

Plateau killings: 51 get mass burial as death toll hits 53 P 4
 ■ Resolve underlying cause of crises, President tells Plateau gov ■ Atiku laments killings, lampoons FG

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Recapitalisation, tariff war: No cause for alarm, banks on sound footing -CBN

From **Uche Usim** and **Adanna Nnamani**, Abuja

AS the race for commercial banks' recapitalisation peaks and the global commerce landscape quakes in the face of the raging US-China

■ UBA GMD lists hurdles to achieving \$1trn economy

tariff war, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has assured Nigerians not to panic as the local financial ecosystem remains stable with the banks operating within set prudential thresholds.

Director, Banking Supervision Department of the apex bank, Dr Olubukola Akinwumi, stated this in Abuja, yesterday, at the 36th seminar of the Finance Correspondents and Business Editors.

According to him, all the guidelines and prudential benchmarks have been complied with by the banks including non-performing loans, thus making the banking sector healthy.

He promised that calculated steps would be taken to keep the economy on a steady growth trajectory, especially to realise the \$1 trillion GDP economy by 2030.

He said: "The banks

are in good health. They are working within set templates."

Earlier in her remarks, the Deputy Governor, Corporate Services of the CBN, Ms Emem Usoro, represented by the acting Director, Corporate

• Continued on Page 24

We'll stand with Fubara till end, vow PDP govs

- Insist party not joining coalition
- Appoint new acting secretary



L-R: Deputy governor, Delta State, Monday Onyeme; Governors Ademola Adeleke (Osun); Peter Mbah (Enugu); Dauda Lawal (Zamfara); Seyi Makinde (Oyo); Bala Muhammed (Bauchi); PDP National Acting Chairman, Umar Damagum; Gov Umaru Fintiri (Adamawa); Douye Diri (Bayelsa); Akwa-Ibom deputy governor, Akon Eyakenyi and Gov Agbu Kefas of Taraba State, during the PDP Governors Forum meeting, in Ibadan, Oyo State, yesterday.



L-R: Group Chairman, Heirs Holdings, Tony Elumelu; Chairperson, Avon Medical Practice, Awele Elumelu and Governor, Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, at the launch of Avon Medical facility in Surulere, Lagos, yesterday

My tortuous road to becoming AfDB president -Adesina P 27

■ Explains roles Jonathan, Buhari, Atiku, Abdulsalami, others played

Rivers Administrator, NBA bicker over N300m confab hosting fees P 6

Insecurity: Kalu warns against politicisation P 6

■ Calls for decisive measures

FG declares national emergency on food security P 27

PAGE 2 BUSINESS



L-R: Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Wale Edun; Minister of State for Finance, Dr Doris Uzoka-Anite and Chairman of Heirs Holdings, Mr Tony Elumelu at the recent unveiling of Abuja AATC building that will serve as a hub for trade intelligence, innovation and regional collaboration.

Nigeria gazettes ECOWAS tariffs, affirms AfCFTA readiness

IN a major step toward deepening continental trade integration, Nigeria has officially gazetted and transmitted the ECOWAS Schedule of Tariff Offers for Trade in Goods under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) to the AfCFTA Secretariat.

The move comes ahead of the 16th AfCFTA Council of Ministers Meeting on Trade, slated for April 15 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, and marks a major milestone in Nigeria's commitment to unlocking the potential of the AfCFTA.

Signed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the gazetted schedule lays the groundwork for implementing zero duties on 90 percent of tariff lines, opening Nigeria's goods to increased market access and competitiveness across Africa's rapidly expanding single market.

The transmission of the ECOWAS tariff schedule reaffirms Nigeria's readiness to operate under AfCFTA's preferential trade regime and underlines the country's strategic intent to drive export-led growth, attract intra-African investment, and rebalance its trade position.

Commenting on the development, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment,

Dr. Jumoke Oduwale, described the move as a transformative leap for Nigeria's trade agenda.

"The gazetted and transmission of the ECOWAS Schedule of Tariffs to the AfCFTA Secretariat signals Nigeria's readiness for trade under the Agreement," she said.

"This milestone enables Nigerian exporters to leverage preferential tariff access across African markets, positioning Nigeria as a key player in regional and global trade."

Nigeria first participated in AfCFTA trade in July 2024, with the inaugural shipment of goods under the agreement. The formal gazetted now sets the stage for accelerated engagement, particularly for exporters, manufacturers, and SMEs looking to expand their footprint within the continent.

The implications of this milestone are far-reaching like; tariff elimination on 90% of goods which enhances Nigeria's export competitiveness across African markets. Another merit is that lower barriers offer small and medium enterprises new opportunities to scale operations regionally.

A surge in exports is expected to attract intra-African and foreign direct investment, with a positive ripple effect on employment. Nigeria's active participation reinforces its influence within ECOWAS and the broader AfCFTA economic bloc. Under Nigeria's phased tariff reduction strategy, a 10-year liberalization process—starting from 2021—is in motion. By 2025, a 50% tariff reduction will be in effect for trade with Africa's least developed countries, progressing at a rate of 10% annually.

Nigeria still Africa's top crude oil producer despite March output decline –OPEC

From Adanna Nnamani, Abuja

NIGERIA has retained its status as Africa's largest crude oil producer, although with a decrease in output for the month of March.

This is according to the latest report from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

In its monthly report released on Monday, OPEC reported that Nigeria's oil production fell to 1.40 million barrels per day (bpd)

In trade with more developed African economies, Nigeria will implement full tariff elimination at a 20% annual reduction rate—demonstrating flexibility and alignment with African Union guidelines set during the 35th Ordinary Session of Heads of State and Government in 2022.

With the gazetted now complete, other AfCFTA State Parties are authorized to accept Nigerian consignments under the trade framework, ensuring the country's exports are accorded preferential treatment.

in March, down from 1.46 million bpd in February. Despite this reduction, the country's production remained the highest on the continent, outpacing Algeria and Congo.

The report, which is based on direct communications with member countries, showed that Nigeria's output exceeded Algeria, which reported 909,000 bpd, and Congo, which produced 263,000 bpd.

Additionally, OPEC noted that secondary sources indicated Nigeria's production in March was 1.51 million bpd, slightly lower than February's 1.54 million bpd.

"Total DoC crude oil production averaged 41.02 mb/d in March 2025, which is 37 tb/d lower, m-o-m," OPEC stated in its report.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) also provided insights on April 12, revealing that the country's oil production for March stood at 1,400,783 bpd. Despite the decline, NUPRC stated that the average crude oil production represents 93 percent of the 1.5 million bpd quota assigned to Nigeria by OPEC.

In a bid to stabilize the market amid challenging economic conditions, OPEC and its allies on April 4, announced their decision to increase oil production by 411,000 bpd starting in May.

BREAKFAST NEWS



NOG Energy Week 2025 to accelerate Africa's integration into global energy value chain

THE 24th edition of NOG Energy Week will help to advance conversations on raising African stakes in global energy industry.

Themed 'Accelerating Global Energy Progress through Investment, Partnerships and Innovation', the event is scheduled to hold from 29 June to 3 July 2025, at the International Conference Centre (ICC), Abuja.

It will bring together leaders, policymakers, regulators and professionals from across the globe to discuss energy transformation as well as explore emerging business opportunities within the country.

Speaking on the conference, Director - Nigeria, dmG Nigeria Events, Odiri Umusu, said: "For over two decades, NOG Energy Week has been at the heart of shaping Africa's energy progress, driving conversations that influence policy, investment decisions and industry growth."

As we gather for the 24th edition, the stakes are higher than ever, with shifting global energy policies, the push for resource maximisation and the need for sustainable development. This platform remains indispensable. NOG Energy Week 2025 will dissect the challenges and also spotlight actionable strategies that ensure Africa strengthens its role in the global energy industry. The event will feature high-level discussions on policy frameworks, financing mechanisms and technological innovations needed to drive Africa's energy transformation.

Continued on www.thesun.ng

BRIEF CASE



Companies info in brief

Cormart unveils local sandwich panels to curb food wastage

CORMART Nigeria Limited, a supplier of chemical and food raw materials and a member of Tropical General Investments (TGI) Group, is transforming Nigeria's cold chain infrastructure with the local production of high-quality sandwich panels. These innovative panels, designed for the construction of cold rooms, will play a crucial role in combating post-harvest losses and food preservation challenges across the country.

Built with steel sheets and Polyurethane Foam (PU) cores for superior insulation, Cormart's sandwich panels ensure optimal temperature control for perishable goods such as agricultural produce, frozen foods, and pharmaceuticals. This initiative aligns with national efforts to enhance food security and reduce Nigeria's estimated 45% agricultural produce loss due to inadequate storage.

"The ability to store perishable goods efficiently is a critical turning point for Nigeria's food security and economic growth," said Dr Johannes Flosbach, Executive Director of Cormart & Chi Farms Nigeria Limited. "By producing high-quality sandwich panels locally, we are making the construction of cold storage more accessible, affordable, and tailored to the needs of businesses across agriculture, food processing, and pharmaceuticals."

Cormart's commitment to quality is further reinforced through its partnership with Big Dutchman, a global leader in agricultural equipment. This collaboration ensures that the locally manufactured sandwich panels meet international standards while being tailored to Nigeria's unique storage needs.

Continued on www.thesun.ng

Int'l crude oil and commodity prices



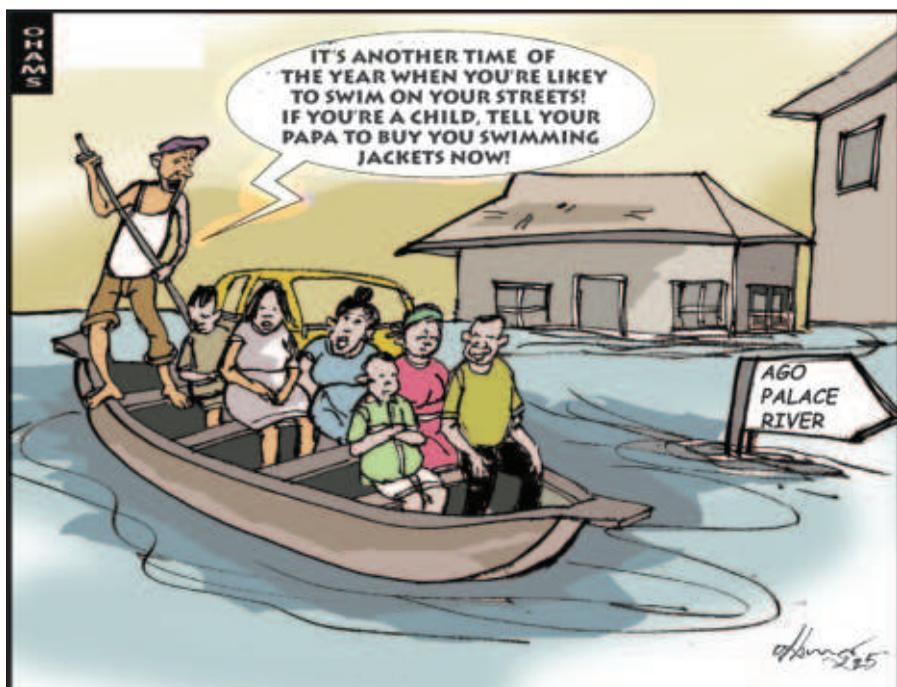
Brent crude oil	-\$64.30	-0.71%
WTI crude oil	-\$60.87	-1.02%
Natural Gas	-\$3.45	-2.27%
RBOB Gasoline	-\$2.01	+0.48%
Heating oil	-\$2.07	+0.41%

Prices as at 14/4/2025 (17:15 BST)

CEO Quote

The number one benefit of information technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential."

—Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft



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NEWS AROUND THE CITY

CRIME

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Military rescues 16 kidnapped passengers in Plateau

From **Jude Owuamanam**, Jos

TROOPS of 3 Division Nigerian Army and Operation Safe Haven (OPSH) have rescued 16 passengers kidnapped along Jos - Mangu Road in Plateau State.

Media Information Officer Operation Safe Haven, Maj. Samson Zhakom, said that the rescue operation began when troops conducting Operation Lafiyar Jama'a discovered an empty vehicle abandoned by the roadside at Mararaban Kantoma, Mangu Local Government, at about 9 p.m on April 13, 2025.

In a statement, Zhakom said that the troops immediately searched the nearby bushes to trace the occupants of the vehicle suspected to have been kidnapped.

"The kidnappers, on sighting the troops, opened fire, but our troops overwhelmed the criminals with superior firepower forcing them to abandon the victims and fled.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Fraud: Mamman insists his statement was obtained under duress

From **Godwin Tsa**, Abuja

A former Minister of Power, Saleh Mamman has insisted that his written statement allegedly confessing to corruption charges was obtained under duress.

The defendant is standing trial on 12 counts of alleged conspiracy and money laundering involving N33.8 billion meant for the Mambilla Power Project.

The former Minister, who voluntarily honoured the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) invitation was asked to write his statement before leaving the commission.

The EFCC was said to have obtained the statement from him preparatory to filing the corruption charges against him last year.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Insecurity: Enugu LG boss clears forests to safeguard citizens

By **Christopher Oji**

EXECUTIVE chairman of Uzo-Uwani Local Government Enugu State, Chijioke Ezugwu, at the weekend, embarked on massive clearance of forests along major roads in the area to prevent ambushes by kidnappers and other criminal elements.

Similarly, he has established community farm protection squads aimed at safeguarding agricultural areas and ensuring that farmers can carry out their work without fear of violence or destruction of crops.

A statement from his media adviser, Kingsley Onyeji, said the initiative was geared towards eliminating hiding places for criminals and improving road safety.

According to him, by removing overgrown vegetation and ensuring that key routes are well maintained, the council will effectively reduce the risk of ambushes, making travel safer for residents and visitors alike.

"Uzo-Uwani has long been plagued by road ambushes, with criminals targeting travellers on key routes such as Ezukolo, Abbi, Nrobo and Nimbo roads, and they have not only caused physical harm to individuals but also contributed to the general sense of insecurity within the communities.

"That is why the local government has undertaken the clearing of strategic roadsides to eliminate hiding spots for criminals and improve road safety.

"The chairman also created a rapid response team within the Neighbourhood Watch, equipped with vans and other modern communication systems, and the team was designed to respond immediately to distress calls and emergency situations."

Onyeji said the team has played a crucial role in minimizing the time between when a threat is identified and when it is

•Continued on www.thesun.ng



L-R: Deputy Chairman, House of Representative Committee on Justice, Sunday Umeha; member, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) Review Committee, Balkisu Saidu; Chairman, Olawale Fapohunda and Attorney-General of the Federation of Minister Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi, during retreat for LFN members in Abuja, yesterday.

Plateau: 51 get mass burial as death toll hits 53

From **Jude Owuamanam**, Jos

DEATH TOLL in the attack on Zike Kimakpa community in Kwall District of Irigwe Chiefdom, Bassa Local Government, Plateau State has risen to 53.

Initial reports gave the future as 47, but a source close to the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) said more bodies were recovered after the villagers combed surrounding bushes.

Several others were also wounded in the Incident, which occurred on Sunday night.

National Publicity Secretary, Irigwe Development Association (IDA), Samuel Jugo, confirmed that the 51 killed were given a mass burial yesterday amidst tears and wailing by relations and other sympathisers who thronged the burial site.

It was gathered that the gunmen in large numbers, rode into the area on motorbikes at about 11:32 pm on Sunday and went on a killing rampage till the early hours of yesterday, killing no fewer than 53 persons.

The marauders, suspected to be Fulani herdsmen were said to be going from house to house to kill their victims. They also burnt their houses and several others were wounded in attempts to escape

Those who sustained fatal gunshot wounds are currently being

•Tinubu, Atiku react

treated at the Plateau State Specialist Hospital and Jos University Teaching Hospital.

It was also gathered that residents of Kwall and neighbouring villages and communities were leaving in droves to Jos, the capital of the state, and other neighbouring local governments for to escape the onslaught of the marauders

Giving accounts of the incident in a statement, Jugo, said that on the night of Sunday, there were sporadic gunshots from multiple locations in the community, adding that on the following morning, 51 people were killed.

He said that there were rumours before the attacks, and the security stationed in the area was notified, adding that the Sector 3 Commander confirmed that he received the intel and mobilised his men to Kwall, but the carnage still took place.

"This assault on a peace-loving people on their motherland is very provocative, vexing and undeserving. What is baffling residents most is the intent of the Drone Station in Kwall, which should have been deployed for reconnaissance when rumours filtered in.

The association called on the federal and State governments to

wade before the already precarious situation becomes uncontrollable.

Meanwhile, President Bola Tinubu has expressed profound sorrow over the recent bloodshed

In a statement by Special Adviser to the President, Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, he said that: "He strongly condemns the violence and extends his sympathies to Governor Caleb Mutfwang, and the people of Plateau while urging him to summon the necessary political will to resolve the crisis and establish enduring peace.

"In his call for harmony among the people of the state, President Tinubu emphasises the importance of love and unity beyond religious and ethnic lines. He encourages community, spiritual, and political leaders within and beyond the state to unite and end the cycle of retaliatory attacks that have made life unbearable for affected communities.

"The ongoing violence between communities in Plateau State, rooted in misunderstandings between different ethnic and religious groups, must cease.

"I have instructed security agencies to thoroughly investigate this crisis and identify those responsible for orchestrating these violent acts.

We cannot allow this devastation and the tit-for-tat attacks to continue. Enough is enough.

"Beyond dealing with the criminal elements of these incessant killings, the political leadership in Plateau State, led by Governor Caleb Mutfwang, must address the root cause of this age-long problem. These problems have been with us for more than two decades. We can no longer ignore the underlying issues. It is time to tackle them fairly and find a lasting solution. I have discussed these problems with the governor over time and offered suggestions for lasting peace.

"The Federal Government remains committed to supporting Governor Mutfwang and the Plateau State government in promoting dialogue, fostering social cohesion, and ensuring accountability—crucial steps towards permanently resolving the conflict in Plateau."

Reacting to the resurgence of attacks, former vice president, Atiku Abubakar said Tinubu's security policy and infrastructure has failed woefully.

He also flayed the upsurge in terrorist attacks in Borno State, which has led to the loss of lives and territories to the Boko Haram insurgents, according to alarm raised by Governor Babagana Zulum and Shehu of Borno Abubakar Ibn Umar Garbai El-Kanemi.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Ilubamito family petitions Sanwo-Olu, IGP over malicious demolition

By **Lukmon Olabiya**

MEMBERS of the Aminatu Ilubamito Family of Onigbongbo, Maryland, Lagos, have petitioned Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu, the Inspector General of Police, and the Assistant Inspector General of Police, Zone 2 over the alleged malicious destruction of their properties and conduct likely to cause breach of public peace.

In the petition dated March 4, 2025, written by their lawyer, Mr. Victor Kolade, the family, alleged that Monsuru, Ganiyu, Oluwasegun, Wakeel, Tajudeen, Ojo, Adekunle, Segun, William, and others were engaging in acts of malicious damage, forgery, fraudulent conversion, and forcible entry of their properties.

The disputed properties are located at No. 713, Iya Oloye Crescent, Ismail Estate, Idiroko, Onigbongbo,

and Nos. 291, 293, 295, and 297, Ikorodu Road, Idiroko Bus Stop, Onigbongbo, Maryland, Lagos.

According to the petition, the family are the recognised owners of the properties, which they have peacefully possessed and managed for decades.

They referenced a judgment by Justice Adeyinka Morgan of the Lagos High Court in Suit No. AB/31/57, which declared the family as the statutory owners of approximately 30.98 acres of land at Ismail Estate, including the properties now in contention.

In the suit filed by Joseph Atunrase and Bamgbola Amao against Kamil Ismail and six others, the court dismissed the plaintiffs' claims in their entirety.

Justice Morgan ruled, "I have found that the land in dispute belongs to Aminatu Ilubamito and does not form part of the Alashe

Chieftaincy family land. I therefore hold that the purported sale to the plaintiffs is void, and they are not entitled to the declaration sought."

The family further stated that the land originally belonged to their ancestor, Aminatu Ilubamito, and was lawfully leased to a man referred to as "Kamil Ismail, the Japanese."

However, they alleged that the suspects recently invaded the properties with armed thugs, demolished existing structures, assaulted family members, and looted valuables, all without legal justification.

"The suspects not only attacked and threatened our clients but also forcibly restrained them from accessing their own properties by deploying miscreants who continue to harass and intimidate them.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Olugbon stool: Oba Alao wins in court

By **Oluseye Ojo**

JUSTICE Kareem Adedokun of the Oyo State High Court, sitting in Ibadan, yesterday struck out a suit seeking the removal of Olugbon of Orile-Igbon, Oba Francis Olusola Alao, in Surulere Local Government.

The case was instituted in 2017 and claimant's in the case are: Akintayo Charles Akintola of Akintola Akinbola Section; Olu Oyelade of Ojediran Akinbola Section; Ladiran Olaniyi of Oluniyi Akinbola Section and Olajoke Bolade of Abioye Akinbola Section, all of Ile Akinbola, Isale Laka, Ogbomoso, as well as Akinwale Akintola.

The Oyo State governor was the first defendant in the case, while Attorney-General of the state, Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, and Secretary to the Surulere Local Government were second,

third and fourth defendants respectively.

The Jagun Olugbon and Chairman of Orile-Igbon Chieftaincy Kingmakers, Chief Ajani Awotoro, was the fifth defendant, and the Oba Olusola Alao was also the

sixth defendant. The duo of Mr. George Okumola Olayinka and Prince John Oyewo Oyelade, were the seventh and eighth defendants respectively.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

UMU IBEBUGWU FOUNDATION

THE GENERAL PUBLIC IS HEREBY NOTIFIED THAT THE ABOVE NAMED FOUNDATION HAS APPLIED TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION FOR REGISTRATION UNDER PART 'F' OF THE COMPANY AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT 2020.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:

1. ANTHONY IFEANYI CHUKWU IBE
2. REV. FR. MICHAEL CHUKWUEBUKA IBE
3. CHARLES IKENNA IBE

THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVE IS TO PROMOTE UNITY AND FAMILY VALUES, AND PROVIDE STRUCTURED PHILANTHROPY IN AREAS OF WELFARE, EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

ANY OBJECTIONS TO THIS REGISTRATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION, PLOT 420 TIGRIS CRESCENT, OFF AGUIYI IRONSI STREET, MAITAMA DISTRICT. ABUJA, WITHIN 28 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS PUBLICATION.

SIGNED: SECRETARY.

2 killed while returning from burial in Ebonyi crash

From **Uchenna Inya, Abakaliki**

TWO persons have died and many injured in a road crash at Uburu, Ohaozara Local Government, Ebonyi State.

The accident occurred at Iduma Junction in the community on Sunday.

Witnesses said the bus which was on high speed was conveying 25 people, including children, lost control and collided with

another vehicle while navigating a bend.

The impact of the collision caused the bus to summersault three times, resulting to the death of two people while others were injured.

The victims, indigenes of Ebonyi state, residing in Imo state, were travelling back to their station after a burial ceremony at Okporike, Abakaliki, when the accident occurred.

Two passengers, a nine-

month-old baby girl and an adult female, lost their lives.

Meanwhile, David Umahi Federal University Teaching Hospital (DUFUTH), Uburu, has activated its emergency response protocols to provide critical care for victims of the accident.

A statement by the hospital's Public Relations Officer, Agwu Nwogo, explained that 23 passengers sustained injuries.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

2 ex-convicts to die by hanging for kidnapping, armed robbery

THE High Court sitting in Ado-Ekiti yesterday sentenced two persons to life imprisonments and death

by hanging for conspiracy, armed robbery and kidnapping.

The defendants, Rotimi Onileowo, 42 and Ayodele Adetola, 42, were arraigned before Justice Bamidele Omotosho on June 30, 2017, on three count charge bordering on conspiracy, armed robbery and kidnapping.

The charge reads: "that the convicts on October 7, 2016, at Abuta Omuo Ekiti, while armed with guns and cutlasses, robbed one Mrs Ajibola Oyelola; on same date and place, they also conspired to kidnap the victim.

"The offences are contrary to Sections 516, 402 and 403 (A) of the Criminal Code Law, Cap C16, Laws of Ekiti State, 2012, also Section 3 (a) (b) of the Ekiti State Kidnapping and Terrorism (prohibition) Laws, 2015.

"In her testimony before the court, the victim said: I was cooking in the kitchen around 8:30 p.m, suddenly, I saw five gunmen in the living room.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Rights group urges intervention in Ijeododo dispute to avert crisis

THE Human Rights Monitoring Agenda (HURMA Global Resource Initiative) has submitted a formal petition seeking urgent conflict resolution and prevention in Ijeododo, under Iba Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Lagos State. The petition was addressed to both His Royal Majesty, the Oniba of Iba, and the executive chairman of Iba LCDA.

Dated Monday, April 14, 2025, the petition was prompted by recent complaints received by HURMA from members of the Ijeododo community regarding a potentially volatile dispute. The document was signed by HURMA's executive director, Comrade Buna Olaitan Isiak,

titled, "Alleged Unlawful Removal of Street Name: Conspiracy/Abuse of Office by Baale of Ijeododo, Abu Jelili, Iba LCDA - Request for Urgent Action to Ensure Peaceful Resolution and Prevent Communal Clash in Iba LCDA, Lagos State."

The petition outlined grievances raised by some members of the Ajimotokin family and associates at the CEHRA Humanity Project of office in Ijeododo. They alleged that the Baale of Ijeododo, Chief Abu Jelili, unlawfully removed the street sign bearing the name "Ajimotokin Street" and replaced it with a different name linked to a relatively new resident.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Tragedy averted as fuel tanker, tipper collide, spill content in Enugu

From **Jude Chinedu, Enugu**

A major tragedy was averted on Sunday when a 33,000-litre fuel tanker collided with a tipper at Ugwu Onyeama axis of Enugu-Onitsha Expressway in Enugu State.

The accident occurred as the tanker was descending from the Ninth Mile end

of the road, while the tipper was ascending from the Enugu end, both navigating a single lane.

Despite the severity of the crash, six occupants of the vehicles escaped unhurt, with only one person sustaining minor injuries.

The injured victim was taken to the Enugu State University Teaching Hospi-

tal, Parklane, for treatment.

Confirming the incident, Enugu State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Franklin Agbakoba, said emergency responders quickly secured the scene to prevent a possible fire outbreak.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

ITEM	DETAILS
Distribution per unit	9.08 Kobo
Qualification/Cut-Off Date	Tuesday March 25, 2025
Register Closure date	Wednesday March 26, 2025
Payment Date	Tuesday April 22, 2025
Distribution Period	Six (6) Months period ended March 25, 2025
Total Number of Units	10,430,000,000
Total Distribution Amount	N947,044,000.00

Cardinal Stone Registrars Limited, being Registrars to the Fund, will process the distribution as stated above and ensure Unitholders receive their share of the distribution accordingly.

James Ilori
Chief Executive Officer

We'll stand with Fubara till end, vow PDP govs

From **Ndubuisi Orji**,
Abuja and **Taiwo**
Oluwadare, Ibadan

THE Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Governors Forum (PDP-GF) has reiterated its support for suspended Rivers State Governor, Siminalayi Fubara.

The governors, in a communique read by chairman of the forum, Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, after its meeting in Ibadan, yesterday, reiterated their commitment to stand with him to the end.

The opposition governors explained that they approached the Supreme Court over the emergency rule in Rivers State to get a clear interpretation of the constitution on the declaration of emergency rule in any state.

"The Forum reasserts our collective determination to avert a rape of our constitutional democracy, hence,

• Insist party not joining coalition, appoints new acting secretary

the decision to approach the Supreme Court to give a clear cut verdict on the interpretation of the provisions of the law on the declaration of state of emergency in any state.

"The Forum restates its solidarity with His Excellency, Sir Siminalayi Fubara, on the ordeal into which his state and people are being plunged by the declaration of a state of emergency. And we reiterate our commitment to stand with him till the end."

The forum also said the opposition party would not be involved in any coalition or merger for the 2027 general elections. But, it stated that the party would welcome any person, group or political party willing to join the PDP to wrestle power from the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2027.

Former vice president,

Atiku Abubakar, who is believed to be nursing a presidential ambition, has been championing a coalition of opposition politicians to confront the APC at the next general election.

Nonetheless, the communique stated, "noting the nationwide speculations about possible merger of political parties, groups and/or associations, the Forum resolved that the PDP will not join any coalition or merger. However, the PDP as a major opposition party welcomes any party, persons or groups that are willing to join it with a view to wresting power and enthroning good leadership in 2027."

Also, the opposition governors recommended that the deputy national secretary of the PDP, Setonji Koshedo, should assume office as acting national secretary while the party's national convention to elect a new National Working Committee (NWC) should hold from August 28 to 30 in Kano State.

The PDP governors, while reiterating support for the ouster of Senator Samuel Anyanwu as PDP national secretary, noted that in view of the Supreme Court judgment on the disputed national secretary's position, Koshedo should assume office as acting national secretary, pending the

nomination and ratification of a substantive national secretary from the South East.

The South East chapter of the PDP in 2023 nominated former national youth leader of the party, Sunday Ude-Okoye as replacement for Anyanwu, after the latter emerged as the candidate in the last Imo State governorship election.

However, Anyanwu's ouster has been a subject of litigation, with an Enugu State High Court affirming Ude-Okoye's nomination and mandating PDP NWC to swear him in as national secretary. Last December, the Court of Appeal, Enugu Division, affirmed the

judgment of the lower court.

However, the Supreme Court, in its verdict on an appeal filed by Anyanwu, nullified the majority judgment of the Court of Appeal, and upheld the minority judgment, which stated that the lower court had no jurisdiction over the issue, as it was an internal affairs of the party.

In the aftermath of the Supreme Court's judgment, both Anyanwu and Ude-Okoye have been laying claim to the national secretary position.

However, the communique stated that, "the Forum reiterates its position taken in Asaba on the issue of the national secretary of the party, but in the wake of the Supreme

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

How Governor Alia blocked my support for IDP's, schools in Benue -Obi

By **Chinelo Obogo**

LABOUR Party's 2023 presidential candidate, Peter Obi, has condemned the politicisation of his efforts, saying that his planned visit to Benue was to support school and displaced families in the state.

In a statement posted on his X handle on Monday, the former Anambra governor narrated his ordeal while trying to get approval from the state government only to receive information that Governor Hyacinth Alia has banned visits to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Obi said he had scheduled visits to IDP camps and schools in Benue on April 14 after his trip to Plateau State and that despite repeated attempts to contact Governor Alia, all his efforts failed and the governor's aide-de-camp (ADC) who promised to call back later claimed he could not reach Alia for three days.

Obi said as his convoy approached Makurdi from Jos, his security team saw a statement from Benue government warning against "unapproved high-profile visits," citing security risks. He said the governor's ADC forwarded the statement directly to which referenced his itinerary shared earlier with state security. Governor Alia's office issued

a statement distancing itself from the visit, that unauthorized visits "cannot guarantee safety," though it did not name Obi directly.

Narrating what transpired, Obi said: "Ordinarily, I would not have commented on this issue, as I have endured far worse situations in my political life since I declared for the presidency, and it continues to worsen as I strive to do things in a civilised and organized manner. The unfolding events demand that I have to start speaking out now.

"On what transpired today during my planned visit to Benue State, I am not entirely sure that the state Governor, my dear younger brother, a Reverend Father I deeply respect, is aware of this situation. Having exhausted every possible means to reach him, I am compelled to use this available platform to ensure my message is conveyed.

"On Thursday, the 10th of April, I had planned to visit Plateau and Benue State, respectively. Plateau on Sunday, the 13th of April 2025, and Benue on Monday, the 14th of April 2025. My trip included paying courtesy calls to the governors as well as visiting the IDP camps and schools of

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

State of Emergency: Chief magistrate quits

From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

A chief magistrate in the Rivers State Judiciary, Ejike King George, has announced his voluntary retirement from service because of the existing emergency rule in the state.

The chief magistrate, in a letter to the Chief Judge through the Secretary, Rivers State Judicial Service Commission dated April 11, 2025, and titled, 'Voluntary Retirement From Service,' said he took a difficult and regrettable decision.

George said he was not comfortable with the recent appointment of a quasi-mili-

tary administration in Rivers State.

He wrote: "This present is intended to convey my decision to voluntarily retire my appointment as Magistrate of the Judiciary of Rivers State.

"This difficult and regrettable decision is informed largely by my discomfort with the recent appointment of a quasi-military administration to run the affairs of a modern state like ours.

"My lord will agree with me that this type of governance system is not only alien, but also runs antithetical to our hallowed profession as legal

• Continued on www.thesun.ng



LR: First Lady of Nigeria, Oluremi Tinubu, Mrs. Agyin Agbu Kefas, First Lady Taraba State, Hajiya Nana Shettima, Wife of the vice president of Nigeria and Dr. Temitope Ileri, Director General NACA. During the Flag off ceremony of Organization of African First Ladies For Development (OAFIAD), Free To Shine; Triple Elimination Campaign in Taraba State.

N300m : Rivers govt, NBA trade words

By **Chinelo Obogo** and **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

THE Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) Annual General Conference (AGC) Planning Committee has denied claims from the Rivers State Government that it paid for hosting rights of the 2025 conference.

A statement by the 2025 NBA planning committee chairman, Emeka Obegolu, said the decision to host the conference in Port Harcourt was finalised in August 2024 and there was no bidding process for it. He said the financial contribution from the state was a gift and not a transaction.

NBA was reacting to Rivers State Government's call to refund N300 million it paid into the association's account for the hosting of its annual general conference in the state.

The state government's decision to demand a refund followed what it termed NBA's selective principled stand to host its event in Enugu State.

A statement by Mr. Hector Igbikiowubo, SSA Media, Rivers State Government, yesterday, faulted the NBA's statement on last minute change of venue, by overlooking the context of the state of emergency in Rivers State.

Rivers Government faulted NBA's reason for taking such a decision, describing it as uncharitable and unbecoming

of a body that prides itself as a beacon of justice

Igbikiowubo stated: "The attention of the Rivers State Government has been drawn to the Nigerian Bar Association's (NBA) announcement dated April 10, 2025, relocating its 2025 Annual General Conference from Port Harcourt to Enugu.

"While we acknowledge the NBA's right to determine the venue of its events, we find the reasons cited for this decision, particularly the insinuation that the Sole Administrator's actions have undermined democracy and the rule of law, to be misleading, uncharitable and unbecoming of an association that prides itself on upholding justice and fairness."

"While we respect the

NBA's right to choose its conference venues, we find it curious that the association, despite its principled position, didn't address the refund of the N300 million already paid by the Rivers State Government for the hosting rights of the 2025 conference.

"If the NBA truly stands on principle, it should demonstrate the same integrity by promptly returning the funds rather than benefiting from a state it now publicly discredits."

According to him, the declaration of state of emergency by President Bola Tinubu was a necessary response to prevent law and order in the state.

He said President Tinubu exercised his constitutional power and acted in the best

interest of members of the public.

Igbikiowubo said: "The NBA's statement overlooks the constitutional basis for the current administration in Rivers State. The declaration of a state of emergency was a necessary response to a breakdown of public order and democratic processes.

"His Excellency, President Bola Tinubu, in exercising his constitutional authority, acted in the best interest of the state to restore stability.

"The Sole Administrator's mandate is clear: to oversee a transitional period that ensures the return of full democratic governance in line

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Insecurity: Kalu calls for decisive measures, says situation shouldn't be politicised

From **Kenneth Udeh**, Abuja

WORRIED by the escalating insecurity across the country, Abia North lawmaker, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, has challenged the Federal Government to take urgent steps to end the scourge.

As a way out of the dire situation, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on South-East Development Commission, called for investment of more resources on security

agencies.

He stressed that for the nation to tackle its security challenges, the issue must be addressed devoid of politics.

The former Senate Chief Whip stated this in China via a video posted on his social media page, calling for decisive measures to end the scourge.

Reacting to recent alarm by the Borno State Governor, Prof. Babagana Zulum, on the deteriorating security situation in his state in which he said some parts had been lost to in-

surgents, Kalu pointed out that if nothing was done urgently, Borno State and the South East might be lost totally to terrorists.

Specifically, the former Abia Governor frowned at the politicisation of insecurity, asserting that security is a serious issue which should not be politicised.

He also urged the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Id-

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Happy Birthday

His Royal Majesty Eze Ali Desmond, the Igwe Gburugburu of Okechi Ancient Kingdom In Imo State, hereby felicitates with **High Chief Government Owezide Ekpemupolo Tompolo** on his 54th Birthday.

Wishing him so many returns, longevity in all that concerns him and to use this opportunity to thank the entire Gbaramatu Kingdom for giving the nation an access of such manner.

Long Live High Chief Government Owezide Ekpemupolo Tompolo the Lion of Niger Delta, The Worthy Son of Aziza.

Congratulations!!!



**HIGH CHIEF GOVERNMENT
OWEZIDE EKPEMUPOLO TOMPOLO**
IBE-EBIDOUWEI OF IJAW NATION & CHAIRMAN, TANTITA
SECURITY SERVICES NIGERIA LIMITED (TSSNL)

Signed:

**His Royal Majesty
Eze Ali Desmond**

The Igwe Gburugburu
of Okechi Ancient Kingdom

HAPPY GOLDEN JUBILEE!

I rejoice with a young and extraordinary entrepreneur, **Chief Obinna Iyiegbu, Chairman, Cubana Group**, on the occasion of his 50th birthday.

May this milestone birthday mark a new chapter of continued success, joy, and fulfillment.

Wishing you many more years of success and service to humanity.

Happy Birthday!

**CHIEF OBINNA
IYIEGBU**
OKPATAOZUEORA 1
Chairman, Cubana Group

Signed:
HE Dr. Orji Uzor Kalu, MON
Senator representing Abia North
Chairman,
Senate Committee on
South East Development Commission

FG commends Cross River's leadership in climate change awareness

From **Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye**, Abuja

THE Federal Government has lauded Cross River State for its proactive efforts in combating climate change and raising awareness about its impact, aligning with the Renewed Hope Agenda.

Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), George Akume, delivered this commendation during a courtesy visit by contestants of the 2025 Miss Africa Pageant, led by reigning Miss Africa, Precious Okoye, in Abuja.

According to a statement Director, Information and Public Relations, Segun Imohiosen, the SGF praised the state's choice of "Climate Change" as the theme for the 2025 Miss Africa Pageant, urging contestants to use their platforms to advocate for climate action. He emphasized the importance

of addressing climate change for food security and sustainable development, noting that such initiatives are crucial to Nigeria's environmental goals.

Miss Precious Okoye highlighted her role as Miss Africa, stating that it has enabled her to empower women through agro-industrialization, fostering productivity and societal contributions.

Special Assistant to the Governor of Cross River State on Tourism Development, Tomas Ikpeme, underscored that this year's pageant goes beyond promoting tourism by serving as a platform to drive impactful societal awareness.

He also extended an invitation to Akume for the 7th edition of the pageant, scheduled for April 20, 2025, at the Calabar International Convention Centre.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Kaduna Career Fair 2025: Jobberman links jobs to young Nigerians

THE Kaduna Career Fair 2025, held in Kaduna State has ended with success, as Jobberman connected thousands of young job seekers with employers across diverse industries.

Under the theme: "Empowering Your Career Journey: Navigating Opportunities and Growth," the fair attracted about 1,000 job seekers and featured on-the-spot interviews by 44 companies, resulting in immediate job placements and fulfilling its goal of creating real-time employment opportunities.

A 24-year-old Computer Science graduate who secured a position at the job fair, shared her experience: "I came with my resume and determination, but I didn't expect to leave with a job offer. The preparation I received through Jobberman's soft skills training gave me the confidence to excel in my interview."

Another excited participant, Hyella Jalani, said: "I have been in Kaduna for 5 years and due to lack of job, I started petty trade. My friend tried to discourage me from coming, saying it would just be a waste of time. But I'm glad I didn't listen to her. I participated in two interviews and I got offered the role of a field officer. At first, I was skeptical but my experience as a petty trader stood me out and I have been asked to come to their office by 9am on Monday. I am just so happy, I can't explain it"

Ahmed Alaga, Head of Programme Impact & Partnerships at The African Talent Company (TATC), emphasised Jobberman's commitment to continued support for all participants:

"While we are thrilled about the on-the-spot placements today, our support doesn't end here. Participants who didn't secure immediate employment can access opportunities through our online platform or visit our job centres located across Kaduna State. Our team will be following up with all registered participants based on the information they have provided to match them with suitable positions as they become available."

Alaga also highlighted the importance of ongoing skills development: "Part of our campaign is to continuously develop young talent. We encourage those who haven't yet taken our employability or soft skills training to do so, as these programs significantly increase their chances of securing dignified employment."

The 2025 Kaduna Career Fair builds on the remarkable achievements of the first phase of the Young Africa Works initiative, a partnership between Jobberman and the Mastercard Foundation.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Group premieres documentary on African legacy

FORMER president Olusegun Obasanjo, has underscored the need for Africans to adopt a renewed mindset to truly achieve decolonisation and claim their place on the global stage.

He made these remarks at the African premiere of The Decolonisation of Africa, a landmark documentary hosted by Accelerate Media Group at The Metropolitan Club, Lagos, under the executive production of its CEO,

In her remarks, Otusheso reflected on the origin of the project, inspired by a profound conversation with

Obasanjo and rooted in the late Dr. Herbert Wigwe's vision of empowering Africans to tell their own stories through their own lens.

"This project began with a deep sense of purpose. Meeting former President Obasanjo opened my eyes to how important it is that this story be told—and told properly. Dr. Herbert Wigwe believed in the power of storytelling to shape identity and preserve legacy. That belief continues to guide us," Otusheso said.

As Executive Producer, Otusheso spoke to the careful and deliberate process of

assembling the right team to bring the vision to life.

In his address, Obasanjo reinforced the message of the film, that symbolic independence is not enough, and Africa must actively pursue economic, social, and psychological liberation.

"If America can lead the white race and China the Chinese, then Nigeria is destined to lead the Black race," he said.

Fola Adeola, President of The Metropolitan Club, described the documentary as a timely and important reminder of Africa's resili-

ence, while Chief Emeka Anyaoku, former Commonwealth Secretary General, lauded Obasanjo's contributions to ending apartheid and fostering democracy in Africa.

Tributes were paid to the late Dr. Herbert Wigwe, Co-Founder and former Group CEO of Access Holdings, whose unwavering support helped bring the project to life. Otusheso also recognised Access Bank for its ongoing commitment to cultural preservation and the power of storytelling.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng



L-R: Ag ES FCDA, Richard Dauda, FCT Minister Nyesom Wike, Regional Manager, Julius Berger Plc, Oliver Berger and Senator Mao Ohuambuwa, during the Minister's tour of the International Conference Center, Abuja, yesterday.

Delineation: Itsekiri leaders kick, seek Tinubu's intervention to avert regional crisis

ITSEKIRI leaders in Delta State have kicked against ward delineation of its constituency as ordered by the Supreme Court and called on the Federal Government to immediately set up an independent panel to scrutinise the work of the delineation committee in a bid to correct the anomaly.

They also called President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the Senate President Godswill Akpabio to Wade into the what they termed "brewing threats to regional security, safety to human lives and property including oil facilities in the region."

The leaders, in a petition through their solicitors, Amuda - Kannike (SAN) & Co queried the composition of the committee to determine whether it was just and fair regard being had to the principle of natural justice.

They also asked the electoral body (INEC) among others to "investigate the finances of the top officials of INEC and those of the members of the Committee to determine the allegation of financial inducement in the entire process."

They noted: "Examine the proposal of the committee to determine whether said proposal is not in fact the cancellation of names of existing Itsekiri communities and their replacement with names of Ijaw communities; in most cases against Supreme Court judgments.

"Inquire into the reason why over 21 years, beginning from 2003, the judgment in Suit No. FHC/B/109/97 Mr. Joseph Otumara & 8 Ors. v. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) & 4 Ors in favour of the Itsekiri people on the Ward structure and number in Warri

South Local Government Area which declared 12 Wards illegal and 10 Wards legal which up till date INEC has never implemented that judgment.

The further added: "Determine whether the committee ought to have proceeded with the event of 4th day of April, 2025

when it has been served an application for an injunction restraining it from doing so adding "that the proceedings of the said Committee be stayed in the meantime to allow for the execution of prayer their prayers".

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

FCT has reached 95% budget implementation, says Wike

From **Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye**, Abuja

IN a remarkable display of fiscal efficiency, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has achieved a historic 95 percent implementation of its 2024 statutory budget, according to the Minister, Nyesom Wike.

According to a statement issued by the Director of Press, Anthony Ogunleye, the minister noted that this milestone marks a significant leap from previous reports, which indicated a 90 percent implementation rate earlier in the year.

"I can tell you we've done not less than 95 percent of the budget implementation. That is historic. It has never happened before. And if you look at the projects there, you will see that there is no project that is in the 2024 budget that we have not touched," he said.

Wike emphasised during a press briefing after inspecting several ongoing infrastructure projects across the Territory, key projects nearing completion include the 4-kilometer six-lane dual carriageway connecting Life Camp Junction to Ring Road III and the access road from Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway to Judges Quarters in Katampe District. The extensive renovation of the International Conference Centre is also progressing rapidly.

Wike attributed the success to the extension of the 2024 budget by the National Assembly until June 2025, allowing for adequate funding and progress on projects. He expressed optimism about

the timely approval of the 2025 budget, which has been submitted to the National Assembly.

"These projects will be inaugurated by Mr. President during his second-year anniversary celebrations. We have gone to the International Conference Centre, which is almost ready. The first phase of the N5 will also be ready by the end of May," Wike stated.

He commended contractors for their dedication and commitment to delivering high-quality work within stipulated timelines, ensuring that payments are made to avoid delays. "Frankly speaking, we are very impressed with what we have seen. We are on schedule," Wike said.

Gov Otu hails Tinubu as construction of Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway begins in Cross River

GOVERNOR Bassey Otu has described the commencement of construction on Section 3A/3B of the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway as a historic breakthrough for Cross River State and the South-South region.

Section 3A/3B is about 65 to 70 km long and the Section 3A of the road is linking Cross River and Akwa Ibom States, and other states in the South-south and South Eastern part of the country.

Speaking on behalf of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu during the flag-off ceremony in Awi, Akamkpa Local Government Area on Monday, the governor lauded the project as "a bold and visionary move that will transform the economic fortunes of our region."

According to Otu, the highway will restore Calabar's

status as a maritime hub while enhancing connectivity by land, air, and sea. "This is not just a road project—it is a corridor of prosperity that will unlock vast economic opportunities, create jobs, promote cultural integration, and connect our Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone to national and global markets," he stated.

He reaffirmed the full support of the government and people of Cross River State for the project and for President Tinubu, whom he described as "a leader making the right decisions to build a better Nigeria." The governor praised the President's economic reforms in infrastructure, agriculture, and public policy, noting that they are "being implemented fairly

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

How Nigeria's first ladies shape power, politics

From **Ismail Omipidan**, Abuja

HISTORICALLY, there are several examples around the world of what ignoble or positive difference women around power can make. In Nigeria, public perceptions of women around power often influence the political trajectories of their husbands.

For Senator Oluremi Tinubu, she appears intentional in her efforts to support the Renewed Hope Agenda of her husband, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. For instance, her decision to donate two billion naira through her Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) towards the eradication of Tuberculosis (TB) in Nigeria has further positioned her as a First Lady using her power and influence for positive impact. She made the donation in her capacity as both the Global and National Stop TB Champion.

Reports show that Nigeria ranks first in Africa and sixth globally among countries most affected by tuberculosis. As an airborne disease, TB poses a threat to everyone and is currently the second deadliest infectious killer after COVID-19. It is also among the top 10 causes of death worldwide. This makes the First Lady's intervention both deliberate and timely, as it aims to safeguard the lives of vulnerable Nigerians.

In addition, she is championing the campaign to end the stigmatisation of people living with HIV/AIDS across the six geopolitical zones of the country. At the South-South campaign launch, she emphasised the need for Nigeria to seize the moment and join other countries in Africa who have achieved the UNAIDS 95-95-95 target, by 2030.

"The Free to Shine campaign seeks to significantly reduce new HIV infections among women of reproductive age, prevent mother-to-child transmission (vertical transmission), and ensure that every child born with HIV receives the necessary treatment and support to thrive. According to the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in 2024, there were over 100,000 children and nearly Two (2) Million adults living with HIV. Also, it is reported that most infants born to HIV-positive mothers, are not tested within the first two months of birth, largely due to the fact that the mothers are not aware or they are ignorant of the consequences of their inaction," the first lady remarked.

She further said that by raising awareness and renewing commitments to take action, the campaign aligns with the shared vision of a healthier Nigeria where every individual, particularly women, youth, and children, can thrive, adding that the vision was in line with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, which prioritises health as a key pillar of national development.

Desirous of catching them young, Senator Oluremi Tinubu is also executing the "Flow with Confidence," programme, through her Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI). Under the programme, each state, including the FCT, will receive 10,000 cartons of disposable sanitary pads, just as she emphasised environmental sustainability, which she noted, is necessitating the establishment of climate change clubs in secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning.

According to her, the goal is to get the students more involved in climate change and waste management as well as ultimately having a recycling plant in each state, promoting waste management and reducing plastic pollution.

"We don't have to be intimidated by



•Tinubu

the quantity of waste we see around us but we must get going and do something about it. We are starting now," she declared.

She further revealed that RHI, will be supporting 250 persons with disabilities in each state with a N200,000 grant to recapitalise their already existing businesses.

For every event that happens in Nigeria, the First Lady ensures her office is recorded on the positive side of history. For instance, when the unfortunate tanker explosion occurred in Karu, on the Abuja-Keffi Highway, which led to the loss of many lives and property, she joined in commiserating with the Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike, the families of the deceased and injured, residents, affected business and property owners and the people of Abuja, just as she urged owners and drivers of vehicles, especially articulated ones, to ensure the road worthiness and good condition of their vehicles before putting them on the road to avert

"For Senator Oluremi Tinubu, she appears intentional in her efforts to support the Renewed Hope Agenda of her husband, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. For instance, her decision to donate two billion naira through her Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) towards the eradication of Tuberculosis (TB) in Nigeria has further positioned her as a First Lady using her power and influence for positive impact. She made the donation in her capacity as both the Global and National Stop TB Champion."



•Sheffima

the recurrence of such sad incidents. "I pray Almighty God grants the souls of the departed eternal rest and their family and friends the fortitude to bear the irreplaceable loss. To the injured, I wish them speedy recovery," she added.

At a recent event where she inaugurated State-of-the-Art Orphanage and Children's Home in Nasarawa State, she noted that the well-being of all children, regardless of their background, is an essential pillar of development, as captured under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Inaugurating a 336-bed space home for Nana Berry Orphanage and Children's Home at New Nyanya in Nasarawa State, she said the initiative underscored her commitment to improving the lives of vulnerable children across the country.

"I first learned about the plight of the children of Nana Berry Orphanage and Children's Home while watching an interview of the Founder on NTA early in 2023. As a mother, I knew I had to act," she noted

The First Lady encouraged the caregivers at the Home to continue providing love and guidance, urging the children to embrace opportunities and dream big.

She remarked: "You are special, you are loved, and you have a bright future ahead of you. This home is a stepping stone towards your dreams. I encourage you to learn, grow, and become the best version of yourselves. Also, learn to cultivate the habit of compassion. You are all contributors to what this Nation can become. The sky is your limit—so dream big!"

She also highlighted the importance of keeping the orphanage focused on its core mission while ensuring the children's needs are met. "We pray that everyone seated here, these children, they still need clothes on their backs, they need food to eat," she said.

At the occasion, she also proposed an innovative farming approach, rather than get a farm land far away from the Home, as requested by the founder of the Home.

"I said no. This place is big enough, very big and I want this to be public, because when interest is divided, the children might suffer. I suggest you adopt smart farming techniques, using buckets to plant crops, which would be space-efficient and educational for the children.

"Nowadays we have something called smart gardening. You can grow in your

bucket... You can grow yams in buckets, you can grow potatoes in buckets," she said.

She acknowledged President Bola Tinubu's commitment to children's development, aligning with the Renewed Hope Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She equally thanked the Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Sule, for donating the land and ensuring the project's success.

On his part, the governor, represented by his deputy, Emmanuel Akabe, reiterated the state government's commitment to social welfare and emphasised the importance of the facility, emphasising its role in renewing the hope of the children who reside there.

"Today, we bring hope to those who have lost it. The dreams of these children are being revitalised, and as a state, we are committed to ensuring that this facility continues to thrive and serve its purpose.

Also speaking on the occasion, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Sustainable Development Goals, Adejoke Orelope-Adefulire, said the Nana Berry Orphanage Home, reflects the President Tinubu administration's commitment to the Renewed Hope Agenda, ensuring no one is left behind, especially children, saying the power of collaborations and partnerships, birthed the rehabilitation and revitalisation of the Home.

Represented by Head, Conditional Grant Scheme OSSAP-SDGs, Ifeyinwa Ukaegbu, she noted that the facility provides a safe environment for learning and holistic development, supporting SDG Goal 4: Quality Education and SDG Goal 5: Gender Equality.

"It is part of our broader strategy to accelerate SDGs implementation in Nigeria, complementing initiatives like Mother and Child Hospitals and skill acquisition centres. The Facility, sits on an expanse of 4,000 Square Meters, with a 100 bed Boys Hostel, 100 bed Girls Hostel, Staff quarters, Classrooms, Sick Bays, and 2 Play Grounds and others," she added.

While reeling out some of the achievements of the RHI in the last two years, Senator Oluremi Tinubu pointed out that the initiative has made significant impact in the areas of empowering women farmers, providing scholarships to indigent students, provision of professional kits to midwives in the North-Central and North-West geopolitical zones, provision of relief materials and funds to victims of disasters across the country, ICT training for women across the country, building of Alternative High School for Girls, supporting the Elderly and providing food items to vulnerable groups among others.

Asking what her priority would be in 2025, she said "Everything, everything, there is no priority. It depends on like the flow with confidence initiative, we still have to manufacture the sanitary towels so, and we're trying to produce locally, which is going to create jobs and put money in our economy."

"We want the students from tertiary institutions that are especially in the faculty of environment, and I believe that they want to see even those in biological sciences."

She pointed out that there was a need for a "can-do spirit" among young people, urging them to work towards achieving their goals. "Hard work is one of the tenets, that you know, took us out of poverty. Faith without works is dead. Go and work, work for this country. Let this country grow," she added.

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Power sector recurring crisis

THE Minister of Power, Adebayo Adedun, recently claimed that Nigeria has achieved a remarkable feat in power generation by 2,000 megawatts in the last two years, from 2,000MW in 1984 to 4,000MW in 2024. While this achievement is being celebrated, the persistent power sector crisis does not in any way support the minister's claim. The excitement within government circles has also not reflected on business operations and households in the country. In the past ten years, the power sector has seen investments totaling at least \$50 billion, including government subsidies and private sector contributions, with some reports citing N36trillion in subsidies alone in the beleaguered power sector.

Nigeria has a total installed power generation capacity of 16,384MW, but can only distribute not more than 4,000MW on most days, or even less. Available statistics show that power generation in the country reached its peak in 40 years at 6,003MW daily on March 2, 2025, but it has since crashed to less than 4,000MW. Adedun made the claim recently when members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) led by its President, Margaret Oguntola, paid him a courtesy visit in Abuja, to discuss areas of collaboration between NSE and the power ministry.

It is high time government stopped playing politics with the power sector, a critical component of economic and industrial growth, and focus squarely on addressing the multifaceted challenges facing the ailing sector. It is ironical that while the power sector continues to experience sluggish growth due to inefficiency and cash flow constraints, Nigerians and business operators are saddled with high tariffs, while Benin Republic and Togo get power steady supply from Nigeria on a 24-hour basis, according to reports from the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN).

According to the Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), international bilateral electricity customers in Benin Republic and Togo owe Nigeria \$8.84 million for energy consumed in the Q4 2024. The indebted foreign companies in Benin off-taking power from Nigeria include Parabe (2.65million), Transcorp-SBEE Ughelli (\$2.8million), ParaCEET(\$2.64million). Only Mainstream-NIGELEC in Togo has paid off its debt totaling \$2.6million, according to invoice

issued to NERC.

Although there are reports of little improvement in the power stability in parts of the country, in particular, in the distribution segment to Discos, which received 7,420.6 Gwh, reflecting a billing efficiency of 83.7 per cent. This represents a slight improvement of 82.2 per cent in Q3 2024, it is still below optimal levels. A recent United Nations Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) 7 tracking report, identified Nigeria as the "world's largest energy deficit", with 90 million people lacking access to electricity, surpassing Democratic Republic of Congo(70 million), and Ethiopia, 58 million people.

The report also reveals that self-generated power supply from diesel and petrol is estimated at 15,000MW. This results in high energy costs, further deepening the current economic disparities. The development is also reducing competitiveness of Nigerian industries in the global market. It is too early for the present administration to start beating its chest on the said achievement of the power sector. The truth is that the power sector has so far underperformed compared to the huge investment in the sector in recent years.

We urge the Federal Government to give more encouragement to private electric power generators as a good alternative to power supply in the country, even though the DisCos have not lived up to expectations. They constantly complain about inadequate gas supply, aging infrastructure and maintenance challenges as limiting their ability to provide stable power supply. For example, transmission inefficiency has reportedly risen to 9.2 per cent, exceeding the 7 per cent Multi-Year Tariff Order (MYTO) benchmark. This also highlights the frequent grid collapses due to infrastructure insufficiency. All of this needs upgrade as well as addressing bureaucratic delays in executing transmission upgrades across the country.

Government should address policy inconsistencies and limited private sector participation, all of which has worsened the sector's perennial crisis, leading to sustainable growth difficulties. In all, government and its policymakers need reminding that the potential of the power sector in economic development is such that nothing should be left to chance in revamping the sector. It is one of the prime considerations for both local and foreign investors in any country.

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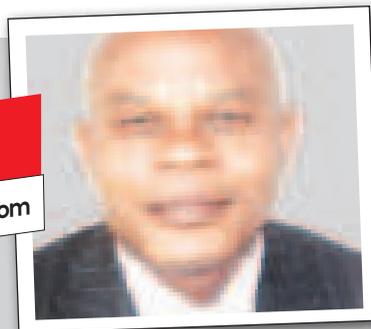
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How to ruin a country

**TUESDAY WITH
DAN ONWUKWE**

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IN a democracy, Presidents who want to be remembered for worthy causes often start by laying their plans with care and introspection, knowing that history certainly, will judge every leader. Secondly, great leaders don't fail to game out what happens next or in the future. That means a deliberate effort to plan how to deal with several scenarios of unpleasant situations and gauge out the outcomes with informed decision-making. Failing to do any or all of these situations, have led many presidents to run aground in the office. Some of them have ruined their country in the process because of lack of foresightedness.

It's unfortunate, and indeed, disturbing, that every incumbent president in Nigeria since 1999, seems to have been worse than his predecessor. I had thought that after 8 years as president, that Muhammadu Buhari would go down in history as the worst leader that Nigerians have had the misfortune of having. I also thought that no elected president after Buhari would surpass his unhidden crass nepotism. And I said so many times in this column. But, time and circumstance seem to have proved me wrong. I never knew that in less than two years in office, President Bola Tinubu, who once prided himself as a democrat would push the envelope beyond what is acceptable in a democracy. Let's not forget that as a presidential candidate, Tinubu was sold to Nigerian voters as a magic bullet, if elected, would revitalise our economy that Buhari left in ruins, and find solutions to intractable insecurity across the

country.

It was also believed that if elected President, Tinubu will unite us rather than divide us, ensure inclusivity and stability in the polity. He was falsely packaged as someone who will make better things happen, and prevent worse things from happening, a leader who will reduce economic hardship and make Nigerians feel a sense of belonging. Now, we have the worst things unimaginable happening in Nigeria. That's why Eedris Abdulkareem's protest song, "Tell your Papa", a rallying cry against the extreme hardship in the country, remains relevant, despite the ban by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC).

As Novel Laureate Prof Wole Soyinka said, the ban represents a return to the "culture of censorship and a threat to right of free expression. I suspect that a time may pretty soon come when husbands will take permission from Aso Rock before they sleep with their wives. Beyond this, insecurity is squeezing everyone to a corner. The country risks being overrun by terrorists. Lt-Gen. TY Danjuma has complained bitterly about the present danger, not only in his home state of Taraba.

Plateau state is still boiling, Sunday Sun (April 13) said it all in its front page, "Nigerians are losing hope as situation worsens nationwide". On all counts, and in less than two years, Nigeria is collapsing under Tinubu's watch. Democracy is threatened more than ever before. And, you ask, why? Was Tinubu sold to Nigerian voters in 2023 as an overblown, complex solution to Nigeria's problems?

In almost two years since he was sworn in, his policies have made worse things happen in virtually every sector of our national life. Like a bikini that reveals more than it can hide, Tinubu has shown us by his actions, who he truly is, a president for a section of the country, not a president for all Nigerians. His key political appointments tell the story: Of about 140 key political appointments, over 80 are Yoruba. That's why someone came up with a headline last week, "All hail President of the Yoruba nation". This is not far from the truth, despite desperate attempts by some of his media aides to the contrary.

Their denial was in response to the allegation by Sen. Ali Ndume (Borno North), of lopsided political appointments by the president in favour from his ethnic stock. Evidence supports Ndume's claims. Clearly, the lopsided nature of choice political appointments, is one of the telling signature policies of Tinubu presidency. As Sen. Ndume and others have said, this is in breach of the Constitution of the Federal Republic, and a clear violation of federal character principle enshrined in the Constitution, specifically section 14(3).

That section says that the "composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that

government or in any of its agencies".

The South East is the worst marginalized in political appointments in Tinubu's government. Does the President has some scores to settle with the Igbo? Sen. Enyinnaya Abaribe was strikingly accurate when he described the president's high-handedness against the Igbo as "renewed shege". Loosely translated, it means to deal heartlessly with someone for no justifiable reason. Again, why, in spite of the clear provision of section 14(3), has the president continued to violate the provisions of the Constitution that he swore to uphold? The answer is in the Egyptian proverb: They asked Pharaoh, what made you a tyrant? He answered, "because nobody stopped me".

That was what made the President to declare emergency rule in Rivers state, and removed the elected Governor, the Deputy and members of the state legislature in clear breach of relevant sections of the Constitution. All of these unhealthy developments are red flags of a collapsing nation. What are these signs? A recent research by Dambise Muyo, a respected global economist, itemised these signs to include weaker voter participation, too much influence of money in politics, weakening the pillars of democracy, overbearing influence of the Executive arm, a weaker and pliable at the dictates of the rich and powerful. Every institution of relevance to democracy appears to have been bought.

Other signs are political corruption,

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

2027: Sani steers APC as opposition shrinks

By **Mahmud Bashir Gada**

AHEAD of the 2027 general election, members of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kaduna State are presently in cloud nine following the growing popularity, organic love and acceptance of the state Governor, Senator Uba Sani, across the nooks and crannies of state. The APC is growing in leaps and bounds just as opposition parties are shrinking rapidly, particularly in the Southern Kaduna zone in a manner that promises to hand the state to the APC in a platter come 2027.

The recent mass defection in Southern Kaduna by loyalists of the Labour Party (LP) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to the APC signals a seismic shift in party allegiance in the zone that has left the opposition in tatters. The defectors can be described as "men of Timber and Calibre" in Nigerian political jargon. Among the first batch are Senator Danjuma Laar, Godfrey Ali Gaiya, and Ado Dogo Audu, all former members of the PDP. There were also House of Representatives Amos Gwamna Magaji and Donatus Mathew, as well as state legislators like Henry Marah Zakariah, Samuel Kambai Kozqaq and Barrister Emmanuel Kantiok.

All this took place at during the APC's zonal rally in Kafanchan, Southern Kaduna. Thousands of party loyalists and supporters had gathered to pass a vote of confidence in the administration of Governor Uba Sani. It was simply massive. At yet another mega rally which held at the Murtala Muhammad Square, Kaduna, notable figures such as Senator Shehu Sani, former governor of the state, Alhaji Muktar Ramalan Yero, Senator Suleiman Hunkuyi and many others too numerous to mention, hopped onto the

APC train in the state.

Without being told, the openness, fairness and equality with which Governor Uba Sani has been running the state counts for much among the people. The people of Kaduna now freely talk about the end of "political discrimination and near apartheid" to which the state was subjected in the past eight years of the previous administration of former Governor, Mallam Nasir El Rufai. A new sheriff in the person of Governor Uba Sani has come to demolish that which divides, segregates and impoverishes some people and uplifting others on the basis of religion, ethnicity, geo-political zone and party affiliation.

A defector who spoke in Hausa narrated how the APC was formed in the state by the coming together of seemingly like minds. He narrated how they were asked to come down from the bus along the road in a lonely bush and left there with nothing for more than seven years. He expressed joy and happiness that Governor Sani has brought back the party bus too come and pick them where they were abandoned because he recognized them as bonafide members who founded the party in the state. He concluded by saying that all of them who suffered the humiliating fate in the hand of the previous administration will do everything possible to put smile on the face of the man who remembered them.

Apart from the political inclusivity approach by Governor Sani, his sterling perform in office in the last 22 months has been very encouraging and attractive to opposition politicians in the state too want to identify with the governor and his party the APC. There is also the intractable infighting within the other leading opposition parties of PDP and the LP causing supporters to quickly figure out where their future politi-

The implication for the opposition is clearly written on the wall – no amount of alliance in the state can undo what has already been done by the APC. Kaduna State is safely in the kitty for the ruling party both at the centre and the state.

cal career is guaranteed. Of course no one can blame anybody for joining the party of his choice at any time. It is a simple function of pragmatism; being on the safer side ahead of the next round of elections in 2027 as the APC is perceived to be stronger at the national level than any opposition, alliance or not.

Governor Sani stated the obvious when he attributed the APC's growing popularity and acceptance in Southern Kaduna and indeed the entire state to his administration's commitment to justice and fairness. According to him, "APC is now taking over Southern Kaduna because my administration is anchored on justice. I am abiding by the oath of my office by being just to every segment of Kaduna State, irrespective of party affiliation or ethno-religious background." the Governor explained at the Kafanchan, Southern Kaduna rally.

And while addressing the crowd of party supporters at the Murtala Muham-

mad Square in Kaduna, he noted that that: "Someone who joins APC today and the one who has been a foundation member 10 years ago, they are of the same status. They will enjoy the same rights and privileges." He then went on to promise that his administration will execute projects in all parts of Kaduna State, regardless of party affiliations and ethno-religious considerations just as he has been doing since day one in office. He emphasized that: "Politics is different from governance. We will be fair to all, whether or not they voted for us, because that is the oath of office that we swore to uphold as leaders."

Waxing liturgical, the Governor reminded the crowd that leaders will be held accountable on the last day when they face their creator and would be made to account for how they led the people whom God had entrusted in their care while here on earth. Governor Sani then challenged the new members to tell their supporters of the readiness of APC to accept them into the party, as its doors in the state are still open to accept more defectors.

The implication for the opposition is clearly written on the wall – no amount of alliance in the state can undo what has already been done by the APC. Kaduna State is safely in the kitty for the ruling party both at the centre and the state. It is in this regard that political analysts are expressing pity and concern for the immediate past governor of the state – Nasir El-Rufai, who has suddenly now found himself in the opposition camp. It is being said loudly in

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

• Gada, a political analyst and commentator, writes from Kafanchan, Kaduna State

★ WOMEN OF THE SUN

Yoruba women, living archives of cultural heritage...empower them to touch generations –Adebonojo, Yoruba language advocate

By **Josfyn Uba**

DAMILOLA Adebonojo is a passionate advocate for the Yoruba language and culture, working to promote its importance and relevance in modern society particularly among younger generations

She is a Ph.D. student in Comparative Literature and Intercultural Studies at the University of Georgia, with a focus on translating women's works in Yoruba literature ¹.

Damilola, who also founded *Alám já Yorùbá*, a startup providing Yoruba language services, including translation and subtitles for Yoruba movies and has co-developed *MENYO-20k*, a multi-domain English-Yoruba corpus for machine translation and domain adaptation has won many awards. She has been recognized by the African Language Teachers Association and UGA's Office of Instruction for her contributions to Yoruba language education

In this interview with Daily Sun, Damilola said that Yoruba women are the living archives of their cultural heritage as they have always passed down the language and values. For her, when we empower them with tools to teach and preserve the language, the ripple effect touches generations.

How do you think the preservation of Yoruba language and culture can benefit women and children in the community?

When people understand their identity, they become unstoppable. Yoruba language education provides this sense of rootedness, especially for women and children. For women, it opens doors to leadership, entrepreneurship, and global opportunities in fields like education, translation, and cultural consultancy. I know women who have created Yoruba language schools abroad as a result of them being taught their language as a child. That's what happens when women embrace their heritage, they not only strengthen their personal growth, they also empower entire communities. For children, learning their language builds self-esteem from an early age. They grow up knowing their language isn't just a "local dialect" — it's a rich, world-class system of thought and communication, full of history and wisdom. By instilling this knowledge, we're setting them on a path to confidently navigate the world.

What role do you believe women play in passing down cultural traditions and language to younger generations?

In the Yoruba context, women's first duties are as the custodians of our culture. It is the reason our people say, "m tó bá dára ni ti bàbá r ." It is believed that a child that hasn't been well trained ends up becoming their mother's baggage and so from lullabies to eulogies, to food preparation to proverbs shared during chores, women have always passed down our language and values. When we empower women with tools to teach and preserve the language, the ripple effect touches generations. And when I say empowering women, I mean empowering our children, the girl-child especially. Teaching them the culture is paramount. The child of today will become the mother, aunty, or grandma who will transfer our culture to the children of tomorrow. A Yoruba woman is a living archive of her heritage.

How can we ensure that Yoruba language and culture are preserved and promoted in a way that is inclusive and accessible to all mem-

bers of the community?

We must start by removing the idea that Yorùbá belongs only to a certain class of people or is confined to rural areas. The language is for everyone, whether you're in Ibadan or Indianapolis.

Accessibility must be intentional. This means building more digital platforms, providing low-cost or free learning resources, and training teachers who understand diverse learner needs. This also means that people need to stop seeing teaching Yoruba online as a get-rich-quick scheme. On the part of learners, it also means removing shame. Too many adults, especially in the diaspora, are embarrassed to learn because they think it's too late. It's not. If anything, the more inclusive we are, the more powerful the movement becomes.

We need media, education systems, and cultural events that welcome everyone into the Yorùbá world, regardless of age, background, or fluency level. Inclusivity looks like adding Yoruba subtitles on streaming platforms, hosting language clubs in diaspora cities, and making learning materials for people with disabilities. Culture thrives where access exists. Inclusivity is not about lowering the bar; it's about opening the gate.

How can education in Yoruba language and culture empower women and children in the community?

As I mentioned earlier, a Yoruba person who knows how to speak their language already won the battle that may be posed by self-identity. When people are taught to speak their mother tongue from young, they have a sense of self, they know who they are. They become unstoppable. That's what learning Yoruba gives everyone, especially women and children: a sense of rootedness. For women, it aids their indigenous duty of safeguarding their heritage and roots them as natural leaders they are supposed to be. For children, it builds their self-esteem early. They grow up knowing that their language isn't just a local dialect or a vernacular; it's a world-class system of thought and communication.

What initiatives or programs do you think would be most effective in promoting language and cultural education among women and children?

"When people understand their identity, they become unstoppable. Yoruba language education provides this sense of rootedness, especially for women and children. For women, it opens doors to leadership, entrepreneurship, and global opportunities in fields like education, translation, and cultural consultancy."



• Adebonojo

We need a multi-level approach. At the grassroots level, back here at home for native speakers, having community language and cultural hubs is highly recommended. I like what Lagos state is currently doing with the J.Randle Centre for Yorùbá Culture and History. We need more of it. Places like these should serve as safe spaces for cultural learning. For instance, the majority of Yoruba native speakers are not Yoruba literates. Very many people can speak Yoruba fluently, but when it is time to write or read in Yoruba, you would be surprised how many can actually do that. We need initiatives like our free Yoruba reading club and paid Yorùbá reading school at *Alám já Yorùbá* that address this problem.

In our South-West Nigerian schools, Yorùbá should not be a subject that students can opt out of. It should be a requirement for schooling in the South-West. I once taught at a school in Lekki Lagos where Yoruba was treated like an optional language and inferior to other languages like French, Spanish, etc. Yoruba is supposed to be more than just a subject; it should be a medium for learning other subjects too. I am particularly pleased that so many of my colleagues online now do what our government has failed to implement. I see people teach complex subjects like Science, Chemistry, and even Artificial Intelligence in Yoruba.

To be honest, the Yoruba digital space is currently thriving, but we need newer ideas instead of repetition of what is already done. We need to collaborate more to create culturally rich content tailored to women. There's nothing wrong with Yoruba contents that focus on women's issues, like Women's health for example. For children, a lot is on YouTube. I recommend that these content creators consult Yoruba professionals for appropriateness and unique ideas. Yoruba tutors should be active contributors

to children's content online. They teach these children and often know what kind of content we need more of.

At my online school (*Alám já Yorùbá*), I've seen firsthand how our comprehensive Yorùbá learning program transformed women who once felt disconnected from their heritage. One of our students came in with zero knowledge of the language and a lot of shame around that gap because her parents never taught her to speak Yoruba. Today, she's not just fluent; she coaches Hollywood actors to speak Yorùbá for film roles. That's what happens when identity meets empowerment.

How can we address the challenges faced by women and children in accessing education and cultural resources in Yoruba language?

The barriers to learning Yoruba are real, we have issues of limited appropriate resources, lack of time (on the part of learners), lack of trained instructors, and digital divides. One of the issues we continue to face is that people still cannot differentiate between teaching Yoruba as a second/foreign language (to someone who did not grow up speaking it) and teaching Yoruba to native speakers. The solutions are within reach. While we need policies that prioritize teaching Yoruba in South-West Nigerian schools, we also need to train more educators to be able to teach Yoruba as a second/foreign language.

This is one of the reasons I've been so committed to training female Yorùbá educators. I know the ripple effect is generational. Some of the women I've trained and mentored now run their own Yorùbá schools and build safe spaces for children, shaping identities, and preserving culture in ways that are deeply local and powerfully global.

(Continued on www.sunnewsonline.com)

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11th April, 2025.

Sam Olumekun, MNI

National Commissioner and Chairman,
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Federal Capital Territory.

Honourable Commissioner Sir,

IN RE:

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE PROPOSED DELINEATION OF WARDS IN THE WARRI FEDERAL CONSTITUENCY BY THE ORDER OF THE SUPREME COURT: THE SUBMISSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF ITSEKIRI ETHNIC EXTRACTION

The above subject matter refers.

We have the instructions of the Focus Persons, Leaders and People of Itsekiri ethnic extraction in Warri Federal Constituency to make this initial submission subject to our clients doing a supplementary submission with more particulars subsequently.

The attention of our clients has been drawn to a media publication as above titled and dated the 10th day of April, 2025 under the hand and seal of your good offices; a copy of which said publication our clients forwarded to us with instructions to do your good offices a befitting reply as herein contained. Please, kindly find a copy of the said publication attached herewith and marked **Annexure "AA"** for the ease of reference and avoidance of doubts.

Accordingly, we act upon the instructions of our clients to make the following initial submissions and observations in the circumstances:

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

1.1 By way of introductory remarks, may we humbly indicate very swiftly, our clients' instruction to inform your good offices of the brewing threats to regional security, safety of human lives and property including oil facilities in the region arising from the procedures, occasioned by the means and strategy deployed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the delineation of Warri Federal Constituency which as you would presently find, is completely at variance with the spirit and intent of the said judgment of the Supreme Court, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended and the guidelines and Manuals of INEC on its mandate as per its neutrality and independence.

1.2 The said threats are occasioned by the proposal by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the delineation of Warri Federal Constituency of as conceived on the 4th day of April 2025 which is in reality a disguised execution of a pogrom against the people of Itsekiri Ethnic Nationality vide the forceful annexation of Itsekiri territories, reversal of court judgments favourable to the Itsekiri people, alteration of well-established historical land ownership records and the illegal creation of communities for the Ijaws and Urhobos in Itsekiri territories.

1.3 We have been fully briefed by our clients of the facts of this matter and our clients' submissions and observations on the report is as hereunder contained subject to the right of our clients to supply further particulars as may be required in the circumstances:

1.4 That our clients have watched with keen interest and rapt attention, the events leading to the highly inflammatory proposal of 4th April, 2025; surreptitiously packaged by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for Warri Federal Constituency and hereby express our clients' uttermost dismay and chagrin over how increasingly the Commission is failing in its responsibility to be independent and neutral; notwithstanding the fact that it has handy, the **Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended** and well as a Manual to keep the Commission on track.

1.5 That our clients hereby vehemently express their deepest disappointment, dissatisfaction and absolute rejection of the entire exercise of delimitation/delineation; including the procedure and process of the **Professor Rhoda Gumus** and **Mr. Joseph Elemson** led Committee of INEC for being truly what we suspected and complained to INEC that it would be; a disguised execution of a well-orchestrated pogrom agenda against the people of Itsekiri Ethnic Nationality.

1.6 That our clients have observed and as we shall presently demonstrate; and as a perusal of the said proposal would also reveal; the said proposal reeks of multiple cases of forceful annexation of Itsekiri territories, reversal of court judgments that are favourable to the Itsekiri people, alteration of the well-established historical land ownership records, the illegal creation of communities for the Ijaws and the Urhobos within Itsekiri territories, just to mention but a few of the inhibiting vices.

2.0 **SUMMARY OF THE CASE AGAINST THE ENTIRE EXERCISE:**
The entire exercise as we shall presently demonstrate, is incurably defective and grossly incompetent both as per the procedure and process as well as technical content and form.

2.1 A perusal of the said proposal would as aforesaid, reveal that it reeks of multiple cases of forceful annexation of Itsekiri territories, reversal of court judgments that are favourable to the Itsekiri people, alteration of the well-established historical land ownership records and the illegal creation of communities for the Ijaws and the Urhobos within Itsekiri territories.

To place our client's submission in proper perspective, it may be imperative to present the extant submissions and observations by identifying the relevant issues and treating them seriatim as follows:

a. On the establishment, constitution and inauguration of the Committee to execute the exercise:

2.2 Our clients woke up to the rude shock of the fact that on or about 12th March, 2024, for the purpose of the establishment, constitution and inauguration of the Committee to execute the delineation exercise, the INEC National Chairman met with the leaders of the Ijaws and Urhobos from Warri Federal Constituency of Delta State at the INEC headquarters in Abuja. The significance of this is certainly too deep to glide over considering the provisions of **Section 36 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended**. Kindly see the bundle of photographs, **Annexure "BB"** attached herewith.

2.3 As it turned out, the reason for the unlawful exclusion of the Itsekiri people that constitute the overwhelming majority of the voters in Warri Federal Constituency by virtue of INEC records may not have been unconnected with the preconceived intention and desperation to rig the whole exercise. The following facts are in this light worthy of isolation:

a. The scripted Chairman of the Committee, **Professor Rhoda Gumus** is a leading Ijaw leader of thought.

b. **Mr. Joseph Elemson** is another leading Ijaw leader of thoughts and he was placed in charge of field operations of the entire delimitation/re-delineation team. He was/is to give instructions and every other person was/is to report to **Professor Rhoda Gumus**.

2.4 Beside the fact that the above script would never have been so written had the Itsekiris not been illegally excluded as aforesaid, none of the other stakeholders would have ever accepted two Itsekiri persons driving such a process. What happened to the sense of natural justice here? Could it have deadened by inducement? Most likely.

There may be a need for the relevant financial investigation agencies to investigate widespread allegations of financial inducement that characterized the exercise in the circumstances.

2.5 The above suspicion is heightened by the fact that despite all appeals and protestations by leaders, stakeholders and people of Itsekiri ethnic nationality to INEC on the above dislocation of one of the pillars of justice, INEC has refused and/or failed and neglected to listen to, consider or look into the pleas and complaints or make any amend/adjustment to reflect a fair, rational and unbiased constitution of the delimitation/re-delineation team.

2.6 The obvious implication of the above development is not far-fetched. By the above exclusion of the Itsekiri people, the principle of fair hearing, "*Audi alteram partem*" a Latin phrase meaning "*listen to the other side*" or "*hear the other*", was denied the Itsekiris.

2.7 In the same vein, having the above-named Ijaw national leaders of thought chair and superintend the Committee constitute another fundamental infraction of the right of Itsekiri people to a fair hearing, rendered in the Latin maxim; "*Nemo iudex in causa sua*, a Latin phrase meaning "*No man shall be Judge in his own cause or the deciding authority must be impartial and without bias*".

2.8 With both pillars of justice dislocated, the eventual outcome was inevitable; the complete travesty of justice that was called a proposal.

b. On the protests and legal actions by the people of Itsekiri ethnic nationality over their illegal exclusion and the appointment of Ijaw National Leaders as the Head and Supervisor respectively of the Delineation Committee

Were the people of Itsekiri quiet in the face of the above infringement and/or likely infringement of their fundamental rights? No, they were not!

2.9 Beyond the multiple protests against the appointment of Ijaw National Leaders as the Head and Supervisor respectively of the Delineation Committee, the Itsekiri people instituted an action in court against INEC.

2.10 As for the said illegal exclusion, a definite petition was lodged with the Commission. May we refer to **Annexure "CC"** attached herewith for which reason the INEC Chairman in anger cowed to permit any meeting with the representatives of the Itsekiri people for protesting the above infringement of their fundamental rights. The INEC Chairman ensured that the Itsekiri representatives were limited only to the inferior decision making office of the Delta State Resident Electoral Commission and its subordinates; never was audience granted them the Itsekiri representatives by the National Chairman even till date; despite multiple applications for the opportunity for a meeting by the Itsekiri representatives.

c. On INEC's Refusal to honour collective resolutions on the judgment of the court of appeal in favour of the Itsekiri people.

For over 21 years, beginning from 2003, there was the judgment in Suit No. FHC/B/109/97 – **Dr. Joseph Otumara & 8 Ors. v. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) & 4 Ors** in favour of the Itsekiri people on the Ward structure and number in Warri South Local Government Area which said judgment declared 12 Wards illegal and 10 Wards legal. Up till date, INEC never implemented that judgment.

2.11 At the appropriate time, we shall deal with the issue of the breach of professional ethics involving some lawyers who knowing that there was a subsisting judgment on the matter, surreptitiously instituted the suit leading to the judgment (2022) now sought to be enforced without making the Itsekiri people who were the initial judgment creditor parties. That would be an issue for another day.

2.12 Sequel to complaining about the unlawful exclusion of the Itsekiri people in the above circumstances, the people also sought to give life to their own judgment which was earlier in time and distinct from the one now sought to be enforced and INEC and all the stakeholders agreed by resolution that both judgments would be enforced together. The said resolution is as contained in **Annexure "DD"** attached herewith attached, a document of INEC duly signed by all the stakeholders. Ironically this was the only unanimous point of agreement at the meeting in Asaba, Delta State of Nigeria; however, it was never implemented.

d. On INEC's Refusal to respect judicial processes particularly with regards to the conduct of the event of the 4th day of April, 2025

2.13 INEC was aware at the material time, that there was and remains not just a pending appeal on the subject matter of the said event it proposed and conducted on the 4th of April, 2025, but that there is in fact, a Motion on Notice duly filed before the Court to the knowledge of INEC, seeking a stay of actions regarding the said event in particular and associated activities in general. The said court processes already served on the parties were served on INEC in particular, on the 2nd day of April, 2025 in this regard. This was two clear days before the event. Attached herewith and marked as **Annexure "EE"** is a copy of the affidavit of service deposed to by the Bailiff of the Court of Appeal in proof of this fact.

2.14 We have no doubts in our minds that INEC knew that the said event of 4th day of April, 2025 does not only constitute disrespect for the Court but certainly now presents the Court with a *fait accompli*; a situation where a party knowing of the existence of an action to restrain it from doing an act pending before court yet proceeds to doing that act. In the case of **EFFIOM v. IRONBAR (2000) 3 NWLR (650) 545 at 563 the Court of Appeal per Opene JCA** sturdily admonished as follows:

"The Court will not allow either of the parties to present it with a fait accompli. It is therefore the duty of the court to see that its orders are not rendered nugatory. When therefore the conduct of one of the parties has the tendency of foisting on the court a fait accompli, the court may make an order which will have the effect of returning the parties to the original status quo pending the determination of the suit."

2.15 It is our hope that INEC is familiar with the constitutional provisions (Section 36 (1), Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended) on the above-mentioned principle of fair hearing which for the sake of emphasis we reproduce hereunder:

"In the determination of his civil rights and obligations, including any question or determination by or against any government or authority, a person shall be entitled to a fair hearing within a reasonable time by a court or other tribunal established by law and constituted in such manner as to secure its independence and impartiality"

2.16 There is no gainsaying the fact that INEC is an authority of government obligated by the said statute to guarantee that it operates; **"in such manner as to secure its independence and impartiality"**. We are also fortified in the extant point of objection by the relevant provisions of the guidelines of INEC as contained in its Manual in this respect.

e. The contradictions in the proposal of the 4th day of April, 2025 clandestinely packaged by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for Warri Federal Constituency

2.17 It is apparent that the INEC Chairman appears from the above facts to be much in a hurry as his tenure is about to expire, to deliver on the profane assignment given to it by the other stakeholders that he has completely disregarded the above-mentioned statutes and guidelines.

2.18 Beyond the aforesaid likelihood of bias protested by our people against the appointment of an Ijaw Professor heading the Delineation Committee and a Senior Ijaw man appointed as the operating field officer against the rule of natural justice some aspects of the said proposal that clearly manifest the bias of the Ijaw composed INEC Committee are as follows:

a. The said proposal is in fact the cancellation of names of existing Itsekiri communities and their replacement with names of Ijaw communities; in most cases against the Supreme Court judgments for example as far as Warri South-West is concerned:

i. In the list of communities proposed by the Committee as part of the said proposal for Warri South-West Local Government Area, listed as RA14, the existing community that was determined by the Supreme Court to be Okerenghigo and not Okerenkoko was by the said proposal reversed to Okenrekoko.

ii. The decision of the Supreme Court of Nigeria in **James Uluba & Ors vs Chief E. E. Sillo & Ors (1972) ALL NLR 2nd Edition Volume 1 Page 53** in terms of the name "Okerenghigo" versus "Okerenkoko" which is a dispute that arose therein and was considered and decided upon by the Supreme Court of Nigeria in favour of the name "Okerenghigo". The said suit was prosecuted by the Itsekiris against the Ijaws.

iii. Worthy of note is the decision of the Lower Court which was also in favour of the Itsekiris as recorded in the said Supreme Court judgment at page 59 is as follows:

"The learned trial judge finally reached the following conclusion- the evidence of the Plaintiffs and their witnesses as to the founding of Okerenghigo before me in this case is more credible than the Defendants' evidence and leads me to the conclusion that Okerenghigo or Okenghigo was founded by the Plaintiffs' ancestors and that the original ancestor of the Defendants by name Akpata and his followers settled on the land with the permission of the Plaintiffs' ancestors. And I find that he accepted his position as their customary tenant. This I so find."

iv. The appeal to the Supreme Court was to challenge the above finding of the lower court. Conclusively, the Supreme Court held at page 66 of its judgment thus:

"We will accordingly dismiss this appeal and affirm the judgment of Obaseki, J., in the High Court, Warri, in Suit No. W/30/1962 delivered on October 3, 1969...". We award costs assessed at N125 to the Respondents in this appeal"

v. The said proposal is in fact the cancellation of names of existing Itsekiri communities and their replacement with names of Ijaw communities; in most cases against Supreme Court judgments for example as far as Warri South-West is concerned:

b. The decision of the High Court of Justice in Suit No: W/277/2012: Chief E.F. Esisi & 10 Ors vs. The Governor of Delta State & 5 Ors where the Honourable Court referred extensively to the decision of R.W. Rhodes-Vivour J. sitting in Warri High Court in Suit No. W/148/56 before the Warri High Court between Chief Izoukumo Olioki & 5 Ors (for themselves and on behalf of the Ogbe-Ijoh people) Vs Itsekiri Communal Land Trustees and Chief Sam Warri Esi (for himself and on behalf of Agbassa and the Igbudu People) over the declaration of title to land in Warri including the areas now being claimed by the people of Ogbe-Ijoh of Warri; the relevant portion being as follows:

"On the 9/7/64, this court delivered its Ruling refusing the plaintiffs application to discontinue after the trial date had been fixed to the knowledge of the parties... The Plaintiffs are hereby precluded from bringing any further actions action against any or either of the 1st and 2nd Defendants in respect of the claims of which specific particulars were given in the Writ of Summons"

c. The above action then instituted on the same subject matter covering the ownership of the areas listed in RA 02, RA 07 & AR12. The claim of the Ijaws for the said areas was struck out by the Honourable Court following a line of decisions. The names now proposed to be given to the said areas are Ijaw names in place of their existing Itsekiri names to give the impression that they are owned by the Ijaws; another way to circumvent the judicial processes in this direction.

d. Again, with the support of top Ijaw Leaders, the Ama Okosu of Ogbe-Ijoh had conceived a plan to launch into Warri South Local Government Area with a view to establishing an Ijaw Kingdom called Ogbe-Ijoh

Kingdom of Warri South. They instituted the suit initially against only the Local Government Council and the State but when the Isekiri people raised an objection the suit was struck out prior to 2020.

- e. Sequel to the above development, the Ijaws instituted W/147/2020 Between: W/147/2020 HRM Amaokosu Mobene Vs. The Executive Governor Delta State & 5 Ors by which the Ama-Okosu of Ogbe-Ijoh claimed to be entitled to royalties in Warri South Local Government Area. After 4 years of intense legal tussle, the suit was struck out for being incompetent and lacking in merit. The judgment was eventually delivered on the 26th day of March, 2024 in favour of the Itsekiris.

Consequently, and without prejudice to our clients' right to raise further objections over the technical absurdities that characterize the said exercise, we vehemently reject in its entirety, the INEC proposal for the delineation of Warri Federal Constituency of the 4th day of April 2025 on the ground that same is a product of an invalid exercise by reason of gross violation of the **Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended**, INEC guidelines and a deliberate contempt of court.

Arising from the above developments, our clients are not at all confident that they would see justice with the current configuration of the Delineation Committee which our client pointed out from the onset was the very high risk of bias; the rationale behind INEC not permitting Resident Electoral Commissioners serving in their home state.

Our Clients have therefore instructed us as we hereby act, to observe in the circumstances that the said proposal constitutes a ticking time bomb; brewing threats to regional security, safety to human lives and property including oil facilities in the region; regard being had to the procedures, means and strategy deployed by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for the delineation of Warri Federal Constituency which as you would have found above, is completely at variance with the spirit and intent of the said judgment of the Supreme Court, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended and the guidelines and Manuals of INEC on its mandate as per neutrality.

OUR PRAYERS:

The above facts adumbrated; it is our humble prayer:

1. That the Federal Government of Nigeria should set up an independent panel of inquiry to perform the following tasks:
 - a. Scrutinize the work of the Delineation Committee as per the procedure of the constitution and composition of the Committee to determine whether it was just and fair regard being had to the principle of natural justice.
 - b. Investigate the finances of the top officials of INEC and those of the members of the Committee to determine the allegation of financial inducement in the entire process.
 - c. Examine the proposal of the committee to determine whether said proposal is not in fact the cancellation of names of existing Itsekiri communities and their replacement with names of Ijaw communities; in most cases against Supreme Court judgments.
 - d. Inquire into the reason why over 21 years, beginning from 2003, there was the judgment in Suit No. FHC/B/109/97 – Mr. Joseph Otumara & 8 Ors. v. Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) & 4 Ors in favour of the Itsekiri people on the Ward structure and number in Warri South Local Government Area which declared 12 Wards illegal and 10 Wards legal which up till date INEC has never implemented that judgment.
 - e. Determine whether the Committee ought to have proceeded with the event of 4th day of April, 2025 when it has been served an application for an injunction restraining it from doing so.
2. That the proceedings of the said Committee be stayed in the meantime to allow for the execution of prayer 1 above.

We appreciate your timely intervention in this matter and hope that same is genuine and that the appropriate measures would be taken to address the issues raised above in the interest of the security of lives and property in the region.

Yours Faithfully,

Pp: Amuda-Kannike (SAN) & Co.

Brenda Modupe Alabi (Mrs.)

CC:



His Excellency,
Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu,
President and Commander in Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Aso Rock Villa,
Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.

His Excellency,
Distinguished Senator Godswill Akpabio,
The Senate President,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Three Arms Zone, Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.

His Excellency,
The Honourable Speaker,
House of Representatives,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,
Three Arms Zone, Abuja,
Federal Capital Territory.

Honourable Attorney General of the Federation & Minister of Justice,
Hon. Attorney General's Chambers
Federal Ministry of Justice,
Central Business District
Abuja,
Nigeria.

The National Security Adviser (NSA),
State House,
Federal Capital Territory,
Abuja.

The Inspector General of Police (IG),
Nigeria Police Force,
Force Headquarters,
Federal Capital Territory,
Abuja.

The Chairman,
Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC),
Plot 301/302, Institution and Research Cadastral District,
Jabi,
Federal Capital Territory,
Abuja.

The Director General,
Department of State Services,
DSS HQ, 1 Maitama Avenue,
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Federal Capital Territory.

The Commissioner of Police,
Nigeria Police Force,
Delta State Police Command,
Asaba,
Delta State.

The Director,
Department of State Services (DSS),
Warri South Local Government Area,
Warri.

The Area Commander,
Nigeria Police Force,
Warri Area Command,
Warri,
Delta State.

SEASON OF EXAMS

■ Schools, students in final preparations for WASSCE, UTME, NECO, parents hire private tutors



• Prof. Is-haq Oloyede, Registrar, JAMB



• Dr. Amos Dangut, Head of National Office, WAEC



Prof. Ibrahim Wushishi, Registrar, NECO

By **Gabriel Dike**

ABOUT 14,000 approved public and private secondary schools and over one million students nationwide are making final preparations to sit for two major terminal examinations. They are May/June 2025 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE).

Also, over two million students are working towards writing the 2025 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) to secure admissions.

Students are expected to obtain five credits including English Language and General Mathematics as well as a high score in the UTME to stand a chance of securing admission in the university, polytechnic or college of education. The UTME will start from Friday, April 25, to Monday, May 5, 2025.

Schools have moved the SS111 students to special coaching classes, in some cases including Saturday and Sunday sessions for schools with boarding facilities.

Parents are not left out as some hired private teachers for their wards at home to take them on specific subjects.

Daily Sun learnt that during the first and second term breaks, some schools engaged their SS111 students in preparation for the external exams.

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and the National Examinations Council (NECO) released their time-tables long ago. The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), recently announced date for the matriculation exam where over two million candidates applied.

WAEC timetable revealed that the school examination will start on Tuesday, April 29, 2025, with Food and Nutrition and Home Management. It ends on Friday, June 20, 2025, with Fisheries and Crop Husbandry and

Horticulture.

The SSCE timetable exams commence with Physical Education and other practical papers from Monday 16 to June 20, 2025. English Language and General Mathematics will be written on Wednesday, July 2 and Wednesday, July 16 respectively.

Some Federal Government Colleges are organising special classes for their SS 111 students for WASSCE, UTME and SSCE at N40,000 per student. In some private schools, the cost for the special coaching classes was included in the fees paid to prepare the SS111 students.

The issue of payment of N40,000 generated ripples in King's College, Lagos. Some parents kicked against it and queried their PTA executives for the high cost.

Following stiff opposition, the KC PTA dropped the idea, forcing parents to make private arrangements for their wards.

Some withdrew their wards at the end of SS111 for a one year tutorial class for WASSCE, SS111 and UTME.

Some special schools in Oshodi, Ikeja, Ikoyi, Fagba, Ogba, Port Harcourt, Benin, Abuja, Awka, Aba, Owerri and Onitsha provide accommodation and feeding for students. Students in such schools are coached by seasoned WAEC exam markers and subject specialists.

Parents' preparations

A guardian with a ward in KC, Ad-ekunle (surname withheld) told Daily Sun that he hired two teachers, one for science subjects and another for English Language. His decision was based on the cancellation of a special class by the PTA of King's College: "Some parents questioned the PTA executives on the rationale to pay N40, 000 per child for the special coaching classes.

"Following the disagreement, the new principal stopped the special classes. Some of us had to engage teachers to fill

the gaps."

Adenike Solaja has an SS111 student at Bright International Academy, Bariga, Lagos. Her son moved to the school for the coaching clinic class ahead of the WASSCE and UTME exams under the supervision of senior subject teachers.

She told Daily Sun that the fee for the coaching clinic class was paid alongside the school fee and that experienced external teachers were engaged to prepare the students.

Another KC parent, who wants his name withheld, said he was in support of the PTA special classes because his son in 2024 benefitted from the session and was ready to pay the N40, 000 but that some parents complained about the high fee demanded by the PTA:

"The N40, 000 generated ripples among parents leading to its cancellation." He had to engage a private tutor to prepare his daughter in some specific subjects.

Educationists intervene

President, Association of Formidable Educational Development (AFED), Emmanuel Oji, described examination in Nigeria as a big thing like in other countries: "Because it gives credence and puts evidence to years of hard work. Gives direction to students' career line and provides opportunities for schools in making decisions concerning students.

"The process of preparing SS 111 students must be taken seriously. Examination and its success beam searchlight on different players and the expectations. By now, final students will be engaged in intensive revision and provides them with structured revision schedules, practice exams and feedback to help them identify areas for improvement.

"Regular practice of exams and assessments can help students familiarise themselves with the exam format,

identify areas for improvement and build confidence.

"Schools are advised to identify areas where students need improvement and focus on those topics, learn effective exam strategies, such as time management, question selection, and answer planning.

"Schools should also ensure that exam materials are stored securely and distributed only to authorised personnel as well as guarantee student safety during exams.

"Security in some very volatile communities especially as being experienced in the North and East is a key concern for worries. Authorities must be deliberate at ensuring that safety and security concerns are adequately addressed."

An educationist and retired teacher, Mr. Samuel Obadina, defended the special classes for SS111 students. He said most schools bring experienced subject teachers who are either serving or retired WASSCE markers:

"Special classes involve going through past questions with the students and guiding them on how to answer the questions based on experience as a former WAEC marker."

Students speak

Two SS111 students of a special school in Ikoyi, Lagos, Samson and Alabi (surname withheld) said the preparation class includes Saturday and Sunday with subject teachers taking turns to treat past questions of WASSCE and UTME.

Maryanne, SS111 student of a private school at Fagba' Ogba, Lagos, said after her first term, the school collapsed the final year class to a special tutorial session: "The school moved SS111 students to the boarding facilities for an all-round session with experienced teachers in different subject areas, who are involved in marking WASSCE and SSCE answer scripts."

Exclusion of CONUA in renegotiation of agreement threat to varsity stability –Sunmonu

Stories by **Gabriel Dike**

THE Congress of University Academics (CONUA) on Monday accused the Federal Government Renegotiation Committee of excluding the union from the ongoing renegotiation of the 2009 agreement.

In a statement signed by the National President of CONUA, Dr. Niyi Sunmonu, expressed concern and surprise at the recent circulation of a letter, dated April 4th, 2025, addressed to the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), indicating that the committee chaired by Alhaji Yayale Ahmed, has submitted its report on the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement without engaging the union.

He said: “This development is both surprising and disappointing, particularly because CONUA had earlier received a formal letter of invitation from the Minister of Education, dated 20 December 2024, directing the Committee to engage with the Union.

“However, up till the time of this release, CONUA has not been invited to make any submission or contribution to the renegotiation process. The union wonders how it was possible for a committee to jettison the mandate of a Min-



• **Dr. Olatunji Alausa**

ister who put the Committee in place in this important national assignment.”

Sunmonu made a passionate appeal to the Minister of Education, Dr. Olatunji Alausa, to urgently look into the exclusion of CONUA and correct this oversight, adding, “the continued exclusion of CONUA could erode the fragile stability currently enjoyed by the academic system and trigger avoidable discontent among staff.”

He disclosed that part of the potential

backlash includes the disruption of the relatively smooth academic calendar that the Nigerian public university system has enjoyed over the past two years, a feat that has been made possible, in part, by CONUA’s principled stance on non-disruptive unionism.

“It is important to underscore that the 2009 agreement was entered into on behalf of all academic staff in Nigerian universities as at that time. With the current existence of three recognized academic unions, it is imperative that all stakeholders be carried along in matters relating to the welfare and conditions of service of their members.

“The exclusion of CONUA, a registered and legitimate union, from such a crucial process undermines principles of fairness, inclusiveness, and democratic engagement, as enshrined in the ILO convention and ratified by the Federal Government of Nigeria, within the university system,” Sunmonu stated.

According to him, the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement is not just about revisiting past commitments, but about shaping the future of academic labour relations, service conditions, and institutional stability in Nigeria’s higher education sector.

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

NUC organises workshop to incorporate 12 omitted courses in CCMAS

THE National Universities Commission (NUC) recently began a workshop for the development of Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) for 12 new programmes that were either outstanding or omitted during the earlier review of the curriculum in the Nigerian University System (NUS).

As expected, upon the conclusion of the exercise, the programmes will be incorporated in the CCMAS for the various disciplines where they belonged to, in the Nigerian Universities.

Declaring the workshop open, the Executive Secretary, NUC, Prof. Abdullahi Yusuf Ribadu, reminded participants that the commission has the powers to lay down minimum standards for all Universities and other degree awarding institutions in the country as well as the accreditation of their degrees and other academic awards, which is vested on it by Section 10 (1) of the Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act, Cap. E3, Laws of the Federation, 2004 (formerly Act No. 16 of 1985 as amended). He stated that the exercise is being carried out because the Commission had received a number of requests for the development of new curriculum from universities and professional bodies after it had embarked on a comprehensive curriculum review exercise that lasted for over two years.

Prof. Ribadu noted that the submissions were analysed to ascertain their viability and marketability as academic programmes and eventually 12 programmes in all were selected which includes: Artificial Intelligence, Classical Christian Education, Community Health Science, Cooperative Economics and Management Studies, Doctor of Medical Laboratory Science, Geomatics Engineering, Intelligence and Security Studies, Parasitology and Entomology, Sports Management, Telecommunication Science, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, and Islamic Economics and Finance.

The executive secretary pointed out that the landscape of education and knowledge is rapidly evolving, demanding a curriculum that not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates critical thinking, adaptability, and innovation, which requires that Nigerian students are equipped with the 21st century skills, employability skills and self-reliance needed to thrive in a dynamic world.

He urged the reviewers to bring in valuable insights and their expertise as experienced resource persons and subject experts in order to draw a befitting curriculum for the new programmes bearing in mind the nation’s desire for local content/ uniqueness in tandem with global best practices.

The NUC scribe advised them to make useful suggestions that would strengthen any weak areas that they might identify other than criticising it as being bad. He informed the distinguished panelists that NUC acknowledge and appreciate their efforts, sacrifices and services over the years, especially when called on National assignment of this nature, tasking them to continue to give their best as always while pledging that the Commission would not at any time take such commitment for granted.

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

LASUSTECH: Ripples over dismissal of ASUU, NAAT, ASUP officials for misconduct

THE Governing Council, Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH), Ikorodu (formerly Lagos State Polytechnic (LASPOTECH) has dismissed two current and a former union leaders over alleged sexual harassment against female students.

However, the decision is generating ripples among teaching and non-teaching staff of the university with some insinuating they were victimized for their stand on certain issues.

The dismissal of the three union leaders was the subject of discussion among LASUSTECH staff on Friday, April 11 and Monday 14th.

A senior staff told Daily Sun that the panel did not recommend the sack of the three staff but demotion. He insisted the university management influenced the decision.

Vice Chancellor of LASUSTECH, Olumuyiwa Odusanya did not response to our Correspondent calls and WhatsApp message sent to the VC’s phone to seek his reaction to allegation against the management.

LASUSTECH Public Relations Officer, Mr. Lanre Kuye, who confirmed the sack, insisted that due process was followed and debunked the insinuation that the



university management influenced the decision.

The governing council led by Prof. Rasheed Ojikutu, approved their dismissal after the submission of a report by the Staff Disciplinary Committee (SDC), which investigated the allegations against the three staff.

The three dismissed staff are members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), National Association of Academic of Technologist (NAAT) and a former scribe of the Academic Staff

Union of Polytechnics (ASUP).

The dismissed staff are Nurudeen Hassan, current protem Financial Secretary of ASUU, from the Department of Mass Communication, Olayinka Uthman of the Department of Arts Design, was former scribe of ASUP and current chairman of NAAT and Kareem Arigbabu, from the Department of Arts Design, he was also a former Secretary of ASUP.

Daily Sun gathered that the three academic staff were issued their sack letters

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

FG's DBI empowers PWDs with IT skills, graduates 49 students

THE Federal Government’s Digital Bridge Institute (DBI) continues to advance digital skills inclusivity in Nigeria by graduating a second cohort of persons with disabilities (PWDs), after a nine-month intensive training programme.

A total of 49 graduates were celebrated across two campuses, 24 from the Lagos campus and 25 from the Kano campus.

DBI, a government-owned institute under the National Communications Commission (NCC), has campuses in Abuja, Kano, Lagos, and Enugu. This cohort, in partnership with Sightsavers International,



Graduating students

highlights the transformative power of education in enabling PWDs to thrive in the digital economy.

Notably, this is the second of such graduation in Africa, after a similar initiative in Kenya, also supported by Sightsavers.

The IT Bridge Academy

offers PWDs a vital opportunity to acquire essential digital skills and certifications. It proves that, with the right support, people with disabilities can overcome barriers and excel in the often-exclusionary digital space.

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

Career fair: BU prepares graduating students for the future

By **Gabriel Dike**

THE Vice Chancellor, Babcock University (BU) Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Prof. Ademola Tayo, has tasked the 2025 Charis graduating students to take full advantage of the career fair to network and tap from the experiences of speakers from different industries.

The career fair was organized by the Department of Alumni and Connectivity, class sponsors, and graduating class executives, brought together BU alumni and



L-R: Eromosele, Prof. Tayo, Olajide-Wusu and Durosini-Etti at the fair

industry experts to share their experiences and give insights to the graduating students how they have fared on their own.

Prof. Tayo, who declared the programme opened, said the career fair is more than a gathering but one to prepare the graduating Charis class

for the future and know about the labour market, which they would soon face.

He disclosed that the career fair is BU’s effort to bridge the gaps between the graduating students and the industries.

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

'Seyi tell your papa country good well well'

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TWO years, in the next two weeks, into the regime of Nigeria's president, Alhaji Bola Ahmed Tinubu, losers of the 2023 presidential election who contested against him, as well as those who fiercely opposed his suitability for the presidency ab initio, are not letting go. They have tried everything in the books to distract our dear ruler without much success. At the presidential election tribunal in 2023, they threw everything at him including accusing him of forging his name, his university certificates, claiming an alumnus of schools he never attended, and being involved in cocaine deals in the 1990s. None of the mud thrown at him stuck. The venerated justices of the Supreme Court (never mind that some ignoramus who do not know that the law is an ass prefer to call it Supreme Cult) ensured that nothing untoward happened to the widely accepted candidate, a man after the hearts of a majority of Nigerians at that time, and even up till today. The justices demonstrated that they were heads and shoulders above our revered justices of blessed memories including Kayode Eso, Chukwudifu Oputa, Alfa Belgore, among others.

Those bent on destroying our country ensured that Tinubu was fully distracted with multiple litigations

in the United States' law courts after Nigeria's 'Independent' National Electoral Commission (INEC) correctly and courageously awarded him the presidency after a fair, free, and credible election which was devoid of any controversies. Both domestic and foreign election observers had in a rare unanimity given the conduct of that poll and the result it produced a clean bill of health. Though the result of the election was declared in the wee hours of March 1, 2023 (about 4am), in spite of the fact that the INEC had assured a few hours earlier that collation of the same result will continue on the same March 1, Nigerians still managed to pour out onto the streets of the country, from the south east, south south, south west, north central, north west and north east, to celebrate Tinubu's win a few minutes after 4am. Nigerians celebrated his victory like drunken sailors, and gave kudos to the electoral commission for the conduct of the freest and fairest election since 1993. And since that spontaneous celebration two years ago, it has been an unbroken chain of celebrations because the man over whom Nigerians rejoiced had kept faith with his campaign promises to turn the fortunes of the country around, arrest its economic decline, provide enabling environment

for employment especially for the youths, stabilise the value of the Naira, tame the galloping inflation, tackle insecurity head on, stop the industrial scale theft of our crude oil, and give corruption a bloody nose. In less than two years, the living standards and conditions of Nigerians have been on a rapid rise, and these have been making our people heady with pride. The ugly tagging of Nigeria as the poverty capital of the world has since been erased. If our country is no longer the poverty capital of the globe because of the relentless war on poverty by the crusading Tinubu regime, do not ask me which country inherited the odium from us. I am a patriot. I do not care. I am only interested in my country. You should also not bother. For once on this issue, you should be a patriot. I am determined to speak well of my country. You should also.

But in spite of a series of victories by Tinubu's regime since it came to office in a landslide and popular mandate of a cross section of Nigerian voters two years ago, and despite plaudits from international agencies including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, JPMorganChase, Standard & Poor's and similar patronising institutions and credible voices on the wonderful outcomes of Tinubu's rewarding reforms, the enemies

within are still not giving up. They are determined to ignore the beneficial effects of the reforms on the lives of Nigerians, and continue their unpatriotic and egregious efforts to undermine the extant regime. How much more evil can the opposition be? And other undiscerning countrymen and women. After failing in using propaganda to besmirch this phenomenally successful regime, the opposition has now resorted to the use of a pernicious tool. The option which the opposition (real name: enemies of the state) has recently adopted and deployed will make the regime look bad no matter how it reacted or responded.

Bad act Abdulkadir Eedris, has been recruited by the opposition to paint our hard working president in unflattering hues. Eedris masquerades as a music producer, writer, songster and political activist. You can see mischief in one nondescript man combining all these attributes. The only thing, to the best of our knowledge, that has brought him fame and fortune (in my considered patriotic opinion, notoriety actually), is that he writes songs which are rightfully promptly banned by the government. It does not matter whether the government was formed

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Disdain for diplomatic appointments

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IN his inaugural speech on May 29 2023, Bola Tinubu, heralded his era with a stunning five-word policy declaration, "The fuel subsidy is gone". That, as it has turned out, marked the beginning of an unprecedented economic travail, which Nigeria is still grappling with. Whether fuel subsidy is truly gone, or not, is another issue, all together, but that is beside the point here. Tinubu's supporters and indeed, he himself, continue to contend that his introduction to his presidency reflect courage. Yet, others insist, he did not appreciate the import of what he said. All that is another topic.

Not long after his inauguration, Tinubu turned his attention to the country's diplomatic field. He may not have used exactly the same words that he used for fuel subsidy, but the definitive order was no different. As he seemed to declare; Nigeria's ambassadors are gone! Thus, was all the ambassadors and representatives of Nigeria abroad recalled. Gone! Two years down the line, the prime seats at the foreign missions abroad remain empty.

As with the removal of fuel subsidy, the recall of the ambassadors must be yielding bountiful savings for the government. Two years after, the actual figures and real worth of savings from the removal of fuel subsidy remain uncertain. Different government officials, from the president himself to his finance minister and Central Bank governors, as well, as other officials down the ladder,

continue to bandy figures of savings that have purportedly accrued from removal of fuel subsidy. Not surprisingly, the government officials have not shown any interest in reconciling gains from savings from subsidy removal and losses through closure of businesses and the such, also derived from the same removal of fuel subsidy.

At the diplomatic field, where the absence of ambassadors must have also saved substantial money for the country, nobody seems ready to count the cost, the enormous implications, of the country being without ambassadors, for a stretch of two years. May be Nigeria does not really need ambassadors and high commissioners. It is possible, considering that the country is no longer in a position to wield power and influence on the international arena. That era in her history, when Nigeria's voice carried weight, and almost all of the world reckoned with where she stood on global affairs, is now, to all intents and purposes, a part of history.

Even on the African continent, once, the famed centre-piece of Nigeria's foreign policy, as it was common put, a zone where her star shone so intensely and her influence undisputedly pre-eminent, the aura is gone, too. In the West African sub-region too. The gross decline of Nigeria, at home and abroad, should stand as a lesson on how devastating poor leadership can be.

Whatever Tinubu's legacy may be at the end of the day, the virtual dismantling

of ECOWAS under his watch, with the pulling away of Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger Republic, will remain an indictment on him, for all times. While the import of the absence of Nigerian ambassadors in various countries, may not easily be quantified, there is no doubt, that the cost is substantial.

It is against this backdrop that the recent report in the media of nominations made by the government, to fill vacant ambassadorial positions, is, at once, disappointing and alarming. Even as it is known that for Tinubu, politics trumps every other consideration, yet some of the names that were reported to have been nominated by his presidency, to be Nigeria's ambassadors in foreign countries, smack of national sabotage. There must be a limit to 'job for the boys'.

Nigeria is in a very precarious situation at the moment, economically, politically and in every other sense imaginable. A vehicle that is running late for an appointment, should avoid having accident on the way, as well, in the wise counsel of a sage. That will be a serious double jeopardy.

It is well and good that the government has repudiated the reported ambassadorial nominations, but you just never seem to know with this government. With them, what ought not to be, become and things that seem logical, somehow never come to pass. There must be some farms at home to settle entities that are in need of succour. It will amount to a

reprehensible display of disdain, not just for foreign service, but for the country, at such a critical period as this, if ambassadorial posting now becomes a dumping ground for characters who are deemed unsuitable for important administrative appointments at home. This, actually, is a most appropriate time for the best of personalities, citizens of stature and character to be appointed to ambassadorial seats abroad. Alongside experienced hands from the foreign service, quality persons that will draw respect and deference in foreign lands are needed as ambassadors at the moment. Anything that can be done to shore up the profile and reckoning of Nigeria abroad, should be done at this point in time.

Nigerians abroad, whether students, professionals or business persons, as well as trafficked girls and the ones in prison, are presently not having the best of time at the hands of their representatives in foreign lands. Citizens in needs abroad, hardly receive robust and helpful representation by their embassies in many countries. Reports from various countries speak of citizens who are literally, on their own.

Interestingly, in many instances these days, when Nigerians are in trouble abroad, they tend to look towards Nigerians in Diaspora Commission. That, more or less, is an aberration. Resolving diplomatic and sundry problems of

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Why we're embarking on comprehensive medical, humanitarian outreach this Easter

—Nneka Jemie, Adani Care Foundation founder

By Doris Obinna

THE people of Umu-Ozo Ikeakpa, Evuazu in Obeleagu Umana community and neighbours will have a good deal this Easter as Adani Care Foundation, a non-governmental organisation set up to uplift the less privileged in the society, would hold a medical and humanitarian outreach for their benefit.

Scheduled to hold on April 21 and April 22 at Chief Aloysius Chijioke Ani compound, the programme is a comprehensive medical and humanitarian service outreach that would focus on medical treatment, wellness workshops, skill acquisition training, raw rice distribution, and serving of nutritious meals to the community members.

Speaking on the programme, Mrs. Josephine Nneka Jemie, founder & president of

Adani Care Foundation, said the organization, in the programme, would step up its impact by introducing vocational training for youths, among others.

She also spoke on what Adani Care Foundation has done in humanitarian service since inception in 2021, challenges and expectations in the future.

Could you tell us your driving force in founding Adani Care Foundation?

My passion lies in serving the underprivileged in Southern Nigeria—widows, orphans, the sick, and the elderly. For me, it's about ensuring that these underprivileged ones in our rural societies do not have to choose between buying food or buying medicine when they are sick. Through Adani Care, we raise awareness and provide direct support to these vulnerable groups.

What is the philosophy behind Adani Care Foundation as well as its aims and objectives?

The philosophy behind Adani Care Foundation is rooted in the belief that no one should die from preventable conditions simply because they lack access to basic medical care. Our aim is to provide essential services—like medical screenings, clean drinking water, and vocational training—so that underprivileged individuals can thrive. We believe that everyone deserves a chance at a healthy, dignified life.

Could you tell us what the Foundation has been able to do since its inception?

Since the inception of Adani Care Foundation, we have achieved significant milestones thanks to our incredible donors, supporters, and volunteers from around the world. We have provided over 1,300 hot meals to those in need, screened and treated 430 patients, and engaged over 150 volunteers. Additionally, we've distributed more than 100 bags of 50kg rice to families, ensuring they have some of the sustenance they need.

We understand that you are organizing a medical and humanitarian service outreach this Easter season. Kindly tell us about it.

This April, right after Easter, from the 21st to the 22nd of April, Adani Care Foundation is organizing a comprehensive medical and humanitarian service outreach. Alongside our incredible team



• Jemie

of supporters, we will provide medical outreach, wellness workshops, raw rice distribution, and serve nutritious meals to the community.

Our goal is not just to address immediate needs but also to ensure follow-up care for those requiring ongoing medical attention beyond the Event. This time, we are stepping up our impact by introducing vocational training for youths.

We will have training and apprenticeship programmes in car mechanics, electrical wiring, bricklaying, plumbing, hairdressing, cooking, baking and catering. These opportunities will equip young people with practical, marketable skills, helping them build sustainable livelihoods and thrive.

How do you get funding for your programmes?

Our funding primarily comes from the generous support of our friends, church, and communities both in the U.S. and Nigeria. Each time we reach out, the response is incredible.

We believe that involving government officials can significantly expand our reach and impact. We have invited the Governor of Enugu State and the Chairman of Ezeagu Local Government to witness our work firsthand.

Our aim is to demonstrate the serious impact we're making in the community and explore how the government can collaborate with us.

However, as we expand into providing essentials like electrification for study, and clean drinking water, we recognize the need for even greater support. We invite corporations, businesses, and neighbors to join us in making these essential projects a reality, ensuring that these young people have the tools they need to thrive.

Has there been any partnership with the government, or are you adverse to working with the government?

We are absolutely open to partnerships with the government at all levels. We believe that involving government officials can significantly expand our reach and impact. We have invited the Governor of Enugu State and the Chairman of Ezeagu Local Government to witness our work firsthand.

Our aim is to demonstrate the serious impact we're making in the community and explore how the government can collaborate with us. Such partnerships can be instrumental in providing the support and resources needed to tackle larger issues like electrification and clean water. We welcome any opportunity to collaborate with government bodies for the greater good.

What are the challenges you have faced or you are still facing?

One of the primary challenges we face is raising enough funding to meet the overwhelming demand for our services. As more people become aware of our efforts, we see a significant increase in registration from youths, the elderly, the sick, orphans, and widows. The demand for our support far exceeds the resources we currently have. This is why we continually call on businesses, companies, and corporations to join hands with us.

I also want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our donors and volunteers who have made everything possible so far. I also want to say to our current and potential donors that support isn't just about cash donations. We need supplies, food items, and partnerships with vocational skills providers. Contributions can come in many forms, and every bit

of help counts. Whether it's providing resources, volunteering, or collaborating on vocational training, all forms of support are invaluable.

At a time when there is widespread hunger in the land, what advice would you give government on how to mitigate the situation?

My advice to the government is to focus on empowering local communities in remote parts of Nigeria. Many underprivileged individuals have the capacity and willingness to farm, but they lack the necessary resources and security to do so effectively. The government can mitigate hunger by supporting agricultural initiatives, providing safe and secure farming opportunities, and ensuring that essential infrastructure, like clean drinking water and healthcare facilities are accessible.

Building functional healthcare centres staffed with professionals on a consistent basis would drastically reduce preventable deaths. Government involvement in these areas can create long-term, sustainable solutions rather than just temporary relief.

Women and children are always the worst hit during economic hardship. What would you recommend as government's policy towards self-reliance of the vulnerable?

My recommendation to the government is to prioritize support for widows in rural areas. Many of them face enormous challenges, from the inability to farm due to security concerns to the struggle of caring for their children. Providing targeted assistance to widows and ensuring access to basic resources like food, healthcare, and education for their children can break the cycle of poverty. By empowering women and supporting their self-reliance, the government can create a ripple effect that uplifts entire families and communities.

What is your projection for Adani Care Foundation in the next 5 years?

In the next five years, I envision Adani Care Foundation expanding our reach to serve at least two additional communities. Our goals include installing boreholes for clean drinking water, implementing solar energy for electrification, and training a significant number of youths in vocational skills. By doing this, we aim to create sustainable change, empower communities, and inspire others to join our mission.

What advice would you give women and youths of Nigeria?

To the youth of Nigeria, I encourage you to explore vocational training and skill acquisition. While education is vital, practical skills can open doors and create opportunities for self-reliance. Don't wait for only formal employment—be proactive in acquiring skills that can help you build a sustainable future.

To the women, especially those in challenging situations, remember that empowerment begins with you. Seek opportunities for self-development, and by doing so, you not only uplift yourself but also your family and community. <This message was edited>

NUJ @70: What should we celebrate?

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THE Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) has just arrived at the 7th floor, to use a street idiom. Its 70th birthday was announced by its President Mr Alhassan Yahya Abdullahi on March 15, an indication that the Union has reached the age of maturity having clocked three score and ten. Its history is replete with trials and triumphs but its birth came 96 years after Nigeria's first newspaper Iwe Irohin was published in Abeokuta and five years before Nigeria gained its independence in 1960. So the birth of the NUJ came at the closing hours of the struggle for Nigeria's liberation from colonialism.

The founding President of the Union was Mobolaji Odunewu while its pioneer Secretary was Olu Oyesanya. The Union's major assignments in those early days were to consolidate on the fight for independence, advocating for an independent media as the country became independent. In 1962 there was the issue of the Anglo-Nigeria Defence Pact which divided Nigerians into two separate camps – one for and one against. It was the students of the University of Ibadan, not the NUJ that made the difference. The U.I students stormed Lagos with their placards and forced the Nigerian government to abandon the signing of the Anglo-Nigerian Defence Pact.

But over the years the NUJ gathered its strength and started fighting against government censorship and advocating for press freedom. In 1973 it waged a relentless battle along with other media groups for Minere Amakiri, a Nigerian Observer correspondent whose head was shaved with a broken bottle on the orders of Alfred Diете Spiff, Military Governor of Rivers State. His offence was that he reported the grievances of local teachers on the birthday of the Military Governor. This was a major battle for the media and the NUJ rose to the occasion with alacrity.

The NUJ also joined other media groups in fighting against Decree 4 of 1984 but this did not prevent the Muhammadu Buhari Military Government from sending two Guardian reporters, Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor to jail for publishing the truth. Their offence was that the offence affected either the government or government officials. After that obnoxious decision, the Buhari government was no longer courageous enough to send truth to jail.



Alhassan Yahya

There was also the Treason and Treasonable offences Decree No. 29 of 1993 enacted by the Sani Abacha Government. Under that decree Kunle Ajibade, Chris Anyanwu, George Mbah and Ben Charles Obi were sent to jail for 15 years. However, the mysterious death of Abacha and the ascension of General Abdulsalami Abubakar to the throne saved the journalists from serving the full 15 years jail term. In this fight neither the NUJ nor any of the media groups could save the journalists from this inexplicable punishment by the tyrant.

But even with all the best efforts of the various journalism groups, journalists were turned by the irresponsible governments of Nigeria into routinely endangered species. In 1983 when I wrote a predictive article on the Nigeria External Telecommunications where there was fraud I was tried for murder because some fellows set the place on fire as was the trend in those days where there were cases of corruption. In 1986 Dele Giwa, the founding Editor in Chief of Newswatch was assassinated for no just cause. In 1987 Newswatch was shut down for publishing a report of the Cookey Committee on Democracy, a report that the Babangida Government refused to release because of his desire to continuously delay the return to democracy. Such irrational decisions were rampant in those days but neither the NUJ nor any of the other media groups could do anything significant about their reversal. In 1994 Dan Agbese, Yakubu Mohammed and

In 1986 Dele Giwa, the founding Editor in Chief of Newswatch was assassinated for no just cause. In 1987 Newswatch was shut down for publishing a report of the Cookey Committee on Democracy, a report that the Babangida Government refused to release because of his desire to continuously delay the return to democracy.

Ray Ekpu, all of Newswatch were tried for mutiny. The offence was not anything close to mutiny. They were detained and tried for publishing an interview with David Mark that the Abacha government did not like. Mark was one of the coup plotters that brought Abacha to power after overthrowing Chief Ernest Shonekan, the leader of the Interim National Government set up by Babangida.

Today, there are about 740 chapels of the NUJ in the country. There are other sub-groups such as the Nigerian Association of

Women Journalists (NAWOJ) and the Sports Writers Association of Nigeria (SWAN) and a few others representing various fragments of professional groups. But the issue of major concern to professional journalists is the enlistment of Ministry of Information officials as journalists. In other countries they are called Information professionals, not journalists. I had a conversation on this with Mr Smart Adeyemi who was President of the NUJ at the time. He told me that the NUJ needed the check-up dues paid by the Ministry of Information officials. So for him it was a matter of cash. The truth however is that with the huge presence of these Ministry of Information officials in the NUJ, the Union cannot take a serious decision on issues of fundamental importance to journalism because they are government officials. That is a matter that the NUJ has not been able to resolve so far whether at the national level or in the states.

The other matter is that the NUJ sees itself and acts more as a trade union than as a professional body. It does very little training for its members and does very little in the promotion of professional and ethical issues. The recent review of the Ethics of the profession was handled largely by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria (NPAN) and the Nigerian Guild of Editors. The NUJ made no contribution to the review. The NUJ must work more closely with the NPAN and NGE so as to benefit from the experience and network of the two major groups. That is the only way it can improve the lot of its members. Today, the arrival of the social media has impacted seriously and negatively on the practice of journalism. Falsehood is being published as truth in the social media. This turn of events in the new technology universe has adversely affected the fortunes of most media – and most journalists – today. A paradigm shift is needed urgently and the NUJ must be part of this media renaissance. This new era must include what to do for journalists in distress, what to do for journalists in retirement, what to do for journalists who cover dangerous assignments, what to do for journalists who face harassment for doing their jobs professionally and ethically, what to do to improve the financial life of media organisations.

The NUJ must move in a new direction so as to achieve enduring results for the benefit of its members in this new era.

What Tinubu got wrong in Rivers emergency rule –Tsav

MOHAMMED is a scion of one of Nigeria's most celebrated Commissioners of Police, Abubakar Tsav. He is an associate at Mike Ozekhome Chambers. We recently caught up with him and he spoke about a book he will soon unveil about the life and times of his late dad among other issues.

Mohammed, we learnt that you were doing a book, about your late dad, Commissioner of Police, Abubakar Tsav. What sort of book are you writing and when are we expecting the book to hit the shelves?

Thank you. Actually, the book has been done. It was co-authored and will soon be presented publicly. It is a book about his life and times; about his service to the country as a Policeman. It will be an interesting read because we explored so many things about his time in the Police and practically, about his life.

So, when are we expecting it?

Well, just a few more days to tie up the preparations. It has been printed and we are waiting for some signals to go ahead with the public presentation. Once the appropriate date for the presentation is fixed, you will be communicated. We are working at securing an appropriate date with his service constituency and all other law enforcement constituencies so that we get the proper date and venue for the book launch.

So what is the focus of this book?

The focus of the book is basically his life and times. It is on how junior or new police officers can get inspiration from a well celebrated police officer. It also captures the essence of serving with integrity.

Talking about integrity and at the same time looking at the incumbent government and the way it has handled the issue of rule of law in Nigeria. From your own experiences as a lawyer, how will you rate the government in terms of adherence to the rule of law?

You see, I have known (President Bola) Tinubu over a period of time. I have studied his style over a couple of years, especially when he was the governor of Lagos state, and when he stood up against the military regimes that came in. But now it turns out that he is more like becoming a despot himself because in a democratic situation like we now have, I do not expect that the President, who is known to have fought the military, would now come and start taking actions that will undermine democracy. He is not adhering to the rule of law, and that is the main bedrock of democracy. I think that President Tinubu is undermining his own democratic credentials.

But he is someone that many Nigerians see as having a very beautiful democratic credentials, coming on the background of NADECO, but you are not giving that pass mark?

No! Coming from recent trends, especially with the issue of state of emergency in Rivers state, which he proclaimed, well, he has the powers to do that under the constitution. That is not the problem. But the issue of sacking, or do I



• Tsav

say, suspending the governor, the House of Assembly, then the deputy governor. No... I don't think he has such powers. In as much as the law is concerned, there's a law that says, you can take certain actions but get the enabling law to back it. However, what I am concerned about is suspending a governor and the legislature. Suspending the governor is totally out of it. You can appoint an administrator to take over the affairs of the state but then he can still work with the governor. Because when you say you are suspending the governor, you did not elect the governor. It is the people of Rivers who elected the governor. So how can you suspend him? Are you trying to say that the people in the state do not know what they wanted before they elected the governor? So I think President Bola Tinubu got it wrong.

Why do you think he took that course of action?

Could be that as president, he has come to terms with the enormous powers of the president and now feels that he can test them. He now forgets that even in the exercise of such powers, you must exercise discretion and exercise proper judgment. But for now, I think he is throwing caution to the wind, and I would not want to say that he is acting somebody's script. Ordinarily, a serving minister who is in open conflict with

“On Peter Obi, I will say that he has done his own part in the last election. He did well. The APC has noticed his strengths and has made a strong in-road in South East since then. This time, based on what the president has done and will do in the remaining two years, it will be APC all the way. President has done a tremendous job. There are many projects coming up. APC has greater goodwill in South East now than before.”

the governor of his home state should not really be in government anymore, because you cannot be in government and be fighting another. You cannot be a Minister of FCT and be fighting the governor of the state. And obviously, it will seem as if the FCT Minister has the ears of the president, and may actually be the reason what is going on the Rivers had continued.

You have raised an issue here. You said the president has powers to declare a state of emergency, but does not have the powers to remove the governor. Now that he has done it, what remedy is there for the people of River states?

Well, you see, as a lawyer, all our remedies always end up in the courts. However, there is a cartoon that is in circulation which depicts President Tinubu as the executive, Senator Godswill Akpabio, the senate president as the legislature and Wike as the judiciary. That cartoon suggests that these three people can manipulate whatever transpires in those arms of government. so, if you ask me what the Rivers people are going to do to remedy the situation, well, they can go to court to challenge the action, or, they can be patient and see what he does after six months.

As a practicing lawyer, do you really see any action in court challenging this getting the support of the of the judiciary, of succeeding in any case, in any way at all, given what you have known of the judiciary since the 2023 presidential election?

You see, throughout my study in law practice, I doubt very much if the Nigerian judiciary have outstanding and fearless judges anymore. In my time in the judiciary when I started my practice, about 37 years ago, we had judges like Justice Niki Toby. We had judges like Karibi-Whyte, Augustine Nnamani, name them. They were outstanding judges. They were fearless. They gave judgment the way it ought to be given. And if you noticed, in their time, even if the judges sit and pass judgment, there were always one or two dissenting judgments in the panel. But right now it is as if the whole plan is unanimous in a judgment which ordinary shouldn't be the case, because you must have different schools of thoughts and the panel is always made up of different schools of judicial thoughts. So you can't really

expect that all those judicial thoughts would streamline and come as decision. But right now, what we are having is that anytime they take a sensitive matter to the Supreme Court, or to the Court of Appeal, to the Supreme Court, you find that all of them are unanimous. However, I am sure that there are judges who will rise to maintain their integrity still in the system. There are some who are fearless and who will stand up for justice. Generally, I think the judiciary is being politicised and that is not healthy for the country. When you see judges, who ordinarily should be secluded from the public, attending social function with politicians, that is enough reason to be worried.

But they are humans too...

We are not saying a judge cannot go to social functions like birthday parties. But they can attend them as official functions, not on private functions. You see that when you go on private functions, you can easily be influenced there, but if you go on the official function, nobody can point fingers at you as being privately influenced. So I still feel that we don't have fearless judges or justices, who deliver judgment not minding who you are.

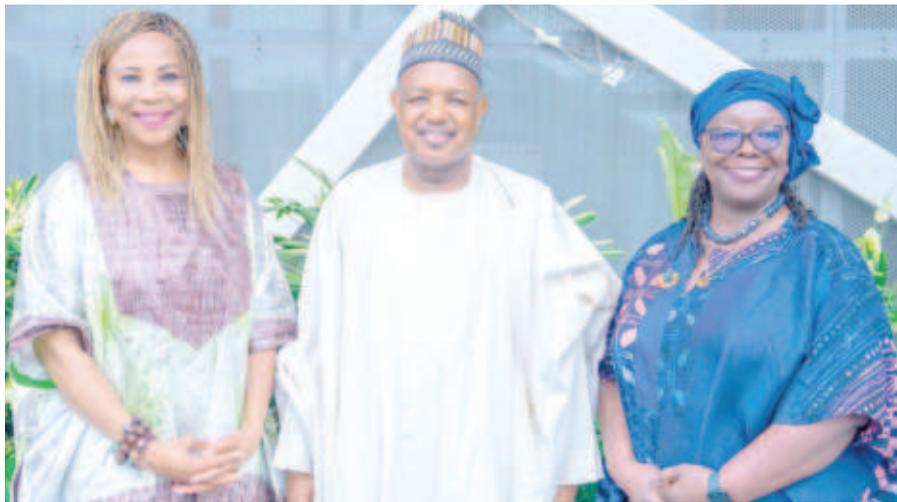
What you are saying, in essence, is that there are no independent minded judges. So, if the judges, or, if the judiciary is politicized, what hope do ordinary Nigerians still have in the judiciary?

You see, when we sit and look in that direction, we now have to become philosophical by going for divine intervention. We know today that so many judgements are written overnight. So if we have a crop of judges, who may have been influenced, then, it is only God's intervention, divine intervention that can twist a man's mind and make him change. For instance, as that cartoon depicts, if one man is holding the judiciary, and he has his wife on the bench, it gives room for a lot of insinuations which are not healthy for the judiciary. This is because it is not impossible that so many things that may happen in her court may be discussed in the other room first before the court takes a decision.

Let me ask you this. You mentioned the FCT Minister here. A few days ago the Body of benchers presented him with an award and he made a call on the body to sanction lawyers that criticise the judiciary. How do you feel about that?

How do you sanction somebody who has proof of what he's saying? Unless you are making allegations that you cannot prove, that is when you can sanction the person. But if you are sanctioning somebody who has proof of what he's saying, how will you go about the sanction? To sanction such a person means that you are even becoming more corrupt; you are going deep down, further down the despot lane, because the man is speaking the truth. There are certain things that shouldn't be going on that have been going on in the judiciary. So if somebody like the FCT Minister comes out and asks you to sanction critics, you need to look beyond the call. The person he asked the Body of Benchers to sanction is a professor of law. Is he saying that a professor of law does not know what he's saying? You know, sometimes you have a proper facts about what is

(Continued on www.thesun.ng)



L-R: Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director, Africa, United Nations Development Programme, Africa, Ms Ahunna Eziakonwa; Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Senator Abubakar Bagudu; and Resident Representative of UNDP Nigeria, Ms Elsie at a recent meeting in Abuja.

FG to junk adulterated seeds, boost food security through quality inputs

From **Okwe Obi**, Abuja

To secure the nation's food supply and enhance agricultural productivity, the federal government has pledged to phase out adulterated seeds from the market and promote the widespread use of certified quality seeds across the country.

The commitment was made by the Director General of the National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), Fatuhu Buhari, during a formal handover ceremony held in Abuja, where he received briefing notes from the outgoing Acting Director General, Dr. Ishiak Khalid.

Buhari highlighted the critical role of seeds in transforming Nigeria's food system and unlocking its agribusiness potential, describing them as

the very foundation of a productive and sustainable farming ecosystem.

"Seeds are the first link in the agricultural value chain, the tiny but mighty catalysts of abundance. "Without quality seeds, there can be no thriving farms; without thriving farms, there can be no food security."

He emphasised that under his leadership, NASC would reposition itself as a key stakeholder in Nigeria's food security architecture by strengthening the seed value chain, encouraging innovation, and collaborating with researchers and agri-tech firms to produce climate-smart seed varieties.

According to him, "We are engaging seed companies, development agencies, and investors to scale up production and distribution." He added that expanding seed multipli-

cation programmes would ensure global affordability and accessibility for farmers nationwide.

However, Buhari stressed that the Council's ambitious vision could not be achieved in isolation. "This is not a journey I can undertake alone," he noted. "I call upon farmers—your feedback will guide our policies. Researchers and seed companies—your innovations will drive our progress. Development partners—your support will amplify our impact."

Earlier, Dr. Ishiak Khalid, the outgoing Acting DG of NASC, highlighted the Council's recent achievements, including Nigeria's accreditation by the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) and its admission into the OECD Seed Schemes. These milestones, he said, have significantly enhanced Nigeria's

global credibility in the seed industry.

Khalid also celebrated Nigeria's accession as the 80th member of the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), describing it as a breakthrough in strengthening intellectual property rights for plant breeders and promoting innovation.

He noted that NASC had successfully restructured the Seed Entrepreneurs Association of Nigeria (SEEDAN) into a unified and more accountable entity. Additionally, the Council launched the National Seed Roadmap Dashboard, a digital platform designed to monitor seed production, ensure regulatory compliance, and identify real-time investment opportunities within the sector.

Farmers get pest control advisory as Tomato Ebola triggers price surge

By **Chinyere Anyanwu**
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Farmers have been advised to embark on collaborative land preparation, particularly in local government areas, to help reduce pest infestations and prevent further outbreaks following the recent outbreak of tomato disease, Tuta Absoluta virus, which is currently affecting the price of tomatoes in markets across the country.

The tomato ebola outbreak has caused tomato growers to raise concerns over the impact of the pest infestation on their crops.

They expressed their concerns in separate chats with the newsmen on Sunday in Lagos.

According to them, Tuta Absoluta, also known as the Tomato Leaf Mine, is a notorious pest of tomato crops in Europe, Africa, Western Asia and parts of the Americas. If not properly controlled, its larvae can cause up to 100 per cent crop loss.

Tuta Absoluta can ravage tomato cultivation in a little above 48 hours, prompting farmers to nickname it Tomato Ebola.

It can breed between 10 and 12 generations in a year, with the female capable of laying about 250 to 300 eggs within its lifetime.

The Chairman of the Tomato Growers and Processors Association of Nigeria, Mr. Rabiu Zuntu, said the recent outbreak of Tuta Absoluta has

significantly affected tomato prices in local markets.

"The invasion of the Tuta Absoluta pest, which began in early March, has ravaged several farms in the northern region.

"The virus doesn't cause much damage during the wet season, but becomes more aggressive during the hot season. Recently, temperatures have been unusually high, causing increased soil humidity, which favours the pest's spread," he said.

Zuntu noted that the infestation has disrupted supply to markets across the country, resulting in noticeable price hikes.

"Despite being in the harvest season, some farms have been destroyed. Currently, a

50kg basket of tomatoes sells for about N30,000 in northern markets due to the infestation.

"Before the outbreak, the same basket was sold for between N5,000 and N10,000, as this is usually the peak harvest season," Zuntu added.

Speaking on preventive measures for the virus, Zuntu pointed out that "humidity in the soil is a major factor contributing to the rapid spread of Tuta Absoluta on infected tomato farms."

He acknowledged that completely preventing the outbreak is not possible, as humidity is an inevitable environmental condition.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

No region excluded from special agro-industrial zone programme -FG

The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, has denied allegation by the National Assembly North East Caucus that the ministry has excluded the zone from benefiting from the ongoing Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) Programme, stating that all zones of the country would benefit from the design and implementation of government programmes.

He explained that the programme being implemented in phases is based on states' expression of interest and meeting eligibility criteria, adding that already three North East

states - Gombe, Borno and Bauchi States - have qualified for first tranche of the phase 2 of the programme.

Kyari, who revealed this at the weekend, expressed the commitment of the Federal Government to the North East and other parts of the country.

He urged other states yet to be captured for the SAPZ programme to express their interest and endeavour to meet up with the eligibility criteria.

"Our attention has been drawn to concerns that the North-East was excluded completely from the Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zone (SAPZ) programme of the

Federal Government. Considering the basic fact that this concern is coming from members of the National Assembly Caucus of the North-East, it becomes very imperative that we set the record straight because they got it all wrong.

"The Phase 2 of the programme had already commenced in earnest. I have personally communicated to all the states that are not in Phase 1 in writing notifying them of the programme and to express interest.

"Consequently, we have received Expression of Interests from 27 states but only 10 states fully complied with

the eligibility criteria which include three states from the North-East, namely Gombe, Borno and Bauchi states, for the first tranche of Phase 2 as there will be three tranches of onboarding states in the Phase 2.

"So, the sweeping statement by the caucus that 'the North-East was completely excluded' is not correct. We are also confident that more states will do the needful to fulfill the eligibility criteria to enable us capture them in the second tranche funding of Phase 2.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng

Food basket

Items	Current Price	Last month Price
YINGBO/OTTO MARKET		
Oloyin beans (50kg)	N75,000	N95,000
Bucket of Oloyin	N5,500	N8,000
Olo2 beans (100kg bag)	N155,000	N170,000
Bucket of Olo2	N5,500	N8,500
Rice (foreign - 50kg)	N83,000	N80,000
Local brands (50kg)	N65,000	N75,000
Yellow garri (50kg bag)	N33,000	N35,000
Bucket of yellow garri	N3,000	N2,700
White garri (75kg)	N27,000	N33,000
Bucket of white garri	N2,500	N3,000
Melon (egusi) (100kg bag)	N330,000	N285,000
Bucket of melon	N8,000	N9,000
Vegetable oil (20ltrs)	N75,000	N85,000
Vegetable oil (5ltrs)	N20,000	N23,000
Vegetable oil (1.5ltrs)	N6,000	N6,000
Red oil (20ltrs)	N45,000	N50,000
Red oil (5ltrs)	N15,000	N14,000
Red oil (1.5ltrs)	N3,500	N4,500
Tuber of yam	N8,000	N9,000

MILE 12 MARKET		
Bag of onions	N230,000	N275,000
Basket of onions	N115,000	N140,000
Basket of tomatoes (large)	N45,000	N40,000
Bag of pepper (rodo)	N150,000	N150,000
Tuber of yam (Benue yam)	N8,000	N9,000

DALEKO MARKET		
Oloyin beans (50kg)	N75,000	N90,000
Bucket of Oloyin	N5,500	N8,000
Olo2 beans (100kg bag)	N155,000	N170,000
Bucket of Olo2	N5,500	N8,000
White beans (110kg)	N95,000	N97,000
Bucket of white beans	N5,000	N6,000
Rice (foreign - 50kg)	N83,000	N97,000
Local brands (50kg)	N65,000	N70,000
Vegetable oil (20ltrs)	N75,000	N80,000
Vegetable oil (5ltrs)	N20,000	N23,000
Vegetable oil (1.5ltrs)	N6,000	N6,000
Red oil (20ltrs)	N45,000	N35,000
Red oil (5ltrs)	N13,000	N10,500
Red oil (1.5ltrs)	N3,500	N3,700
Yellow garri (50kg)	N33,000	N36,000
Bucket of yellow garri	N3,000	N2,800
White garri (100kg)	N67,000	N70,000
Bucket of white garri	N2,500	N3,000

Eco-friendly agriculture: 'Waste4Meal' initiative launched in Lagos

By **Bianca Iboma-Emefu**

Grace Foundation, an arm under The Grace Tribe Church, in conjunction with Agricultural Social Entrepreneurship Foundation (ASEF), has graduated 31 students from its Waste4Meal project. Convener/Executive Officer at the organisation, Rosemary Omoyeni, said they have been navigating a challenging landscape as it rolls out its innovative Waste4Meal project. This initiative aims to harness the benefits of black soldier fly (BSF) larvae as a sustainable protein source for animal feed, addressing the pressing need for alternative protein sources in Nigeria's agricultural sector.

"This ambitious regenerative agriculture project harnesses the remarkable capabilities of the BSF to transform organic waste into valuable resources.

Omoyeni stated that over 70 per cent of the Nigerian population are involved in agriculture, adding that the project seeks to empower women who represent nearly 60 per cent of Africa's agricultural workforce. The Waste4Meal project not only promises to enhance food security but also aims to alleviate the reliance on conventional protein sources such as fishmeal and soybean meal. In addition to providing a rich and sustainable protein alternative, BSF larvae produce frass, an organic fertiliser that rejuvenates degraded soils and boosts crop yields naturally. The project reflects a significant step towards sustainable agricultural practices and environmental conservation in Nigeria.

As the foundation celebrates the progress made over the last three months, it acknowledges the challenges faced, reinforcing its commitment to fostering economic empowerment and sustainable development in the agricultural sector.

Lead Facilitator and President of ASEF, Azeez Saheed, said the project, which started small is a new horizon for Nigeria's agriculture, noting that about 16 firms came together to work on it.

•Continued on www.thesun.ng



L-R: Olubunmi Akinremi, Independent Non-Executive Director ; Omomene Obanor, Company Secretary; Ayodeji Adigun, Non-Executive Director; Agatha Obiekwugo, Non-Executive Director; Emmanuel Nnorom: Chairman, Board of Directors; Azubike Emodi, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer; Owen Omogiafo, Non-Executive Director; Obong Idiong, Non-Executive Director and Olukayode Odebiyi, Executive Director; all of Afriland Properties Plc at the company's 12th Annual General Meeting held recently.

Hunger worsens despite presidential food emergency declaration

From **Okwe Obi**, Abuja

DESPITE a declaration of a state of emergency on food insecurity by President Bola Tinubu, prices of foodstuffs have continued to soar beyond the reach of most Nigerians, investigation reveals.

In July 2023, President Tinubu, through his spokesperson, Dele Alake, announced a declaration of a state of emergency to salvage the country from famine and boost food production.

According to the government, "In the immediate term, we intend to deploy some savings from the fuel subsidy removal into the agricultural sector, focusing on revamping the agricultural sector.

"All matters pertaining to food and water availability and affordability, as essential livelihood items, will be included within the purview of the National Security Council." Also, in 2024, the government announced an import waiver for maize, husked brown beans, wheat, and cowpea. In spite of the pronouncement, the policy has not kicked off. Nigerians buy bags of maize and beans at a costly rate.

A source in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, who opted to remain anonymous, advised the government to pull the ministry

out of the Treasury Single Account (TSA).

The TSA is a government financial policy that centralizes all government receipts and payments into a single bank account. It aims to improve financial transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public financial management.

"We are having this food crisis because the Federal Government has not removed the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security from the Treasury Single Account. How then do you want us to operate freely? It is not possible. The consequence is that hunger will continue to hit Nigerians very hard.

"Let me tell you in confidence that since this year, we have not had a single kobo to carry out any interventions. We have been relying on foreign donors to assist us," the source said.

But the President of the All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Kabir Ibrahim, countered the idea of exempting the Ministry from the TSA.

According to him, farmers are not taking money from the government to cultivate crops that would warrant an exemption from the TSA.

He suggested that the government should prioritize the naira over the dollar in order to give the currency value.

Ibrahim said: "It is a work

in progress. There may come a time when there will be food that is more abundant and more affordable.

"I think the issue we are talking about is affordability, not availability. We need to do a lot to prop up the value of the purchasing power of the naira. "Nobody goes to the market and says they cannot find food because it is not easily affordable.

"That is the major thing that we need to work on, affordability. So how do we work on it? By working and supporting farmers to produce optimally. By subsidizing directly, subsidising the farmers.

"Not pretending to subsidise them through surrogates. That's what we must do. The best solution to the problem is being able to do it here internally.

"We must produce optimally internally. Some people are suggesting that the Ministry of Agriculture should be removed from the TSA to enable it to function effectively. That is bullshit.

"That is bullshit. That is somebody who doesn't know what he is talking about. Is this thing giving farmers money to produce? We are not giving money.

"It is not like the FCT, where the man there said he is doing infrastructure, he is

doing everything. So he is giving contracts. The farmers are not taking money from the government to produce optimally.

"We take incentives. And this is what we are asking for. So it doesn't mean that they will be removed from the TSA. "To do what? Even when the government says there is a budget of N500 billion, for instance, for agriculture—is the money going to be given to farmers? Farming is a vocation that we have chosen to do. And it is just like those people who have shops in Wuse Market.

Continued on www.thesun.ng

Nigeria signs BASA with Trinidad to boost tourism, trade

By **Chinelo Obogo**

NIGERIA has signed a Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) with Trinidad and Tobago, which will enable designated airlines from both countries to operate passenger and cargo flights under mutually agreed terms and conditions.

The agreement was finalised on Monday in Trinidad and Tobago during a visit by Nigeria's Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Festus Keyamo, alongside Trinidad and Tobago's Minister of Works and Transport, Rohan Sinanan.

According to Tunde Moshood, Special Adviser on Media and Communications to Keyamo, the agreement is the result of years of diplomatic negotiations that originated during former President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration. Keyamo said that proactive negotiations by his team led to the eventual signing of the agreement.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Keyamo said, "Today's achievement not only honors a bilateral vision set in motion during President Obasanjo's tenure but also underscores Nigeria's dedication to expanding its global aviation influence. This pact will drive trade, tourism, cultural exchange, and stronger connectivity between Nigeria and the Caribbean."

Sinanan said he is optimistic about the potential of the agreement to improve collaboration, which will create opportunities for Caribbean and African carriers.

Aba Power pledges 350 jobs with nationwide prepaid meter rollout

ABA Power has announced that it will generate over 350 new jobs through its new mass rollout of prepaid meters, which is set to commence this month. The initiative, driven by strategic partnerships with multiple meter manufacturers, is part of the company's broader commitment to improve service delivery and accelerate metering coverage across its franchise area.

Speaking on the development, Edise Ekong, Senior Manager for Brand and Communication at Aba Power, said the jobs will emerge directly from collaboration with three major meter vendors.

"Each of the meter vendor partners," Ekong explained, "is creating over 100 direct jobs, including meter assemblers and meter installers, apart from transporters, warehouse hands, security, and others who will be impacted positively by the rollout."

He noted that Kayz Consortium, one of the key partners, is taking significant steps to ensure high-quality meter assembly. "Kayz Consortium, for instance, is, in addition, bringing eight expatriates this month to lead its 130-man workforce in assembling 90,000 meters from April to December 2025 for Aba Power customers," he said.

According to Ekong, the expatriates are representatives of the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) from China. "The expatriates will return to their home country when they conclude their supervision of the meter assembling, having trained enough of our people to continue assembling and installing the meters. These are representatives of the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) from China, and their presence ensures quality assurance in assembling and installing the meters in the field," he added.

Ekong also quoted Prince Kalu, Managing Director of Kayz Consortium, as saying that the meter assembly operations will be based at the Aba Power premises in the Osisioma Industrial Layout, starting mid-April.

Additional support will come from two other firms—Chint and Eve Electric—both of which will begin meter installations in May, each deploying 34 professional installers. Chint Power and Energy Services of China and Eve Electric, also based in China, will lead the second phase of installations.

These international partners will be complemented by Nigerian meter manufacturers, including HAMPOC Utilities Limited and M.E. Meters. Together, they are contributing to Aba Power's fast-tracked metering initiative across its service area, which covers nine of the 17 local government areas in Abia State.

Ekong revealed that Kayz Consortium alone will install 20,000 prepaid meters in April. "The 20,000 meters installed by Kayz in April will make many in the Aba Ring-fenced Area, covering nine of the 17 local government areas in Abia State, have meters and will help end complaints about the estimated billing system," he said.

He emphasized the company's long-term commitment to ensuring universal access to prepaid meters within its customer base. "We are committed to providing enough meters to all our over 350,000 customers in the Aba Ring-fenced Area with modern prepaid meters within one year," Ekong stated.

"Meters make for transparency and accountability, making our customers and our company happy and satisfied. It is truly a win-win for every party," he noted.

ICNL honours Yusuf, Raimi for outstanding contributions

THE Managing Director of Inland Containers Nigeria Limited (ICNL), Omatayo Dada, has celebrated Ismail Yusuf Adekola, the former ICNL MD, and Rotimi Raimi-Hassan, the former Kaduna Inland Dry Port (KIDP) Manager, as they retire from service.

During a retirement party held on 14th April 2025 to recognize their immense contributions to the company, Dada said Adekola is retiring after an illustrious 33-year career defined by excellence, innovation, and unwavering dedication.

Adekola's journey with ICNL began in 1990 as a National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) member, where his exceptional promise led to his immediate retention. He was formally appointed as Assistant Manager, Accounts in 1991, and steadily rose through the ranks with distinction, serving as Depot Accountant, then General Manager/CEO in 2002, and ultimately becoming Managing Director/CEO in 2010. Under his visionary leadership, ICNL experienced transformational growth and operational advancement.

His major contributions include: modernizing ICNL's operations to align with global logistics standards; spearheading KIDP establishment and operational success; implementing robust, transparent financial systems; infrastructure expansion—enhancing ICNL's national presence through depot and logistics development; building strong teams and nurturing leadership within the organization; representing ICNL on national and global platforms to influence policy and regulatory standards.

Being a committed professional, Mr. Adekola is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), and Chartered Institute of Shipping (CIS), as well as a Member of the Institute of Directors (IOD), Nigeria.

On the other hand, Omatayo Dada said Raimi-Hassan spent 31 remarkable years of dedicated service to ICNL. He began his journey with ICNL on February 3, 1993, during a transformative period in the company's history. Starting as Assistant Operations Manager, his dedication, discipline, and professionalism swiftly set him apart, propelling a distinguished career marked by integrity and innovation. Over the years, Mr. Raimi rose through the ranks to hold several key positions, including Assistant General Manager, Operations; Head of ICT/ICD Department; and notably, Pioneer Port Manager of the Kaduna Inland Dry Port (KIDP)—a role he assumed on February 20, 2017.

As the inaugural Port Manager, he laid the groundwork for KIDP's operations, establishing a reliable and efficient hub that continues to serve Nigeria's Northern region and beyond. His career is decorated with numerous achievements, including: streamlining logistics, warehousing, and container handling processes across ICNL locations; contributing to internal policy formulation and strategic operational frameworks; leading ICT integration that transformed port operations and documentation systems; mentoring and training staff, many of whom now hold leadership positions in the industry; holding degrees in Business Administration and Law, exemplifying lifelong learning; establishing core systems and partnerships that enhanced ICNL's service delivery. *Continued on www.thesun.ng*

Recapitalisation, tariff war: No cause for alarm, banks on sound footing -CBN

•As UBA GMD lists hurdles to achieving \$1trn economy

Continued from page 1

Communications, Mrs Hakama Sidi-Ali assured that the apex bank will continue to provide a strong platform to interact with the media.

In his presentation, the Group Managing Director of United Bank of Africa (UBA), Oliver Alawuba, said a double digit economic growth of 10 per cent was achievable, just as he listed various challenges to attaining the \$1 trillion GDP economy by 2030.

He said: "10 per cent growth is achievable if we set out to do it. We grew to 3.84% in Q4 2024 and that was the highest made since 2021 of 3.46%.

"We have many challenges like high inflation, naira depreciation, regulator challenges, security concerns, infrastructure deficit, financial accessibility and inclusion and more.

"Security is very critical to economic growth. Anything we're doing revolves around insecurity.

"Infrastructure deficit is a big issue. From poor roads and epileptic power supply, there are many things to address under infrastructure.

"A client in Tanzania says he enjoys 24/7 electricity at five per cent cost. How will a Nigerian entrepreneur compete with him?

"Banks must be positioned to fund infrastructure in Nigeria. Banks also needs to be incentivised

"Nigerian banks are capable of managing the reserves of Nigeria. We are already doing this for banks in Africa. We can use Nigerian money to develop Nigeria. Nigerians take this money out and we come back to borrow it. We should end this," he said.

Alawuba also called for increased fortification of Nigeria's digital architecture to close cybersecurity gaps.

"There's a report that banks lost N52 billion and we need to tackle this and it requires collaboration with various stakeholders to build platforms to protect banks and ultimately safeguard depositors' funds", he said.

He also noted that strong oversight was needed for prudent capital deployment into the real economy.

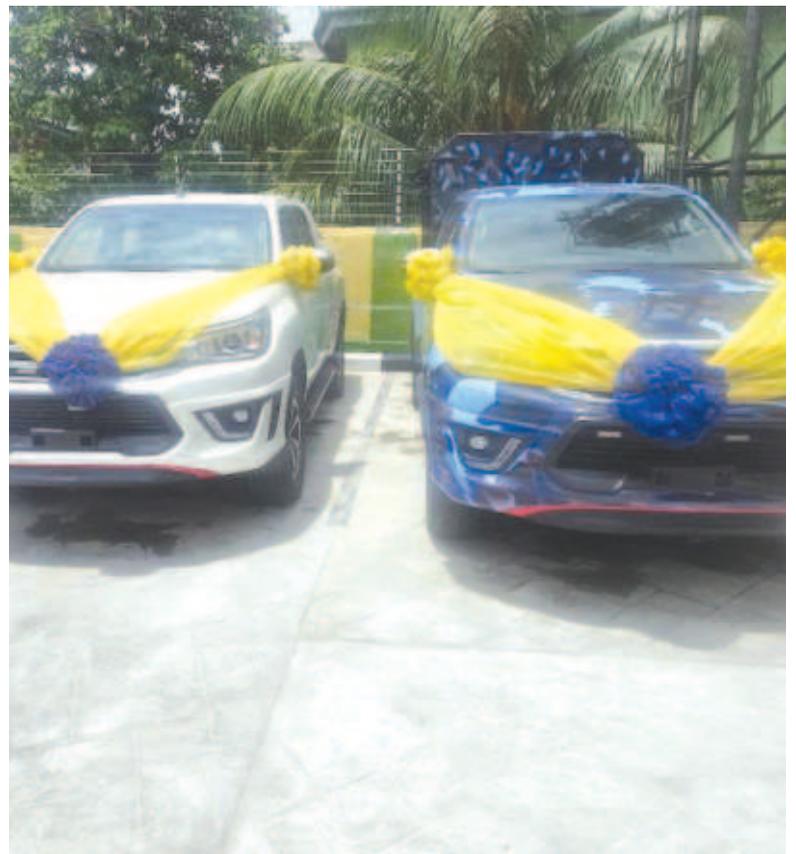
"According to Afrinvest, banks need N4.1 trillion to meet new capital requirements. We should work towards this.

"CBN and banks must jointly sensitise stakeholders on policy rationale and this speaks to strategic communication," he added.

NIGER DELTA CHRONICLE

Delta: Onslaught on insecurity boosted

● Antita donates ultra-modern police station to community



Donated police station

From **Ben Dunno**, Warri

AGAINST the backdrop of rising crime waves in the Niger Delta and the country and its attendant consequences, Tantita Security Services Limited (TSSL), has donated a state-of-the-heart facility for Ugborikoko Divisional Police Headquarters, Uvwie Local Government, Delta State.

TSSL chairman, Chief Government Ekpempupolo, aka Tompolo, acknowledged the importance of peace and security in the development of any society: "This occasion is not merely the unveiling of a new building for the police, but a celebration of our shared commitment to safety, security, and community development.

"Our decision to rebuild this police station is a mark of our commitment to rebuild the



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peace in Warri and improve the security of life and property for all residents in Warri, Effurun, and its environs.

"I want to take a moment to celebrate the men and women of the Nigeria Police Force who are the unsung heroes of our security.

"They are the reasons we chose to invest in this important project, to give back to the community, and to support the

tireless men and women who work daily to keep our neighbourhoods safe and secure."

Tompolo, represented by the company's Managing Director, Chief Kestin Pondi said TSSL understood the plight of its communities: "The company shares the desire of the society for improved security as a pre-condition for investment.

"The decision to rebuild the Ugborikoko Divisional Police Station is borne out of a recognition that security infrastructure matters, where a secured and decent work environment boost morale, enhances operational effectiveness, among others."

Governor Sheriff Oborewori, who was represented by Dr. Kingsley Emu, Secretary to the State Government, said: "Tantita has the DNA of the enterprise of the future. The

Donated vehicles

DNA enterprise of the future talks about genuine Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and this is a remarkable CSR.

"You have been in the forefront of community development, we are not unaware of the numerous numbers of drains and roads you have done in numerous communities unrelated to your business.

"You are not just a company that chase profit, you are a company that wish your neighbours as good as yourself, you run an all-inclusive programme that makes environment a better place to live." The governor urged Tantita to extend its generosity to other parts of the state.

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP), Mr Kayode Egbetokun, the project described it as a standard model that should be replicated. He was represented by Salman-Dogo

Garba, AIG, Zone 5.

He said the donation did not only reflect commitment of police to the well-being of the community but a deep trust in the role they play in maintaining peace, law and order:

"The decision to build the Police station is a mark of Tantita's commitment to rebuild the peace in Warri and improve the security of lives and properties for all residence in Warri, Effurun and environs."

The rebuilt police station furnished with sophisticated gadgets, comprising of a fully equipped police station with offices, Quarter Guard post and dedicated generator house.

It has a conference room; interrogation room gadgets; drain system; reconstruction of the existing police hall; provision of two Hilux vehicles, A

●Continued on www.thesun.ng

Don't incite ethnic crisis in Warri, GYC warns Itsekiri leader

From **Ben Dunno**, Warri

GBARAMATU Youth Council (GYC) in Delta State has called on security agencies, especially Department of State Security Services (DSS) to invite for questioning a prominent Itsekiri youth leader (name withheld), over a recent statement inciting his ethnic youths to pick up arms to defend themselves against the invasion of their communities by members of Tantita's Security outfit.

GYC said the call became necessary to avoid the sad experience of the Warri crisis that witnessed the destruction of

GYC leadership addressing newsmen



lives and property for a very long time. Its Public Relations Officer (PRO), Maxwell Wuruyai, said GYC would

not tolerate any instigated attack on operatives of Tantita duly engaged by the Federal Government to protect the

nation's critical assets:

"Gbaramutu people have been known for peace and have no intention of attacking any of their neighbours. Tantita is not owned by Gbaramutu Kingdom but engaged by the Federal Government to protect oil pipelines from vandalism and illegal bunkering."

Wuruyai said the Itsekiri youth leader "is venting his anger on the ground that Tantita is preventing illegal bunkering. We firmly believe that his bitterness stem from the disruption of illegal bunkering by Tantita operations. He now thinks to incite ethnic unrest."

●Continued on www.thesun.ng

Senate'll ensure equitable spending of N1trn earmarked to revive moribund solid minerals sector

From **Jude Owuamanam, Jos**

CHAIRMAN, Senate committee on Solid Minerals Development, Ekong Sampson, has said the 10th senate would ensure equitable use of the N1 trillion earmarked in 2025 budget by the Federal Government to revive the moribund solid mineral sector

He said this is part of Federal Government's effort to diversify the economy by bringing back the vibrant solid minerals sector of the Nigerian economy

Senator Sampson, representing Akwa Ibom South, spoke yesterday, while on an oversight function in Jos. He said the amount is already approved in the 2025 budget.

Sampson, who spoke through his deputy, Senator Mustapha Habib, expressed the

2027 elections may become joke if Edo tribunal ruling is not reversed - Amadi

From **Adanna Nnamani, Abuja**

THE Director of the Abuja School of Social and Political Thought, Dr. Sam Amadi, has warned that if the judgment of the Edo State Governorship Election Tribunal is allowed to stand, it would set a dangerous precedent that could turn Nigeria's 2027 elections into 'farfetched, impotent rituals.'

Amadi made the statement during a press briefing in Abuja yesterday, in reaction to the April 2 judgment of the tribunal, which upheld the declaration of the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate as winner of the 2024 Edo governorship election, despite what he described as overwhelming evidence of malpractice.

"If the judiciary allows the travesty that took place in Edo State on September 21, 2024 to stand, then we might as well

Umahi vows to continue supporting Lagos - Calabar Coastal Highway

By **Aniekan Aniekan, Calabar**

MINISTER of Works, David Umahi, has vowed to continue supporting the 750km Lagos Calabar Coastal Highway.

He disclosed this in Awi, Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State, during the flag off of the Calabar section.

"This project is beyond road construction but an investment. I take responsibility for the costing, alignment and choice of contractors. I can defend this project any day and anytime, even up to the World Court."

The minister said the project was conceived 27 years ago by President Tinubu and thanked God for giving him the wisdom to dream and the opportunity to fulfill the dream.

He charged people of Cross River to cooperate with the contractors as the speed of the project will depend on them.

Governor Bassey Otu who represented President Tinubu

determination of the 10th Senate to support President Bola Tinubu's administration which is prepared to revive solid minerals in Nigeria so as to boost economic developments.

Speaking at the Palace of Gbong Gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, during a visit, he said Jos has the pride of place as a solid mineral sector and called on traditional rulers to check the activities of unlicensed miners who have been exploiting the sector at the expense of real operators in the sector.

The six-man member senate committee on solid minerals development who was in Jos for a day oversight function, pledged its determination to assist the president achieve this objective.

Gbong Gwom Jos told the committee that growing insecurity has continued due

all go home. The 2027 and all other elections will be farfetched, impotent rituals used by the ruling class to give the unilateral appointment of political officeholders the imprimatur of democratic responsibility," Amadi cautioned.

The former chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), described the ruling as a judicial endorsement of what he termed "an electoral coup" by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), accusing the electoral body of manipulating results and subverting the will of the people.

According to him, the tribunal ignored clear evidence that INEC violated key provisions of the Electoral Act, including Section 73(2), which mandates that serial numbers of sensitive materials such as

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

said the project is an economic enabler, job creation booster, inter/intra regional linkage and other verticals.

He urged residents to reawaken their entrepreneurial spirit and maximally utilize the diverse economic possibilities the coastal highway offers.

Managing Director of Hitech Construction Danny Abboud said his company is committed to constructing and finishing the project even earlier.

He also pledged to deploy the best international construction standards in the course of executing the project.

Olayinka Onafuye, Federal Controller of Works in Cross River State, promised to supervise the section of the road with a sense of commitment.

The Cross River section of the Highway will pass through 14 communities comprising Awi, Njahasang, Oduyama, Ikot Okon Akiba, Obot Ekpo, Atan Okoyong, Ekemkpon,

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

to illegal mining activities.

He revealed that young Nigerians in the state were being killed in the mining ponds; even as institutions and other residential buildings were also being threatened due to devastating ponds.

The traditional ruler noted that the hike in foodstuffs in the state was as a result of increasing illegal mining activities, pointing out that the decline in school enrollment in the state was due to mining activities.

He revealed that it was the reason the Plateau State Government activated the Executive Order 001, which has temporarily suspended mining activities in the state.

He, however, revealed that some persons hadn't stopped

mining, in spite of the order.

The monarch equally called on the Senate committee to insist that the Minister of Solid Mineral Development should do the needful in regulating mining activities in Nigeria.



The Vice President of Nigeria, HE Kashim Shettima, arrives in Akwa Ibom State for the launch of the ARISE Human Capital Development Strategic Plan and the ARISE Local Government HCD Implementation Roadmap. He is warmly received by HE Governor Pastor Umo Eno

PDP formidable, won't join any coalition - Prof. Gana

From **John Adams, Minna**

FORMER Minister for Information and National Orientation and Board of Trustee (BoT) member of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Professor Jerry Gana, has declared that the main opposition party would not join any coalition or merge with any political party ahead of the 2027 general elections in the country.

Gana noted that despite its current setback, it is a solid and organised political party and absolutely trusted by Nigerians, stressing that the leaders of the party were doing serious underground work to bring the party back to where it should be ahead of 2027 general elections.

The PDP BoT member spoke to the Daily Sun in an exclusive interview shortly after attending this year's Nupe Christian Fellowship International Conference in Bida, Niger State.

"PDP will not join any coalition because when we formed the party in 1998, it was a coalition; it was a platform for democracy and a very powerful coalition. All that the party needs now is a new leadership, and we shall surprise Nigerians with a good and credible candidate for 2027.

"Knowing the capacity, the ideas and power that we possess, we cannot go into a merger or coalition with any political party. PDP is the only political party that is tested and trusted and found to be the only option for Nigeria's greatness.

"All that we need like I said is a new leadership after which we will present a new proposal to Nigerians and we will give Nigerians purposeful leader-

ship," he submitted.

He pointed out that now that the PDP is an opposition party, all kinds of things were happening but assured Nigerians and supporters that the party would soon resolve all the issues at hand and give the country an alternative that would be very clear, credible and desirable.

"In political development, there are bases and people like us have seen a lot of things in politics. Right now, the PDP is in opposition, so there are all kinds of things that are

happening but let Nigerians wait, we will soon come up to resolve all the issues at hand right now, and move forward and give the nation an alternative that will be very clear, credible and desirable.

"Forget about the struggle to be here and there because there is a new political order that is emerging but let Nigerians give the PDP a few months, we will correct it and give Nigerians a better and clear alternative.

"PDP is a very solid and organized political party and

absolutely trusted by Nigerians. It took over power from the military and we restored democracy, good governance, fairness, justice and equity in the country."

Professor Gana, who expressed regret over the current economic and security situation in the country, stated that Nigeria as a country, was doing well under the PDP, adding that, "The country's economy was doing so well. Nigeria paid her foreign debts

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

Shettima reaffirms Nigeria's goal to join top 80 on human capital index by 2030, lauds Akwa Ibom

From **Juliana Taiwo-Obalonye, Abuja**

VICE President Kashim Shettima has reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to achieving a top-80 ranking on the global Human Capital Index (HCI) by 2030, emphasizing the importance of grassroots implementation and data-driven policies to transform the nation's socioeconomic landscape.

He spoke during the launch of the National Human Capital Development (HCD) Accelerator Project and the ARISE Human Capital Development Strategy in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, yesterday.

Shettima described the Federal Government's target as "ambitious yet achievable" as he outlined the vision for a healthier, better-educated and empowered Nigeria. "We aim to position Nigeria among the top 80 countries on the Human Capital Index, reaching a score of 0.6 by 2030," he said. "These metrics represent more than just numbers; they

signify real change in the lives of our people—access to quality healthcare, improved educational outcomes, expanded opportunities for meaningful employment, and a society that remains resilient in the face of global challenges."

Shettima commended Akwa Ibom for becoming the first state to fully implement the national HCD blueprint across all local government areas.

"Every policy or programme that intervenes in the life of our people can only succeed if it's rooted in the grassroots. The true wealth of any nation lies in its human capital: the education of its children, the health of its citizens, and the productivity of its workforce," he noted.

Highlighting Akwa Ibom's achievements, Shettima said, "With an under-five mortality rate of 80 compared to the national average of 110, and with only 3.5 percent of primary-age children out of school—far below the national average of 25.6 percent - your state is not

merely compliant with our national vision. You are ahead of the curve."

The Vice President unveiled HCD 2.0, a second phase of the National Human Capital Development Programme that builds on previous efforts with a focus on integration and measurable outcomes. "At its core, HCD 2.0 is about integration and impact. It is built on the foundation of HCD 1.0 but goes further to incorporate cross-cutting themes," Shettima explained.

He also announced a new HCD Dashboard to monitor key indicators with precision. "We are deploying data not for reports but for results. Because behind every number is a story: a child not vaccinated, a mother lost to childbirth, a youth with promise but no pathway. These are not mere statistics; they are realities we must confront with urgency and compassion," he emphasized.

• **Continued on www.thesun.ng**

PENGASSAN shuts firm's operations over suspension of executives

From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

THE Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) has directed its members to embark on a total withdrawal of services at all operational locations of Newcross Exploration and Production Limited, following what the union described as "arbitrary queries and suspension letters" issued to its branch executives.

Newcross operates several oil wells in OML24 within the shallow waters of Bille Kingdom in Degema Local Government Area of Rivers State, including Awoba North/West oil wells C, D and E.

In a strongly worded directive dated April 14, 2025 and signed by Sere Nwikebeh, assistant general secretary of PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt zone, the union accused the oil firm of targeting union leaders and undermining collective bargaining efforts.

"The Association is constrained to direct our members to withdraw their services from all locations with immediate effect. This withdrawal of services

is a proactive measure to actualize our core objective by ensuring the safety and security for our members' job," the letter stated

PENGASSAN vowed that the industrial action would persist until Newcross management withdraws the disciplinary actions and resumes the stalled Collective Bargaining Agreement, CBA, negotiations.

The dispute stems from queries issued to the branch chairman and other executive members of the union, which PENGASSAN described as retaliation for carrying out lawful union activities.

"We are in receipt of a written query issued to our Branch Executives in respect of their PENGASSAN activity," wrote Comrade Regina Ewah, Assistant General Secretary, PHZ, in an earlier letter dated April 13 to the company's Human Resources Manager.

"The Branch Executives were merely carrying out lawful instructions given to them by the Association," Ewah noted, demanding an immediate withdrawal of the queries.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Women march in support of emergency rule in Rivers

From **Tony John**, Port Harcourt

THOUSANDS of Rivers Women for Good Governance, yesterday, hit the streets of Port Harcourt in support of the state of emergency declared by President Bola Tinubu in Rivers State.

They also said their peaceful rally was to demonstrate support for the efforts of the Sole Administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (retd), for restoring democratic governance, peace and stability in the state.

The women who were dressed in white attire, said the declaration of state of emergency is constitutional and they welcomed it in their state.

Last week, anti-state of emergency women wore black clothes and protested to the Government House,

Port Harcourt, expressing their disgust for emergency rule in the state.

They called on President Tinubu to reinstate suspended Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his deputy and exit of the sole administrator.

The protesters declared their total support for the embattled governor, Fubara, saying he was democratically elected, and suspending him from office was an injustice against him and the state.

But the women protesters rejected calls for the governor's reinstatement and urged the Sole Administrator, Vice Admiral Ibok-Ete Ibas (retd), to investigate the bloated contracts awarded by the governor, adding that there was no tribal war in Rivers State.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

FG declares national emergency on food security

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has declared a national emergency on food security, urging expanded irrigation infrastructure and participatory water resource management nationwide.

Tinubu made the declaration when he opened the sixth African Regional Conference on Irrigation and Drainage in Abuja, yesterday.

Represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, he urged African nations to adopt innovative strategies in addressing the continent's irrigation and water management challenges.

He described the confer-

ence theme, "Tackling irrigation development and water management crisis in Africa" as a clarion call to action for sustainable agriculture and economic resilience.

"Africa continues to face major challenges in unlocking its irrigation potential due to inadequate infrastructure, financial constraints, climate change, and governance issues. This conference offers a vital platform for us to collectively chart a path forward."

Tinubu stated that the country had more than 3.1 million hectares of irrigable land located around key river basins such as the Niger and Benue.



L-R: Chairman Editorial Board, Energy Times Newspaper, Mallam Yakubu Lawal; District Overseer, New Oko Oba District Headquarters, Foursquare Gospel Church, Rev Dr Wole Adebayo; and Head of Strategy, Modion Communications, Oluwatosin Baiyewu at Energy Times Award presentation ceremony where Modion was honoured as the Outstanding Oil & Gas PR Agency of the Year in Lagos

My tortuous road to becoming AfDB president - Adesina

• Explains role Jonathan, Buhari, Atiku, Abdulsalam, others played

From **Fred Ezeh**, Abuja

DR. Akinwummi Adesina has narrated the journey that culminated in his election as President of African Development Bank Group (AfDB) on May 28, 2015, in Abidjan, for the first five-year term and re-elected in 2020 for another five-year term that will end this year.

He told the story at the 14th convocation lecture he delivered at the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). The topic was "Advancing Africa's positioning within global development and geopolitical dynamics."

He started by appreciating his then Principal, former president, Goodluck Jonathan, who nominated him for the position, and also confessed that his dream which was clearly coming to pass then would have failed if former president, Muhammadu Buhari did not endorse it.

"I have come to realise that nobody gives you space in any profitable venture in life, you take the space. It took the efforts and connections of so many people, leaders, for me to have emerged as the President of AfDB.

"Firstly, it took someone

like former President Goodluck Jonathan to nominate me for that, for which I'm eternally grateful. When it was time for campaign, former Head of State, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, gave me strategies I needed, and also the place I needed to go to be able to succeed in my campaign. He also took me to somebody I had never known nor met before, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar, who also played a significant role in the journey.

"Former head of state, General Yakubu Gowon,

accompanied me to Namibia to campaign. Former president, Olusegun Obasanjo, also supported me in campaigning for many of these states. Former Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida was also instrumental to the success.

"But I want to say a very important thing. If President Buhari had not supported my candidacy, it was dead on arrival. For instance, I went out on campaigns around the world. I got to a particular country, they said, sorry, we can't see you. I asked, why? They said, because the

government has changed in Nigeria. There's a new president that's coming in. And we don't know whether he's going to support you. Sadly, I have never met President Buhari ever before.

"I was in Paris. Everybody was running away from me because they don't know whether my candidacy was valid, viable, or not. I was confused, and was losing hope speedily. I reached out to my state governor, Senator Ibikunle Amosun, to inform him about the

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

PDP, Okpebholo bicker over 2027 presidential election campaigns

From **Tony Osauzo**, Benin

EDO State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Governor Monday Okpebholo, yesterday, engaged in verbal punches over a presidential statement denouncing campaigns for President Bola Tinubu ahead of the 2027 election.

The PDP, in a statement by its Publicity Secretary of the state Caretaker Committee, Chris Nehikhare, to

react to a statement issued by Mr. Bayo Onanuga, triggered the exchange.

The PDP had said: "The Presidency has publicly disclaimed the premature and illegal 2027 campaign billboards flooding parts of Nigeria, including those promoted by Senator Monday Okpebholo and the APC-led government in Edo State.

"In a statement titled 'Presidency Disclaims 2027 Campaign Billboards Nationwide,' the Federal Government expressed dismay over the growing number of unauthorised political billboards and reaffirmed its commitment to upholding the rule of law.

"This marks a major blow to Senator Okpebholo's desperate attempts to curry favour with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu through reckless and unlawful political grandstanding. The Edo State Chapter of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) had earlier raised the alarm in a statement titled: 'Okpebholo's Launch of 2027 Presidential Campaigns for Tinubu in Edo: An Insult, an Affront to the Constitution.

"The Presidency's intervention clearly validates our concerns and exposes the deceitful tactics of the Edo APC, which has shown a complete disregard for the

nation's electoral laws. Their antics have not only embarrassed Edo people but have now drawn a firm rebuke from the very leadership they were trying to impress.

"We now await the response of the Edo State Government to this direct disapproval from the Presidency. As we previously noted, Section 94(1) of the Electoral Act 2022 clearly states: 'The period of campaigning in public by every political party shall commence 150 days before polling day and end 24 hours prior to that day.'"

"The Edo PDP remains committed to defending constitutional order and protecting the integrity of our democracy against desperate and unlawful manipulation by the APC."

But in a swift response, Governor Okpebholo in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Fred Itua, described the PDP statement as "reckless, misleading and malicious" saying that the party "once again peddled baseless claims and sought to mislead the public on matters it clearly does not understand or deliberately chooses to misrepresent.

"Let it be clearly stated that the statement is a

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

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Sokoto revives massive water projects to end water scarcity

By **Shafa'atu Suleiman,**
Sokoto

AS part of measures to tackle water scarcity across the state, Sokoto State Governor, Ahmad Aliyu Sokoto, has revived two major initiatives aimed at providing clean and safe water to both the urban and rural communities.

This was disclosed by the state APC chairman, Isa Sadiq Achida, during a press briefing at the APC secretariat yesterday.

According to Achida, the initiatives were part of Governor Aliyu's administration's nine-point agenda and represent a critical step towards resolving a decade-long challenge of inadequate water supply in the state.

He said that the government had revived the 40-million gallons per day water

project initially launched under former Governor Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko but abandoned by the immediate past administration.

"Governor Ahmad Aliyu has not only revived the initiative but has also accelerated its progress, with completion targeted before the onset of the rainy season," he said.

He stated that the project spans six strategic locations in and around Sokoto metropolis, including Old Airport, Mana, Tamaje and Gagi, each with a capacity of three million gallons.

Others are two larger projects at Runjin Sambo with eight million gallons capacity and Ruggar Liman with 20 million gallons.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

FUAHSE holds 1st matriculation, vows to pioneer unique health courses

THE Federal University of Allied Health Sciences (FUAHSE), Enugu, has held its first-ever matriculation ceremony at the Trans-Ekulu Campus, Enugu, with more than 1,000 students taking part in the exercise.

Speaking at the event, the Vice Chancellor of the institution, Professor John Emaimo, described the moment as historic and fulfilling, adding that the university would pioneer health courses in nanotechnology and artificial intelligence.

He said: "This is a hallmark. The pronouncement of this institution as a university was only a word on paper, but today we have translated that into reality. It's a thing of joy to see plans become realities, for people to begin to feel it in concrete terms."

Professor Emaimo said the institution is not just about awarding degrees but is focused on building well-round-

ed graduates equipped with both academic and practical entrepreneurial skills.

"Every student of this university is expected to register and graduate with a diploma in an area of entrepreneurship. We have piggy, horticulture, catering and others. It's going to be a little more demanding, but we believe this is what society needs.

"We are pioneering some unique courses. Speech therapy, for instance, is not offered in any other university in Nigeria; we are the first. The same thing goes for dental technology in federal universities. We're also introducing nanotechnology and artificial intelligence. We want to do things differently," he said.

He also praised the Federal Government for its support, especially in terms of infrastructure, noting that much of

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

C&S marks centenary, wants change of economic policy

By **Christopher Oji**

THE Cherubim and Seraphim Unification Church of Nigeria (C&S) has concluded plans to meet with President Bola Tinubu and state governors to give advice on the economic and security situation in the country.

The Church, which is marking its 100 years in the country has, therefore, called on the Federal Government to look critically into some challenges confronting the nation.

It said, the church was not unaware of the present harsh economic realities, assuring that one of the activities lined up to celebrate the 100 years of the church is to visit the presidency and the governors, plead with them and advise them, especially, President Tinubu, to look into some policies tend to be anti-people.

Addressing the press yesterday, General Secretary of the church, Senior Apostle Tayo Ajose, said churches all over the country have a vital role to play in the overall wellbeing of the people, especially, economic policy

adding, "When our fathers and mothers visit the president, it would be to tell him the truth, ask him about the well being of the country and advise him on the need to change the economic policies. We will also pray for him because we believe in the efficacy of prayers, and minister to him to change his tactics economically. We will not limit our visit to prayers alone, we will back it up with action. The church is intentional in addressing issues, especially economic issues. If you must know, our fathers advised all our churches to stop everything we do everyday and pray for the nation at 12 midnight and we have been doing just that. Nobody is happy with the rate of kidnapping and banditry as a result of the harsh situation of things. So, the C&S church is not resting on its oars in this regard and we pray that God will help us.

"Throughout this year, up until September 9, 2025, a

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Nigeria losing \$2bn annually to medical tourism -Minister

By **Merit Ibe**

THE Federal Government has said Nigeria loses an estimated \$2 billion annually to medical tourism, which reflects the gap in confidence, access, and quality within the local system.

Coordinating Minister for Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammadu Ali Pate, represented by Prof. Lanre Wasiu Adeyemo, CMD of the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) made the remark at the commissioning of a state-of-the-art 50-bed multi specialty Hospital by Avon Medical Practice, in Lagos, a subsidiary of Heirs'

Holdings, yesterday.

Ali Pate was, however, optimistic that the trend can be reversed with collaboration of the private sector, adding that the government was ready to co-create pathways for private sector engagement, whether through health insurance expansion, regulatory reforms, or integration of private facilities into national health programs and referral systems.

"We welcome urban medical, and indeed all winning private providers, to come alongside us as partners in building a healthier, safer, and more equitable Nigeria.

"As we commission this facility, we stand not just as a

symbol of brick-and-mortar excellence but as a beacon of possibility, a reminder that when vision meets values and business meets purpose, healthcare in Nigeria can be world-class."

He noted that health priorities are not the responsibility of the government alone but require full partnership of the private sector, state government, local government, development partners, civil society, academia as well as all our communities. Today's launch of the medical facility is a shining example of how private sector investment can complement the public sector. Public sector efforts are

expanding access to critical services such as emergency care,

diagnostics, specialized treatment, all within our national borders."

Congratulating the Avon Medial team for the feat, Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu corroborated the minister on the need for collaboration with the private sector, noting that health practitioners, institutions and facilities everywhere in the world were not achieved by one arm of the side table.

Admitting that the government must create the enabling

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Ethnic blackmail is dead strategy, Hashim to opposition politicians

FORMER presidential candidate and elder statesman, Dr. Gbenga Olawepo-Hashim, has delivered a sharp rebuke to opposition politicians employing ethnic rhetoric to gain political advantage, describing such tactics as obsolete and harmful to Nigeria's unity and development.

In a statement yesterday, he warned that the continued deployment of ethnic sentiments in political discourse was a distraction from the pressing issues confronting

the nation. He called for a shift toward solution-driven engagement that addresses Nigeria's economic collapse, rampant insecurity and foreign policy failures.

"Those still stuck in the old game of ethnic blackmail should understand that Nigerians have outgrown that playbook. The people are looking for competent leadership, not ethnic champions," he said.

He expressed concern over the recent attempts to brand the administration of Presi-

dent Bola Tinubu as a 'Yoruba government,' dismissing such claims as both baseless and ironic.

He added: "President Tinubu struggled to win support even among his own ethnic group. He lost Lagos, arguably the heart of the Yoruba political base, in the 2023 presidential election. So, on what grounds is anyone now calling this a tribal government?"

The former presidential hopeful also accused some of Tinubu's former allies, who

were instrumental in his rise to power, of now resorting to ethnic incitement because their personal ambitions were unmet.

"It is pure hypocrisy. You cannot install a government and then disown it on ethnic grounds when your expectations aren't fulfilled," he stated.

To reinforce his argument, he cited historic instances where Nigerian voters defied ethnic lines in favour of leadership they believed in, adding, "In 1993, Kano voters chose Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba man, over their kinsman, Bashir Tofa. In 2023, Lagosians voted for Peter Obi, an Igbo candidate, over Tinubu. Yet, they returned Governor Sanwo-Olu of the APC. Nigerians are far more politically mature than many politicians assume."

He stressed that the real crisis confronting the country was not ethnicity but the absence of purposeful, visionary leadership.

"The nation is groaning under inflation, rising poverty, food insecurity and a worsening security situation. These are the matters that deserve attention, not tired ethnic narratives," he said.

He urged political leaders

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Exclusion of CONUA from agreement renegotiation dangerous for academic system - Sunmonu

From **Lateef Dada,**
Osogbo

THE Congress of University Academics (CONUA), has expressed concern over its exclusion from the renegotiation process on the 2009 agreement, saying the development was dangerous for academic system.

In a letter dated April 4, 2025 and addressed to the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), it was indicated that the committee chaired by Dr. Yayale Ahmed, has submitted its report on the renegotiation of the 2009 agreement with the exclusion of CONUA.

Reacting to the develop-

ment, the national president of CONUA, Niyi Sunmonu, in a statement yesterday, described the development as surprising and disappointing, noting that CONUA had earlier received a formal letter of invitation from the Minister of Education, dated December 20, 2024, directing the committee to engage with the union.

"However, up till the time of this release, CONUA has not been invited to make any submission or contribution to the renegotiation process. The union wonders how it was possible for a committee to jettison the mandate of a minister, who put the committee in place in this important national assignment.

"It is important to underscore that the 2009 agreement was entered into on behalf of all academic staff in Nigerian universities as of that time. With the current existence of three recognised academic unions, it is imperative that all stakeholders be carried along in matters relating to the welfare and conditions of service of their members.

"The exclusion of CONUA, a registered and legitimate union, from such a crucial process undermines principles of fairness, inclusiveness and democratic engagement, as enshrined in the International

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

FIN honours Sanwo-Olu, Okpebholo, Oba of Benin, others in Dubai

A London-based investment organisation, Foreign Investment Network (FIN), has honoured Governors Babajide Sanwo-Olu (Lagos) and Monday Okpebholo (Edo) as well as the Oba of Benin, Oba Ewuare II and other top personalities during its international award ceremony in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates.

The award ceremony, which took place on Wednesday, April 9, 2025, during the 2025 Net Zero MEA Summit,

had top chief executive officers (CEOs), managing directors (MDs), innovators, founders and other stakeholders from different countries, in attendance.

Sanwo-Olu was honoured with the Distinguished FIN Outstanding Leadership Award, while Okpebholo received the Distinguished FIN Emerging Governor Of The Year Award in recognition of their remarkable achievements in Lagos and Edo states, respectively.

The MD/CEO of Bank of Industry (BoI), Dr. Olasupo Olusi, was also honoured with the Distinguished FIN Transformational Leader in Development Finance while the Executive Director, Rural Electrification Agency (REA), Doris Uboh, who graced the event, also received the Distinguished FIN Rural Electrification Champion of the Year for her outstanding contribution to public service.

In his remarks at the event, the Lagos State Commissioner

for Energy and Mineral Resources, Mr Biodun Ogunleye, who received the award on behalf the Governor said: "Our unique selling point is not just about upwardly mobile population but a growth trajectory that confirms Lagos as a choice destination for investment.

"The FIN event was an opportunity for Lagos, under the able leadership of Governor Sanwo-Olu, to showcase the competitiveness of our city as an investment destination. We were also able to debunk some assumptions about the progress we are making as the largest subnational towards improving our liveability index. We are also delighted about the enquiries and follow up we have had so far."

The Managing Director, Edo State Investment Promotion Office, Mr Amen Odigie, who received the award on behalf of Okpebholo, said:

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

Borno rolls out 3rd polio immunisation round

From **Timothy Olanrewaju,** Maiduguri

BORNO has rolled out the third round of immunisation of children against polio from April 14 to 19.

Director of Disease Control and Immunisation at the Borno Primary Healthcare Development Board, Fatima Ali announced this at a media roundtable in Maiduguri yesterday that the immunisation

exercise would cover 10 local government areas in the state.

"We have designed innovative strategies to close the immunisation gap that occurred as a result of COVID-19 and insurgency, which made some areas inaccessible to health workers," she disclosed.

She said the three-leg strategies include "Big Catch-Up, focus on immunising all children from 24 to 59 weeks.

Others include fixed mobile

centres, a mobile arrangement created at health facilities in the 10 local governments to provide immunisation to children and ensure accessibility.

She said the outreach centres located some kilometres away from health facilities, were designed to provide immunisation to areas difficult to reach or inaccessible due to the security challenge.

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

SPORTS

Nwobodo urges FG to immortalise Christian Chukwu

From Jude Chinedu, Enugu

Elder statesman and former Minister of Youth and Sports, Senator Jim Nwobodo, has called on the Federal Government to immortalise the late Super Eagles captain and coach, Christian Chukwu. Speaking during a condolence visit to the late football legend's family at their Trans-Ekulu residence in Enugu, Nwobodo emphasised the need for the government to not only honour deceased sports heroes but also cater to the welfare of athletes who served the country in their

youth. "Christian Chukwu was a soccer star, disciplined, committed, and a selfless servant of Nigeria and the South East. He and his teammates lifted the spirit of the Igbo people after the civil war and wrote Nigeria's name in gold through football." Nwobodo lamented that many patriotic sportsmen have been neglected after retirement, facing financial and health challenges due to lack of support. "Femi Otedola had to come from Lagos to pay Chukwu's medical bills.

That's unacceptable." He stressed the importance of celebrating and supporting heroes while they are alive: "It's good to immortalize the dead, but it's more impactful to reward their service while they are alive. The dead don't know what happens after they're gone." Nwobodo, who was governor of old Anambra State when Chukwu played for Enugu Rangers, described him as not just the captain of Rangers FC but also of the Super Eagles, later becoming the national team's coach.

Osimhen shows off ₦250m worth Mercedes Brabus G63

BY RASAQ OBOIRIEN

SUPER Eagles star, Victor Osimhen has been spotted out in a ₦250 million worth Mercedes Benz G63, a modified derivative of the G-Wagon. The Galatasaray forward and leading top scorer in the Turkish Super Lig showed off his high-performance toy while filling it with fuel at a gas station. The Mercedes-Benz

G-Wagon is considered a footballer's favourite when it comes to SUVs, and the Nigerian took it for a spin with pals in Wolfsburg, Germany, while with his family on a four-day leave. Osimhen, 27-year-old appeared in a relaxed mood in the video and photo he shared on his verified Instagram account. Meanwhile, his followers on the social media app dropped few hilarious comments on the

photo as one asked if he was now a fuel attendant, while another asked the former Napoli striker to send his bank details, so he can credit him money to pay for the gas. Alabi: "Wow. You don't turn fuel attendant? Nobody hustle reach you ooo, "the post read. Asiwaju Larry's post read: "Send your Opay make you buy full tank inside that swag."

Spires 5-Aside Season 2 begins Saturday

By EMMA JEMEGAH

The race for the premier grassroots football initiative, Spires 5-Aside football tournament, aims to nurture and develop young talents for national and international, will begin on Saturday April 19. According to the convener of the tournament, Dr Femi Bankole Allibay, a total of 40 teams, representing the five divisions of Lagos will take part in the Season 2 meant to foster regional representation and unity. Dr Allibay stressed that to reflect the commitment to

excellence, the participation fee for each team has been adjusted to N100,000 with a substantial increase in the prize money for the top three teams in each division as well as for outstanding performances. "The Spires 5-Aside tournament is designed to identify, nurture and promote football talents within the age of 16-21 bracket, providing them with structured pathways for professional careers in football. This year's edition has seen significant enhancements to further elevate the competition and opportunities for participants," Dr Allibay stressed.

Africa's largest school Chess tourney to launch in Lagos

The first-ever ChessMasters tournament will takeplace at Eko Hotel & Suites, bringing together over 500 young players from 100+ schools for Africa's largest school chess tournament, competing for more than ₦5,000,000 in prize money. The inaugural ChessMasters tournament is open to primary school children aged between 6 and 11 years old, across Lagos, who are eager to challenge themselves, think critically, and compete at the highest level. More than just a competition, ChessMasters is the launchpad for a bold new vision: a pan-African movement leveraging chess as a tool for education, empowerment, and leadership development. A groundbreaking collaboration between KEY academy, Africa's first 100% project-based school, and Eko Hotel & Suites, Lagos' leading venue for large scale cultural events, and Chess in Slums Africa, the globally recognised nonprofit founded by chess champion and Guinness World Record holder, Tunde Onakoya - ChessMasters is designed to equip the next generation with critical thinking, problem-solving, and leadership skills. This tourna-

ment is the proof of concept for a transformative initiative that will extend far beyond Nigeria, shaping the future of education across the continent. "At KEY academy, we believe learning should go beyond memorisation and test scores but also cultivate 21st century skills including critical thinking, problem solving and resilience. ChessMasters is an extension of that philosophy - a platform where young minds can develop 21st century skills that will serve them in every aspect of life. By integrating chess into education, we are not just teaching a game; we are shaping a generation of problem solvers and future leaders for Africa," noted KEY academy founder, Damiola Okonkwo. The ChessMasters initiative has garnered support from a diverse group of blue-chip brands and industry-leading innovators, underscoring its credibility and far-reaching impact. Sponsors including Sterling Bank, 7Up, Mikano, Fidson Healthcare, Paga, and DyeLab bring a wealth of expertise and influence across finance, consumer goods, manufacturing, healthcare, technology, and design.

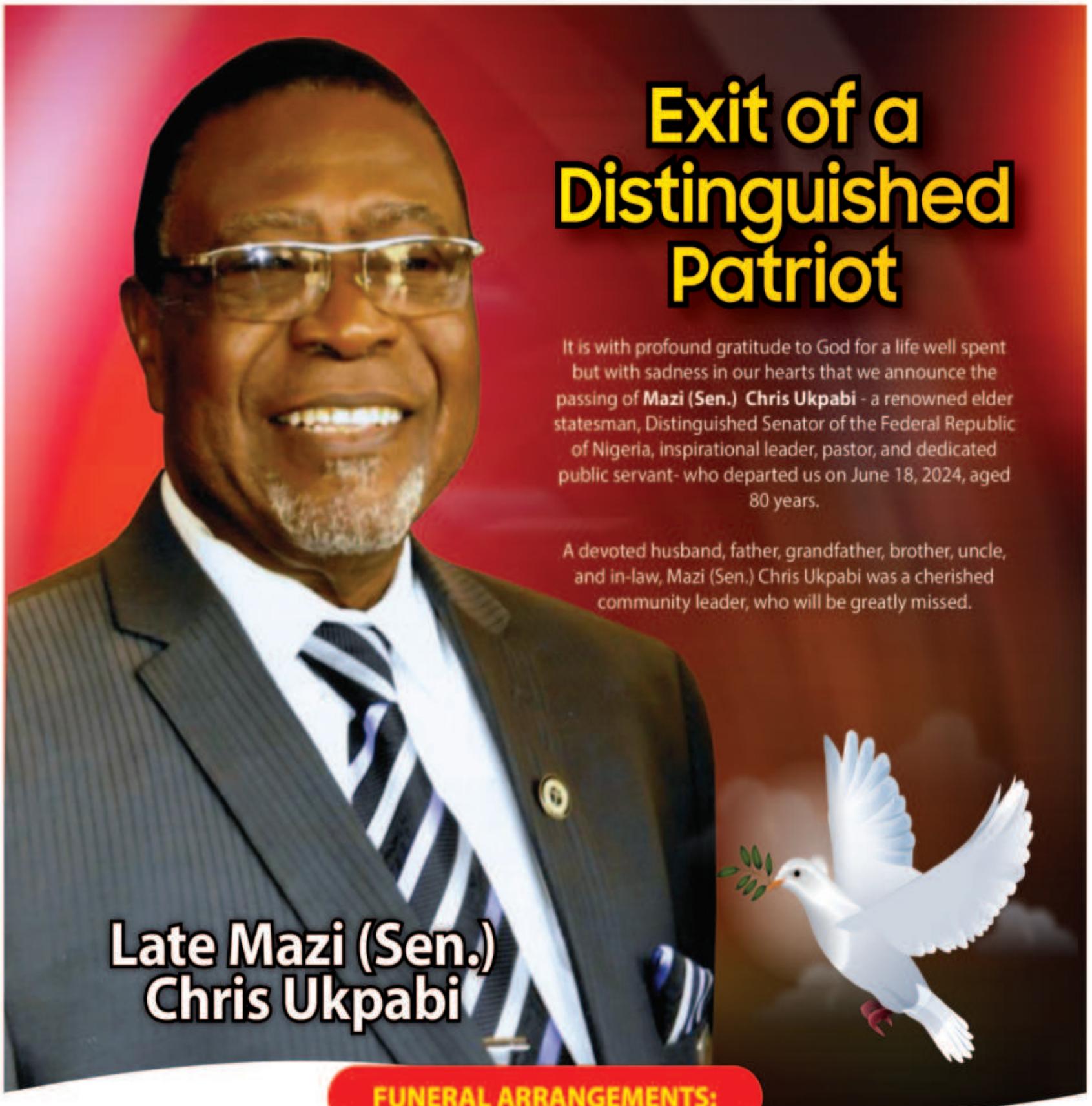
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<p>NWADIUTO: I formerly known as MISS NWADIUTO CHIDIMMA OBIANUJU, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS ANAKUDO CHIDIMMA NWADIUTO. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>ANADUMAKA: I formerly known as ANADUMAKA EKWUSIGO ANTHONY, now wish to be known and addressed as OKEKE EKWUSIGO ANTHONY. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>NWAIKE: I, formerly known as NWAIKE JOHN CHUKWUDI, now wish to be known and addressed as NWAIKE JOHN CHUKWUDI. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>
<p>ZAMANATU: I, formerly known and addressed as ZAMANATU BELLO, now wish to be known and addressed as AISHA BELLO. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>This is to notify the general public that KRISAGBEDO CELINA EBERE and KRISAGBEDO EBERE CELINA are one and the same person, who now wishes to be known and addressed as KRISAGBEDO CELINA EBERE. All former documents remain valid. UNN, NYSC and the general public please take note.</p>	<p>NWANKWO: I, formerly known as MISS NWANKWO BLESSING CHIOMA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS BLESSING CHIOMA CHIEMERIE. All former documents remain valid. The general public please take note.</p>
<p>ONYEKA: I, formerly known as ONYEKA CHITO LOTANNA, now wish to be known and addressed as ONYEKA-CHUKWUNWIKI CHITO LOTANNA. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.</p>	<p>ADEGBOYE: I, formerly known as ADEGBOYE MOTOLANI FELICIA, now wish to be known and addressed as ESEYIN MOTOLANI FELICIA ADEGBOYE. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>	<p>FRIDAY: I, formerly known as FRIDAY NDOLO SAMUEL OBINNA, now wish to be known and addressed as NDOLO FRIDAY SAMUEL. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>
<p>FRIDAY: I, formerly known as FRIDAY OBENDJI MOSES IKENNA, now wish to be known and addressed as OBENDJI FRIDAY MOISE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>DAUDA: I, formerly known as DAUDA SALAU, now wish to be known and addressed as DAUDA ODETOYE ADENIRAN. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>EBINIMI: I, formerly known as NICKSON-BOMS EBINIMI, now wish to be known and addressed as NICKSON-BOMS MOLLIE EBINIMI. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>
<p>DIROKWENI: I, formerly known as EDNA DIROKWENI, now wish to be known and addressed as ASELEMI EDNA ATUNIMA. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>HALILU: I, formerly known as HALILU MUSA, now wish to be known and addressed as HALILU MUSA GARBA. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>NWAOGBE: I, formerly known as MISS NWAOGBE JANE CHINONYEREM, now wish to be known and addressed as OKPOM JANE CHINONYEREM. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>
<p>UDOKA: I, formerly known as UZOMA BRIDGET UDOKA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS UZOMA BRIDGET. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>VINCENT: I, formerly known as CHIOMA LYNDA VINCENT, now wish to be known and addressed as CHIOMA LYNDA ARIGUZO. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>SYLVANUS: I, formerly known as MR SYLVANUS CHINEDU BLESSING, now wish to be known and addressed as MR NWANKWO CHINEDU SYLVANUS. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>
<p>NWAFOR: I, formerly known as NWAFOR CHIKE, now wish to be known and addressed as UHAKANDU-NWAFOR MAXIMUS CHIKE. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>IBRAHIM: I, formerly known as IBRAHIM MARTHA, now wish to be known and addressed as AKPAN JANET MARTHA. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>OKEKE: I, formerly known as OKEKE STEPHEN CHUKWUEBUKA, now wish to be known and addressed as ANASONWU STEPHEN CHUKWUEBUKA. All former documents remain valid Banks the general public please take note.</p>
<p>Oladimeji Ayomide Sofiat declared that my date of birth was wrongly captured in my WAEC certificate as 14/03/2001. That my correct date of birth is 13/03/2001. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>	<p>OZOFOR: I, formerly known as MISS OZOFOR CHIMDINDU MARY, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS AMALU CHIMDINDU MARY. All former documents remain valid. General public please take note.</p>	<p>This is to confirm that CHUKWUDI BEATRICE CHINEDU, and CHUKWUDI BEATRICE UKAMAKA popularly known as 'AMAKA' refer to one and the same person, now wish to be known and addressed as CHUKWUDI BEATRICE AMAKA. All former documents remain valid. Enugu state government, banks and general public please take note.</p>
<p>OKOYE: I, formerly known as OKOYE OBY HELEN as written in my BVN, now wish to be known and addressed as ATUANYA OBY HELEN as in my NIN. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>	<p>IGNATIUS: I, formerly known as MISS IGNATIUS SALVATION, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS IGNATIUS SALVATION UGOCHUKWU. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.</p>	<p>EKWERIKE: I, formerly known as EKWERIKE OGECHI ULOMA, now wish to be known and addressed as EKWERIKE OGECHI SYLVIA. All former documents remain valid. Banks and the general public should please take note.</p>
<p>CHILAKA: I, formerly known as CHILAKA CHINYERE, now wish to be known and addressed as OKAFOR CHINYERE SCHOLAR. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.</p>	<p>NWOKORIE: I, formerly known as MISS NWOKORIE NGOZI, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS OGBONNA NGOZI RUTH. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.</p>	<p>UCHECHUKWU: I, formerly known as MISS UCHECHUKWU AUGUSTA ULOMA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS AJAH AUGUSTA ULOMA. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.</p>
<p>This is to certify that my correct name is OFORMA TOCHUKWU GODWIN and not OFORMA TOCHUKWU. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as OFORMA TOCHUKWU GODWIN. Also, my correct date of birth is 08/02/1985 and not 27/03/1985. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.</p>	<p>MBAH: I, formerly known as MISS MDAH OLUCHI GOODLUCK, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS FRANCIS OLUCHI GOODLUCK. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note.</p>	<p>NWAMADI: I, formerly known as MISS NWAMADI NZUBECHI, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS ONYEACHILAM NZUBECHI. All former documents remain valid. The general public should please take note</p>
<p>IRUOMA: I, formerly known as MISS IRUOMA IJEOMA EZEUGO, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS IRUOMA PETER EZE. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>	<p>NNAYELUGO: I, formerly known as NNAYELUGO IFEYINWA CECELIA, now wish to be known and address as OKAFOR IFEYINWA CECELIA. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>	<p>This is to certify that Kehinde Falolu Ogundayomi and Kehinde Ogundayomi Falolu are my names, but henceforth, I want to be known and addressed as KEHINDE OGUNDAYOMI FALOLU. All former documents remain valid. General public should please take note.</p>



Exit of a Distinguished Patriot

It is with profound gratitude to God for a life well spent but with sadness in our hearts that we announce the passing of **Mazi (Sen.) Chris Ukpabi** - a renowned elder statesman, Distinguished Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, inspirational leader, pastor, and dedicated public servant- who departed us on June 18, 2024, aged 80 years.

A devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and in-law, Mazi (Sen.) Chris Ukpabi was a cherished community leader, who will be greatly missed.

**Late Mazi (Sen.)
Chris Ukpabi**

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS:

April 20, 2025:

Body arrives in Arochukwu, Abia State.

Lying in state/Wake

Venue: Mazi (Sen.) Chris Ukpabi's country home, Atani Village, Arochukwu.

April 21, 2025:

Funeral Service at the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Ugwu Avor Village, Arochukwu.

Time: 11:00 AM

Interment follows immediately after service, at his country home, Atani Village, Arochukwu.

Reception is also at his country home, Atani Village, Arochukwu, Abia State.

May his generous soul rest in peace; Amen!

Signed:

Engr. Dr. Ukpabi Ukpabi,
For the family.



THE UMUNRI CLAN
ENUGWU-UKWU TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY
(CABINET AND IGWE-IN-COUNCIL)

Obu Umunri, Awka-Onitsha Old Rd, Enugwu-Ukwu, Njikoka LGA, Anambra State
Tel: 08033125705; 08035004064



Our Ref:..... Your ref:..... Date: 26th March, 2025.....

**ENUGWU-UKWU TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY AND ENUGWU-UKWU
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UNION (ECDU)**

Address: Obu-Umunri/Civic Centre, Old Awka-Onitsha Road, Enugwu-ukwu
Njikoka L.G.A Anambra State

**PUBLIC NOTICE
DISSOCIATION AND DISCLAIMER**

The attention of the general public is drawn to the negative propaganda, clandestine activities and spurious claims made by one Mr. Chukwudinigbo Agwuna alias "NKPUME AZAOKU"

We, the undersigned members of Enugwu-ukwu and representing the Traditional Authority (Comprising, the Traditional Cabinet, Traditional Council, Ozo Odu-Eze, Iyom Society on one side, Enugwu- Community Development Union, Central Executive, Branches all over Nigeria and the diaspora) on the other side charged with managing the affairs of Enugwu-Ukwu and the Diaspora write to state as follows:

1. We dissociate ourselves from the actions, utterances and activities of one Mr. Chukwudinigbo Agwuna and his cronies.
2. These his negative actions have put the image of Enugwu-ukwu in bad light and public opprobrium. His conduct which have continued to tarnish the reputation of Enugwu-ukwu and create unwarranted antagonism towards its people, does not reflect the collective position or interest of the people. To this end, it behoves on us also as representatives of the Elders, Women, Youths to protect our age-long history and stand against all forms of perversions against our culture and tradition.
3. This has become expedient in order to clear the negative narrative of our history, put by some tale bearers and busy bodies whose stock in trade is to deceive and bamboozle unsuspecting members of the public into believing that there are issues in Enugwu-ukwu.

Following from the above, it is pertinent to point out the following facts:

1. This Chukwudinigbo Agwuna filed a case in Anambra State High Court against the election of Eze Enugwu-Ukwu na Igwe Umunri and the court dismissed his case with costs.
2. Eze Enugwu-ukwu and Igwe Umunri is duly recognized by Anambra State Government vide certificate issued in 2020 as the duly elected Igwe in Enugwu-ukwu. He performs the annual Igu-Aro (Ofala) Ceremony which is his sole responsibility as provided and enacted by Anambra State Traditional Rulers Law. The Eze Enugwu-ukwu and Igwe Umunri also performs the annual Ikpo-ji ceremony (involving sending-off old yam and introducing the new yam tubers into the Traditional Nkwo market). This same Chukwudinigbo Agwuna always interferes with these ceremonies in cohort with some miscreants posing as Eze Enugwu-ukwu na Igwe Umunri. This is absurd.

Sequel to the foregoing, we therefore make bold:

1. To Affirm that our Community enjoys a profound and cordial working relationship with our Traditional Ruler, Igwe Sir Ralph Obumnemeh Ekpeh, with other Communities, and Anambra State Government under the able Leadership of Prof. Chukwuma Soludo, CFR as the Executive Governor.
2. To Debunk the smear campaigns, unfounded allegations, and callous claims of being the Eze Enugwu-ukwu and Igwe Umunri as always exhibited by Mr. Chukwudinigbo Agwuna; added to the bombastic title of "His Serene Highness" and other irrelevant appellations should be disregarded by the general public especially his yearly repetition of performing a phantom "Final Burial Rites" of our previous Traditional Ruler whose final burial has since been performed and a new Igwe elected in the person of Igwe Sir Raph Obumnemeh Ekpeh by the people of Enugwu-ukwu and recognized by the Government of Anambra state.
3. To also urge the **General Public** to disregard statements, publications and actions emanating from the said Mr. Chukwudinigbo Agwuna and his cohorts as representing the Traditional stool of Enugwu-ukwu or any other activities which are not in consonance with our Tradition and Culture.



"ears that do not listen to advice, accompany the head when it is chopped off" also, "the very thing that killed a mother rat is always there to make sure that its young ones never open their eyes. The General Public to take note!

Dated: March 26th, 2025.

Signed:

Ozonkpu Chief Denis Anekwe
Traditional Prime Minister
And President Ozo Enugwu-ukwu
Na Umunri People Association

Chief Nze Patrick Nworji
President General, Enugwu-ukwu
Community Development Union

Ozonkpu Chief Sir Clem Nwafor
Deputy Traditional Prime Minister

Ozonkpu Chief Frank Nwokike
Cabinet Secretary

Ozonkpu Chief Sir Jude Ekwunife
Secretary, Ozo Enugwu-ukwu
Na Umunri People Association

Ozonkpu Chief Sir Philip Nworji
Chairman, Traditional Council

Nze Benjamin Okoye
Chairman, Nze Enugwu-ukwu

The future of Africa's youth

Guest columnist
Kingsley Moghalu



In 1800, the world had 1 billion people. Today we have 8.2 billion people on the planet. Although that population is still growing, the rate at which it is happening is decreasing. We will have a population of 10 billion by 2050. The slower population growth rate is because women are having fewer children, and more people are living longer.

But Africa's population is growing faster than other regions, while Europe is experiencing a declining population. Africa, with a continental population of 1.5 billion people today, is projected to achieve population growth in leaps and bounds over the rest of this century: our continent will have 2.7 billion by 2050 which will be one quarter of the world's projected population 25 years from now. By 2070, Africa's population will have doubled to 3.2 billion. Of the eight countries that, together, will make up half of global population growth by 2050, five are African – Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Egypt. At current trends, Africa as a continent will likely be 40% of the world's total population by 2100 according to population experts.

Welcome to a scenario in which the world's future is increasingly African, demographically speaking. Why is this happening? Because fertility rates remain high in our continent, combined with decreasing mortality rates. This trend has created an extremely young continent in terms of population, one in which 70% of Africans are under the age of 30.

This background brings us to the theme of Harvard University's African Development Conference – the future of Africa's youth. If the future will be increasingly "African" with one-third of the world's working age population being African, will Africans automatically prosper because they have multiplied on the earth? Will Africa's population boom be an asset or a liability? Will the 21st century be the African century?

Some have argued that it will be, and, that this population explosion – the population momentum -- means Africa is The Next Big Thing. There is a certain level of political correctness that is inherent in optimism. No one wants to be a party-pooper. And yet



... We must think this through, even though tomorrow is full of unknowns. On the one hand, Thomas Robert Malthus', theory, set out in his famous but anonymously published essay in 1798 titled "An Essay on the Principle of Population" in which he argued that population growth will be restrained by famine and disease because, he argues, population increases geometrically while food production could only grow arithmetically, was proved wrong. The world's population has increased by nearly 1000% since 1800, and the world has not run out of food because science and technology have transformed agricultural productivity in advanced industrial countries.

On the other hand, we should be wary of conventional wisdom about Africa's population boom such as theories of The Next Big Thing. The question is not so much about the world becoming numerically more African. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), for example, has gone as far as to posit that Africa's demographic transformation could alter the world order. The question is not Africa's population numbers. The real question is about how prosperous or poor the billions of the new African entrants to planet earth will be. As Ashley Ann put it in her cautionary Foreign Policy magazine essay in August 2023 titled "Demography is Destiny in Africa", "rapid population growth is about to hit countries whose economies and elements are least

Evidence abounds that projections of Africa's imminent transformation have often been exaggerated. The post-independence euphoria about our continent's prospects after colonial rule ended in the 1960s have not been born out, while Asia, most of which also experienced colonial rule, has made remarkable progress in human development and industrialization. In the 2000s, the "Africa

equipped to handle it."

Evidence abounds that projections of Africa's imminent transformation have often been exaggerated. The post-independence euphoria about our continent's prospects after colonial rule ended in the 1960s have not been born out, while Asia, most of which also experienced colonial rule, has made remarkable progress in human development and industrialization. In the 2000s, the "Africa Rising" euphoria hit the airwaves. While the continent witnessed some economic progress, it certainly did not rise, and has not risen, because the structure of the continent's economies has barely changed from reliance on raw commodities in its international trade and revenue profile, and most African countries continue to suffer from a marked deficit in leadership and governance.

Implications of Africa's population boom

Africa's demographic trends should be understood in a clear-eyed manner to assess accurately whether it will be an asset or a liability. First, as we all know, it has resulted in a massively

young population. But will this young population have the skills, jobs, and productivity that can secure the future? Without this, the phenomenon will ultimately prove a liability – a youth bulge that will foster challenges of unrest and security. Even discounting the entrepreneurial inclinations of Africa's youth and the changing nature of work and opportunities fostered by technology including social media, the reality is that the economies of African countries are not creating jobs for young Africans at the rates that are necessary.

Second, a massive wave of urbanization is afoot. This has implications such as the adequacy of urban infrastructure, social services, and other aspects of municipal governance.

Third, Africa's young population is putting its stamp on the world in the areas of music and the arts. Afrobeats is taking over the world. But how many jobs do musical superstars create? We should not be misled by cliches and feel-good stories and statistics.

Fourth, the young generation of Africans is more self-assured than their forebears, and they are more entrepreneurial. This means that African agency, a missing factor in the continent's development trajectory, is on the rise.

Fifth, the younger the African population gets, the more likely that the texture of politics and democracy could change for the better in the years ahead. The youth, especially if well educated, will likely be impatient and demand more from aspiring political leaders in the continent. We have seen this trend in countries such as Kenya and Senegal in recent months.

Sixth, a population boom has implications for climate change in African countries. There will be increased demand for resources, including fossil fuels that drive higher greenhouse gas emissions

Seventh, the booming youth population has triggered more and more innovation and is responsible for the rise of the Fintech industry in the con-

• Continued on www.thesun.ng

• Prof Moghalu, President, African School of Governance, delivered this Keynote address at the Harvard University's African Development Conference 2025