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Information Minister Asks States Not To Downgrade Or Scrap Ministries Of Information

Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, has appealed to some state governments considering the dissolution or downgrading of their Ministries of Information to reconsider the decision, stressing that the ministries are not just

administrative bodies but key drivers of public engagement, national orientation, and societal cohesion.

Idris stated this in Kaduna on Friday in his address at the 48th National Council of Information and National Orientation with the theme "Enhancing Pub-

lic Information Management for Inclusive Governance: The Renewed Hope Agenda in Focus." "At this juncture, I would want to make a passionate appeal to some of our state governments, especially on the status and operations of State Ministries of Information.

"And my plea, for

emphasis, goes like this: that, in the ever-broadening parameters of governance, the role of Ministries of Information at both the national and state levels cannot be overstated. These Ministries serve as the bridge between government policies and the citizens they are designed to benefit,

thereby fostering transparency, accountability, and trust, which are essential pillars of any thriving democracy.

"The Ministry of Information plays a critical role in public sensitization. Through this institution, and the platforms associated with it, governments

are able to educate citizens on policies, programmes, and initiatives. They also serve as vital platforms for addressing misinformation, which, if left unchecked, can erode public trust and undermine collective progress. In an era where information is both a tool and a

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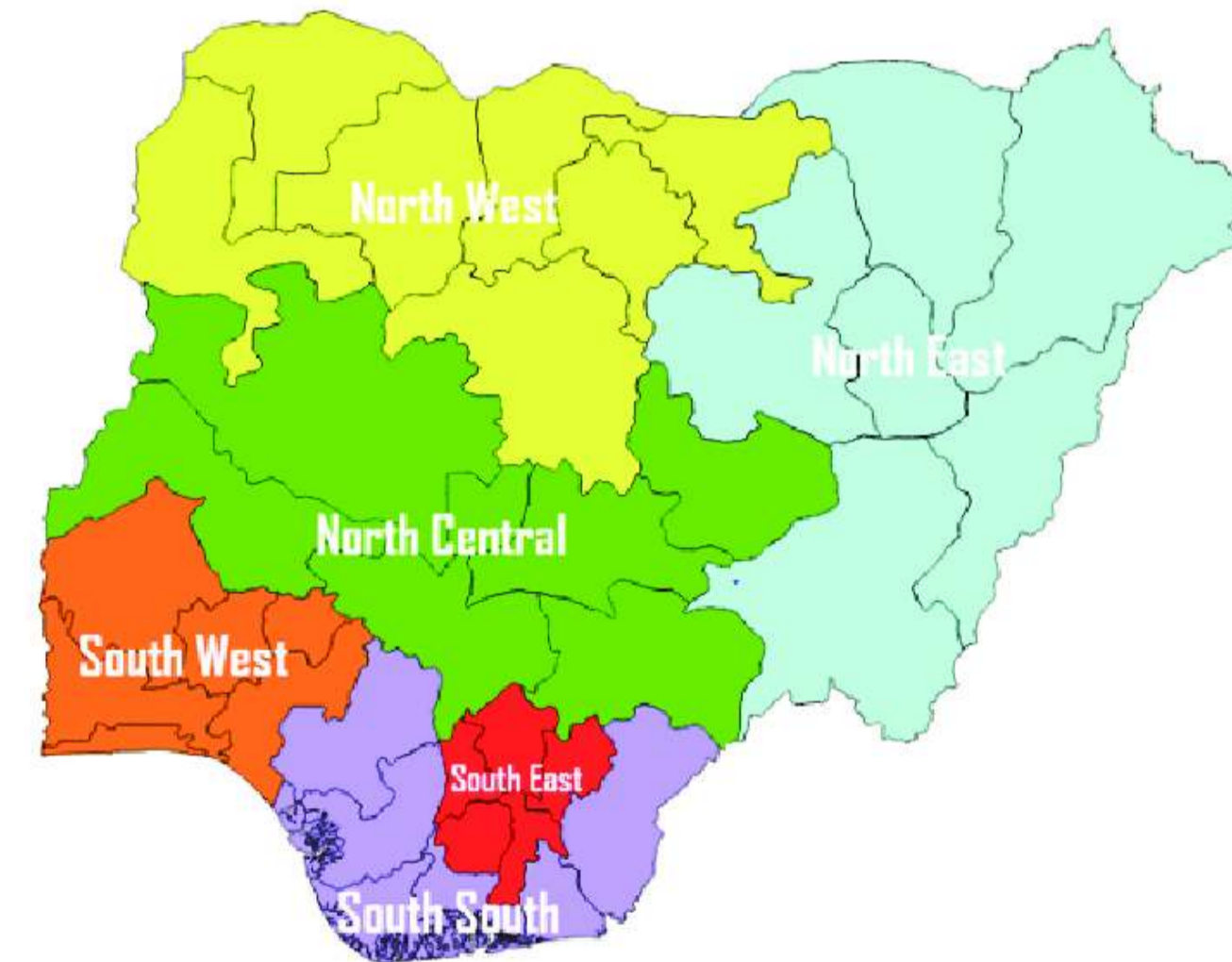
Who Holds the Power? Nigeria's Shifting Political Alliances

By Godwin Anyebe & OnehiPaul

As Nigeria's political stage heats up, the nation is witnessing a wave of shifting alliances that could redefine its power dynamics. In a landscape where loyalty often bows to opportunity, political heavyweights and rising stars alike are recalibrating their positions ahead of pivotal elections. The question dominating conversations across the country is clear: who truly holds the power?

Recent defections, coalition talks, and behind-the-scenes negotiations suggest that Nigeria's political structure is in flux. Legislators from both the ruling and opposition camps have been crossing party lines, spurred by discontent, strategic positioning, or the search for greener pastures. For many, these movements are less about ideology and more about political survival in an unpredictable environment.

At the heart of this shifting landscape is the ruling party, which faces growing internal rifts. High-profile disagreements over key policies such as subsidy removal, rising inflation, and the ongoing fuel crisis have exposed cracks in the party's unity. While it con-



tinues to maintain a legislative majority, murmurs of discontent from party faithful and regional leaders hint at potential fractures that could impact its future.

Meanwhile, the opposition appears emboldened

by public frustration with the current administration. However, unity remains a challenge. Efforts to forge a mega-coalition are underway, but deep-seated rivalries and competing ambitions have slowed progress.

"The opposition has an opportunity to seize power, but only if it can present a united front," said political analyst Dr. Aisha Garba. "Right now, they are still working out the terms of their marriage of convenience."

Regional dynamics further complicate the picture. In the south, governors and political leaders are consolidating their influence, aiming to challenge northern dominance in national poli-

tics. In the north, traditional rulers and political stalwarts are leveraging their cultural and religious authority to maintain their hold on power. These regional power plays highlight Nigeria's enduring struggle to balance national unity with diverse local interests.

Amid these shifts, the electorate is growing restless. Many Nigerians view the ongoing realignments as a distraction from urgent national issues, including insecurity, unemployment, and worsening economic conditions. "The politicians are busy playing games while ordinary people are suffering," lamented a civil servant in Kaduna. "We need leaders who care about the people, not just their next election," said Abubakar Musa.

As the 2027 elections draw closer, the stakes are higher than ever. Both the ruling party and the opposition understand that their future hinges on these shifting alliances. The question remains: will these political maneuvers lead to meaningful change, or will they perpetuate the cycle of self-interest that has defined Nigerian politics for decades?

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Who Holds the Power? Nigeria's Shifting Political Alliances

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For now, the chessboard is set, and the players are making their moves. Nigerians can only watch and hope that the eventual victors will wield their power in service of the nation, not just themselves.

Speaking on this development, a Political Analyst, John Atabo said; "with the 2027 general elections on the horizon, the question of who holds the power has never been more pertinent. In my analysis, what we are witnessing is not merely a series of defections, but a fundamental recalibration of Nigeria's political dynamics, where the lines between the ruling party, opposition, and regional interests are becoming increasingly blurred."

According to him, "most striking feature of Nigeria's political realignment is the intensifying fragmentation within the ruling party. Despite its hold on power, the ruling party faces a growing number of internal divisions, largely driven by dissatisfaction with the administration's handling of critical issues such as fuel subsidy removal, the state of the economy, and rising insecurity. These fractures are not just about policy disagreements; they reflect deeper tensions over the distribution of power, resources, and influence within the party itself. As the leadership struggles to maintain a united front, defections from within the party are inevitable. Several key figures, sensing the shifting winds, have begun to reposition themselves for the upcoming electoral cycle, either by distancing themselves from the administration or seeking new alliances with other political forces."

However, he continued, "the opposition, while opportunistic, faces its own set of challenges. Despite the growing discontent with the current government, the opposition has failed to present a cohesive and unified alternative. Instead, we see political fragmentation with competing factions vying for dominance. The recent efforts to form coalitions, aimed at challenging the ruling party in 2027, have been hampered by personal rivalries, divergent regional interests, and ideological differences. Unlike in past elections, where opposition parties were merely reactive, the current environment demands that they evolve into a credible, unified force capable of offering a clear policy agenda to the Nigerian electorate. Without that cohesion, the opposition risks being nothing more than a collection of

disgruntled voices rather than a genuine challenger for power."

"The regional dynamics also cannot be ignored. In Nigeria, political power is often tied to geographical influence, and the shifting alliances we are witnessing are a reflection of this reality. Southern leaders, frustrated by the perceived marginalization of their region, are consolidating power to assert their political relevance, particularly with the 2027 elections in mind. Similarly, northern power brokers are holding firm, leveraging their entrenched influence in the nation's political and economic sectors. These regional power plays are shaping alliances and reshaping party affiliations in ways that are not easily predictable. As such, the role of traditional rulers, governors, and ethnic groups cannot be downplayed in the determination of who will ultimately hold the power." He noted.

He pointed out that "to the average Nigerian, these shifting alliances raise legitimate concerns. There is growing frustration over the self-serving nature of political elites, with many feeling disconnected from the real issues affecting the country, such as insecurity, unemployment, and inflation."

He noted that "to the average Nigerian, these shifting alliances raise legitimate concerns. There is growing frustration over the self-serving nature of political elites, with many feeling disconnected from the real issues affecting the country, such as insecurity, unemployment, and inflation."

Speaking on the theme of the Council, the Minister said the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Tinubu, is a clarion call for transformational leadership at all levels and people-oriented governance, which is firmly anchored on the time-honoured principle that governance must be inclusive, transparent, and centered on improving the lives of Nigerians.

Idris said the essence of governance lies in its ability to connect, communicate, and inspire collective action, hence information management is not merely a tool of administration but the lifeblood of democracy and development.

He said with a multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages, and religions in Nigeria, ensuring that every citizen feels heard, informed, and included in the governance process, requires deliberate efforts, especially by Information Managers.

The Minister advised that to foster inclusion in policy formulation, informa-

The political class, preoccupied with maneuvering for power, appears to have lost sight of the urgent need for governance that addresses the needs of the people. The electorate is increasingly cynical, yet hopeful that the right coalition of political forces will emerge to bring about meaningful change."

Also Speaking on this issue, a Public Affairs Commentator, Abubakar Musa disclosed that, "in Nigeria's ever-evolving political landscape, the question of who holds the power has become more fluid than ever before. As the country navigates a complex web of shifting alliances, defections, and recalibrations, it is clear that political power in Nigeria is no longer concentrated in the hands of a single party or a few power brokers. Instead, it is a dynamic and fragmented force, where allegiances are constantly being tested, and the true seat of power is anything but certain."

According to him, "at the heart of the current political shifts is the ruling party, which, despite holding the reins of governance, is increasingly experiencing fractures within its ranks. The discontent that has been brewing over the administration's handling of critical issues such as economic hardship, fuel scar-

city, and the rising insecurity has now manifested in defections from key party members. What we are witnessing is not just a typical case of political opportunism but an indication of a deeper dissatisfaction with the direction the party is headed. These defections, although framed as strategic moves, are a reflection of the growing disillusionment within the ruling party, especially as it becomes clear that the unity that once held it together is rapidly eroding."

"This internal crisis is significant because it exposes a critical weakness in the current government: the inability to consolidate its support base amid a challenging national landscape. It's not just about public criticism; it's about how political loyalty, once thought to be unshakeable, is now malleable as individual interests take precedence over party loyalty. The ruling party's inability to bridge these internal divides means that the power dynamics within the party are shifting, with factions seeking to assert themselves as the true standard-bearers of the administration's legacy." He said.

Continuing, he stated that, "in the other side of the political spectrum, the opposition is eagerly eyeing these

cracks in the ruling party's structure. However, they too face significant challenges. While the opposition is united in its critique of the ruling party, it remains deeply divided internally, with various factions jockeying for dominance. Efforts to build a formidable coalition have been repeatedly stymied by infighting and disagreements over leadership and policy direction. As much as the opposition sees an opportunity to capitalize on the ruling party's internal turmoil, it must first address its own fragmentation. The question, therefore, is not just whether the opposition can unite against a weakened ruling party, but whether it can offer a cohesive and appealing vision for the future of Nigeria."

Also, he disclosed that, beyond party politics, regional dynamics are also playing a pivotal role in Nigeria's shifting alliances. In a country as diverse as Nigeria, regional interests often influence national politics in ways that cannot be ignored. We are seeing southern leaders rallying around the need for greater regional autonomy and economic opportunity, while northern political heavyweights continue to exercise their historical influence

over key sectors of power. These regional interests complicate the already fractured political atmosphere, as leaders strive to ensure their regions are not left out of the decision-making process."

"The growing emphasis on regional power underscores the need for a more inclusive political process that reflects the diverse aspirations of Nigeria's many ethnic and cultural groups. Without this inclusivity, the shifting alliances and power struggles we are witnessing may deepen existing divides, making national cohesion more difficult to achieve." He added.

For the Nigerian electorate, these shifting alliances are both confusing and frustrating. Many Nigerians are left questioning whether their leaders are genuinely concerned with the welfare of the people, or simply engaged in a game of political maneuvering. The increasing sense of disillusionment among the populace cannot be ignored. Voters are weary of a political class that seems more interested in maintaining power than addressing the pressing issues of the day—economic hardship, unemployment, and security challenges.

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weapon, having a dedicated body to manage its dissemination is indispensable," he said.

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He said with a multiplicity of ethnic groups, languages, and religions in Nigeria, ensuring that every citizen feels heard, informed, and included in the governance process, requires deliberate efforts, especially by Information Managers.

The Minister advised that to foster inclusion in policy formulation, informa-



tion managers should leverage technology to enhance the speed, accuracy, and reach of their messaging while also integrating artificial intelligence for better audience engagement and feedback analysis.

He equally said gendering Public Debate for policy refinement and alignment with public aspirations is a necessary component of promoting public participation in the decision-making process. "In every democracy, the strength of governance is deeply rooted in its ability to reflect the will and aspirations of the people. Public policies, while crafted with the best intentions, must

continuously evolve to meet the dynamic needs and expectations of the citizens they serve. It is within this context that public debate plays a pivotal role."

"For instance, you are all aware that we are currently witnessing robust debates on the Tax Reforms proposed by President Tinubu. Such debates are necessary in policy formulation and implementation in order to foster a transparent exchange of ideas, where citizens, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders can voice their opinions, and provide constructive feedback on the reform proposal of the President," he said.

The Minister added that countering Misinformation and Fake News remains critical in information management, emphasizing that fake news poses a significant threat to governance and public trust.

He called for the provision of the necessary skills for information officers to employ fact-checking mechanisms, as well as seek collaboration with media organizations, and enhance public awareness campaigns to combat misinformation.

In addition to that, he said, President Tinubu recently approved the release of funds for the immediate operationalization of the

UNESCO Category-2 Media and Information Literacy (MIL) Institute, the first of its kind in the world, and embedded in the precincts of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) in Abuja, to equip people with the tools to discern between credible sources and misinformation. "In an era where fake news, propaganda, and biased reporting can significantly influence public opinion and decision-making, media literacy fosters critical thinking. It helps individuals analyze the intent behind media messages, understand the context in which they are presented, and assess their accuracy and relevance."

"I will therefore urge the Commissioners for Information to take advantage of this very important Institute once it takes off, in order to further build the capacity of our staff in combating the menace of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation," he said.

The 48th National Council of Information and National Orientation was declared open by the Kaduna State Governor, Senator Uba Sani



From left: Adetola Odusote, Partner CMC Connect LLP; Mrs Comfort Nwankwo, Chairman Lagos NIPR; Ms Clara Okoro, Chairman BJAN; Damola Salvador, CEO, Digisplash; Victoria Uwadoka, Corporate Communications & Public Affairs Manager, Nestle Nigeria and Akonte Ekine, CEO Absolute PR. During the Brand Journalists Association of Nigeria (BJAN) 12th Annual Brands & Marketing Conference Theme: Rebuilding Consumer Confidence addressing Policy Impact & Market Realities in Lagos.

2027: Nigerians Will Vote Tinubu For Second Term – Presidency

The presidency has put to rest the speculations regarding President Bola Tinubu running for re-election in 2027.

Addressing the speculations recently, Tinubu's Special Adviser Public Communication and Media, Daniel Bwala told journalists at the headquarters of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Abuja that the president

"will run his course as provided by the constitution".

According to Bwala, President Tinubu will not only contest but win the 2027 presidential election.

He claimed that Tinubu's performance will "naturally endear Nigerians to vote him for the second term", stressing that the president "is more than eminently qualified constitu-

tionally to contest for a second term in office".

He, however, said that President Tinubu is currently focused on "issues that border on the Nigerian people, to make sure that people come out of hunger, to make sure that agriculture brings about the expected revolution, to make sure that our people are able to deal with their

everyday problems.

"So, the time for politicking is not yet and when that time comes we are going to be ready for everyone.

"And God willing, if God gives Mr. President life and health, we do hope that Mr. The President will run his course as provided by the constitution".

Why Tinubu Made Wike Minister -Akpabio

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio on Friday gave an insight into why former Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Wike, was nominated into the Federal Executive Council (FEC) by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Speaking at a book launch to mark the 57th birthday celebration of the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in Port Harcourt, Senator Akpabio described the celebrant as a workaholic public officer and someone who gives his best at any office he found himself saying, "let me tell you why you were nominated into the FEC by President Tinubu despite being an opposition politician. Your performance, as a local government chairman, Chief of Staff to the Rivers State Government, Minister and two-term governor gave you the job.

"You have made us proud as the FCT minister. You have turned Abuja into a model city befitting the capital of a country. You are a very committed public officer who is has no room for excuses on any given task. In less than two years, you have turned Abuja into a huge construction site", Akpabio noted.

Speaking further, Senator Akpabio said, "today we gather to celebrate not just

the years in your life, but the life in your years. We have come to honor not just the duration of your life but the donation of your life and the countless ways you've enriched the lives of the people around you.

"Born in the tumultuous year of 1967, when the fabric of our nation was being tested in the fires of conflict, you emerged, my dear Wike, not in the safety of calm waters but amid the storm itself. You might have chosen to arrive in more tranquil times, but instead, you bravely came forth into the fray. It is perhaps this very fortitude that has shaped your character, allowing you to rise like an eagle, soaring high above the tempests that beset us.

"As a two-term governor, you have been a leader of the people, a visionary who acts with purpose, and a friend whose care for others knows no bounds. Your dedication to uplifting communities, as a Governor and now as an Honourable Minister, has left an indelible mark upon our nation's history. The bridges you have constructed—both of steel and of spirit—stand as testaments to your commitment to progress and unity. I recognized the fire within you long before you stepped into the public arena; you were, indeed, a secret waiting to

be unveiled for the nation to behold.

"Your contributions to the political landscape of Nigeria, particularly during your governorship, shine like a beacon of hope. Your charismatic leadership and staunch advocacy for the rights of your constituents have focused on the pillars of infrastructure, education, and healthcare.

"Your passion for sports, particularly football, and your commitment to nurturing the talents of our youth reflect your unwavering belief in the potential of the next generation. You have earned a reputation as a leader of uncompromising integrity, speaking truth in every circumstance even when the winds of injustice howl around you like a tempest," he declared.

Akpabio thanked the wife, children and family members of the celebrant, who have stood by him



Wike

LASHMA Rewards Excellence In Healthcare, Honours Stakeholders

In commemoration of the 2024 Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day, the Lagos State Health Management Agency (LASHMA) hosted a Stakeholders' Appreciation and Recognition Award Ceremony at Providence Hotel, GRA, Ikeja. The event brought together policymakers, healthcare providers, organizations, pharmaceutical service providers, the media, and other key players to celebrate their contributions toward equitable and quality healthcare under the ILERA EKO Social Health Insurance Scheme.

Speaking at the event, the Permanent Secretary of LASHMA, Dr. Emmanuella Zamba, emphasised the importance of collaboration in achieving UHC. She lauded the theme, "Health: It's on the (House) Government", as a reflection of government leadership in ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare.

Dr. Zamba attributed LASHMA's success to the unwavering commitment of stakeholders. "Your innovative approaches, dedication, and tireless advocacy are the backbone of our achievements. Today, we celebrate not just the milestones but the extraordinary individuals and organizations that made them possible. Together, you exemplify a partnership that inspires countless souls, proving that love and unity can elevate a leader's impact to unparalleled heights.

Now, let us take a moment to appreciate your infectious spirit, which has the power to lighten the gravest of discussions with your wit and charm. You remind us that politics is not merely a realm of policies and procedures; it is, at its core, about people—about laughter, camaraderie, and the shared joy of our communities.

He prayed for Wike on his 57th birthday, saying, "may this birthday bring you as much joy as you have bestowed upon others, and may you embrace even more adventures, more successes, and an ever-increasing momentum in your noble service to our beloved fatherland. Here's to another year of making a difference, inspiring change, and, of course, sharing that signature smile that warms our hearts!"

the award recipients for their dedication to improving health outcomes in the state.

Senior Health Specialist with USAID-LHSS, Dr. Chidumga Ohazurike, applauded LASHMA's progress and recognized the vital role of healthcare providers. "Your dedication proves profit isn't the sole goal; it's about improving health indices in Lagos," Dr. Ohazurike noted, calling for sustained collaboration.

In the health management category, Phillips HMO Limited emerged as the Best Performing Third-Party Administrator, and Nectarite Pharmacy, Alimosho, was named the Best Performing Community Pharmacy. HCI Healthcare Limited received the Excellence in Compliance with Quarterly Returns award for consistent regulatory adherence.

Recognising excellence in media, the Lagos State Government was awarded Best Online Media Reporter for promoting ILERA EKO initiatives, while Angela Onwuzoo won Best Print Journalist for her impactful stories on health awareness. TV journalist Titilayo Aberoowo and radio host Adeolu Okunade (Mr. Pilot) were honoured for their exceptional health advocacy through broadcast media.

General Hospital Ikorodu and Crystal Specialist Hospital were lauded for their data reporting accuracy, while healthcare providers like Perfect Eyes Eye Clinic and Nene Dental received recognition for outstanding service delivery in optical and dental care, respectively.

In a special category, Dr. Osinachi Ubani of Oshodi Primary Health Centre won the Leadership in Quality Improvement Award, while 10 healthcare professionals, including Dorcas Nyanah of Ikorodu General Hospital, were recognized as Healthcare Quality Champions.

The awards served as a testament to the progress made under the ILERA EKO scheme and a rallying call for stakeholders to sustain their efforts in achieving universal health coverage in Lagos State.



L-R: CEO, Ladybird Advertising, Bunmi Oke; Principal Consultant, NECCI CONSULTING, Nkechi Ali-Balongun; Head corporate affairs, media and partnerships, Reckitt sub-Saharan Africa, Cassandra Uhzo-Ogbugh; and Founder, Nigerian Marketing Awards and Managing Consultant at OE&E Consulting Ltd, Tony Agenmonmen; during the Nigerian Marketing Awards 2024 edition held in Lagos recently.

Okpebholo: Let Edo People Live With It For Next Four Years – Abati

Reuben Abati, a veteran journalist and former Senior Adviser on Media and Publicity to former President Goodluck Jonathan, has said that the people of Edo State should live with their Governor, Monday Okpebholo, for the next four years.

Abati, the lead anchor of the popular Arise TV breakfast talk show, Morning Show, stated this on Wednesday.

The statement comes after the governor was

caught in a mix of confusion during his presentation of the 2025 budget to the State House of Assembly on Tuesday.

DAILY POST reported how Okpebholo struggled with the pronunciation of the budget's numerical value.

While discussing the 'What's Trending' segment on the TV programme, Abati said the development could be likened to "what Edo people ordered versus what they were given."

He said: "Well, I sympa-

thize with the people of Edo State. The state that produced Professor Ambrose Ali, the state that produced my former teacher, Professor Osarime Osunbor, has now produced an individual who cannot even pronounce N650 million, finding it very difficult.

"I don't understand this argument about being dyslexic and all of that. Well, it has to be medically proven. I think that what we are suspecting here is a question of 'what Edo people ordered and what they were given.'

"You know they do this thing on social media—'what I ordered, what I got.' This is a state that has Asue Ighodalo, who has been chairman of a bank, who knows about numbers, who knows about law, you know, who would have pronounced it very well.

"Now, democracy throws up its own tricks. This is what Edo State people said they have ordered. Let them live with it for the next four years."

Insecurity: 'I stand by my remarks on Nigeria' – Badenoch replies VP Shettima

The leader of the United Kingdom, UK, Conservative Party, Kemi Badenoch, has replied to Nigeria's Vice President, Kashim Shettima, saying she stands by her remarks about Nigeria despite criticism that she is denigrating the country.

Badenoch has allegedly described her upbringing in Nigeria as being overshadowed by fear and insecurity in a country plagued by corruption.

Born in the UK in 1980 to Nigerian Yoruba parents, she married a Scottish banker, Hamish Badenoch, and took her husband's surname.

Before she was elected leader of the Conservative Party, Badenoch described Nigeria as a socialist nation brimming with thieving politicians and insecurity.

"This is my country. I don't want it to become like the place I ran away from. I grew up in Nigeria, and I saw firsthand what happens when politicians are in it for themselves, when they use public money as their private piggy banks, when they pollute the whole political

atmosphere with their failure to serve others.

"I saw what socialism is for millions. I saw poverty and broken dreams. I came to Britain to make my way in a country where hard work and honest endeavour can take you anywhere.

"I grew up in a place where fear was everywhere. You cannot understand it unless you've lived it. Triple-checking that all the doors and windows are locked,

waking up in the night at every sound, listening as you hear your neighbours scream as they are being burgled and beaten, wondering if your home would be next," she said.

Shettima had asked Badenoch to remove the "Kemi" from her name if she was not proud of her nation of origin.

Asked about Shettima's comments, Badenoch, through her spokesperson, said she stands by her state-

ments and is not interested in doing public relations for Nigeria.

"She is the leader of the opposition, and she is very proud of her leadership of the opposition in this country.

"She tells the truth. She tells it like it is. She's not going to couch her words, and she stands by what she says," the spokesperson said.

Niger Govt postpones ongoing tour to mourn late Katcha LG Chairman

ADIGUN TUNDE - MINNA

Worried by the sudden death of Katcha local government Chairman, Alhaji Danlami Abdullahi Dakuger on Tuesday 9th December, the state governor Mohammed Umar Bago has suspended it's tour of Zone "B" to mourn him.

The State Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Hon. Binta

Mamman made known to newsmen on Thursday in Minna.

She noted that the Governor Mohammed Umar Bago said the tour is now postponed till January, 2025 as a sign of respect.

The statement also read in part that: Governor Bago has declared that the Fidda'u prayer which will be handled by the Director General Religious Affairs, Dr. Umar Farooq Abdullahi will come up on tomorrow (Fri-

day) after Jumaat at the Minna Central mosque.

It should be recalled that the Governor had toured local government areas in Zones A and C where he inspected ongoing projects across the state.

The Governor prayed Allah to make Aljanna Firdausi the final abode of the deceased and comfort the late Chairman's family and also the people of Katcha.

NA Set To Host Chief Of Army Staff Annual Conference 2024

The Nigerian Army is set to hold the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Annual Conference 2024 at the Army Headquarters Command Officers' Mess 1, Asokoro, Abuja, from Monday, 15 December to Thursday, 19 December 2024.

The conference, to be presided over by the Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Olufemi Olyede, provides a pivotal platform for evaluating the Nigerian Army's kinetic and non-kinetic operations, with a strong focus on ensuring operational effectiveness.

The conference aims to highlight successes, address challenges, and propose strategies to further enhance the Nigerian Army's operational efficiency. A significant feature of this year's conference will be the formulation of a strategic roadmap for 2025. This forward-thinking initiative will define clear objectives and set projections to guide the Nigerian Army's response to Nigeria's diverse security challenges.

The event will serve as a key forum for the Nigerian

Army's leadership and participants to review the implementation of operations, training programs, and strategic initiatives aligned with its constitutional mandate. Participants will conduct in-depth analyses of ongoing counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, anti-banditry, and other security operations.

The conference will also feature detailed presentations on training, administration, logistics, and other key areas as outlined in the Nigerian Army's Forecast of Events. These presentations aim to showcase current achievements while introducing innovative strategies to strengthen the Nigerian Army's capabilities.

Discussions will address logistical support, operational deployments, and related areas, focusing on optimizing operational efficiency and improving troop morale through sound administration. Additionally, the event will include the presentation of Group Life Insurance benefits to the families of fallen heroes.

Senate Holds Valedictory Session For Okpebholo As His Seat Is Declared Vacant

Senators, on Wednesday, held a valedictory session in honour of the Governor of Edo State, Senator Monday Okpebholo. The session, which was presided over by the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, had almost all the lawmakers in attendance.

Lawmakers expressed their joy on the emergence of Senator Okpebholo as the Governor of Edo State. The senators expressed mixed feelings that they will miss his absence in the Senate.

They eulogised his virtues as a humble, hard-working, dedicated, and committed person who is loved by his people and many Nigerians.

Specifically, the Deputy Senate President, Senator Barau Jibrin, described the Governor as a humble person and a man of few words, but full of action. He noted that the people of Edo State elected him "because he's someone who has people's interest at heart."

He said that Governor Okpebholo was doing the right thing in the Senate and has started doing the same in Edo. He advised him to remain focused without any distractions.

Senator Adams Oshiomhole, in his own

remarks, pointed out that the Governor has made a great mark within his one year of being a senator and a short period as the Governor.

While pointing out that Okpebholo was the first person to be elected as Senator by the people of his senatorial district and within a year, became a Governor through the massive support of the people of the State, added that he is a very humble man whose humility is infectious.

"In 30 days, Edo people knew that a new Governor was in town. He is very humble, intelligent, active, and committed," he said.

In his own remarks, Senator Danjuma Goje disclosed that during the last election in the Senate, Governor Okpebholo kept to his words and, thereafter, showed commitment till he left to contest the governorship election.

He, therefore, urged him to continue in the same direction, saying "you will never regret if you are committed, resolute, and determined, even though you may be threatened. But remain focused."

President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, urged the Governor to keep his legacy of good works, as he carries out his duties in Edo state.

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FAAC Distributes N1.7 Trillion November Revenue To FG, States, And Lgs

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

The Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) has distributed a total of N1.727 trillion among the Federal Government, state governments, and local government councils for the month of November, according to a communiqué released following its meeting in Abuja on Thursday.

The total distributable amount of N1.727 trillion consists of statutory reve-

nue of N455.354 billion, Value Added Tax (VAT) revenue of N585.700 billion, Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL) revenue of N15.046 billion, and Exchange Difference revenue of N671.392 billion.

According to the communiqué, the total gross revenue available for November was N3.143 trillion, with deductions amounting to N103.307 billion for collection costs and N1.312 trillion allocated to transfers, inter-ventions, and refunds.

The gross statutory reve-

nue for November stood at N1.827 trillion, which represents an increase of N490.339 billion compared to the N1.336 trillion recorded in October. On the other hand, gross VAT revenue totaled N628.972 billion, showing a decrease of N39.318 billion from the N668.291 billion reported in October.

From the total distributable revenue, the allocations are as follows: the Federal Government received N581.856 billion, state governments received

N549.792 billion, and local government councils (LGCs) received N402.553 billion. Derivation revenue, which represents 13% of mineral revenue, totaled N193.291 billion and was shared among the benefiting states.

From the N455.354 billion statutory revenue, the Federal Government received N175.690 billion, state governments received N89.113 billion, and local government councils (LGCs) received N68.702 billion. Derivation revenue,

which represents 13% of mineral revenue, totaled N121.849 billion and was shared among the benefiting states.

From the N585.700 billion VAT revenue, the Federal Government received N87.855 billion, state governments received N292.850 billion, and local government councils (LGCs) received N204.995 billion.

From the N15.046 billion received from the EMTL, the Federal Government received N2.257 bil-

lion, state governments received N7.523 billion, and local government councils (LGCs) received N5.266 billion.

The communiqué noted that, in November, Oil and Gas Royalty and CET Levies recorded notable increases, while other revenue streams such as Excise Duty, VAT, Import Duty, Petroleum Profit Tax, Companies Income Tax, and EMTL experienced significant declines.

MTN Nigeria Raises N72.1Bn in Series 13 and 14 Commercial Paper Issuance, Reports Over subscription

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

MTN Nigeria Communications PLC has successfully completed its Series 13 and 14 Commercial Paper (CP) issuance, raising a total of N72.18 billion, according to a recent announcement to shareholders and the Nigerian Exchange (NGX).

This follows the company's earlier report to the NGX regarding the successful issuance of Series 11 and 12 Commercial Papers, which together raised N75.1 billion.

In a formal notification signed by the company's Secretary, Uto Ukpanah FCIS, and published on the NGX disclosure platform, MTN Nigeria revealed that the Series 13 and 14 CP offerings were conducted under the company's N250 billion Commercial Paper Issuance Programme.

While the initial target was N50 billion, the issuance was oversubscribed by 144%, leading to a final amount of N72.18 billion.

MTN Nigeria successfully raised funds through two commercial papers under its N250 billion Commercial Paper Issuance Programme.

These Series 13 and 14 Commercial Papers were issued on Friday, November 29, 2024, and offered competitive yields of 27.50% for the 181-day paper and 29.00% for the 265-day paper, attracting a variety of investors.

This issuance follows the successful Series 11 and 12 Commercial Papers, which were launched on November 7, 2024, and raised N75.1 billion.



L-R: Freelance Photojournalist, Mr. Akintunde Akinleye; Chairman, Guild of Photojournalists Nigeria (GPN), Mr. Abiodun Ajala; Awardee of GPN Most Outstanding State Energy Giant of the Decade Oil and Gas to NNPC and Most Outstanding Corporate Professional of the year in Oil and Gas to Head, Relationship and Stakeholder Management in NNPC Ltd, Dr. Oluwakemi Olumuyiwa; Keynote speaker, Petroleum expert and accountant, Comrade Bala Zakka and Executive Director, Foundation for Public Interest Law and Development, Barr. Yusuf Nurudeen, during the GPN 4th Annual Conference, Exhibition and Award Dinner 2024, at GRA Ikeja, Lagos

Tinubu To Present 2025 Budget To National Assembly on Tuesday

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

President Bola Tinubu is set to present the 2025 budget next Tuesday, according to Senate President Godswill Akpabio. Akpabio made the announcement during Thursday's plenary session.

He stated, "The president has made his intention known to the National Assembly to present the 2025 budget to the joint Assembly of the National Assembly on the 17th of December, 2024."

The budget presentation will take place in the House of Representatives Chamber. Akpabio also informed lawmakers that plenary would commence at 10:30 a.m. to allow senators to convene in the Red Chamber before proceeding in pro-

cession to the House of Representatives for the presentation.

Last month, President Tinubu submitted the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework and Fiscal Strategy Paper (MTEF/FSP) for 2025-2027 to both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Akpabio has since directed the Senate Committee on Finance, National Planning, and Economic Affairs to review the MTEF/FSP documents and submit its report within one week.

The MTEF/FSP key parameters include a crude oil price benchmark of \$75 per barrel, daily oil production of 2.06 million barrels, an exchange rate of N1,400 to \$1, and a targeted GDP growth rate of 6.4%. These projections will guide the

consideration and approval of the proposed N47.9 trillion budget for 2025.

The Federal Executive Council approved N47.9 trillion for the 2025 budget in November to support capital projects and cover the Federal Government's recurrent expenditures. The approval followed a briefing by the Minister of Budget and National Planning, Senator Atiku Bagudu, to State

House media.

Bagudu disclosed that the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework for 2025-2027 was approved and that the crude oil price benchmark was set at \$75 per barrel, with oil production estimated at 2.06 million barrels per day. The proposed budget also includes an exchange rate of N1,400 to \$1 and a target GDP growth rate of 6.4%.

Senator Bagudu explained: "And equally, the fiscal objectives were conservative because we want to ensure that we study the course much as we believe the projections will be exceeded. The budget size approved for presentation to the National Assembly in the MTEP is N47.9tn, with new borrowings of N9.2tn to finance the budget deficit in 2025."



Bola Tinubu

Shettima Commissions Nigeria's Oriental Energy's \$315Mn Oil Facility in Dubai

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

Vice President Kashim Shettima, on Saturday, commissioned a \$315 million Floating Production, Storage, and Offloading (FPSO) unit constructed in Dubai by the privately-owned Nigerian oil company, Oriental Energy Resources Limited.

According to a statement from the Vice President's spokesman, Stanley Nkwocha, the FPSO has a storage capacity of one million barrels and will begin with an initial production of 17,000 barrels per day, with plans to ramp up to 30,000 barrels per day.

The statement further revealed that the vessel is expected to set sail for Nigeria in the first quarter of 2025 and commence production at the Okwok Oil Field within the first half of 2025.

Shettima, representing President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the commissioning ceremony held at the Drydocks World Dubai Shipyard in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, emphasized that the FPSO represents much more than just maritime infrastructure.

He described the facility as a symbol of Nigeria's national ambitions and a reflection of the success of President Tinubu's reforms in the oil sector.

"This FPSO vessel is more than just a technological achievement; it is a symbol of Nigeria's ambition and our readiness to meet global energy demands. Under President Tinubu's leadership, we are witnessing the transformation of the oil and gas sector, which is central to our economic revitalisation efforts," said Shettima.

CBN Imposes ₦150 Million Fine On Banks For Illegal Distribution Of New Notes

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has imposed a ₦150 million fine on Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) found to have illegally released newly minted naira notes to currency hawkers across the country. This action is aimed at ensuring effective cash distribution to customers and the general public.

The announcement fol-

lows recent concerns and misinformation regarding the continued validity of the old ₦1000, ₦500, and ₦200 banknotes, which remain legal tender as confirmed by a Supreme Court ruling on November 29, 2023. CBN also cautioned against hoarding these banknotes.

In a statement signed by Sidi Ali Hakama, acting director of corporate communications, the bank emphasized its worry about

the growing issue of newly minted naira notes being circulated by hawkers. CBN described this activity as a significant obstacle to the smooth distribution of cash and warned that it hampers the efficient operation of monetary policy.

On Friday, CBN issued a circular signed by Mohammed Olayemi, acting director of the Currency Operations Department, reiterating its commitment to addressing the commodifi-

cation of the naira. The circular referred to an earlier directive from November 13, 2023, aimed at combating these illicit practices.

Financial institutions found to have violated the rule by facilitating or aiding the release of mint naira notes will face an initial penalty of ₦150 million for each erring branch.

Repeated violations will result in stricter sanctions under the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act

(BOFIA) 2020.

To enforce this, the CBN will carry out increased and periodic spot checks at bank branches and ATMs and will deploy undercover "mystery shoppers" to monitor and identify hotspots for cash hawking.

The circular stated: "The CBN has noted with dismay the prevalence of illicit flows of mint banknotes to hawkers and unscrupulous agents, which commodify Naira banknotes and

impede efficient and effective cash distribution to customers and the general public."

The bank also directed DMBs to improve their internal controls, procedures, and systems—particularly at their Cash Management Centres, branches, and teller operations—to prevent their channels from being exploited for illegal transactions.

CBN Says Old N1,000, N500, N200 Notes Still Valid

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has addressed recent misinformation about the validity of the old N1000, N500, and N200 banknotes still in circulation.

A statement signed by Sidi Ali Hakama, acting director of corporate communications, reaffirmed that these denominations remain valid legal tender in line with a Supreme Court ruling issued on November 29, 2023.

The ruling permits the indefinite circulation of all versions of the N1000, N500, and N200 denominations, including the old and redesigned notes, as

well as the commemorative and earlier designs of the N100 denomination.

The CBN said that there is no deadline for the use of these notes, urging the public to disregard any claims suggesting they will cease to be legal tender by December 31, 2024.

The CBN encouraged Nigerians to accept all Naira banknotes for transactions and to handle them responsibly to maintain their quality. Additionally, the bank reiterated its call for increased adoption of alternative payment methods, such as electronic channels, to reduce reliance on physical cash



L-R: Seed Coach, Stanford Seed, Mark Phelps; Regional Director, Emmanuel Kitcher; Minister of Industry Trade and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole; President, Stanford Seed, Transformation Network, Nigeria, Omololami Ajani and Network Manager, Stanford Seed, Kwame Dadson during the Cohort 14 Induction and End of year party organized by Stanford Seed Transformation Network.

NNTheANigeria Full Operation Of 52MW Maidugu Power Project By 2025

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited has assured the complete operation of the 52 megawatts Maiduguri Emergency Power Project (MEPP) by 2025.

This was made known during an inspection visit by Ekperipe Ekpo, Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas) on Saturday, December 14, 2024.

Mele Kyari, NNPC's GCEO, and Olalekan Ogunleye, the Executive Vice President of Gas, Power & New Energy, accompanied the minister.

The NNPC on its official X (formerly Twitter) account that the 32MW Simple Cycle phase of the project is already completed and operational, while the remaining 18MW Com-

bined Cycle phase is set to be operational by 2025.

MEPP, a 52MW Integrated Power Project, was commissioned on March 2, 2023, by former President Muhammadu Buhari.

The power generation project aimed at providing reliable and sustainable electricity to the city of Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, and its environs.

The Project was necessitated by the extended power outages experienced in the region in the last nine years, according to the NNPC.

"These outages, caused by vandalism and insurgency attacks on power supply infrastructure had resulted in a decline in economic activities in the region."

NAICOM Issues Operational License To NPF Insurance Firm

The National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) has officially issued an operational license to NPF Insurance Co. Ltd, allowing the company to commence general insurance operations in Nigeria.

The license was presented by the Commissioner for Insurance, Mr. Olusegun Ayo Omosehin, at a brief ceremony in Abuja, recently.

This milestone follows months of deliberations and public debate over the establishment of a police-affiliated insurance company.

NAICOM confirmed that NPF Insurance met all registration requirements before being granted

approval to operate.

The approval process for NPF Insurance was not without its challenges. In August 2024, NAICOM acknowledged the objections raised by various stakeholders against the establishment of the company.

The Commissioner for Insurance, Mr. Omosehin, stated at the time that the commission would thoroughly review these concerns before taking a position.

"We are open to licensing new firms, but those interested must meet the requirements," Omosehin reiterated during the licensing process.

In a letter dated July 25, 2024, Kari addressed his concerns to Omosehin,

copying key government officials and industry leaders, including the Minister of Finance, the Chairman of NAICOM, and the leadership of relevant Senate and House Committees.

Despite the controversies, NAICOM proceeded with granting the license, signaling confidence in NPF Insurance's capacity to meet regulatory standards. The company is now set to offer general insurance services to Nigerians, with a focus likely to include policies tailored to the needs of law enforcement personnel and the wider public.

The granting of this license shows NAICOM's commitment to expanding Nigeria's insurance industry by accommodating new

entrants that meet stipulated requirements.

The entry of NPF Insurance into the market adds a new dimension to Nigeria's insurance landscape. While some stakeholders remain skeptical about a police-affiliated insurance company, others view it as an opportunity to enhance the welfare of police officers and foster competition within the industry.

As NPF Insurance begins its operations, its ability to address public concerns and operate transparently will be critical to gaining trust and achieving long-term success in the competitive Nigerian insurance market.

Tourism Commissioner Lagos State Emphasises Vital Role Of Women In Nation Building

The Honourable Commissioner for Tourism, Arts, and Culture, Mrs. Toke Benson-Awoyinka, joined Her Majesty Olori Atuwatse III and Her Excellency Dr. Jewel Howard-Taylor, at the Elevate Africa Dinner held on Monday at the J.K. Randle Museum, Centre for Yoruba

Culture and History, Onikan, Lagos, to celebrate the pivotal contributions of women in shaping the future of Nigeria and Africa.

In her remarks, Mrs. Toke Benson-Awoyinka lauded the exceptional leadership of Olori Atuwatse III as a beacon of inspiration for women. She reaffirmed

Lagos State's unwavering commitment to empowering women through innovative policies and programmes focused on education, entrepreneurship, and leadership development, stressing the importance of mentorship, resource-sharing, and collaboration in building an

inclusive society while urging stakeholders to work collectively to overcome barriers to gender equality.

"Lagos State remains a trailblazer, actively implementing initiatives that position women as vital contributors to growth and nation-building", she stated, emphasising the state's belief

in unity and shared responsibility as cornerstones of progress.

Also speaking at the event, First Lady of Kwara State Professor Olufolake AbdulRazaq shed light on the challenges young women face, such as early marriages, discrimination, and limited access to education, which

have resulted in 76% of inactive out-of-school youth being female. She highlighted Kwara State's proactive steps toward gender inclusion, including the enactment of a 35% gender inclusion law and increased representation of women in leadership roles.



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A Nation at a Crossroads: Navigating Nigeria's Path to Stability and Progress

Nigeria stands at a critical juncture. After years of political, economic, and social turmoil, the nation's future remains uncertain, and the decisions made today will define the course of its future. As Africa's largest economy and most populous country, Nigeria's trajectory has profound implications not only for its citizens but also for the entire continent.

However, a combination of leadership challenges, economic struggles, and social divisions has left the nation at a crossroads. How Nigeria navigates this moment of opportunity or peril will determine its stability and progress.

Politically, Nigeria has long grappled with deep divisions—tribal, religious, and regional. These divisions were evident in the heated 2023 elections and have carried over into the early stages of the 2027 race. The ruling APC, with internal rifts and a fractured base, faces significant challenges in maintaining national unity. Conversely, the opposition parties, including the PDP and Labour Party, must look beyond their immediate grievances and present viable alternatives that resonate with a populace increasingly disillusioned with partisan politics.

The need for a more inclusive political framework that transcends ethnic and religious lines has never been more urgent. As analyst Richard Karka pointed out, Nigeria's political future hinges on addressing these fractures. A genuine commitment to federalism, power-sharing, and fair representation is essential to maintain political cohesion and avoid further fragmentation (Karka, 2024). If Nigeria is to achieve political stability, leaders must focus on fostering unity, not division, and create mechanisms that ensure that all regions and communities feel heard and represented.

Economically, the country is in a state of flux. The administration's bold reforms, such as the removal of fuel subsidies and changes to the tax system, have been both praised and criticized. While these measures are intended to create a more sustainable economy, the short-term pain has been significant. Inflation, unemployment, and poverty continue to rise, exacerbating the frustration of millions of Nigerians.

In fact, economic policies must not only address macroeconomic stability but also focus

on grassroots improvements. "The challenge for Nigeria is how to balance necessary reforms with the economic realities of its citizens. Nigeria needs a long-term, inclusive economic strategy that addresses not only immediate concerns but also builds a foundation for future growth. Key sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure, and technology must be prioritized to create jobs and lift millions out of poverty.

Socially, Nigeria's youth—an increasingly vocal and digitally savvy demographic—hold the key to the country's future. With over 60% of the population under the age of 30, the youth's aspirations, frustrations, and demands cannot be ignored. They are using social media not only to demand better governance but also to influence national discourse.

This shift in political engagement offers both opportunities and challenges. As Technology has become the battleground for ideas, and the youth are the key players Their mobilization is vital to driving a more transparent and accountable government, but this energy must be channeled toward constructive change.

As Nigeria approaches the 2027 elections, it is essential to recognize that the country is not just at a political crossroads; it is at a moral one. The decisions made now about leadership, governance, and national direction will set the tone for the next generation.

In this crucial moment, Nigeria needs leadership that is not only pragmatic but visionary. Political leaders must focus on long-term policies that address the country's systemic issues, foster inclusivity, and promote economic stability. At the same time, they must be responsive to the demands of the people, particularly the youth, who are seeking a more transparent and accountable political system.

Ultimately, Nigeria's path to stability and progress depends on its ability to navigate these challenges with wisdom, foresight, and unity. The coming years will test the resilience of the Nigerian people, but with the right leadership and collective action, the nation can overcome its current difficulties and emerge stronger. The crossroads are real—but so too is the opportunity to chart a new course for Nigeria's future.

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'Of No Effect,' PDP NWC Dismisses Ugochinyere's Expulsion from Party

The National Working Committee (NWC) of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has dismissed the expulsion of Ugochinyere Ikeagwuonu by the leadership of the party in Imo State.

Ugochinyere who represents Ideato North/Ideato South Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives was suspended by the Ideato LGA chapter of the party in a letter dated December 5 for alleged

indiscipline and anti-party activities.

But hours after the move, the PDP NWC nullified the expulsion in a statement by its spokesman Debo Ologunagba.

"The NWC declares the said purported expul-

sion as null and void and of no effect, not being consistent with the express provision of Sections 57 (7) and 59 (3) of the Constitution of the PDP (as amended in 2017) and laid down Rules of our great Party," the PDP's

NWC statement read.

It cited Section 59 (3) and 57 (7) of the Constitution of the PDP to insist that "no Ward, Local Government or even State Chapter of the Party has the power to suspend, expel or discipline a mem-

ber of the National Assembly in any form whatsoever without due recourse to the National Working Committee as provided by the Constitution of the PDP".

Imo lowest record in VAT evidence of dying economy – PDP

The Peoples Democratic Party, (PDP), Imo State Chapter, has alleged that the recently released data on Value Added Tax, VAT, as generated across the 36 States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory, remains a vindication of its previous stand on the dwindling fortunes of Imo economy under Governor Hope Uzodinma's watch.

Imo PDP in a press release signed by its state publicity secretary, Lancelot Obiaku, and made available to newsmen, alleged that the Governor's leadership style had made the state "unattractive to investors."

The party wondered how the State allegedly generated the lowest VAT revenue in the whole Federation of Nigeria, adding that even the second worst performing State, Zamfara, generated N432.80 million compared to Imo's N235.41 million, an amount the PDP described as not only the lowest in the whole country but also "paltry."

"To illustrate the dire state of Imo's economy, the State generated the lowest VAT revenue in the entire Federation, with a paltry N235.41 million.

"This amount is almost half of what the second worst-performing State, Zamfara, generated (N432.80 million).

"Before they blame it on insecurity...it is worth noting that the second-worst performing State in the Southeast (Abia) generated three times more, while Ebonyi performed nearly ten times better, and Anambra recorded twenty times Imo's VAT figure," he said.

The publicity secretary of the party revealed that Imo's VAT contribution was a mere 0.2 percent of what Lagos generated, which represents an embarrassing disparity, pointing out that in its analysis of the nexus between the VAT figures and performance of States' economies, the State recorded what he described as very poor performance.

"To be clear, VAT, a consumption tax levied on goods and services at each stage of production or distribution, is paid by consumers but collected by businesses and remitted to the government through the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).

"VAT ratio, therefore, is directly proportional to the productivity level and health of an economy.

"We are not in doubt that Imo's dismal performance reflects the comatose state of its business environment and overall economy. Nothing can better mirror the state's zero productivity," the party declared.



Divisional Traffic Officer (DTO), Divisional Headquarters Police, Ikotun, SP Grace Ogbonoko; Auditor, National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), Lagos State, Com. Sunday Ojo Ogunleye; Area Commander, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Badagry, Deputy Corp Commander (DCC), Sikiru Aduloju; Executive Chairman, Igando-Ikotun Local Council Development Area (LCDA) Alimosho Local Government Area (LGA) Comr. Lasisi Ayinde Akinsanya; Chief Route Commander, FRSC Unit Ikotun, CRC Emma Ekwo; Superintendent of Corps, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Ikotun Unit, SC Anayo Uchebulam, at FRSC Ember months Town Hall Meeting at Ikotun, Lagos recently.

Imo PDP Appoints Ugochinyere As Party's State Leader

A member of the House of Representatives, representing Ideato North/South Federal Constituency of Imo State, Hon. Ikenga Imo Ugochinyere, has emerged the leader of the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the State.

The development followed the appointment of Ugochinyere, who is the highest elected office-holder on the PDP platform in Imo State, by 27 PDP chairmen in 27 local government areas of the State at the weekend.

The leaders, in a statement signed on their behalf by Coordinating Chairman of the 27 Imo PDP LGA

Chairmen Forum, urged stakeholders in the state to rally round the vibrant lawmaker in the battle of rescuing the umbrella party from imminent collapse both at the state and national levels.

The PDP leaders, who passed vote of confidence on Ugochinyere, also insisted that the party's acting national chairman, Umar Damagun, and national secretary, Samuel Anyanwu, should be immediately removed to pave way for reinvigoration of the main opposition party.

They said: "We the leaders of PDP in Imo state after wide consultations and deep reflection on the state of our party in the state and the

country, resolved to appoint the member representing Ideato North/South Federal Constituency of Imo State in the House of Representatives, Hon. Barr Ikenga Ugochinyere as our leader.

"This is based on his antecedents, sterling leadership qualities and commitment to the protection and promotion of the ethos of our party over the years. Judging from his ingenuity, we are confident in his ability to be the rallying point of PDP in Imo state for the party to rebound ahead of future polls.

"We therefore urged stakeholders in the party to rally round him and give him all the support needed to succeed in the task of rebuilding

our party into a virile force to be reconked with not just for electoral purposes but in promotion of democratic ideals which our party stands espouses.

"While passing a vote of confidence on Hon. Barr Ikenga Ugochinyere as our leader, we insist that the acting national chairman of PDP, Umar Damagun and national secretary, Samuel Anyanwu should be removed without further delay hence their continuous stay in office even illegally is doing more harm than good to our party as we prepared to take over government in 2027."

2027: Atiku, Obi reveal details of meeting in Adamawa

The presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 election, Atiku Abubakar and his Labour Party (LP) counterpart, Peter Obi have spoken about their recent meeting in Adamawa State.

Speculations trailed the meeting after pictures and a video of Obi meeting Atiku in his house in Adamawa were shared on social media.

Many alleged that both men met to collaborate on the 2027 presidential election, a speculation that both sides have now dismissed.

Giving details of the meeting, Atiku's spokesman, Paul Ibe, who spoke with journalists disclosed: "Let us not jump the gun.

"The fact is that Obi accepted to be the keynote speaker at the 20th anniversary of AUN and the 16th Founder's Day, which was a milestone. Obi is part of that celebration.

"The university was founded by Atiku Abubakar, who was more like his host. But people think it is because of politics. We all know our friends. The truth is that politics cannot separate friends.

PDP crisis deepens as Wike's camp begins move to oust Atiku's loyalists

The internal crisis within the People's Democratic Party (PDP) has escalated, with the faction loyal to former Rivers State Governor and Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, intensifying efforts to sideline supporters of the party's 2023 presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar.

Sources within the party revealed that Wike's camp is gearing up to enforce disciplinary measures, including expulsions and suspensions, targeting opponents at various levels—state, local government, and ward.

The development fol-

lows the faction's unwavering support for the embattled acting National Chairman, Umar Damagun, whose leadership has been under scrutiny.

Party insiders disclosed that key figures in Wike's camp are strategizing to consolidate their influence by neutralizing opposition, particularly those critical of the Damagun-led National Working Committee (NWC).

Among the targets is Ikenga Ugochinyere, a prominent PDP lawmaker, whose vocal criticism has reportedly drawn the ire of the Wike faction.

"There's a deliberate plan to move against party members and even members of the public who oppose their interests," a party source told Punch.

According to sources, some NWC members have stopped attending meetings regularly due to growing disunity within the party.

The members are reportedly managing the situation until the party establishes a National Elective Convention planning committee next year.

Meanwhile, the crisis has further polarized the PDP Governors' Forum, with a clear divide between

those supporting Damagun's continued leadership and those advocating for his replacement.

Four governors – Seyi Makinde (Oyo), Ahmadu Fintiri (Adamawa), Caleb Mutfwang (Plateau), and Agbu Kefas (Taraba), are aligned with Wike in supporting Damagun.







While, the PDP Governors' Forum Chairman, Bala Mohammed (Bauchi); Rivers State Governor, Sim Fubara; and Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, are reportedly opposed to Damagun continuing in acting capacity.



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FCT: NSCDC Arrests Eight Suspects For Vandalism

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Command has arrested eight suspected vandals of public infrastructure in different parts of the FCT.

NSCDC FCT Commandant, Dr. Olusola Odumosu, paraded the suspects at the Command headquarters, Wuse, Abuja, recently.

According to a statement by the Acting Public Relations Officer of the Command, Monica Ojobi, Odumosu, said the arrest of the suspects was in continuation of a full-scale assault against vandals in Abuja.

He maintained that the arrests were in line with the resolve to chase vandals out of the FCT through a renewed operational strategy and "I am glad we are getting results".

"My covert operatives with the Critical National Assets and Infrastructure Tactical Team (CNAIT) are in town on 24-hours surveillance and monitoring to prevent any occurrence of vandalism, especially at this

period of the year", he said.

Four of the suspects were arrested at Idu Layout CITEC, Abuja, at about 2:10 am with vandalized Solar Panel Poles.

Exhibits recovered included five vandalized gigantic street light poles, One (1) vandalized solar panel pole and over 40 pieces of iron rods.

The statement added that the investigation is ongoing and suspects would be charged in court accordingly.

Odumosu expressed anger at the level of destruction of public infrastructure by the hoodlums who have infiltrated the territory to destroy the steadily growing infrastructure that the government is providing for the citizens.

He assured the Hon Minister of the FCT, Nyesom Wike of putting a stop to the sabotage and wickedness being perpetrated on the city infrastructure on a daily basis by these criminal elements and warned them that the manhunt for vandals is still ongoing.

Senate Bars Wike From Demolishing Structures In FCT

The Senate recently asked the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, to halt further demolition of structures pending the outcome of its investigation into the matter.

The Senate also set up an ad hoc committee headed by the Deputy Senate President, Barau I. Jibrin, to ascertain the propriety or otherwise of the demolition exercise, and asked the minister to appear before the committee.

The resolutions were sequel to a motion by the FCT senator, Ireti Kingibe, during plenary, in which she said the demolition exercise did not follow due process and was causing untold hardship to victims, and pleaded for the Senate's intervention.

Wike has been criticised for embarking on widespread demolition of houses in Abuja.

A construction company, Paullosa Nigeria Limited, had recently raised the alarm over a demolition notice issued by the Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) to demolish its estate in the Lifecamp area.

Senator Ireti said, "Further concern that demolition in FCT is no longer in line with due process and that a cross-section of individuals has suffered untold hardship occasioned by

massive demolitions which have led to loss of properties worth billions of naira.

"Note that the Federal Capital Territory Administration, on the instruction of the Honorable Minister of Federal Capital Territory, embarked on massive demolition of structures within the Federal Capital Territory.

"Also note that the demolition, according to the FCT authority, was informed by illegal structures and non-development of allocated plots of land by the FCT administration.

"Also concerned that at the moment, an estate by the name Messrs Paulosa, for which late Colonel Paul Osang Kwanwa of Bebo, is the chairman, is currently under revocation and demolition. And from reliable information, the said plot of land was allocated to him in 1984 with the requisite title documents.

"And further concerned that the owner of this estate was a patriotic Nigerian who served the nation meritoriously and one of the first intakes of the Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna, with registration number 001."

Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan (PDP, Kogi Central) seconded the motion, saying the exercise should be stopped pending the outcome of the Senate investigation into the matter.



L-R: Site Medical Adviser, Agbara Factory, Unilever Nigeria, Dr. Oludare Adeyemi; Senior Medical Adviser, Unilever Nigeria, Dr. Taiwo Akinoso; The Alagbara of Agbara Kingdom (Olute III), HRH Oba (Barr.) Lukman Jaiyeola Agunbiade; Manufacturing Director, Unilever Nigeria, Mr. Abayomi Alli and Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainable Business, Unilever Nigeria, Godfrey Adejumo during a community medical outreach organized by Unilever Nigeria at Agbara, Ogun State today

Yuletide: Police Ban Use Of Firecrackers In FCT

The Federal Capital Territory Police Command has announced a prohibition on the use of firecrackers, popularly known as knockouts, ahead of the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

In a statement issued on Saturday by the command's spokesperson, Josephine Adeh, the Commissioner of Police, Olatunji Disu, explained that the measure

aimed to ensure the safety of lives and property during the festive period.

According to him, using firecrackers often causes unnecessary panic, poses fire risks, and could lead to other avoidable incidents.

Disu said, "This ban is implemented to ensure the safety of all residents and to protect lives and property throughout the festive season.

"The use of these items creates unwarranted fear and anxiety in the community. This ban is essential to maintaining peace and safety. Anyone found using or selling firecrackers will be arrested and prosecuted according to the law."

The police urged community leaders and residents to support efforts to sensitize the public on the dangers of using firecrack-

ers, adding that it was important to residents adhere to the directive.

"Residents were also encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activities or violations of the ban through our emergency hotlines," he added.

Disu, however, assured residents of the police's commitment to maintaining law and order throughout the holiday season.

FCT Wins PHC Leadership Challenge Award

The Federal Capital Territory Primary Health Care system has emerged as one of the best in the federation at the second edition of the Primary Health Care Leadership Challenge Gala/ Awards ceremony held in Abuja recently.

A statement from Bola Ajao, the Senior Special Assistant to the Mandate Secretary, FCT Health and Environment Secretariat, Adedapo Fasawe, noted that the FCT emerged as the runner-up for "Best Performing and Most Improved State" with a cash incentive of \$400,000 in recognition of its implemented innovations and outstanding performance in strengthening PHC system in the territory in line with Universal Health

Coverage among other states in the year 2024.

Meanwhile, 14 awards were presented in total—one per geo-political zone and one national award. Along with FCT, other states that shined at the ceremony were Gombe state, which won "Best Implemented Innovation," and Anambra, which got the "Overall Best Performance" award for the 2024 edition.

This year's edition, chaired by Vice President Sen. Kashim Shettima, was represented by a former Minister of FCT, Alh. Aliyu Madibbo.

The PHC Leadership Challenge award was launched in 2022 by the Nigeria Governors Forum as a commitment to strengthen-

ing and improving the PHC system across the country and to appraise state performance. The first award edition kicked off in 2023.

In response to this remarkable feat, Fasawe said, "This award underscores the strategic leadership of the FCT Minister in investing in healthcare and the credible services carried out daily in PHC centres across the territory, with more to come."

Fasawe noted that the FCT healthcare system promotes and utilises the Basic Health Care Provision Fund adequately yields significant improvements in antenatal coverage, an increased proportion of women who are using modern contraceptive methods, an increased rate

of women delivery with skilled birth attendants through various approaches targeted at creating awareness and educating vulnerable women on the importance of accessing quality healthcare system within their proximity.

Fasawe, while appreciating the entire management and staff team of the Health Services and Environment Secretariat, and other stakeholders called for more action by putting in more work to ensure that the commitment to strengthen and improve the PHC systems in Nigeria is fully actualised.

At the ceremony, the HSE Secretariat was represented by the Acting Executive Secretary, FCT Primary Health Care Board, Ruqqaya Wamako in the company of the Director, FCT Health Insurance Scheme, Dr. Salamatu Belgore, who received the award on behalf of the Secretariat.

The statement added that the Chairman of the NGF and Governor of Kwara state, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq, who was represented by the Governor of Anambra state, Prof Charles Soludo; and the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof Muhammad Pate were present at the award ceremony.



Abia Clarifies Contending Issues, Says FG's Building Planned Airport

Abia State government has said that its proposed airport project to be flagged off by the Minister of Aviation, Mr Festus Kayemo tomorrow is being funded wholly by the Federal Government.

This is coming as criticisms trail the construction of the multi billion naira project as residents argue that

money meant for such gigantic project should have been diverted to other developmental infrastructures that impact more on the people.

Governor Alex Otti who dropped this hint in Umuahia last night during the monthly media chat tagged "Governor Speaks To Abian", explained that

the state government would only provide land and logistics.

He maintained that the federal government had initially planned to build an airstrip in the state but following the pleas by the state government, the airstrip project was upgraded to an airport.

On the planned Medical Village by his administra-

tion, Otti stated that it will be flagged off during the first quarter of 2025 and that the project will, when completed, cater for the comprehensive medical needs of Abia citizens and residents.

He disclosed that his administration has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with some

companies to develop the agricultural sector, particularly the palm oil subsector in Ukwia axis of the state, and added that even though some of the palm oil estates built by the late Michael Okpara government of Eastern Nigeria had been concessioned by previous government, the subsector will soon receive a boost.

On the minimum wage, Otti revealed that he directed the reworking of the minimum wage after some discrepancies were noticed in the document already signed by the organized labour and government and that a consequential adjustment is being made to correct the abnormalities.



L-R Emmanuel Uka, Experiential Marketing/ Sponsorship Manager, Moniepoint Inc; Pharm.(Mrs) Omokhafa Ashore, National Secretary, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN); Emmanuel Imouokhome, Regional Sales Manager, Moniepoint Inc; Pharm Ambrose Igwekwama, National Chairman, Pharm. Adegboyega Oguntayo, National Vice Chair, ACPN and Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, Immediate Past National Chairman, ACPN during a courtesy visit to the new ACPN Executive by Moniepoint at the ACPN National Secretariat in Lagos this afternoon.

Ebonyi 1st Lady Compliments Tinubu's Wife Efforts To Reduce Poverty, Empowers 110 Rural Traders

By Njoku Chijioko, Abakaliki

The wife of Ebonyi State governor, Mrs Mary-Maudline Ogbonna Nwifuru has complemented the efforts of the wife of the President, Mrs Oluremi Tinubu to reduce poverty and sufferings amongst women and children in the state.

ABUJA POST reports that no fewer than one hundred and ten, (110), rural traders in Ebonyi state, benefitted from the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI), project of Wife of the President, Mrs Oluremi Tinubu in collaboration with Better Health for Rural Women, Children empowerment.

The state Coordinator of the Renewed Hope Initiative and founder of Better Health for Rural Women Children and Internally displaced foundation, chief Mrs Mary-Maudline Ogbonna Nwifuru, distributed cheques of N50,000 each to the beneficiaries as well as bundles of wrappers, cartons of bags and educational materials for students.

Mrs Nwifuru, advised the beneficiaries selected from the 13 Local Government Areas of the state to reduce cost of their commodities in the market to

make life bearable for people, thereby achieving the aim to boost businesses of rural women.

The wife of the governor also applauded efforts of her husband, Governor, Francis Nwifuru and the first lady, Mrs Tinubu for their deep commitments to equip women in the state, advance gender equality and make meaningful contribution to the society.

"Women traders contributes to economic growth. The programme is designed to equip them with tools and resources needed to strive, advance in business," Nwifuru said.

In a swift reaction, the Commissioner for Education, Paul Nwobashi who received educational materials on behalf of students in the state, appreciated Mrs Nwifuru and promised to share the writing materials judiciously to students.

In a remark, one of the beneficiaries, Mrs Chioma Okenmiri who spoke on behalf of others, thanked the First lady, Mrs Tinubu and Mrs Nwifuru for giving women hope, especially during the economic hardship.

Shun Hostilities, Embrace Peace -Ivo Chairman Urges Warring Communities

By Chijioko Simon

The Executive Chairman of Ivo Local Government Area, Hon. Ajah Emmanuel Ogbonna, also known as "Confirm," has urged warring factions in the ongoing land dispute between the Umuobor-Akazeze and Ogwor-Ishiagu communities to halt hostilities and embrace peace.

During a press briefing in Abakaliki, Hon. Ogbonna commended the Ebonyi State Governor for designating the disputed area as a buffer zone and deploying security forces to restore tranquility in the conflict-affected communities.

Addressing allegations circulating on social media linking him to the violent clashes, the chairman refuted the claims, insisting that a doctored video wrongly accused him of instigating crisis.

He disavowed any involvement in the conflict and emphasized his commitment to peace in the area.

According to him, "The crisis, which dates back to

1967, has intensified in recent weeks, resulting in fatalities and property damage. Hon. Ogbonna

"I denounced the violence and no parcel of land is worth the shedding of human blood and there is need for dialogue and cooperation in resolving the dispute"

Despite initial mediation efforts through a committee comprising stakeholders and security agencies, renewed clashes hampered progress towards peace. The chairman

recounted the challenges faced in mediating peace talks and the subsequent arrest of individuals involved in the conflict.

Following the Governor's declaration of the conflict area as a buffer zone, Hon. Ogbonna mobilized security personnel to maintain order in the region.

He called on the feuding communities to uphold peace and allow the reconciliation process to proceed unhindered.

Expressing concern for the safety of travelers and

residents, the chairman assured the public of secured roads within the local government during the festive period. He urged both communities to prioritize peace and cooperation, emphasizing the importance of resolving differences amicably.

"I want to reiterate my innocence regarding the allegations on social media and reaffirmed my commitment to fostering peace and stability in Ivo Local Government Area" Aja said

Ebonyi First Lady Frees 41 Out Of 1265 Inmates

By Chijioko Njoku, Abakaliki

The wife of Ebonyi State governor, Chief Mrs. Mary-Maudline Uzomaka Nwifuru yesterday released 41 inmates out of 1265 that are languishing in Abakaliki correctional centre.

ABUJA POST gathered that the release of the said inmates was part of a compassionate gesture of the

wife of the governor, Mary-Maudline to celebrate with inmates in this 2024 Christmas season.

Speaking with newsmen at the Abakaliki correctional facilities shortly after releasing the inmates, the commissioner for justice and Anthony general of the state, Hon Ben Odo said that the Abakaliki prison facility is billed to accommodate 387 inmates, but is currently housing over 1265

individuals.

Odo said the release of the inmates by the Ebonyi First Lady, serves as a response to the overcrowding crisis that has plagued the correctional centre.

The Commissioner for Justice emphasized that the pressing need for reforms within the correctional system is to ensure appropriate care and justice for all inmates.

"This act of kindness

aims to alleviate the burden on the facility and provide deserving individuals with a second chance at rehabilitation and reintegration into society"

"The First Lady's visit and release of the inmates highlight the importance of addressing overcrowding and promoting rehabilitation efforts within Ebonyi correctional system" he said



Yobe Wins \$500,000 For Excellence In PHC Service Delivery

With Paul Onehi

Yobe State has won a 500,000 dollars prize for being the North-East's best-performing state in effective Primary Health Care, PHC, service delivery.

This is contained in a statement by Hussaini Mai-

Sule, Press Secretary to Deputy Governor, Idi Gubana, in Damaturu on Saturday.

He said the prize was presented to Gubana on Thursday in Abuja by development partners, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Dangote Group, the Federal Ministry of Health, the National Pri-

mary Health Care Development Agency, and UNICEF.

He said the award was part of the Leadership Challenge Award, initiated by the partners to improve the Primary Health Care Under One Roof, PHCUOR, policy, with commitments from state governors.

Mai-Sule noted that Mr

Gubana, who also serves as the state chairman on immunisation and primary health care, credited the success to the dedication of Gov. Mai Mala Buni towards healthcare service delivery.

He said that the deputy governor expressed his gratitude to the partners for the award and pledged to build

on the state's existing achievements.

In his remarks, the UNICEF Country Representative, Christian Munduate, emphasised the consortium's vision to make primary health care services more accessible to women, girls, and children across the country.

Ms Munduate stressed the importance of improving leadership, oversight, and the management of essential health services at the sub-regional level to enhance overall health outcomes.



Pic L-R seated: Registrar, Nigeria Police Academy, Dr. Ekpere F. Ezengwu; Representative of Chairman (Police Service Commission), Ponfa Audu Wuyep; Minister of Police Affairs, Ibrahim Gaidam; Director Overseeing (Permanent Secretary Office), Mr. Yusuf Abubakar Argungu; Commissioner of Police, CP Bode Akinbami; (Standing L-R) Deputy Director (Information & Public Relations), Bolaji O. Kazeem; Yusuf Nasidi (PSC); Director Reforms and Innovation Coordinator, Dr. Ogbu F. Fabian; Director Police Services Department, Ibrahim Muhammad; Senior Special Assistance (HM), Goni Kuwata; Director Legal Services, Fati Lamorde; Director Finance & Account, Okechie Isaac Tochukwu and CSP Ossai during the inauguration of an 11-man committee to review the dismissal and suspension of Cadets of the Nigeria Police Academy held at the Headquarters of the Ministry in Abuja

FG Supports Gombe Farmers With Subsidised Inputs

The Federal Government has stated that no fewer than 8,000 wheat farmers in Gombe State have been supported with subsidised inputs to cultivate wheat during the dry season.

The State Coordinator of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Dr Ibrahim Bomo, said this in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria in Gombe on Friday.

Bomo said the gesture was aimed at actualising the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu's administration, through the ministry.

He disclosed that each wheat farmer received two bags of NPK fertilisers, one bag of 50kg Urea, and a bag of 50kg wheat seeds to enable them to cultivate wheat during the dry season farming.

So This Happened (251) reviews the murder of a pregnant woman in Rivers, other

According to him, with the subsidy, each farmer is required to pay 50 per cent of the cost of fertiliser and 25 per cent of the cost of wheat

seeds.

He stated that the farmers were selected from four local government areas of the state, namely, Nafada, Kaltungo, Yamaltu Deba, and Dukku, respectively.

"The Federal Government is supporting about 8,000 farmers in Gombe to boost wheat cultivation during the dry season.

"The input subsidy is 50 per cent for fertilisers and 75 per cent subsidy for wheat seeds. Some farmers have started receiving their inputs while others are in the process of receiving them.

"But within the next 10 days, all farmers are expected to have received their inputs to commence cultivation," he said.

Bomo said that the Federal Government's gesture followed the cost-intensive nature of wheat farming.

He said the government also assigned aggregators to each cluster of wheat farmers to prevent market glut and ensure judicious use of inputs.

TETFund Dismisses N325m Payment To Adamawa APC, Says Agency Not Political Party Funder

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund, TETFund, has disclaimed reports on the social media that it paid the sum of N325 million to the Adamawa State chapter of the All Progressives Congress, APC, for running the party's activities in the state between October 2023 and 2024.

APC Woman Leader in the state, Mrs. Patricia Yakubu had in a petition addressed to the National Security Adviser, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu asserted that the TETFund doled out N25 million monthly to the party between October 2023 and October 2024.

Mrs Yakubu, in the petition, accused the state party leadership of monumental fraud and misappropriation of party funds totalling N500 million.

Among them, the Adamawa APC Woman Leader said the party received a total N325 million from TETFund in the said period using contract sales at General Murtala Mohammed College, GMMC, Yola and Federal

College of Education, Yola.

"The money is meant for running day to day party activities in and outside the state. The party account has been completely abandoned; the Financial Secretary has been removed as a signatory against the party constitution.

"Treasurer has been totally sidelined in all financial dealings. All financial transactions are done through an individual account (account details for investigation available).

"There was this time they collected three months at once totaling Seventy-Five Million naira (? 75,000,000.00). Sometimes, these monies are paid through BDCs," Mrs Yakubu alleged.

But the Director, Public Affairs of TETFund, Abdulmumin Oniyangi Thursday denied the allegations on party funding. "The assertion is not only preposterous and totally false, but also a great disservice to the nation that an individual of such political standing, would engage in frivolity without an iota of evidence.

"To further buttress the futility of the allegations, we wish to state in clear terms that General Murtala Mohammed College (GMMC), Yola, where TETFund contracts are alleged to have been sold is not a Beneficiary Institution of TETFund", he explained.

Similarly, the TETFund Director added that FCE Yola which is a beneficiary institution of TETFund is solely responsible for engagement of its contractors in line with the policy of the Fund.

"The Fund has observed that allegations of this nature, sponsored by desperate individuals, have become the trend in recent times but will not be deterred in carrying out its statutory mandate which remains funding for the rehabilitation, restoration and consolidation of tertiary education in Nigeria", said Oniyangi.

He stressed that the Fund has undertaken its mandate steadily over the years both as ETF and TETFund and with renewed vigour under the

leadership of President Bola Tinubu.

"We advise that detractors get their facts right so as to avoid misleading the public," the statement added.

Zaar Traditionalists Condemns MURIC For Opposing Creation Of Zaar Chiefdom In Bauchi

By Samuel Luka, Bauchi

The Zaar Traditional worshippers in Bauchi state have condemned in its totality, a recent comment made by Muslims Rights Concern (MURIC) against the creation of Zaar/Sayawa Chiefdom out of the present Bauchi Emirate in Bauchi state.

Mbami Iliya Sabka, Chief Priest of Zaar Traditional Worshippers who was reacting to MURIC's open letter to Governor Bala Mohammed against the creation of the Chiefdom with headquarters in Tafawa Balewa town, referred MURIC to the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which he said, explicitly prohibits the adop-

tion of a state religion by the Government of the Federation or of a State, as outlined in Section 10.

"The Zaar community wishes to respond to the recent statement made by the Muslim Rights Concern (MURIC) regarding the Governor of Bauchi State's decision to create the Sayawa Chiefdom with its headquarters in Tafawa Balewa Township", Sabkastated.

He noted that Section 38 guarantees every person the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, adding that the imposition of an Emirate Council exclusively in Bauchi State violates these constitutional rights.

According to the traditional worshippers, the Emirate system pertains

solely to Muslims and not to Nigerians of other faiths.

"This practice is discriminatory and contravenes Section 42(1) of the 1999 Constitution, which prohibits discrimination on the grounds of religion, ethnicity, or social status", Sabka said in a Press statement.

The Zaar Traditional worshippers described the Governor of Bauchi state as People's Governor, known for his commitment to social justice.

"We find it troubling to respond to MURIC's biased statements, however, it is necessary to address their actions, which violate Sections 10, 38, and 42(1) of the 1999 Constitution and risk causing religious conflict in a secular state", Sabka pointed out.

NSCDC Uncovers Building Used For Storing Illegally Refined Petrol In Rivers

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) has uncovered a residential premises used for storing illegally refined petroleum products in Rivers State.

The state commandant of the corps, Joachim

Okafor, who made this disclosure, said the illegal storage facility, located at Elelewo community in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, contained large storage tanks and cans filled with illegally refined petroleum products.

Okafor, who led a team of operatives from the corps to the illegal storage site, pointed out that the discovery by the Command's Anti-Vandal Unit was made through the deployment of the corps' latest illegal crude oil theft technology tracker.

According to him, aside from its negative impact on the nation's economy, the activities of crude oil thieves are causing serious environmental hazards and health issues for the people.

Fubara: No one in their right senses would sustain quarrel with Wike – Akpabio

President of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio has declared that only those who are not in their right senses could sustain a fight with the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, FCT, Nyesom Wike.

Akpabio, who spoke on Friday during the public lecture and book launch organized to celebrate Wike's birthday in Port Harcourt, was apparently reacting to the face-off between Wike and his successor as governor of Rivers State, Siminalayi Fubara.

The Senate President, who was the Special Guest of Honour at the event, used the opportunity to critique Governor Fubara's management of the ongoing political crisis in the state, particularly regarding his relationship with the legislature.

Akpabio emphasized the importance of maintaining quality relationships with legislative leadership,

narrating the lessons he learned from his tenure as governor of Akwa Ibom State.

"For those who may not understand politics, we were taught that the parliament can turn a woman into a man and a man into a woman.

"As a governor, my greatest fear was my House of Assembly. That's why I always worked closely with my Speaker", Akpabio said.

He acknowledged Wike's ability to reconcile quickly after any disagreements, stating that "No one in their right senses would sustain a quarrel with Wike".

Addressing Wike directly, Akpabio said, "Your contributions to Nigeria's political landscape, both as governor and now as minister, are indelible. The bridges you've built stand as a testament to your commitment to progress and unity."

'Oborevwoji Committed To Quality Education In Delta'

Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwoji, has been described as a leader with unwavering commitment to providing a high-quality education for every child, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Executive Assistant to the Governor on Education Monitoring, Hon. Clement Siakpere, gave the commendation during a tour of Secondary Schools in Uvwie and Warri Local Government Areas.

Siakpere remarked that in an era marked by rapid technological advancements and shifting economic landscapes, the governor has continued to prioritise education as a fundamental right and a vital investment in the collective future of Delta state.

According to him, Governor Oborevwoji strongly believes that education serves not only as a means of personal development but also as a catalyst for social and economic progress with improved economic outcomes for poverty reduction.

He said: "Governor Oborevwoji is hell-bent in ensuring that our education system is equipped to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

"The governor has made it abundantly clear in several forums that he is committed to implementing a comprehensive education reform agenda that prioritizes equity, accessibility, and excellence.

"His vision encompasses increased funding for public education, equitable access to quality education, support for educators, with emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education, Community and Parental engagement."

Emphasising further, The Executive Assistant, remarked that the future of our state lies in the hands of our children.

"It is our responsibility to ensure that they receive the education they deserve, a quality education that empowers them to reach their full potential and contribute positively to society.

"Governor Oborevwoji, therefore, enjoins all and sundry to build an education system that is equitable, innovative, and responsive to the needs of all standards.

"His Excellency invites all stakeholders to join him in this vital endeavour as we work together to create a brighter future for our children and state."



L-R: National President, Methodist Church Nigeria Men's Fellowship, Sir. Dr. Kehinde Oladeji; President, Men's Fellowship South West Zone, Sir. Dr. Oladele Taiwo; Secretary, Nigerian Christian Pilgrims Commission (NCPC), Rt. Rev. Prof. Stephen Adegbite; National Coordinator, Men's Fellowship, Very Rev. James Adikwu; President, Trinity Council Men's Fellowship, Bro. (Asiwaju) Oladele Maraiyesa; and Baale of Ojora Kingdom, Chief Johnson Adebowole at 4th Biennial South West Convention, at Trinity Church Council, Lagos

Okpebholo gives immediate employment to daughter of late NLC chair, Ebiogbodin

Governor Monday Okpebholo of Edo State has offered automatic employment to the daughter of a former Chairman of the Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC, Edo State Chapter, late Comrade Anthony Kaduna Ebiogbodin, who died recently.

DAILY POST recalls that Ebiogbodin slumped and died during a scuffle with policemen in Benin City.

The governor

announced the employment on Saturday while on a con-



Governor Monday Okpebholo

dolence visit to the widow and family members of the deceased, expressing displeasure over his death.

Okpebholo also promised that his administration would interface with the State's Police Commissioner, Umoru Ozigi, to ensure that the conduct of officers does not pose any threats to Edo State residents.

According to him, the death was avoidable if only the policemen had conducted themselves well at the

checkpoint, where he collapsed, after a heated argument.

"It is painful that we have lost a soul in this manner, but I will talk to the police about their conduct so that they will behave well and conduct themselves well in the state.

"He is gone. It is painful, but that is life, as we all will die one day. I feel sad over the circumstances surrounding his death, but he is gone. No man knows who is next," the governor concluded.

Okpebholo Approves Nominees for Appointment Into Edo Revenue Board

The Governor of Edo State, Monday Okpebholo, has approved the nomination of Oladele Bankole-Balogun for appointment as Executive Chairman, Edo State Board of Internal Revenue.

Bankole-Balogun, born in 1961 into the illustrious family of the Late Chief Bankole Balogun of Igarra Akoko-Edo, Edo state obtained his education in

University of Ibadan (BSc Hons Political Science 1984); University of London (LLB Hons Law); College of Law, Store Street, London (Post-graduate Diploma Law).

He is a member, Law Society of England and Wales, Nigeria Bar Association; International Bar Association and Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (UK).

Bankole-Balogun has worked in different spheres

of human endeavours including Principal Partner, Oladele Bankole-Balogun & Co and Federal Commissioner, Public Complaints Commission (2012-2015) representing Edo State.

In politics, he was at various times, an aspirant and candidate for the House of Representatives Elections in Akoko Edo Federal Constituency and was recently a Member of APC Campaign

Council for 2024 Governorship elections in Edo State.

Other members nominated by Governor Okpebholo for appointment as Executive Directors into the Edo State Board of Internal Revenue are: Deacon Idiacke Patrick Akhimien (representing Edo Central), Hon. Mike Ohio Ezomo (representing Edo North) and Hon. Engr. Jackson Eribo (representing Edo South).

Clergyman Advocates For Muslim Governor In Lagos After 12 Years Of Christian Leadership

Having been led by Christian leaders for the past years, Lagos State deserves a Muslim governor, the Archbishop of Methodist Church of Nigeria (Lagos) Most Reverend Isaac Ayo Olawuyi has said.

Olawuyi while speaking 22nd annual thanksgiving

service of the Lagos State House of Assembly said by 2027, Christians would have occupied the number one seat in the state for 12 years.

The clergyman's remark was disclosed in a statement issued by Eromosele Ebhomele, the Chief Press Secretary to the Speaker of the Lagos State House of

Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa.

According to the statement, the Archbishop of Methodist Church noted that there should be religious tolerance among the people.

He said 2027 is a time for the people of Lagos state to elect a Muslim governor for the state.

Since Nigeria switched to democratic leadership in 1999, four governors have led Lagos state with Bola Tinubu and Babatunde Fashola governing between 1999 and 2015 – two tenures each for four years per tenure cycle. Both governors were Muslims.

In 2015, Akinwunmi

Ambode assumed office, completed his tenure in 2019 before handing over the Babajide Sanwo-Olu. Both Ambode and Sanwo-Olu are Christians.

As it is, the clergyman is calling for a Muslim governor by 2027 when Sanwo-Olu would be completing his maximum two tenures of

four years each.

The clergy while driving his point home said, "I also want to add that we have consideration for religious inclination in Lagos State. It would be 12 years in 2027 that we have been in the system together and we have been having Christians as governors."

Badagry Slave Route Now A UNESCO World Heritage Site

The Lagos State Government is proud to celebrate the historic recognition of Badagry's Slave Route, including the renowned Point of No Return, as one of the 22 newly listed UNESCO World Heritage Sites. This prestigious designation underscores Badagry's pivotal role in global history and its enduring legacy as a key site in the transatlantic slave trade.

For centuries, Badagry served as a major hub for the slave trade. From the 8th to the 20th centuries, countless individuals were traded across land routes to North African territories and, from the 17th to 19th centuries, transported across the Atlantic to the Americas. The Point of No Return remains a stark and poignant symbol of this dark chapter in human history, representing the tragic journeys of those who were forcibly taken from their homeland.

The recognition by UNESCO is a testament to the historical and cultural significance of Badagry, shining a global spotlight on Lagos State as a centre for heritage preservation and cultural tourism. This milestone aligns seamlessly with the vision of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu to position Lagos as a leading tourism and cultural destination in Africa.

Speaking on this monu-

mental achievement, the Honourable Commissioner for Tourism, Arts, and Culture, Mrs. Toke Benson-Awoyinka, noted that the recognition presents a unique opportunity for Lagos State to expand its tourism offerings while educating the world on the importance of acknowledging and learning from history.

"Badagry's inclusion on the UNESCO list is not only a validation of its historical significance but also a call to preserve its legacy and use as a platform for healing, education, and cultural tourism. Lagos State remains committed to ensuring that this site is fully developed to provide visitors with an impactful and transformative experience," the Commissioner stated.

She further emphasised that the Lagos State Government, through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, is collaborating with stakeholders to enhance infrastructure around the heritage site. This effort is geared toward ensuring that it remains a place of remembrance, reflection, and learning for generations to come.

This global recognition reaffirms Lagos State's unwavering commitment to showcasing its rich history, promoting sustainable tourism, and preserving its cultural landmarks.



L-R Emmanuel Uka, Experiential Marketing/ Sponsorship Manager, Moniepoint Inc; Pharm. (Mrs) Omokhafa Ashore, National Secretary, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN); Emmanuel Imouokhome, Regional Sales Manager, Moniepoint Inc; Pharm Ambrose Igwekwama, National Chairman, Pharm. Adegboyega Oguntayo, National Vice Chair, ACPN and Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, Immediate Past National Chairman, ACPN during a courtesy visit to the new ACPN Executive by Moniepoint at the ACPN National Secretariat in Lagos this afternoon.

Ministry Of Transportation Lagos Takes Firm Stand Against Gated Streets In Lekki

The Ministry of Transportation has observed a surge in the installation of unauthorized gates, particularly in the Lekki axis of Lagos State. Many of these gates according to the Ministry were erected without the necessary approvals from the Ministry, while some approved gates are being mismanaged as residents fail to adhere to the established

guidelines for gated streets in Lagos State.

This non-compliance poses significant challenges to traffic flow, emergency response access, and overall public safety. As such, the Ministry is taking a firm stance to address this issue and wishes to reiterate the following in line with the Lagos State Government's policy and regulations:

All gates and barriers installed without prior authorization from the Lagos State Government are illegal and will be removed.

Any unauthorized gate or barrier must be dismantled within seven (7) days of this announcement. Failure to comply will result in enforcement actions, including removal and penalties, in line with existing regulations.

For gates and barriers with prior approval, compliance with the following guidelines is mandatory:

Gates or barriers on public roads or streets must remain fully open for public use between 5:00 AM and 10:00 PM daily, to ensure interconnectivity and the free flow of traffic across the State.

All approved gates or barriers must be manned by

security personnel engaged by the Community Development Associations (CDAs). However, between 10:00 PM and 5:00 AM, these gates or barriers may remain closed but must be opened promptly in the event of an emergency to allow free access and exit for first responders.

The Lagos State Commissioner for Transportation, Mr. Oluwaseun Osiyemi urges all residents and CDAs to strictly comply with these guidelines to foster a safe, efficient, and connected transportation network across the State. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will incur punitive measures against non-compliant CDAs, including fines and further enforcement actions from the State Government.

All residents in gated streets or areas with barriers are encouraged to ensure compliance with these regulations to maintain a safe and accessible transportation network across the State.

Worshippers Trapped, As Fire Guts Ibadan Church

A devastating fire engulfed a parish of the Christ Apostolic Church in Ibadan, Oyo State, on Friday night, reportedly trapping several worshippers inside.

The incident occurred at about 9:30 pm at Wisdom Estate, Road 1G, Olohunda Road, in the Lagelu Local Government Area, sources confirmed to journalists on Saturday morning.

Eyewitness accounts revealed that the church was hosting a Friday vigil when

the fire broke out.

One source recounted, "The incident happened in the night around 9:30pm. I think they were having Friday vigil. Some worshippers had already slept off, to have some rest before they start vigil when the incident happened."

Another source described the harrowing scene, saying "There was an aged woman, very old to the extent that she could not work properly. She was still inside the church when the

fire was raging seriously."

A church member, who requested anonymity, said, "People were still inside the church during the fire. I will get back to you later, please."

As of the time of reporting, the exact cause of the fire remains unclear.

Confirming the incident, the General Manager of Oyo State Fire Services, Akinyemi Akinyinka, said, "Our men were there based on information from one Kunle Junaid."





L-R seated: Registrar, Nigeria Police Academy, Dr. Ekpere F. Ezengwu; Representative of Chairman (Police Service Commission), Ponfa Audu Wuyep; Minister of Police Affairs, Ibrahim Gaidam; Director Overseeing (Permanent Secretary Office), Mr. Yusuf Abubakar Argungu; Commissioner of Police, CP Bode Akinbamilowo; (Standing L-R) Deputy Director (Information & Public Relations), Bolaji O. Kazeem; Yusuf Nasidi (PSC); Director Reforms and Innovation Coordinator, Dr. Ogbu F. Fabian; Director Police Services Department, Ibrahim Muhammad; Senior Special Assistance (HM), Goni Kuwata; Director Legal Services, Fati Lamorde; Director Finance & Account, Okehie Isaac Tochukwu and CSP Ossai during the inauguration of an 11-man committee to review the dismissal and suspension of Cadets of the Nigeria Police Academy held at the Headquarters of the Ministry in Abuja

Man Threatens Legal Action Against Kano Govt Over N20m Property Demolition

....We gave notice 3 times - MDC

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

The owner of a multi-million Naira property located at new Gandu layout close to Zoo road in the metropolis has threatened to take legal action against kano state government for demolishing a property which belong to him.

Ibrahim Mukhtar Muhammad who disclosed this while addressing newsmen Friday, said the property worth N20 million was demolished without prior notice from the Kano State Urban Planning and Development Authority (KNUPDA).

Muhammad also accused officials of KNUPDA of alleged extortion by taking money from him to design the construction, drawing and supervis-

ing of the work and suddenly demolishing same project, describing it as traumatic.

"This is once a beautiful place we constructed, but as I look back you can see what happened as a result of the demolition exercise that was carried out by KNUPDA.

"We were not given any notice prior to this demolition. We just woke up one morning, that was on Monday morning and found these rubbles.

"My driving force for constructing this eatery is just to help our younger ones, our brothers, our children to get something, to get employment. I'm not here to make any money because of this thing.

"As you can see, as I can tell you from the stretch of almost 500 feet, I'm the owner of this property. So if

there's anybody that has a stake, I am the one that has a stake.

"This place that was constructed before, you cannot come after eight o'clock, you cannot pass this place. The place has become a dumping ground, people urinate, we need to do all sorts of things here. But by our coming, I said no, it has to be stopped. So we applied for construction of temporary, which was on the process.

"But unfortunately, without any notice, we finished this building. The only thing that remains is to put furniture inside and to start business and they come and demolish this.

"Unfortunately, this government, for the past six months or seven months, they will collect your money, but they will not give you approval. You can go and confirm from the KNUPDA,

you will see heaps of files. So what we knew we did was they sent their representatives.

"They were even the ones telling us what to do for instance to cut here, demolish here before the final structure. This drawing was produced from the architectural department of KNUPDA.

"And prior to this demolition, when they told me that they are going to demolish this place, I called the MD. And the MD said, okay, I should meet him on Monday, nine o'clock. Later he said, 11 o'clock. That was even after the demolition.

"That was when I know I've just been deceived because nothing has been done. And I went to him and I explained to him, this is the situation. He said I should come on Thursday.

ACF Reacts On Tax Reform Bills: Urges FG To Allow Opposition Voice

...Says no democracy without dissenting Views

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

Northern leaders, under the auspices of the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) have urged the Federal Government to be tolerant dissenting voices against the tax reform bills before the National Assembly, saying that fighting them is against the spirit of democracy.

According to the Forum, the policy which is controversial at the moment, and over the past two weeks in the country has been on the Executive Bills sent to the National Assembly, proposing sweeping changes in Nigeria's tax laws.

The National Publicity Secretary, Professor Tukur Muhammed-Baba in a statement on Thursday, said "ACF accepts that periodic public policy reforms are in line with the political and public administrative processes, in which regards reforms are indeed necessary and desirable."

He explained that "nothing in the life of any community is static and policies must try to address emerging challenges, take advantage of new opportunities, etc."

"Debates have continued to rage on the pros and cons of the proposed bills, with positions being argued vehemently and stridently with passion. However, it is concerning that the emerging debates have become acrimonious, pitting sections of the country against each other.

"It is highly regretful that opinions have tended to involve unsavoury and often abusive words meant to denigrate, blackmail or intimidate anyone perceived, rightly or wrongly, as standing in support or opposing the bills or their specific aspects therefrom as are now under consideration in the Senate", he said.

Muhammed-Baba pointed out that "needless to remind all, the proposed bills' impact will have ramifications on every citizen and every part of the country," while adding, "ACF notes that debates over bills are part and parcels of the public policy process, especially in democratic settings."

"Reforms meant to correct policy shortcomings or inadequacies must necessarily address all areas of concern that citizens may

wish to raise. The current debates actually suggest that not enough consultations went into the preparations of the bills, as obvious in concerns raised by critical stakeholders and various interest groups across Nigeria including, critically, the National Economic Council, headed by the Vice President of the Federation."

He lamented that, "the apparent impatience by supporters of the bills, obviously including and especially the Federal Government, to have them speedily processed through Senate, creates and sustains impressions of specific but unstated underlying interests."

He said: "It is therefore a welcome development that the Senate has wisely decided to tarry by electing for wider consultations with relevant stakeholders intended to address areas of concerns.

He stressed that "ACF encourages all concerned to cooperate with the relevant Senate Committee tasked with the assignment, while urging every interest group to see the debates for or against any provisions in the bills as essential inputs into the policy process."

He pointed out that the federal government should allow the voices of opposition to the proposed tax bills by aggrieved Nigerians, Muhammed-Baba, adding, "expressions of contrary opinions and views are necessary ingredients of the legislative process, in line with the dictates of democracy, to ensure that the emergence of robust laws that will stand the test of time."

"Ultimately, the outcome of such laws emanating from the process will serve the interests of the whole country and not, as some insinuate, specific sections or interests to the detriment of others. It is in line with the above that ACF constituted a committee of experts to study the proposed bills so as to come out with appropriate recommendations to be forwarded to appropriate organs of government", he further stressed.

"In the meantime, ACF urges restraint, decorum and mutual respect in any discussions of provisions in the proposed bills as, in accordance with the timeless adage, no one has monopoly of knowledge and/or wisdom", he added.

Kano Scrap Cos Office, Drop SSG In Major Cabinet Reshuffle

By Achadu Gabriel, Kaduna

Kano state government has scrapped the office of the Chief of Staff, Bala Sagagi, and dropped the Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Baffa Bichi, from the administration due to health challenges, in a major cabinet reshuffle.

Accordingly, the Deputy Governor Abdussalam Gwarzo, has been moved from the position of Commissioner for local govern-

ment to that of Higher Education, also in the shakeup.

Announcing this shakeup in his office on Thursday, the Director General, Media Sunusi Dawakintofa explained that it was meant to rejigged the cabinet for optimum performance.

Five other commissioners affected in this cabinet reshuffle include those of Special Duties, Finance, Rural and Community Development and Information.

"In a major political decision, Kano state Governor

Alh. Abba Kabir Yusuf has announced a reshuffle of the state executive council to effect pragmatic political realignment of his administration.

"Those affected by the major shake up are the Chief of Staff, Alh. Shehu Wada Sagagi whose office is now scrapped, and Secretary to the State Government, Dr. Abdullahi Baffa Bichi dropped on health ground.

"Governor Yusuf removed some cabinet members and reassigned others to enhance administrative per-

formance and political retool.

"Those who retained their positions are Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Barr. Haruna Isa Dederi, Commissioner for Agriculture, Dr. Danjuma Mahmoud, Commissioner for Health, Dr. Abubakar Labaran, Commissioner for Land and Physical Planning, Hon. Abduljabbar Mohammed Umar, Commissioner for Budget and Planning Hon Musa Suleiman Shannon and Commissioner for Works and Housing Engr. Marwan Ahmad.

Fulani Group Alerts DSS Of Possible Breach Of Peace In Kwara

Three Fulani leaders in Kwara State have written to the Department of State Services (DSS), alleging a group's plans to disrupt peace and urge the security agency to act quickly.

The three leaders, Alhaji Abdullahi Ahmed (Ga'a Federal), Abdullahi Arisekola (Ga'a Erin and Jowuro),

and Muhammad Jowuro of Omu Aran, claimed that a group led by Ande Mu'azu Buruku is currently plotting a leadership crisis that could destabilise the state.

The trio accused Buruku of refusing to identify with Alhaji Jimoh Adam Ojonla, who was recently turbaned as the new Ardo Fulani by the Emir of Ilorin, Alhaji

(Dr.) Ibrahim Sulu-Gambari, in a letter written through their lawyer, H.O. Buhari of the Buhari, Oguntoye Associates.

According to them, Buruku, whose father was the Ardo, intends to replace Ojonla, who was turbaned on November 15, 2024.

In the petition received by the DSS on November

25, 2024, the leaders wrote: "Following the said turbaning, some disgruntled elements among the Fulani, led and championed by one Alhaji Ande Mu'azu Buruku, wanted to cause confusion by installing another Ardo of Fulani for Kwara State because his father was the first Ardo."

"This Alhaji Ande

Mu'azu Buruku has gone on air and instructed all of his supporters to buy and wear 'Ankara clothes' for the installation of a new Ardo to oppose the Emir of Ilorin's choice.

"We feel obligated to notify you and other security agencies. Alhaji Ande Mu'azu Buruku intends to disrupt law and order in

Kwara State."

The petition also stated that the information provided to the security agencies was intended to "prevent what will cause mayhem and chaos in the society, especially among the Fulani."



L-R Emmanuel Uka, Experiential Marketing/ Sponsorship Manager, Moniepoint Inc; Pharm.(Mrs) Omokhafa Ashore, National Secretary, Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN); Emmanuel Imouokhome, Regional Sales Manager, Moniepoint Inc; Pharm Ambrose Igwekwama, National Chairman, Pharm. Adegboyega Oguntoye, National Vice Chair, ACPN and Pharm. Adewale Oladigbolu, Immediate Past National Chairman, ACPN during a courtesy visit to the new ACPN Executive by Moniepoint at the ACPN National Secretariat in Lagos this afternoon.

Lecturer Arrested Over Kidnap Of ASUU Chairman's Wife In Benue

A lecturer with Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM), Dr. Ichor Tersagh Smart, has been arrested by the police for alleged kidnap of the wife of ASUU Chairman in same University, Mrs Susan Anyagh.

A statement signed by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO) in the state, Kate Aneene, a Superintendent of Police (SP), and made available to newsmen recently stated:

"On the 7/12/2024 at about 0900hrs, information was received at Police Headquarters, Makurdi that Mrs. Susan Anyagh, wife of the Chairman, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), University Makurdi (JOSTUM) chapter, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka, was kidnapped along Otukpo Road, Makurdi and taken hostage in her car that was being driven to an unknown destination."

Aneene further stated that "in quick response, the Commissioner of Police, Benue State Command, Steve Yabanet, immediately ordered all patrol officers and checkpoints to ensure her rescue and arrest of the kidnappers involved."

She said: "At about

1300hrs another information was received along Yandev-Ugbema Road that the said victim was attacked by her assailants and left unconscious by the roadside."

According to the PPRO, "she was identified and rushed to Primary Healthcare Clinic, Ameladu for treatment.

"Subsequently, the victim started responding to treatment and gained consciousness.

"She stated that while she was driving from NNPC mega fuel station, Kanshio where she went to collect money from her customer, she was flagged down on Otukpo Road by persons who claimed to be in need and she stopped to render help.

"They quickly jumped into her car and pointed a gun at her, ordered her to drive towards Wurukum area.

"Immediately, she looked outside the car and saw her husband's colleague, Dr. Ichor Tersagh Smart of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University (JOSTUM), standing by the car. She beckoned to him for help but he turned his back and walked away.

Acting Provost Receives Supports From Colleagues, Members Of Staff

ADIGUN TUNDE - MINNA

The entire workforce of the Kwara State College of Health Technology, Offa, have congratulated the Acting Provost of the College, Mallam Jimoh Olasunkanmi Ibrahim on his recent elevation following.

The workers declared "Mallam Jimoh Olasunkanmi Ibrahim be assured our support at all times"

This development followed the expiration of tenure of the former Provost of the College, Dr. Abdulrauf Aliyu Alabi and his Deputy, Dr. Nda Ishiaku.

The new helmsman Mallam Jimoh Olasunkanmi Ibrahim was the immediate past Deputy Provost (Academics) before his new status.

Speaking while on a courtesy call on the new Provost, Mrs. Christianah Bamidele, HOD Community Health acknowledged the extensive experience in Health Education of the Acting Provost, commitment, hardwork and sense of duty

all these while in the College. She went on "He is fit for the position and job in all honesty" added th academician.

"Mallam Jimoh Olasunkanmi Ibrahim is a core professional, administrator, disciplinarian and workaholic that will take the College to a commendable heights".

In his own remarks, the HOD Public Health, Mrs. G.O Akande advised the Acting Provost, Mallam Jimoh Ibrahim to lead by example, be very patient and listening, encourage an open door policy that will embrace accountability and transparency to enhance feedback in his regime.

The Head of Departments of Public Health, Dental Technology, Community Health and Pharmacy & others assured the Acting Provost of their elastic support, commitment and service delivery that will propel the College.

They as well assured Governor Abdulrahman Abdulrasaq that the College is in a very safe hands of the Acting Provost and the Registrar, Alhaji Soliudeen

Babatunde.

According to them the College is well positioned to continue to deliver on its mandate" just as they assured the Commissioner for Tertiary Education, Dr. (Mrs.) Mary Ronke Arinde of harmonious working relationship with all and sundry in taking the citadel of knowledge to its rightful place in the comity of higher

institutions in the country.

Mrs. Roseline Bolanle Ogundele HOD, Dental Technology and other HODs prayed that the tenure of the Acting Provost will be prosperous, peaceful and most rewarding in the annals of the College existence and growth with peaceful co-existence in the College community.

Niger State Draggess 240 Frontline Heath Workers To Classroom For Updates On Maternal, Infant Nutrition

About 240 Frontline health workers in Niger state have been dragged back to classroom to update On maternal, Infant and young child Nutrition (MIYVM).

Packaged by Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, in collaboration with the Niger State Ministry of Primary Health Care, is supervised by Niger State Ministry of secondary and tertiary health care.

The week long training programs launched a week-long training programs has as its theme, "Adequate Nutrition," is taking place in

Bida Local Council.

Speaking shortly after the training kickoff, Niger State Nutrition Officer and Secretary of the State Committee for Food and Nutrition, Hajiya Asmau Abubakar Mohammed, highlighted that this training builds on previous Training of Trainers (TOT) sessions and includes training for secondary health facility workers as well.

"A significant amount of training has been conducted to enhance our data collection efforts," stated Asmau.

"In the past, our data col-

lection faced challenges, but we are now ensuring that our data is fully documented, enabling informed decision-making regarding nutrition initiatives.

This data helps us identify how many individuals require training and the number of beneficiaries we aim to reach."

Hajiya Asmau expressed confidence that participants will bring this knowledge back to their respective facilities and implement on-the-job training, leading to increased local-level nutrition awareness and

improved health outcomes for mothers and children under five.

She announced that a total of 550 frontline health workers are expected to be trained across the three senatorial districts in the state, with plans to extend training to other areas soon.

Earlier, the Project Manager of the Accelerated Nutrition in Nigeria (ARIN) project, Niger State, Shehu Mohammed Etsugaie, shared that ARIN, which began its operations in 2018, is set to conclude on December 31, 2024.

I Was Raised Not To Depend On Any Man – Queen Blessing Ebigieson

Queen Blessing Ebigieson was recently re-elected as the President of Association of Movie Producers. This movie producer is also an accomplished actress, a business woman and a philanthropist. Queen is not one to pretend over issues. In this exciting interview, Blessing opens up on many things concerning her life, career and marriage. Enjoy this no holds bare interview with ORJI CHUKA

Congratulations on your re-election as AMP President, tell us what it has been like since you took over as AMP President; your achievements so far, welfare plans for members?

I have been a member of Association of Movie Producers, (AMP), Nigeria, for over 16 years now. I was the National Treasurer of the Association from 2018 – 2020 under the leadership of the former President Emeritus Ralph Nwadike. In 2020, I became the National Vice President of the Association under the leadership of Peace Anyim Osigwe till 2023 when we lost her.

I was later sworn in as National President on March 17th, 2023; and re-elected for another term this year. It has been an amazing journey but with a lot of work because I hardly have time for myself these days. In July, I was in London for the Nigerian Week hosted by SRTV London, where I received recognition for the Most Devoted Industry Leader, 2023. I must say I deserve it because I have worked very hard. In August 30th, 2023, Actors Guild of Nigeria, AGN, honored me for my remarkable leadership in the guild and the creative space. In September 17th to 24th, 2023, I was in Toronto, Canada, for the Toronto International Film Festival, where I spoke at the event and also received the Achievement Award in Media and Creative industry.

I am happy because I have not disappointed my predecessor and other past presidents, knowing also that I can count on their advice and support and that of all the members at all times. I am not ashamed to ask for help from them, even my members when needed because nobody knows it all. As I try to complete most of the projects the past presidents began, I am also charting a new part for the Association.

With new leadership, no matter how you look at it, it comes with new perception on how things should be done and how we see and look at things. In all, it has been an amazing journey, I have the support of my members because they are happy with my leadership and I'll continue to do my best to make sure it stays that way. It will always be AMP first and AMP always.

You started as a dancer and model more than 20 years ago. What is the difference between actors that started in your time and actors of today, especially the young ladies; in terms of character, discipline and approach to work?

No. I started as an actress, and a model, later added dancing along the line. I started dancing in musical videos and I danced for the likes of Tony Tетуila, Eedris Abudulkareem, Pasuma Wonder, Adex and Asker among others. I also started modeling when jobs were not coming, for me; it was necessity that drove me into all these ones, otherwise the passion was acting.

I had so many bills to pay and I was raised in a manner that as a woman, you shouldn't depend on a man, so the man factor providing for me was not really my thing. In fact, I came into Nollywood as an 18-year old virgin till I was 21 years; my mom did not raise me to depend on any man. So, if there is no acting job, dancing job will be available and when there's no dancing job, modeling job will come. Jobs to put food on the table and when they come, I am very professional and disciplined about it.

I did the TV series Super Story and This



Life multiple times for Chief Wale Adenuga, One Bad Apple, Only God forgives, and Officers Wife etc. One thing people I have worked with either in acting or other businesses know about me is that when you give me your call time; your call time is your full time. If I don't have time, I won't take your job and one thing I never do is take a job when I'm still on another job. I must finish the production, go to my house, sleep at least two days, and eat the food I cooked because I am a very good cook; before I will take up another job.

I consider my health in everything I do that is why I am careful with what I eat outside because I don't know what they used to cook their food, so it's always important to come back home, detox, make your food, sleep and rest before you take up another job. Most of the actors today are not disciplined. As a producer, I am a much disciplined person and harsh when I need to be. Almost everybody I worked with have not come to set late because of the kind of person I am. I will make sure I put you in a hotel a day before the production starts.

On the other hand, if you don't come a day before the production and you want to come same day, you must come at call time or you will have to talk to my lawyer. I don't want to know what happened because it's my money that is wasting. So, when it comes to me, I'm very strict and people that work with me know that.

Yes, a lot of actors are not disciplined like in our days and the ones before us. When you tell them call time is 8:00am, you will see some of them coming by 4:00pm and some of them especially ladies take three hours to make up. I don't think most of these ladies depend on money they make from acting to survive, they either have other busi-

nesses or they have men that are bankrolling them. So, if you don't have a man that is bankrolling you, neither do you have other businesses that generate money for you, then you would appreciate and respect time.

Yes, after I had my son; I stopped dancing and also stopped runway modeling, I only do photo modeling now. Of course, I added movie production 14 years ago into my portfolio. I'm a serial entrepreneur: I sell charcoal, I sell clothes and I do aso ebi for parties, I do a lot of things just to make sure that I don't lack, to keep up with my bills because it's a lot to stay in this industry.

About your foundation, tell us more about the lives you have touched especially that of the widows and why you are particular about the widows?

The foundation has been on for many years; in 2018, we celebrated our 10th anniversary. By next year, this foundation would be 17 years. Every 14th of February, we celebrate 1000 (one thousand) widows and aged women, on Val's day which is always February 14th. Last year, it was held at the palace of the Emir of Zauzzau in Zaria, Kaduna State. As you know, we choose a state that we will go each year. The only year we don't do it is during election year because of the uncertainty in the country. Again, I don't want anyone to compel us to politicize the foundation, because it's strictly a calling from God. It has nothing to do with politics or religion.

We go through the traditional rulers to help us select genuine widows who are truly in need. We organize parties where we provide music, food and drinks. Some of the side attractions include dancing competition; we also do balloting for sewing and grinding machines and also give them sti-

pend to start a trade. When you help a widow, you are helping the children also because she's not going to allow them suffer. 80% of the funding for now is from me and this depends on how buoyant I am at that time. Organizing the program alone, the DJ, food, drinks, for the guests including the 1,000 widows and aged women that come because you have to cook for more than this number as some will also come with their children. We also we give them six yards of ankara each and the wrappers alone cost about 6,000 naira, we are talking about the cheapest and good wrapper that will at least last for some time. We are talking about millions of naira.

Last years program, I spent over 7million naira and you know a dollar was about 360 naira, with dollar now at over 1,000 naira and fuel at close to 1000 naira; I will need over 10,000,000 naira to host the program next year which is just a few months away. No matter how small I try to do it, it will still cost a lot. In 2018, when we hosted the wives and mothers of our fallen heroes, at the Army Cantonment, Maryland, Ikeja, Lagos state, 3 days before the program, we brought some facilitators to teach them how to make shoes, bags etc. At the event, we did balloting for sewing machines and most of them won. We also gave some of them token for start up. Some told us they want to sell food, some pure water, some fairly used clothes and akara, etc. Anything that N20, 000- N50, 000 can start up, we do that yearly when we host the program.

I asked God what do I do. He specifically said I should not do it in one state so that I don't recycle widows. I've done it twice in Edo State because I'm from there and also twice in Lagos state because I live and work here. I've also done in Niger state, Ibadan - Oyo state, Ile ife- Osun state and Kaduna State. I did not just start it; it was God that instructed me to do it.

Each time the event is getting closer, I become restless because 80% of the funding comes from me. The remaining 20 % come from outside support. I used to fund it alone but two years ago, my cousin Prof Azeez Butali based in the U.S through his foundation paid for 6 yards of wrappers for 100 widows and promised to make it a yearly thing. Mr. Jimi Agbaje, my mentor and godfather; who is also a Patron of the Foundation paid for 6 yards of wrappers for 100 widows and give a token to five widows business as a start up, a support he promised to continue on a yearly basis. Prof Pat Utomi also a patron supports the foundation and my uncle and great friend, Apostle Johnson Suleiman also supports the foundation whenever we reach out to him.

My online fans and well wishes support us too and that explains the 20% support I talked about. I pray that more people will come on board because I can't continue to put in 80% of the funds yearly, so that I don't go bankrupt. I have faith that one day, it will be only 50 per cent and it will continue to go down. I am one person that never gives up on the things that I believe in. I know that we're always going to continue to do it because it brings a lot of joy and smile to the faces of these widows and their children and anything that brings peace of mind to humanity is what I live for.

Continued next week

Power Surge: TCN's Bold Call for Grid Expansion Investment

By Anyanwu Theresa Ijeoma

In a thrilling turn of events, the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) has issued a clarion call for increased investment to supercharge the nation's power grid. This electrifying announcement comes at a critical juncture, as Nigeria grapples with the dual challenges of meeting burgeoning energy demands and modernizing its aging infrastructure.

The TCN, established as part of the unbundling of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), is the backbone of Nigeria's electricity transmission network. Despite being the only entity from the PHCN not privatized, TCN has faced significant challenges, including underfunding and outdated infrastructure.

The Transmission Rehabilitation and Expansion Program (TREP), launched in 2017, aims to rehabilitate and expand the nation's transmission infrastructure to stabilize the grid and enhance its capacity to 20,000MW.

The TCN's ambitious vision is nothing short of a power revolution. With the national grid often teetering on the brink of collapse, the stakes have never been higher. The company's plea for investment is a bold move to ensure that the lights stay on and the wheels of industry keep turning.

Significant milestones have been achieved with the installation of new transformers at substations in Alausa, Ota, and Alagbon. These upgrades have increased the capacity of these substations, providing additional bulk power to various regions.

The TCN's Managing Director, Engr. Sule Ahmed Abdulaziz, emphasized the need for substantial financial investment to achieve the government's target of 10,000MW by 2025. Drawing comparisons with countries like India, which allocates over \$500 million annually for power development, Abdulaziz highlighted the critical need for robust financial support.

Imagine a Nigeria where power outages are a thing of the past, where businesses can operate without the fear of sudden blackouts, and where every home is illuminated with reliable electricity. This is the future that TCN envisions, but it requires a massive influx of capital to become a reality.

The call for investment is not just about money; it's about securing Nigeria's energy future. It's about creating a robust and resilient grid that can withstand the pressures of a growing economy and a rapidly increasing population. It's about harnessing the power of innovation and technology to build a grid that is not only efficient but also sustainable.



The government's commitment to improving electricity nationwide is clear, but achieving the 10,000MW target by 2025 requires substantial investment. The TCN's appeal for more investment is a call to action for all stakeholders, including the government, private sector, and international partners.

In the words of TCN's Managing Director, "We are at a pivotal moment in our nation's history. The decisions we make today will determine the future of our energy sector for generations to come. We must seize this opportunity to invest in our grid and build a brighter, more prosperous Nigeria."

So, as the TCN lights the way forward, the message is clear: the time to act is now. The benefits of a modernized grid are manifold, from boosting economic growth to improving the quality of life for millions of Nigerians. But achieving this vision will require a concerted effort from all stakeholders. The time to electrify Nigeria's future is now.

Historical Context and Challenges: The history of Nigeria's power sector is marked by numerous challenges and attempts at reform. The unbundling of the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) in 2013 was a significant step

achieving this vision requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. The time to act is now, and the decisions made today will determine the future of Nigeria's energy sector for generations to come. The TCN's ambitious vision of a stable and reliable power supply is within reach, but it requires the necessary investment and commitment from all parties involved

towards privatization, aimed at improving efficiency and attracting private investment. However, the transition has been fraught with difficulties, including inadequate infrastructure, regulatory hurdles, and financial constraints.

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) has been at the forefront of these challenges. As the entity responsible for electricity transmission, TCN's role is crucial in ensuring that generated power reaches consumers efficiently. However, the aging infrastructure and lack of investment have often hampered its efforts.

The Transmission Rehabilitation and Expansion Program (TREP): Launched in 2017, the Transmission Rehabilitation and Expansion Program (TREP) is a comprehensive initiative aimed at addressing the critical issues facing Nigeria's transmission network. The program focuses on rehabilitating existing infrastructure, expanding transmission capacity, and improving grid stability.

One of the key components of TREP is the installation of new transformers and substations across the country. These upgrades are essential for increasing the capacity of the transmission network and ensuring that power generated by the generation companies

(GenCos) can be effectively distributed to consumers.

The financial requirements for achieving the goals of TREP are substantial. The TCN's Managing Director, Engr. Sule Ahmed Abdulaziz, has emphasized the need for significant investment to meet the government's target of 10,000MW by 2025. This target is ambitious, considering the current state of the transmission network and the financial constraints facing the sector.

Drawing comparisons with other countries, Abdulaziz highlighted the need for robust financial support. For instance, India allocates over \$500 million annually for power development, a figure that underscores the scale of investment required to achieve similar results in Nigeria.

The Role of Stakeholders: Achieving the goals of TREP and ensuring a stable and reliable power supply in Nigeria requires the concerted efforts of all stakeholders. This includes the government, private sector, international partners, and the general public.

The government's role is crucial in providing the necessary regulatory framework and financial support. This includes addressing the issues of underfunding and ensuring that the necessary investments are made in the transmission network.

The private sector also has a significant role to play. Private investment is essential for financing the upgrades and expansions needed to improve the transmission network. This includes investments in new technologies and infrastructure that can enhance the efficiency and reliability of the grid.

International partners, including development banks and international organizations, can provide the necessary financial and technical support. This includes funding for infrastructure projects and technical assistance in implementing best practices and innovative solutions.

The Transmission Company of Nigeria's call for increased investment is a bold and necessary step towards addressing the critical issues facing the country's power sector. The benefits of a modernized and efficient transmission network are manifold, from boosting economic growth to improving the quality of life for millions of Nigerians.

However, achieving this vision requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. The time to act is now, and the decisions made today will determine the future of Nigeria's energy sector for generations to come. The TCN's ambitious vision of a stable and reliable power supply is within reach, but it requires the necessary investment and commitment from all parties involved

Dele Farotimi: Balancing Free Speech And The Boundaries Of Defamation

By Godwin Anyebe

In an age where free speech is heralded as the cornerstone of democracy, the conversation surrounding its limits has become more crucial than ever. Dele Farotimi, a Nigerian lawyer and vocal public commentator, has consistently pushed the boundaries of political and social discourse. His fearless expressions have sparked admiration among advocates for truth and accountability, yet they have also raised questions about the fine line between free speech and defamation.

Free speech is fundamental in any democratic society. It empowers citizens to question authority, challenge societal norms, and hold power accountable. Farotimi's bold critiques of Nigeria's leadership and institutional failings reflect this principle in action. He uses his platform to amplify concerns many Nigerians share but are often too afraid to voice. His rhetoric, deeply rooted in frustration over systemic failures, resonates with a populace yearning for transparency and change.

However, the right to free speech does not exist in a vacuum. It must be exercised responsibly to avoid infringing on the rights of others. Defamation, defined as

the publication of false statements that harm an individual's reputation, represents a critical boundary. When unchecked, it can destroy careers, tarnish personal lives, and derail public trust in discourse. Critics argue that some of Farotimi's statements occasionally tread dangerously close to this line, challenging the ethicality of his approach.

The debate here is not just about Farotimi but about the broader implications of free speech in Nigeria. The country's legal system often struggles to mediate between protecting individual reputations and upholding the freedom of expression enshrined in the constitution. In a politically charged environment, accusations of defamation are sometimes wielded as tools of suppression, silencing critics and perpetuating a culture of impunity among the elite. Farotimi's experiences highlight this tension, as his fearless outspokenness frequently draws legal threats and public backlash.

To strike a balance, there must be an acknowledgment of context and intent. When Farotimi speaks, his goal often seems to be provoking critical thought and galvanizing action rather than causing harm. Nevertheless, intent cannot absolve responsibility for the impact of one's words.

Public figures, particularly those with significant influence, must navigate their platforms with care, ensuring their critiques are rooted in verifiable facts and constructive discourse.

At the same time, the Nigerian judiciary must establish clear, impartial frameworks for addressing defamation claims. Such mechanisms should protect individuals from reputational harm while safeguarding freedom of speech from weaponization by the powerful. This equilibrium is vital for fostering a society where both truth and accountability thrive.

Dele Farotimi's fearless engagement with the Nigerian sociopolitical landscape is an invaluable contribution to public discourse. Yet, his journey underscores the importance of balancing the right to speak freely with the responsibility to do so ethically. As Nigeria continues to grapple with the complexities of governance and civil liberties, his story serves as a reminder that the pursuit of truth must always respect the dignity and rights of others.

Ultimately, the challenge lies not in choosing between free speech and defamation but in finding a path where both coexist, reinforcing the principles of justice and democracy.



Free speech is fundamental in any democratic society. It empowers citizens to question authority, challenge societal norms, and hold power accountable.

Nigeria And The Journey Toward True Freedom

By Godwin Anyebe

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has long been a beacon of potential. With its abundant natural resources, vibrant culture, and resilient population, the country holds the promise of greatness. Yet, over six decades after independence, the journey toward true freedom—freedom from corruption, poverty, insecurity, and social inequality—remains a formidable challenge.

The idea of freedom transcends mere political independence. While Nigeria broke free from colonial rule in 1960, its post-independence years have been marred by internal struggles that continue to shackle its growth. From military coups to civilian mismanagement, the dreams of the founding fathers have often been overshadowed by the grim realities of governance failures.

One of the most glaring hindrances to true freedom in Nigeria is systemic corruption. Corruption has permeated every facet of public life, from politics to education, healthcare, and even law enforcement. This endemic issue siphons resources meant

for development, leaving the majority of Nigerians trapped in poverty while a privileged few thrive. For Nigeria to realize true freedom, there must be a collective and unwavering commitment to transparency, accountability, and the rule of

law.

Insecurity is another significant obstacle. From insurgencies in the northeast to communal clashes, kidnappings, and organized crime, Nigeria's citizens live in constant fear. True freedom means the ability

to live without the fear of violence or instability. Addressing insecurity requires more than military might; it demands tackling the root causes, such as unemployment, social exclusion, and poor governance at all levels.

Economic inequality further underscores Nigeria's incomplete journey to freedom. Despite being Africa's largest economy, millions of Nigerians live in extreme poverty. The gap between the wealthy elite and the struggling masses grows wider by the day, breeding resentment and social unrest. True freedom will only be achieved when every Nigerian has equal access to opportunities and a fair chance to prosper.

Furthermore, social and political freedoms remain constrained. Freedom of speech, though constitutionally guaranteed, is often stifled by a combination of state suppression and societal intimidation. Activists and journalists who speak truth to power frequently face harassment, imprisonment, or worse. True freedom cannot exist without an environment where ideas and dissent can flourish without fear of persecution.

Despite these challenges,

the Nigerian spirit remains indomitable. Across the country, young people are rising to demand accountability and justice, exemplified by movements like #EndSARS, which called for an end to police brutality. These efforts signal a growing awareness among Nigerians of their rights and the power of collective action.

The journey toward true freedom is neither linear nor easy. It requires visionary leadership, active citizen participation, and a collective determination to break free from the chains of complacency and impunity. Nigerians must continue to demand better governance, equitable policies, and a society that values justice and inclusivity.

Nigeria's story is still being written. With its rich history, diverse population, and untapped potential, the country has all it needs to chart a new course toward true freedom. The question remains: will its leaders and citizens rise to the occasion, or will the journey remain unfulfilled?

The road ahead is long, but with steadfast commitment and collective will, Nigeria can achieve the freedom its people have long yearned for—a free-



Omera: The Epic Drama That Takes A Dive Into Reverse Japa, Power, Corruption, Redemption

In a country where many young Nigerians have resulted to fleeing the country for greener pastures, Femi Ogunsanwo's 'Omera' tells a reverse 'japa' story, where the lead (Desmond Bryce) is scammed of his travel funds and subsequently presented with an opportunity by his uncle, Abara (Akin Lewis), to head his NGO, the Ajogu Empowerment Foundation (AEF). Unknown to Omera, he is heading to a community where its people are its own enemies. How much can one do in a land whose people are blinded by personal gains?

Madam Regina (Mary Kowo) and the Chief Priest of Ajogu, Atamebo (Williams Omo Godwin), the catalysts of Ajogu's misfortunes, in order to further their personal ambitions for wealth, serve as a tool for Idu—a neighboring village currently at war with Ajogu over land mass—to secretly acquire parcels of Ajogu land. As the story progresses, this duo orchestrates chaos and encourages natives to sell their lands under the guise of helping them immigrate to the big city.

Exploring theme of greed and corruption, Africa Magic's Omera weaves a web of personal ambition, community struggles, and complex relationships. With every episode, we are taken on a journey filled with



power struggles and betrayal, but one sub-theme that adds to the overall depth of the story is forbidden love.

Omera explores the relationship dynamics between two couples who love each other but are at different levels of the Ajogu social ladder. In Ajogu, you're either a noble or a peasant. In this case, Prince Ameh (Benjamin Olaye) the crown prince, and Iyoma (Olarenwaju Ayanwale) play a central role as their relationship causes turmoil outside and within the palace.

The problem? Iyoma is a single mother who is not from a noble family and Ameh is the Crown Prince of Ajogu and soon to be Onu

(king). One challenge the couple face is that for Ameh to become king, he has to marry a noble woman, and according to Ajogu, Iyoma is far from noble. Unknown to the whole of Ajogu, Ameh plays a key role in Iyoma's current standing in society.

Ajifa (Mofe Okorodudu) and Akoji (Kingsley Nwachukwu) are also faced with the same dilemma, with Ajifa being a daughter to high Chief Alewo and Akoji being the head of the Ajogu Vigilante. Their union is under threat, and for the most part, they are the only compatible duo in the series. This side of the drama adds emotional stakes to the overall story.

At the centre of all this

drama is Omera, an antihero who is deeply flawed, uncouth, and a self-serving character that you can't help but root for amidst the chaos and dynamics in Ajogu. While he occasionally contributes to the general good in Ajogu, his impatience and selfishness make him a difficult character to stand by.

Regardless of his morally questionable actions, Omera's activities in Ajogu challenge a selected set of Ajogu gatekeepers committed to its ruin, especially with influential figures like Madam Regina and the Chief Priest, who thrive by exploiting the people.

Thematically, Omera explores the lines between

tradition and modernity while exploring the delicate nature of love amidst societal pressures, with a focus on the forbidden relationship between Prince Ameh and Iyoma. Additionally, it highlights the cost of change and ambition, illustrated by the tragic death of Akoji.

Every character on the show has a background story that further drives the show's plot. Prince Ameh, torn between his love for Iyoma and his duty to Ajogu, explores ways to resist societal pressure while retaining his right to become Onu of Ajogu Kingdom. On the other hand, Madam Regina and the Chief Priest are direct

opponents of Prince Ameh's plans for reformation with Ajogu. Madam Regina orchestrates conflict to further her land-grabbing schemes.

The Chief Priest, under the guise of his spiritual connection with the ancestors, joins hands with rival communities to further turn Ajogu into a shell; this is coupled with his obsession for wanting to kill Omera. His character is an emblem of how tradition and spirituality can be weaponized for personal gain.

Aside from complex narratives, Omera's critiquing of land exploitation and traditional hierarchies reflects real-world issues, as the myopic nature of a few fuels the well-conceived plan of an evil mastermind whose eventual goal is for the community to be extinct and his pockets enriched. All these complexities are explored with engaging visuals and settings.

Set to unfold over 130 episodes, there's a lot to uncover and a lot to have viewers at the edge of their seats. While Omera's main character might be hard to love, the show compensates for this with occasional comical moments, exciting character dynamics, and a compelling exploration of societal issues. With Africa Magic's Omera, there's depth and drama.

Football, Cartoons, Festive Feels, Tours: How Dstv Is Bringing Festive Cheers To Nigerians

MultiChoice, the leading entertainment provider in Africa, recently embarked on a heartwarming initiative to spread joy and gratitude this festive season. With "DStv Reason To Be Happy" the Happiness Tour made its way through major cities, bringing smiles and essential supplies to communities.

The tour, which kicked off on December 6, 2024, saw a vibrant bus adorned with festive decorations travel across the country. At each stop, the bus transformed into a hub of excitement, offering a variety of activities, from thrilling music to engaging conversations.

But the tour's impact extended beyond entertainment. MultiChoice distributed essential food items to families in need, ensuring everyone could enjoy a joyous and fulfilling festive season for Nigerians. In line with spreading happiness during the season, DStv subscribers also have the

opportunity to enjoy the Open Windows season.

For Open Windows, subscribers can enjoy channels not normally available on their package at no extra cost. Imagine sitting with your loved ones, the smell of festive treats in the air, and your screen lit up with the best football action, heartwarming movies, and magical kids' shows. That's the DStv promise—entertainment that brings everyone together.

Dr. Busola Tejumola, Executive Head, Content & Channels, West Africa at MultiChoice, shared that these initiatives were more than a campaign but a celebration of togetherness.

"The Happiness Tour is more than just a campaign; it's a celebration of the spirit of giving and a commitment to our viewers. We're thrilled to have the opportunity to spread joy and positively impact our communities' lives."

"By providing essential supplies and creating unforgettable experiences, we

aim to foster a sense of togetherness and gratitude. We want our viewers to know that they are valued, and we're here to enrich their lives," she added.

Here's what you can enjoy during the Open Windows period

Football Fans, this one's for you

Starting Friday 13 December until Sunday 15 December, the SuperSport Premier League,

SuperSport Action and SuperSport Football Plus channels will open up to DStv Access and up subscribers for the weekend. This is your chance to catch memorable matches like Arsenal vs. Everton and the Manchester Derby between Manchester United and Manchester City. Whether you're shouting for your team or bonding with family over a shared love of the game, it's football that

unites us all.

Kids get their time to shine

From Friday 13 December to Sunday 5 January, the little ones are in for a treat. DStv Access subscribers and up can enjoy a world of adventure with Cartoonito, Moonbug, Cartoon Network, Disney Channel, Nick Jr. and NickToons channels packed full of festive fun. Watch the SpongeBob Christmas Special on Nick Jr., laugh along with Bugs Bunny Builders on Cartoonito, and be a part of the magic of Lego Star Wars: Holiday Special on Disney. It's holiday magic made just for them—and for you to join in.

Movie magic at its best

From Friday, 13 December, until Sunday, 5 January, DStv Access subscribers and up can settle in for movie marathons on MovieRoom, TNT Africa, Kix, Studio Universal, M-Net Movies 3, AXN Movies, Cinemundo HD, and Star Movies that will make every evening special. Watch clas-



sics like Kung Fu Panda 4 on MM1, Mr. Bean's Holiday on MM3, and festive gems like Last Christmas on Studio Universal. It's the perfect way to unwind and create moments that matter.

More festive fun on the Holiday Channel

Don't miss the Holiday Channel, running until Friday, 3 January, with even more feel-good content to keep the festive cheer alive. It's available to all subscribers from DStv Access Up—another reason to join and stay with us this season.

During this festive season, DStv isn't just opening windows—we're opening doors to joy, connection, and togetherness. Let us be part of your family's celebrations and make this season unforgettable.

Reconnect today, stay with us, and enjoy the festive magic with DStv. The joy is just a click away! For those on the go, DStv Stream keeps you connected, offering top movies, series, and sports anywhere, anytime.

Moses Simon's Stunning Strike Saved Antoine Kombouaré's Job With Former Porto Man Linked To Nantes

Moses Simon's spectacular strike against Stade Rennais may have saved FC Nantes manager Antoine Kombouaré's job, as the Nigerian winger secured a vital 1-0 victory in Ligue 1, Soccer.net.ng reports.

Simon's unstoppable effort, leaving veteran goalkeeper Steve Mandanda helpless, handed Nantes their first win since August and lifted the team out of the relegation zone into 13th place with 14 points.

Stade Rennais believed they had equalised from a corner shortly after Simon's goal, but VAR intervened, ruling the effort out and keeping Nantes ahead.

The result was a breath of fresh air for Kombouaré, who had been under immense pressure following a string of poor performances.

Before the Rennais victory, Nantes had gone 10 matches without a win, drawing four and losing six.

Speculation was rife that former FC

Porto boss Sérgio Conceição was being lined up to replace Kombouaré, with reports suggesting a draw or loss would seal his fate. However, Simon's moment of brilliance seems to have postponed such plans.

When asked if he knew his goal had saved his manager's job, Simon, who is Nantes' top scorer in Ligue 1 with four goals, brushed it off:

"Who said the coach was in danger? We don't know. We won for ourselves, for the coach, our supporters, and the people of Nantes."

Since being reappointed in March 2024, Kombouaré has struggled to replicate his success during his first spell, which included a Coupe de France triumph in 2022.

The manager will hope this victory signals a turning point, as Nantes prepare for a crucial away clash against Brest this weekend.



Boniface Edges Closer To Long-Term Contract Extension At Bayer Leverkusen

Super Eagles star Victor Boniface is close to signing a contract extension at Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen, Soccer.net.ng reports.

Boniface has been impressive for Bayer Leverkusen since his €21.7 million transfer from Royale Union SG last year. Last season, the Super Eagles striker registered 21 goals and ten assists to help Bayer Leverkusen reach the Europa League final and claim their first-ever Bundesliga title. He could even have scored more goals, but for the thigh injury he sustained at the turn of the year.

Following his impressive campaign with Die Werkself, Boniface was linked with a big move to a top club. However, he opted to remain at Leverkusen.

This season, the 23-year-old striker has produced seven goals and one assist in 13 appearances for Bayer Leverkusen.

Boniface's current contract is supposed to expire at the end of the 2027/28 season, and there have been talks that Bayer Leverkusen are making moves to extend the deal.

Now, according to a new development, per Transfer News Live, Bayer Leverkusen are edging closer to extending Boniface's contract.

Although the Super Eagles star is injured, the deal is expected to be completed in the coming weeks. The move goes to show the high premium the German Champions place on Boniface.



Osimhen Advises Another Nigerian Striker To Join Him At Galatasaray

Super Eagles striker Victor Osimhen has advised compatriot Gift Orban to leave Lyon and join him at Turkish Super Lig club Galatasaray, Soccer.net.ng reports.

Orban has struggled badly at Lyon since his transfer from Gent in January. The Nigerian striker has registered just five goals in 21 appearances. This season, he has even missed out on the match day squad on different occasions.

Due to his struggles, there have been talks that the 22-year-old will leave Lyon for another club in order to get more game time. The talks have been further fueled by the fact that Les Gones have to sell some players to balance their books and avoid

financial fair-play breaches.

German sides like Leipzig and Borussia Dortmund have been linked with Orban, but they have to see off interest from Turkish side Trabzonspor.

Now, in a new development according to Freekick, Galatasaray are interested in Orban. And Nigerian superstar Osimhen, who joined the club in the summer, has advised Orban to join him in Turkey in the January transfer window.

Nonetheless, if another club in one of the top five European leagues tries to sign Orban, he could refuse to join Galatasaray. Lyon currently values the Nigerian striker at €25 million, but that price can be beat