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Autonomy

WHY SIECS SHOULD NOT CONDUCT LG ELECTIONS - ANALYSTS



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- Stakeholders condemn installation of cronies as chairmen
- Withhold allocations to states failing to conduct credible polls – SERAP tells Tinubu

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Nigerians no longer envied, poor shadows of what they could be – **Yemi Farounbi**



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Lady allegedly strangles mother to death after pastor's witchcraft claim



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Monday, September 30, 2024

Disquiet in NPA over lack of functional board



For over two months now, the Nigerian Ports Authority has been operating without a fully constituted board. This development, The Point gathered has been affecting the smooth running of the agency.

Tuesday October 1, 2024

I won't abuse executive/judiciary relationship – Tinubu



President Bola Tinubu on Monday affirmed his government's commitment to respecting the independence of the judiciary, vowing never to interfere or abuse the relationship between the executive and judiciary.

Wednesday October 2, 2024

Nigerians shun protest as commercial activities thrive unfettered



It was a beehive of social and commercial activities on Tuesday in Katsina, the Katsina State capital, as residents of the state shunned the October 1 nationwide protest.

Thursday October 3, 2024

Osun 2026: APC, Adeleke bicker over 'alleged plan to bomb INEC office, kill officials'



The major opposition political party in Osun State, the All Progressives Congress and the state governor, Ademola Adeleke, has traded words over an alleged plot to bomb the office of the Independent National Electoral Commission and kill top electoral officials during the 2026 governorship election in the state.

Friday October 4, 2024

Expect reduction in electricity costs, Minister assures Nigerians



The Minister of Power, Adebayo Adedun, has assured Nigerians of a possible reduction in the cost of electricity in the coming months, following a current effort to step up the generation and distribution of power in the country.

Saturday October 5, 2024

Ondo election: 18 parties nominated only 32.3 percent of required agents, says INEC



The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) yesterday said that the 18 political parties participating in the November 16 governorship election in Ondo State failed to nominate the required number of agents required for the elections.

Top stories



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Sunday October 6, 2024

Explosions, protests, boycott mar Rivers LG poll



Explosions, gunshots, a fresh wave of protests and multiple cases of alleged voter intimidation were the main features of the local government election in Rivers State yesterday.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



L-R: Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun; wife of the Vice President, Nana Shettima; Vice President Kashim Shettima; President Bola Tinubu; First Lady of Nigeria, Oluremi Tinubu; Senate President Godswill Akpabio; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Tajudeen Abbas; wife of the Speaker, Fatima Abbas; and Secretary to the Government of the Federation, George Akume, at the 64th Independence Day Parade, held at the forecourt of the State House, Abuja, on Tuesday.

GTCO, Zenith, Ecobank, nine other banks generate N3.81trn profit in six months

FESTUS OKOROMADU
ABUJA

Despite the uncertainties in the operating environment, Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc and 11 other financial institutions listed on the Nigerian Exchange Limited generated an estimated N3.81 trillion profits before tax in the half year ended June 2024.

This represents a 108.2 per cent increase from the N1.83 trillion PBT generated by these 12 financial institutions in H1 2023.

In the period under review, the financial institutions operating in Nigeria, and Sub-Saharan African countries were faced with inflationary pressure, and sustained hikes in monetary policy parameters that drained liquidity in the banking system, among other challenges.

However, in the period under review, five banks, including GTCO, Access Holdings Plc, Zenith Bank Plc, Stanbic IBTC Holdings Plc, and Fidelity Bank Plc were the only financial institutions that declared interim dividend payout to shareholders.

The five financial institutions declared N198.35 billion as interim dividends for the half year ended June 30, 2024, about a 131.67 per cent increase from the N85.6 billion declared in the half year ended June 30, 2023.

FBN Holdings Plc, Ecobank, Wema Bank Plc, FCMB Group Plc, Sterling Financial Holdings Company Plc, and Jaiz Bank were the financial institutions that did not declare an interim dividend for H1 2024.

GTCO, during the period under review, generated the highest profit before tax, followed by Zenith Bank, Ecobank, and FBN Holdings.

GTCO reported N1.003 trillion profits before tax in H1 2024, about a 207 per cent increase from the N327.4 billion it declared in H1 2023, to emerge as the first financial institution to cross the N1 trillion mark in profit generation.

The Group Chief Executive Officer, GTCO, Segun Agbaje, in a statement, said, "We are immensely proud of the progress we have made as a leading financial holding company.

"Despite the uncertainties in the operating environment, our performance in the first half of the year, where we recorded our highest profit to date, is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of our business model.

"We remain optimistic about the future and are committed to leveraging our unique strengths as a thriving financial services ecosystem to create sustainable value for all our stakeholders as we continue to position all our business verticals—Banking, Funds Management, Pension, and Payments—for rapid growth across key markets," he explained.

While the Zenith Bank reported N727.03 billion PBT in H1 2024, representing a 108 per cent increase from the N350.36 billion the bank reported in H1 2023, Ecobank declared N443.5 billion PBT in H1 2024, representing about 195 per cent increase over the N150.3 billion it reported in H1 2023.

The CEO of Ecobank Group, Jeremy Awori in a statement said, "Our half-year results demonstrate the strength of our diversified business model. Despite facing macro-economic challenges in some of our operating markets,

the company increased its net revenues to \$994 million and its profit before tax by five per cent to \$324 million.

"Our transformation agenda remains our top priority, with a focus on improving customer experience and driving efficiency and productivity. Despite persistent inflation, we achieved an efficiency ratio of 53.6 per cent.

"We continue to right-size our risk-weighted assets, and our deposits franchise remains strong. Customer deposits rose 13 per cent in constant currency to \$19 billion, with current and savings accounts (CASA) comprising 81 per cent of total deposits. With a loans-to-deposit ratio of 54 per cent, we have room to take advantage of credit opportunities that meet our risk appetite if required," Awori said.

According to Awori, the bank's sole focus remains on enhancing the customer experience and meeting their financial needs.

On its part, FBN Holdings posted N411.99 PBT in H1 2024, an increase of 100.9 per cent from the N205.05 billion reported in H1 2023.

Commenting, the Group Managing Director, FBN Holdings, Nnamdi Okonkwo in a statement said, "FBN Holdings has again delivered a strong set of financial results despite the complex macroeconomic and operating environment.

"Our Group's strong performance over the period is underpinned by our robust institutional capabilities, effective risk management practices, and solid business momentum, and it is a testament to the resilience of our institution.

"Notably, gross earnings and profit before tax grew 118.8 per cent y-o-y and a 100.9 per cent y-o-y to N1, 402.5 billion and N412 billion respectively for the first half of the financial year, showing a continuous growth trajectory. These results reflect our ongoing commitment to further improving profitability, enhancing performance, and delivering sustainable value to our stakeholders.

"Despite the macro-economic headwinds, we remain resolute and confident of successfully navigating the terrain towards surpassing stakeholders' expectations."

During the period under review, UBA reported N411.99 billion PBT in H1 2024, representing about 0.5 per cent decline from the N403.6 billion in H1 2023, while Access Bank announced N348.9 billion PBT in H1 2024, a growth of 108.2 per cent from

the N167.6 billion reported in H1 2023.

Fidelity Bank closed the period at N200.87 billion PBT, a significant increase of 163 per cent from the N76.33 billion declared in the corresponding period of 2023, just as Stanbic IBTC Holdings posted N147 billion PBT in H1 2024, about 77 per cent increase from the N82.99 billion reported in H1 2023.

Furthermore, FCMB Group declared N64.21 billion PBT in H1 2024, about a 68 per cent increase from the N38.23 billion in H1 2023.

Similarly, Wema Bank announced N30.57 billion PBT in H1 2024, a growth of 153.47 per cent from the N12.06 billion reported in H1 2023.

Sterling Financial Holdings Company generated N17.35 billion PBT in H1 2024, representing a 51 per cent increase from N11.46 billion in H1 2023, just as Jaiz Bank, in H1 2024, announced N11.56 billion PBT, an increase of 194.27 per cent from N3.93 billion reported in H1 2023. ●

Face Off



NIGERIANS ARE APPALLED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS A COMPLETE WASTE OF TIME, AS IT DID NOT ADDRESS ISSUES OR PROFFER ANY SOLUTIONS TO THE MYRIAD OF ECONOMIC AND SECURITY PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE APC GOVERNMENT, FOR WHICH NIGERIANS ARE SUFFERING.

– PDP NATIONAL PUBLICITY SECRETARY, DEBO OLOGUNAGBA



FOR THE PDP TO CLAIM THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH IS EMPTY IS SIMPLY AN AFTERTHOUGHT. THEY ARE REACTING BECAUSE THEY SEE THE APC ACCOMPLISHING WHAT THEY FAILED TO ACHIEVE.

– APC DIRECTOR OF PUBLICITY, BALA IBRAHIM

GTCO, ACCESS HOLDINGS PLC, ZENITH BANK PLC, STANBIC IBTC HOLDINGS PLC, AND FIDELITY BANK PLC WERE THE ONLY FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS THAT DECLARED INTERIM DIVIDEND PAYOUT TO SHAREHOLDERS.

BRIGHT JACOB

Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara, has sworn in the newly elected chairmen of the 23 local government areas, following their victories in Saturday's Local Government Council elections.

The swearing-in ceremony held on Sunday at the Executive Council Chambers, Government House, Port Harcourt, saw 22 chairmen from the Action Peoples Party and one from the Action Alliance officially inaugurated into office.

After the electoral process, the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission declared the APP victorious in 22 local government areas,

Fubara swears in new Rivers LG chairmen, Wike warned not to undermine President Tinubu

POINT
Governor Fubara congratulated them on their electoral victories

while the Alliance secured one chairmanship seat.

Governor Fubara, while addressing the newly sworn-in chairmen, congratulated them on their electoral victories.

The ceremony was graced by notable dignitaries, including the Chairman of the People's Demo-

cratic Party Governors' Forum, Bauchi State Governor, Bala Mohammed, who was in attendance to lend his support.

Each chairman was accompanied by a guest, as stipulated by the state government, and they are now expected to immediately assume their duties, focusing on fulfilling their campaign promises and improving the welfare of their local communities.

Meanwhile, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike, has been urged to refrain from overstepping his author-

ity and allegedly undermining the powers of President Bola Tinubu.

This warning was issued by Evans Bipi, Director General of the Simplified Movement Worldwide and outgoing Caretaker Committee chairman of Ogu/Bolo Local Government Area in Rivers State.

Bipi accused Wike of attempting to usurp the President's power by allegedly instructing Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun, to halt the recently concluded local government elections in Rivers State.

Speaking in response to the

withdrawal of police officers from the election due to a supposed Federal High Court order in Abuja, Bipi condemned Wike's actions, calling them contrary to President Tinubu's directive.

He highlighted the President's commitment to implementing the Supreme Court's ruling on local government autonomy, which mandated that all states conduct council elections before October 30.

Bipi questioned why the Inspector General of Police would follow an order from the FCT Minister that conflicts with the President's directive.

"The President, who gave a three-month deadline for all governors to conduct local government elections in accordance with the Supreme Court judgment, cannot stand by and allow the FCT Minister, his own appointee, to countermand that directive by ordering the Inspector General of Police to act otherwise. This amounts to a usurpation of the President's powers," he argued.

The Ogu/Bolo Council Boss further cautioned President Tinubu to be vigilant regarding Wike, accusing him of seeking to control Rivers State's resources and presenting a potential threat to presidential authority.

Bipi also criticized the Federal High Court in Abuja, stating that

it lacked the jurisdiction to issue an order halting the Rivers State Independent Electoral Commission from conducting the election, which is constitutionally mandated.

He accused Wike of misleading the court to obtain an order that runs counter to the Supreme Court's decision on local government autonomy.

Despite these tensions, Bipi praised Governor Fubara for conducting what he described as the most peaceful local government election in Nigeria's history, even without the presence of security forces.

He noted that the absence of police did not affect the peaceful and smooth conduct of the election in Ogu/Bolo and other parts of Rivers State.

Commending the people of Ogu/Bolo, Bipi called the local government area the most peaceful in Rivers State, appreciating the high voter turnout and the calm demeanor of the residents during the election, despite the heightened political tensions.

In his remarks, retired Navy Captain Erasmus Victor, a key stakeholder in Ogu/Bolo, expressed regret over the Nigeria Police's decision to withdraw from the election, stating that it further tarnished their already strained reputation. ●

Ondo poll: Over 2 million voters registered – INEC

BRIGHT JACOB

The Independent National Electoral Commission said it had concluded the Continuous Voters Registration exercise ahead of the Ondo State governorship election slated for November 16, 2024.

The commission disclosed that a total of 2,053,061 registered voters would participate in the forthcoming governorship poll.

The state's Resident Electoral Commissioner, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Babalola, disclosed this at the state's commission headquarters in Akure, the state capital, on Saturday, while speaking on the preparation for the election.

She said, "The INEC has concluded the Continuous Voter

Registration exercise, which saw a significant increase in registered voters across the state. After the successful conclusion of the CVR exercise, 58,708 new voters were registered. In addition, 3,132 voters transferred their registrations into Ondo State while 123 voters transferred their registration out of Ondo State. The harmonised total number of new registered voters with the old registered voters is now 2,053,061.

"From the above information, it is well established that the registration exercise was inclusive, transparent, and accessible to all eligible citizens, including marginalised groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities.

"As we await the commence-

ment of the distribution of Permanent Voter Cards from the CVR exercise, we urge all registered voters in the previous registration exercise who are yet to collect their PVCs to do so, as this process is ongoing at our LGA offices. We shall simplify the collection process and establish PVC collection centres."

Babalola, who expressed the readiness of the electoral body, further disclosed that the commission had received a large percentage of sensitive materials for the November poll which had been distributed to all the 18 Local Government Areas of the state, adding that 16 political parties would be participating in the election.

"I am pleased to inform you that a large percentage of the non-

sensitive election materials required for the election have been received and deployed to the 18 Local Government offices, where they are batched to RAs and PUs levels. We are working closely with the relevant security agencies and stakeholders to ensure the safe storage and timely distribution of these materials on the eve of the election," the REC stated.

She added that the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System would be available at the 3,933 polling centres across the state during the election, saying, "This system will also transmit polling unit results directly to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV), enabling greater transparency and real-time access to election results by the public." ●



L-R: Minister of Marine & Blue Economy, Gboyega; Senator Ibikunle Amosun; Ondo State Governor, Lucky Aiyedatiwa; his Ekiti State counterpart, Biodun Oye-banji; Dr. Kayode Fayemi; Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabamila; Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; his Ogun State counterpart, Dapo Abiodun; National Vice Chairman of APC South West, Isaac Kekemeke; Chief Olusegun Osoba and APC National Secretary, Ajibola Basiru, during the party's South West Zone Assembly in Lagos, on Saturday.

FESTUS OKOROMADU

The Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Olayemi Cardoso, has defended the bank's decision to raise the Monetary Policy Rate to 27.25 per cent, describing it as a necessary move to control inflation and curb excess money in circulation.

This is according to a press statement from the apex bank on Sunday.

Speaking during an address at the Harvard Club of Nigeria over the weekend, Cardoso emphasised that the rate hike, while tough on borrowers, is crucial for the country's economic stability.

"Our decision to raise the Monetary Policy Rate to 27.25 per cent was a bold move. Higher interest rates, while painful for borrowers, are necessary to curb excess money

Higher interest rate necessary to check inflation, says Cardoso

in circulation and control inflation. Leadership is about making hard choices to secure long-term stability over short-term comfort in moments like these," Cardoso said.

He noted that the CBN's focus on core objectives, such as containing inflation, restoring credibility, and building public trust in the financial system, is critical to any meaningful recovery.

Cardoso's remarks came as he reflected on his tenure as the head of the CBN, marking one year in office. He pointed out that trust is at the core of central banking, and without it, the effectiveness of the bank's policies would diminish.

The CBN governor also said

the introduction of the Electronic Foreign Exchange Matching System is a key initiative to enhance transparency and restore market confidence.

"Trust is the currency of central banking. If the public loses trust in the institution, the efficacy of its policies diminishes. Our decision to implement the Electronic Foreign Exchange Matching System is rooted in this understanding.

"By enhancing transparency and providing more accurate oversight of forex transactions, we send a strong signal that the CBN is serious about fair and efficient markets," he said.

Cardoso also revisited the

bank's controversial decision to float the naira, a move that was met with public criticism.

He explained that the decision was necessary to bring the official exchange rate closer to market reality and reduce speculative trading.

He asserted that the move had started stabilising the currency markets and reducing speculative trading.

While the CBN has yet to fully achieve its inflation targets, Cardoso expressed optimism, citing recent reports from the National Bureau of Statistics which showed inflation had begun to decline in July and August 2024. ●

NAF to intensify air onslaught against agitators, criminals in South East, South South

TIMOTHY AGBOR

The Nigerian Air Force has disclosed its readiness to intensify air onslaught against separatist agitators and other criminal elements in the South East and South South geo-political zones, as part of the grand plan to meet national security objectives.

A statement by the Deputy Director, Public Relations and Information, NAF, Group Captain Kabiru Ali, on Sunday said that the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, visited the zones to evaluate operational readiness and infrastructural development of the units with a view to enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness.

According to him, "In furtherance of the drive to actualise his command philosophy of transforming the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), for greater agility and resilience to effectively project air power in meeting all national security imperatives, the Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, on Saturday, 5 October, 2024, conducted an operational tour of NAF units in Enugu and Port Harcourt. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate operational readiness and infrastructural development of the units with a view to enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness." ●

Ali noted that while in Enugu, the CAS visited the 405 Helicopter Combat Training Group (HCTG) and the International Helicopter Flying School (IHFS), adding that during the tour, Abubakar inspected various facilities, interacted with personnel and discussed ways to improve operational performance.

He emphasized the importance of maintaining high levels of preparedness to meet current and emerging security challenges.

The CAS further highlighted his commitment to implementing developmental projects and procuring critical service facilities that would elevate the standards of the units.

He said, "Our goal is to ensure a vibrant and effective service delivery across all platforms."

Abubakar also extended the tour to 115 Special Operations Group (SOG) in Port Harcourt, reiterating the same mission of assessing operational readiness and identifying areas for infrastructural upgrades.

He reassured the personnel that efforts to provide better facilities and equipment will be prioritized.

Operational visits such as this, he said, underscored his unrelenting determination to improve the NAF's airpower capabilities through strategic infrastructure enhancements, as well as robust operational, logistical and welfare support. ●

Court reverses Osun government's closure of mining company

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

A Federal High Court in Abuja has reversed the decision of the Osun State Government to shut down Segilola Resources Operating, a mining firm in the state.

The presiding judge, Justice Emeka Nwite gave the order in suit numbered: FHC/AB/5/1452024 and filed against the Osun State Government.

Other defendants in the matter included the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Solid Minerals Development.

In the motion ex-parte dated and filed on October 2, 2024 and heard on October 3, the plaintiff prayed the court for an order of interim injunction restraining Osun State Government, the third defendant, and its agents or officers from interfering with or disrupting the gold mining operations of the applicant or continuing to deny the applicant access to its business premises or mining site in Osun State, pending the hearing and determination of applicant's motion on notice for interlocutory injunction.

"Further or in the alternative, an order directing the parties to maintain the status quo ante bellum pending the determination of

the applicant's motion on notice for interlocutory injunction," the applicant prayed after arguments by its counsel, O. Opasanya, SAN.

Delivering the ruling, Justice Nwite ordered that the Osun State Government should not deny Segilola Resources Operating access to its mining firm.

"That an Order of Interim Injunction is hereby made by this Honourable Court restraining the 3rd Defendant and agents or officers of Osun State Government, either acting by themselves or through their agents, officers, officials, staff, nominees, servants, privies, assigns, law enforcement agents, or any person acting for, or deriving authority from the 3rd Defendant and Osun State Government, from interfering with or disrupting the gold mining operations of the Applicant or continuing to deny the Applicant access to its business premises or mining site in Osun State, pending the hearing and determination of Applicant's Motion on Notice for Interlocutory Injunction," the judge ruled.

Meanwhile, the case was adjourned till October 17, 2024 for hearing of motion on notice.

Recall that the Osun State Government had sealed off the mining company for allegedly evading tax among other issues. ●

NCS revitalizes air wing operations, acquires Cessna Grand Caravan Ex-208B to bolster air surveillance efforts

ZAINAB JUNAID

The Nigeria Customs Service has taken a significant step towards strengthening its air surveillance capabilities with the acquisition of a Cessna Grand Caravan EX-208B aircraft.

In a statement made available on Sunday by the Service's spokesman, Abdullahi Maiwada, the Comptroller-General of Customs, Adewale Adeniyi, inspected the newly acquired aircraft on Friday, in Bartlesville, Washington, USA, marking a pivotal moment for the NCS air wing operations.

The aircraft, registered as 5N-BAA is set to enhance the Services' air patrol and surveillance efforts.

Powered by the reliable PT6 Pratt and Whitney engine, the Cessna Grand Caravan is globally recognised for its rugged versatility, short-field take-off and landing capabilities, and ability to operate on remote airstrips, making it ideally suited for border security operations in Nigeria.

Adeniyi emphasized the importance of this acquisition, noting that the aircraft is fitted with the modern Garmin G1000 Avionics cockpit system, enabling operations under day, night, and low-visibility conditions.

"This aircraft will be a game-changer for the Nigeria Customs Services' air wing. Its ability to carry 10 officers, coupled with its six-hour aerial endurance, will significantly enhance our capacity for air surveillance and border patrol," Adeniyi stated.

The Cessna Grand Caravan aircraft will play a crucial role in air patrols aimed at detecting smuggling routes, deploying armed personnel, and providing swift support for ground operations.

"With this aircraft, we will strengthen our air border patrol capabilities, which will not only help us intercept illegal activities but also provide quick extraction support when necessary," Adeniyi explained, aligning the move with President Bola Tinubu's "Renewed Hope" agenda.

Additionally, the aircraft will serve as a strategic asset for Nigeria Customs Technical and Hangar Services Ltd, offering logistical support and revenue generation for the Service.

Adeniyi underscored the cost-efficiency of the Cessna Grand Caravan aircraft, noting that its operational costs are relatively low compared to other aircraft in its class. ●

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control has stated that the cholera outbreak in Nigeria has seen a sharp increase in 2024, with suspected cases rising by an alarming 220 per cent.

The NCDC, on its official website, said that this was according to the latest epidemiological report.

Cholera is an acute intestinal infection spread through contaminated food and water. Communities with limited access to sanitation are most affected.

Conflict, climate change, inadequate safe water and sanitation, poverty, underdevelopment, and population displacement due to emerging and re-emerging conflicts and disasters from natural hazards all contribute to the rise in cholera outbreaks.

The Nigerian Public Health Agency said that by the end of epidemiological week 39, the country had recorded 10,837 suspected cases and 359 deaths.

It said that the figure represented a 239 per cent increase in fatalities compared to 2023.

It said that the Case Fatality Rate (CFR) for the year stood at 3.3 per cent, slightly higher than the 3.1 per cent recorded in the previous year.

"In the past week alone, 198 new suspected cases were reported across five states, leading to 15 deaths and a weekly CFR of

Cholera outbreak surged by 220% in 2024 - NCDC

POINT

Lagos Island Local Government accounted for five percent of the country's overall cases

7.6 per cent.

"The states most affected by the outbreak during week 39 include Adamawa (131 cases), Ebonyi (30 cases), Borno (29 cases), Kano (7 cases), and Jigawa (1 case).

"Adamawa continues to be a hotspot, with 535 suspected cases reported in the past month," it said.

The agency said that since the beginning of 2024, Lagos State had reported the highest number of suspected cholera cases, contributing 43 per cent of the national total.

It said that Lagos Island Local Government accounted for five per cent of the country's overall cases.

"Lagos Island LGA is particularly hard-hit, contributing five per cent of all suspected cases nationwide.

"Stool cultures have been employed to monitor the situation,

with 254 Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs) conducted, yielding 175 positive results, and 149 stool cultures, of which 103 tested positive," it said.

It said that other states, including Jigawa, Kano, Borno, and Katsina, had also reported significant case numbers, highlighting the widespread nature of the outbreak.

"Jigawa recorded 870 cases, Kano recorded cases, and Borno recorded 588 cases," it said.

The NCDC disclosed that children under five years old were most affected, followed by those aged between five and 14.

It said that the male population represented 52 per cent of the total suspected cases, with females making up 48 per cent.

The NCDC report underscores the need for continued vigilance and response efforts, as the outbreak shows no signs of slowing.

The Agency has activated a national multi-sectoral Cholera Technical Working Group to monitor and respond to outbreaks across states.

It stressed the importance of improving sanitation, access to clean water, and public health

education to curb the spread of the disease.

"Efforts are ongoing to strengthen health systems and enhance surveillance in high-risk areas," it said.

The agency urged the public to report suspected cholera cases and adhere to preventive measures, including proper hand washing and safe food handling, to reduce transmission.

Meanwhile, according to the NCDC, in communities affected by the outbreak of the infectious disease, open defecation is a common practice.

It said that the practice continued to pose a challenge to the country's effort at curbing the spread of cholera.

The agency also highlighted the poor access to potable water, sanitation and WASH supplies.

It said that lack of drinking water in some rural areas and urban slums; water shortage leading to reliance on people selling water in Jerry cans were also responsible for the spread.

"There is also inadequate WASH infrastructure and supplies including wastewater management facilities," it said. ●



Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde (middle), while commissioning a block of 10 classrooms at NUT Model College, Owode, Apata, Ibadan, during the 2024 World Teachers' Day celebration. With him from left are, Commissioner for Education, Science and Technology, Salihu Adelabu; PDP National Deputy Chairman (South), Taofeek Arapaja; Chairman Nigeria Union of Teachers, Oyo State Wing, Oladimeji Ismail and Speaker, Oyo State House of Assembly, Debo Ogundoyin, at the weekend.

Enugu government demolishes another kidnappers' den, warns property owners

TIMOTHY AGBOR

The Enugu State Government, at the weekend, demolished yet another property linked to kidnapping activities in the state, warning landlords that it would not entertain any excuses in enforcing relevant laws of the state mandating the government to bring down any property linked to such evil acts.

Section 315 (Second Amendment) of the Criminal Code Law, Cap 30, Laws of Enugu State provides, "If the building or structure owned by the offender or any other person, who knows or ought to reasonably know that the building or structure is so being used for that purpose, the building or structure shall be demolished or forfeited to the State Government."

Speaking to newsmen at the site, the Executive Chairman, Enugu Capital Territory Development Au-

thority, Uche Anya, explained that the mansion located at Amaebo Owelli Autonomous Community in Awgu LGA of the state, was said to be used for keeping victims of kidnapping.

According to him, the video of a male kidnapping victim, who had several AK-47 rifles pointed at his head in May 2024, was recorded in the same building, but security agencies were able to track the building, rescuing the victim, while also apprehending most of the criminals and recovering a cache of arms and ammunition.

"What you see here today is the continuation of the war of the Enugu State Government against all manner of criminality. Today, we are here to take down a kidnappers' den. The property you see us taking down right now is a place where horrendous criminal activities happened.

"For instance, on 25th of May 2024, some deadly kidnappers abducted a man in Enugu, brought him here, stripped bare, even naked to his red boxers, bound him, pointed guns at him, and forced him to start talking to his family to request for money. They posted that video to his relatives.

"They held him down, but to the glory of God and the commitment of Governor Mbah, who is giving his all to security, the government and security agencies, through our state-of-the-art security system, were able to see what was happening in this rural community.

"Security agencies moved to the place. Every other person was arrested, but the kingpin escaped to Ebonyi. We tracked him to Lagos where the Enugu State Government and the security agencies

caught up with him.

Several AK-47 rifles, semi-automatic weapons and all manners of ammunition; dozens of proscribed and offensive weapons were recovered.

"Interestingly, the kingpin of the gang that did this nonsense was a member of the same gang we went after somewhere at Ogbek Nike.

"To those who say why not convert these properties to good use, we want these to serve as a deterrent in accordance with the law. The Enugu State Government does not want anything that will remind us of the deadly criminality. We just want to put it out of our minds. We do not need to acquire a criminal's property to use it to serve the public. We bring it down and we do our own thing. We do not want to profit from their criminality," he stated. ●

Autonomy

Why SIECs should not conduct LG elections – Analysts

- Want INEC to conduct polls as Govs, godfathers battle over LG control
- Stakeholders condemn installation of cronies as chairmen
- Withhold allocations to states failing to conduct credible polls – SERAP tells Tinubu

TIMOTHY AGBOR AND
BRIGHT JACOB

Stakeholders in Nigeria have expressed concerns over struggle by state governors and political godfathers to install their cronies as chairmen and councillors of local government areas in Nigeria, saying there may not be real autonomy that would translate to growth in the local councils.

While some political analysts were optimistic that the continuous dominance of state governors may not rob the local government areas of expected development and dividends of democracy, they canvassed for sanitation of the electoral system for the local councils, describing State Independent Electoral Commissions as sham and fraudulent.

For them, SIECs are easy tools in the hands of state governors to manipulate polls and pave the way for the emergence of their stooges as local government leaders.

They, therefore, advocated that the constitution of the country should be amended to give way for the Independent National Electoral Commission to conduct elections into local government.

The interests of governors and other key political players in some states have been fueling violence.

For instance, in Rivers State, explosions destroyed buildings and other property at the All Progressives Congress Secretariat in Rivers State a few hours before the local government elections in the state on Saturday amid tension from supporters of former Nyesom Wike and his successor, Sim Fubara.

Similarly, the Police Command in Akwa Ibom confirmed a fire incident at the office complex of the Akwa Ibom State Independent Electoral Commission in Ibiono Ibom Local Government Area following the local government election crisis.

A political expert, Mojeed Animashaun, in an interview with The Point, said with the turn of events as regards conducts of local government elections across the country, the real autonomy expected in council areas would be elusive.

He said virtually all the state governors have mapped out plans to ensure that their candidates emerge

as chairmen and councillors of councils, saying with such development, the funds accrued to local governments would still be controlled by state governors.

Going by this, he argued that rural communities may still remain underdeveloped as LGA chairmen would still be going cap in hand to state governors for funds.

"Since the local government autonomy became an Act, we have discovered that Nigerians might not be able to hold on to that autonomy because it will still be that governors and godfathers will still, at the end of the day, be in effective control of local governments. Since they have seen that it is illegal to maintain caretaker committees, the governors are rushing to conduct elections in local governments and they know that once they have their own people there, they would still have a measure of control but that control cannot be challenged again because they have allowed local government to go through election. So, whatever the character of the election is, whether it is free or not doesn't matter to them. Once SIEC makes pronouncements, it becomes binding but we know that all the people that have emerged as chairmen and councillors will be under effective control of the state gov-



SINCE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTONOMY BECAME AN ACT, WE HAVE DISCOVERED THAT NIGERIANS MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO HOLD ON TO THAT AUTONOMY BECAUSE IT WILL STILL BE THAT GOVERNORS AND GODFATHERS WILL STILL, AT THE END OF THE DAY, BE IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

ernors and majority of them, if not all, are of the ruling party.

"So, the state governors are still the godfathers at local government levels now. Nothing will change. We can only commend the President for midwifing the local government

autonomy but the reality is that nothing will likely change. Look at the state legislature, are they truly independent of the executive arm of government, they are not. So, on the surface, it will seem as if we have autonomy at the council areas but the real autonomy is not in practice but they are under the control of the executives.

"The solution is no longer at the purview of law, it will be at the purview of those who control the government. Their attitude towards the local government will determine real autonomy. Even if the money is transferred directly to local government accounts, the chairmen cannot still have control of it. So, it is just the attitude of those who have been elected as chairmen. They should see their positions as being held in trust for the people, and not for governors," he said.

A lawyer and Professor at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Tunji Ogunyemi, who spoke to The Point, argued that dividends of democracy are not good roads and other infrastructure, explaining that notwithstanding that governors are still indirectly in control of local government administrations in Nigeria, rural dwellers could still

experience development.

Ogunyemi said, "The attempts by politicians to install their own clones or to even clone themselves in the respective local government of their states, particularly the governors of the state, is not a strange thing. After all, governors have been trying to clone themselves by ensuring that they have successors that would be favourable to them, although, they have not been that successful. So, this issue of local government elections is just part of politics. There is nothing wrong in ensuring that people who will take over the control of government in some parts of the country are people who are in some camps.

"The only thing that is wrong is when people go and do illegalities, commit crimes. For example, wanting to install people with the use of force, by the use of means other than the due process of the law. People have associates and loyalists in different parts of the offices created by the constitution is part of something legit. The only thing is if you use the instrument that is not prescribed by the constitution. And what are the instruments prescribed in the constitution, they are four - one, that you must be a member of a political party; two, that you must be sponsored by that political party; three, that you must have your name on the voter register and that register will now be the guide for the election; and four, that you must vote for the person, not that you will install a person by simply just saying, I appoint you Supervisory Councillor in A,B,C, D. That one is subverting the law and it is illegal."

He added, "The truth is that we actually need to route them back; amend the Constitution to empower INEC to conduct elections by having its own state version. After all, there are Resident Electoral Commissioners in all the states and Resident Electoral Commissioners can be made to conduct elections in Local Government. In other words, we must have a consequential amendment to Section 9 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and Section 162 sub section 6 to 9 of the same Constitution."

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Tinubu



Fagbemi

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Sharing similar opinions with Ogunyemi, and election monitoring specialist, Bukola Idowu, pointed out that without restoration of sanity in the conduct of council polls, no meaningful achievement would be recorded as regards autonomy in LGAs.

He called for scrapping of SIEC maintaining that elections in local governments have been sham.

"Yes, we can still see the gains of the local government autonomy because we cannot judge with Rivers State. Other states that have had their elections were not like that. Rivers State is a peculiar state because there are a lot of political interests. You know even before the election, there have been issues in Rivers State between former governor Wike and the present governor and I think that is the power play going on but if you compare the rest of the 35 states, it is a totally different case.

"So, what we need to do is to see how we strengthen the local government and if you ask me, one of the things we think is better is to scrap all these State Electoral Commissions. Like what the National Assembly is proposing, I am not saying that they should set up another body, but just imagine the INEC conducting this election, you are not going to have all this drama. Some people believe the SIEC is loyal to the governors, and some other people want to use the federal might to also come and do these things that they are doing. But, the most important thing is that in principle, local government autonomy will bring development and that is just the case but that cannot happen until we get the election into local governments right.

"With the present SIECs that are controlled by the state assemblies and the governors, we may not eventually get there on time. INEC should add conduct of local government elections to their responsibility. Since we have the electoral body in place, why not conduct elections? For instance, Rivers State, Edo State, Kogi State, Bayelsa State, Kebbi State, all of them have INEC offices, so what are they doing? What exists now is that you have INEC offices in the states and you also have the State Independent Electoral Commissions in the states, two electoral bodies and yet they are saying that they want to set up a national election body that is going to look into elections in local government areas and some people are saying no, but that is what is already happening because you have the INEC and State electoral bodies in the states.

"As of now, tell me what the INEC office is doing in Rivers State? They finished conducting elections last year. So what exactly are they doing that they can't conduct that election? So, we cannot just be duplicating efforts and wasting resources because we already have INEC which also has offices across the local government areas. So, why can't they conduct LGA elections? We understand Edo and Ondo have off-cycle elections but places



Yakubu



Oluwadare

that don't have off-cycle elections, what is their INEC doing that they cannot conduct local government elections?" Idowu, the Executive Director of Kimpact Development Initiative queried.

However, Animashaun, a lecturer at Fountain University, differed, saying that allowing INEC to conduct elections at local government level would negate the federal structure.

According to him, "INEC conducting elections would bring some change in terms of quality and integrity of the local government elections because what we have seen so far that the SIEC are doing is just a sham. But, it will be a complete negation of federalism if INEC is allowed to conduct local government elections. We cannot sacrifice the autonomy of the local government on the altar of good elections by saying INEC should conduct elections, that would just increase the dominance of the Federal Government over local government affairs."

"What we can do is that civil society organisations can take their oversight to that level but ensuring that elections are conducted fairly but pushing the conduct to INEC will negate federal structure," he maintained.

Meanwhile, some analysts have said that with the controversies surrounding local government elections, the number of election petitions would increase.

They disclosed that the judiciary would be more overwhelmed by the growing election matters that would emerge after conducting local government elections in the country.

"Electoral litigations will surely increase with the controversies surrounding local government elections. If you look at the data after the 2023 elections, there were 1,209 election cases. Before then, it was just like 1,800 in 2019, in 2015, it was around 600, and last year, it was 1,209. So, it is going to be increasing. We just conducted elections in Edo and the people are going to courts already. If we don't sanitize our electoral process, the courts will be having lots of work to be doing and that is not going to augur well for

our democracy," Idowu stated.

Sharing his thoughts with The Point on Local Government autonomy, a socio-political commentator, Charles Ndubuisi, praised President Tinubu for supporting Local Government autonomy.

However, he said that despite the Supreme Court judgment that gives autonomy the go-ahead in the country, it would still be difficult to achieve.

"Local Government autonomy is one of the reasons why Nigeria must give Tinubu a chance in office. The President supports autonomy. He proved that he is indeed a democrat by ensuring that our LGs can breathe. So, whenever the story of LG autonomy is written in this country, the President's name will feature prominently.

"But autonomy will be hard for Local Governments to fully achieve even though the Supreme Court has given the go-ahead to that. This is because the claws of many governors have already sunk deep into the Local Government system and it will be difficult to bring those claws out.

"Look at what is happening in Rivers State. You would think that it is because Fubara and Wike truly love the Local Governments in the state, hence their actions in support or against elections there.

"It is selfish love they have. They are fighting for their political future in the state. 2027 is around the corner and only the Local Governments can water the ground well for any of them that are planning to pocket a state," he said.

Moreover, Ndubuisi added, "Let me shock you a bit. Many governors who are serving their first term now know that they will not win reelection if the Local Governments are taken out of their hands.

"It is control over Local Governments they want and they are ready to shed innocent blood for it.

"You mentioned godfathers who struggle to win polls and put their supporters as Local Government chairmen. What did Nigerians expect?

"You can see that the fact that they put their supporters as councillors and chairmen shows, without doubt, that they have a hidden agenda.

"This is why I enjoy Nigerians to



A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL DOES NOT AND SHOULD NOT EXIST AT THE PLEASURE, WHIMS AND CAPRICE OF GOVERNORS OR THEIR 'POLITICAL GODFATHERS'.

take the Local Governments seriously now. Many Nigerians wave Local Government business aside because they consider it unimportant. It has to change now.

"Nigerians must learn to ask questions about the Local Governments. They should know who their chairmen and Councilors are. The era of 'siddon look' and 'e no concern me' are over. Nigerians should wake-up concerning who governs them at the Local Government level.

"And you also mentioned the dividends of democracy. What most Nigerians don't know is that there are some roads that come under the purview of Local Governments. But because Nigerians know next to nothing about Local Government administration, they usually think that such roads belong to the state governments.

"Nigerians must, therefore, not allow any godfather to dictate to them those who will govern them. This is so that they can hold those who govern them accountable. Anything outside this will unfortunately be the beginning of the end for them when it comes to the dividend of democracy."

WITHHOLD ALLOCATIONS TO STATES FAILING TO CONDUCT CREDIBLE LG POLLS – SERAP TELLS TINUBU

Meanwhile, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project has asked President Bola Tinubu to withhold allocations to states that

have failed to conduct credible local government elections.

On October 5, elections were held at the grassroots levels in some states like Rivers, Benue, Akwa Ibom, Jigawa. Most states, however, are yet to conduct local government polls and still collect money from the federal allocations for their respective local council.

Displeased by the development, the group described the action of some state governors as wrong.

In a statement on Sunday, SERAP Deputy Director, Kolawole Oluwadare, specifically wants Tinubu to "direct Mr. Olawale Edun, Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, to immediately withhold federal allocations to states that have failed and/refused to conduct credible local government elections, and to ensure that any allocations from the Federation Account is paid only to democratically elected local government councils and no other body or institution."

Oluwadare urged the President to "details of the number of local government councils that have directly received federal allocations and whether the councils are democratically elected, as provided for by the Nigerian Constitution 1999 [as amended] and ordered by the Supreme Court in its judgment of 11 July 2024."

"Your government has the obligation to enforce the Nigerian Constitution and to prevent public wrong, including by state governors," he said.

"A democratically elected local government council does not and should not exist at the pleasure, whims and caprice of governors or their 'political godfathers'.

"Your government also has the constitutional obligation to ensure accountability for the spending of federal allocations and immediate compliance with the judgment by the Supreme Court and the rule of law.

"Local government councils are entitled to a direct payment from the Federation Account to promote good governance, people's welfare and development of local government areas across the country.

"Where the rule of law reigns, political expediency ought to be sacrificed on the altar of the rule of law so as to guarantee the continued existence of institutions created to promote social values of liberty, orderly conduct and development.

"We would be grateful if the recommended measures are taken within 7 days of the receipt and/or publication of this letter. If we have not heard from you by then, SERAP shall consider appropriate legal actions to compel your government to comply with our request in the public interest.

"It will be entirely consistent with the rule of law to immediately withhold federal allocations to states that have failed and/refused to conduct local government elections and to ensure that any allocations from the Federation Account are paid only to democratically elected councils and no other body or institution." ●

Judges in states see themselves as appendages of governors, those at federal level as attachments of FG – Mike Ahamba

Chief Mike Ahamba is a Senior Advocate of Nigeria with over 50 years legal practice experience. In this interview, he speaks on the dangers of the attempts by politicians to influence the decisions of the court and other sundry issues, including disregard for precedent by some judges, governors' emasculation of the local government powers. Excerpts:

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria forbids any person who has held office as a judicial officer, on quitting that office, from appearing or acting as a legal practitioner before any court of law or tribunal in Nigeria. How do you react to this provision?

Section 292 (2) provides that a person who has held office as a judicial officer shall not cease to be a judicial officer, for any reason whatsoever thereafter appear or act as a legal practitioner before any court of law or tribunal in Nigeria.

In my own view, this provision is a Sword of Damocles hanging over the judicial officers who don't like pressure and decide to resign. They are finished forever. So, they have to do everything possible to keep themselves in office until retirement. I have been criticising this since 1981. And I have not ceased to oppose it.

Shortly after General Muritala Mohammed came in the military putsch of 1976, the Chief Justice of the Federation, Dr Taslim Olawale Elias, was removed from office on radio on grounds of ill-health. The same man was later found strong enough to become President of the World Court at The Hague. I also recall that the Chief Judge, Oyemade, Adewale Thompson and Justice Olu Ayoola, were also removed because the government of the day considered their decisions and judgments to be too anti-government.

I must add here that these three great dispensers of justice knew their onions and their removal was not on account of corrupt practices, inefficiency, or misconduct. That singular action by the Muritala administration marked the beginning of the decline in the number of competent lawyers going to the bench which has adversely affected the quality of judgments from the bench.

At what point did this provision become part of our law?

I became aware of this provision after the 1979 Constitution came into effect. I became a lawyer in 1974. If it was in the previous constitutions,

I cannot say now. But I'm talking about what happened during my own era.

In your own view, what do you think was the intention of the framers of the Constitution who brought the provision in?

Remember, the military was in charge of the country pre-1979. They didn't want anybody who could take steps not favourable to them. So, they say if you resign before hitting the retirement age because you don't want to do it, you can't become a lawyer. They have to make it there. That is why judges in the state see themselves as appendages of the governors while those at the federal level as the appendages of the Federal Government. This is very unfortunate.

If that provision was not there, a judge can decide to resign if there were pressures on him to do what he doesn't like. If you sack him, he picks up his wig and gown and goes back to court as a lawyer.

So, when you say he cannot act as a legal practitioner before any court or tribunal in Nigeria that means if he ceases to be a judicial officer, then he becomes uneducated. He cannot get work anywhere where he can practice law anymore. I feel this is a very dangerous provision. This is because that constitutional blockade in itself engenders timidity, corruption, inefficiency, and decline in the quality of judgments among other undesirable attitudes on the part of judicial officers since they know they cannot revert to status quo. That provision should be deleted. They should limit it to judges relieved of their position on the account of corrupt practices so that the law does not allow him to come to the bar to corrupt the people.

Can we say that provision accounts for why many judges die soon after retirement?

Well, they have good pensions at least in recent times. And now, they have good salaries. Nobody will want to lose any of those things by being recalcitrant. And if for any

reason, you become recalcitrant, you can't go back to practice what you have gone to school to learn. A lawyer can go back to court after being president. A lawyer can go back to court after being governor. You can go back. Nobody stops you from doing that. But if you are a judge, you can't go back. You can't even go to an ordinary tribunal. And if you have no pension, that is a funeral. In my own belief, I may be wrong, that is part of the reasons some of them want to play the tune desired by the executive under whom they are serving.

They don't want to risk losing their job. None of them told me this but I believe that this provision constitutes a threat to good governance in our constitution. It is not convenient to judicial officers at all.

If that provision is amended in the constitution, what other benefits do you think it will confer on judicial officers?

I believe it will enhance their independence of opinion. All of them will now believe that there is no one

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breathing on their neck. I remember some time ago, a governor of a state was said to have boldly boasted that any judge who gives judgment against his government is doing that at his own risk. You see that type of statement? A governor could say that because he knows about this section. But if I were his Attorney-General, once he makes such a statement, I will resign.

Some however see political office as an enhancement. My biggest treasure is my wig and gown. That is why I do not want to gamble at any cost. I do not want to do anything that will affect it. Any other thing can go as far as I am concerned because I can continue to practice law even until I am 100 years old if I have the strength to do it.

But a judge cannot be harassed anyhow now. I remember that in the course of my conversation with a senior judge on the concerns by right thinking members of the public regarding certain somewhat silly or political judgments by some judges or justices, he said a judge has the right to be wrong?

Yes, a judge truly has the right to be wrong but not deliberately. He has the right. That is why we have the Appeal Court. A judge is a human being. He can be wrong. But if it is deliberate against judicial oath, he can be sacked for it.

So, who should bell the cat now regarding the amendment of the constitutional provision you are advocating?

That should be by the National Assembly. They can alter that provision by just adding a phrase so that it will now read: A person who has held office as a judicial officer shall not cease to be a judicial officer, by reason of corrupt practices or breach of judicial oath or any reason whatsoever. Something like that. They should just

bring in that phrase.

My argument has always been that if you don't like the environment you find yourself in, you can resign and go back to the court. But if you are forced to go out because of what is happening, and you do not want to be part of it, then you should be in a position to stand up for yourself elsewhere.

There was a Federal High Court judge who was sacked for corrupt practices. He could not come back to the court. I knew he would end up that way. There was a case I did before him at the Federal High Court. Somebody came to court five times but the court did not sit. On the sixth occasion, the judge came and remanded the accused person in custody. I called the judge. I got his number. I said this man has come before you five times; then, the sixth time when he came and you were around, you decided to remand him in prison custody when the purpose of remanding people in prison custody is to ensure that an accused attends his trial. He had come five times in your absence. Now if that man is not restored, we shall discuss this at the National Judicial Council. Anybody who engages in such conduct may not last on the bench. At the end of the day, he had to go because of another case.

My argument is that if the person has left the judiciary for reasons of corrupt practices or breach of judicial conduct, he cannot return to the bar. If the person quits on principles, why should he not return to the bar? If a person retires normally at 70 years, he now wants to come to the bar, he has no respect for himself. So, it is a question of giving such a person the free will to decide whether in honour he will want to go back to the bar but not to bar him from going back to the bar except where he lost his position due to corrupt practices or breach of

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Views

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Olasupo Abidakun

Nigeria is currently facing a series of profound challenges, including insecurity, the removal of fuel subsidies, the devaluation of the Naira, and an increase in electricity tariffs. Addressing these issues requires deliberate and comprehensive efforts from the Federal Government.

These problems cannot be ignored or wished away, yet the government's response so far seems vague and lacking in concrete actions. As a result, Nigerians are enduring immense hardship due to recent government reforms. Years of corruption and mismanagement by politicians have brought us to this crisis.

For three weeks, I found it difficult to read Nigerian newspapers, overwhelmed by stories of widespread looting and corruption. It took a great deal of courage to start reading them again. The headlines are often filled with reports of officials embezzling staggering amounts of money.

Too often, politicians rely solely on civil servants to suggest solu-

Tinubu, time to act

tions. I believe the entire nation should be engaged in discussing each of these critical issues. Let the national conversation be broadcast on television and radio, where experts, stakeholders, and citizens can openly address the problems we face. This kind of inclusive approach can lead to meaningful solutions.

I also believe that the partial restoration of the fuel subsidy is necessary. A controlled, publicly announced price reduction for petrol would provide immediate relief. Lower fuel costs would bring down transportation fares and the prices of essential goods. Families would no longer need to send their children trekking to school, and workers could return to full-time schedules, no longer exhausted from long, arduous walks to their offices.

Additionally, the hike in electricity tariffs must be reversed. The government should not be swayed by bureaucratic statistics; the President must overrule this increase for the sake of the common good.

Already, institutions such as hospitals and universities are struggling to cope with the added costs. The process of singling out entities for special exemptions is cumbersome and inefficient.

President Tinubu should take a more hands-on approach to understanding the plight of everyday Nigerians. Watching different television channels for just 30 minutes a day, covering various regions, would give him direct insight into the challenges facing the population. Why should parastatals be allowed to reap enormous profits at the expense of ordinary citizens?

Moreover, Nigerians must stay vigilant and ensure that the government does not manipulate the legal system to establish a one-party state. It is suspicious that while many sectors are suffering, civil servants in the legal system have been granted a threefold salary increase. This could raise concerns about undue influence.

It would be a wise move for the President to pardon those arrested during the recent protests. These

demonstrations were a genuine response to the widespread dissatisfaction with his reforms.

Instead of relying on surface-level changes, the President must swiftly reassess and adjust his policies. If his advisers are telling him that all is well, they are doing him a disservice. The youth are not interested in overthrowing the government—they simply want their voices heard.

The recent crackdown on protests suggests that the government cannot tolerate criticism. Punitive measures, such as freezing the accounts of those detained, should be reversed. Nigerians are suffering, and their grievances are real. The President has the capacity to organise effectively and must focus on addressing the immediate challenges while planning for the future. He has both a physical and spiritual responsibility to lead, knowing that every thought, word, and action is accountable to a higher power.

The President must also broaden his inner circle beyond famil-



THE PRESIDENT MUST ALSO BROADEN HIS INNER CIRCLE BEYOND FAMILIAR FACES FROM LAGOS. TO ADDRESS STAFFING NEEDS, HE SHOULD CONSULT WITH GOVERNORS ACROSS THE NATION, REGARDLESS OF THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS. WHEN FILLING POSITIONS, HE MUST ENSURE THAT THOSE NOMINATED ARE CAPABLE AND NOT SIMPLY RELATIVES OF THE GOVERNORS

iar faces from Lagos. To address staffing needs, he should consult with governors across the nation, regardless of their political affiliations. When filling positions, he must ensure that those nominated are capable and not simply relatives of the governors.

The situation is dire—prices have skyrocketed, with a single tuber of yam now costing N5,000, and a bundle of vegetables that used to cost N100 now priced at N200. Sellers attribute these increases to rising petrol prices, and this trend could lead to widespread malnutrition.

To address corruption and inequality, Nigeria should eliminate housing allowances for civil servants starting in January 2026. Everyone, aside from the President and Vice President, should live on their salary alone. This policy should also apply at the state level. Ultimately, Nigeria needs restructuring. Each state must be empowered to manage its own affairs, including the establishment of state police forces, to reduce the overwhelming power of the federal government.

We must act now, for the future of our country depends on it. ●

●Abidakun writes from Iju, Lagos

Adamu Rabiu

Kaduna: A state choked by misfortune

Kaduna State, a pivotal state in the North West geopolitical zone, is a land rich in human and natural resource potential. Yet, it is currently bogged by a complex maze of paradoxical governance challenges. As we delve into the realities, we encounter threads of rising insecurity, political comedy and drama, and the implications of the continuity of certain political appointees.

Also, the fiscal management and increasing debt dilemma in the state cannot be ignored. Likewise, the hope and aspirations of the citizens in educational strides, quality healthcare, and agricultural advancement have been dashed.

A cursory gleaning at the state's finances, one will discover gross misplacement of priorities. The 2024 state budget of "Rural Transformation for Inclusive Development," amounting to N458.3 billion, is comprised of capital expenditure of N318.8 billion and recurrent expenditure of N139.4 billion, hoping to go cap-in-hand borrowing the sum of N150.1 billion to adequately fund the budget.

The education sector is expected to receive N115.4 billion, a far cry from the needed financing. For a state known as the centre of learning with six universities and other tertiary institutions, the sector remains underfunded. It is plagued by infrastructural deficit, and inadequate teachers while grappling with overcrowded classrooms, and empty classrooms in some areas in the state. Although little

progress has been made in the sector, it has failed to serve as a fulcrum for nurturing minds and engaging the growing youth population.

The state budget pegged N71.6 billion for the health sector. But beyond numbers, it is burdened by systemic inefficiencies, under-equipped, understaffed, and underfunded, with residents facing significant barriers to quality care, hospitals, and clinics.

The hospitals are often overcrowded, with chronic shortages of essential drugs and medical supplies. Despite efforts to improve healthcare delivery through initiatives like the Kaduna State Contributory Health Insurance Scheme, poor health outcomes still exist.

While the agricultural sector was recorded to get N22.5 billion for programmes targeted at providing improved seeds and fertilizers, it falls short of "cultivating prosperity through employing a significant portion of the population and boosting agricultural productivity." The sector is bedeviled by a lack of access to modern farming techniques, insufficient infrastructure, and misaligned and inconsistent policy implementation, all of which limit its potential for growth and poverty reduction.

According to the Kaduna State Bureau of Statistics, the population of residents in the state is 10.4 million as of 2024. This is a double-edged sword as it presents both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the

THE CHALLENGES FACING KADUNA STATE ARE A MICROCOSM OF THE BROADER ISSUES CONFRONTING NIGERIA. IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE STATE IS ATTEMPTING TO NAVIGATE THESE TURBULENT WATERS OR IF STRATEGIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ARE MERELY SLOGANS

population can drive economic growth by expanding the labour force and consumer base, and it can put immense pressure on the state's FAAC receipts on the other hand.

Another aspect of the state's realities that is concerning is the deteriorating security situation.

Insecurity, banditry, and kidnappings have not only disrupted daily life but have also stymied development efforts, particularly in rural areas where agricultural productivity is vital for the local and state economy.

Alarmingly, the state's rising debt profile has reached critical levels. Its domestic debt is at N321.54 billion, external debt at \$587.07 million and contractual liabilities amounting to N115 billion as of December 2023, with an additional N2.9 billion for electricity consumed by the state government. The expected internally generated revenue for the state in 2024 is put at N62 billion which is N5 billion monthly.

Between January and July 2024, Kaduna's FAAC receipts have fluctuated significantly, with the state receiving an average of N7 billion monthly. This inconsistent revenue stream, we are told, has directly affected the state's ability to pay salaries, provide for citizens' welfare, fund essential services, and meet its debt obligations.

The state's reliance on federal allocations and the volatility of IGR and FAAC revenues underscore the need for fiscal discipline and diversification of income streams.

Unfortunately, the situation is compounded by the political imbroglio in the state. Recently, the State House of Assembly's ad hoc committee didn't mince words when they indicted the former governor, Nasir El Rufai, and his cabinet on allegations of

corruption, contracts, loans, and financial mismanagement to the tune of N423 billion. Meanwhile, El Rufai has instituted a court case against the Kaduna State House of Assembly, but the court declined the suit for lack of jurisdiction.

Another paradox is that about 90 per cent of those who served under the last administration and were indicted still wield influence and now occupy key positions in the present cabinet. This raises several pragmatic questions and indicts the current state government of clientelism and cronyism.

There is a huge anomaly in Kaduna's agriculture investment. While Kaduna State with a land size of 46,053 Km² was only able to generate a paltry N1,099,299.4 million in 2018 in terms of GDP for the agricultural sector per KDBS, the Netherlands with a land size of 37,378 Km² is estimated to have earned €50.4 billion (equivalent of N87.4 trillion according to Webull) from the export of agricultural goods in 2023.

According to Statistics Netherlands, the country has earned €45.7 billion from agricultural goods produced in the Netherlands, and €4.7 billion came from the re-export of agricultural goods produced elsewhere. Crop output includes cereals, industrial crops, forage plants, potatoes, and fruits, while animal output involves cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, poultry, milk, and eggs. There are approximately 55,680 agricultural holdings. Most holdings

have holders aged over 64 years. The average agricultural area per holding is 32.8 hectares. Kaduna and Nigeria need to borrow a leaf from the book of the country.

Despite international interventions in agricultural development in Kaduna State, it has failed to reach its full potential. It has benefited from interventions, the most recent being the African Development Bank—the Special Agro-industrial Processing Zones, a N540 million facility granted to Nigeria, with Kaduna being amongst the first states to benefit from the facility.

The project is poised to revolutionise agriculture by creating economic zones in rural areas in beneficiary states by developing infrastructure, establishing 15 Agricultural Industrial Processing Hubs, 15 Agric Transformation Centres, and supplying agricultural inputs and extension workers.

Beneficiaries will include smallholder farmers, private sector agribusinesses, agro-dealers, agro-processors, and agripreneurs. The SAPZs will allow food and agribusiness companies to situate their factories close to farmers, support processing, reduce food losses, and foster competitive value chains. ●

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*Rabiu (Bakondare) writes from Kaduna

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VIO personnel are dangerous on our highways

On Wednesday October 2, 2024, a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja made an order restraining the Directorate of Road Traffic Services popularly known as VIO from impounding, confiscating or imposing fine on any motorists over alleged road infractions.

Justice Nkeonye Evelyn Maha made the order while delivering judgement in a fundamental rights suit filed by rights activist and public interest lawyer, Marshal Abubakar Marshal.

Justice Maha in the judgement agreed with the applicant that there is no law empowering the respondents to stop, impound, confiscate, seize or impose fine on motorists.

Abubakar had dragged the Directorate of Road Traffic Services and four others to court over the powers of the defendants to impound vehicles of motorists and fine them for alleged breach amongst others.

Delivering judgement in the suit marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/1695/2023, the judge held that the 1st (Directorate of Road Traffic Services) to 4th respondents under the control of the 5th respondent (Minister of the Federal Capital Territory) are not empowered by any law or statute to stop, impound, confiscate the vehicles of motorists and or impose fine on motorists.

The judge also made another order restraining the 1st to 4th respondents either through their agents, servants and or assigns from impounding, confiscating the vehicle of motorists and or imposing fine on any motorist as doing so is wrongful, oppressive and unlawful by themselves.

In addition, Justice Maha made an order of perpetual injunction restraining the respondents whether by themselves, agents, privies, allies or anybody acting on behalf of the 1st Respondent from further violating the rights of Nigerians to freedom of movement, presumption of innocence and right to own property without lawful justification.

In March 2024, the Asaba Division of the Court of Appeal had ruled that payment of levy and issuance of Road Worthiness Certificate to private vehicles was illegal, warning that the state government "must not abuse" its powers.

The ruling was an affirmation of the judgement of the High Court in the Ughelli area of the state.

While delivering his judgement in appeal NO: CA/B/333/2017, Justice Joseph Ekanem had stated that he found no merit in the appeal and therefore affirmed the decision of the trial court.

The court stated that the Vehicle Inspection Officers lack the powers to stop a private vehicle on the highway to demand a certificate of roadworthiness.

The Appeal Court further awarded the cost of N200, 000 against the Appellants.

It has been argued severally that it is an infringement on the constitutional rights to liberty of movement for Vehicle Inspection Officers

to stop drivers of both commercial and private vehicles because of vehicle particulars.

It is also hazardous for members of the Federal Road Safety Commission to be competing with the Nigeria Police Force on the road in the alleged extortion of members of the public.

The Federal High Court in Abuja, the High Court of Delta State and the Court of Appeal are so emphatic that VIOs have no right to stop any vehicle (including commercial vehicles) on the roads, as doing so amounts to infraction of the driver's constitutional right to freedom of movement.

There is no law that authorises VIOs to be on the roads to do their business because they are not security men.

Their works are to be done at their offices or workshops when vehicles are brought to them for inspection.

Unfortunately, the VIOs now spend most of their work time on the roads setting up roadblocks and constituting nuisance.

The regularity of VIOs on public roads is illegal and any person who is stopped by them just for the purpose of asking for any documentation has the right to seek redress in court.

There is a reason why there is a law to enable us conduct our affairs within known and accepted boundaries, and to also curtail the excesses of government and its officials so that they don't trample on the rights of Nigerians.

The issue of private vehicles not legally bound to possess roadworthiness certificate has been settled in the concurring decisions of the Federal High Court, the High Court of Delta State and the Court of Appeal.

The Court of Appeal clearly stated that private vehicles are not expressly listed amongst the vehicles that must possess road worthiness certificates.

The court interpreted the provisions of the Road Traffic Law of Delta State, which is in pari materia with that of most of the states in Nigeria.

Motorists that are being harassed by the VIOs may be ignorant of the decisions of the courts and should seek legal advice from their lawyers. It is sad that some of the VIOs are on the roads only to extort money from motorists.

They have no legal authority or business being on the road except where it is an accident scene.

Impunity amongst government officials is rampant. Most of the VIO personnel are not even competent and know nothing about traffic rules. It is an unsafe act for both the FRSC and VIO personnel to be on a public road and convert the roads to business centres.

If truly they have been doing their jobs effectively, we would not be seeing rickety vehicles on our roads but they extort them and let them go. To check the excesses of the VIOs will require a collective effort of all. VIO personnel are a menace on our roads. ●

IMPUNITY AMONGST GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IS RAMPANT. MOST OF THE VIO PERSONNEL ARE NOT EVEN COMPETENT AND KNOW NOTHING ABOUT TRAFFIC RULES. IT IS AN UNSAFE ACT FOR BOTH THE FRSC AND VIO PERSONNEL TO BE ON A PUBLIC ROAD AND CONVERT THE ROADS TO BUSINESS CENTRES.

City Pulse

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● CRIME ● COURTS MARRIAGE PALAVER

Apprehension over FG's alleged plan to relocate repentant Boko Haram insurgents, IDPs to Imo for training

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

There is a fresh security threat in Imo State over an alleged plan by the Federal Government to relocate repentant Boko Haram insurgents, refugees, migrants and Internally Displaced Persons from the North to the South Eastern state for rehabilitation and training.

Stakeholders in the state have warned Governor Hope Uzodinma against using facilities in Imo to accommodate former terror combatants and refugees from the North when there has never been a concrete plan by the state government to rehabilitate IDPs in the state.

They said the plan to use the state as a training ground for non-indigenes is already brewing attacks and arson in the state, advising that the alleged plan be jettisoned.

Recall that some suspected arsonists had torched the residence of a former lawmaker, Senator Frank Ibezim, at Ezeoke-Nsu in Ehime Mbano Local Government Area of Imo.

In the same area, the suspects also burnt down some facilities at the National Open University of Nigeria Study Center.

The dastardly attacks were coming on the heels of a viral video report that the Federal Government planned to renovate the NOUN facility as a training ground for repentant Boko Haram insurgents.

The video followed a recent inspection visit by the Federal Commissioner, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, Tijani Mohammed, to the national training facility for the vulnerable, located inside the NOUN study centre.

Mohammed, who was accompanied on the visit by Ibezim, reportedly said in a news interview that the inspection was in view of a training programme for vulnerable persons, which would commence at the centre before the end of the year.

A member of the community suspected that the attacks might



The surrendered Boko Haram members



have been prompted by the video report that repentant insurgents would be relocated and trained at the NOUN facility.

"A lot of our people raised their voices against this Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) training project in that place, especially where there are no existence of IDPs in the state. The planners of that project were insensitive to the agitation in the area," the source said.

A community leader, who also pleaded anonymity, lamented over the destruction of the NOUN

buildings by the suspected arsonists. He regretted that the NOUN facility also housed Ezeoke Girls' Secondary School, with a boarding facility.

"With the razing down of the buildings, the community has lost the only boarding school and a NOUN facility in our area," he further lamented.

Confirming the attacks, the Commissioner of Police, Aboki Danjuma, described them as barbaric and condemnable.

While condemning attacks on

government and individuals' facilities in the state, a human rights activist, Chinonso Uba, berated the state government for approving facilities in the state to be used for training of outsiders when there are vulnerable groups in the state that have been neglected by the state government.

He said, "It was not mentioned that the IDPs to be trained in that Center would come from Orsu, Orlu, Izombe, Agwa, Okigwe or even Akabo where we have Displaced Persons whose houses were

burnt down between 2020 and 2024.

"This was the height of conflict as no one who saw the said news report would believe it wasn't for the Northern IDPs. Giving the volatile nature of Imo State and the daily report of Fulani herdsmen abducting Imolites around FUTO, Ihiagwa, Nekede, Obinze, Avu, Oforola, Eziobodo and other vulnerable places in Owerri West LGA of Imo State, Imo people are apprehensive of such move to Camp IDPs in Ehime Mbano of the state."

Also rejecting the planned establishment of IDP camp in the state, the Indigenous People of Biafra, in a statement issued by its Media and Publicity Secretary, Emma Powerful, accused the Nigerian government of plans to dispossess people of the communities of their ancestral lands and heritage, saying "it will not work."

Powerful said, "They have tried all forms of land grabbing techniques with different names such as RUGA, and these all failed. Now they want to import so-called displaced persons from Northern Nigeria, a distance of thousands of kilometres away from their locality and homeland into Imo State.

"These people never set up skills acquisition programmes for the millions of jobless youths in our land but consider bringing in Boko Haram foot soldiers into the South East in the name of skills acquisition for internally displaced persons."

Meanwhile, Senator Ibezim who was one of the inspection team for the training, debunked insinuation that repentant Boko Haram combatants would be imported to Imo for training, clarifying that the centre would be used to train vulnerable groups in Imo.

"For emphasis, I must restate that there are no plans to settle IDPs, Refugees or Migrant persons at the National Open University Centre, Nsu, Ehime Mbano LGA. Any such claim is categorically false. I will never be part of such a plan. The plan is for skills training for our vulnerable young people from the South East," the former lawmaker whose residence was torched allegedly over the development, said. ●

'Nigerians no longer eat meat', cattle traders lament low sales as cows sell beyond N1m

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

Some dealers in cattle business in Nigeria have lamented low patronage following rise in prices of cows.

They wondered if Nigerians still value beef meat as they complained of a significant shortfall in demand for the livestock.

The cattle traders explained that the removal of fuel subsidy has been having negative impacts on the prices of cows, disclosing that the animals now sell for N1 million and beyond.

Over the years, cattle prices in the market have seen a sharp rise. Traders attributed the

surge to various factors including inflation, the rising cost of transportation, and the ongoing insecurity that disrupts the flow of cattle from the northern parts of the country to the markets.

One of the cattle traders at Keffi Cattle Market, Salihu Muhammed, identified some factors responsible for high cost of price for cows, saying that they included fuel price hike, high cost of transportation fare, insecurity and general inflation in the country.

Checks by The Point revealed that for decades, the Keffi Cattle market has been a hub of trade, drawing buyers and sellers

from across Nigeria.

Known for its diverse offerings, the market does not only deal in cattle. From goats to sheep, it has long been a vital hub for livestock trade, catering for the needs of buyers from various parts of Nigeria.

The full tale of the economy of Nasarawa State where Keffi Cattle market is situated will be incomplete without the mention of the market that accounts for a significant share of the state's agribusiness income. Located in the outskirts of Keffi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State since 3rd September 2013, 'Kara' otherwise known as the Keffi Cattle market has become a melting point of agribusiness.

The market, situated on the boundary of Keffi and Karu, the last two local government areas before the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, is not only for cattle breeders but for poultry farmers and sellers of staple food produce among others.

In an interview, Muhammed, who owns over a hundred cows at the market, said, "We have any kind of animals that you can find in the Keffi Cattle market. We have cows, rams, chicken, goats, and other animals.

He said big cows now sell from N1 million and above, saying the development has impacted sales negatively.

"The issue of fuel subsidy removal has made things become very expensive. For example, you will carry your cattle from Kachia, Kaduna State to this market, the cost of transport makes the cows sell higher. Before subsidy was removed, if you come to this market with N250,000, you will go back home with a very big cow but now, if you get N800,000, you won't get a big cow unless you have N1 million and above. This is as a result of fuel subsidy removal," Muhammed said.

He added, "Even many of our customers that used to come and buy beef from those who kill these cows no longer come to buy. At one point, we were even wondering if people had stopped eating cows. But we later discovered that the hardship in the country has discouraged people from eating beef as they used to and people no longer do ceremonies like before. Whenever they go for low-key celebrations, they don't come to buy cows."

Giba, another cow trader lamented, saying, "Everywhere we go to buy these cows, they are very expensive. We go to Yobe, it is costly, we go to Bauchi, it is expensive. Even the transport fare is not helping matters at all. Before, we used to go with small money and we will buy cows but now, we have to go to the places we buy from with millions of naira.

"Sometimes, the prices fall and some other time, they rise. We used to buy small cows for N350, 000 to N450, 000 but now, it sells between N700, 000 and N1million. Sales have dropped because of this and it is affecting us. I have children in school and there is no money to keep up with my responsibilities as their father," he stated.

Meanwhile, the traders have called on the Nasarawa State government to come to their assistance by ensuring that the market is secure.

Despite paying revenue to the local government authorities, the cow sellers said brigands do invade their market to steal cows because there is no fortified security

team in place.

Muhammed pointed out that "Security remains a concern at Keffi Cattle market. Despite efforts by the union, thefts are increasing. Now, vigilance is key for all traders at the market.

"The chairman of the union invited all the dealers and marketers on security matters. That is why anytime anyone carries stolen cows to this market, once you enter the market, they will apprehend you. If you bring any cow, there is a security team that will investigate where you got the cow."

He said, "There are many things we want

the government to do in this market and one of them is erecting a fence. Insecurity is one of the challenges we are having and lack of access roads to big vehicles. We need government's interventions. As large as this market is, there is no single office built by the government."

Other challenges confronting the cattle traders are inadequate infrastructure, poor sanitation and lack of basic amenities like clean water. These challenges have made daily operations tough for the traders. Many believed the market is being neglected despite its importance to the economy. ●



Lady allegedly strangles mother to death after pastor's witchcraft claim

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

A lady, simply identified as Rita, has allegedly killed her biological mother over alleged witchcraft.

The Point gathered that the incident happened in Umuogbo Ulo community in Enugu Ezike, Igbo Eze North Local Government Area of Enugu State.

The suspect was accused of strangulating the aged woman to death at midnight recently when the deceased was asleep.

Sources within the community informed The Point that Rita had returned from a nearby city where she had gone to make some spiritual consultations with a pastor.

It was gathered that the cleric she consulted over the situation of her life had claimed that her mother was a witch and that she had been standing against her success. ●

"Rita's mother had been hale and hearty. In fact, neighbours that saw her the night before her death said she had gone to the community market earlier and returned safely. So, we suspect Rita killed her mother because of the way we found her in bed lifeless.

"Some people said they were aware that Rita visited a pastor who told her that her mother is a witch. These are the people who are close to her. When we were questioning her over her mother's death, there was nothing concrete she said, other than that she woke and discovered that her mother had died," a community leader who did not want to be named explained.

Meanwhile, in a video sighted by our correspondent, Rita denied the allegations.

Efforts to contact the Enugu State Police Command were not successful. ●



Man absconds after wife delivered triplets

● I've been begging for alms to feed our children since he left us - Wife

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

A man identified as Dayo Omotayo has reportedly forsaken his wife after she was delivered of triplets.

According to the middle-aged mother of triplets, Jumoke Omo Kubrat, her husband arrived at a hospital where she gave birth in Ilesa, Osun State, after she phoned him.

The woman, while carrying the three children, disclosed that immediately the nurses broke the news of the birth to Omotayo, an indigene of Ekiti State, he told her that he was going to get baby items.

Three years after Omotayo left the hospital hurriedly, he has not returned home and neither has his phone connected.

It was gathered that the runaway father of the triplets hails from Irapora community of Ekiti State and he is an artisan while the mother is an indigene of Ojo-Oba area of Osogbo, capital of Osun State.

The couple were said to have been living together peacefully in Ilesa before the arrival of the triplets.

Narrating her ordeal, Kubrat said she was bailed out of a maternity centre where she was delivered by kind spirited persons, adding that after her discharge, she had to beg for alms before she and her new babies could eat.

"I never knew my husband could abandon me. We were not aware that I was

carrying triplets because we didn't go for a scan owing to our financial predicament. So, on that day, he was not around and I had to phone him that I had been delivered. I didn't tell him the number of the babies.

"When he arrived at the maternity ward, the nurses congratulated him and told him that I gave birth to triplets. I discovered that his countenance changed but I thought it is something we can pull together.

"He then told me and the nurses that he was going home to bring the necessary items for our babies. That was the last I heard about Dayo. His phone was switched off and I couldn't reach him. None of his family members was able to assist and they also claimed his whereabouts were unknown.

"Since 2021, I have been the only person catering for these triplets and it has not been easy. I have to carry them around market places and streets to beg for alms before we could eat.

"If Dayo can hear me, I want him to come home. They are his babies and he cannot abandon them," she said.

Meanwhile, Kubrat has cried out for help in catering for the triplets.

She called on the government, individuals and groups to come to the aid of the family, just as she sought for employment to alleviate the family's plight.

According to her, the three-year-old triplets have not been enrolled in school due to her financial predicament. ●

Stakeholders seek urgent actions as kidnappers, bandits, killers torment Kwara

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

Many residents of Kwara State have been living in extreme fear following recurring rates of kidnapping, banditry and killings across different communities of the state.

This development has become a great concern for stakeholders in the state even as security agencies continue to give residents assurances.

However, checks by The Point revealed that the more efforts by security agencies to tackle insecurity, the higher the rate of abductions, killings and other forms of criminalities in the state.

The recent murder of the commandant of a vigilante group, Chief Lukman Balogun, in Igbaja community in the Ifelodun Local Government Area of Kwara State, brought to fore the alarming level of insecurity in the community.

Balogun, who was until his death the Jagun of Igbaja land, was killed by kidnappers believed to be itinerant herdsmen who invaded the community penultimate Sunday and abducted three people the next day while another two people were reportedly kidnapped from Kajola village in the early hours of Tuesday.

The coordinator of Kwara South Elders Security Forum, Elder Olaitan Oyinzubair, who confirmed the abduction of



AbdulRahman

five people from the communities, added that the late commandant was killed during the exchange of fire between the vigilantes and the kidnappers while attempting to rescue the kidnapped victims in the forest.

Residents of Igbaja, consisting of women, men and youths, stormed the palace of their traditional ruler, Eleso of Igbaja land, Oba Ahmed Babalola Arepo III, to protest Balogun's murder allegedly by the Bororos cattle herders.

The protesters, who blocked roads and wielded leaves, accused the monarch of indulging the Bororos cattle rearers, asking



Oba Babalola

him to announce their banishment from the community.

They said they could no longer access their farmlands because of fear of being abducted.

According to one of the protesters, who simply identified himself as Seun, "The Bororos killed our Jagun while he was trying to rescue those they kidnapped from our community. There is no longer protection for us because this Jagun has been the only one taking steps to wage war against these criminals. We are afraid of going to farms now.

"We came to the palace because we

want our king to ban them from coming into the community. We believe this is the only way we can easily stop infiltration of criminals in our community. We doubt if our Kabiesi will do anything serious because some of these Bororos sometimes visit the palace to give him cows."

Addressing the protesters, Oba Babalola charged them to be calm, describing Jagun's death as a big blow to Igbaja.

He assured the youths that the perpetrators of the dastardly act would be apprehended and brought to book.

The chairman of the state's Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, Afolabi Lukman, described the late local security commandant as a thorn in the flesh of criminals in the area.

He urged the state government to strengthen the security frontiers, saying, "This is a great setback on the state's security architecture."

Similarly, the National President, Isolo Opin Development Association in Ekiti Local Government Area of Kwara State, Joseph Alaba Kumuyi, raised the alarm over the incessant banditry and kidnapping attacks on the people of the town by suspected gunmen.

Kumuyi, therefore, said that the development has led to the fleeing of many farmers in the town from their farms adding that it is high time the federal government deployed more armed security agents to the community in order not to hinder food

production in the country.

In an open letter to the state governor, AbdulRazaq AbdulRahman, a prominent leader in Kwara South, Nasiru Ariyibi lamented escalating insecurity in the state, especially in Kwara South, urging him to implement a comprehensive and coordinated security plan involving all relevant stakeholders, including the seven local government chairmen, royal fathers, community leaders, opinion leaders, security agencies, vigilante groups, and other key figures.

He said, "Only through a united and coordinated effort can we effectively address the growing menace of kidnappings and banditry that have disrupted our communities."

"The boldness of these criminals is unprecedented—they even send written warnings to communities, announcing their attacks. This level of insecurity is unacceptable, and we can no longer live in fear. We have full confidence in your leadership and commitment to the safety of all Kwarans, and we believe that with your timely intervention, peace and order can be restored," Ariyibi charged the governor.

Meanwhile, the Chairman of Ifelodun Local Government Area, Femi Yusuf, who led a delegation to the area, commiserated with the community on the death of Jagun, and assured them that all hands would be on deck to track down the kidnappers who were the killers of the late chief. ●

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Osun communities cry out over destruction of farmlands by cattle rustlers

TIMOTHY AGBOR
OSOGBO

Some communities in Osun State have raised the alarm over destruction of their farmlands by cattle rustlers. They lamented that the action has damaged crops and threatened the livelihood of local farmers.

While calling on the state government and security agencies to intervene and prevent what they termed a looming communal crisis, the leaders of the communities

disclosed that cattle grazing go on people's farms unchecked.

The communities affected are Otuuru, Coker-Ijesa, Omu-Ijesa, Oduola-Ijesa, Anjo-Ijesa, Eripa-Ijesa, Oke-Ogbo, and Oniyere which are all under Ilase-Ijesa town, Obokun Local Government Area of the state.

Speaking on behalf of the affected communities, Chief Oyeniyi Adetunji Olurin, the Baale of Otuuru, Coker, Ilase-Ijesa, expressed frustration over the repeated encroachment on farmlands by cattle rearers.

He described the situation as il-

legal and inhumane, pointing to the harmful effects the destruction has been having on agricultural activities in the region.

Olurin revealed that several meetings have been held with key stakeholders, including the Seriki Fulani of Osun State, Alhaji Dende, and a prominent cattle breeder in the area known as Muhammed Fu-

lani, also called "Soldier."

However, despite efforts to reach a peaceful resolution, he said the herdsmen have refused to halt the use of farmlands as grazing fields.

The traditional leader then re-issued stern warning to cattle rearers, urging them to immediately stop moving their cattle through the farmlands of Otuuru, Coker-Ijesa,

Omu-Ijesa, Oduola-Ijesa, Anjo-Ijesa, Eripa-Ijesa, Oke-Ogbo, and Oniyere communities.

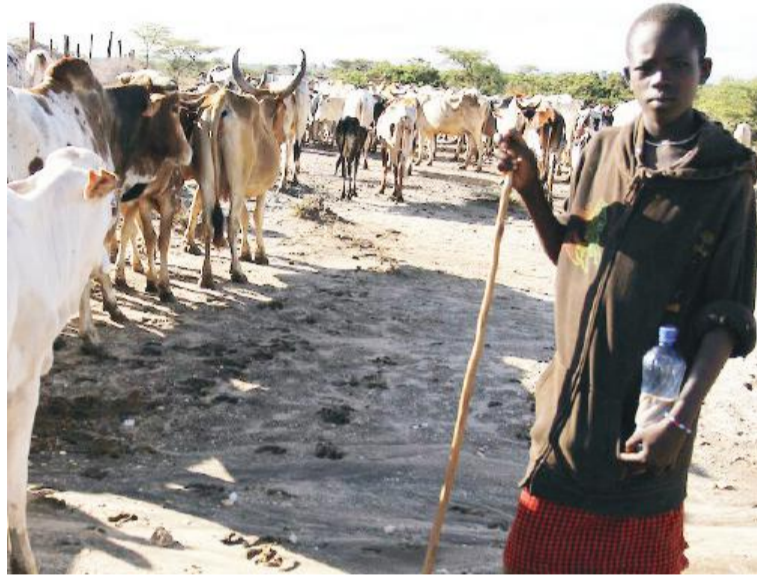
He emphasised that failure to comply could ignite a serious communal conflict.

Olurin expressed particular concern over the fact that much of the land in these areas has been developed into residential spaces, leaving only small portions for farming.

He noted that with the consistent invasion and destruction of these farmlands, the livelihoods of community members are at risk. He called on the authorities to intervene urgently to preserve the long-standing peaceful relationship between cattle breeders and the host communities.

The community leader's appeal reflects the growing tension in the area, as the destruction of crops continues to strain relations between the local farmers and cattle rearers.

The residents are hopeful that swift action from the state government and security agencies will help resolve the situation before it escalates into violence.



Three arrested for beheading septuagenarian, wife in Abia

The Abia State Police Command has arrested three yet-to-be-identified persons in connection with the killing of a couple, 78-year-old Udo Jacob and his 73-year-old wife, Dorcas, in the Bende Local Government Area of the state.

It was gathered that the couple was beheaded by unknown assailants on Tuesday and their corpses were found in a pool of blood in their compound in the Etiti Ulo community of the LGA on Wednesday with some of their properties stolen.

The tragedy that befell the victims got the attention of the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Benjamin Kalu, who represents Bende Federal Constituency.

He condemned the gruesome act and urged law enforcement agencies in the state to conduct a thorough investigation and apprehend the

perpetrators.

The state Public Relations Officer, Maureen Chinaka, said investigations into the case had commenced, adding that three suspects had been arrested.

She said, "Upon receiving the report, the crime scene was visited and corpses were deposited at the mortuary for autopsy. Three suspects were arrested in connection with the heinous crime and are currently under interrogation at the State Criminal Investigation Department Umuahia."

The state Commissioner of Police, Danladi Isa, expressed his deep anxiety over the unfortunate incident and appealed to residents to remain calm.

He promised to ensure that the mystery behind the murder would be unraveled to ensure prompt dispensation of justice.

NDLEA arrests Canadian for importing illicit drugs

A 41-year-old Canadian woman, Adrienne Munju, has been arrested by operatives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency at Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, for importing a large consignment of a strong strain of synthetic cannabis called 'Canadian Loud'.

The suspect was arrested during the inward clearance of passengers on a KLM airline flight from Canada at Terminal 1 of the Lagos airport on October 3, 2024.

A statement released on Sunday by the agency's spokesperson, Femi Babafemi, said that during a joint examination of her three bags, Adrienne, who was in Nigeria for the first time, was found with 74 parcels of the illicit substance weighing 35.20 kilograms, stuffed in two of her three bags.

"In her statement, she claimed she was recruited to traffic the consignment through an online platform for 10,000 Canadian dollars upon successful delivery in Lagos. She said she took the offer because she needed the money to pay for her ongoing master's degree programme in Canada," he added.

Babafemi also said that 13,298,000 pills of opioids, including Tramadol, Tramaking Quick Action Tramadol, Tamol-X, Royal Tapentadol, and Carisoprodol, as well as 338,253 bottles of codeine-based cough syrup worth over N9, 017,771,000, were recovered at the Port Harcourt Ports Onne, Rivers State.

He added, "The opioids were recovered in three containers coming from India, targeted by the NDLEA during a 100% joint examination of the cargoes with men of the Nigerian Customs and other port stakeholders on October 2 and 3, 2024."

Similarly, at the Tincan seaport in



Lagos, Babafemi said that 100 parcels of Canadian Loud weighing 50kg were intercepted on October 3.

He added that the consignment was packed in 20 parcels each in five jumbo bags concealed in a container with four units of imported vehicles that came from Canada.

He said, "Though the container had earlier been cleared out of the ESS Libra Bonded Terminal in Ikorodu based on credible intelligence, NDLEA operatives were able to trace it to a warehouse in Ikorodu where the illicit consignments were discovered in one of the imported vehicles, a Toyota Sienna bus.

"A suspect, Abubakar Shuaibu Ibrahim, has already been taken into custody in connection with the seizure."

In Taraba, he said that NDLEA officers on October 3 intercepted a commercial bus marked JAL 198 YQ coming from Onitsha, Anambra State, to Jalingo.

He added that 80 blocks of cannabis weighing 38kg hidden in bags of garri were also recovered in the state.

"Large quantities of opioids: Tramadol, Rohypnol, and codeine-based

syrup concealed in body compartments of the vehicle were recovered when it was searched, while two suspects, Pako Thomas and Emmanuel Anyigor, were arrested. Another suspect, Chibuzor Okafor, was arrested at Wukari on Wednesday, October 2, with 80 blocks of cannabis weighing 38kg hidden in bags of garri," the statement added.

He noted that a suspect identified as Bolanle Ajenifuja was arrested on Friday, October 4, at Afo - the Media area of Ojo, Lagos.

Babafemi said that 700 litres of skuchies, a mixture of local chapman and a cocktail of illicit drugs, were recovered from her, while three suspects: Ezekiel Akpele, Elijah Michael, and Goddard John, were nabbed.

"On the same day, NDLEA operatives raided two cannabis farms located at Bridge Camp, a boundary community between Edo and Ondo states. Not less than 9,966.332kg of the substance was destroyed on over three hectares of farmland, with 48kg of the already processed psychoactive substance recovered," the statement added.



Politics

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Adelabu



Keyamo

Planned cabinet reshuffle: Horse trading, lobbying as pressure mounts on Tinubu, ministers

● Why President opted for two-week leave, retreat in UK

● Some portfolios to be split, others merged into single unit

ROTIMI DUOROJAIE

President Bola Tinubu is under intense pressure to reassess his cabinet and inject action-oriented ministers who can drive meaningful change.

Presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, confirmed recently that the President would reshuffle the cabinet on or before the nation's October 1st Independence Day.

However, the promised reorganization is yet to occur due to intense lobbying by formidable figures, including political, religious and traditional leaders who are said to be distracting the President from reshuffling his cabinet.

An anonymous source in the Presidency, said, "The original plan was for the President to announce his new cabinet on or before Independence Day. The President has consistently been tinkering with the list on his table. Each time you think he was done; there would be new development that would necessitate addition and subtraction of nominees on the list. Most times, these frequent changes of mind were caused by the activities of lobbyists."

Another source disclosed that the President opted to depart for London for a two-week leave and retreat because he was being inundated by lobbyists, especially those seeking to be appointed ministers and other political bloc-leaders across the country seeking appointments for their protégés.

It was further learnt that apart from having some rest and routine medical treatment, the president may have travelled to London to focus more on the planned cabinet rejig without distraction.

"Lobbyists are leaving no stone unturned. Political, traditional and religious leaders across the country are involved in this horse trading. That possibly was part of the reasons why the President opted to go to London for his two-week working leave, so that he would not be distracted.

"It will interest you that those perceived to be close to the President, including the First Lady, his children and close political allies, are under serious pressure from serving ministers and others seeking appointments to exert their influences on the President in their favour. So, you find that several interests are involved. Now that he's left for London, this intense pressure will, at least,

abate," he said.

Asked how many of the serving ministers he thought would be dropped by the President, the source said: "That would be difficult to answer. This is because if I tell you he would drop anyone now, it would just be a mere guess. This is because performance alone won't be the consideration. If it's only by performance, about half of the Ministers would have to go.

Credible sources confirmed that political considerations ahead of the 2027 Presidential election are germane to the decision of the President.

It was learnt that those mounting pressure on the President include those outside the ruling All Progressives Congress.

Some People's Democratic Party members, who are close to the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Nyesom Wike and the Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabamila, are said to be also working on them to intercede for them before the president.

Ahead of the planned cabinet shake-up, several ministers and their political godfathers have also intensified lobbying to retain their positions.

Some ministers had started frantic lobby-

ing to be in the President's good books.

"Yes, that is a typical thing. Some of the ministers will be calling their godfathers to influence the President. It is a normal thing. But the President will still do what is on his mind for the country," one of the aides said.

It was learnt that some ministers, who are afraid of being dropped from the federal cabinet and their godfathers, have intensified lobbying, seeking the intervention of the President's allies and associates, including the Chief of Staff, Femi Gbajabamila, for a soft-landing.

Another top official said the CoS had expressed concern over the intense lobbying and pressure on Tinubu by those seeking assurances on the fate of their protégés in the Federal Executive Council.

The source stated, "Since reports filtered out that the President would soon reshuffle his cabinet, he has been under immense pressure from political godfathers and ministers who are afraid that they may be dropped from the cabinet.

"Due to the intense pressure, the CoS had to advise the President to take some days off in the United Kingdom after concluding the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Sum-



IT WILL INTEREST YOU THAT THOSE PERCEIVED TO BE CLOSE TO THE PRESIDENT, INCLUDING THE FIRST LADY, HIS CHILDREN AND CLOSE POLITICAL ALLIES, ARE UNDER SERIOUS PRESSURE FROM SERVING MINISTERS AND OTHERS SEEKING APPOINTMENTS TO EXERT THEIR INFLUENCES ON THE PRESIDENT IN THEIR FAVOUR

mit in China two weeks ago.

"Remember that for some days, Nigerians did not know about Tinubu's whereabouts. After pictures of his meeting with King Charles surfaced online, people started speculating that he went to London for medical checks. The fact is that he was advised to spend a few days to allow the pressure and lobbying to subside.

"Anyway, it is not unusual for politicians to lobby on behalf of their wards but Nigerians are not satisfied with the performance of many of the ministers and the President would have no choice but to let them go. If you are not performing, you have to go, regardless of who your godfather is," he added.

Tinubu has been facing increasing pressure from within and outside his party, the All Progressives Congress, to sack underperforming ministers in his cabinet.

There are strong indications that the President may scrap the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation as part of the cabinet rejig.

Another Presidency source said that the exercise would also see some portfolios split and others merged into a single entity, while some ministers would be relieved of their duties.

Although the President warned against underperformance about 10 months ago, the cabinet remained largely intact, save for the suspension of the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Betta Edu.

The Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Planned cabinet reshuffle: Horse trading, lobbying as pressure mounts on Tinubu, ministers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Disaster Management and Social Development was established in August 2019 by former President Muhammadu Buhari.

Buhari said its formation was part of his strategy to streamline and coordinate humanitarian interventions, disaster response, and social welfare programmes in the country.

Nigeria has been dealing with numerous crises such as internal conflicts, particularly from Boko Haram insurgencies, natural disasters, and a rising number of internally displaced persons.

The ministry was tasked with managing these matters, along with various social investment programmes such as the N-Power scheme, Conditional Cash Transfer and the Homegrown School Feeding Programme, amongst others.

While announcing his new ministers in August 2023, President Tinubu re-scoped the ministry to 'Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation.'

However, the ministry had been mired with various allegations of corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency, with most of these controversies centering on its first minister, Sadiya Farouq, who served from its inception until 2023.

Farouq's successor, Edu, was also suspended for allegedly diverting N585m in ministry funds to a personal bank account.

While announcing her suspension January 7, the Presidency said Tinubu had tasked a panel, headed by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, to, among other functions, "conduct a comprehensive diagnostic on the financial architecture and framework of the social investment programmes to conclusively reform the relevant institutions and programmes in a determined bid to eliminate all institutional frailties for the exclusive benefit of disadvantaged households and win back lost public confidence in the initiative."

Last November, after a three-day retreat for cabinet members and presidential aides, Tinubu announced that a Central Delivery Coordination Unit headed by Bala-Usman would measure the performance of ministers and other top government officials.

Their performance would determine who would leave or remain, Tinubu stated.

Early in his administration, after putting in place a cabinet, Tinubu set up a Result and Delivery Unit headed by Bala-Usman to measure the performance of each minister.

There are indications she has done it, and may continue to tweak the report until a reshuffle is done.

At the opening of a three-day cabinet retreat for ministers, presidential aides, permanent secretaries and top government functionaries on November 1, 2023, the President said the ministers in his cabinet would only retain their offices based on performance, which would be reviewed quarterly.

In commemoration of his first anniversary in office, President Tinubu directed his ministers to present their performance reports to Nigerians.

"If you are performing, you have nothing to fear. If you miss the objective, we'll review it. If no performance, you leave us. No one is an island and the buck stops on my desk," the President said.

On January 24, the agency in charge of the assessment, the Central Delivery Coordination Unit, trained at least 140 officials to track and assess the performance of federal ministries, departments and agencies ahead of the assessment.

Speaking on a live television programme in April, Bala-Usman affirmed that the unit had received performance reports from at

least 20 of the 35 ministries.

She explained that the assessment reports would be a product of a joint effort of the ministers, citizens and industry experts.

Bala-Usman said, "Our submission is for the first quarter. So, the first quarter has just ended, and we have initiated the assessment process. The ministers have all been asked to submit their performance based on the deliverables."

She asserted ministers would be assessed "based on what is out there in the public space. They would write to say, 'Based on every deliverable you have given me, this is what I've done within the first quarter of the year.'"

Meanwhile, Nigerians have expressed increasing frustration and anger over what they perceive as poor performance by some government ministers.

The discontent stems from various issues, including economic challenges, corruption, unemployment, insecurity, and lack of infrastructural development.

Despite high hopes when the ministers were appointed, many Nigerians feel that the promises made during campaigns have

not been fulfilled.

Nigerians also feel that the government has not delivered on promises to improve roads, electricity, healthcare, and education.

Other areas of concern include rising inflation, unemployment, and a stagnant economy which have left many Nigerians struggling to make ends meet.

Also, the continued threat from insurgent groups, bandits, and kidnappers has worsened, with many blaming the defence ministers for not doing enough to strengthen security forces or bring lasting solutions to the crisis.

The general hardships and frustration resulted in the #EndBadGovernance protests which rocked the country in August.

The group also organised another round of protests on October 1.

HOW THE MINISTERS STAND

Some of the ministers like Yusuf Tuggar (Foreign Affairs) recorded considerable success after over a year in office.

Tuggar was instrumental in strengthen-

ing Nigeria's bilateral relations with key strategic partners, including countries in Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

Under his stewardship, Nigeria continued to play a significant role within the African Union, especially regarding peace and security efforts in conflict-affected regions such as the Sahel, West Africa, and the Horn of Africa.

He also appointed 12 consuls-general and five chargés d'affaires to represent the country in 14 countries on appointment of new ambassadors 13 months after the former envoys were recalled has been questioned.

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has been lauded for working on initiatives to combat fake news and promote factual reporting, as well as campaigns aimed at fostering national unity and reorienting the citizenry towards positive values.

He's launched the Audience Measurement System and the National Value Charter but has been accused of not communicating government policies and programmes effectively.

The Minister of Budget and National Planning, Atiku Bagudu, negotiated the 2023 Supplementary Budget and the 2024 fiscal estimates and their amendment with the National Assembly.

He also implemented over 500 selected Federal Government projects implemented in 2023 Capital Appropriation were monitored to ensure accountability and value for money and reimbursed N438.3bn to the FCT and 34 states.

So far, 67,038 jobs have been created in the first phase of the 2023 implementation but his policies increased economic hardship.

Reduction of revenue-to-debt service ratio from 97% in 2023 to 68% in 2024 has been one of Wale Edun's achievements as Minister of Finance. He also paid back N7.3trn Ways and Means obligations and initiated a strategic input programme to increase food supply and a pivot to CNG fuel for mass transit vehicles.

However, economic hardship persists as a result of government policies while he's been criticised for slow rollout of social programmes despite increasing poverty.

The Minister of Solid Minerals, Dele Alike, has promoted the diversification of the economy through mining, commissioned

the geological and mineral resource maps to guide investors on the locations of key minerals and created a long-term master plan to guide the solid minerals sector but he's been unable to attract sufficient investors while stakeholders complain of his opaque policies.

The Minister of Trade and Investments, Doris Uzoka-Anite paid a N50,000 grant to small business owners and engaged with international partners/investors to promote Nigeria's industrial and trade opportunities.

She also streamlined processes related to trade facilitation, reducing delays in customs and port operations. However, she's yet to begin payment of loans to manufacturers and MSMEs.

The Minister of Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani, has been instrumental in implementing Nigeria's Start-up Act, ongoing training and placement of three million technical talents as well as working on initiatives to increase access to venture capital and funding for Nigerian tech startups

But under the minister's watch, there's been no progress on plans to increase internet access nationwide. He is also yet to set up OneGov, a one-stop shop for all government services, and investing in innovation hubs nationwide

The Minister of Aviation Festus Keyamo initiated moves and the return of Emirates Airlines to Nigeria after two years' suspension and has supported indigenous airlines and others in the aviation sector to reduce capital flight.

He facilitated the commencement of Air Peace operations to the UK and has begun moves to build a second runway at the Abuja Airport. He also facilitated the payment of 45 months of minimum wage arrears owed NiMet workers

The Minister of Power, Adebayo Adela-bu successfully launched the long awaited Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition and installed systems used for controlling, monitoring, and analysing industrial devices and processes.

The Minister of Health, Muhammad Pate secured a \$3bn pledge from foreign partners while over 10 million children received tetanus and diphtheria vaccines under his watch.

He also retrained 120,000 health workers, increased school admission quota by 100 per cent in health institutions and facilitated signing of Executive Order on healthcare products.

The FCT Minister, Nyesom Wike, inaugurated commercial operations of the Abuja metro rail system, resurfaced 135 roads and built several bridges in the city centre.

He approved the promotion of over 800 FCTA staff, and 1000 FCDA staff. He completed the construction of the Vice President's official residence.

The Supreme Court judgment on Local Government financial autonomy happened under Justice Minister, Lateef Fagbemi. He also passed into law the 300 per cent judicial salary increment bill. He played key roles in the conviction of 125 Boko Haram terrorists and financiers in mass trial and the £2.1m corruption proceeds received from bailiwick of Jersey.

The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas), Ekperikpe Ekpo, unlocked \$3bn investment in the gas sector by resolving issues relating to the execution of the Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement for the Brass Methanol Project.

He midwifed the reconstruction of the Midstream and Downstream Gas Infrastructure Fund council and guidelines and unveiled many gas projects since his appointment. ●



Bagudu



Uzoka-Anite

“**THERE ARE STRONG INDICATIONS THAT THE PRESIDENT MAY SCRAP THE MINISTRY OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION AS PART OF THE CABINET REJIG**”

Nigerians cast doubt over government's ability to make them see light at end of tunnel

BRIGHT JACOB

Nigerians are still downcast and unsmiling; many countrymen and women, who have nowhere to turn for help, are feeling on edge because of the harsh economic climate in the country and believe they have been abandoned to their fate by the government.

But the President of Africa's most populous country, Bola Tinubu, whose 64th Independence Day anniversary speech was on October 1 broadcast to anxious but hopeful Nigerians, said he was aware of the struggles people were facing "in these trying times" as well as the struggles associated with rising costs of living and the search for meaningful employment.

Tinubu, who said that the policies his administration put in place were beginning to work, also noted that he was committed to finding sustainable solutions to alleviate the plight of Nigerians.

The President, thereafter, kindled the people's hopes of light at the end of the tunnel.

"Fellow Nigerians, as I address you today, I am deeply aware of the struggles many of you face in these challenging times.

"Our administration knows that many of you struggle with rising living costs and the search for meaningful employment. I want to assure you that your voices are heard.

"As your President, I assure you that we are committed to finding sustainable solutions to alleviate the suffering of our citizens.

"Once again, I plead for your patience as the reforms we are implementing show positive signs, and we are beginning to see light at the end of the tunnel," the President said as he addressed Nigerians.

Many Nigerians, including Reno Omokri, a former aide to ex-President Goodluck Jonathan, said that Tinubu showed empathy and understood the challenges Nigerians face.

Omokri, who reviewed Tinubu's Independence Day anniversary address and described it as "a good speech," noted that the President admitted that the country had made mistakes which his government is working to address.

"The President started his speech by showing empathy; saying he understands the challenges Nigerians face as his administration returns the economy and devolves power. It was a commendable start to his Independence Day speech.

"President Tinubu fessed up to the

country's mistakes, and talked about how he and his government would address them.

"By going into details of the progress they have made in the last sixteen months, he gave Nigerians and our international partners some relief and confidence about the future," Omokri stated as he addressed his followers on Facebook.

Omokri, who said he spent Independence Day with Tinubu at the Presidential Villa in Abuja, was, however, criticised by some of his followers who faulted his lauding the President.

According to these followers, who also cast doubt over the government's ability to make them see light at the end of the tunnel, Omokri, a member of the People's Democratic Party, is fraternizing with the "enemy" because he wants to be in the running for a ministerial slot.

The "conundrum" hanging round Omokri's neck notwithstanding, many Nigerians are of the view that Tinubu's government and that of his predecessor, Muhammadu Buhari, cannot be separated and are to blame for the country's woes.

"They are the same. There is no difference," a Lagos-based businesswoman, Ugochi Ekeh, told *The Point*.

"I don't see light at the end of the

tunnel. How will I see light when I know that Buhari and Tinubu's governments are the same APC?" she retorted.

"My daughter, who is serving in Akwa Ibom State, called to tell me that the government didn't pay them their new N77, 000 allowances, and you are telling me that there's light at the end of the tunnel? How will she survive till next month as my business is suffering?"

“THE ONLY RESULTS OR FRUITS NIGERIANS WILL APPRECIATE NOW ARE THE ONES THAT TRANSLATE TO REDUCED COSTS OF LIVING AND INCREASED SALARY AT PLACES OF WORK

"These governments are the same. No difference," Ekeh submitted.

Buhari was President of Nigeria from 2015 to 2023 and is still a stalwart of Nigeria's governing party, the All Progressives Congress. During his tenure, Nigeria's economy took a lot of beating and even experienced a couple of recessions in 2016 and 2020.

Because of Buhari's "sins," quite a lot of Nigerians, to this day, hold Tinubu responsible for the country's not-so-inspiring state as he (Tinubu) revealed, before the 2023 presidential election which he won was conducted, that he helped put Buhari into power.

Nigerians, thus, candidly remember, for instance, that when Buhari was in power during the twilight of his administration, he had introduced an infamous naira redesign policy that backfired and brought untold hardship on citizens.

Buhari later urged Nigerians to exercise patience as appropriate measures were being taken to ease the hardship occasioned by the policy. He, too, said there would be light at the end of the tunnel.

"I want to once again assure you that I am fully aware of the current hardship you are facing as a result of some policies of the government

which are meant to bring overall improvement to the country.

"I am appealing to you to exercise further patience as we take appropriate measures to ease these hardships. God willing, there will be light at the end of the tunnel," Buhari said.

Unfortunately, by the time Buhari handed power over to Tinubu, Nigerians had begun to argue that the light at the end of the tunnel, which Buhari harped on, had disappeared and was part of the reason why they yearned for another "messiah" in Tinubu to take them to the promised land.

A political analyst, Muyiwa Bello, told our correspondent that Buhari's "light at the end of the tunnel" was a "scam" that Nigerians did not see until the former President left office.

Bello said the assertion by Tinubu that his own reforms were beginning to yield results would only make sense to Nigerians if it amounted to reduced living costs and increased salaries.

"Buhari's light at the end of the tunnel was a scam. Nigerians didn't see it until he left the seat of government.

"We are now looking at Tinubu's promise to make us see light at the end of the tunnel and I can assure you that we are scrutinizing it in 3D.

"Tinubu said his reforms are beginning to yield results, right? I don't want to sound like a prophet of doom, but if these results are the ones Nigerians only see on statistical data sheets, then we are still playing in this country.

"The only results or fruits Nigerians will appreciate now are the ones that translate to reduced costs of living and increased salary at places of work.

"My position is this way because past governments had promised to change our lives but, sadly, many Nigerians died waiting for the manifestation of such blessings. So, enough is enough."

Another analyst, Elvis Ogbomo, said, "I am a stakeholder in the Nigerian project and I believe that I will not only see the light at the end of the tunnel but I, as a person, will also bask in it.

"If anyone is not seeing the progress made so far by this government, well, I am sorry for him or her.

"By the grace of God, based on some of the solutions that the government has already proffered, I can beat my chest confidently now and say that our problems will not get any worse than this. In fact, it is finished with half of Nigeria's problems."



Tinubu

Hot Seat

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Nigerians no longer envied, poor shadows of what they could be — Yemi Farounbi

Dr Yemi Farounbi has served the country in many capacities, including as Nigeria's former Ambassador to The Philippines. His 80th birthday falls on Nigeria's Independence Day, October 1. His remarkable career as a journalist, innovative media administrator, diplomat, and cultural advocate spans decades, leaving a significant impact on Nigeria's media landscape, diplomatic relations, and cultural heritage. His life journey reflects the enduring values of respect, integrity, hard work, intelligence, and compassion. In this interview, he reflects on his eight decades of remarkable experiences entangled with Nigeria's unique history and on a number of issues. Excerpts:

What does turning 80 feel like for you?

I am thankful to God for His grace and mercy. God has taken me through difficult times. I have been in accidents and confronted armed robbers who stole my car but later returned it, as well as intruders who entered my house but took nothing. I have experienced life-threatening illnesses, and God pulled me through. In a country where life expectancy is about 50, reaching 80 is a matter of grace.

Take us on a journey through your early years—what defining moments laid the foundation for the extraordinary person you are today?

I'm the son of an Anglican priest who died in active service after working for 41 years. Consequently, I have a deep religious background. Because my father, as a priest, was posted to many churches in what is now Ekiti State, I attended various primary schools in the region, eventually ending up at the renowned Anglican secondary school, Christ's School, Ado Ekiti.

This strict, disciplined, and religious upbringing has fostered a profound relationship with God. The belief that one must love their neighbour as oneself has formed the foundation of my interactions with people, irrespective of their background, religion, ethnic nationality, or political leanings. The concept of servant leadership demonstrated by Jesus Christ has influenced my management style. Furthermore, Christ's love for the poorest, the most marginalised, and abandoned individuals have shaped my life's path. I am indeed a street pas-

tor, more interested in those who are neglected, abandoned, and forgotten. This is a product of my background.

What do you miss the most about your childhood?

I had a fulfilling childhood. I was brought up in a virtuous Christian environment. I was incessantly reminded of the need to protect my family name and to be a flag bearer of the best and highest virtues. Many of my friends have transitioned into glory, but I still have some with whom I closely relate, like Ranti Dada, Prof. Segun Areola, Olusola Dada, Bola Borisade, and others.

What was the pride of your generation?

My generation will be remembered for being complete Omoluabi. We were perfect gentlemen who worked hard, who never gave up on Nigeria, and who did everything to make Nigeria a better place.

What is the secret to your longevity?

There is no particular secret to longevity; it is sheer grace. On the two occasions that I met armed robbers, they became respectful as soon as they recognised my name. As my late brother and friend, former Managing Director of Daily Times, Tunji Oseni, would say, "ka sa ma se dada" (we should always strive to do good). If you live a good life of contentment and moderation, chances are that many of the ailments of the rich and the wicked won't come your way.

How did you meet your spouse, and

how has the marriage been since then?

My first wife, Princess Adenike Farounbi, passed away in 2008. She was a great woman—royal and special;

a very good helpmate and partner. My present wife, Evelyn Farounbi, shares many qualities with my late wife. She is very supportive, hardworking, and focused. Both of them are lovers of the poor, generous, and philanthropic to a fault.

How long do you wish to live?

I want to live as long as God spares my life, as long as I will not be a burden to my family and society. Certainly, I want to see the rebirth of a new Nigeria where everyone can optimally develop his or her talents and abilities to the fullest. I really must see this great Nigeria fulfilling its mission and destiny.

What are the things that give you immense joy at 80?

Essentially, I believe that good prophets must have disciples who will externalise and internalise their virtues and principles. That is called mentorship. Through mentorship, a leader will produce a succession of leaders who will do the right things at the right moments.

What gives me the greatest joy is seeing those I have mentored commanding positions in various aspects of Nigeria. I see them in the media, public service, and private sector. I feel the utmost happiness when I mentor the very young ones. I feel great joy when I am surrounded by them, with their inquisitive and curious minds, seeking to create a better Nigeria.

I always want to see them fulfill their destiny, adding value to humanity and making a positive difference. It is much more significant because they will be

the leaders of tomorrow. I like to assist them as they traverse the slippery roads of Nigeria. I am glad to open their minds so that they can be part of those who will make Nigeria a much better country.

You always appear in white clothes, with white hair, and even slippers. Is there any significance or story behind this?

There is no special significance or spiritual reason for wearing white. I used to love blue and white. I owe my wearing of white to my deputy when I was Ambassador of Nigeria to the Republic of the Philippines. It was Ambassador Buba Tekune who advised that I should wear white because it suited me and my character traits best. He is one of the greatest, most patriotic, disciplined, and focused public servants I have come across in Nigeria. So, I accepted his advice. My white hair is a function of age and heritage. My parents had white hair in old age.

Are you happy to share your birthday with Nigeria's Independence Day?

In 1960, I was very excited to share my birthday with Nigeria. I thought Nigeria would be the greatest star in the African firmament. I thought Nigeria would become a world power, playing an active role in the world scene. At inception, Nigeria offered bright hope to become a giant in Africa and the world. But gradually, Nigeria lost the glamour conferred on her by sheer size,

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NIGERIANS WERE NO LONGER ENVIED; THEY BECAME POOR SHADOWS OF WHAT THEY COULD BE. HAPPILY, NIGERIA DECIDED TO DEMOTE OCTOBER 1; THE DAY IS NO LONGER CELEBRATED. IT HAS BECOME A POOR COUSIN OF MAY 29 OR JUNE 12”

'Today's journalists are better educated, more exposed, not as courageous, disciplined as those of the past'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

population, economic base, enormous potential, and the dazzling quality of her citizens.

Nigerians were no longer envied; they became poor shadows of what they could be. Happily, Nigeria decided to demote October 1; the day is no longer celebrated. It has become a poor cousin of May 29 or June 12. That is why the symbols of independence, like the flag, currency, and anthem, are being desecrated by Nigerians.

They no longer stand as great symbols of an independent Nigeria. Sometimes, we debate whether Nigeria is truly independent. We can't feed ourselves, provide decent homes, good education, rapid and effective transportation, good healthcare, potable water, and so on. We still need freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from hunger, poverty, and disease, and freedom from the fear of bandits, kidnapers, insurgents, and terrorism. I never imagined Nigeria would one day drive her best children to slavery in Japan. I never imagined Nigeria would be unable to feed its citizens, give them true freedom from want and poverty, or freedom from fear of insecurity, Boko Haram, ISWAP, ISIS, bandits, terrorists, and kidnapers.

Having lived through Nigeria's pre- and post-independence eras, how would you assess the country's progress and development?

Nigeria has made progress, but given our human, material, and natural resources, we are certainly not where we should be. Our industries have dwindled in number and in contribution to the GDP. We are unable to feed ourselves, and our agricultural sector has deteriorated. Our country is crying loudly for restructuring based on true federalism, which is key to increasing economic growth and development. Our political parties are in need of an ideological foundation, internal democracy, transparency, and accountability as necessary steps toward reforming and

strengthening our political recruitment system.

As a veteran journalist, what is your assessment of journalism practice today?

The goals of journalism have never changed. The reportorial function, agenda-setting role, social ethicising responsibility, and status-conferring duty have remained constant. Today's journalists are better educated and more exposed. However, they are not as courageous or disciplined as those of the past. They are not as thorough in exercising monitoring and oversight functions over society. But the younger ones are certainly more professional, digital, and ICT-compliant. They are upholding our collective image of having the freest and most professional press/media in Africa.

What motivated you to pursue a career in journalism?



My entry into journalism and broadcasting was accidental. I wanted to work in Ibadan or Lagos to be near the only Lagos passport office in Nigeria. I needed a passport to take advantage of postgraduate scholarships in Canadian, American, and British universities. In this process, I responded to an advert by WNTV-WNBS (Western Nigerian Television Network). The aptitude tests conducted by the Test Development and Research Office of the West African Examination Council confirmed my suitability for the job. That was how I entered the industry and began my long journey into the profession. I subsequently received a lot of professional training.

Nigeria is 64 years old. What do you see as the key challenges facing the country, and how can they be addressed permanently?

The key challenge for Nigeria is the

need to guarantee the security of life and property and provide freedom from want, poverty, and hunger. Other associated problems include joblessness, inadequate provision of housing, and insufficient educational institutions. The quality of education also needs improvement to meet current demands.

What are your thoughts on Nigeria's federalism, constitution, and the recent local government autonomy granted to local government?

I am opposed to the so-called autonomy of local governments. I subscribe to the USA's Dillon Rule concept, which posits that the relationship between local governments and the state is akin to that between a child and the mother. I believe there can only be two tiers of

government in a federation, not three. I support restructuring that will make the federating units equal and provide an effective counterbalance to the centre.

Restructuring should overturn the centralization tendencies of the unification decree of 1967 and subsequent centralized constitutions. Powers and functions should be devolved to the levels closest to the people. This will reduce the struggle for power at the centre, which has become a life-and-death matter, and prevent the centralization of resources and revenue at the centre, which turns the federating units into beggars.

How would you advise younger Nigerians on marriage, education, and social life?

Youths must appreciate that there is no perfect marriage. As a couple, they are two different individuals from different family, cultural, and traditional backgrounds. They need to work hard to become one unit. They need God's guidance, cooperation, collaboration, communication, understanding, tolerance, and a large heart to forgive. In education, youths must appreciate that it is the best legacy they can be given. They must understand that education, both formal and informal, is lifelong. As long as they live, they must remain curious and hungry for contemporary education. They must seek education that is functional and can be readily applied in their lives, rather than pursuing it for decoration or sheer ornamentation. In social life, youths must not allow it to dominate their lives.

They must choose their mentors, peers, associates, and colleagues carefully. They should seek friends and companions who will motivate them to succeed and help them fulfill their destiny. They must ensure that their actions today do not undermine their progress tomorrow. They must take their destiny into their own hands, design a vision for their lives, and acquire the competencies required to achieve that vision. They must live good lives characterised by integrity and strong moral character. ●



OUR POLITICAL PARTIES ARE IN NEED OF AN IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION, INTERNAL DEMOCRACY, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY AS NECESSARY STEPS TOWARD REFORMING AND STRENGTHENING OUR POLITICAL RECRUITMENT SYSTEM

'There's nothing wrong with judges setting up consultancy firms after retirement'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

the judicial oath. Once that happens, the punishment should continue.

When some judges retire, they set up consultancy firms. Is that right?

There is nothing wrong with that. They are not coming back to court anymore. You can actually open a consultancy office where juniors can come and ask you questions and ask you to advise them even in writing. And you

advise them. You can also lecture in a university. But if you sign any document coming to the court, it becomes a nullity.

Sometimes when you hire a retired judge as a consultant in cases, such a judge consultant may have a link with the judge who will eventually decide the case now?

No. You don't sign your name on the document. Somebody is consulting you. You prepare a document for

him to present somewhere. By the time the document gets there, your name is off. Except those that are doing consultancy for corrupt practices. I have done an election petition where a former Justice of the Court of Appeal showed up. Naturally, he wants to show those who hired him that he has influence. And of course, it worked. You see. But at that time, there could be no appeal to the Supreme Court. So, I couldn't do anything about it. But this is the kind of thing I see. If you come like

that and show yourself, you have become a consultant for the purpose of corruption. Such a retired judge would be dealt with like anybody involved in corruption.

EFCC should pick him up. Somebody who decides to go or who retires normally but wants to continue to have something to do with the bar, should be allowed to do so. I wouldn't do that if I were a judge and I had retired as a judge. I would rather be a consultant.

There were media reports that the Imo local council poll was done by mere selection and not election.

It was not a mere selection. It was a mere publication of names who were said to have won across the board. Those involved have taken the matter to court. If they now go before the tribunal and the court says from the evidence before us, there was an election, what can you do? But you cannot say that is what the tribunal will say until you are there. ●

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly known as **EUNICE OMOLARA ODESOLA AYANBEKU** on the BVN registration and **DOB as 28 June 1949**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EUNICE ODEMISOLA AYANBEKU** and **DOB 28 June 1948** as written on my NIN registration details with documents bearing former names and DOB remain valid. Banks and the general public to take notice.

CONFIRMATION OF NAMES
That, I am the same person bearing **OLADIPO FAUSAT IKEPO** and **AJAKAYE FAUSAT IKEPO**. Now to be known and addressed as **MRS. SHITTU FAUSAT IKEPO**. 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 **USMAN MOHAMMED HAMMED**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **USMAN MUHAMMED AHMED**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

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 ACGOOLA**. 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 DUNANDOLADEHINDE BILIKIS OLADUNNI** NOW TO BE KNOWN AND ADDRESSED AS **OLADEINDE BILIKIS OLADUNNI**. 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 **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 **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 **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 **ADEBAYO ADEWUNMI OMOTOLA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEBAYO ADEWUNMI OMOTOLA**. 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 and 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 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.

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 **MOSHOO ADEWALE IBRAHIM**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **MOSHOO ADEWALE IBRAHIM OLUWAFADEREMI**. All Former Document Remain Valid. General public take note.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, formerly Akinwande addressed as **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 **ALEXANDER AUGUSTINA NDIRFREKE**. Now wish to be known and addressed as **AKANIIYENE NDIRFREKE JIMMY**. 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
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.

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 former documents 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
IBEAWUCHI FUNMILAYO OLAYIDE - TRUSTEE
OREKOYA EBU DOLA 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 AGUYI IRONSI STREET, MAITAMA, ABUJA, NIGERIA. WITHIN 28 DAYS OF THIS PUBLICATION.
SIGNED- CHAIRMAN

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 NUHU GANIYU - 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 YOUTH 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 Aguyi Ironsi Street, PMB 198, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days from the date of this publication.
SIGNED- MUHAMMED NUHU GANIYU - 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 Aguyi Ironsi Street, PMB 198, Maitama Abuja, within 28 days from the date of this publication.
SIGNED- TRUSTEES

CHANGE OF NAME
I **BRIGGS ENIOLA ABOSEDE** want my date of birth which was mistakenly written on my NIN as **13/11/1988** to be corrected to **13/11/1990** which is my correct date of birth

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 **ABDULSALAM ABIODUN KAFILAT** or **ABDULSALAM KAFILAT ABIODUN**. Now wish to be known as **ABDULSALAM ABIODUN KAFILAT**. 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.

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **TOYIN RASHEEDAT**. Now wish to be known as **TAJUDEEN RASHEEDAT BIDEI**. All former documents remain valid banks and general public should please take note.

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

CHANGE OF NAME
I formerly known as **IBISANMI MOTUNRAYO ELIZABETH**, Wrong Date of birth is 8/05/1990. Now wish to be known as **OLESIN MOTUNRAYO ABOSEDE ELIZABETH**, Correct date of birth is 8/05/1983. All former documents remain valid banks and general public should please take note.

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.

Electronic payment transactions in Nigeria hit N89.5trn in July – NIBSS

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CBN orders banks to submit FX compliance report

>> 24



\$543.5m FX sold to authorised banks in 11 days – CBN

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Economy

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Prospects rise as FG intensifies efforts to deepen CNG consumption, boost economic performance

The Presidential Initiative on Compressed Natural Gas has a mandate to sell to Nigerians the prospect of using gas as an alternative source of energy. In this report, **FESTUS OKOROMADU** examines the efforts of the committee so far.

As Nigerians continue to grapple with the economic realities of reform initiatives introduced by the President Bola Tinubu's administration since its inauguration on May 29, 2023, two key policies pump up as the most critical in terms of impact on the generality of the economy.

First was the announcement of the subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) otherwise known as petrol and the floating of the foreign exchange market.

Interestingly, the government and its agencies have not failed to acknowledge the negative impacts of both policies especially as they affect the ordinary citizens.

For instance, the Governor of the Central bank of Nigeria, Olayemi Cardoso, while addressing the media at the end of its monetary policy committee meeting recently, stated that members of the committee noted the huge impact of energy cost on food prices leading to increase in core inflation.

"Members thus reiterated the need to work in close collaboration with the fiscal authorities to address the current upward pressure on energy prices," he stated.

Expressing optimism on the relief local refining of crude oil could bring with reference to Dangote Refinery, he said, "the lifting of refined petroleum products from Dangote Petroleum Refinery will moderate transportation costs and significantly support the easing of food price pressures in the short to medium term.

"This is also expected to moderate foreign exchange demand for importation of refined petroleum products, with a positive spillover on external reserves and improvement in the overall balance of payment position," Cardoso stressed.

No one could have captioned it more perfectly than Cardoso who is positioned to have an overview of the working of the economy.

As rightly pointed out by the CBN governor, except deliberate and purposeful plans are initiated to have a convergence of well-articulated policy marriage between monetary and fiscal authorities, Nigeria's abundant resources may not deliver value for her citizenry.

TERMINATION OF PETROL SUBSIDY
While critics of the Tinubu administration



MARKET EXPERTS SAY WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY REPORTING GLOBAL DEMAND FOR NATURAL GAS PUT AT 4.6 PERCENT, NIGERIA NEEDS TO FOCUS ON INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY SO AS TO HARNESS THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET PROSPECT

tend to blame him for the removal of petrol subsidy payment, the reality remains that the cost implication of the policy powered by the political cum corruption imbibed it is enough to run the nation aground.

This is aside from the global perception of the use of fossil fuel as an energy source. The question that readily comes to mind then is, does Nigeria have alternatives to petrol or fossil fuel as a source of energy?

HARNESSING NATURAL GAS POTENTIALS

According to the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, Nigeria has 202 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of untapped proven gas reserves with estimated recoverable gas of 139.4 tcf as at 2018.

Market experts say with the International Energy Agency reporting global demand for natural gas put at 4.6 percent, Nigeria needs to focus on increasing productivity so as to harness the international market prospect.

In addition, they said the government must put in place a conducive environment for enhancing the value chain to provide the

much-needed economic returns from the abundance of natural gas as a resource capable of transforming the nation's economic wellbeing.

According to a recent report by PricewaterhouseCoopers, harnessing Nigeria's proven gas reserves can stimulate an estimated Gross Value Added of \$18.3 billion annually to the domestic economy.

The report further stated that, "In addition, optimizing the domestic utilization of gas could support 6.5 mill Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs for the local economy."

TAPPING DOMESTIC MARKET POTENTIALS

Given the PwC's perspective, natural gas either as compressed natural gas (CNG) or Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) seems to be one of the low hanging fruits the Tinubu administration can harness to boost the nation's economy.

Fortunately, the government seems to have adopted the natural gas option hence the setting up of a Presidential Compressed

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Prospects rise as FG intensifies efforts to deepen CNG consumption, boost economic performance

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Natural Gas Initiative (Pi-CGN) by the government in August 2023 to among others ease the impact of fuel subsidy removal.

Upon inauguration, the seven member (Pi-CGN) committee chaired by Mr. Zachi Adedeji, who also doubles as the executive chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service had their tasks clearly spelt out for them.

At inception, the Pi-CNG committee announced a transformative plan to revolutionize the transportation landscape of the country, targeting over 11,500 new CNG-enabled vehicles and 55,000 CNG conversion kits for existing PMS-dependent vehicles, while simultaneously bolstering in-country manufacturing, local assembly and expansive job creation in line with the presidential directive.

To achieve this, a CNG comprehensive adoption strategy includes the following: Empowering Workshops Programme, Provision of Nationwide Network of Workshops, Local Assembly and Job Creation as key points of emphasis. In the short- medium term focus on mass transit systems and student hubs in order to significantly reduce transit costs for the general populace.

Determined to ensure a seamless integration of CNG utility within the current mid-stream and downstream energy value chain to support its sustainability, the Pi-CNG embarked on facilitating the provision of workshops across all geopolitical zones and states with essential kits and comprehensive training for newly employed staff, thus creating new opportunities for technical skill development and employment for Nigerians.

The new nationwide network of workshops, established through the initiative, is to ensure widespread access and demand side utilization of CNG technology and CNG-related expertise, thereby facilitating smoother transitions for vehicle owners at the wider benefit of the Nigerian economy.

As noted by the committee chairman at its inauguration, President Tinubu's focus on assembling CNG-enabled vehicles within the country will stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities, and bolster the nation's automotive manufacturing capabilities.

According to him, the launch of the initiative also underscores this administration's commitment to fostering a cleaner environment by reducing carbon emissions and promoting energy security through the utilization of domestic natural gas resources.

BUILDING FACILITIES AND ACCEPTANCE

Despite the economic viability or otherwise of the Pi-CNG programme, it is evidence as usual that in the absence of the necessary infrastructures to facilitate conversion of vehicles as well as getting the citizens buy-in into it, the committee may just end up wasting time and resources.

To avoid that, the committee last year signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with competent workshop owners across the country for use as conversion centres to convert one million commercial transport petrol vehicles to CNG by 2027.

At a ceremony held in Abuja, partners like NIPCO Gas, Portland Gas Ltd., Fix It 45, ABG Oil, and the Nigeria Institute of Transport Technology signed up with the Pi-CNG

to serve as agents to facilitate the programme.

Speaking at the event, Michael Oluwagbemi, Pi-CNG's CEO, stated that the programme aims for the highest global vehicle conversions, hinting that above 2,000 workshops has been identified nationwide then, with 123 already approved.

Oluwagbemi further stated that President Tinubu has ordered 1 million free CNG conversion kits to be distributed to commercial vehicles involved in transporting people, food, and goods.

"These kits, along with free installation, will be rolled out over the next 18 months, helping the transport sector quickly transition to CNG and take advantage of the significantly lower fuel prices. The distribution of these kits will be carried out in collaboration with key partners, ensuring nationwide accessibility," he stated.

Expanding further, he said, "In the first phase of the initiative, Pi-CNG will begin the immediate distribution of 10,000 free conversion kits.

"These kits will be provided at no cost to transport operators through key national transport associations, including the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Moove, UBER, and the Kaduna State Transport Authority (KSTA).

"This will enable commercial drivers to switch their vehicles to run on CNG, thus easing the cost burdens for both transporters and the public."

A PROMISE KEPT

By mid-September 2024, the Pi-CNG committee in adherence to its promise of distributing 10,000 free conversion kits, commenced the distribution process in partnership with NIPCO Gas.

Responding to questions from journalists at an event to commence kits distribution in Lagos, Head of Commercial Operations of Pi-CNG, Omoh Imouchuede, who commended the Tinubu-led administration for the initiative, emphasized the need for public acceptance of the programme, stressing that there must be "acceptance for it to have a viral effect on our economy."

He applauded the turnout of participants at the event saying, "It's a good turnout. But for us to push through the programme, there

has to be acceptance. And from what we can see, there is acceptance."

Highlighting the transformative nature of the initiative, he said "It's very critical for us to understand the need for CNG to be adopted across all spheres; hence, we're starting with mass transit.

"It's also important for everyone to see the importance of the fact that CNG is here to stay and to rally behind Mr. President to ensure that the initiative hits its mark. We are going to deliver a million vehicles by 2027, and we're going to do it."

Speaking to the Pi-CNG committee's commitment to execute the programme successfully, he said, "All hands are on deck, and we're working tirelessly every day. Our programme directors are all over the place, ensuring that everyone is aware of what we're doing.

"The key thing for us is to keep pushing and working with our partners. And we're looking towards meeting many more milestones come the end of this year, 2025, and towards 2027."

On measures taken so far to ensure success of the initiative, he noted that availability of kits as well as increase in the volume of the conversion centres tops the team's priorities.

OPERATORS' PERSPECTIVES

During the kit distribution launch in the Lagos axis, some operators in the sector applauded the initiative.

The Managing Director, NASENI Portland Gas Limited, Folajimi Mohammed described the programme as a welcome development, stressing that it will bring relief to the transport sector when fully operational.

As a partner in the vehicle conversion scheme, Mohammed said his firm had received 50 kits and it's going to convert 50 commercial vehicles into CNG.

"At the moment we have over 30 vehicles, so we have a mark of 50. Once we hit the mark of 50, then we have to close. It's a free initiative given to mass transit by the Federal Government.

"Aside that CNG is a safe gas, it is safer than petrol combustion, it reduces emissions, as well as promoting cleaner energy. It's going to be on a first-come, first-served basis.

"If we have a lot of the mass transit vehicles being retrofitted with the CNG, it will lower the cost of food, cost of transportation, and then Nigerians will smile."

Also speaking, the Chief Operating Officer of the company, Michelle Ejiolor, stated that the firm has a diagnostic machine as well as engineers on ground that confirms the fitness of a vehicle physically and mechanically before approval is given for conversion.

She stated that the firm operates on a first-come, first-served programme. She commended the government for initiating the programme stressing the environmental friendliness of it.

"Introducing the CNG into the vehicle, and retrofitting it, actually gives a better emission as well as it reduces the cost of transportation, that's a cleaner energy, and cleaner source of oil," she stated.

She therefore called on all Nigerians to embrace the initiative, while applauding the Pi-CGN team for collaborating with the private sector to empower different conversion centers who had been given the mandate to convert these various vehicles into CNG.

AJAOKUTA AS A GAS HUB FOR NIGERIA

Meanwhile, Kogi State seems to be prepared to tap into the opportunities of the ex-

panded programme on natural gas utilization as a source of energy.

Speaking at the launch of the Pi-CGN pilot conversion incentive programme and the handover of CNG buses to transporters in the state on Wednesday, the Minister of Steel Development, Shuaibu Abubakar Audu, said plans are underway to make Ajaokuta one of the CNG hubs of Nigeria, as the Ministry is on the verge of presenting a proposal to Mr President for the establishment of an Industrial Park within the Ajaokuta environment, which will also host a CNG park and a Free Trade Zone.

"Mr President has mandated that we should have one million CNG vehicles and/or conversions, and it needs to be in place before the end of 2025. So, one million vehicles will be converted from petrol to gas in the next year, and this is very significant.

"As the Minister of Steel Development, I want to tell you some of the benefits of this CNG conversion site and the critical role Ajaokuta plays in that light. Ajaokuta is a gas hub for Nigeria. Gas lines are passing from Warri to Ajaokuta, from Ajaokuta to Kaduna and Kano (AKK Pipeline), meaning that billions of cubic feet of gas are being transported from Ajaokuta to other parts of Nigeria annually.

"We are taking a proposal to Mr. President to declare Ajaokuta an Industrial Park that will also have a CNG park which will be one of the CNG hubs in Nigeria. And instead of having situations where most of the CNG conversion centres and CNG parks are outside of Kogi State, Ajaokuta has the land, Ajaokuta has the gas, and Ajaokuta has the facility for conversion kit production. The Industrial Park will attract steel companies to Ajaokuta. So, anything that we need is within our environs. And most importantly, that will create thousands of jobs for Kogites and Nigerians as a whole.

"So, the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is here and will turn around the economy, therefore, the desire of Mr. President to grow the economy by \$1 trillion by 2030, and we will achieve that by the special grace of God," Audu stated.

Kogi State Governor, Ahmed Usman Ododo said that the CNG initiative is a significant milestone in the "Renewed Hope" Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, thanking the President for the initiative, which aims to reduce reliance on petrol, which would in turn alleviate the sufferings of the people.

Governor Ododo, who was represented by the Deputy Governor, Joel Salifu, pledged the commitment of the state to the project, with a promise to train 250 youths in CNG conversion and empower them to enable them to key into global technologies.

On his part, Oluwagbemi said that the Pi-CNG chose Kogi for its inaugural launch because the state beyond being a confluence state of water bodies is also significant in the transportation system as a link between the north and other parts of the country, and also hosts an important gas hub.

He said that the event was not designed just to reduce transportation fares for commercial drivers or fulfill Mr. President's promise to ensure that transporters get their vehicles and tricycles converted for free, but also an opportunity for Nigerians to benefit from the abundant resources of the country, urging everyone to key into the transformative initiative of Mr. President. ●



IF WE HAVE A LOT OF THE MASS TRANSIT VEHICLES BEING RETROFITTED WITH THE CNG, IT WILL LOWER THE COST OF FOOD, COST OF TRANSPORTATION, AND THEN NIGERIANS WILL SMILE



Cardoso



Adedeji

CBN orders banks to submit FX compliance report

STORIES: FESTUS OKOROMADU

The Central Bank of Nigeria has mandated Deposit Money Banks and all other participants in the foreign exchange market to submit compliance reports regarding the FX Code by December 31, 2024.

This directive comes as part of CBN's efforts to strengthen the integrity and efficiency of Nigeria's foreign exchange market, ensuring it aligns with global standards.

The FX Code, issued by CBN and effective from October 14, 2024, outlines a comprehensive set of principles that regulate market participants' conduct to ensure ethical and professional behaviour in Nigeria's FX market.

The FX Code document read, "The FX Code is issued pursuant to CBN Act 2007 and BOFIA Act 2020 which empowers the Central Bank of Nigeria to issue directions for the standards to be adhered to by an institution in the conduct of foreign exchange business in Nigeria.

"Market participants will be required to conduct a self-assessment and submit to the CBN a report on the institution's level of compliance with the FX Code by December 31, 2024.

"All market participants will thereafter be required to submit to the CBN a detailed compliance implementation plan that is approved by its board by December 31, 2024. The FX Code should be fully implemented, and each market participant be in full compliance by December 31, 2024."

The apex bank clarified who the market participants are, as it said, "The FX Code applies to market participants. These are banks licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria under the CBN Act 2007 and Bank and Other Financial Institutions Act 2020 and engage in the wholesale foreign exchange business in Nigeria as part of their licensed business."

The apex bank added that failure to comply with this requirement could attract sanctions, including monetary penalties, under the CBN Act of 2007 and the Bank and Other Financial Institutions Act of 2020.

The FX Code introduces new governance structures and operational frameworks for institutions involved in FX activities, such as banks and financial institutions.

These participants are required to have a sound governance frame-

work, uphold ethical standards, and manage risks effectively.

"Market participants should strive for the highest professional standards," the CBN emphasized.

Starting December 31, 2024, market participants are also required to submit quarterly reports to the Financial Markets Department of the CBN on their adherence to the FX Code to ensure ongoing compliance.

This quarterly reporting will be a continuous monitoring mechanism to ensure the FX market operates transparently and efficiently.

It added, "Market participants will be required to submit a quarterly report to the Financial Markets Department, on the level of compliance to the FX Code within 14 days after the end of every calendar quarter, with the first report due by December 31, 2024."

Also, the CBN has put in place enforcement mechanisms, including sanctions, to address cases of non-compliance.

The bank said, "CBN may take appropriate enforcement and other administrative action including monetary penalties as provided for under the CBN Act 2007 and BOFIA Act 2020 against any market participant for failure to comply with the FX Code."

This move is part of the CBN's broader strategy to promote a robust, fair, and liquid FX market

that reflects market information and supports Nigeria's flexible exchange rate regime.

The FX Code is modeled after the globally accepted FX Global Code and aims to integrate best practices in Nigeria's foreign exchange market.

By aligning with international standards, the CBN hopes to create a more transparent and resilient market infrastructure where participants can confidently engage in FX transactions at competitive prices. ●

\$543.5m FX sold to authorised banks in 11 days – CBN

The Central Bank of Nigeria has disclosed that it sold a total sum of \$543.5m at the rate of N1,540 and N1,580 to authorised dealer banks between September 6 and September 30, 2024.

This amount is the equivalent of N844.92bn in naira.

The CBN disclosed this in a statement signed by the Director, Financial Markets Department, Omolara Duke, on Friday in Abuja.

Duke stated that the sale was conducted via two-way quotes in the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market with the aim of reducing observed market volatility driven by high demand for commodity importation and seasonal demand for FX.

She explained that the amount was sold to an average of 26 authorised dealer banks within 11 trading days.

Despite these sales, the naira only appreciated by 2.77 per cent to N1,541 at the official market but hit its lowest point in September closing at N1,700 per dollar at the parallel market.

The statement read, "The Central Bank of Nigeria sold a total of US\$543.5m from September 06-30, 2024, to Authorized Dealer banks through two-way quotes at the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market on 11 dealing days.

"The FX spot sales were to reduce observed market volatility driven by high demand for commodity importation and seasonal demand for FX. The value dates for all the transactions were T+2."

The CBN director added that the release is to educate and provide guidance to the general public on the pricing of FX and the range of rates it sold to banks within the period.

"This press release is to educate and provide guidance to the general public on the pricing of FX

by taking a cue from the range of rates at which FX was sold by the CBN to Authorised Dealer Banks.

"The CBN will continue to facilitate the supply of FX into the Nigerian Foreign Exchange Market as part of its holistic FX Management strategy," the statement concluded.

The declining value of the naira has raised concerns among Nigerians, as it serves as a benchmark for the prices of essential goods in the country.

Since Olayemi Cardoso became CBN Governor, the local currency has lost more than half its value in just one year.

However, the governor has maintained that the bank has performed its best to strengthen the value of the naira at the exchange rate market.

At the last Monetary Policy Meeting, Cardoso alluded to a correlation between the monthly disbursement from the Federation Account Allocation Committee and FX demand pressures.

He noted that going forward the bank will monitor future disbursement by the FAAC to determine its impact on prices.

Foreign reserves have increased by almost 5 per cent in September rising from \$36.24bn at the beginning of the month to \$38.058bn by September 30, 2024.

A breakdown of the amount sold on each trading day showed that the bank sold \$39m on September 6 between the range rates of N1,580-N1,605 to 26 banks.

On September 9, it sold \$66m at range rates of N1,570-N1,585 to 23 banks. By September 11, the amount sold increased to \$77m at the rate of N1,540-N1,575 to 31 banks.

The CBN also sold \$46m on September 13 at the range of N1,540 and N1,575 to 23 banks. Five days later, the amount sold was reduced to \$24m at the rate of N1,530-N1,540 to 12 authorised banks. ●

Oyo State Governor, Seyi Makinde (right), receiving report from the chairman, Committee on 'Review and Other Regulation in the State Civil/Public Service, Chief Adebisi Adesola, at the Executive Chamber, Governor's Office, Secretariat, Ibadan, on Thursday



Electronic payment transactions in Nigeria hit N89.5trn in July – NIBSS

Data obtained from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System shows that the total value of electronic transactions processed under the NIBSS Instant Payments platform returned to a normal growth path in July 2024 to print at N89.5 trillion, after a brief moderation in the prior month.

This impressive growth can be attributed to the robust expansion of Nigeria's electronic transaction platforms, along with the increasing adoption of mobile telephony services across the country.

In the review month, the value of recorded transactions rose by 12 percent month-on-month, from N79.6 trillion in June 2024, and 88.9 percent year-on-year to N89.5 trillion, up from N47.4 trillion in July 2023. Cumulatively, the total value of transactions processed electronically through the NIP platform between January and July 2024 saw a remarkable increase of 86.4 percent year-on-year, reaching N566.4 trillion, up from N303.8 trillion in the same period last year.

Nigeria's electronic payment ecosystem has experienced significant expansion in recent years, driven by several factors, with the Central Bank of Nigeria playing a pivotal role through policy initiatives such as the adoption of a cash-

less policy.

This is evidenced by the substantial surge in the total value and volume of payment transactions. Notably, Nigeria's E-payment landscape is experiencing steady growth, as businesses and individuals enthusiastically embrace digital channels.

According to data from the NIBSS platform, transactions through mobile money channels grew by 63 percent year-on-year to N6.23 trillion in July 2024, up from N3.82 trillion, and also recorded a 9.7 percent month-on-month increase from N5.7 trillion in June 2024.

Meanwhile, all payments processed through the Point-of-Sale

(PoS) channel saw increases of 8.02 percent month-on-month and 8.89 percent year-on-year, reaching N1.01 trillion at the close of July 2024.

In addition, the NIBSS Instant Payments channel recorded an impressive transaction volume of 907 million, marking a 4.1 percent month-on-month increase from 872 million and a 22 percent year-on-year surge from 743 million in the same period last year.

The E-bills payment platform, commonly used for bill payments, rose by 4.6 percent month-on-month to N239 billion, and on a year-on-year basis, the value of transactions increased by 7.46 percent, up from N137 billion.

Cheque payments also rose by 30 percent month-on-month and 16.87 percent year-on-year to about N294 billion, indicating that some individuals and corporates still prefer cheque transactions.

"We note the positive growth in electronic payment channels during the review period, highlighting the convergence of technological advancements, a thriving e-commerce sector, an expanding population, increasing internet and smartphone penetration, and the CBN's steadfast commitment to achieving 70 percent financial inclusion among underserved individuals in Nigeria. This has paved the way for remarkable growth in electronic payment channels.

NPA rejigs management staff, appoints new General Managers

The Nigerian Ports Authority has announced new appointments and redeployments of General Managers to support the Abubakar Dantsoho led management in actualizing its performance deliverables.

The Authority in a statement on Saturday said the move was geared towards repositioning the country's foremost trade facilitation platform for greater efficiency

and renewed contribution to the national economy.

Dantsoho who was recently appointed by President Bola Tinubu is reputed to have come to the job with decades of sector-specific experience having commenced his career at the NPA as a Youth Corp member.

Commenting on the development, he was quoted to have said "these appointments represent

our deliberate strategy to deploy the wealth of experience of the appointees to national advantage".

The appointments which take immediate effect reorganized some Divisions to align with the direction of the Federal Ministry of Marine & Blue Economy retained Dr (Mrs) Chinwe Nwokolo, Pharmacist Hadiza Sani and Mr. Babatunde Gbotolorun as General Managers Medical, Abuja Liaison

and ICT Divisions respectively.

The new appointees named to head various Divisions include Captain Jerome Angyunwe, Engr. Richard Unde, Engr. Mukhtar Isa, Mr. Anthony Edosomwan, Mr. Dapo Adekunle, Mr. Victor Gofwan, Mr. Rabi Dambatta, Mrs Priscilla Maduka, Mrs Sarah Ballah, Mrs Zainab Dantiye, Engr. Anas Suleiman, Mr. Adeayo Oni, Mr. Abdulkadir Gusau, Mr. RAB

Salau, Barr. Nurrude Abdulka-dir, Mr. Seyi Iyawe, Barr. Ethel Uduehi, Barr. Nansel Zhimwan, Barr. Ahmad Wanka, Mr. Fatai Oladapo, Mr. Ibrahim Lukman, Engr. Abdul Isah, Mr. Charles Okaga and Mr. Ikechukwu Onyemekara who assumes the role of the Authority's spokesperson as General Manager, Corporate & Strategic Communications Division. ●

The rate at which bandits and terrorists kill and kidnap Nigerians is on the increase, particularly in the northern part of Nigeria. In an attempt to combat this, the Federal Government has spent billions of naira to ensure that Nigerians are safe, but this issue continues to ravage the northern region. What do you say to this?

No matter how many expensive drugs you give to patients, if they are not the right drugs, they will not get cured. In fact, the drug needed may be very cheap, but you may be giving an expensive drug that is ineffective for the ailment. In this case, there is a need to diagnose what the problem is, especially among the youth.

We must understand that these individuals are all young, whether they are Boko Haram or bandits; you will never see an old man among them. There is a social reason associated with all these disturbances, and there is also a lack of respect for leadership.

The Federal Government must look at the root cause of this problem and start to apply the right formula to solve it. Spending trillions on ammunition and militarisation when the problem is social will yield no results. This will only compound the issue, leading people to become radicalised and turn to militancy.

Recently, you said the Federal Government should not have radicalised bandits and Boko Haram. Why did you say so?

Well, it is not the government that started it. A long time ago, when the conflict was a social or ethnic problem, they used the military to quell or suppress it. It is not suppressible.

When a society is neglected until it becomes harmful, like the military, the next line of action is dialogue—to sit down with them, especially when they express a desire for dialogue.

For instance, I have been there, I have seen them, I have talked to them, and they said they want dialogue. Why does the Federal Government emphasise the kinetic approach when the people say they want dialogue? If they do not want dialogue, that is a different issue. Then the government should come out with the armament.

Another thing is that our military is doing very well. It is overstretched from Maiduguri to Sokoto, from Sokoto to Lagos, and from Lagos to all parts of the country.

It is not just about the military; it can be the police. What we have to do is downsize the military, expand the police force, and empower them. It is really useless when we spend our money on modern gadgets, intelligence gathering, and all that; we are going astray.

The military is a fire engine. It is a fire-for-fire approach. These people they are fighting are guerrillas.

Using the military to fight a guerrilla war is like punishing the military. We have seen that in Afghanistan; now Israelis are fighting guerrillas in Gaza and are facing serious consequences for doing that.

The military is not designed to fight guerrillas. It is just like using a hammer to kill flies. One will destroy the house. The design of the military is not for this job. We have to empower the police, enhance intelligence gathering, and, more importantly, empower the people themselves. The trillions the government has spent on social welfare and amenities do not even need to be agitated for. This is all agitation.



“THE MILITARY IS NOT DESIGNED TO FIGHT GUERRILLAS. IT IS JUST LIKE USING A HAMMER TO KILL FLIES. ONE WILL DESTROY THE HOUSE. THE DESIGN OF THE MILITARY IS NOT FOR THIS JOB. WE HAVE TO EMPOWER THE POLICE, ENHANCE INTELLIGENCE GATHERING, AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, EMPOWER THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES. THE TRILLIONS THE GOVERNMENT HAS SPENT ON SOCIAL WELFARE AND AMENITIES DO NOT EVEN NEED TO BE AGITATED FOR

Downsize military, empower police, enhance intelligence gathering to end banditry, terrorism – Sheikh Gumi

Ahmad Abubakar Gumi is an Islamic cleric, scholar and former military officer with the rank of Captain in the Nigerian Army. In this interview, he says the Federal Government must look at the root causes of banditry and terrorism in the country and start to apply the right formula to solve them. He urges the Federal Government to downsize the military, expand the police force, and empower them. Excerpts:

When people don't see justice, they take justice into their own hands.

Many Nigerians want to know how you find bandits and talk to them, and why the Federal Government can't use you as bait to apprehend them.

People should not talk like that. This is unintelligent. For instance, if you are in Lagos or Ogun State and you have access to see people, do you ask how you have access to them? These people are Nigerians; we can trace them through their relatives and all that easily.

When one approaches them as a negotiator or a preacher, they open their hearts. So, they can be approached and convinced. The question is: Why is the government not taking that course? Well, I can say the present government has learned from the legacy of the past.

The only thing I think is lacking here is that the talking is too much. If you stand on the right side, then we will get results.

So far, you've said there's a need for the Federal Government to empower and educate them. Meanwhile, do you agree that the motive of these

terrorists is towards the Islamisation of Nigeria?

Before the herdsmen became bandits, they were fighting an ethnic war. They respect the government as an authority and have said that the problem is vigilante groups. The vigilantes started killing and massacring them; they had no peace, and that was their grievance. If there can be one vigilante group and a state police or local government police, some of them should be incorporated to have a balance. Nobody is saying anything about that, and everyone is doing their own business. Now we are all suffering.

Why have you taken the matter of speaking to these terrorist elements seriously?

I am in the eye of the storm, and I am a full-fledged Nigerian. I also have an interest in peace and tranquility. I cannot wait for the official narrative because I have been in the Army and I know how things go.

Today, 90 percent of our intelligence is garbage. What we have left is just about 10 percent. That is why we have coups because intelligence does not have a way

to identify these people.

They also killed their leaders because no intelligence picked them up. Can we wait until we get a government that understands, then, we can make plans to intervene and see if it can calm nerves to achieve peace. No, as individuals, we have to do our best. Then I can advise the government on what we have seen.

One thing Nigerians should understand is that I have never been to any den of these people without officials of the government. I go with the police because one cannot go alone; you must go with them.

Only that they will tell you there is a perimeter—don't come with some of them. Sometimes, I also go with traditional institutions and state government officials. My plan is only to broker peace with them. They open their doors for us to sit and discuss issues.

Do you think they are ready to sheathe their swords?

At the moment, they have started shouting "Allahu Akbar," and that is what we fear. Now they are committing the same crimes of killing, raping, and slaughtering.

When we went there, they were not shouting "Allahu Akbar." Now, they are aggrieved, and they think it is a revengeful fight. They must have been engaged by religious fanatics. This is what we feared.

It has been alleged that these terrorists are being sponsored by some politicians to wreak havoc in the country, especially those in the northern region. What is your take on this?

No politician is sponsoring these people. We are all victims. The opposition is not even behind this. This is a natural reaction of people neglected for centuries.

Now they are exposed to the world and they want education. These people are exposed to the internet and see how much they are deprived.

They want to fight back. This act is not orchestrated by anybody. To our surprise, in a school built for herdsmen in a village between Abuja and Kaduna, over 600 of them, along with their families, have started schooling there. They are telling us they don't want their children to be like them. Imagine if we did that all around the country. ●

Capital Market

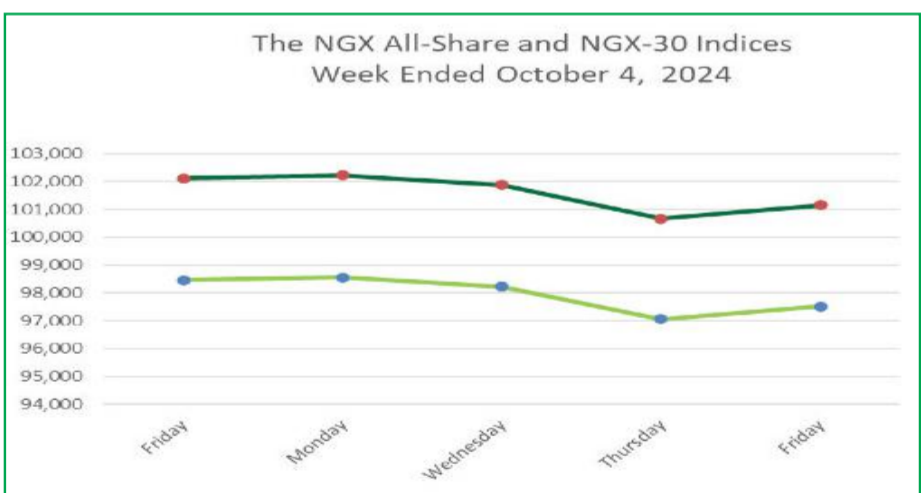
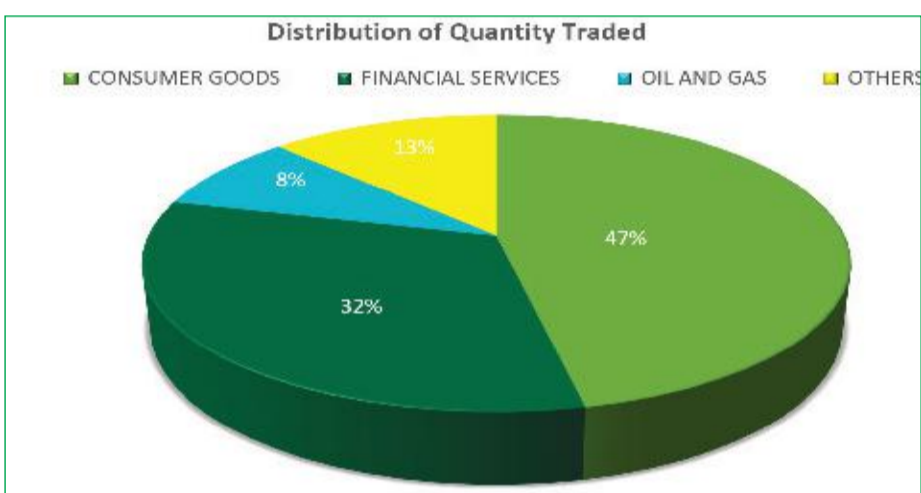
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WEEK ENDED OCTOBER 4, 2024

Top 10 Price Gainers				
Company	Open	Close	Gain (N)	% Change
DEAP CAPITAL MANAGEMENT & TRUST PLC	1.11	1.46	0.35	↑ 31.53
SEPLAT ENERGY PLC	4103.10	4964.70	861.60	↑ 21.00
TRIPPLE GEE AND COMPANY PLC.	4.13	4.97	0.84	↑ 20.34
VERITAS KAPITAL ASSURANCE PLC	1.40	1.68	0.28	↑ 20.00
REGENCY ASSURANCE PLC	0.69	0.82	0.13	↑ 18.84
AFRICA PRUDENTIAL PLC	9.00	10.65	1.65	↑ 18.33
LIVESTOCK FEEDS PLC.	2.80	3.28	0.48	↑ 17.14
R T BRISCOE PLC.	3.01	3.50	0.49	↑ 16.28
NEM INSURANCE PLC	7.65	8.75	1.10	↑ 14.38
CWG PLC	5.60	6.20	0.60	↑ 10.71

Top 10 Price Decliners				
Company	Open	Close	Loss (N)	% Change
MCNICHOLS PLC	1.60	1.35	-0.25	↓ -15.63
FIDELITY BANK PLC	15.00	13.00	-2.00	↓ -13.33
DANGOTE SUGAR REFINERY PLC	34.85	30.60	-4.25	↓ -12.20
FBN HOLDINGS PLC	28.15	25.00	-3.15	↓ -11.19
DANGOTE CEMENT PLC	532.00	478.80	-53.20	↓ -10.00
ETERNA PLC.	30.00	27.00	-3.00	↓ -10.00
ACADEMY PRESS PLC.	3.17	2.86	-0.31	↓ -9.78
P Z CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC.	19.50	17.65	-1.85	↓ -9.49
NASCON ALLIED INDUSTRIES PLC	33.00	30.00	-3.00	↓ -9.09
ELLAH LAKES PLC.	4.92	4.50	-0.42	↓ -8.54



CBN EXCHANGE RATE

Date	Currency	Buying(NGN)	Central(NGN)	Selling(NGN)
OCT./3/2024	US DOLLAR	1656.86	1657.36	1657.86
OCT./3/2024	POUNDS STERLING	2174.1317	2174.7878	2175.4439
OCT./3/2024	EURO	1829.0078	1829.5597	1830.1117
OCT./3/2024	SWISS FRANC	1945.8133	1946.4005	1946.9877
OCT./3/2024	YEN	11.3073	11.3107	11.3141
OCT./3/2024	CFA	2.6822	2.6922	2.7022
OCT./3/2024	WAUA	2157.5721	2158.2232	2158.8743
OCT./3/2024	RIYAL	441.3233	441.4565	441.5896
OCT./3/2024	DANISH KRONA	245.1665	245.2405	245.3145
OCT./3/2024	SDR	2234.11	2234.7842	2235.4584

Investors suffer N539bn loss as negative sentiment dominates first trading week of October in NGX

FESTUS OKOROMADU
ABUJA

The local bourse, Nigerian Exchange Limited, closed the Nigerian equities market began October on a negative note, with investors losing N539 billion in market capitalisation.

Trading activities on the floor of the Nigerian Exchange Limited in the first week of the month saw investors exhibiting cautious investment trends amid prevailing macroeconomic uncertainties.

Many investors appear to be seeking portfolio rebalancing in light of global and domestic economic challenges.

The market recorded losses driven primarily by profit-taking in large-cap stocks, further eroding investors' confidence.

The decline reflected renewed bearish sentiment, as sell-offs across key sectors like the banking and industrial goods weighed on market performance.

The NGX All-Share Index fell by a significant margin (0.95 percent) week on week to 97,520.54 points, marking a continuation of the downward trend seen in the early days of the month.

Consequently, market capitalisation of listed equities nosedived by 0.95 percent week on week to N56.04 trillion on profit taking activities across major sectors.

The year-to-date return of the index printed at 30.42 percent even as the exchange recorded more gainers (45) compared to the week's losers of 33 and reflects the positive market breadth and internals driving market dynamics.

Market momentum was weak, fuelled by sell interest across small, mid, and large-cap stocks. As a result, the weekly trade value advanced by 188.7 percent week-on-week to N132.63 billion, while the traded volumes this week declined by 13.9 percent week on week to 2.85 billion shares, all executed in 39,529 deals translating to a 20% decrease from the previous week.

Across the sectoral spectrum, performance was in the mixed bag, with three of the five sectors under observation closing in the bullish territory.

The NGX-Oil & Gas and NGX-Insurance indexes led the charge with weekly gains of 7.29

percent and 3.81 percent, respectively, driven by buying interest in stocks such as SEPLAT, VERITASKAP, REGALINS, and NEM.

Also, the NGX-Consumer Goods index saw some pockets of gains by 0.34 percent week on week due to upticks in MECURE, INTBREW, GUINNESS and TANTALIZER in that order.

On the contrary, the NGX-Industrial Goods and, NGX-Banking indices closed the week down by 6.84 percent and 0.74 percent respectively, buoyed by downbeat sentiments in the likes of FIDELITY, FBNH, DANGCEM, BUA CEMENT and UPDC REIT.

At the close of the week, stocks like DEAP-CAP whose share price rose by 32 percent, SEPLAT ENERGY 21 percent, TRIPLE G 20 percent, VERITASKAP 20 percent, and REGALINS 19 percent emerged as the top gainers, drawing significant investor attention.

Conversely, others like MCNICHOLS which lose 19 percent, FIDELITYBK 18 percent, DANGSUGAR 14 percent, FBNH 13 percent, and DANGCEM 10 percent of their share price were the week's laggards, as investors offloaded these stocks as part of a broader portfolio rebalancing exercise.

Meanwhile, researchers at Cowry Assets Management Limited have predicted that positive outing for investors in the new week. Forecasting what the new week holds in stock for equities investors, they said "In the coming week, we anticipate a positive outing for the local bourse as we see the local bourse showing signs of recovery heading into the final quarter of the year, while the market awaits the nine months performance scorecards of some of the early filers such as GEREGU, DANGCEM, DANGSUGAR, MTNN, amongst others. "Nevertheless, we continue to advise investors to focus on fundamentally sound stocks."

On their part, market analysts at Cordros Securities Limited charge investors to retain the cautious trading approach for now.

"In the near term, we expect investors to maintain a cautious trading approach, with sentiments likely skewed towards the bearish side. As such, we expect intermittent profit-taking to persist.

"However, this could be balanced by bargain-hunting activities as investors prepare for the upcoming Q3-24 earnings season," they stated in their weekly market review report. ●

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Discordant tunes as government employs drastic measures to suppress protests

BRIGHT JACOB

The date was October 1, 2024, and Nigerians were taking part in a commemoration of their country's Independence Day.

That momentous occasion, however, turned out not to be the only thing that was occupying the minds of the people on that particular day.

Nigerians were also waiting with bated breath to see whether an earlier announced nationwide protest, themed #FearlessInOctober, goes as planned.

The October protest was supposed to be the sequel to the #EndBadGovernance protests which shook the entire fabric of the country from August 1 to 10, but the Police had something to say about that.

The protest was peaceful in some states, such as Lagos and Ondo, but the Police came down heavily on protesters in a handful of states in the country where it was held.

There were reports that some protesters in Rivers and Kano States, including Abuja – the Federal Capital Territory, were teargassed and boxed into a corner as Nigeria marked its 64th independence anniversary.

For this reason, some Nigerians were disappointed that the October 1 protest did not gather enough momentum, while many more were relieved that the protests were contained and protesters sheathed their swords.

Analysts say the protest was a flop and understandably so. The majority of Nigerians boycotted it. And except for those states where members of Civil Society Organizations and human rights activists braved the odds to venture onto the streets, the protests would have ended up an outright failure.

And unlike the #EndBadGovernance protests, which were used by Nigerians to air their grievances about the hardship, poverty and bad governance in the country, the October 1 protests did not pack a hefty punch that could be equated with the August protests.

The general consensus among commentators and observers alike is that the roles the government played and the measures they used to cast the August protests in bad light, contributed in no small way to the widespread apathy among Nigerians towards it.

Indeed, the government's approach, which are said to be both decent and crude – depending on who was at the receiving end, were brought to bear prior, during and after the August protests, and likely contributed to the low turnout of protesters on October 1.

It will be recalled that one of the first strategies used by the government to dissuade those bent on protesting in August was the decision by Tinubu to reach out to influential traditional rulers in the country who, in turn, compelled their subjects to stand down.

First-class monarchs, such as the Ooni of Ife, Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi; the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II; the Dein of Agbor, Benjamin Keagborekuzi; the Emir of Zazzau, Ahmed Banalli, then stepped in to appease the youth and used moral suasion to convince them.

In Lagos State, the dreaded Oro Festival was invoked, specifically in the Ikorodu area of the state, to give would-be protesters the jitters and discourage them from hitting the streets in the bustling metropolis.

The Tinubu-led Federal Government also began to implement what supporters described as well thought out policies, such as the student loans scheme, and this, to some extent, pleased many Nigerians.

And not only this, the government also began to distribute foodstuffs like rice and beans. Moreover, they also paid stipends to unemployed graduates.

Tinubu himself even urged the organisers of the August protests and the protesters, when demonstrations turned violent, to suspend further hostilities as he was willing to dialogue with them.

He said, "As President of this country, I must ensure public order. In line with my constitutional oath to protect the lives and

SOME OF THESE PROTESTS HAVE BEEN USED TO MAKE NONSENSE OF EVEN DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS. PROTESTS HAVE BEEN USED IN THE PAST TO ALSO OVERTHROW DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS. WE HAVE SEEN IT HAPPEN BEFORE IN MANY COUNTRIES

property of every citizen, our government will not stand idly by and allow a few with a clear political agenda to tear this nation apart.

"Under the circumstances, I hereby enjoin protesters and the organisers to suspend any further protest and create room for dialogue, which I have always acceded to at the slightest opportunity."

Security agencies were also at their menacing best. Their men were deployed throughout the country and did not allow the August protests to fully blossom into lawlessness in many states in Nigeria.

The Police, who lost several men during the protests, also arrested a sizable

number of protesters. In fact, the National Human Rights Commission disclosed that those arrested across the country in relation to the August protest were 1,200, while some media reports put the number at almost 2500.

Even though some of the protesters have been released, many who were granted bail have not been able to perfect their bail conditions and are still battling for their lives and freedom.

Last month, a Federal High Court in Abuja granted bail to 10 protesters accused of alleged treason over their participation in the August protests.

At the hearing, the High Court judge, Emeka Nwite, granted each of the defendants bail in the sum of N10 million with one surety who must have property worth the bail sum in Abuja.

This particular approach adopted by the government to allegedly silence protesters is what Amnesty international Nigeria, through its Director, Isa Sanusi, called "repressive."

Sanusi said, "The Nigerian authorities must end their repressive approach to peaceful protests and listen to critics, as the country faces its worst economic crisis in three decades."

A political and socio-economic analyst, Ifeoma Ogbonna, told *The Point*, "My heart goes out to those who are still remanded in custody in various Nigerian prisons following the #EndBadGovernance protests in the country.

"I am sure members of their families are going through a lot. I am also sure that some of the detainees don't have family members and may rot in the prisons. This is the country we find ourselves in.

"I read a report by a civil society group about the plight of #EndBadGovernance protesters that are still languishing in prisons. It is shocking that the vast majority of the over 2,000 protesters that were arrested cannot meet their bail condition. It is disturbing and scary.

"With this unfortunate scenario playing out in the minds of Nigerians who escaped arrests during the protests,

many will not come back again to protest against bad governance in the country.

"And I don't blame Nigerians who decided not to join these protests again. This is because when they are arrested for participating in a protest, the world forgets them. Everyone continues with his or her life and those arrested are left to carry their cross themselves.

"And sadly, too, most of the time, those who mobilized them bail only themselves. They cannot do much for other Nigerians in detention because they are stretched financially."

Reacting to the argument whether the government reined in protesters or not, a public affairs analyst, Alex Nwadike, said, "I won't blame any government that tries to control or limit protests in a country.

"Some of these protests have been used to make nonsense of even democratically elected governments. Protests have been used in the past to also overthrow democratic governments. We have seen it happen before in many countries.

"Assuming you also looked critically at this situation, you would realise that the government takes some of these drastic measures it uses to suppress protests, especially violent protests, because it fears for the safety of peace loving citizens.

"Thugs and miscreants usually take over these protests and use that opportunity to vandalise and wreck people's businesses. No responsible Government would sit idly by while people's means of livelihood were taken away.

"But even with all that said, the government must also be compassionate. The President is like a father. And if his children have offended him, he can forgive them.

"Let the government drop the treason charges against the protesters. Treason carries a possible death penalty and that is too harsh. Let them release everyone who was arrested for participating in the #EndBadGovernance protests."

Ascending Odu'a Company beckoning South West development commission

TUNDE AKANNI

From the presidency in Abuja came the news of the appointment of a nine-person board for the newly enacted North West Development Commission Saturday September 28, 2024. Same day, friends and associates of the immediate past Chairman and Group Managing Director of Odu'a Investment Company, Dr Segun Aina and Mr. Adewale Raji respectively, spared the entire evening to honour the great duo.

It was the very first time that any such event was organized by the management of the 71-year-old company.

As far as the current Chairman of OICL, Otunba Bimbo Ashiru, was concerned, adorning new appointees with congratulations rather smacks of illogicality.

"We should always wait to see how well they have performed to determine whether they deserve it or not because only good work should earn congratulations, not sheer appointment."

He added, "Our honourees tonight are the perfect candidates for honour and congratulations."

Ashiru was emphatic that the OICL model was its own gift to public service rating in place of parameter-blank, fleeting and patronage seeking and rather unfounded praise singing often preceding formal assumption of duty.

Ashiru was loudly applauded by the audience, obviously populated heavily by fellow south westerners. It was like a precocious cautionary note to friends of those that may emerge as appointees to the board of the forthcoming South West

Development Commission such as announced for the Northwest Development Commission that Saturday.

Interestingly, with the event of September 28, the retiring Group Managing Director was becoming a serial honouree for excellence.

As recently as August 18, 2024, the University of Jos Alumni staged another fanfare for Raji and a few other high achievers among them.

Like Saturday September 28, 2024, like August 18, 2024. Regaled in snow white flowing agbada and pumping hands of friends and other folks who had come around to felicitate, Mrs. Raji fittingly glowed with smiles and head nods acknowledging everyone who had come to honour the hubby.

On hand and duly recognized by the organisers was the sitting chair of OICL, Otunba Abimbola Ashiru as well the incumbent Group Managing Director, Mr. Yunusa leading the select management

staff including the ebullient Victor Ayemoro and vivacious Nike Ajobo, both of corporate affair department.

Such was the grandeur of the Unijos alumni event that the proud Lagos chapter of the Unijos Alumni flew into Lagos, the current vice-chancellor, Prof Tanko Ishaya.

For the Unijos Alumni, there was no constricting the inspiring stories of the righteous Raji and others listed for honour on that day to Unijos alumni alone.

It was good enough for anyone interested in narratives of diligence, commitment to professionalism and respect for omoluabi ethos that their darling Adewale Raji symbolises.

They therefore ensured the gracious presence of select friends and associates of the honourees speaking at the loudly celebrated adoption of Otunba Ashiru as an 'honorary' alumnus of Unijos.

Raji as the star honouree was celebrated for his sterling leadership and rather uncommon spirit of integrity with which he successfully coursed through the ranks at PZ Cussons to emerge as a managing director.

The association beamed with steaming pride that one of their own had captained the business legacy of the entire south-western region with a most inspiring mien.

As Raji's citation was being rendered while made to stand tall for all to appreciate, the venue reverberated with thunderous claps which punctuated the highlighted distinctions for which Raji should be eternally appreciated.

At PZ Cussons for instance, Raji ingeniously pioneered the creation of Distribution Service SBU. This was in addition to nurturing and managing an innovative supply chain blueprint for the delivery of a consonant nationwide operation of logistics and first class distribution networks.

This enterprise alone was estimated at N120 billion (domestic sales) and N3 billion (export sales) as of 2014.

A Fellow of the Association of Corporate Governance Professionals of Nigeria, the Institute of

Logistics Management of Nigeria as well as the Institute of Entrepreneurs, it was not for nothing that Raji got appointed to the prestigious Board of the University of Ibadan School of Business.

Raji, as a most distinguished alumnus, is a BOT member of the national body of the University of Jos Alumni Association.

This distinguished Unijos alumnus' transcendental destiny of distinction echoed on. Then came the evening of September 28 for his South West kinsmen to further appreciate their own even as what Nijel Lardner, one of his friends, calls his



Raji



Ashiru

cool mien of a teacher, helps to sustain Raji's humility and stability, never to be carried away by his serial successes.

Raji hit the ground running on assumption of office as GMD of Odua. As he activated the cleansing of inherited rots, he did not lose sight of the ultimate marketability of the entity for further expansion for enhanced earnings.

Promptly, the former multinational chieftain just berthing at OICL triggered the application of the mathematical inflection point theory to energise for digitech compliance, the company's public image management.

This was decisively done to properly showcase the envisioned accruals to his relentless commitment. For Raji, the journey to bring glory to the commercial bond uniting all the states of the South West of Nigeria had commenced and would be driven with all passion possible.

He was as meticulous as he was futuristic, resisting any stampede, rather sticking to being self-styled.

Notwithstanding the lean human and material resources available, the compassionate GMD revved up the OICL machine

to such an enviable level that its statistics commanded sufficient attention from the Lagos State Government.

A major accomplishment of the Raji regime that will remain an enduring pillar of OICL was the creation of about Nigeria's biggest property company from the pre-existing WEMABOD.

This he did by facilitating the consummation of the multi-billion Naira joint venture development of the luxurious address home by WEMABOD Estate at Ikoyi Crescent as well as the construction and commissioning of Westlink-Iconic Villa in Ibadan.

In 2018 therefore, the Lagos State Government formalized its interest and became a shareholder like the rest of Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo. Thus emerged at least a commercially strengthened South West which today constitutes the fourth largest economy in Africa.

South West, with its security also substantially boosted by Amotekun, today remains the region to beat in Nigeria.

To reinforce Raji's performance and strengthen the conglomerate further, the owner states sought to deepen corporate

AS RAJI'S CITATION WAS BEING RENDERED WHILE MADE TO STAND TALL FOR ALL TO APPRECIATE, THE VENUE REVERBERATED WITH THUNDEROUS CLAPS WHICH PUNCTUATED THE HIGHLIGHTED DISTINCTIONS FOR WHICH RAJI SHOULD BE ETERNALLY APPRECIATED

governance initiated by Raji and persuaded a most versatile player in the corporate circles with multidimensional experience of decades in the person of Dr. Segun Aina.

Dr. Aina has had "three decades of distinguished banking career. He was the president and chairman of Council of Chartered

Institute of Bankers; West African Bankers Association; Chairman of Global Council of Banking Education Standards Board," to mention only a few.

To avoid the likes of a ludicrous situation of some lethargic board members wishing away parts of the legendary conglomerate for paltry compensation, Dr Aina spearheaded a merit driven recruitment to the board routing barely literate political jobbers. No sooner had this commenced than the results began to manifest. Subsidiaries that had gone comatose roared back to life even as no fewer than three new ones were created namely, South West Agricultural Company, SWAgCo; South West Innovation and Tech Company, SWIT as well as BITA Exploration Limited which has since secured the BITA marginal oilfield.

Today, from the daunting indebtedness that Raji inherited in 2014 has since emerged a conglomerate that has managed to muster the payment of dividends of over N300 billion to the owner states.

The current board chair, Bimbo Ashiru, has promised to take this even further. Obviously in full endorsement of the duo of Aina and Raji who have come a long way to renew the enviable position of the South West among all the regions, the Oranmiyan Hall venue of the unprecedented shindig was filled to capacity with top players across all sectors including top government officials and others like the foremost LASU benefactor, Alhaji Makanjuola of Caverton Helicopters.

Of particularly special significance perhaps was Aremo Segun Osoba who defied all his odds to make it to the event and expressed his utmost excitement at the upswing of Odu'a to the delight of all including the aged but delectably attired mother of the retiring GMD, Adewale Raji.

Living up to the nomenclatural epithet of the home state of its headquarters, Oyo, therefore, Odu'a Investment Company has come to present a most reassuring readiness for shrewd management of the imminent South west Development Commission coming after those of other regions of Nigeria. ●

*Akanni is an associate professor of journalism at Lagos State University. Follow him on X via @AkintundeAkanni

Sports

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NPFL: Enaruna excited over his scoring prowess



Bendel Insurance golden boy, Michael Enaruna has spoken with so much excitement about his recent goal form as he urged fans to be patient with the team.

Speaking with journalists after scoring his goal for Bendel Insurance FC in the home game against El-Kanemi Warriors which ended 1-1 at the weekend Enaruna was delighted with his recent form that has seen him score 2 goals in 2 games for the Benin boys. His first was the winning goal against his former team, Shooting Stars SC

which ended 1-0 and now his second goal against El-Kanemi Warriors.

"I feel so happy for my performance today, I give God all the glory for everything. It's not been easy for me, right from the pre-season period till now, things were really not working in my favour and in addition to that, I sustained an injury which didn't also help. As a team, we are not very happy with this result, as we didn't get the kind of result we wanted but we'll continue to do all we can on and off pitch to get to back to winning ways and also maintain some consistency

with that."

On how he thinks his goal scoring form will help his team going forward, he said, "I feel really confident right now and I think that's all I need to help my team. I think next weekend will be another opportunity to contribute my quota for the team and I'm very confident of a win against Ikorodu City."

Enaruna is currently the highest Goalscorer for Bendel Insurance this season with two goals while James Oronsaye and Vincent Okeke have a goal each. ●

Martin hails Onuachu, Aribo despite Southampton loss to Arsenal

Southampton coach Russell Martin was delighted with the performance of Nigeria internationals Paul Onuachu and Joe Aribo despite his side's 3-1 loss to Arsenal in a Premier League encounter at the Emirates Stadium in London at the weekend.

The Saints are still searching for their first win after the opening seven matches in the new season, having lost six games while drawing once against fellow newcomers Ipswich Town.

For the first time in four matches, Aribo was named in the starting lineup, while Onuachu made his first appearance in the English top flight in 511 days.

After missing a penalty against Manchester United, Cameron Archer broke the deadlock in the 55th minute but goals from Kai Havertz, Gabriel Martinelli and Bukayo Saka secured a win for the Londoners.

Aribo managed to stop Leandro Trossard from pulling the trigger but Saka was quickest to react to the loose ball and slotted into the net in the 88th minute to extinguish any hopes of a Southampton comeback.

Aribo brought physicality to the Southampton midfield, while Onuachu did not do badly against two of the best central defenders in the Premier League Gabriel Magalhães and William Saliba.

Speaking at the post-match press conference, Martin singled out Onuachu and Aribo for praise despite the loss to Arsenal.

"Paul came on and did really well today and I thought Rhino did a brilliant job for us too, a really brilliant job for us," Martin told reporters. ●



Why I had strong start to new season - Dessers

Rangers striker Cyriel Dessers has explained the reason behind his excellent start to the season.

The Super Eagles forward struggled largely last season and came under huge criticism for his performances which led to calls that Rangers should sign a replacement.

The Light Blues did attempt to get a replacement, as they were linked to last season's Scottish Premiership top scorer Lawrence Shankland and a host of others but eventually signed Hamza Igamane.

Dessers wasn't affected by the criticism and has been able to earn the trust of Philippe Clement, starting all but two games across all competitions this term, and he has also been aided by Igamane's slow start to life.

With seven goals in 12 appearances, the Nigerian striker is Rangers top-scorer and he has now explained the reason behind his strong start to the season.

Speaking with reporters, Dessers alluded that his participation during pre-season as compared to the previous season has helped his form.

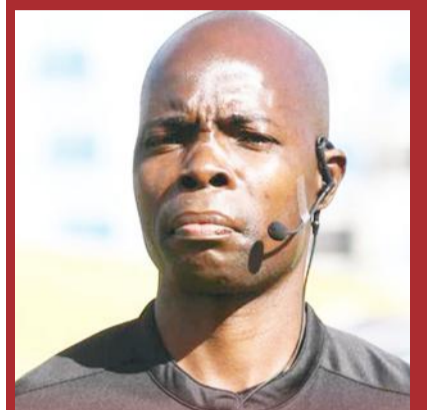
"I'm feeling good. For the first time in a few years, I had a full pre-season and I think that's showed up to now," Dessers remarked.

"I've got some goals and assists already and I've had a decent start to the season. It hasn't been perfect but you can see we're growing as a team.

"Games against the likes of Lyon will help us massively on our journey. It's a learning process for all of us and we have to keep going."

Dessers has three goals in his first six games in the Scottish Premiership this term but he had just one at this stage in the last campaign, highlighting his upturn in fortune.

However, his form hasn't earned him a place in the Super Eagles squad as he was excluded from the squad that will face Libya in back-to-back fixtures in the 2025 Africa Cup of the Nations qualifiers. ●



Morocco 2025: CAF names Nkhakananga as ref for Nigeria, Libya clash

ANDREW EKEJIUBA

Referee Godfrey Philip Nkhakananga, of Malawian nationality, will be at the centre during Friday's 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying match between Nigeria's Super Eagles and the Mediterranean Knights of Libya, at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium, Uyo.

The Confederation of African Football (CAF) has also appointed Nkhakananga's compatriots, Clemence Kanduku and Joseph Nyauti as assistant referees 1 and 2 respectively, while Botswanan Keabetswe Dintwa will serve as fourth official for the Matchday 3 clash starting at 5pm local time.

Munkaila Nassam Adam from Ghana will be the commissioner, while Issaka Boubacar from Niger and Mayowa Akingbemisilu will be in the roles of referee assessor and broadcast venue manager respectively.

Meanwhile, the NFF has respectfully called on Editors/Managers of the nation's sporting media to send in requests for media accreditation for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations Qualifying Match between the Super Eagles of Nigeria and the Mediterranean Knights of Libya.

The match will take place at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium, Uyo on Friday, 11th October 2024, starting from 5pm.

NFF further informed that in consideration of the size of the Media Gallery at the venue, no media organization shall be accorded more than one slot for Press and Photo-Journalist.

Media organizations are to send in their request between 12:00hrs on Sunday, 6th October 2024 and 18:00hrs on Tuesday, 8th October 2024.

The accreditation cards will be issued at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium, Uyo as from 16:00hrs on Thursday, 10th October 2024. ●

AFCON Qualifier: Ige backs Eguavoen to deliver despite Osimhen's absence against Libya

Former Flying Eagles goalkeeper Kola Ige has expressed his thoughts on the notable absence of Victor Osimhen from Nigeria's squad for the upcoming double-header against Libya in the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers.

The matches are set to take place at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo on Friday, October 11, before the team travels to Benghazi for the return fixture on Tuesday, October 15.

Interim manager Augustine Eguavoen has named a 23-man squad, which includes three goalkeepers, seven defenders, six midfielders, and seven strikers.

Among the selected players are Ademola Lookman, William Troost-Ekong, Alex Iwobi, and the returning Chidera Ejuke.

However, Osimhen and Olisa Ndah have been sidelined due to injuries, leaving a significant gap in the team.

In an interview with reporters, Ige acknowledged the impact of Osimhen's absence but expressed confidence in Eguavoen's ability to adapt the team's tactics.

"Eguavoen is a team player, I have played under him before, he is a very good coach," Ige stated.

"He knows how to put the boys together. He has been doing that for long he is not a novice. Of course there would a little bit changes and he knows everything, he has experience."

Ige emphasized the importance of commitment from the players called up for the crucial matches, stating, "Any player invited to this game has to give more than 100 percent because every player wants to be at the Na-

tions Cup."

"Yes football is all about money but sometimes you have to count how many things you have done for your club and country."

"So if they are rating you too it will be among things they will rate you with."

As the team prepares for both matches, all eyes will be on the players and the technical staff to see how they can adjust to the absence of Osimhen. ●



Oborewori lauds Zenith Bank for organizing Zenith Bank Headmaster's Cup

The third edition of the Delta State Zenith Bank Headmaster's Cup has kicked off on Sunday, October 6, at Saint Patrick College field Asaba with Azagba Primary School Asaba and Mbala Primary School playing a goalless draw in the opening game.

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborewori, lauded Zenith Bank PLC as he performed the ceremonial kick off. He appreciated the sponsor, Zenith Bank for the gesture to foster partnership with his administration to achieve his vision of meaningful development through its Corporate Social Responsibility outreach.

The governor, who was represented by his Chief of Staff, Hon. Johnson Erijo, said that Zenith Bank/Delta Headmasters' Football Competition was a testament of his administration's commitment to sport development at all stages and levels in the state with the objective of nurturing and developing the scholars physically and mentally.

Oborewori explained that there was positive impact of the tournament in the lives of the learners in schools since the first edition which resulted in increased participation by both public and private schools.

According to the governor, in 2023, 639 schools participated in the competition, adding that over 700 primary schools had been accredited to participate in the 2024 edition of the competition.

While commending Zenith Bank PLC for their commitment in sustaining the competition in the state, Oborewori noted that the achievements recorded in the last few years of the tournament which had been sponsored by the Zenith Bank PLC was commendable.

He said that sports had the power to change the world and urged the younger generation to showcase their talents and exhibit high sense of discipline.

Earlier in his welcome address, the State Commissioner for Primary Education, Dr. Kingsley Ashibogwu stated that the competition was invigorated to strengthen grassroots sports development and foster unity among primary school children in the state.

Ashibogwu recalled that the premier position of Delta State in National Sports notwithstanding, the governor had always deemed it necessary to groom footballers in the state to world class players, stressing that this initiative informed Governor Oborewori's decision to develop grassroots football where talents could be discovered.

The Primary Education Commissioner, who disclosed that a total of 708 schools had already registered for this year's edition as against 639 in 2023 edition, thanked Zenith Bank for their unwavering dedication at ensuring the sustenance of the partnership with Delta State Government.

In his remarks, the Group Managing Director (GMD), Zenith Bank PLC, represented by one of the management staff of the Bank, Mr. Oghonovwu Obayendo said that sporting activities were very important to keep a person fit and foster unity.

He reiterated Zenith Bank's commitment to sustain the competition, noting that the sporting activities and educational development of the children could not be overemphasized.

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Mr. Augustine Oghoro applauded the Bank for their support thus far in the sponsorship of the tournament.

At the end of the regulation time the two teams played a goalless draw.

The ceremony was attended by the Chairman, Delta State House of Assembly Committee on Education, Hon. Charles Emetulu among other top government functionaries. ●

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-ERIKI IN IKOLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, OYO STATE	LOT W 122	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF ATAI EDIENE
LOT W 98	CONSTRUCTION OF ICT HUB AT ONE-BOLA 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 ADD ODO/OTA FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OYO STATE	LOT W 124	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF OKUK
LOT W 100	CONSTRUCTION OF 3KM RURAL ROAD BETWEEN UTE AND OKELUSE, OSE/LGA, ONDO 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 CLASSROOMS IN SOUTHERN STATE LOCAL FARMING COMMUNITY
LOT W 103	PROVISION AND INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREETLIGHTS IN SELECTED AREAS OF IREPODUN/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 EKSI, 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 EKSI, 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	REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF SOME SELECTED MEDICAL FACILITIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES NATIONWIDE LOT 1-5	LOT W 132	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN OKU UBARA
LOT W 108	CONSTRUCTION OF RURAL FARM ROADS FOR EASE OF TRANSPORTING FARM PRODUCE IN SOME SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST LOT 1-5	LOT W 133	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN OKUK
LOT W 109	CONSTRUCTION AND REHABILITATION OF SELECTED RURAL FARM LINK ROADS FOR SELECTED AGRO-DEPENDENT IN VARIOUS RURAL COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST LOT 1-5	LOT W 134	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN USUNG ATAI
LOT W 110	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 135	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN MANTA
LOT W 111	PROVISION FOR REHABILITATION OF ICT CENTRE	LOT W 136	FURNISHING & EQUIPPING OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN OBONG EDIEME
LOT W 112	REHABILITATION OF AGBARAFAPARA ROADS, UBERI IKO/OGUN STATE	LOT W 137	CONSTRUCTION OF A FARM HOUSE AND PROVISION OF LIVESTOCK PEN AND ACCESSORIES IN FCT, ABUJA (LOT 1-2)
LOT W 113	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 IN 1 SOLAR STREET LIGHT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF ASOKO/OKORO	LOT W 138	RECONSTRUCTION/MAINTENANCE OF UMUWINA TO UMUJEZAZU ROAD
LOT W 114	PROVISION/INSTALLATION OF SOLAR STREETLIGHT IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES IN OHINBE SANGO/OTA AND IJAKOTA AREAS	LOT W 139	CONSTRUCTION AND PROVISION OF COMMON FACILITIES, OPEN AND CLOSED STORE AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE IN SELECTED LOCATION IN IREPODUN, IREPODUN LGA, EKITI STATE (LOT 1-2)
LOT W 115	CONSTRUCTION OF 3 IN 1 SOLAR STREET LIGHT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS NIGERIA	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 OF 3 IN 1 SOLAR STREET LIGHT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS SOUTHWEST	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 INNER ROADS IN SELECTED COMMUNITIES OF IREPODUN/IFELODUN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EKITI STATE	LOT W 142	CONSTRUCTION OF FCC-IBADAN ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
LOT W 118	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF OBONG EDIEME	LOT W 143	PROCUREMENT OF ICT EQUIPMENT, FURNITURE, NETWORKING ETC. FOR 500 SEATER FEDERAL COOPERATIVE COLLEGE IBADAN'S CRT CENTRE
LOT W 119	CONSTRUCTION OF BLOCK OF CLASSROOMS IN RURAL FARMING COMMUNITY OF MANTA		
LOT W 120	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/OSE FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OWO STATE
LOT G 46	SUPPLY OF GRAIN AND POWER TILLERS TO ADD EKITI/IREPODUN/IFELODUN
LOT G 47	SUPPLY OF TRACTOR AND POWER TILLERS TO ADD EKITI/IREPODUN/IFELODUN
LOT G 48	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF 100KVA GENERATOR AT MONTGOMERY POLYTECHNIC (KERE EKITI, EKITI SOUTH FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, EKITI STATE)
LOT G 49	SUPPLY OF FOOD STUFFS (RICE, BEANS AND GARRI) IN USHELL/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 COOPERATORS IN OYO CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OYO STATE
LOT G 52	PROCUREMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF FERTILIZER FOR RURAL COOPERATORS IN OYO CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, OYO STATE
LOT G 53	SUPPLY OF GRAINS AND OTHER FOOD ITEMS TO SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN EKITI CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, EKITI STATE
LOT G 54	SUPPLY OF FOOD ITEMS IN UBERI 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 IROKO, ONIGBOBNGBO, IGBELE/AFANA LOT 1-3
LOT G 58	PROVISION/SUPPLY OF GRAINS TO CUSHION HUNGER IN OBERE, ILEJI, IGBO 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 AMBLUANCES IN SOUTH SOUTH STATE (LOT 1-3)
LOT G 62	PROVISION OF STATER PAGES TO YOUTHFUL RURAL COMMUNITIES OF MIDLAND AND MIDWEST SELECTED LOCATIONS
LOT G 63	PROVISION OF STATER PAGES TO WOMEN IN RURAL COMMUNITIES OF SELECTED SOUTH SOUTH STATES
LOT G 64	PROVISION OF STATER PAGES 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 IGBE, ARAMOKO AND IGBEKO 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, UBERI AND ADD EKITI

CATEGORY C: CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TRAINING)

LOT No.	TITLE OF PROJECTS
Lot S 49	EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN IKOLE AND OYE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EKITI STATE
Lot S 50	CAPACITY BUILDING AND SKILL ACQUISITION ON POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN AKINYELE/LAGELU FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OYO STATE
Lot S 51	EMPOWERMENT ITEMS IN ADD ODO/OTA FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY, OGUN STATE
Lot S 52	STRATEGIC EMPOWERMENT INPUTS THROUGH DISTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURAL AND ARTISANS ITEMS TO AINA ASIPA, OGORUNDA, KODERA COMMUNITIES LOT 1-3
Lot S 53	MEDICAL OUTREACH FOR SELECTED RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES IN SOUTH WEST (1-5)
Lot S 54	MEDICAL OUTREACH AND AMBLUANCES FOR RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES OF MANTA, EDEM IDEM, MIDIM AND MBARAKOM LOT (1-5)
Lot S 55	MEDICAL OUTREACH AND AMBLUANCES FOR RURAL FARMING COMMUNITIES OF OBONG 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 if 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:
 - discussing whether or not any 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 (2021, 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



OIKONOMIA with Lekan Sote X:@lekansote1

How not to hike electricity tariff

ists, and the retention of the national grid in the hands of bureaucrats.

One major problem is that those who bought the facilities lack the managerial, financial, and technical capabilities to run the companies, even though they regard their more-or-less sinecure equity in those companies as compensation for their less-than-patriotic service to the country.

To borrow and rework a phrase from Bashorun MKO Abiola, the presumed winner of the June 12, 1993, presidential election that was cruelly annulled by the regime of military President Ibrahim Babangida, "Nigerians held the horns of the cow for the crony capitalists to milk!"

Some observers feel that the minister is probably insisting on raising the tariff because he feels that many consumers rack up high electricity bills. After all, they are usually careless by switching on electrical appliances, like air-conditioners, that they may not necessarily have to use all the time.

Someone asked if the minister takes his own counsel in his office where the electricity bill is paid by the Federal Government, or in his home which may likely be an official quarter.

The minister, who admitted to having given the unsolicited advice to electricity consumers to cultivate what he described as the "culture of managing energy consumption," has, however, apologised to those who may have been offended by his unsolicited counsel.

NERC has finally come up with the sledgehammer announcement that the government is feeling the weight of about N181.1 billion monthly subsidy bills, and, as a result, electricity tariff would have to be hiked for consumers in Band A, who were promised 20 hours of electricity every day.

And that would, of course, further harm the finances and well-being of these already impoverished consumers who are reeling under the weight of subsidy removal and the floating of the Naira, even though

APART FROM THE BOAST BY THE MINISTER OF POWER THAT MORE THAN 40 PERCENT OF NIGERIANS CURRENTLY RECEIVE 20 HOURS OF ELECTRICITY PER DAY, IT IS ACTUALLY TOO LITTLE AND INSIGNIFICANT. 100 PERCENT OF NIGERIANS SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET 24 HOURS SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY EVERY DAY.



NERC had unilaterally placed them in Band A tariff plan without asking them if they were game for the tariff plan.

What the consumers really need is not the minister's counsel, but appropriate policies to mitigate their gradually depleting standard of

living on top of irregular electricity supply. That is why he was appointed as minister of power. As they say on the streets of Lagos, "The minister should shake a leg!"

Apart from the boast by the minister of power that more than 40 percent of Nigerians currently receive 20 hours of electricity per day, it is actually too little and insignificant. 100 percent of Nigerians should be able to get 24 hours supply of electricity every day.

The minister sounded like he expected those Nigerians that he forcibly conscripted into the Band A tariff plan should be grateful for even the irregular electricity supply that they get, a reminder of a former minister of communications who said telephone is not for everybody.

By the way, the minister should stop that nauseating claim that the (less than modest) achievement of the electricity sector is inspired by the Renewed Hope agenda of President Bola Tinubu, a man who has not claimed omnipotence or invincibility.

The current template of the electricity industry can only guarantee shortages and consequent inefficiency that causes the accountant minister to think that inordinately holding down Nigerians for milking by the Gencos, the Transmission Company of Nigeria, and the Discos, is the silver bullet to sorting out the problems of the sector.

One should add, for the umpteenth time, that GenCos, DisCos, and electricity grids that currently operate in silos, should be integrated under one management in each of the markets that have already been demarcated for them.

What this means is that the transmission lines within the Ikeja market, for instance, should be ceded to Ikeja Electric, which will merge with the GenCo which currently uploads electricity to its market. All three components of electricity supply should be under one roof in each market.

If the Minister is not too sure of the expediency of this model being

suggested, he could seek clarification from experts, amongst which should be Professor Barth Nnaji, who is possibly Nigeria's most illustrious minister of power.

The gentleman is a thoroughbred professional who understands the technical demands and the dynamics of the ecosystem of the electricity system. When he was minister of power, electricity supply was very regular.

This matter should be treated expeditiously like that of the man who appeared in a dream to entreat Apostle Paul to "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" Like Paul, Prof Nnaji would likely come to help Nigeria overcome the electricity sector debacle.

It is not fair for the electricity tariff to be raised by about 330 per cent, from N68 to N225 per kilowatt hour, for Band A tariff plan customers in April and to now start hinting at another hike in less than six months, even if the law provides that tariffs can be reviewed two times in one year.

If the government goes ahead with this wicked intention, it may well be the final straw that would break the camel's back. It will further impoverish the disappearing Nigerian middle class that is barely coping with 34 per cent inflation and they may be easily persuaded to join the lumpen plebeian proletariat as they embark on street protests.

This won't bode well for a government that came into office with roughly one-third of the votes of less than one-fourth of the electorate. That should not be the testimony of a government that is committed to Section 14 of the Constitution which sets the security and welfare of the citizens as the primary responsibility of the government.

The minister of power needs to understand that inappropriate and ineffectual government policies are the major causes of the inability of the electricity sector to deliver regular electricity to Nigerian citizens at an affordable tariff rate. No other reason. ●

