sell-side sentiment. ●

Climate financing hits record \$125bn in 2023 - Report

Multilateral development banks (MDBs) including the African Development Bank announced on Friday that their collective financing for climate action hit a record high of \$125 billion (about N19.3 tril-

lion) in 2023, more than doubling levels in 2019, when MDBs agreed on new targets at the United Nations Secretary General's Climate Action Summit.

The announcement of the findings of the Joint Report on Multilat-

eral Development Banks' Climate Finance comes ahead of the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 29) that will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan in November 2024.

One of the key expected deliv-

erables of COP29 is an increase in global climate financing and an agreement on a new collective target.

Of the \$125 billion, MDBs allocated \$74.7 billion to low- and middle-income economies. Sixty-

seven percent of this—or \$50 billion—went to finance climate mitigation, which refers to actions that reduce, avoid, limit or sequester greenhouse gas emissions, while \$24.7 billion, or 33 percent, was directed to climate adaptation. ●

SMEWatch

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Organic Cocoa farming in Nigeria: A growing trend

Nigeria, once a powerhouse in global cocoa production, is witnessing resurgence in its cocoa industry.

However, this time, there's a significant shift towards organic farming practices.

The trend of organic cocoa farming in Nigeria is gaining momentum, driven by increasing global demand for organic products, environmental concerns, and the potential for higher profits.

This comprehensive article delves into the world of organic cocoa farming in Nigeria, exploring its history, current state, challenges, and future prospects.

HISTORY OF COCOA IN NIGERIA

Cocoa cultivation in Nigeria dates back to the late 19th century, when cocoa pods were first introduced to the country. The crop quickly gained popularity among Nigerian farmers due to its economic potential. By the 1960s, Nigeria had become the world's second-largest cocoa producer, contributing significantly to the country's foreign exchange earnings.

However, the discovery of oil in the 1970s led to a shift in focus away from agriculture, including cocoa production. This, coupled with ageing cocoa trees, pests and diseases, and a lack of investment in the sector, resulted in a decline in Nigeria's cocoa output over the following decades.

REVIVAL OF NIGERIA'S COCOA INDUSTRY

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in revitalising Nigeria's cocoa sector. The government and private stakeholders have recognised the potential of cocoa as a major non-oil export commodity. This revival has coincided with a global trend towards organic and sustainable farming practices, paving the way for the emergence of organic cocoa farming in Nigeria.

WHAT IS ORGANIC COCOA FARMING?

Organic cocoa farming refers to the cultivation of cocoa without the use of synthetic fertilisers, pesticides, or genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Instead, organic farmers rely on natural methods to manage soil fertility, control pests, and maintain crop health. These methods include:

1. Use of organic fertilisers such as compost and animal manure
2. Implementation of biological pest control methods
3. Crop rotation and intercropping to maintain soil health
4. Conservation of biodiversity within the farm ecosystem

Organic cocoa farming aims to produce high-quality cocoa beans while minimising environmental impact and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

RISE OF ORGANIC COCOA FARMING IN NIGERIA

The trend towards organic cocoa farming in Nigeria has been driven by several factors:

1. Global demand: There is

an increasing global demand for organic products, including organic cocoa. Consumers in developed countries are willing to pay premium prices for organic chocolate, creating an incentive for Nigerian farmers to adopt organic practices.

2. Environmental concerns: Growing awareness about the environmental impact of conventional farming practices has led to a shift towards more sustainable methods. Organic farming helps preserve soil health, protect water resources, and maintain biodiversity.

3. Health considerations: Organic cocoa is free from synthetic pesticide residues, making it a healthier choice for consumers. This has contributed to its growing popularity in both domestic and international markets.

4. Economic benefits: Organic cocoa often commands higher prices in the international market, potentially leading to increased income for farmers.

5. Government support: The Nigerian government has shown support for organic agriculture as part of its efforts to diversify the economy and promote sustainable development.

CURRENT STATE OF ORGANIC COCOA FARMING IN NIGERIA

While still in its early stages, organic cocoa farming is gaining traction in Nigeria. Several regions, particularly in the southwestern states of Ondo, Osun, and Oyo, have seen a rise in organic cocoa cultivation.

KEY STATISTICS:

As of 2023, it's estimated that about 5-7% of Nigeria's cocoa farms are certified organic.

The number of organic cocoa farmers in Nigeria has grown by approximately 15% annually over the past five years.

Organic cocoa exports from Nigeria have increased by around 20% year-on-year since 2019.

CERTIFICATION PROCESS

For Nigerian cocoa to be labelled and sold as organic in international

markets, it must be certified by recognised organic certification bodies. The certification process typically involves the following:

1. Transition period: Farms must undergo a transition period of 2-3 years, during which they implement organic practices but cannot yet sell their produce as certified organic.

2. Documentation: Farmers must keep detailed records of their farming practices, inputs used, and harvest data.

3. Inspections: Regular inspections are conducted by certification bodies to ensure compliance with organic standards.

4. Training: Farmers receive training on organic farming methods and certification requirements.

5. Annual renewal: Certification must be renewed annually, subject to continued compliance with organic standards.

Some of the certification bodies active in Nigeria include Ecocert, Control Union, and the Institute for Market Ecology (IMO).

BENEFITS OF ORGANIC COCOA FARMING IN NIGERIA

The adoption of organic cocoa farming practices in Nigeria offers numerous benefits, including:

1. Premium prices: Organic cocoa typically commands a price premium of 10-20% over conventional cocoa in international markets, potentially increasing farmers' incomes.

2. Environmental conservation: Organic farming practices help preserve soil fertility, protect water resources, and maintain biodiversity on cocoa farms.

3. Health benefits: Farmers and local communities benefit from reduced exposure to harmful synthetic pesticides and fertilisers.

4. Improved soil health: Organic practices such as composting and cover cropping enhance soil structure and fertility, leading to the long-term sustainability of cocoa farms.

5. Climate resilience: Organic farms often show greater resilience to climate

change impacts due to improved soil health and biodiversity.

6. Market access: Certification opens up access to niche markets and specialised supply chains for organic products.

7. Knowledge transfer: The process of transitioning to organic farming often involves training and capacity building, enhancing farmers' skills and knowledge.

CHALLENGES FACING ORGANIC COCOA FARMING IN NIGERIA

Despite its potential, organic cocoa farming in Nigeria faces several challenges:

1. High initial costs: The transition to organic farming often requires significant upfront investment in terms of time, labour, and resources.

2. Yield concerns: Some farmers worry about potential yield reductions during the transition period and early years of organic production.

3. Certification complexities: The organic certification process can be complex, time-consuming, and expensive for small-scale farmers.

4. Pest and disease management: Without synthetic pesticides, managing pests and diseases can be more challenging and labour-intensive.

5. Limited local market: The domestic market for organic cocoa in Nigeria is still developing, making farmers heavily reliant on export markets.

6. Knowledge gap: Many farmers lack the necessary knowledge and skills for effective organic farming practices.

7. Infrastructure limitations: Poor rural infrastructure, including storage and transportation facilities, can affect the quality of organic cocoa beans.

Best practices in organic Cocoa farming Successful organic cocoa farming in Nigeria involves implementing a range of best practices, including:

1. Soil management:
 - *Use of organic compost and manure
 - *Cover cropping to prevent soil erosion and enhance fertility
 - *Mulching to conserve soil moisture and suppress weeds
2. Pest and disease control:
 - *Regular pruning to improve air circulation and reduce disease incidence
 - *Use of biological pest control methods, such as predatory insects
 - *Application of organic pesticides like neem oil
3. Biodiversity enhancement:
 - *Intercropping cocoa with other crops like plantains, cassava, or fruit trees
 - *Maintaining shade trees to create a favourable microclimate for cocoa
4. Water management:
 - *Implementing water conservation techniques
 - *Using drip irrigation systems where necessary
5. Post-harvest handling:
 - *Proper fermentation and drying tech-

niques to ensure high-quality beans

*Use of clean, organic-certified storage facilities

6. Record keeping:

Maintaining detailed records of all farm activities, inputs, and outputs

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND SUPPORT

The Nigerian government has recognised the potential of organic cocoa farming and has implemented several initiatives to support its growth:

1. National organic agriculture policy: Launched in 2019, this policy aims to promote organic agriculture across various crops, including cocoa.

2. Cocoa transformation agenda: Part of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda, this initiative includes support for organic cocoa production.

3. Export promotion: The Nigerian Export Promotion Council has been actively promoting organic cocoa in international markets.

4. Research and development: Government-funded research institutions are working on developing organic pest control methods and improving organic cocoa varieties.

5. Farmer training programmes: Various government agencies conduct training programs on organic farming practices for cocoa farmers.

ROLE OF NGOS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Several non-governmental organisations and international bodies are playing crucial roles in promoting organic cocoa farming in Nigeria.

1. Organic Agriculture Project in Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria (OAPTIN): This project aims to integrate organic agriculture into the curriculum of Nigerian universities and colleges.

2. Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN): CRIN conducts research on organic cocoa production methods and provides extension services to farmers.

3. International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM): IFOAM supports the development of organic agriculture in Nigeria through policy advocacy and capacity building.

4. German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ): GIZ has been supporting sustainable and organic cocoa production in Nigeria through various projects.

SUCCESS STORIES: NIGERIAN ORGANIC COCOA FARMERS

Several Nigerian farmers have successfully transitioned to organic cocoa farming, serving as inspiration for others.

1. Case Study: Ondo State Cooperative A group of 50 cocoa farmers in Ondo State formed a cooperative to transition to organic farming. ●

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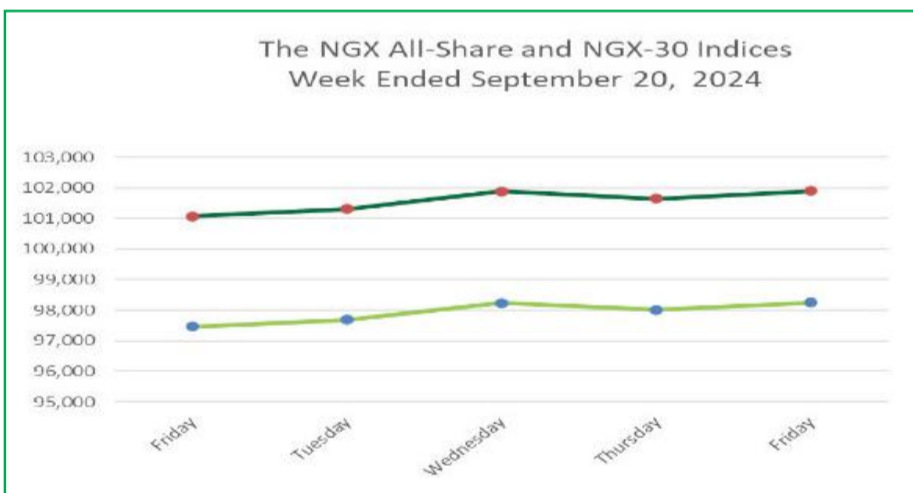
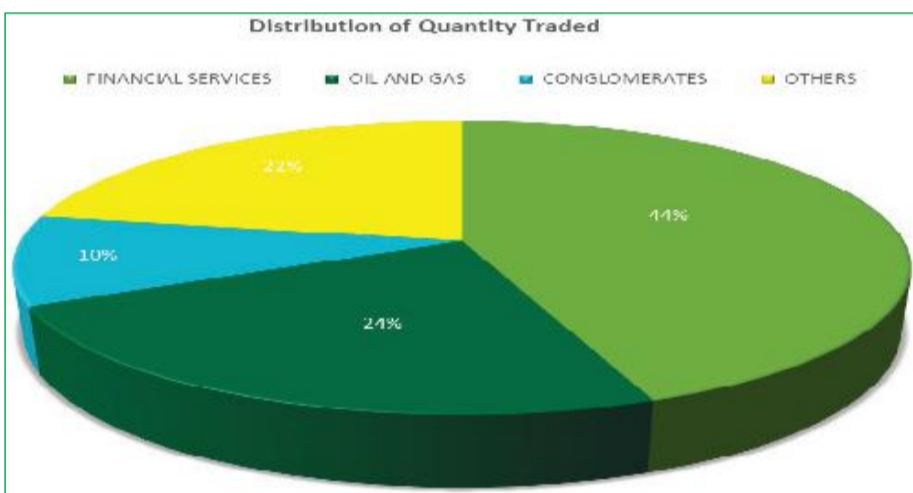
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WEEK ENDED SEPTEMBER 20, 2024

Company	Open	Close	Gain (N)	% Change
CAVERTON OFFSHORE SUPPORT GRP PLC	2.54	3.69	1.15	45.28
FIDELITY BANK PLC	10.95	13.60	2.65	24.20
FIDSON HEALTHCARE PLC	13.10	15.95	2.85	21.76
VITAFOAM NIG PLC.	18.10	22.00	3.90	21.55
MEYER PLC.	5.83	7.05	1.22	20.93
MCNICHOLS PLC	1.41	1.70	0.29	20.57
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	2.63	3.17	0.54	20.53
THOMAS WYATT NIG. PLC.	1.70	1.98	0.28	16.47
DAAR COMMUNICATIONS PLC	0.65	0.75	0.10	15.38
GEREGU POWER PLC	1000.00	1150.00	150.00	15.00

Company	Open	Close	Loss (N)	% Change
N NIG. FLOUR MILLS PLC.	43.50	35.25	-8.25	-18.97
MECURE INDUSTRIES PLC	9.35	7.65	-1.70	-18.18
TANTALIZERS PLC	0.71	0.61	-0.10	-14.08
R T BRISCOE PLC.	3.65	3.18	-0.47	-12.88
CHAPEL HILL DENHAM NIG. INFRAS DEBT FUND	112.80	101.60	-11.20	-9.93
ABBEY MORTGAGE BANK PLC	2.53	2.28	-0.25	-9.88
JOHN HOLT PLC.	3.08	2.78	-0.30	-9.74
SOVEREIGN TRUST INSURANCE PLC	0.64	0.58	-0.06	-9.38
FLOUR MILLS NIG. PLC.	54.50	50.45	-4.05	-7.43
OANDO PLC	89.05	82.50	-6.55	-7.36



Financial, oil & gas stocks drive bullish performance on NGX as investors grab N455bn gain

BAMIDELE FAMOOFO

Financial stocks comprising Banking and Insurance as well as stocks in the Oil & Gas sectors emerged as key drivers of activities on the Nigerian Exchange Limited in the week ended September 20, 2024, with investors taking away about N455 billion as gains from their dealings.

Sectoral analysis revealed resilience, particularly in the Banking, Insurance, and Oil & Gas sectors.

The Banking Index led sectoral gains, rising by 1.26 percent week-on-week, driven by strong investor demand. The Insurance sector followed with a 0.86 percent increase, while the Oil & Gas sector posted a marginal 0.02 percent gain.

The Nigerian equities market sustained its upward momentum in the review week, buoyed by consistent buy sentiment as investors reacted favourably to the latest inflation data, which moderated for the second consecutive month to 32.15 percent.

Additionally, quarter-end window dressing activities contributed to the bullish outlook, propelling the NGX All-Share Index (ASI) by 0.81 percent week-on-week, from 97,456.62 points to 98,247.99 points, elevating the market's year-to-date return to 31.39 percent.

Market capitalization saw a corresponding increase of 0.81 percent, reaching N56.47 trillion and yielding a weekly investor gain of N454.86 billion.

Despite the positive market performance, breadth was slightly negative, with 41 gainers against 40 losers.

Trading activity declined, with average traded volume falling by 28.02 percent to 1.86 billion units, the traded value dropping by 24.92 percent to N38.44 billion, and total deals decreasing by 20.56 percent to 40,211 trades for the week.

Conversely, the Consumer Goods and Industrial Goods sectors experienced setbacks, with declines of 0.77 percent and 0.13 percent, respectively. On the stock level, CAVERTON (+45.3%), FIDELITYBNK (+24.2%), FIDSON (+21.8%), VITAFOAM (+21.5%), and MEYER (+20.9%) emerged as the top gainers for the week, reflecting robust price appreciation. Meanwhile, NNFM (-19.0%), MECURE (-18.2%), TANTALIZER (-14.1%), RTBRISCOE (-12.9%), and NIDF (-9.9%) were among the key laggards, as investors rebalance their portfolios in response to market dynamics.

With the market displaying resilience amid positive macro signals, stock market analysts anticipate continued bullish sentiment this week, driven by portfolio rebalancing and strategic positioning in value-driven

stocks.

The recent dip in inflation and favourable quarter-end activities suggest that investor optimism may persist, creating entry opportunities for those seeking fundamentally sound investments.

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, consumer prices eased for the second consecutive month as the high statistical base from the prior year supported performance. Specifically, headline inflation moderated by 125bps to 32.15 percent y/y in August (July: 33.40% y/y).

Analyzing the breakdown, food prices (-201bps to 37.52% y/y) eased to a 7-month low, while core inflation (+11bps to 27.58% y/y) remained at the highest level since March 2004 (32.60% y/y). On a month-on-month basis, headline inflation slowed by 6bps to 2.22 percent (July: 2.28% m/m), underpinned by the decline in food prices.

However, experts on the platform of Cowry Asset Limited advise caution as market volatility remains a key factor.

"Investors should maintain a focus on quality stocks with strong growth prospects to navigate potential swings effectively," Cowry said.

Meanwhile, the global equities market rallied in the review week as investors digested a series of policy decisions from the world's major central banks and their impact on the global economy.

Accordingly, US equities (DJIA: +1.5%; S&P 500: +1.6%) were set for another weekly gain driven by positive reactions to the Fed's larger-than-expected 50 bps rate cut and the four-month low print in weekly jobless claims, which reinforced expectations that lower borrowing costs could support labour demand without reigniting inflation.

Similarly, European equities (STOXX Europe: +0.4%; FTSE 100: +0.1%) tracked global optimism, heading for a positive close, as investors assessed the Bank of England's decision to keep interest rates steady, alongside the US Federal Reserve's rate decision.

Asian markets (Nikkei 225: +3.2%; SSE: +1.2%) posted gains, buoyed by (1) the Bank of Japan's decision to maintain interest rates, (2) expectations of further stimulus from China, and (3) the positive sentiments surrounding the US Fed's monetary easing.

Finally, the Emerging Market (MSCI EM: +1.6%) index advanced, driven by gains in China (+1.2%) and India (+1.3%), while the Frontier Market (MSCI FM: -0.1%) index closed lower following the selloffs in Kazakhstan (-0.1%).

CBN EXCHANGE RATE

Date	Currency	Buying(NGN)	Central(NGN)	Selling(NGN)
SEPT./19/2024	CFA	2.7819	2.7919	2.8019
SEPT./19/2024	YUAN/RENMINBI	225.3505	225.4212	225.4919
SEPT./19/2024	DANISH KRONA	237.4456	237.5201	237.5946
SEPT./19/2024	EURO	1771.4938	1772.0498	1772.6058
SEPT./19/2024	YEN	11.1232	11.1267	11.1302
SEPT./19/2024	RIYAL	424.5243	424.6576	424.7908
SEPT./19/2024	SOUTH AFRICAN RAND	90.9396	90.9681	90.9966
SEPT./19/2024	SDR	2152.3969	2153.0724	2153.748
SEPT./19/2024	SWISS FRANC	1875.7447	1876.3335	1876.9222
SEPT./19/2024	POUNDS STERLING	2107.313	2107.9744	2108.6358

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Nigerians to Tinubu: We're tired of excuses, lamentations

BRIGHT JACOB

“Will the President – yet again – beg us to endure hardship?”

The abovementioned expression is the million-dollar question on the lips of many Nigerians who say they have always been prepared to lend an empathetic ear to the President, Bola Tinubu, whenever he makes one of his many pleas to citizens to endure hardship.

Going forward, however, it seems that the President's usual efforts to strike a chord with Nigerians will hit a brick wall, and this is as a result of the biting economic hardship that has continued to perplex the people.

More exasperatingly, the President's entreaties, which usually come with reassurances that he will turn the country's fortune around, will likely be taken with a pinch of salt and could leave many desperate Nigerians with frayed nerves, making them insist on results – not excuses.

Unfortunately, experts have argued that there is no end in sight yet to the hardship and anguish being experienced in the country. They also say that even though they do not want to be bearers of bad news, it is the down-trodden citizens that will yet languish in lack and penury.

On their part, ordinary Nigerians say that the President will sound like a broken record if he once again attempts to assuage the collective anxiety of Nigerians who are tired of hearing him beg them.

One such Nigerian said he wanted to hear “a new message” from the President.

“I want to hear a new message from Tinubu. I won't like the idea of the President begging us again to endure hardship or to be patient with his government,” said Kehinde Afolayan, a bus conductor in Ikeja, Lagos, trying to eke out a living.

“I supported the President when he was the Governor of Lagos State. I am still supporting him today. This is why I listened to his past pleas. As things are now, I am overwhelmed by the hardship in the country.

“We need solutions now that will change our story. Tinubu must hurry up with implementing his economic plans because we can't wait all day” Afolayan added.

Another Nigerian, Hafisat Amusa, who sells foodstuffs in the Egbeda area of Lagos State, said that she does not want to listen to another appeal by the government or “the friends of the government.”

According to her, the pleas have not done anything to stop the general increase in the prices of her wares, some of which she can no longer afford to sell.

“Let no one come here to tell me about enduring hardship in this country. Is it when we die that Nigeria will be better off? Both the government and the friends of this government should spare us their pleas. We don't need it.

“I know you (referring to our correspondent) come to this market sometimes to buy foodstuffs. Is this how the market was last year? Or, are you journalists not affected by the hardship?”

“Just look around. For instance, I no longer sell ‘Oloyin beans’ because



Tinubu



Tinubu-Ojo



Daniel



Barau

“THE PRESIDENT SHOULD REALISE THAT PEOPLE HAVE PASSED THEIR ELASTIC LIMITS AND ARE NOW EXPERIENCING BREAKING POINTS. THEY CAN'T ENDURE AGAIN. AND I DARE SAY THAT IF THE PRESIDENT ASKED NIGERIANS TO BE PATIENT AND ENDURE HARDSHIP YET AGAIN, THEY WOULD INSULT HIM IN THE OPEN

people cannot afford it. And most of the other beans available now, you will boil them for ages before they get cooked,” Amusa lamented.

While defending the policies he introduced after he took charge of the affairs of the country in May 2023, Tinubu said that he inherited a struggling economy from his predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, and had no option but to introduce a “painful but needed” end to oil subsidy.

Therefore, for the past 16 months since he took office, Tinubu has continued to acknowledge the severe impact his policies, including the floating of the naira, has caused but keeps assuring Nigerians that his administration is on top of the situation.

In July last year when Nigerians were already feeling the pinch as the prices of basic household items were shooting up, Tinubu pleaded with them, “I understand that our people are suffering; yet there can be no childbirth without pain.

“The joy of childbirth is the relief that

to look beyond the present temporary pains and aim at the larger picture.

“All our good and helpful plans are in the works. More importantly, I know that they will work. Sadly, there was an avoidable lag between subsidy removal and these plans coming fully online.”

But, unexpectedly, the video stirred controversy after the Special Adviser to Tinubu on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, said it was old and a clip from the broadcast the President made last year.

Apart from Tinubu, several prominent individuals have also been spotlighted in the past for pleading with Nigerians to bear with the President.

Some of the persons who made impassioned appeals to Nigerians include two of the President's children, Seyi Tinubu and the Iyaloja General of Lagos State, Folashade Tinubu-Ojo, as well as a former military Head of State, Yakubu Gowon.

Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, a former Governor of Ogun State, Gbenga Daniel, and the Deputy Senate President, Jibrin Barau, who said that the hardship experienced by Nigerians was not peculiar to the country, but a global problem, are among those whose names are also on the list.

Although many Nigerians have exhibited patriotism and decided to build hope up around the pitch made by Tinubu for them to endure hardship, present realities indeed indicate that the people no longer want “the endless appeals and promises” made by the President.

According to Nigerians, the nearly 50 percent increase in petrol price, which came into effect early this month, is inexcusable.

Nigerians are aghast that petrol prices, on an unprecedented scale, soared to record highs of between N950 and N1,200, a dire situation that will result in a corresponding hike in the prices of essential goods and services.

A political analyst, Alex Nwadike, told *The Point*, “Seriously, if the President is thinking of coming on television again to tell Nigerians to endure hardship, the people will not listen to him.

“The President should realise that people have passed their elastic limits and are now experiencing breaking points. They can't endure again. And I dare say that if the President asked Nigerians to be patient and endure hardship yet again, they would insult him in the open.

“Have you seen the gloom in the land? How did we get here? Businesses are suffering and collapsing everyday and somebody still wants us to endure more hardship? Please, leave me out of that.”

Another analyst, Benedict Njoku, said, “Well, if the President tells Nigerians to endure hardship, what can they do? The last time the people tried to do something about their situation, we all saw how it ended.

“The nationwide hunger protests, which could have been used to hold the government accountable, did not achieve much.

“Therefore, I am almost certain that Nigerians still believe in the ability of the government to turn their situation around. This should be the only reason why more Nigerians did not take to the streets during the protests in August.”

comes after the pain. Nigeria is reborn already with fuel subsidy removal. It is a rebirth of the country for the largest number of smugglers. Please tell the people to be a little patient.”

Following the appeal, the former Lagos State Governor, who said becoming President was his lifelong ambition, made several other appeals to Nigerians

Tinubu has told Nigerians to put up with biting costs of living and skyrocketing inflation tearing households apart. He also promised that his administration was doing all it can to ameliorate the sufferings of beleaguered masses.

The latest appeal by Tinubu was made only last month. The President said via a video posted on X, formerly Twitter, by the State House, that “an avoidable lag” prevented his administration's “good and helpful plans” from coming to fruition.

He said, “Fellow Nigerians, this period may be hard on us and there's no doubt that it is tough, but I urge you all

ZAINAB JUNAID

Customs leverages PR strategy to achieve significant breakthrough

The Comptroller General of Customs, Adewale Adeniyi, has introduced a mindset and strategy that drives Public Relations Officers towards achieving significant breakthroughs in the Service.

Speaking at the just-concluded three-day 2024 Public Relations Conference held in Abuja, Adeniyi emphasized the importance of PR strategies in achieving rapid and substantial success in the Service.

Adeniyi stated that all Public Relations Officers in NCS have demonstrated productivity, discipline, commitment and professional standards with this strategy.

According to him, Public Relations has helped Customs Officers in the PR Units to reposition the Commands and make them more relevant.

"PR officers have demonstrated excellence in everything they do and must continue to command presence and recognition by striving to be the best version of themselves, hence the essence of this conference. Capacity building is not a one-off event, we know that PR is evolving in response to the evolving society and as society evolves, strategies have to evolve. I therefore implore you all to leverage on the opportunities provided by ICT, and we must continue to be strategic in our approach to communications," he said.

He charged all officers to always align their achievements to the objectives of the President Bola Tinubu, which centered around decongesting the Ports, bringing in Single Window, and making the Ports more efficient and competitive.

"They must take responsibility for explaining all tools introduced, strategies and partnership engaged in, to all Stakeholders for proper understanding," he added.

Adeniyi pledged to continue to support PR activities in the Service by investing more in capacity building to make jobs easier for all officers and ensure there is robust communication strategy in the PR Units to bridge any form of communication gap in the future.

In his remarks, the Public Relations Officer of the Service, Chief Superintendent of Customs, Abdullahi Maiwada, underscored the importance of the conference saying it reflected the current position of the Service.

His words, "This conference is not merely a gathering of minds but an avenue to collectively reflect our journey, assess our present and envision our future. As we explore the chronicles of progress, we trace the historical path of our unit, acknowledging the milestone reached, the challenges overcome and the invaluable lessons learned along the way. The retrospective view is crucial as it sets the foundation for discussions on contemporary dynamics. The current landscape of PR strategies, media relations and Communication technologies shaping the identity of the NCS today. Our focus will shift to the future horizon, where we will envision the roles and strategies of the PR Units in the coming years. We must embrace in-

novation, adaptability, and emerging trends to ensure our communication remains effective and relevant in the ever evolving global village."

He highlighted how PR strategy has enhanced significant breakthroughs in the quest for effective communication in the Service which laid a solid foundation for the PR Units transformative journey.

To him, "Understanding the strengths and weaknesses through SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and gathering feedback has been instrumental in improving communication strategies, our efforts to enhance media relations, establish strategic partnership and strengthen administrative efficiency have contributed to our success as a strategic unit of the Service.

"We have made remarkable success in embracing PR and digitizing data analysis to analyze trends and predict their impacts. We have successfully participated in managing significant events and also enhanced Stakeholders engagement and upheld the values of NCS and into the CGC Policy thrust of Collaboration, Consolidation and Innovation with PR strategies."

Also speaking, Deputy Comptroller General Sulaiman Bomoi, who was delighted to be the chief host of the event which was an historical reunion of all Public Relations Officers both retired and in-Service, stressed that the conference was about bridging gaps and maintaining the thrust

of the Public; managing the reputation of the Service in a complex and challenging environments.

Bomoi enjoined all participants to use the opportunity to improve on PR practice and redefine its approach in the face of new era.

"The strength of NCS lies in the PR Units, professionalism and unwavering dedication to the Service and collectively we can set a new benchmark for the PR in the Service," he said.

On his part, the President of the National Institute of Public Relations, Ike Nneliaku, lauded the Comptroller General of Customs for setting the pace with the initiative of a three-day conference on capacity building and for showing that Public Relations

is life with the essential elements of Communications he deployed since he assumed the helmsman of the Service in 2023.

The event which was fully supported by the Trade Modernization Project under the Managing Director, Zainab Umar-Ajjola was graced by prominent PR personnel of the Service, other security agencies and other notable stakeholders.

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Customs Service has recorded a significant success in the implementation of the Authorized Economic Operator programme, which began its pilot phase on April 15, 2024.

This initiative aims to enhance trade facilitation and improve compliance in international trade.

On September 2, 2024, the Service rolled out the benefits of the AEO programme to select importers, exporters, SMEs, and logistics operators who demonstrated high levels of regulatory compliance.

In the first week of the rollout, one of the beneficiaries voluntarily disclosed an underpayment of duties due to the erroneous classification of a high-value item.

The error, identified through a self-audit, was reported to the NCS without waiting for detection by customs officials.

By taking immediate corrective action, the company avoided penalties while retaining the benefits of the AEO programme.

Speaking on this development, NCS AEO Lead, Nnenna Awa, highlighted that this act of transparency strengthened the company's relationship with the NCS, demonstrating the importance of trust in driving compliance and building strong partnerships.

"This voluntary disclosure marks a significant milestone for the NCS, being the first formal instance of such in the agency's history," she stated.

According to her, voluntary disclosure allows businesses to proactively report errors related to customs activities, promoting transparency and fostering a culture of compliance.

The NCS rewards this openness with reduced inspections and expedited clearances, reinforcing the value of trust in regulatory relationships.

While the Comptroller General of Customs, Adewale Adeniyi, remains committed to upholding the highest standards as the AEO programme progresses, the CGC emphasised the need for traders to be compliant.

Also, Adeniyi on Friday decorated seven newly confirmed members of his management team with their new ranks at the Nigeria Customs Service Headquarters in Abuja, amidst calls to redouble their commitment and dedication to the success of the service.

Recall that the Nigeria Customs Service Board announced the confirmation of the new appointees on Tuesday, September 10, 2024, during

its 60th Regular Meeting at the new NCS Corporate Headquarters in Maitama, Abuja.

While addressing the newly decorated officers shortly after the ceremony, which took place inside the CGC's Conference Hall, the CGC congratulated them and urged them to double their devotion, determination, and loyalty to advance the Nigeria Customs Service.

According to him, their appointment and approval followed the due process of the Federal Character principles.

"Today, this promotion signifies the realisation of another milestone set by the Nigeria Customs Service. It comes at a time when we have witnessed a significant turnover in the management team, with over 10 members leaving office.

"This indicates that the Service is undergoing a transition from one generation of officers to another. To the younger generations of officers, I want to assure you that there is no cause for alarm, for a number of reasons.

"Most importantly, their appointments were based on their exemplary dedication and commitment to the service. Therefore, I encourage you to continue these virtues; exemplary conduct is expected from all of you," he stated.

While urging them to intensify their contributions to the fight against smuggling, revenue generation, and trade facilitation, Adeniyi also enjoined the new heads of departments to ensure that they share a common vision for fulfilling their departmental mandates.

His words, "I must emphasise as usual, that your placement in the service requires your utmost discipline at all times. You must conduct yourselves in a manner that sets a good example for the officers behind you."

Speaking on behalf of the decorated officers, DCG Adeogun Alajogun, who has been deployed to the Enforcement, Inspection, and Investigation Department, thanked the CGC for his fairness and assured him of their unwavering commitment and dedication to protecting the Service's reputation.

"On behalf of my colleagues who have just been elevated, I want to thank God Almighty for making this day possible. Thank you to the CGC for recognising us with these appointments to our various ranks," DCG Alajogun said.

He emphasised that, "In light of this, on behalf of myself and all the newly elevated colleagues, we pledge our undivided loyalty, unwavering commitment to duty, and unparalleled dedication to service."

The newly decorated officers are: Deputy Comptroller Generals of Customs (DCGs) – Olaniyi Alajogun and Kikelomo Adeola, while the Assistant Comptroller Generals are Isa Umar, Tilley-Gyado, Bamidele Makinde, OA Salefu and Timi Bomodi. ●

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AND WE MUST
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Kahveci delighted with Osimhen's Galatasaray debut

Former Beşiktaş forward Nihat Kahveci has revealed what impressed him the most about Victor Osimhen when he made his debut for Galatasaray in their 5-0 thrashing of Çaykur Rizespor in the Süper Lig at the RAMS Park recently.

With Mauro Icardi injured, head coach Okan Buruk had a choice to make on whether to start the Super Eagles forward or Michy Batshuayi.

Osimhen got the nod and didn't play like one who has yet to play 90 minutes since May, as he had a very eventful game.

He came close to getting a goal and also collided with Rizespor centre-back Husnidin Alikulov who was eventually taken off after suffering a concussion.

Speaking about his performance after the game, Kahveci revealed what impressed him about the performance of the Super Eagles star.

"I didn't see Osimhen as lacking in physicality. He showed what an athletic player he is. I saw his jumping advantage in all the cut balls," he said.

"Goals were expected from

Osimhen. Batshuayi gave him a very nice pass, I think he hit the ball correctly with the inside of his foot and the goalkeeper saved it.

"Apart from that, did he get into many clear positions? Galatasaray players did not get him into many positions like that.

"On the defensive side of things, I really liked his directing the ball to the goalkeeper and defenders when it came to him, and his defensive role and struggle in those areas when the ball was in Rizespor.

"Osimhen scores a lot of goals. He searches a lot, he is very active. He is always involved. If you create more positions for him, he will score a lot of goals in Galatasaray."

Galatasaray have won the Süper Lig in the past two seasons and the arrival of Osimhen will no doubt strengthen their squad.

It remains to be seen how Buruk will make use of the 2015 Fifa U17 World Cup Golden Boot winner and Icardi who won the Süper Lig top scorer last season.

It has been suggested that Buruk plans on using the two strikers. ●

NPFL: Rivers Utd sink Lobi in crunchy away win

ANDREW EKEJIUBA

Rivers United defeated hosts Lobi Stars of Makurdi 1-0 at Matchday 3 of the ongoing Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) played at the weekend.

Kabiru Abdullahi scored the winning goal in the 79th minute to earn George Finidi's side the win at the Lafia Township Stadium in Nasarawa.

This is Abdullahi's third goal of the season after scoring a brace off the bench last weekend in a 3-1 home win over Heartland FC of Owerri.

Unbeaten Rivers Utd has now secured 7 points on the NPFL log as more results of other Matchday 3 encounters are expected to be recorded. ●



Over 120 youngsters participate in FIFA Talent Development Scheme

As part of its youth talent development programme, the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has successfully completed a two-week training programme for the National U15 Boys, otherwise known as Future Eagles in Abuja. This is in line with FIFA's Talent Development Scheme (TDS) initiative aimed at creating a sustainable

legacy for long-term talent development in the country.

Head of TDS delegation in Nigeria, Mr. Nasiru Jibril, a former Nigeria international, said the programme is a welcome development which will serve as a pathway for every child within the ages of 12-15 to showcase themselves and be discovered. With the main

goal of the TDS project being to help raise the standards of national-team football around the world for both men and women, which is driven by FIFA's desire for a long-term dedication to global talent development, Jibril said he is confident the programme will form the major plank for supplies to our senior national teams in no distant time. ●

NPFL: Nasarawa Utd succumb to El-Kanemi Warriors fire-power in 7-goal thriller

ANDREW EKEJIUBA

The Solid Miners had a Saturday to forget in a hurry after letting their 2-0 early lead slip off their grasps as they lost to El-Kanemi Warriors for the first time at the Lafia City Stadium in a league game.

Anas Yusuf had put the homers ahead from the spot in the 14th minute of the first-half after being fouled in the box by El-Kanemi's goalkeeper, Abine George.

The deadly winger made it 2-0 for United, six minutes later with a well-crafted placement.

But the lead lasted for only seven minutes as the visitors reduced the deficit through Nasiru Salihu who pounced on a defensive frailty inside the box.

The attacker capitalized on another error to

draw his side level on 2-2 in the 32nd minute.

Amin Umar ensured United went into the break trailing as he netted the visitors' third goal, with the scoreline remaining unchanged until the half-time whistle.

Anas Yusuf restored parity for the Solid Miners after lashing home Adamu Hassan's left footed cross into the box in the 67th minute, to ink his name as the first hat-trick scorer in the elite league this season, and his fourth goal for Nasarawa United in three games this campaign.

But the hosts were again undone by the Maiduguri-based side after they were awarded a penalty in the 88th minute.

Bright Etaghara stepped forward to convert the resultant spot kick, as the visitors held on to the tempo to win 3-4 on the road, their first victory against Nasarawa United in Lafia. ●

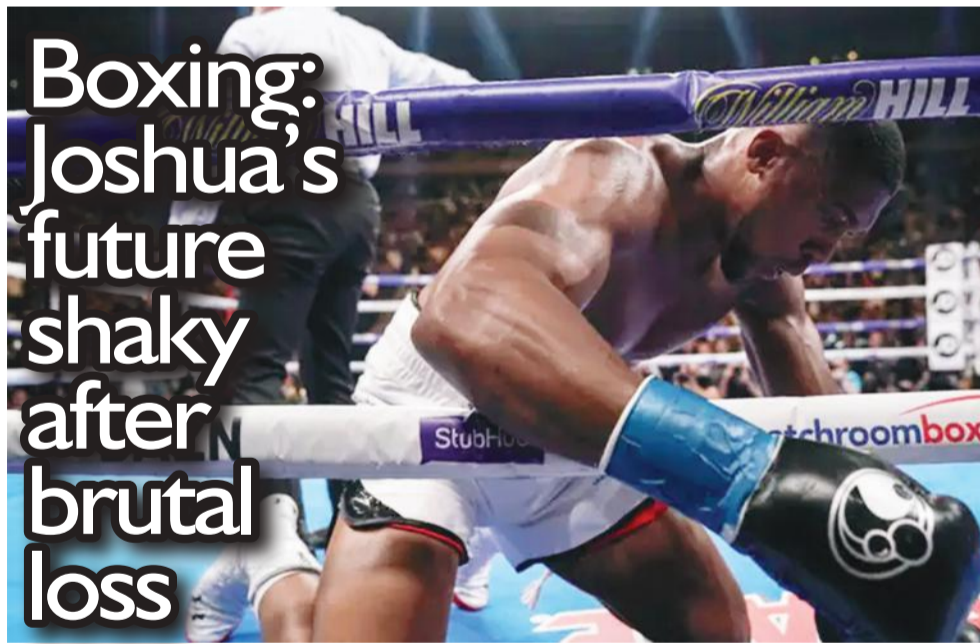




AFCON Qualifier: Super Eagles to host Libya in Uyo

The Super Eagles of Nigeria will play the Mediterranean Knights of Libya on Friday, October 11 at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo in a 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying matchday three. Four days later, the two teams will square off at the Tripoli International Stadium on matchday four. The Benin Republic's Cheetahs were defeated 3-0 at home by the Super Eagles to kick off their qualifying campaign.

In their second group match, the Amavubi of Rwanda held the three-time African champions to a scoreless draw. With four points from two games, the West Africans are first in Group D. Libya, with one point from two games, is at the bottom of the group. Starting in December 2025, only the best teams from each group will move on to the main competition in Morocco. ●



Boxing: Joshua's future shaky after brutal loss

Anthony Joshua's bid to become a three-time champion and return to the division's top table ended in the most dramatic and unexpected fashion. He was battered by a destructive Daniel Dubois who started the fight a bang and ended in similar fashion. He gave Anthony Joshua no chance to survive his dynamite blows. He did it before a capacity 96,000 crowd to retain his IBF heavyweight title. He knocked out an unsettled Joshua who also arrived the Wembley Stadium late and cast an initial doubts on whether he was going to honour the fight. A calmer and more confident Dubois arrived the arena an hour before Joshua showed up. Now, Joshua's career is in ruins. An anticipated rematch with the Oleksandr Usyk is now a mirage. The 27-year-old Dubois dropped Joshua multiple times to retain the IBF heavyweight title. Londoner Dubois stopped Joshua, 34, with an incredible coun-

ter right hook to secure the biggest win of his 24-fight career. "Are you not entertained?" Dubois shouted after the post-fight, to huge cheers in the packed-out stadium. "I'm a gladiator. I am a warrior to the bitter end. I want to get to the top level of this sport and reach my potential." Joshua who won his first world title more than eight years ago - suffered a fourth loss in his 32nd bout, but hinted he will continue in the sport and has a clause to trigger a rematch with Dubois. "You know I'm ready to kick off in the ring but I'm going to keep it respectful," he said. "Before I came here, I always say to myself I'm a fighter for life. You keep rolling the dice." An ecstatic Dubois, meanwhile, enjoyed the crowning moment which had eluded him after he was elevated to world champion when Oleksandr Usyk vacated the belt. ●

FEDERAL CO-OPERATIVE COLLEGE ELEYELE, IBADAN, OYO STATE

INVITATION FOR THE PRE-QUALIFICATION/EXPRESSION OF INTEREST UNDER THE CAPITAL PROJECT/CONSTITUENCY PROJECT FOR YEAR 2024 AMMENDMENT BUDGET PROJECTS

1. **INTRODUCTION**
Federal Co-operative College (FCC), Eleyele, Ibadan a parastatal under the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and food security, in keeping its mandate and in compliance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act, 2007, intends to implement the College's 2024 Capital Projects. The College hereby invites interested competent and reputable contractors/suppliers/consultancy firms, with relevant experience and good track records of related projects and services for the procurement of under listed.

2. **SCOPE OF SERVICE/WORKS/SUPPLIES AND TRAINING**

CATEGORY A: WORKS (PREQUALIFICATION)

LOT No.	TITLE OF PROJECTS	LOT No.	TITLE OF PROJECTS
LOT W 97	RENOVATION AND UPGRADE OF AYEDUN CAMPUS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OYE EKITI IN IKOLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OYO STATE	LOT W 122	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF ATADEJENE
LOT W 98	CONSTRUCTION OF ICT HUB AT OKE SOLA AREA IN IBADAN NORTH WEST/IBADAN SOUTH WEST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY OYO STATE	LOT W 123	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF USUNG ATAI
LOT W 99	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREET LIGHTS IN ADDO ODO OTA FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY	LOT W 124	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF ONUK
LOT W 100	CONSTRUCTION OF 3KM RURAL ROAD BETWEEN UTE AND OMLUZE, OKE LGA, OUNDO STATE	LOT W 125	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN OKU UBARA RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY
LOT W 101	CONSTRUCTION OF BOREHOLES IN SELECTED LOCATIONS OF ONDO SOUTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT, ONDO STATE	LOT W 126	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF SOUTH SOUTH STATE
LOT W 102	CONSTRUCTION OF SOLAR POWERED BOREHOLES FOR SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN ONDO CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, ONDO STATE	LOT W 127	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOM IN SOUTHERN STATE LOCAL FARMING COMMUNITY
LOT W 103	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREETLIGHTS IN SELECTED AREAS OF IFEPODUN/IFELODUN LGA, EKITI STATE	LOT W 128	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF MBARAKOM
LOT W 104	CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE 2 OF MALE MEDICAL STUDENTS' HOSTEL AT ERSU, ADD EKITI	LOT W 129	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN MBARAKOM
LOT W 105	CONSTRUCTION OF PHASE 2 OF FEMALE MEDICAL STUDENTS' HOSTEL AT ERSU, ADD EKITI	LOT W 130	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN SOUTHERN STATE
LOT W 106	CONSTRUCTION OF MALE STUDENT HOSTEL AT GOVERNMENT SCIENCE COLLEGE, IYIN EKITI	LOT W 131	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN SOUTH SOUTH STATE
LOT W 107	CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE STUDENT HOSTEL AT GOVERNMENT SCIENCE COLLEGE, IYIN EKITI	LOT W 132	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN OKU UBARA
LOT W 108	REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SOME SELECTED MEDICAL FACILITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST LOT 1-5	LOT W 133	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN ONUK
LOT W 109	CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL FARM ROADS FOR EASE OF TRANSPORTING FARM PRODUCE IN SOME SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST LOT 1-5	LOT W 134	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN USUNG ATAI
LOT W 110	CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF SELECTED RURAL FARM ROADS FOR SELECTED AGRO-DEPENDENT IN VARIOUS RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST LOT 1-5	LOT W 135	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN MANTA
LOT W 111	CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF 3 IN 1 SOLAR STREET LIGHT ON RURAL FARM ROADS IN VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST LOT 1-5	LOT W 136	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN MONTGOMERY POLYTECHNIC IKERE EKITI, EKITI SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EKITI STATE
LOT W 112	PROVISION FOR REHABILITATION OF ICT CENTRE	LOT W 137	CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF CLUSTER FARM FOR SELECTED YOUNG SCHOOL LEAVERS IN SOUTHERN STATE
LOT W 113	REHABILITATION OF AGABAJARABA ROAD, IBERU ISGBO OUNDO STATE	LOT W 138	RECONSTRUCTION (MAINTENANCE) OF UMWINNA TO UMAZEZAJU ROAD
LOT W 114	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 IN 1 SOLAR STREET LIGHT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF ASEDIO/CHORO	LOT W 139	CONSTRUCTION AND PROVISION OF COMMON FACILITIES, OPEN AND CLOSED STORE AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE IN SELECTED LOCATION IN IFEPODUN/IFELODUN LGA, EKITI STATE (LOT 1-3)
LOT W 115	PROVISION/INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREETLIGHT TO RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES IN OHANJE SANGO OTA, AND IAI-OTA, ABUJA	LOT W 140	CONSTRUCTION AND PROVISION OF COMMON FACILITIES, OPEN AND CLOSED STORE AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE IN SELECTED LOCATION IN EKITI WEST LGA, EKITI STATE (LOT 1-2)
LOT W 116	CONSTRUCTION/INSTALLATION OF SOLAR LIGHT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS NIGERIA	LOT W 141	CONSTRUCTION OF A FARM HOUSE AND PROVISION OF LIVESTOCK PEN AND ACCESSORIES IN FCT, ABUJA (LOT 1-2)
LOT W 117	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 IN 1 SOLAR STREET LIGHT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS SOUTHWEST	LOT W 142	CONSTRUCTION OF FCC/IBADAN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
LOT W 118	CONSTRUCTION OF INNER ROADS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF IFEPODUN/IFELODUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EKITI STATE	LOT W 143	PROCUREMENT OF ICT EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE, NETWORKING ETC. FOR 100 SEATER FEDERAL COOPERATIVE COLLEGE IBADAN'S CBT CENTRE
LOT W 119	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF IBONG EDIEME		
LOT W 120	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF MANTA		
LOT W 121	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF OKU UBARA		

CATEGORY B: GOODS

LOT No.	TITLE OF PROJECTS
LOT G 44	PROVISION OF FOOD SUPPLY TO SELECTED CONSTITUENTS WITHIN ONDO WEST/EAST FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, ONDO STATE
LOT G 45	PROVISION OF FOOD ITEMS AND CLOTHINGS (PALLIATIVES) TO VULNERABLES IN OWO/OISE FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OUNDO STATE
LOT G 46	SUPPLY OF GRAIN AND POWER TILLERS TO ADDO EKITI/IFEPODUN/IFELODUN
LOT G 47	SUPPLY OF TRACTOR AND POWER TILLERS TO ADDO EKITI/IFEPODUN/IFELODUN
LOT G 48	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF 100KVA GENERATOR AT MONTGOMERY POLYTECHNIC IKERE EKITI, EKITI SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EKITI STATE
LOT G 49	SUPPLY OF FOOD STUFFS I.E RICE, BEANS AND GARRI IN UGHELLI/UDU FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY.
LOT G 50	PROVISION OF FARM INPUT IN OYO FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OYO STATE
LOT G 51	PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF KNAPSACK SPRAYERS FOR RURAL COOPERATIVES IN OYO CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OYO STATE
LOT G 52	PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF FERTILIZER FOR RURAL COOPERATIVES IN OYO CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OYO STATE
LOT G 53	SUPPLY OF FERTILIZER AND OTHER FOOD ITEMS TO SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN EKITI CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, EKITI STATE
LOT G 54	SUPPLY OF FERTILIZER IN IBERU LGA, EKITI STATE
LOT G 55	PROVISION OF FOOD ITEMS AS PALLIATIVE FOR PEOPLE IN EKITI WEST LGA, EKITI STATE
LOT G 56	SUPPLY OF NPK AND UREA FERTILIZERS TO COOPERATIVE FARMERS IN SOME RURAL COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE LOT 1-5
LOT G 57	PROVISION/SUPPLY OF IMPROVED SEEDLINGS TO FARMERS IN SOME COMMUNITIES IN ABULE IKOKO, ONIGBONGBO, ISIBELAJANA LOT 1-3
LOT G 58	PROVISION/SUPPLY OF GRAINS TO CUSHION HUNGER IN OBERE, ILEI, ISBO ASA, WASIMI IKORODU AND SEKERE COMMUNITIES LOT 1-5
LOT G 59	PROVISION FOR SUPPLY OF HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY CLINIC
LOT G 60	PROVISION FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREET LIGHTS
LOT G 61	PROVISION OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT, DRUGS AND AMBULANCES IN SOUTH SOUTH STATE (LOT 1-3)
LOT G 62	PROVISION OF STARTER PACKS TO YOUTHS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF FARMING AND ENTREPRENEUR SELECTED LOCATIONS
LOT G 63	PROVISION OF STARTER PACKS TO WOMEN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF SELECTED SOUTH SOUTH STATES
LOT G 64	PROVISION OF STARTER PACKS TO UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS IN RURAL AREAS OF SOUTH SOUTH STATES
LOT G 65	PROVISION AND DEPLOYMENT OF SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR UNDERGRADUATES IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY IN SOUTH SOUTH STATE
LOT G 66	PROVISION OF SEEDLINGS, LIVESTOCKS CHICKS, FEEDS, FARM INPUT AND FERTILIZER IN FCT ABUJA.
LOT G 67	EMERGENCY SUPPLY OF GRAINS (BEANS) TO FARMING COMMUNITIES OF ISEDE, ABARAKO AND ISIBEMO EKITI.
LOT G 68	EMERGENCY SUPPLY OF GRAINS (RICE) TO FARMING COMMUNITIES OF IWOROKO, EFOR AND IKORO EKITI.
LOT G 69	EMERGENCY SUPPLY OF GRAINS (BEANS) TO FARMING COMMUNITIES OF OKEMESI, UBERO AND ADDO EKITI

CATEGORY C: CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TRAINING)

LOT No.	TITLE OF PROJECTS
Lot 5 49	EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN IKOLE AND OYE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EKITI STATE
Lot 5 50	CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILL ACQUISITION ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN AKINYELE/LAGELU FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OYO STATE
Lot 5 51	EMPOWERMENT ITEMS IN ADDO ODO/OTA FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OUNDO STATE
Lot 5 52	STRATEGIC EMPOWERMENT INPUTS THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL AND ARTISANS ITEMS TO AINA ASIPA, OLORUNDA, KODERA COMMUNITIES LOT 1-3
Lot 5 53	MEDICAL OUTREACH FOR SELECTED RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST (1-5)
Lot 5 54	MEDICAL OUTREACH AND AMBULANCES FOR RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES OF MANTA, EDEM IDEM, MIDIM AND MBARAKOM LOT (1-5)
Lot 5 55	MEDICAL OUTREACH AND AMBULANCES FOR RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES OF IBONG EDIEME, OKU UBARA, ATAI EDIENE USUNG ATAI AND ONUK LOT (1-5)

3. **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- Evidence of Certificate of Incorporation issued by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) including Form CAC1.1 or CAC2 and CAC7.
- Evidence of Company's Income Tax Clearance Certificate (or Personal Income Tax Clearance Certificate of all the Partners in case of Business Name) for the last three (3) years valid till 31st December, 2024, with minimum average annual turnover of N500 million for Works, N250 million for Goods and N100 million for Services.
- Evidence of Pension Clearance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024 (this requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is 15 and above);
- Evidence of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) Compliance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024 (this requirement is only applicable to bidders whose number of staff is 5 and above or the bidder's annual turnover is N50m and above);
- Evidence of Nigeria Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) Clearance Certificate valid till 31st December, 2024;
- Evidence of Registration on the National Database of Federal Contractors, Consultants and Service Providers by submission of Interim Registration Report (IRR) expiring on 31st December, 2024 or valid Certificate issued by BPP.
- Sworn Affidavit:
 - disclosing whether or not an officer of the relevant committees of the Federal Co-operative College, Eleyele, Ibadan or the Bureau of Public Procurement is a former or present Director, shareholder or has any pecuniary interest in the bidder and to confirm that all information presented in its bid are true and correct in all particulars;
 - that no Director has been convicted in any country for any criminal offence relating to fraud or financial impropriety or criminal misrepresentation or falsification of facts relating to any matter;
 - that the Company is not in receivership, the subject of any form of insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings or the subject of any form of winding up petition or proceedings;
- Company's Audited Accounts for the last three (3) years - 2022 & 2023;
- Reference Letter from a reputable commercial bank in Nigeria, indicating willingness to provide credit facility for the execution of the project when needed;
- Company's Profile with the Curriculum Vitae of Key Staff to be deployed for the project, including copies of their Academic/Professional qualifications such as COREN, ARCON, CORBON, QSRBN, SURCON etc. with current practice licence valid till Dec. 2024;
- Verifiable documentary evidence of at least three (3) similar jobs executed in the last five (5) years including Letters of Awards, Valuation Certificates, Job Completion Certificates and Photographs of the projects together with evidence of commissioning of the project.
- Only Companies included in the National Automotive Design and Development council's approved list of local manufacturers of Vehicles or their authorised representatives should bid for the vehicles
- For Joint Venture/Partnership, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should be provided indicating among others the Lead Partner (CAC, Tax Clearance Certificate, Pension Clearance Certificate, ITF Compliance Certificate, NSITF Clearance Certificate, IRR & Sworn Affidavit are compulsory for each JV partner);

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

4. **SUBMISSION OF EOJ AND PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

Interested firms are to submit three (3) bound of Expression of Interest (EOI) and Pre-qualification documents in Hard copy and one soft copy as applicable, separated by dividers and arranged as indicated above. The documents should be submitted in a sealed envelope and addressed as indicated above, and clearly marked with (the name of the project and Lot number). Furthermore, the reverse of each sealed envelope should bear the name and address of the bidder and drop it in the designated Tender Box at the office of the Provost office not later than 12:00 noon Monday, 16th September, 2024.

5. **OPENING OF EOJ AND PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS**

The EOI and Pre-qualification documents will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission at 12:00 noon Monday, 16th September, 2024, at The Conference Room, Provost Office'

6. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

- The Bidders are expected to adhere strictly to ALL instruction as non-compliance will constitute a ground for disqualification.
- EOIs/Bids must be in English language and signed by an official authorised by the bidders.
- The EOIs/bids will be opened in the presence of CSOs and professional bodies and covered by video recording; invitation link will be sent to bidders who choose to join the opening online.
- Invitation for Pre-qualification: Only pre-qualified bidders at technical evaluation will be invited at a later date for collection of tender documents;
- Expression of Interest (Services): Only shortlisted Consultants will be invited at a later date for collection of Request for Proposals;
- Tendering with false document is an offence, which will lead to disqualification and prosecution.
- All cost will be borne by the bidder.
- The Federal Co-operative College, Eleyele Ibadan is not bound to pre-qualify/shortlist any bidder and reserves the right to annul the procurement process at any time without incurring any liabilities in accordance with Section 28 of the Public Procurement Act, 2007.

Signed
THE PROVOST
FEDERAL COOPERATIVE COLLEGE,
ELEYELE IBADAN

Nigeria's GDP climbed to N60.93trn in Q2, 2024 – FG

AFCON Qualifier: Super Eagles to host Libya in Uyo

Bumblng Nigerian bureaucrats

Whitehall is a street in London that has bestowed its name on ministries of the British government. It also bestowed its practices and traditions on the civil service of Nigeria and most other Commonwealth countries.

The street is now a metaphor, like New York City's Wall Street and Broad Street, which respectively represent investment banking and dramatic arts theatres. Fleet Street, London, where the earliest British newspapers had their offices, is synonymous with journalism.

In addition, Whitehall is a symbol of the power and prestige of the British bureaucracy, as it is also steeped in intrigue and falsehoods that lead to the failure of ministers who weren't aware of the banana peels on its corridors.

Like its British progenitor, the Nigerian civil service, once described as an abyss by a senior journalist and columnist, is home of "capa y daga," or cloak-and-dagger, intrigues, treacheries, lies, and large doses of incompetence. And that, unfortunately, is the system that runs Nigeria.

The political class that pretends to be ruling Nigeria is no more than a group of ignoramuses, led by the nose into the labyrinth of governmental machinery run by cunning civil servants who have near-permanent tenure within the bureaucracy.

It is these generally incompetent bureaucrats that administer the disastrous economic and political policies in Nigeria.

The World Bank doubted the competence of Nigeria's bureaucracy even from the early days of post-independence Nigeria.

When proposing Nigeria's First 5-Year Development Plan for 1962-1968, the World Bank observed that "it is doubtful whether the (Abubakar Tafawa Balewa) government's administrative machine, as at present staffed and organized, will be able to carry out public investment at the planned rate."

So, when you are impatient and lambast the "wobbling and fumbling" political class of Nigeria, remember that it is this calibre of unprofessional bureaucrats that have been providing them with counsel from the very beginning.



OIKONOMIA with Lekan Sote X:@lekansote1

The bureaucrats have been as constant as the wall gecko in Nigeria's corridor of power. That is probably why the most senior officers in the civil service are styled "permanent secretaries." It takes a tortuous process to discipline or fire incompetent or erring civil servants.

The failure of Nigeria's bureaucracy in the last 64 years makes it clear that the economic and political fate of Nigerians is in the hands of incompetents, with their much-storied credentials, obtained from some of the academic citadels of the Western world.

If you look at the epileptic outing of Nigeria's energy "multiverse" which includes electricity and fuel for automobiles, homes, and industries, you will see a graphic representation of the cause of the quandary that Nigeria has sunk into.

Despite the many transformations and changes in the nomenclatures of the electricity provider, Electricity Corporation of Nigeria, to the National Electric Power Authority, National Electric Power Plc, Power Holding Company of Nigeria, and the spaghetti of names for now partially privatized electricity generation, transmission, and distribution companies.

The same incompetence is apparent in the running of the Nigeria National Oil Corporation, which was renamed Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation. It has a legendary incapability to provide enough fuel for Nigerians.

After a meeting with some International Oil Companies, former President Olusegun Obasanjo wisely sold Nigeria's refineries in Port Harcourt and Kaduna to billionaire businessmen, Aliko Dan-



gote and his pal, Femi Otedola.

The bureaucrats saw their cookie crumbling and quickly joined labour to prevail on Obasanjo's successor, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, to reverse the decision. He reacquired the refineries and returned them to the bureaucratic vultures.

The bureaucrats are simply lurking within the lumbering NNPC, indulging in their private interests, while ramping up \$6.8 billion in trade debt, which has now become a roadblock to Nigerian motorists having a regular supply of petrol.

The bureaucrats, who famously kept the lie of fuel subsidy going in the public space, have now capitulated and admitted that the subsidy can no longer be sustained and the pump price of petrol must be hiked.

Recently, NNPC surreptitiously increased the pump price in its petrol outlets. When Dangote Refinery offered to sell petrol and diesel at undisclosed prices said to be below that of NNPC, marketers, allegedly encouraged by bureaucrats, rejected the products.

They preferred the imported products because it gave them legitimate access to foreign exchange. Maybe President Bola Tinubu should have allowed marketers to import petroleum products and see them compete with the expected lower cost of Dangote Refineries.

After failing to run NNPC refineries, the oil bureaucrats cleverly sidetracked marketers and initiated a meddlesome plan to make NNPC the sole off-taker of Dangote Refinery petroleum products, perhaps to look as if they are working. Still, the bureaucrats continued with their mischief.

After Olufemi Soneye, NNPC Cor-

“AFTER FAILING TO RUN NNPC REFINERIES, THE OIL BUREAUCRATS CLEVERLY SIDETRACKED MARKETERS AND INITIATED A MEDDLESOME PLAN TO MAKE NNPC THE SOLE OFF-TAKER OF DANGOTE REFINERY PETROLEUM PRODUCTS, PERHAPS TO LOOK AS IF THEY ARE WORKING. STILL, THE BUREAUCRATS CONTINUED WITH THEIR MISCHIEF.”

porate Affairs Manager, announced that NNPC paid N898.78 for petrol per litre from Dangote Refinery, it was compelled to respond that though NNPC paid in Dollars (\$0.55), the price was lower than the current cost of imported petrol. NNPC then disclosed that the petrol price for the Lagos market is N950.22 (or \$0.58).

Everyone knows that this is just a scheme to put NNPC somewhere in the loop of the petrol supply chain. NNPC should only sell crude petroleum to Dangote Refinery, collect its money, and leave the midstream and downstream sub-sectors alone.

The perennially unresolved disagreements between the government and the Academic Staff Union of Universities reveal a horde of bureaucrats lurking in the crevices of failed negotiations and unimplemented agreements.

The involvement of bureaucrats in inconclusive negotiations dates back to the days of the Federal Military Government of General Yakubu Gowon, who issued a quit notice for striking dons to vacate their official university residential quarters.

The can of the problems continued to get kicked down the road to successive politicians who have no sense of the history of the failed negotiations and therefore have no clue on what to do to resolve the outstanding disagreements.

It keeps looking as if the bureaucrats love the problems to continue to have a sense of relevance and have something to do in their offices every day. It sounds like the fulfillment of the mischievous quip, "Why do what can be done tomorrow, today?", something you often hear on the corridors of civil service premises.

Keen observers see in Nigeria a tribe of self-serving civil service bureaucrats who look out for their interests only and leave the devil to care for the citizens and their employers. Someone suggested that bureaucrats became more self-centered after former military Head of State, General Murtala Muhammed, carried out a massive purge of the civil service in 1975.

They claim that when serving civil servants saw that their tenure was no longer protected and that they could lose their jobs, pensions, and gratuities on the whim of a Head of State, they wisely opted to look after their interests only and relegated the business of governance to a secondary level on the totem pole of priorities.

There can be no justification for carrying out the business of governance in half measures. Any bureaucrat who is not prepared to give his or her best to the service of the nation should simply make way for those who will be more committed.

But let no politician think that this exonerates them from blame for causing pain to fellow Nigerians; this just happens to be the time to call out bureaucrats who hide behind seemingly unwary politicians. ●

