

Edo 2024: We stand by our report, Yiaga Africa insists

● **says election failed integrity test**

FAVOUR ANETOR, WITH AGENCY REPORT

Yiaga Africa, a civil organization, on Thursday said it stands by its reports on the just-concluded off-cycle governorship election in Edo State, stating that

the election failed integrity tests and standards.

Yiaga Africa's programme officer, Mr Paul James, made the remarks at a one-day post-election meeting with leaders of Edo Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and media partners in Benin City.

James, who said the electoral process was largely peaceful, noted that the inflation of results in some local governments, as against the results INEC posted on IREV, rendered the outcome of the process not credible.

The Yiaga Africa pro-

gramme officer, who spoke on the topic "Agenda Setting and Methodology", alleged that results in Egor, Oredo, Esan West, and Etsako West local government areas were manipulated at the collation centers.

"Our position on the election, after reviewing what transpired,

especially as a result of the results collation and the process, is that it fails to meet the election integrity standards for obvious reasons," James said.

"While largely we would say the election process went well, what we observed at the collation centres showed that the

results of some parties were inflated. Without casting aspersions on any party, we said any party could have benefited from the process.

"For instance, we saw that the

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>>

The Nigerian Observer



...that the people may know

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Obaseki approves payment of gratuity to pensioners who retired in 2011

-Pg 2

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Atiku blames Nigeria's hardship on Tinubu's subsidy mismanagement

● **as calls for reversal of latest petrol price hike resound**

FAVOUR ANETOR & VIVIAN OKAFOR

The presidential candidate of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 election, Atiku Abubakar, on Thursday blamed Nigeria's current economic crisis on the haphazard approach of President Bola Tinubu's administration to fuel subsidy management.

Atiku, in a post on X (formerly Twitter), said President Tinubu is unperturbed by the hardship confronting Nigerians.

Atiku's comment comes on the heels of the latest hike in the pump price of petrol by the National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), which pushed the price of the product from N897 per litre to N1,030 in Abuja, and from N855 to N998 in Lagos.

This makes it the fourth petrol price increase since Tinubu as-

sumed office as Nigeria's President.

When Tinubu became President, the pump price of petrol was N195 per litre, but the President's announcement, on the day of his inauguration on May 29, 2023, that "subsidy is gone" immediately shot up the price to between N448 and N557 per litre.

Subsequently, in June 2023, petrol prices inched up from N557 to N617 following an announcement by the NNPCL about market forces.

In September 2024, the PMS prices rose again to N897 per litre after the NNPCL announced that it was facing severe financial constraints, including high debt to petrol suppliers.

On October 9, the NNPCL again raised the pump price of fuel from N897 per litre to N1,030 in Abuja and from N855 to N998 in Lagos. In other South-West states, the product will now sell at N1,025 per

litre while customers in the South-East will pay N1,045 per litre.

"The haphazard and disingenuous approach of the current administration to fuel subsidy management has been the reason we are in this current economic crisis in the country," Atiku wrote on Thursday.

"As things stand, there will be no let up in the escalating inflation rate, which is drowning the material well-being of Nigerians.

"It is even more worrying that T-pain is undisturbed by the hardship in the country," he wrote.

On Wednesday, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) condemned the hike in petrol price, demanding an immediate reversal of the hike while accusing the government of only focusing on fuel price increments.

The NLC, in a statement signed

CONTINUES ON PG 2 >>>



Remembering Nigeria's reggae greats

—Pg 17

Wellspring University to graduate 5% First Class, 49% Second Class Upper candidates

-Pg 3

Is a revolution possible in Nigeria?

-Pg 10

Natural hair vs. hair extensions: The shift

-Pg 21

BOWFT aims to empower women in Nigeria and beyond, says Betsy Obaseki

-Pg 22

Obaseki approves payment of gratuity to pensioners who retired in 2011

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has approved the payment of gratuity to the pensioners on the payroll of the Local Government Staff Pension

Board who retired in 2011. In a statement, the Commissioner for Ministry of Local Government, Community & Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Monday E. O. Osaigbovo, said the

governor has directed the State Pension Bureau to immediately commence the screening and payment of gratuity to Pensioners who retired in 2011.

In August 2024, Governor

Obaseki had approved the payment of gratuity to the pensioners on the payroll of the Local Government Staff Pension Board who retired in 2010.

"This is to inform the gener-

al public, especially Local Government Pensioners that his Excellency, the Executive Governor of Edo State, Godwin Nogheghase Obaseki has approved the payment of gratuity

to pensioners who retired in 2011," the Commissioner said.

"By this directive, the Pension Bureau and 2011 retired Local Government Pensioners should take note," he said.

FG commences zero VAT on pharmaceuticals, medical devices

The Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has announced that government has commenced the implementation of zero Value Added Tax (VAT) and excise duties on pharmaceutical products and medical devices.

The measure is expected to open the doors for local pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers to benefit from the relief measures outlined by President Bola Tinubu via an Executive Order.

In a statement signed by the head, Information and Public Relations, Alaba Balogun, the ministry expressed hope that the measure will lead to reduction in the prices of essential pharma-

ceutical products and medical consumables.

"The ministry is pleased to announce the finalisation of the Executive Order Harmonised Implementation Framework, which has now been cleared for gazetting.

"This critical step ensures that the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and the Nigeria Customs Service can proceed with the implementation of zero VAT and excise duties on pharmaceutical products and medical devices.

"This is a significant milestone, as it opens the door for our local pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturers to begin fully benefiting from

the relief measures outlined by President Bola Tinubu, in the Executive Order.

"With the implementation of this Executive Order, we anticipate a notable reduction in the prices of essential pharmaceutical products and medical consumables," it said

According to the statement, the development aligned with the ministry's commitment to reducing both the physical and financial pain faced by millions of Nigerians who depend on these critical health supplies.

It said the gazetting of the harmonised implementation

framework represented the realisation of the third pillar of the ministry's four-point agenda, which focuses on unlocking the healthcare value chain.

"By creating an environment that supports local manufacturers, we are fostering a healthier, more self-reliant nation, and

ensuring that quality healthcare becomes more accessible and affordable for all.

"The gazetted copies of the Harmonised Implementation Framework will be distributed to the relevant government agencies for immediate action," Balogun said.

Edo 2024: We stand by our...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

results in Egor, Oredo, and Esan West Local Government Areas were tampered with.

"Our reasoning was that when observers sent in reports from the polling unit levels, we compared that against what INEC had submitted on their IREV.

"To a large extent, what was in the IREV matched what we had, but when the results started coming in, maybe as a result of issues that happened at some of those collation levels, like Egor LGA, where the collation was moved to the INEC office.

"Oredo LGA was also moved. At Ikpoba Okha LGA, canisters of teargas were thrown at many people; the collation was also disrupted and moved. In Et-sako West, there were gunshots around the vicinity, and the collation was also disrupted.

"So, that was why we paid attention to those specific locations, and we thought that if the results were not hampered with, it was very likely that the election might not even have been concluded on Saturday because there wouldn't have been a clear winner. It would have gone into a runoff.

"That was based on what we saw, and we thought that it was as a result of these manipulations that these events happened," he said.

James, however, called on INEC to invoke Section 65 of the Electoral Act to review the results that have allegedly been declared under questionable circumstances.

According to him, the people are aggrieved and have reasons to question the outcome; INEC can go back and look at what had happened.

"The people are aggrieved, and they have reasons to question the outcome. INEC can go back and look at what had happened. There

are places where, for instance, the ward collation started, and some of the wards were skipped.

"So, if those reports are out there and the people don't feel comfortable with the reports of some of those wards, INEC can simply go and audit it and see if whatever is there is reflective. Don't forget that at different layers, you are supposed to have party agents, and in fact, party agents have called into question some of those results.

"I think, in the interest of transparency, the commission can kindly go back and do that. Sadly, the seven-day window for INEC to do that has expired.

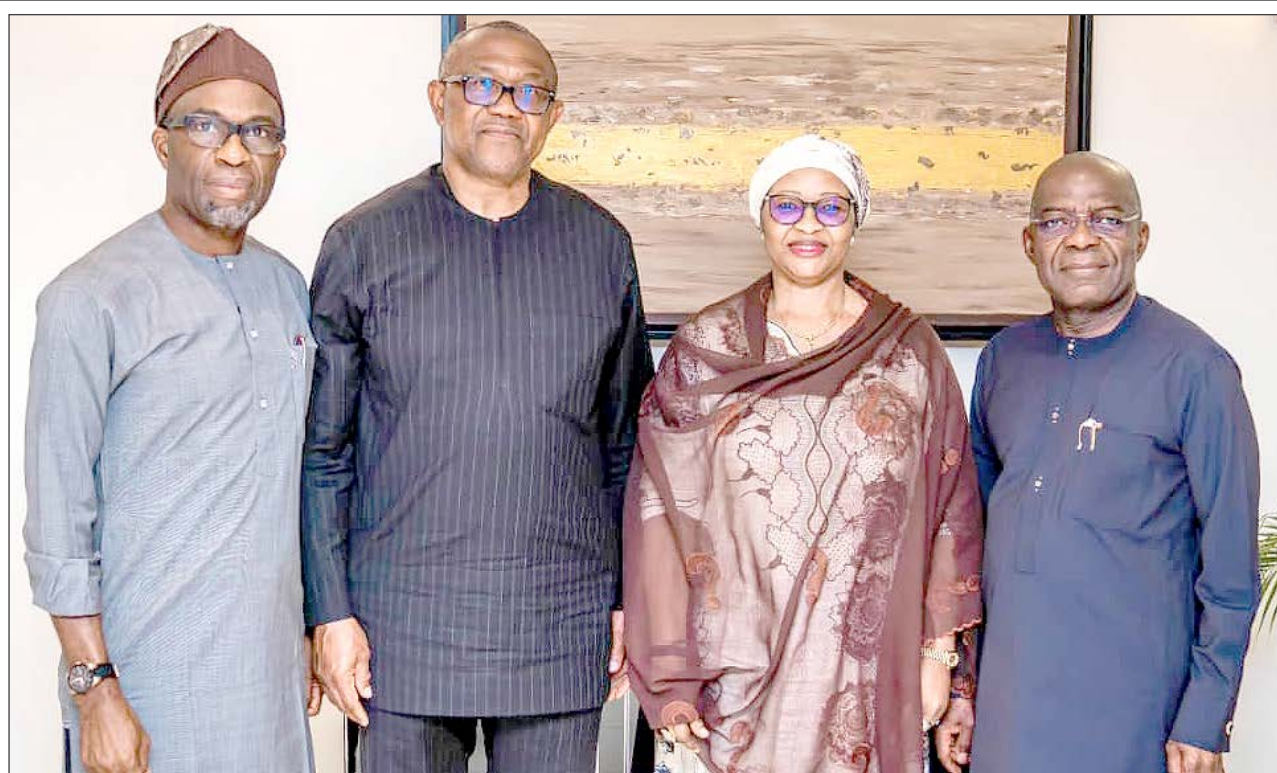
"The only body that can do any of those things at the moment is the court, and so we wait to see what the court could do going forward," he added.

He opined that the outcome of the election was assessed based on three principles: resilience, integrity, and impartiality tests.

He noted that the governorship election failed the integrity test due to the lack of transparency in the results collation processes, which led to the manipulation of results.

"While key processes such as accreditation, voting, counting, and recording of results at the polling unit substantially complied with procedures, the results collation process was compromised by the actions of some biased INEC officials in connivance with other actors. This manipulation severely undermines the overall integrity of the election," he added.

He posited that the cases of disruption in Ikpoba Okha, Et-sako West, Egor, and Oredo local government areas during the course of collation created opportunities for election manipulation, raising significant concerns about the credibility and integrity of the results collation process.



STAKEHOLDERS MEETING:

L-R: Secretary, Labour Party (LP) National Caretaker Committee, Senator Darlington Nwokocha; Presidential candidate of the party in the 2023 general election, Mr. Peter Obi; Chairman of the Committee, Senator Nenadi Usman, and Abba State governor, Dr. Alex Otti, during a stakeholders meeting to review a court judgement affecting the party.

Pinawei Tom congratulates Edo governor-elect, Okpebholo

HENRY OMO OGBEMUDIA

The Ibekobe Uwei of Arogbo Ibe, High Chief Pinawei Tom, has congratulated the Edo State governor-elect, Senator Monday Okpebholo, on his victory in the September 21

governorship election in the state.

He also promised to work with the governor-elect at the right time.

Recall that Okpebholo was declared winner of the 2024 Edo State governorship election by the Independent National

Electoral Commission (INEC), alongside his deputy, Dennis Idahosa, on Sunday, September 22, having won the majority votes.

Sending out his congratulations to Okpebholo and his deputy, Idahosa, in Benin City, High Chief Tom said it

was a victory well deserved.

Pinawei Tom holds the chieftaincy title of the Ibekobe Uwei of Arogbo Ibe conferred on him by His Imperial Majesty Pere (Barr.) Z. D. Egbunu, Opukutu III Agadagba and Paramount Ruler of Arogbo Ijaw Kingdom.

Atiku blames Nigeria's hardship on Tinubu's...

«CONTINUED FROM PG 1

by its president, Joe Ajaero, described the decision of the NN-PCL as an aberration.

"Even following the logic of market forces, we find it an aberration that a private company (NNPCL) is the one fixing prices and projecting itself as a hegemonic monopoly," Ajaero said.

"We challenge the government to go to the drawing board and present us with a blueprint for inclusive economic growth and national development instead of this spasmodic ad holism and palliative policy.

"It needs no stating the fact that the latest wave of increase has grossly altered the calculations of Nigerians once again at a time they were reluctantly coming to terms with their new realities.

"It will further deepen poverty as production capacities dip, more jobs lost with multidimensional negative effects. In light of this, we urge the government to immediately reverse this rate hike as previous increases did not produce any good results. People only got poorer.

"But more fundamentally, the government should be bold enough to tell Nigerians in ad-

vance the destination it wants to take the country," he said.

The Organised Private Sector also condemned the development. The Director-General of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria, Segun Ajayi-Kadir, said the hike would further drive up the cost of production for manufacturers.

"The second increase in one month will send high costs across the value chain for the manufacturer. In terms of the distribution of our products, it means that we are going to pay much higher for it and this will of course impact the prices at which our locally produced items will go," he said.

Meanwhile, senior officials at Dangote Refinery have debunked reports that the new petrol price hike must have been triggered by an increase in the ex-depot price of the product at the refinery.

This comes amid online reports on Wednesday indicating that Dangote Refinery had raised the price of petrol to N977/litre, prompting NNPC to also push up its rate.

"The NNPC should be in a position to tell you why it increased the price of petrol, go and ask them. I don't know where you got N977 from," a Dangote Refinery official told the Punch.

NEWS

FG asks Nigerians to move to higher ground in fresh flood alert

BILL OKONEDO

The Federal Government has alerted Nigerians in vulnerable areas to embrace flood preparedness protocols including moving to higher ground as it issued a fresh flood warning stating that the 3,900 million cubic meter capacity Jebba Dam which is located between Niger and Kwara states is currently spilling excess water.

Flood preparedness protocols include designating places on higher ground to quickly move to, planning to move to higher ground before flooding begins and reviewing evacuation plans so as to be able to evacuate quickly.

Others include gathering supplies including non-perish-

able foods and water for several days and keeping important documents in waterproof containers.

A statement by the Director General Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA), Umar Ibrahim Mohammed, circulating on Tuesday, informed that Jebba Dam is currently spilling excess water as regulated by Kainji Dam operators, who had kept 53cm buffer until now to allow for any change in inflow.

The spilling of excess waters from the Kainji and Jebba dams typically puts up to 13 states under flood threat according to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA).

These include Adamawa, Taraba, Benue states. Oth-

er states to experience heavy floods due to heavy rainfall coupled with the combined water of rivers Niger and Benue include Niger, Nasarawa, Kebbi, Kogi, Edo, Delta, Anambra, Cross River, Rivers and Bayelsa.

The statement from NIHSA DG further read, "NIHSA through the Director Operational Hydrology Pastor Femi Bejide, is working in close contact with the operators of Kainji and Jebba Dams on the management of the reservoirs

"The rain is gradually shifting to the south, however, there is still some amount of water coming into Nigeria as monitored from our station at Jidere Bode and Kende."

Highlighting the agency's synergy with the authorities

of dams both nationally and internationally, he maintained that NIHSA is committed to managing great river flooding incidences to foster socio-economic growth in Nigeria.

Mohammed also revealed that the water level in the River Niger Basin has slowly receded since the beginning of October.

He called on Nigerians to continue to adhere to flood preparedness protocols, reaffirming the agency's commitment to the overall flood management in Nigeria.

The warning comes following recent reports on the worst flooding incidents in the history of Nigeria, with the capital of Borno State, Maiduguri taking the lead.

Climate change in Nigeria has been responsible for flood-

ing, droughts, decreased air quality, and the loss of habitat. A climate modeling study by the World Weather Attribution project estimated that the floods were rendered far more likely and much more intense by climate change.

On 9 September 2024, heavy rain and structural damage caused the Alau Dam in Konduga local government area

(LGA), Borno state, to collapse. The dam collapse caused flash flooding in neighbouring Maiduguri and Jere LGAs. By 10 September, the floods had affected an estimated 240,000 people across both LGAs. Though, the number of affected people varies according to different sources, it is estimated that more than 122,750 people affected as of 18 September.

GTBank announces weekend shutdown for core system upgrade

ERHUVWU ETARHIENYO

Guaranty Trust Bank (GTB) has announced it will temporarily shut down this weekend due to the bank's plan to upgrade its system transition strategy to a strong suite of core banking applications technologies.

The bank made this disclosure through a statement made available via a press release, indicating that the disruption is a necessary part of its process of switching from its current core banking apps.

The new development is set to kick off on October 11, 2024. The bank has also informed its customers that there will be an early closure of services across its branches in the country as banking activities in GTB are set to close by 12:00pm on Friday nationwide and reopen 9:00am on Monday October 14th.

"As part of our commitment to bringing meaningful improvements to the lives of our customers, we will begin the transition from our current core banking applications to a new and robust suite of Finacle Core Banking

Applications system on Friday, 11th of October 2024," the statement read in part.

GTB has also announced that there will be disruptions to its digital banking system for 11 hours between 10:00pm, Sunday, October 13th and 9:00am, Monday, October 14th. This will help to enhance good customer service and achieve better interactions.

"Additionally, there will be service disruptions on our digital banking channels for 11 hours, specifically between 10:00 pm on Sunday, October 13th and 9:00 am on Monday, October 14th. This transition will allow us to drive digital transformation to achieve insights-driven and frictionless interactions with all our customers," the bank said.

The bank also stated that although the digital service will be made available during system upgrading, it will only be limited to transfers, bill payments, airtime and data purchases.

The bank thanked customers for their understanding and cooperation as it strives to offer a more robust banking experience with the new system in place.

**BoT MEETING:**

Chairman, Board of Trustees (BoT) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Senator Adolphus Wabara (2nd right); acting National Chairman, Umar Damagum (2nd left), and others, at the Party's BoT meeting on Thursday, October 10, 2024.

Wellspring University to graduate 5% First Class, 49% Second Class Upper candidates ● *inducts graduands into national ICT council*

BILL OKONEDO

Wellspring University, a private institution licensed by the Federal Government and accredited by the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), will be presenting 149 candidates for graduation at its 12th convocation ceremony on Friday October 18 at its campus in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

This was revealed by the institution's vice chancellor, Professor Isaac Ajayi, at a press conference on Tuesday.

Of the 149 candidates for graduation, 67 will be graduating with first degrees and 82 with postgraduate diplomas and master's degrees.

The university was recently rated third among the second-generation private universities in Nigeria, according to the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC)

Webometric Ranking.

The statistics of the first degree graduands shows that three (5%) graduands made First Class, 33 (49%) made Second Class, Upper Division, 25 (37%) made Second Class Lower Division while six (9%) are in other categories.

In the postgraduate category, 46 are graduating with postgraduate Diplomas while 36 are graduating with master's degrees in various courses.

"Having passed through the most stringent academic standards and evaluations, these individuals have been found most worthy both in character and in their several disciplines to be the holders of the certificates of this institution, attesting to their various levels of degrees," Professor Ajayi said.

"One significant event that is included is this year's convocation activities is the induction

of our graduates in computer science, software engineering and cybersecurity into the Computer Professionals Registration Council of Nigeria before their graduation," Ajayi added.

The induction ceremony is to be performed for the graduates by the Registration Council on the 17th of October, 2024 at 12:00 noon in the University Multipurpose Hall.

"The induction is coming after the graduates have fully met all the professional requirements of the Council and lending credence to the quality of professional training we offer to our graduates," Ajayi further said.

Other activities to celebrate the week include a special keep-fit exercise for staff and students and a novelty match between female staff and female students, which will be held at 6:00 am and 4.30 pm respectively on Tuesday 15th October 2024.

On Wednesday 16th of October, 2024, there will be a debate competition by students at 10.00 am, followed by an Exhibition/Research Fair will be declared open at 1.00 pm and the university choir will thrill us to a musical concert at 5.00 pm in the university multipurpose hall.

A special thanksgiving service for graduands is slated to hold at 10.00am on Thursday 17th October 2024, and an alumni lecture and dinner will hold from 4.00 pm on the same day. All the activities will culminate in the convocation event, on Friday 18th October, 2024 at 9.00 am where the Chancellor of the University, Pastor Ituah Ighodalo, will be conferring first and higher degrees on deserving graduands.

The Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Governing Council, of the University, Ambassador Daniel Isimoya and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Major Gen-

eral Ephraim Usiade, Rtd. will also address the convocation.

This academic harvest will be preceded by a convocation lecture on the topic "Positioning for global competitiveness and great societal impact", to be delivered by Dr. Uyi Akpata, Chairman, Rusa Advisory and immediate past Country Senior Partner PwC Nigeria and Regional Senior Partner West Africa.

"Recognising that we have no strength of our own, we return all praises to God that He has enabled us to add value to the lives of these people. We are confident that they would go out of this university with enhanced discernment, a greater understanding of the issues of life with which they have to deal in their various professions, better grasp of their tools, leading to better efficiency and effectiveness in the discharge of their duties wherever they find themselves," Ajayi enthused.

He stressed that Wellspring University is making remarkable strides of progress on all fronts and reaffirmed that its academic programmes remain accredited by the National Universities Commission and relevant professional Associations.

"Our Nursing programme which enjoys the full accreditation of the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria and with the state-of-the-art-laboratories has just been upgraded to a faculty with increased quota for admission.

"As an institution of higher learning, we are getting a better grip by each passing year on the task of preparing skilled manpower for today's knowledge economy that is driven by 5G Networks, Nanotechnology, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Alternative Energy Revolution, Business Intelligence Analysis and so on," he added.

Inside Edo

Edo Varsity holds two-day training for academic staff on modern teaching techniques

LAMAI CASSIUS

Edo State University Uzairue has organised a two-day capacity training workshop for academic staff of the institution on modern teaching techniques.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, which started on Tuesday at the Aliko Dangote Auditorium, the Acting Vice Chancellor of the institution, Professor Dawood Egbefo, said it was imperative for academic staff to acquire and apply new teaching techniques for academic development.

He said no amount of time spent in colleges or universities will be enough to complete the preparation of a teacher for classroom tasks, saying teachers must continually be trained and retrained as well as armed with the requisite modern knowledge acquired for the 21st Century engagement.

According to the Acting VC, the training is to lay a solid foundation for a sound academic session as it is aimed at enabling us to get acquainted with the challenges ahead of us as we prepare for the first semester.

Prof. Egbefo said the two-day training workshop would allow the academic staff to acquire new teaching techniques for their academic development and learn more ways on how to structure and deliver their teaching in more practical, impactful and effective methods.

“As we set necessary machinery in motion for an effective take-off of this academic session, it is therefore expected of us to discharge our professional responsibility to meet the challenges in academic and research development”, he said.

A guest speaker, Professor

Patrick Oviasuyi, who spoke on the topic ‘Work Ethics in the University Environment for Academic Staff’, described work ethics as morals and norms observed in workplaces, saying it is crucial to the development of any institution.

In a paper titled: Techniques for Improving Performance of Academic Staff, Dr. Orhare Osumah said academic staff performance is vital for proper functioning of a university to achieve its core mandate and objectives.

To him, academic staff performance can be influenced by various factors, adding that a number of techniques can be adopted to improve academic staff performance.

Dr. Osumah listed such techniques to include investment in staff training; development of mentorship and coaching; creating an enabling environment; setting clear goals and expectations; analysis of critical incidents and provision of regular feedback; recognition and reward, and opportunity for growth and development.

Also speaking at the workshop, another guest lecturer from Ambrose Ali University Ekpoma, Professor Godwin Okogun, called on the Federal Government to adequately fund tertiary education in Nigeria.

He said the major issues affecting tertiary education are gross under funding, which affects teaching, learning and research.

According to him, tertiary education is grossly underfunded and the government needs to inject enough money into the system as under-funding is one of the banes of education development, which has contributed to the low standard of education in Nigeria.

Also, the Director, ICT of the institution, Dr. Ayodeji Makinde, who spoke on ‘Teaching Aids in an Academic Environment’ emphasised the importance of teaching aids in a modern teaching era.

Dr. Makinde said teaching

aids provide learners with more clarity about the context that they are being taught, adding that all these activities create a friendly learning atmosphere in the class and bridge the gap between teachers and students.

Earlier, the Director of Pro-

fessional Training and Development of the institution, Dr. Anthony Iyoha, said the training is geared towards empowering the academic staff with teaching skills required for a world-class institution.

“The knowledge and experi-

ence you will acquire from this exercise will in no small measure assist you to impact our students positively. I therefore implore you to listen attentively to the speakers for you to gain knowledge at the end”, Iyoha said.



TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR ACADEMIC:

Cross section of participants at the two-day training workshop for academic staff of Edo State University Uzairue, yesterday.

Etsako Central chairman assesses progress of Edo health project in Udaba community

LAMAI CASSIUS

The Executive Chairman of Etsako Central Local Government Area, Hon. Solomon Obomighie, yesterday undertook a visit to the Udaba community project site of the Edo State government’s Com-

munity and Social Development Agency (CSDA) EDO-COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus Programme.

The ongoing project involves the construction of a Primary Healthcare Centre (PHC) in collaboration with the local Internal Development Associ-

ation for Conflict and Fraud in Etsako Central LGA.

At the visit, Hon. Obomighie emphasized the importance of the project in enhancing healthcare services and community development in Udaba, as he conducted a thorough assessment of the project

site to ascertain the progress made by the engineers and supervisors involved in the construction process.

During the visit, he expressed his satisfaction with the level of work achieved so far and praised the dedication and commitment of the project team in ensuring the timely completion of the PHC. He reiterated his administration’s support for initiatives aimed at improving healthcare infrastructure and services for the residents of the Udaba community.

According to a press statement by Igbonor Anthony A., Chief Press Secretary, Office of the Executive Chairman Etsako Central LGA, the chairman acknowledged the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in driving the project forward and highlighted the positive impact it will have on the community once completed. He encouraged continued cooperation and diligence to ensure the successful implementation of the Edo State government’s health project in Udaba.

NOA holds sensitisation workshop on national anthem, national values charter

LUCKY EFESE, BENIN CITY

As part of its continued efforts to promote formidable policies and programmes of government for the overall development of the country, the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Wednesday, held its nationwide one-day Sensitisation Workshop on National Anthem and National Values Charter, across the 36 states directorate in line with the renewed hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu-led Federal Government in ensuring cohesion, unity, peace and progress among Nigerians.

In his keynote address at the Sensitisation Workshop organised by the Edo State directorate, the director-general of NOA, Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu, who was represented by Mrs. Rebecca Nasamu, said the national anthem and national values charter were national identity projects of this present administration’s new mandate strategies for societal engagement and community mobilisation for the country’s socio-economic growth and to also strengthen our democratic institutions.

The DG said the core values of NOA was to inform and enlighten the Nigerian populace on government policies and

strategies for implementation as well as mobilisation of people to support the government through a two-way feedback mechanism for the overall good of the country.

“Our collective experience has been employed in our processes of self-evaluation, retooling and re-strategising to meet our needs in the present times.

“Staff training and retraining, galvanising partnership and institutional collaborations, retooling and updating equipment to meet the standards of new age of information technology and innovations in public communication, have been silently undertaken to fully deliv-

er on our statutory mandate, so the collaboration and cooperation with the media will be key to our success,” he said.

The DG thanked the media for their roles in promoting his office’s noble course, noting that the nation’s public communication and enlightenment have grown from the hard copy publications, 12-hour a day television broadcasts and transistor radios, to countless 24/7 satellite/online global platforms, which now remain the preferences of most people, especially the younger generation.

He therefore assured of collaboration with the critical stakeholders to achieve the set

objectives in the country.

Earlier in his welcome address, the Edo State director of NOA, Barr. Osahon Uwoghien, outlined the importance of the national anthem and national values charter, saying it will enhance effective and efficient leadership as those occupying leadership positions, especially those occupying political positions, would be compelled to undergo two weeks orientation training to enable them discharge their responsibilities towards the realization of the dreams of accountability, transparency, integrity and result-oriented leadership to the people.

Danesi's claim to Aidonogie of South Ibie stool false — HRH Umoru

LAMAI CASSIUS

The Aidonogie of South Ibie, Etsako West Local Government Area, Edo State, HRH Umoru Inusa Umoru, has debunked the claim by Mr. Aliyu Kelvin Danesi as the authentic Aidonogie of South Ibie land, as false.

In a press statement by HRH Umoru Inusa Umoru seen by the Nigerian Observer, Mr. Danesi had claimed,

among others things, that the community should disregard his removal as the Aidonogie of South Ibie as he is still the Aidonogie of South Ibie; No law or court has ever removed him as the Aidonogie of South Ibie; The new chieftaincy law enacted on 2006 qualified him to occupy the stool of Aidonogie of South Ibie.

Furthermore, that his removal by the Edo State government was politically motivated

and the action of the government amounted to “executive lawlessness”, and he obtained ex parte orders restraining the government from disturbing him as the Aidonogie of South Ibie.

According to HRH Umoru, in the press statement, “My attention has been drawn to the press conference granted by Mr Aliyu Kelvin Danesi, which was widely published on different print and electronic media,

where in summary, Mr Danesi stated...

“The entirety of Mr Aliyu Kelvin Danesi's contentions above is deliberately false and misleading. As I shall show below, Mr Danesi was never the Aidonogie of South Ibie; he merely usurped the stool of the Aidonogie of South Ibie and forcefully and illegally imposed himself on the people for over 25 years.

“Mr Danesi has always been

rejected by the custom, the law and the people. My appointment and recognition by the Government is merely the liberation of the good people of South Ibie from Mr. Danesi shenanigans, the enthronement of rule of law and the enforcement of multiple decisions of the different hierarchies of courts as explained in the succeeding subheadings and paragraphs.”

HRH Umoru showed court decisions nullifying Mr. Danesi's appointment, saying that Danesi's claim is specifically untrue and manipulative, as “the courts did not just merely remove Mr. Danesi as the Aidonogie of South Ibie, the courts nullified his appointment as the Aidonogie of South Ibie.”

By the nullification, in the eyes of the law, Mr. Danesi in fact was never appointed or installed as the Aidonogie of South Ibie, the numerous court decisions are considered

“In the instant case, having duly considered the evidence adduced by the parties and their witnesses, I hold that the selection of Alhaji Aliyu kelvin Danesi does not comply with the registered Declaration regulating the succession to the clan head Aidonogie of South Ibie. See exhibit B2. I therefore declare his selection, appointment as well as the approval by the Edo State government invalid, null and void.”

Also see, judgement of Justice Muntaka-Coomassie JCA in Appeal Number CA/B/9/2001 - Mr. Danesi ap-

pealed the decision of Justice Sadoh to the Court of Appeal. On 7 April 2003, the Court of Appeal, in the main, rejected the appeal and Justice Muntaka-Coomassie JCA while delivering the unanimous decision of the Court of Appeal, at page 16 of the judgement, specifically declared and ordered as follows:

“That the selection, presentation, appointment and/or production of Alhaji Inusa kelvin Danesi as the Clan Head or Aidonogie of IYAK-PI, South Ibie by the Danesi branch of Okhokho Ruling House is hereby declared null, void unconstitutional and of no effect”.

On the claim of ex parte orders, “As shown above, all the hierarchies of the Courts (from the High Court to the Supreme Court), at least, 6 different courts have held that Mr. Danesi is not the Aidonogie of South Ibie.

“In fact as described by Justice Omonua, Mr. Danesi's appointment as the Aidonogie of South Ibie is deemed in the eyes of the law “never took place”. Yet, in 2024, Mr. Danesi commenced yet another case, concealed the above different decisions of various courts which declared his appointment as a nullity, and got the court to issue ex parte interim orders in his favour even before the Government and I were aware of the case and before any defendant were served with the documents of that suit.”

In all, the general public is advised to disregard Mr. Danesi lawless and ill-advised press conference as he is not, and had never been, the Aidonogie of South Ibie, according to HRH Umoru.



TRADITIONAL COUNCIL MEETING:

Inaugural Traditional Council meeting of HRH Umoru Inusa Umoru and chiefs of South Ibie.

Evbuotubu: The dull side of Benin City

OJEABULU ISIBHAKHOMEN
AMANDA

Evbuotubu, a community tucked away in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, can be compared to a faded cloak of neglect and despair. The sprawling neighbourhood that houses many is a vivid reminder of the inadequacies of the community. From the narrow streets lined with crumbling buildings to the bad roads, lack of drainage system, absence of streetlights, broken pipes and insufficient access to clean water and electricity, you can just imagine it.

Irrespective of the various government attention, Evbuotubu is a blurry vision of development. The major areas are far from being developed and the infrastructural

constraints are very glaring.

A major constraint faced by the community is the lack of electricity. Power outages are the order of the day, and this makes it a bad site for business. The few business owners that reside there are compelled to run their businesses with generators, which automatically leads to an increase in running costs and may likely affect their profit from sales made because a great percentage will be spent on fuel. Do we say it is the reality of present day Nigeria?

The issue of power outage has been a major concern to many as it is a major determinant for most businesses to thrive, and with the current hike in fuel price, business owners will find it more and very discouraging. A few residents have stated that these issues have been reported to the appropriate authorities

and promises have been made to tackle these issues. However, a good number of these issues have been left unattended till date.

Also, the issue of hygiene in Evbuotubu is alarming and has raised serious concerns; the poor sanitation and lack of waste management are notable. It is well known that poor sanitation and lack of waste management not only litter the surroundings but also have severe health implications. The presence of such waste makes the environment unhealthy, makes room for germs, bacteria and viruses to exist, causing diseases. This is where the residents should come in and take ownership.

The roads are bare and untarred, littered with waste of different kinds, making a total mess of the environment, thereby creating an eyesore. This is an even worse sight to

behold in the rainy season because the roads are covered in puddles and most times overtaken by floods as a result of inadequate drainage systems. One thing that has drawn the attention of many residents is that the roads are usually submerged in water even with little rainfall, which puts the roads in a very bad state, paving way for accidents and vehicle damage. This is where the local government should show responsibility.

Unemployment is rampant with few job opportunities and local businesses struggle to maintain stability due to inadequate infrastructure and lack of support. Government officials seem to recently be attending to the issue regarding drainage systems. Currently, gutters are being constructed to channel the flow of water and arrest the issue

of flooding. Residents have constantly complained about the slow construction and the damages that have been made on the roads as a result of the drainage construction.

“This project has been on for a while now and not much has changed since the construction commenced. The roads are still covered in puddles whenever it rains leading to an increase in transport fare, as the major routes will become not motorable”, Miss Faith, a resident of the community, stated. “In fact, the state of the roads has gone from bad to worse with the commencement of this drainage construction. The roads have become narrower and more inconvenient for both drivers and pedestrians, but we trust that the government will take care of the roads after attending to the drain-

age construction”, she further stated. It is obvious that the residents are dissatisfied with the state of the community.

In spite of all these challenges, Evbuotubu residents have remained resilient and their struggle for survival surpasses all these challenges. It is this drive and determination that keeps its residents going in the hope that one day, their community will achieve vibrancy.

These numerous problems have made Evbuotubu very dull as it lacks the criteria for livelihood. Residents however admit that there is peace and quiet in the community without any form of unrest. Despite its underdevelopment, the crime rate is near zero. Irrespective of the challenges encountered by its residents, their struggles will continue, undaunted.

South-SouthReport

Gov. Diri says it's time to rethink Nigeria's federalism

PHILIP EKE, YENAGOA

● 'FG creating local government an aberration'

Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, on Wednesday, faulted Nigeria's brand of federalism, saying a situation where only the Federal Government can create local government is an aberration.

Governor Diri also said Nigeria was on the wrong path to development and needed to turn back.

Delivering a lecture titled: "Rethinking Our Future: The Need For True Federalism and Economic Renaissance," at the 64th Founders' Day Lecture of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, the Bayelsa governor averred that states should constitutionally have the right to create and legislate on local governments in a truly federal structure.

He reaffirmed his belief in the unity of Nigeria, which he said can only be sustained on the basis of equity, justice and fairness, describing federalism as a very touchy subject that concerns Nigeria's corporate existence.

He said the fact that true federalism has become a lexicon that reverberates across the socio-political landscape of Nigeria underscores the defective nature of the governance structure operational in the country, a situation which has led to constant agitations.

The guest lecturer expressed concern that the misgivings of ethnic nationalities and minority interests about the inequities and disequilibrium that defined the political paradigm at the time of independence in 1960 still persist and stressed the need for a paradigm shift where the dreams and aspirations of Nigerians will not be deferred perpetually.

According to Governor Diri,

the current governance structure in Nigeria cannot deliver the future the vast majority of Nigerians desire and deserve.

The Bayelsa helmsman remarked that Nigeria had reached a pivotal point, a crossroads that demands wise decision-making to determine the nation's destiny and secure a prosperous future, stressing that Nigerians must engage in frank conversations about how to create a more perfect union that embraces diversity while pursuing common goals.

Diri queried Nigeria's current federalism, saying it was meant to serve the interest of the colonial masters as against the ideal pattern of forming a federation where states willingly come together to form a nation, as it is in the United States of America.

He recalled how a son of the Niger Delta and of the Ijaw nation, Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro, pioneered minority rights activism in the country, beginning his revolutionary journey during his days at the University of Nigeria where he was president of the students union government during the 1964/65 session.

He also argued that the current governance structure in Nigeria has left oil-producing communities impoverished despite being the backbone of the country's economy and advocated the reconsideration of the Land Use Act of 1978, which he described as a paradox and that no meaningful development can take place in a situation where states cannot control their resources.

The governor further noted that every state in Nigeria was blessed with natural resources as well as peculiar needs and should be allowed to harness

the resources, manage them and develop at their own pace while contributing a percentage to the government at the centre.

He also stressed the need for state police, citing recent developments in Rivers State during the local government election and the Bayelsa situation in Bassambiri community during the 2023 governorship election where police was used against the people, saying states must have the power to take charge of their security.

His words: "We are all aware of the ongoing conversation around the issue of autonomy of local governments. My concern over this sensitive subject is beyond the question of autonomy and more about the rationale for their creation. The

current system, which allocates funds based on the number of local governments, puts some states, especially Bayelsa with just eight, at a disadvantage. This disparity arises because states with more local governments receive a larger chunk of resources, regardless of their specific requirements or financial strength.

"Since the Constitution exclusively recognises states and the federal government as federating units, the federal government's creation of local governments constitutes an aberration, undermining the principles of federalism and state autonomy. The Constitution's clear delineation of federal and state powers renders the federal government's creation of local governments incon-

gruous, as local governance falls within the purview of state authority. My take to addressing this issue is enforcing states' autonomy to create local government areas tailored to their unique needs and financial capacity to do so.

"In the context of Nigeria, the term "true federalism" has become a rallying cry for those seeking autonomy, resource control, addressing issues of marginalisation and good governance. It is about moving away from a system that can properly be described as "unitary federalism" or a "federation without federalism."

"For the avoidance of doubt, I wholeheartedly support the Nigerian state and its continuous unity and existence. However, I recognise that, like any

nation, we strive for a more perfect union. A union where diversity is celebrated, equity ensured and opportunities are accessible to all.

"Consequently, we must rethink our future and build a political culture where the promise of federalism is not a mere illusion of unity, but a powerful catalyst that drives our passion for success and unlocks untapped potential."

Earlier, the UNN Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Polycarp Chigbu, said the event is to celebrate the founding fathers of the institution led by the late Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, whose vision led to its establishment on October 7, 1960, according to a press statement by Daniel Alabrah, Chief Press Secretary to Governor of Bayelsa State.



NIGERIA 64TH FOUNDERS' DAY:

L-R: Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Prof. Polycarp Chigbu; Bayelsa State Governor and Guest Lecturer, Senator Douye Diri, and chairman of the event and Pro Chancellor/Chairman, Governing Council, Godfrey Okoye University, Enugu, Prof. Nwachukwu Okeke, during the University of Nigeria 64th Founders' Day Lecture at the Princess Alexandra Auditorium on Wednesday.



Mr. Ottos Aghoghophia (l) Clerk and Mr. Smart Edoge, as Deputy Clerk of the Delta State House of Assembly.

DTHA appoints Aghoghophia as substantive clerk

AJUWA VICTOR, ASABA

Delta State House of Assembly, on Tuesday, confirmed the appointment of Mr. Ottos Aghoghophia as the substantive Clerk of the State Legislature.

The confirmation followed a motion to that effect by the Majority Leader, Hon. Emeke Nwaobi, seconded by the Minority Leader, Hon. Edefe Emakpor and adopted during plenary of the House, presided over by the Speaker, Rt Hon Emomotimi Dennis Guwor.

Mr. Aghoghophia, a lawyer,

was appointed Deputy Clerk in March 2017 and became the Acting Clerk of the House in June 2023 following the appointment of the former Clerk of the House, Mrs. Lyna Ocholor as the Principal Secretary to Governor Sheriff Oborevwori.

In the same vein, the lawmakers confirmed the appointment of Mr. Smart Edoge as Deputy Clerk of the House. Mr. Edoge was until his appointment as Deputy Clerk the head of the Legal Department in the State Legislature.

The Speaker, Rt Hon Emomotimi Guwor congratulated

the duo on their appointments and charged them to bring to bear their wealth of experience in the office of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the House, respectively.

Meanwhile, the confirmation of Ottos Aghoghophia as the Clerk of the House was greeted with wild celebrations by both the political class and members of the Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN), Delta State House of Assembly chapter.

Some of them who spoke said the appointment and subsequent confirmation were

well deserved.

They described Mr. Aghoghophia as upright and hardworking, stressing that even as Deputy Clerk of the House for the past seven years, he has shown so much commitment and capacity in the discharge of his responsibilities.

They said the appointment was long overdue and merited, and the respondents expressed optimism that the confirmation as substantive Clerk of the House would further strengthen his expertise in legislative business and push for staff welfare.

A'ibom lawmaker urges commencement of Maritime University

PAULINUS NTA, UYO

The member representing Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udu- ng Uko/Uruoeffong Oruko Federal Constituency, in the Federal House of Representatives, Martins Esin, has moved a motion urging the Federal Government to commence academic activities at the University of Maritime Studies, Oron, Akwa Ibom State.

In the session, recently, Esin emphasised the strategic im-

portance of the institution to the maritime industry and the host community.

In his motion, titled "Call to Commence Academic Activities at University of Maritime Studies, Oron, Akwa Ibom State," Esin recalled that the legislative framework upgrading the Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron, to a full-fledged university was assented to by former President Muhammadu Buhari in 2023.

He noted that the institution has well-established structures,

initially designed to serve as a base for specialized maritime education.

He further highlighted the growing demand for maritime graduates in the workforce, stating that the establishment of the university will provide students with the opportunity to specialize in areas such as International Shipping, Marine Transport, and Marine Security, among others.

This, the lawmaker argued, "would enhance their employment prospects and contribute

to the broader maritime industry, which is vital to global trade."

However, Esin expressed concern that despite the university's approval, academic activities are yet to commence, stalling commercial growth in Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udu- ng Uko/Uruoeffong Oruko Federal Constituency.

He explained that the university's operations would not only advance maritime education but also stimulate local economies.

The House, in response to

the motion, resolved to invite the Honourable Minister of Education and the Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) to brief the Committee on University Education on the delay.

Furthermore, the House urged the Federal Ministry of Education, the Nigerian Uni-

versities Commission (NUC), and TETFUND to expedite the necessary modalities for the commencement of academic activities at the university.

The Committees on University Education, TETFUND, and Legislative Compliance were mandated to ensure the implementation of these resolutions.

Foundation presents writing materials to school children in Nsukwa

AJUWA VICTOR, ASABA

Awele Ugochukwu Osisi Foundation in collaboration with Team Bishop has presented notebooks and other writing materials worth hundreds of thousands of naira to 11 primary and secondary schools at Nsukwa and Aniocha South Local Government Area of Delta State.

Presenting the items to the school children at Ashama where the team took off for the project, Bishop Brian Ilomechine said the gesture is to support the parents of the children, especially now that the economy is bad.

Bishop Ilomechine said the best legacy one can give to children was education, noting that a well trained child would become a blessing to the family and the nation at large, saying Aniocha South Local Government Area would be great in the future, if proper attention was paid to children's education.

He lauded the founder of Awele Ugochukwu Osisi Foundation, Comrade Awele Osisi, for her initiative of establishing the foundation, adding that the foundation has the interest of children at heart.

Ilomechine, while saying that children were the bedrock of every nation, urged parents to see their children's education as top priority.

Awele Ugochukwu Osisi Foundation in collaboration with Team Bishop in line with the state government job creation programme equally presented six Point of Sales (POS) machines and cash of N30,000 each to six persons in the locality.

The cleric said they decided to present POS machines to the people to enable them set up small businesses for themselves and become self dependent, commending the state governor, Elder Sheriff Oborevwo, for his administration's various youths' empowerment programmes in the state.

The principals and head-teachers who received the items on behalf of their students and pupils lauded the donors for the gesture, and prayed God to continue to bless them.

The schools that received the items include Ashama Comprehensive Secondary School; Ekelie Primary School, Ashama; Perfect Gate Nursery and Primary School Ashama; Ulogwe Primary School, Umute; Umomi Primary School, Ewulu, and Ewulu Mixed Grammar School.

Others are Lima Nursery and Primary School, Ewulu; Saint Stephen Nursery and Primary School, Ewulu; Adofi Primary School, Ejeme-Unor; Obi Ezeamaka Primary School, Nsukwa, and Enele Primary School, Nsukwa.



PRESENTATION OF WRITING:

Team Bishop and Awele Osisi Foundation shortly after presentation of writing materials to the children.

You're jinx breaker, Gov. Diri commends Eruani, Azikel Refinery president

PHILIP EKE, YENAGOA

Governor Douye Diri of Bayelsa State has said President of the Azikel Group, Dr. Azibapu Eruani, broke the jinx in establishing the Azikel Modular Refinery, which is the first crude oil-related industry in the state.

Senator Diri gave the commendation on Tuesday when he visited the refinery complex located at Obunagha in Yenagoa Local Government Area for the first time.

The governor commended Eruani's business acumen, noting that the abundance of crude in the state would eliminate losses and other impediments to smooth operations of the refinery.

He also stated that the refinery had changed the status of the state in its industrialisation drive and that it met the dreams of its founding fathers.

In a press statement by Daniel Alabrah, Chief Press Secretary to Governor of Bayelsa State, the Bayelsa helmsman said the refinery would improve the internally generated revenue of the state and create job opportunities for the youths.

He expressed delight that the project was nearing completion and that he would be part of the history of inaugurating the first modular refinery in the state.

According to him, it was an aberration for the state to have abundant crude oil and gas without industries or 24-hour electricity.

He restated his administration's determination to tackle the electricity challenge and that it was ready to engage investors to revive the state's gas turbines.

He also advised that development of the state should not be left only in the hands of politicians or government and urged privileged Bayelsans to partner his administration to build the state.

He said: "Dr. Eruani has established a modular refinery here in Bayelsa State and not in any other state. Let me on behalf of the government and people of Bayelsa State congratulate you and thank you for this bold step to make our dreams come to pass.

"This is what our state's founding fathers and all of us have been talking about. We cannot have crude oil and gas on our soil and not have electricity or industry in the state.

"You have broken the jinx and I am sure the younger generation will follow your footsteps. Development is not done by the government alone. It is done in partnership with the private sector. That is why we are very glad that you are partnering with the state government in developing Bayelsa State. Like you rightly said, this will bring job opportunities here and taxes will be paid to the state government.

"I have often said that you do not need to lay pipes too far away from where you have the raw materials. Elementary economics taught us about the nearness to source of raw materials. This is the knowledge and benefit in siting the refinery just a stone's throw from the crude. Eruani knows where the problem was because he is from Bayelsa. He understands that by siting his industry close to where the raw material is, it is going to be cost-effective and will not face a lot of challenges.

"Now if they call businessmen in Nigeria, I will say I also have Dr Eruani in my state. I invite our businessmen from Bayelsa that are doing well

outside the state to also come home to affect lives, create jobs and join hands with the government to develop the state".

Earlier, Dr. Eruani said the refinery is worth over \$850 million and currently has about 400 foreign and local employees at the site.

The Azikel Group president explained that one of the reasons he established the refinery was to add value to the Nigerian crude oil, create employment and to industrialise the state.

Eruani said the refinery was unique as it is the only one in Sub-Saharan Africa to refine condensate apart from petrol, diesel and aviation fuel, saying it has equally placed Bayelsa among the critical states that would contribute to the industrial base for petroleum sufficiency in the country.

He assured that the state would not have product scarcity when the refinery commences operation.

The group's president, who took the governor and his entourage on a tour of the facility, appealed for partnership with the state government to dualise the road leading to the complex for easy transportation of refined products.

Women groups empower 105, enjoy collaboration with N'Ass, CRBDA

PATRICK ABANG, CALABAR

No fewer than 105 young women have received start-up kits after undergoing several months of skills acquisition training in Cross River State.

The kits, including sewing machines, hairdressing equipment, liquid soap making equipment and assorted financial sums, were handed over by a group known as Universal Women's Fellowship through minister of women's affairs, Barrister Uju Kennedy, represented by Mrs. Angeleen Nkwocha of Child Welfare Department.

The women earlier empowered 17 through long-term training, and another 35 sisters were empowered with funds to startup mini businesses.

They also paid first-term school levies for 53 less-privileged secondary school students, according to head of the

group, Mrs. Victoria Imowo. She said it was a deliberate attempt to empower women and lift them out of unemployment and dependency, saying the empowerment was part of activities to mark their 66th anniversary celebration.

The minister commended their efforts in helping the Federal Government actualize their Arise Agenda aimed at empowering women, and also expressed the Federal Government's willingness to bolster the efforts of Mansion of Blessedness (MOB), another women's group that commissioned N85 million Mother Elizabeth Multipurpose Factory in Asiak Obufa Anyanganse community of Akpabuyo LGA of the state.

The minister said her ministry was very happy that a group of women was very committed in pulling their resources together to achieve such a laudable initiative.

EDITORIAL

Transparency and the price of petrol

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The Petroleum Products Retail Outlets Owners Association of Nigeria (PETROAN), spoke the minds of Nigerians when they expressed regret over the nondisclosure of the exact price of the Premium Motor Spirit by the Dangote Refinery.

This is just as there is a rush of outrage flowing across the nation in response to the unannounced 15 percent hike in the price of petrol by the state owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Ltd, from N855 per litre to N998 in the Lagos area and a mark up from N897 per litre to N1,030 in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja area.

Expectations were high that the roll out of PMS by the Dangote Refinery would to an extent reduce the rising price of the product in Nigeria, even though experts called for caution, explaining

that market forces and not national sentiment determine prices.

Speaking on Channels Television's breakfast programme The Morning Brief on Thursday, PETROAN president, Billy Gillis-Harris, said it is high time Dangote opened communication with retailers and other stakeholders.

Gillis-Harris said his association which is a core industry stakeholder was in the dark as to the dynamics of petrol prices and pricing between Dangote Refinery and the NNPC as middlemen.

He asserts that Dangote needs to open up communication with all the stakeholders, get valuable inputs from everybody because it is a business that involves Nigerians, retail outlet owners, marketers and different consumers.

This fresh petrol price increase follows a September 2, 2024 increase by the NNPC-CL. The retail company had hiked the price per litre of petrol from N568 to N855.

Since the presidential announcement removing fuel subsidy in May 2023, the NNPC has gradually increased the pump price of petrol from N184 in Lagos to N998.

Mid-September, the NNPC began loading its first batch of petrol from the Dangote Refinery, saying it got petrol at N898 per litre from the private refinery.

The NNPC immediately hinted at a fresh price increase when it said a litre of Dangote petrol would now sell for N950 per litre in Lagos and N1,019 in Borno.

This increase in Nigeria's processing capacity with the coming onstream of the Dangote Refinery could have

substantial implications for both the refinery's operations and the local oil industry, transforming the region's import and export markets.

Economists say one of the fall outs of this development will be a strengthening of the local currency, the naira, as it will be relieved of the drag of the pursuit of scarce dollars to buy refined products.

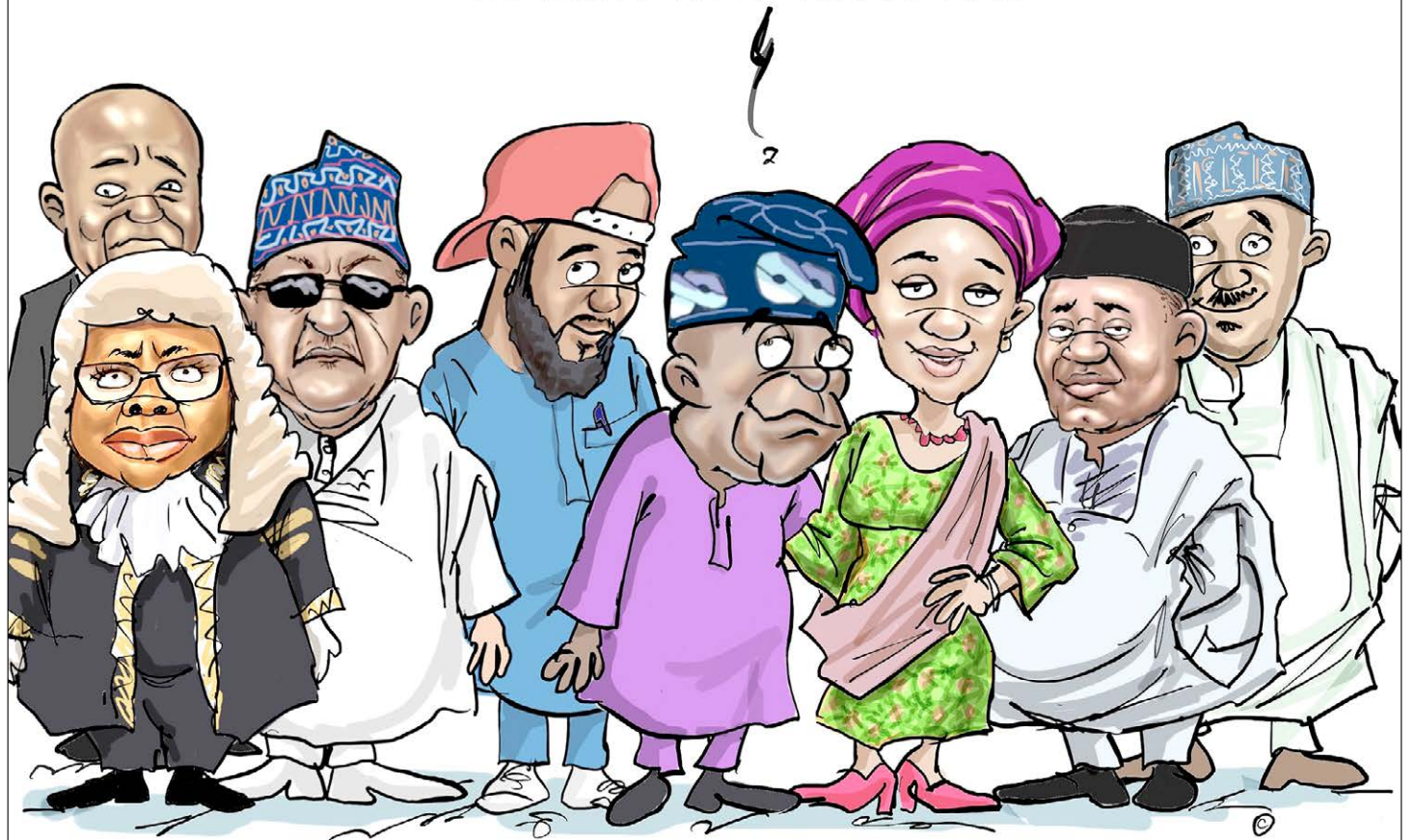
It is said that the pricing of petrol and other refined products will depend on international crude market dynamics and that the main advantage that Nigerians would derive in the immediate is that there will be an assured stream of refined products which will cancel out former frequent shortages.

All of this is well and good. However, as Harris says, Nigerians do have a right to know the nitty gritty of things that affect their daily lives.

WE VS THEM

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NIGERIA WORKS FOR US.
WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU!



...that the people may know



Cartoon Corner

Cousin John as a barometer for Nigeria

MATTERS ARISING
DIASPORA CHRONICLES

With
OKWUDILI OJUKWU-ENENDU



I have a cousin, John. He is the ultimate survivor and I use him to measure the season in Nigeria.

My cousin, John, was built to survive all seasons. But like Mark Anthony, the vicissitudes of time do register on his body, but not his soul. When Biafra was about to sink and outright extermination of the Igbo race was feared, he was one of those that were selected and sent to Gabon. They were to be the remnants that would form the nucleus of a new Igbo race.

At the end of the war, he was one of those that were brought back - not all came back. John remembered his surname and the name of his town.

Back home, he enrolled in school, but didn't go too far. While in secondary school, he visited his elder brother during a long vacation and decided to join him in trading.

By 1984, he had finished his apprenticeship and was 'settled' by his brother and master. Within one year of being on his own, he had become a success. He bought himself a brand new Volkswagen Passat before age 20. He wasn't a show-off. He needed a

vehicle for his trade and decided on one that gave him both pleasure and utility. John was hard work personified. About three times in a week, he would make trips from Lagos to Ado-Ekiti to buy stationary, which was his item of trade. Nigeria was relatively industrialized, and Omolayo manufactured stationary at Ado. John was one of his main customers.

There were also the government-owned giant paper mill at Jebba, and the Oku Iboku newsprint mill was to join in 1986. Of course, the Passat that my cousin bought was made in Nigeria by Volkswagen at Badagry Expressway. There was also a Peugeot at Kaduna, and the cars made by these two companies were booked ahead. The military government of Olusegun Obasanjo made them Nigerian cars, also used by the head of state.

Though corruption was high in the management of these state firms, they provided jobs for Nigerians, at least, and the import substitution philosophy on which the idea was hinged was a limited success.

After President Shehu Shagari's Aus-

terity Programme, following massive corruption which ended with his overthrow on the last day of 1983, the Buhari/Idiagbon military government restored hope. It took out the food shortages and rampaging inflation through its trademark counter trade midwifed by General Ike Nwachukwu. They succeeded in staunching the bleeding underbelly of Nigeria without exacting great pain. It was within this period that John bought his Passat, at a sum of about N13,000! Yes, this very naira had value. For a sum that can't buy 10 litres of fuel today, one bought a trending posh car.

General Ibrahim Babangida overthrew Buhari in 1985, introduced the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme in 1986, and Nigeria's unrelenting descent started, till date.

Under Babangida, the naira moved from a near par with the dollar, to double digits. It meant that industrial spare parts and raw materials required multiples of their original naira costs to import. And the consumer public, whose purchasing power moved in the opposite direction, couldn't buy. Overnight, the local industries died out. The badly managed government industries died first. But they were quickly followed by the better-run private ones. Omolayo stationary manufacturers died too. No amount of micro-economic management can cover macro-economic gaps. That was how Nigeria underwent industrial denudation.

The only benefit of SAP was that it

replaced the opaque import-licensing regime for access to foreign exchange with the more transparent bidding system. Under the import licensing regime, those that wanted to import would apply to the Central Bank for an import licence as well as foreign exchange for the import. The process of getting both was mired in deep corruption. But under SAP, those who need foreign exchange simply had to apply to the CBN through the deposit money banks and make bids for available foreign exchange.

This SAP foreign exchange system has run for 38 years and what do we have to show for it?

Yes, it has a seemingly more transparent allocation method by open bidding. But in reality, what have we got? In place of CBN staff milking the system under the import license regime, we have had a 38-year long bazaar of deposit money bank managers doing the same under the SAP regime till today.

The SAP regime has promoted speculation against the naira by the deposit money banks through sundry means, particularly round tripping. It doesn't require intelligence to do, and mediocre money managers have become super rich by this singular act.

Now, isn't it like replacing stomach ache with stomach cancer?

The Passat was the only brand new car that John bought. When it dawned on him that the Passat may be the best car he would buy, he tried to extend its life.

He bought a Volkswagen bus with which he did the shuttles to Ado. It cost him close to a million naira to buy this fairly-used bus, whereas he had bought his brand new Passat for less than N13,000! The governments of Nigeria have practically buried this man in whom they had invested next to nothing.

John is 60 now, and though his strength and enterprise remain constant, the output has been moving in an almost reverse direction. Nigeria wasted much of his youth and energy and he is not likely to retire, for he has no pension. His only chance at rest is if his children whom he trained through the university make good and put him on a family pension. Otherwise, this strong man who followed the straight and narrow path since his youth will struggle at his shop till his last day. Nigeria happened to him, as we say these days.

For his children, their only chance is for them to find a way out of Nigeria - join the japa train. But even if the visa were free, how would they pay for the flight ticket? Their father's shop can't buy a single flight ticket now. Forty years ago, their father could have bought return tickets for all five of them at the same time without a jolt to his capital. Ah Nigeria!

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Tithing: Now that Pastor Adeboye has apologised...

KELLY ODARO

In the journey of life, our conscience acts as a compass, guiding us toward right and wrong, morality, and immorality. It often serves as a reflection of our values, beliefs, and ethical standards. When we stray from these principles, our conscience can become a source of torment, akin to an open wound that festers and causes pain.

This analogy highlights the profound impact that unaddressed guilt or wrongdoing can have on an individual's psyche and spirit. When we act contrary to our values or commit actions that hurt others, we create a dissonance within ourselves that can lead to suffering.

The healing of this wound requires a commitment to truth—an acknowledgement of our actions, a confrontation with our guilt, and a sincere effort to make amends. In this light, the truth emerges as a powerful force, an antidote that can mend the rift within our conscience. The importance of truth cannot be overstated; it is the foundation upon which trust, integrity, and authenticity are built. When we embrace the truth, we take the first step toward reconciliation with ourselves, others, and the Almighty God.

Recently, we witnessed a remarkable instance of this principle in action through the conduct of Pastor Enoch Adeboye, the General Overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God. His public apology for certain statements about tithing that caused widespread controversy exemplifies not only a rare display of humility but also the transformative power of truth. Pastor Adeboye's decision to address the public openly and take responsibility for his words is a testament to his understanding of the significance of truth in heal-

ing wounds of conscience.

Leadership, particularly in the realm of spiritual guidance, carries immense weight. A head, like Pastor Adeboye, is a religious opinion leader who is often seen as a moral authority, and his words can significantly influence the beliefs and actions of his followers. When a leader falters or miscommunicates, the ramifications can extend far beyond their immediate circle; they can ripple through communities, affecting countless lives. This reality places a heavy burden on leaders, as they must navigate their roles with caution and a profound sense of responsibility.

His apology was not just an admission of error; it was recognition of the impact his words can have. In the face of criticism, he chose to confront the situation directly rather than deflect blame or remain silent. This act of bravery is not common among public figures, especially those in positions of authority. Acknowledging one's mistakes in the public eye requires courage, vulnerability, and a deep commitment to integrity.

The act of apologising can be incredibly challenging, particularly when one holds a position of power and respect. It requires a willingness to set aside pride and ego for the sake of truth and healing. Pastor Adeboye's apology can be viewed as a godly act—one rooted in the principles of humility, compassion, and accountability. By addressing the public and expressing remorse, he demonstrated an understanding of the gravity of his role and the importance of maintaining trust with his congregation and the broader Christian community.

This act serves as a reminder that true leadership is not about being infallible; it is about being human. Leaders will inevitably make mistakes, but it is how they respond to these errors that define their

character. Apologising for a misstep is not a sign of weakness; rather, it is an affirmation of one's commitment to authenticity and integrity. In a world where public figures often evade accountability, Pastor Adeboye's willingness to confront his actions head-on sets a powerful example and it is exhilarating!

Truth is sacred; it is the bedrock upon which relationships and communities are built. When we hide from the truth or attempt to manipulate it, we risk damaging the very foundations of trust and respect. The healing process begins when individuals choose to face the truth, no matter how uncomfortable or painful it may be. This journey often involves self-reflection, humility, and a genuine desire to make amends.

Pastor Adeboye's public apology illustrates the liberating power of truth. By acknowledging his mistakes, he not only initiates his own healing process but also invites others to engage in similar acts of accountability, thus affirming the doctrines of Dr. Abel Damina and others who have decided to unleash the true Christian doctrines. In doing so, he fosters an environment where honesty and transparency can flourish. When leaders model such behaviour, they inspire their followers to reflect on their actions and the impact they have on others, creating a culture of integrity and compassion.

This perspective aligns with the recent advice to the Lord's Chosen Christian Charismatic Revival Ministries. The Punch newspaper of 5th October, 2024 reported that the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Lagos State branch, instructed the leadership of the church to review the pattern with which its members present testimonies at gatherings. CAN's reaction to the Church was sequel to a recent testimony by an unnamed member who said an old man appeared to her in the ex-

amination hall and gave her answers to some questions. The report also added that the testifier admitted sharing the answers with a member of the Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries in the examination hall. This, the Association described as an utter fabrication and falsehood.

The advice from CAN to the Lord's Chosen (as it is popularly called), emphasises the need for accountability within the Church. It noted that vetting testimonies ensures that the experiences shared by members are genuine and credible, helping to maintain the integrity of the church's activities. By reviewing how testimonies are presented, the church can avoid situations where exaggerated or false claims might mislead congregants or the public. This practice helps uphold the church's reputation and trustworthiness.

The rare display of humility and integrity by Pastor Adeboye prompted the Catholic community to hail his decision. According to the Vanguard newspaper of 6th October 2024, Rev. Fr. Anthony Godonu, the Director of Social Communications for the Lagos Catholic Archdiocese, praised Pastor Enoch Adeboye for coming out with the truth. Fr. Godonu acknowledges Adeboye's willingness to speak the truth, which is often seen as a commendable act in leadership, especially within religious contexts. This recognition emphasises the value of transparency and integrity.

Indeed, Fr. Godonu's statement highlights the moral responsibility of leaders irrespective of office or position held in society to uphold truth, reinforcing the notion that such actions contribute positively to society and faith communities. In fact, there is no other alternative to truth.

The implications of Pastor Adeboye's actions extend beyond his immediate

community. They resonate with the larger societal narrative regarding accountability and the importance of confronting wrongdoing. In an era marked by division, misinformation, and a lack of accountability, the courage to speak the truth can serve as a beacon of hope. It encourages individuals and communities to engage in honest dialogue and work toward reconciliation, healing, and understanding.

Moreover, Pastor Adeboye's example challenges us all to examine our own lives and the ways we may have strayed from our values. It urges us to confront our open wounds and seek healing through truth. As we navigate our own complexities and imperfections, we can draw inspiration from his bravery and commitment to accountability. Without mincing words, he has experienced a significant emotional release, as a result of the truth revealed and would be at peace with his maker.

The metaphor of conscience as an open wound serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of truth in our lives. Pastor Enoch Adeboye's public apology reflects a rare display of bravery and humility, emphasising the transformative power of confronting our mistakes and embracing accountability. Truth is indeed sacrosanct; it is the healing balm that can mend our wounds and restore our sense of integrity. In a world that often struggles with authenticity and accountability, such acts of courage serve as vital reminders of the path toward healing, understanding, and reconciliation.

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The Polity

• Policy • Legislation • Enforcement

Is a revolution possible in Nigeria?

JIBUNMA ANTHONY-SPINKS

In the words of Prince Niccolo Machiavelli, a 16th-century Italian diplomat and philosopher, “All well-governed states and wise princes have taken care not to reduce the nobility to despair, nor the people to discontent.” Put differently, society must be run in a manner that ensures fairness to both the rulers and the masses. This is because where the leadership is insensitive to the suffering of the masses, there will be general discontent which may result in social uprising; and when the leaders are dispirited, there will be general hopelessness. But as it stands today in this country, citizens have lost interest not just in government but in our brand of democracy because the sacred ballot box that embodies the people’s aspirations has been broken into pieces.

With the general feeling of discontent in Nigeria today, resulting from hunger and poverty, fuel and energy crisis, insecurity, corruption, youth unemployment, violence particularly during elections, and despair even within the so-called leadership elite, there have been suggestions that Nigeria is ripe for a revolution. But is a revolution possible in Nigeria, and what type of revolution is it going to be? Is it even necessary in the first place?

From recorded history, not a few revolutions have taken place across the globe at different times and in different nations with some resulting in positive social transformation and others in outright disintegration of the nations involved.

The Third Agricultural Revolution, or what was commonly referred to as the Green Revolution, took place during the 1950s and 60s which resulted in unprecedented improvements in technologies and innovative tools for growing plants, leading to much greater crop yields and food stability across most of Europe and other parts of the world. Ultimately, this led to a dramatic upsurge in livestock because these plants were also utilized for grazing, thereby boosting livestock production and agro-allied industrial activities. Here in Nigeria, a number of policies were initiated, aimed at achieving something close to an agricultural revolution. There was Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) programme which kicked off



on 21st May 1976 under the military regime of General Olusegun Obasanjo. The programme was launched in order to bring about increased food production in the entire nation through the active involvement and participation of every citizen. The idea was that everybody should own a farm. In other words, farming should become a national culture. There was also Green Revolution (GR), a programme inaugurated by President Shehu Shagari in April 1980. The programme was aimed at increasing production of food and raw materials in order to ensure food security and self-sufficiency in basic staples. It was geared towards boosting production of crops, livestock and fish in order to meet home and export needs and to expand and diversify the nation’s foreign exchange earnings. It was envisaged that through production and processing of export crops to compliment huge oil earnings at that time, the country would gradually derob itself from the so-called third world toga. These programmes may have recorded some level of impact, but they never were able to evolve into anything in the semblance of an agricultural revolution that could, for instance, match that of the Chinese or the French whose revo-

lution of 1789 was largely agricultural, or the British agricultural revolution of the 1930s through to the 60s. The gross value of agricultural output in China doubled from 1978 to 1985, and from the 1980s up to 2010 the output value of Chinese agriculture skyrocketed sixfold. As a matter of fact, by the time the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949, virtually all arable land was under cultivation, irrigation and drainage systems. If all arable land in Nigeria is cultivated with modern technology, when Nigeria coughs, the entire world will freeze. It has been said that the technocrats in Abuja are working on it. That is good enough. Textile production which formed a dominant industry during the 18th-century Industrial Revolution, providing employment for millions of unemployed persons across Europe, is a shadow of itself today in Nigeria. The technocrats are also working on it in Aso Rock. That is also good enough.

Some countries have witnessed a violent kind of revolution which is mostly political. Political revolutions have significant effects on the nation in which they occur, but it is on record that they are not always successful. The main purpose of a political revolution

is to drastically recreate the government of a nation to a form that will easily create desired policies for the benefit of citizens. Such revolutions are fought against rulers or government officials, and they often end in the death of these individuals. It typically begins among the common people, the lower classes of society who feel oppressed and discontented with the ruling class. The danger here is that the revolution more often throws up greater demons than the demons that were meant to be overthrown. The military coups in Nigeria, though revolutionary in nature, never produced any meaningful progress mainly because the citizens were naïve and initially supportive of the juntas only to be disillusioned after each regime. At the end, they rose up and chased the soldiers back to the barracks. The French Revolution from 1789 to 1799 has similar elements, but because it was people-oriented it was characterized by much more violent uprisings and demonstrations. The royalty and nobility of France were reckless with public treasury, and the burden of their recklessness fell upon the poor citizens. Eventually, the people revolted and established their own form of govern-

ment known as the National Assembly. It was recorded that in one of its National Conventions, the assembly members arrested King Louis XVI and beheaded him in the French public guillotine. The revolution produced major political and social changes, but ultimately led to much instability due to its failure to address economic issues. It serves as an example of how revolutions must take into account all aspects of society in order to be successful. You cannot dig a second pit in order to get sand to cover the first one; otherwise you will end up digging pits for the rest of your life.

From our understanding of the Nigerian character, this kind of violent revolution is certainly not desirable and even if it is contemplated at all, it will fail woefully. At any rate, such an adventure - or misadventure - would definitely assume tribal and ethno-religious dimensions as was evident in the 1966 military coup which some commentators have often likened to a revolution. We know who we are despite our affectations of western culture. Africans are hardly rebellious except when pushed to the wall. The cat and rat idea where the leadership sees the citizens as their obstacle and the citizens in turn see their leaders as demons is simply pedestal and foolish. You can’t love eggs and hate chickens.

The Chinese Revolution of 1949 saw the establishment of a communist party which replaced feudalism with socialism. But even today, the Chinese society still shows relics of its communist past. The point here is that revolution or no revolution, it is only when people are united towards one common objective that true power and social change can emerge from collective action. So, the Nigerian activists calling for a revolution may do well to understand that they themselves may not be as wise and as righteous as they think, and they may not actually have the capacity to bring about the social change that they desire. The way forward therefore is to repair the broken ballot box or build a new one in a manner that ensures that both the rulers and the citizens are protected.

Anthony-Spinks, Functioning Director-General, Delta State Public Procurement Commission, writes from Asaba.

Appeal Court sets aside Rivers 2024 budget passed by Edison Ehie group

● **asks Fubara to re-present it to Amaewhule-led lawmakers**

FAVOUR ANETOR

The Court of Appeal in Abuja has affirmed the judgement of the Federal High Court that set aside the N800 billion budget passed by five members of the Rivers State House of Assembly led by Edison Ehie.

The appellate court on Thursday dismissed the appeal filed by the Governor of Rivers State Siminalayi Fubara on grounds that it lacked merit.

The court held that Governor Fubara withdrew his counter-affidavit at the lower court in the matter and as such cannot commence an appeal in a matter he did not challenge at the trial stage.

In the unanimous judgement, the court said that Governor Fubara is expected to apply the rule of law and not the rule of might.

The court further says that the situation in Rivers State House of Assembly is an executive dictatorship by the gov-

ernor and a joke taken too far.

Justice Omotosho had nullified the 2024 Rivers budget passed by pro-Fubara lawmakers and set aside the presentation and passage of the Rivers State 2024 budget.

In the judgment delivered Omotosho ordered Siminalayi Fubara, Rivers governor, to re-present the budget to the legally constituted House of Assembly under Martin Amaewhule.

Fubara had presented the budget

titled: ‘Budget of Renewed Hope, Consolidation and Continuity’ of N800 billion to five out of the over 30 lawmakers of the state house of assembly in December 2023.

In the judgement, Justice Omotosho ordered Fubara to release all funds accruable to the Rivers House of Assembly and barred the governor from interfering with the activities of the assembly.

The court also nullified the redeployment of the clerk and deputy clerk of

the state assembly by the state’s head of civil service.

The judge held that the appointment of a clerk and deputy clerk is the responsibility of the speaker, as contained in the Rivers State Assembly Service Commission law.

The court further ruled that the inspector-general of police and the Nigeria Police Force were duty-bound to continue to provide security for all Rivers citizens, including members of the state assembly.

The Bello Turji dilemma: Can dialogue end Nigeria's banditry crisis?

YAMTA BUKAR

Nigeria's northwest region is grappling with a debilitating banditry crisis, leaving thousands displaced, kidnapped, or killed. The region's instability has dire consequences for national, economic growth, and human rights. Amidst this chaos, Bello Turji, a notorious bandit leader, has surprisingly called for dialogue with the government. Turji's plea for peace has ignited intense debate, raising questions about the legitimacy of engaging with a group responsible for violence and harm. Can dialogue with Turji bring an end to the crisis, or will it perpetuate a cycle of violence and undermine the rule of law?

According to Daily Trust report on Thursday 3, October 2024, "The wanted bandit kingpin, Bello Turji, has dared the security forces, saying he is not afraid to be killed. He, however, called for dialogue with the Federal Government to end armed violence in Zamfara State.

"Turji, who is among the 43 terrorists in the North West declared wanted by the Defence Headquarters, made the call in a five-minute and forty-second video.

"In the video, Turji confirmed the killing of his boss, Halilu Sububu, saying that Sububu's killing would not silence him. Turji said that he was willing to lay down his arms if the government would dialogue with him."

BELLO TURJI: A NOTORIOUS BANDIT LEADER

Turji, born in the 1980s in Zamfara State, began his life as a Fulani herdsman. However, his transition to banditry allegedly started in the early 2010s, driven by land disputes with local farming communities; economic hardship and lack of opportunities, and perceived marginalization of Fulani herdsman.

Turji's group initially focused on cattle rustling and highway robberies but escalated to kidnappings, village attacks, and extortion.

ALLEGED CRIMES AND CONTROVERSIES

Turji's notorious reputation stems from mass kidnappings, including schoolchildren and villagers; deadly attacks on villages, markets, and security personnel, and alleged links to terrorist groups and transnational organized crime.

In rare interviews, Turji claims his actions are a response to government



TINUBU



EGBETOKUN



TURJI

neglect of Fulani herdsman's interests; persecution by local farming communities, and economic hardship and lack of opportunities.

Therefore, the poor leadership, unemployment, poverty, corruption, and the proliferation of arms are the underlying factors contributing to banditry in Nigeria. The country's governance system has been criticized for its failure to address these issues, creating an environment conducive to banditry.

THE ROLE OF DIALOGUE IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Dialogue has been recognized as a vital tool in resolving conflicts, including banditry. By engaging in dialogue, parties can address grievances, build trust, and find peaceful solutions.

Some of the successful case studies of dialogue in conflict resolution in Nigeria are as follows:

1. The Niger Delta Amnesty Programme (2009)

Conflict: Militancy and oil bunkering in the Niger Delta region. **Dialogue process:** Government-led negotiations with militant leaders. **Outcome:** Amnesty for militants, disarmament, and reintegration into civilian life.

2. The Ogoni-Shell conflict (2006)

Conflict: Environmental degradation and human rights abuses in Ogoni land. **Dialogue process:** Mediation facilitated by the Nigerian government and international organizations. **Outcome:** Compensation for affected communities, environmental cleanup, and improved relations.

3. The Tiv-Jukun conflict (2014)

Conflict: Ethnic violence between Tiv and Jukun communities in Taraba State. **Dialogue process:** Traditional leaders' mediation and community-based dialogue. **Outcome:** Ceasefire, reconciliation, and establishment of peace committees.

4. The Plateau State peace process (2011)

Conflict: Ethnic and sectarian violence in Plateau State. **Dialogue process:** Government-led negotiations with community leaders. **Outcome:** Establishment of peace commissions, disarmament, and reintegration programmes.

5. The Boko Haram ceasefire (2016)

Conflict: Insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. **Dialogue process:** Backchannel negotiations facilitated by international organizations. **Outcome:** Temporary ceasefire, release of abducted persons, and initial steps towards peace talks.

Dialogue, as demonstrated by successful case studies in Nigeria, can be an effective tool in conflict resolution, especially banditry as requested by bandit kingpin Bello Turji.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND BENEFITS OF DIALOGUE WITH TURJI

Engaging in dialogue with Bello Turji, a notorious bandit leader, poses both risks and benefits to Nigerians and Nigeria.

The benefits include:

Reduced violence: Dialogue can potentially lead to a ceasefire and decreased hostilities, saving lives and reducing the humanitarian crisis.

Addressing grievances: Talking to

Turji can help understand and address the underlying concerns driving the conflict, which may include socioeconomic issues, political marginalization, or historical injustices.

Peaceful resolution: Dialogue offers a non-violent resolution to the conflict, which is essential for Nigeria's stability and development.

On the other hand, the risks include:

Legitimizing violence: Engaging with Turji may be perceived as legitimizing his actions and those of his followers, potentially emboldening other criminal groups.

Security concerns: Dialogue may pose risks to individuals involved, including negotiators, community leaders, and vulnerable populations.

Public backlash: Nigerians sceptical of dialogue may criticize the government for negotiating with individuals responsible for heinous crimes, potentially leading to social unrest.

MITIGATING THE RISKS

To minimize the risks associated with dialogue, Nigeria must adopt a comprehensive strategy combining the following:

Economic empowerment: Addressing socioeconomic inequalities and providing opportunities for affected communities.

Enhanced security: Strengthening security forces' capacity and accountability to prevent exploitation by criminal groups.

Inclusive governance: Promoting inclusive governance, accountability,

and reconciliation to address historical grievances.

CONCLUSION

The menace of banditry in Nigeria is a complex issue requiring a multifaceted approach. Understanding the root causes, including poverty, unemployment, corruption, and proliferation of arms, is crucial to addressing the crisis.

Dialogue, as demonstrated by successful case studies in Nigeria and globally, can be an effective tool in conflict resolution. Engaging with Bello Turji, a notorious bandit leader, poses potential risks and benefits. While dialogue may reduce violence and address grievances, it also risks legitimizing violence and sparking public backlash.

To navigate these challenges, Nigeria must adopt a comprehensive strategy combining dialogue with Turji and other stakeholders; economic empowerment programmes for affected communities; enhanced security measures and intelligence gathering; anti-corruption initiatives, and reconciliation and reintegration programmes for former bandits.

Ultimately, resolving Nigeria's banditry crisis demands strong political will, collaborative efforts from government, civil society, and local communities, addressing socioeconomic inequalities, and promoting inclusive governance and accountability.

By embracing this holistic approach, Nigeria can mitigate the risks associated with dialogue and foster a peaceful, stable, and prosperous future for all citizens.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a national dialogue framework for conflict resolution.
2. Develop economic empowerment programmes targeting vulnerable communities.
3. Strengthen security forces' capacity and accountability.
4. Implement anti-corruption reforms.
5. Foster international cooperation to address regional security challenge

CALL TO ACTION

Nigerian leaders, policymakers, and citizens must prioritize constructive dialogue, inclusive governance, and socioeconomic development to overcome the banditry crisis and ensure a brighter future for the nation.

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Cabinet reshuffle alone may not make any significant difference

KENECHUKWU AGUOLU

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is expected to reshuffle his cabinet soon and some portfolios may be reassigned and some ministers be relieved of their duties. According to the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Bayo Onanuga, "When the reshuffle happens, it is expected to align with the President's broader strategy to enhance governance and better communicate the administration's successes."

To achieve the desired results, the performance review of ministers should be holistic, as various factors affect performance, some of which may be beyond their control. The lag between policy announcements and implementation has contributed to

the perceived poor performance of this administration.

The workload of the ministers should be reviewed to identify those who may be overwhelmed. No matter how capable a person is, being overloaded with tasks will lead to longer turnaround times and delays in policy implementation. Some ministerial portfolios may need to be split, or Ministers of State appointed in some ministries where they do not exist. Some people think the Minister of Finance, who also doubles as the Coordinating Minister of the Economy, should have a Minister of State.

The problem of bureaucracy in Nigerian governance has always existed. Tasks that can be completed in two days in a private setting take much longer in government. The gov-

ernment should conduct a process review and streamline its operations for greater efficiency. This should be done without losing sight of the need for control and supervision. This will speed up policy formation and implementation thereby making the government more responsive. Beyond bureaucracy, another factor causing delays in policy implementation is the lack of, or delays in, funding. In such scenarios, there is little a minister can do.

One may ask if the roles, responsibilities, and deliverables with timelines expected of the ministers were clearly communicated to them. For example, just recently, Bayo Onanuga said, "The President has instructed ministers to actively communicate what their ministries are achieving.

Some have been hesitant to engage with the media, but the President wants them to change that." While some ministers have been very vocal, though it may seem implied, it is possible that others did not know they were expected to be, given that the government has other means of promoting its successes.

There are factors beyond a minister's control that can affect their perceived performance, apart from funding. For instance, whilst not celebrating or defending the performance of the Minister of Agriculture, without addressing insecurity, which has led to incessant attacks on farmers, farmlands, and livestock, domestic food production will remain impaired. The Ministry of Solid Minerals is faced with a similar circum-

stance with many mining sites under the control by non-state actors.

As Mr President prepares to reshuffle his cabinet, it is imperative that issues like workload, funding, bureaucracy, communication of deliverables, and other factors beyond the control of ministers are properly addressed. Changing ministers or reassigning portfolios without dealing with all the issues impairing performance may not lead to significant improvement. Performance review is holistic and goes beyond just evaluating the individual responsible for certain tasks. Nigerians deserve a more responsive government.

WIKE VS FUBARA:**Unending crisis and search for peace in Rivers**

PEACE AKPOBOME

The power tussle between the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nyesom Wike, and Rivers State Governor Siminalayi Fubara does not seem like it is about to end. If anything, it has become a typical case of one week, one trouble as no week passes without something new popping up in the Garden City.

In the latest turn of events, the state was thrown into turmoil following the local government elections that took place on 5th October 2024, where the Action Peoples Party (APP) won 22 out of the 23 LGAs. The widespread violence involved shootings, arson and protests by persons suspected to be Wike's supporters across several local government secretariats aimed at preventing the newly-elected chairmen of local governments from taking over the council secretariats.

While a faction of the PDP in the state accepted the result, another faction alleged to be members of Wike's camp rejected the outcome of election, saying they are heading to court to contest the result.

Speaking to the Punch, the PDP Publicity Secretary in the state, Kenneth Yowika, "We are a law-abiding party, we are not going to come out physically to fight.... We are pressing further through the court."

ORGY OF VIOLENCE

Five people were feared dead while properties running into millions of naira were destroyed during attacks on six council secretariats as several thugs invaded Eleme, Ahoada East, Obior Akpor, Emohua, Khana and Ikwere LGAs protesting the recently conducted local elections in the state. In Ahoada East, gunmen reportedly killed a man who was said to be the brother of the Chief of Staff to the Government House, Edison Ehie. Also, three individuals were allegedly killed during sporadic shooting in Oyigbo local council. The hometown of the deputy governor, Prof Ngozi Ordu, was not spared as protesters used sticks and iron to destroy plastic chairs outside the complex of the local council.

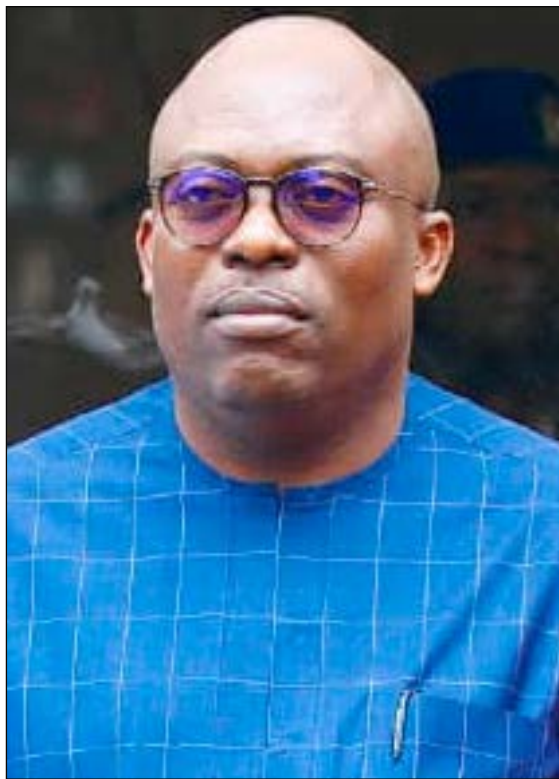
The violence broke out on Monday after the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kayode Egbetokun, ordered that the secretariats of the 23 LGAs of the state be unsealed as a group loyal to some political actors laid siege to the councils and prevented the newly elected LG chairmen from entering their offices.

RIVERS GOVT BLAMES POLICE

On Wednesday, the Rivers State Government, through the state Commissioner for Information and Communications, Joseph Johnson, blamed the police for the violence that rocked the various local government areas of the state.

Johnson accused the police of renegeing on its responsibility of protecting the lives and property of the citizens, as he described the decision of the police to withdraw from providing security during last Saturday's election in the state as a conspiracy.

"It is to tell you that there is a conspiracy by the Nigerian Police and I put every blame on the Nigerian police for leaving a whole state unpoliced on Saturday," Johnson said.



FUBARA



WIKE

"It tells you that anything could have happened; it meant 'To your tent, O Israel,' to every resident of the state."

Johnson said that by the constitution, the least job of the police is to protect lives and property of the state but they ignored it.

"I think that the police, who ought to be at the centre of the blame, was not there. And they also know that there are other unseen hands.

"No man can destroy his own house. There is no way the Governor could set any of the councils ablaze, and watch three councils being burnt while there was even an attempt on the Ohio/Akooor council," he said.

POLICE COMMENCE INVESTIGATION

On Wednesday, the Rivers State Police Command announced that it has commenced a full-scale investigation into the post-election violence which rocked some local government areas of the state leading to the loss of lives and burning of three local government secretariats on Monday.

The newly deployed Commissioner of Police, Mustapha Mohammed, disclosed this during an on-the-spot assessment of the three affected LGAs.

Mohammed also disclosed that a high-powered investigation team of seasoned police officers led by the Deputy Commissioner of Police, State Criminal Investigation Department, had been assigned the task, and said the report of the investigation would be submitted to the Inspector General of Police upon completion.

Mohammed said police operatives had begun intensive patrols to build confidence of the residents and reassure them of their safety.

He added that a series of measures had been put in place aimed at ensuring adequate security in the state.

CP Mohammed sued for peace among stakeholders in the state and urged members of the public to collaborate with the police to ensure peace is fully restored in the state.

"I am preaching the gospel of peace to everybody. I am a peacemaker. I am an ambassador of peace. My message

to everybody is to let us collaborate to maintain law and order.

"The state is not volatile. There is relative peace and we will continue to ensure public safety. We will collaborate with all critical stakeholders both state and non-state actors, to ensure the safety and security of the entire state," he stated.

LONG-DRAWN BATTLE

The ongoing clash between Wike, the immediate past governor of Rivers State, and his successor, Fubara, has been a subject of interest for a long time with many wondering what is fuelling the conflict. People have argued that Fubara's refusal to be loyal to Wike has caused the rift. Wike has, however, come out to debunk the news. According to Wike, the issue isn't about power struggle, but rather, Fubara's alleged plan to remove the Speaker of the House of Assembly, Hon. Martin Amaewhule, which ultimately backfired. The FCT Minister made this revelation on Channels Television, stating that Fubara's coup attempt "boomeranged" against him. He denied ever demanding money from his successor or interfering with Fubara's governance.

WIKE IS TO BLAME, SAY FRANK, OKPARA

Reactions have, however, trailed the recent turn of events in the state. Former Deputy National Publicity Secretary of the ruling All Progressive

Congress (APC), Frank Timi, has accused IGP Egbetokun and FCT Minister Wike of collusion in the recent burning of some local council secretariats in Rivers State.

Frank, in a statement in Abuja, condemned the attacks, saying that the IGP and Wike should resign and be held accountable for violence.

Similarly, former Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Austin Okpara, has also blasted Nyesom Wike for trying to control the structures of the PDP and the APC in the state.

"A man wants to control the APC structure but he wants to be in control of the PDP structure in a state? How do you explain that?" he said during an interview on Channels Television's Sunday Politics.

Okpara, who is a former political associate of the minister, said they are no longer allies.

"We were political associates but now, we are no longer. The point of our disagreement was when he supported APC in the 2023 presidential election at the expense of PDP," he said.

SEARCH FOR PEACE

In the midst of the crisis, political leaders have sued for peace. PDP chieftain, Bode George, called for justice, equity and fairness in the politics of Rivers State, saying he was not interested in taking sides.

Despite the call for peace by the chieftain, a lasting resolution remains almost impossible as both parties have refused to relinquish their grip on the struggle. Genuine reconciliation demands a willingness to compromise and resolve differences, but with neither side willing to budge, peace remains a distant prospect.

Fubara has, however, expressed his desire for peace. He said that he wants peace and he has knelt down to beg many times so that the issue can go.

"There is nothing I have not done on earth for peace to reign. I can tell you the number of times I have knelt down to beg that let us allow this issue to go. I have done everything," he said.

The Rivers State APC governorship candidate in the 2023 election, Tonye Cole, has said that for peace to reign in the state, four persons must sit down to resolve the crisis.

Addressing the political violence that erupted in Rivers State as a result of the recently concluded local government elections, Cole said in an interview with ARISE NEWS on Tuesday that the ongoing unrest stems from deep-rooted internal conflicts dating back to the tenure of former Governor Peter Odili and continuing through the administrations of Amaechi, Wike, and the current governor, Siminalayi Fubara.

"What you're talking about is one internal battle that has started a long time ago, and it's not in isolation. And so, to actually believe that moving forward from now is actually going to bring peace moving forward, I think it's a fallacy. There's no peace that can happen under the present circumstances. And you have to go back to Odili into Amaechi, Amaechi into Wike, Wike into Sim, and you will see that there is a trend that must end, because everybody that is being mentioned here comes from the same nuclear family, splitting up and fighting to the death," Cole said.

"There are four actors here that must be called together to sit down, and until all of them sit at a table and decide that Rivers State is more important than personal agenda or interests, till then, we're not going to have peace. His Excellency Peter Odili, who is the father of everybody in this political dynamic must sit at the table. Rotimi Amaechi His Excellency must sit at that table. Nyesom Wike must sit at that table, and Sim Fubara must sit at that table.

"And the President can superintend this if he really wants peace in Rivers State, and a decision must be made that this is how we are going to be moving forward. Until that is done, as soon as Fubara's time is about to end, you will see another all-out war," he said.

PDP inaugurates Benue exco members

LORETTA ALFRED

Amid festering crisis, Benue State chapter of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on Thursday swore in newly-elected executives of the party.

The newly-elected chairman of the party in the state, Mr Chris Abah, was sworn in alongside 14 other members of the State Working Committee (SWC), Daily Post reports.

Barr Sam Tumba administered the oath of office on the new executives

at the party's state secretariat in New GRA, Makurdi.

He performed the ceremony on behalf of Benue PDP caretaker committee and afterwards congratulated the officials for their emergence as party leaders.

Mr Abah and other officials were elected during the Benue State PDP Congress held in the state on October 3.

Other members of the executives sworn in were, the Deputy Chairman, Hon Clement Azuanongo, Secretary, Mr Moses Audu, Youth Leader, Saater Atser and Woman Leader, Grace

Abine, among others.

Responding on behalf of the newly inaugurated Exco, the Chairman, Hon Abah, assured that under his leadership, every effort will be made to return Benue State to the PDP.

"I accept this great responsibility to reposition the party and call on members with good disposition to rally round the party to bounce back in 2027."

Recall that Benue PDP is factionalised into Ortom/Moro and Suswan camps, which held parallel State Congresses on October 3.



EDO STATE MIGRATION AGENCY
PMB 1007, Sapele Road, Benin City

RECRUITMENT

The Edo State Migration Agency formerly known as the Edo State Task Force Against Human Trafficking (ETATH) calls for applications from suitably qualified candidates to fill the following positions below:

Position: Director General

Location: Edo State, Nigeria

Contract Type: Performance-based, Renewable
Contract Duration: 4 years, with the possibility of renewal for another 4 years

Overview

The Edo State Migration Agency is seeking a qualified and experienced individual to serve as its Director General. The individual will be the Chief Executive Officer of the Agency and further serve as Secretary to the Board of the Agency. As Director General, you will be responsible for the leadership and operational management of the agency. This position is fundamental in execution of policies and day-to-day administration in alignment with the established Edo State Migration Law.

The successful candidate will be appointed by the Executive Governor of Edo State and will work under a performance-based contract that is subject to renewal at the Governor's Directive

Organization Overview

The Edo State Migration Agency is established by the Edo State Migration Law to address migration-related issues within the state. With a broader mandate, the Agency is tasked to manage migration, protect human rights, combat trafficking in person, facilitate the reintegration of returning migrants and foster sustainable development through effective migration policies.

The agency collaborates with relevant stakeholders to promote a safe and supportive environment for potential and returning migrants.

Responsibilities

- Leadership: Provide visionary and strategic direction to the Agency that is in line with State, National and International Migration policies.
- Policy Execution: Implement and oversee the execution policies and programmes.
- Operational Management: Manage the day-to-day operations of the Agency, including resource allocation, staff management, and operational efficiency.
- Board Secretary: Serve as the Secretary to the Board; facilitate communication and coordination between the Board and the Agency.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborate with relevant state agencies, international organizations and Local organization.
- Reporting: Regularly report to the Executive Governor, Attorney General and the Board on the Agency's activities.
- Perform other tasks as required.

Skills Required (Essential)

- The candidate must possess strong leadership skills with a proven track record of managing diverse teams and organizations, demonstrated integrity and ethical conduct in professional settings.
- He/She must have excellent verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with stakeholders at all levels.

Education and Experience (Essential)

Experience: Minimum of 10 years of experience in human rights, human trafficking, humanitarian affairs, migration, diaspora affairs, or peace and conflict management.

Education: Desired Master's degree or higher (Social Science, Public Administration, International Relations, Migration Studies, Law, or a related discipline).

1. Human Resource Officer

Responsibilities:

- Coordinate recruitment processes, including job postings, screening resumes, conducting interviews, and facilitating the selection of candidates.
- Assist in the development and implementation of staff development programmes, including training sessions, workshops, and mentorship programmes.
- Handle employee relations matters, including conflict resolution, disciplinary actions, and grievance procedures.
- Maintain accurate records of employee information, including personnel files, attendance

records, and performance evaluations.

- Assist in the administration of employee benefits and compensation packages.
- Support the development and implementation of HR policies and procedures in compliance with labour laws and regulations.
- Provide guidance and support to employees on HR-related matters, including policies, procedures, and benefits.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management, Business Administration or a related field.
- Previous experience in human resources or related field is preferred.
- Knowledge of recruitment and selection processes.
- Familiarity with HR policies, procedures, and best practices.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills.

2. Training and Manpower Development Officer

Responsibilities

- Design and implement capacity building trainings for staff and stakeholders to enhance their skills and competencies.
- Develop training curricula tailored to the specific needs and requirements of the migration agency, ensuring the professionalism of officers.
- Conduct training needs assessments to identify areas for skill development and capacity building.
- Collaborate with internal stakeholders to gather input and feedback on training programmes effectiveness.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Human Resource Management, Organization Psychology, Education, or a related field.
- Previous experience in designing and delivering training programmes.
- Strong understanding of adult learning principles and instructional design methodologies.
- Excellent presentation and facilitation skills.
- Knowledge of relevant laws, regulations, and best practices in human resource management.

3. Research and Policy Officer

Responsibilities:

- Conduct research on migration trends, human trafficking, and related topics.
- Gather and analyze relevant data and statistics to inform policy development and decision-making.
- Prepare reports, briefs, and presentations based on research findings for internal and external stakeholders.
- Monitor and analyze legislative and policy developments related to migration and trafficking.
- Collaborate with other departments to ensure alignment of research findings with organizational goals.
- Assist in the development and implementation of policies and strategies to address migration challenges and other related functions.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences, International Relations, Public Policy, or a related field (preferred). A related higher degree will be an advantage
- Previous experience in conducting research and policy analysis in the field of migration or human rights.
- Strong analytical skills and ability to interpret complex data and statistics.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with experience in report writing.
- Proficiency in data analysis software and statistical tools.

4. Programme Officer

Responsibilities:

- Design and develop programmes aimed at addressing migration challenges and promoting regular, safe, and orderly migration.
- Coordinate with internal departments and external partners to ensure effective implementation of programmes.
- Develop partnerships with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to leverage resources and expertise.
- Contribute to the development of policies and strategies related to migration, in alignment with organizational goals and priorities.
- Monitor and evaluate programme activities.
- Prepare reports, presentations, and other materials to communicate programme outcomes to stakeholders.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in International

Development, Public Policy, or a related field.

- Previous experience in programme design, implementation, and evaluation, preferably in the field of migration or humanitarian assistance.
- Strong project management skills, with the ability to multitask and prioritize competing demands.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with experience in building and maintaining partnerships.
- Familiarity with monitoring and evaluation frameworks and methodologies.

5. Counsellor

Responsibilities:

- Provide psychosocial support and counselling services to victims of human trafficking and irregular migration.
- Conduct individual and group counselling sessions to address trauma, stress, and other psychological issues.
- Develop and implement counselling plans tailored to the needs of each victim, with a focus on empowerment and resilience.
- Collaborate with other departments and external partners to ensure holistic support for victims, including access to sheltering services and medical care.
- Maintain confidentiality and ethical standards in all counselling interactions, while adhering to professional codes of conduct.
- Assess victim's needs and refer them to appropriate resources and services as needed, such as legal aid, healthcare, or vocational training.
- Monitor victim's progress and adjusts counselling interventions as necessary to achieve desired outcomes.
- Keep accurate and up-to-date records of counselling sessions and victim progress.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree, desired master's degree or higher (Counselling, Psychology, Social Work, or a related field).
- Certification or licensure as a professional counsellor or therapist preferred.
- Experience providing counselling services to victims of trauma, violence, or exploitation, with knowledge of trauma-informed care principles.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to establish rapport and build trust with diverse clients.
- Ability to work effectively in a high-pressure environment with empathy, patience, and resilience.
- Knowledge of counselling techniques and interventions, including cognitive-behavioural therapy, narrative therapy, and mindfulness-based approaches.
- Proficiency in relevant software applications for documentation and case management.

6. Rehabilitation and Reintegration Officer

Responsibilities:

- Deliver timely and accurate project-related activities to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of migrants.
- Develop and maintain labour market support services for migrants, including facilitating access to formal employment opportunities, vocational training and education.
- Administer cases of migrants in need of rehabilitation and reintegration support, ensuring that their needs are assessed and addressed appropriately.
- Establish and maintain contact with potential employers and vocational training providers, including supporting the development of a referral system for migrants seeking employment or skills training.
- Support the drafting of monthly reports as required by funding organizations, documenting progress and outcomes of reintegration efforts.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's or Master's degree in Social Science, Political Science, Business Administration or Economics.
- Ability to network and correspond effectively with the Organized Private Sector to facilitate employment opportunities for migrants.
- Knowledge of vocational training opportunities available to migrants, including skills development programmes and training.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, with the ability to build rapport and trust with vulnerable persons.
- Knowledge of family tracing and reunification processes, including legal and ethical considerations.

- Ability to develop and implement individualized reintegration plans.
- Proficiency in documentation and case management, with attention to detail and confidentiality.

7. Data Management Officer

Responsibilities:

- Handle the collection, storage, and analysis of data.
- Develop and maintain databases to organize and store data.
- Prepare regular reports from data analysis, as well as relevant information on agency activities and initiatives.
- Ensure that all reports and documentation produced by the agency are accurate, complete, and compliant with relevant standards and guidelines.
- Archive data and documentation according to established protocols and procedures, ensuring that information is easily accessible for future reference and analysis.

Skills Required Essential:

- Proficiency in data collection, storage, analysis, and archiving techniques.
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy in working with data and documentation.
- Excellent organizational and time management skills, with the ability to prioritize tasks and meet deadlines.
- Proficiency in database management systems and data analysis software.
- Effective communication skills, including the ability to present complex data and information in a clear and understandable manner.
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively in a fast-paced environment.
- Analytical thinking and problem-solving skills.

8. Nurse

Responsibilities:

- Perform daily nursing activities to fulfil technical requirements, including medical examinations such as checking vital signs, weight, height, and visual acuity.
- Conduct blood, urine, or sputum collection as required.
- Provide treatment, referrals, and pre-departure procedures.
- Ensure accurate documentation, certification, and information transmission.
- Provide detailed explanations to returnees regarding treatments and referrals.
- Conduct comprehensive history taking and accurate biodata collection.
- Verify proper transportation of samples to the laboratory.
- Monitor and maintain stock of medical kits and emergency supplies.
- Offer counselling to returnees on TB or HIV education, prevention, and management.
- Prepare administrative reports and programme updates.
- Support planning and execution of mobile missions.
- Perform medical escort duties when required.
- Maintain collaborative relationships with various partners for relevant information sharing.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree in Nursing Science with a minimum of three years of clinical experience.
- Valid license to practice nursing in Nigeria.
- Excellent technical skills, including phlebotomy.
- Training or experience in tuberculosis management, immunizations, mental health, or public health is an advantage.
- Strong clinical skills to perform medical examinations and technical procedures.
- Proficiency in MS Office suite (Word, Excel, Access).
- Good communication skills and ability to work in a team.
- Experience in counselling, health promotion, or migration health is a plus.
- Self-motivated with the ability to work with minimum supervision.
- Demonstrated ability to maintain detail, accuracy, and confidentiality.

Method of Application

Interested and qualified candidates should apply:
<https://jobs.edostate.gov.ng>

Application Deadline: 7 days from the date of this publication

Faith

CHRISTIANITY

Intercession is for others

CHRIS OYAKHILOME

Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God

by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them (Hebrews 7:25).

Intercession involves standing in the gap between two parties or more. It is about pleading a case on behalf

of someone else, often without their awareness of their predicament or their need for help. For instance, when you intercede for someone who isn't born again, they may not be con-

scious of their spiritual state or their need for salvation.

In such cases, you are presenting reasons to God on their behalf. You are bringing their ignorance and lack of understanding about their spiritual standing before the Lord. Consider how God described the Ninevites to Jonah—they didn't know right from wrong. But God sent Jonah to them to preach and get them to repent from their wickedness.

Remarkably, the Ninevites, from the king to the common people, took Jonah's message to heart and repented sincerely, fasting and wearing sackcloth as a sign of mourning and penitence. Their collective repentance moved God. In Jonah 4:11 (NIV), after sparing Nineveh, God explained His compassion to Jonah: "And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

Similarly, when we pray for sinners, we are telling God that they don't understand their situation and their need for salvation. We acknowl-

edge that they deserve God's judgment due to sin, but we plead our case on Jesus' sacrifice for them. We are not persuading God to save them because salvation is already available through Jesus. Instead, we're asking that the Lord will arrange circumstances that will lead them to accept this salvation.

This type of intercession extends beyond the lost to those who, even though are already Christians, may still be ignorant or struggling with their faith. It is about selflessly praying for others; advocating for them in prayer before God, whether they are aware of their need or not.

PRAYER

Dear Father, I pray for those in my world who are yet to receive salvation, that their eyes and hearts be open to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I pray that you'll orchestrate circumstances, situations, materials, and people that'll cause the radiant light of your glorious Gospel to shine brightly in their hearts, dispelling darkness, and ushering them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, in Jesus' Name. Amen.



OYAKHILOME

One cannot be truly dedicated to God and not emerge a wonder

DAVID OYEDEPO

What is dedication? In our context, dedication implies: Being sold out to God and the interest of His kingdom in truth and indeed Mak. 12:30 Mat. 22:37; Making one's life a seed unto God and the course of His kingdom Jhn.12:23-26/ Gal. 3:29. In the kingdom of Christ, no one's life can be any more fruitful than he or she is dedicated as we saw in the parable of the sower as told by Christ, how that among them that received the seed in good ground produced fruits at different rates, some 30, others 60 and

some 100 fold of fruitfulness Mat. 13:23 The question then is, how does one get to the 100-fold category of fruitfulness?

Mat. 19:26-29/ Mak. 10:27-30/ Luk. 18:27-30 Jesus gave us the answer through his response to the question of the disciples: we have left all and followed you. What shall we have then? There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with

persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.

Mak 10:29-30 God once spoke to me from Deut. 28:1, There is a place for you on top, if you are interested and I answered, 'Lord, I am interested' then God further responded, 'then whatever I tell you to do, do it.' But every seed must first subscribe to the heat underneath the earth before its full potential can be made manifest.

This is illustrated in the parable of Jesus about the mustard-seed, though it be tiniest of all seeds, but when it is sown, it grows up, and shoots out great branches; so that the fowls of the

air may lodge under the shadow, that is, providing succor for many. Dedication can turn any believer to a phenomenon among men a Mak. 4:30-32/ 1 Cor. 2:9 The testimonies of the following biblical giants validate the power of dedication to God and the interest of His kingdom: Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, and Paul Isa. 5:1-3/ Heb. 6:12.

May every Winner succeed through genuine dedication to God to be listed among the 100-fold company of believers through our individual's faithful engagement in this prophetic season, in the name of Jesus Christ! Jesus is Lord!



OYEDEPO

ISLAM

EMEGG calls for Muslims representation in Edo State government

ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

The Edo Muslim for Equity and Good Governance (EMEGG) has made a bold demand for increased Muslims representation in the newly elected Edo State government.

In a recent statement made available to newsmen in Benin City, the state capital, the group emphasized that it is time for Muslims who represent 40-percent population of the state to be recognized for their active participation and contributions during the last election cycle. The group's leadership pointed out that Muslims have been consistent in their calls for fair representation, yet these demands have often been overlooked by previous administrations.

The General Coordinator of EMEGG, Shiekh Sirajudeen Muhammad, noted that Muslims in Edo State played a significant role in ensuring the victory of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the recent election. He highlighted that while both the positions of Governor and Deputy Governor have already been assigned to Christian candidates, it is now crucial to honour promises of inclusivity made by the Governor-Elect, Senator Monday Okpebholo.

EMEGG is advocating for Muslims to be appointed to key positions, specifically the Secretary to the State Government (SSG) and the Chief of Staff. They argue that these positions are critical to ensuring a balanced and inclusive government that reflects the diverse religious makeup of Edo State.

"Edo Muslims have qualified, experienced, dedicated, committed, and loyal APC faithful who have made significant contributions to the party's success," the group stated.

By appointing Muslims to these roles, the group believes that the Edo State government can foster unity, build trust within the Muslim community, and enhance the state's governance.

The statement concluded with EMEGG's continued support for the Governor-Elect and a commitment to the development of a better Edo State.

According to the statement, "Considering the Muslims will change the narrative of governance in Edo state, build confidence In His Excellency, Senator Monday Okpebholo and APC as a party above all consideration will

take Edo state to the promise land"

This call for representation underscores a broader national conversation about the inclusion of religious and ethnic minorities in Nigeria's political processes. The group's demands will likely fuel further discussions about equitable power-sharing as the new Edo administration prepares to take office.

ACQUIESCING TO DISOBEDIENCE

The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Whoever of you sees something wrong, let him change it with his hand. If unable, then let him change it with his tongue. If unable, then with his heart. And that is the weakest degree of faith." [Sahih Muslim]

And in the hadith related by Imam Muslim concerning oppressors, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Whoever

fights them with his hand is a believer, whoever fights them with his tongue is a believer, whoever fights them in his heart is a believer. Beyond that, there is not a mustard grain of faith."

This hadith proves that whoever does not condemn acts of disobedience in his heart, or wish they would cease, is devoid of faith. Fighting with the heart includes asking Allah Most High to eradicate falsehood and guide perpetrators of falsehood if they are worthy of guidance.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Do not disobey the Almighty for the sake of someone you love because the heart of the one you love is in the control of the One you disobey, for the more you disobey Allah, the more power will Shaitan get over you.

Health & Environment

• Community Health • Primary Health • Medicine • Climate

Health workers issue 15-day strike notice effective today to FG over unresolved demands

ESOHE AIFUWA

The Nigerian health workers under the umbrella of Joint Health Sector Unions (JOHESU) have issued a 15-day strike notice to the federal government due to some unmet demands which include pending welfare issues.

This was released in a memo titled "Notice of 15 days ultimatum and resumption of suspended strike action" by the unions to the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Mohammed Pate on Wednesday.

JOHESU involves the Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria, the Nigerian Union of Allied Health Professionals, the Senior Staff Association of Universities, Teaching Hospitals, Research Institutions, and Associated Institutions, and the Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and Associated Institutions.

The memo which was signed by the National Chairman of JOHESU, Kabiru Minjibir, and its National Secretary, Martin Egbanubi noted the issue led to the strike that took place from May 19 to June 6, 2023. Following President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's intervention, the suspension was subsequently dropped.

According to INTEL REGION, the issues listed by the unions include the adjustment

of the Consolidated Health Salary Structure as was done with the Consolidated Medical Salary Structure since January 2, 2014, the implementation of a consultant cadre for pharmacists in Federal Health Institutions, the upward review in the retirement age from 60-65 years for health workers and 70 years for Consultants, the payment of JOHESU members in professional regulatory councils.

Others are the payment of arrears of CONHESS review, the tax waiver on healthcare workers' allowances, the immediate payment of COVID-19 inducement hazard allowances to omitted health workers, the immediate suspension of planned establishment and activities of National Health Facility Regulatory Agency, and the withdrawal of the Drug Revolving Fund Standard Operating Procedures.

Nevertheless, the unions demand the immediate implementation of CONHESS adjustment, immediate payment of 25 percent CONHESS review arrears, immediate payment of nine months (January – September 2024) salary to staff of Regulatory Agencies, and immediate restoration of funding to Environmental Health Regulatory Council, immediate reconstitution of Boards/Governing Councils of FHIs, the commencement of the process to upwardly review retirement

age of health workers through Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to the Federal Executive Council.

Other demands include tax waiver on healthcare workers' allowances, immediate payment of COVID-19 inducement hazard allowances to omitted health workers, immediate suspension of planned establishment and activities of NHFRA, withdrawal of the DRF SOP by the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, and the implementa-

tion of approved entry point, call duty and other allowances for holders of Doctor of Pharmacy.

The memo reads, "Consequently, arising from the unanimous resolution of JOHESU Expanded National Executive Council at a hybrid meeting held on 2nd October 2024, and in compliance with the provisions of Section 41 of the Trade Disputes Act Cap.T8 LFN, 2004, JOHESU is constrained to give the Federal Government of Nigeria 15 days ulti-

matum with effect from Thursday, 10th October 2024, and to inform you that with effect from midnight of Friday, October 25, 2024, all our members in the Federal Health Institutions shall embark on seven days strike action.

"However, if at the end of the seven-day warning strike, the Federal government fails to meet our demands, JOHESU has no other option than to embark on an indefinite strike action.

"Honourable Minister Sir, you

will agree with us that JOHESU has always exhibited maturity, selflessness, and patriotism even in the face of extreme provocations and the government's long delay in meeting these demands of workers under JOHESU and we think that our maturity and patriotism have been taken for granted."

"This 15-day ultimatum is necessitated by the non-response of the Federal Government to the plight of our members, despite our benevolence".



HEALTH AGENCY RETREAT:

The Executive Secretary, EDSPHCDA, Dr. Omosigho Izedonmwen addressing the participants at the Primary Healthcare Leadership Challenge Health Retreat.

Asthma in Nigeria: The unseen enemy of public health

NENRIT YAKZUM

Asthma is a significant health concern in Nigeria, affecting approximately 5-10% of the population, which translates to around 10-20 million people.

This chronic respiratory disease poses a substantial threat to the health and well-being of Nigerians, particularly in urban areas where prevalence rates are higher, reaching 13.4% compared to 6.3% in rural areas.

The causes of asthma in Nigeria are multifaceted. Air pollution from vehicle emissions, industrial activities, and biomass burning contributes significantly to asthma development. Indoor air pollution from cooking fuels and tobacco smoke, allergens like dust mites, mold, and pet dander, respiratory infections, and genetic predisposition further exacerbate the condition.

Symptoms of asthma include wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness.

Effective management involves medication, such as inhaled corticosteroids and bronchodilators, and lifestyle modifications like avoiding triggers and regular exercise.

Despite its prevalence, asthma management faces numerous challenges in Nigeria. Limited access to healthcare services, especially in rural areas, inadequate diagnosis and treatment, high costs of medications and healthcare services, and low awareness and education about asthma hinders effective management. Asthma's impact on Nigeria is staggering, with approximately 1,500 deaths annually, higher hospitalization rates compared to other African countries, and estimated productivity losses of ₦144 billion (approximately \$400 million USD) annually.

To combat asthma's burden, Nigeria requires improved access to healthcare services, especially in rural areas, enhanced diagnosis and treatment capabilities, and increased awareness and edu-

cation through public health campaigns. Environmental interventions, such as reducing air pollution and improving indoor air quality, are also crucial. Developing national asthma guidelines and policies will help address the challenges and ensure effective management.

The Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) publishes an annually updated evidence-based strategy for asthma management. However, its implementation in Nigeria is limited due to factors like complexity, unavailability, and unaffordability of asthma medicines, and poor patient adherence to medications³.

Asthma's impact on Nigeria's health and economy necessitates urgent attention. Addressing the challenges and implementing targeted initiatives can significantly improve asthma management and reduce its burden. By prioritizing asthma care and education, Nigeria can mitigate this growing health concern.

Flood: Swiss govt donates €1.2m to Borno

KWUBEI DESTINY

The Swiss Federation has donated 1.2 million Euros to the Borno State Flood Disaster Relief Fund to provide much-needed support to the victims of the flood disaster in Borno State.

The donation was announced by the Swiss Ambassador to Nigeria, Nicolas Lang, who led a delegation of the Swiss Embassy on a sympathy visit to the government house in Maiduguri.

Lang was accompanied by Mr. Nicolas Martin-Achard, the Senior Humanitarian Advisor, and Mr. Florent Geel, the Sen-

ior Political Advisor at the Swiss Embassy.

Lang said that Switzerland had supported the Borno Model in 2023 with about 700,000 USD.

"This contribution has been fully implemented in due time and purpose.

"The Borno Model is a programme for the mass exit of armed Boko Haram insurgents and civilians trapped in the lines of conflict.

"These donations in 2023 and 2024 demonstrate Switzerland's continued support and solidarity with the Borno State Government and the people of Borno affected by the crises," Ambassa-

dor Lang said.

Responding, Gov Zulum thanked Lang and his team for taking time out of their busy to pay the sympathy visit to Borno State and the Swiss Federal Government for the generous donation to the affected flood victims.

"On behalf of the Government and the good people of Borno, let me express our profound gratitude to the Swiss Government for this generous donation.

"We are equally grateful to Amb Lang and his team for the sympathy visit. Rest assured, the donation shall be judiciously utilised under my watch," Zulum said.

NAN reports that flood waters displaced more than one million people in and around Maiduguri, which serves as the hub for the responses to the humanitarian crisis in the northeast, in one of the worst floods.

Thousands of homes were engulfed by rapidly rising waters after a dam burst following a weekend of torrential rain in northeastern Nigeria.



Health & Environment

EDSPHCDA sets to improve a culture of positive behaviour change in healthcare delivery

NENE OLAYE

In its commitment to improving a culture of positive behaviour change in healthcare delivery within the primary healthcare sector in Edo State, the Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCDA) has hosted the Primary Healthcare Leadership Challenge Health Retreat in Benin City.

The retreat which aims at reinforcing a sense of ownership of programs and services to drive effective results, took place from Monday, September 30 to Friday, October 4.

The event was supported by the Nigerian Governors Forum (NGF), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA).

Key activities during the retreat included the review of the development of the 2025 Annual Operational Plan (AOP) at both the Local Government Area (LGA) and facility.

Participants were trained on how to effectively fill out essen-

tial templates and present reports on health programs covering the period from January to October (Present). These reports spanned crucial areas such as immunization, nutrition, maternal and child health, reproductive health, and other critical health services. The review provided a platform to harmonize progress, address challenges, and propose actionable solutions moving forward.

Another crucial aspect of the retreat was a mandatory leadership course for Medical Officers of Health (MOH) and Directors of Nursing Services (DNS). This course was important to equip them with leadership skills to support their roles in the primary healthcare system.

During the retreat, the Executive Secretary, EDSPHCDA, Dr. Omosigho Izedonmwen, expressed his gratitude to all attendees and emphasized the need to strengthen the primary healthcare system in Edo State. He highlighted the importance of rebranding primary healthcare services, noting that while the buildings are called "Neighborhood Clinics," they offer comprehensive primary

healthcare services.

Dr. Izedonmwen explained that shifting public perception from viewing these services as primarily for the underprivileged is important, a task already underway through the Government's rebranding efforts.

Throughout the retreat, the Acting Director of Planning, Research, and Statistics, Mrs. Esther Ajayi-David and her team, played a key role in moderating the training sessions. She provided technical support and guided participants in data template population and proper reporting techniques.

Seasoned Facilitators from NPHCDA, EDSPHCDA, EDO DIDA, NHIA, and Edo State Ministry of Health led various training sessions. Topics ranged from Data Reporting and Sustainability, Quality Health Service Delivery, Basic Healthcare Provision Fund (BHCPF), Health Insurance, and the Role of Stakeholders in Improving Primary Healthcare among several other lectures. A key session led by the Ministry of Health focused on developing a sector-wide approach (SWAP) to streamline healthcare processes, ensuring that all programs operate under a unified plan and budget to reduce waste and eliminate duplication.



EDO STATE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
PLOT 116, OKO - OGBA ROAD,
P. M. B. 1181, BENIN CITY,
EDO STATE, NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Sequel to the resolution passed by the Edo State House of Assembly declaring vacant the seat of the Councillor representing Ward 3 of the Esan Central Local Government Legislative Council following the abscondment of the erstwhile Councillor from his legislative duties, Edo State Independent Electoral Commission has fixed Saturday 9th November, 2024 for a by-election to fill the vacancy. Only the 7 Political Parties that fielded candidates in the September 2nd 2023 Local Government Council Elections will participate in this by - election. The schedule of activities for the election are as follows:

S/N	DATE	ACTIVITY
1.	10/10/2024	Party Primaries begin
2.	17/10/2024	End of party Primaries
3.	18/10/2024	Collection and submission of form by Political Parties
4.	28/10/2024	Submission of Party Candidate
5.	28/10/2024	Publication of Names of Candidates
6.	28/10/2024	Electioneering Campaign Commences
7.	2/11/2024	Submission of names of changed/submitted Candidates
8.	5/11/2024	Publication of Notice of Polls at the Ward Collation Centre
9.	6/11/2024	Publication of final list of validated Candidates
10.	4/11/2024	Submission of Names of Party Agents by Political Parties
11.	Midnight of 17/11/2024	End of Electioneering campaign
12.	9/11/2024	By-Election and Declaration of Result

Emmanuel Abebe

Signed
Emmanuel Abebe
For Chairman

Edo State Independent Electoral Commission

OSASERE
I, formerly known and addressed as EDITH OSASERE AIGBIREMWEEN, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. OTABOR EDITH OSASERE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGHOGHO
I, formerly known and addressed as IDEHEN OGHOGHO, now wish to be known and addressed as IGBINAKENZUA OGHOGHO. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

GODSPOWER
That my name was captured on my NIN as JOHNSON GODSPOWER OKON, that I wish to remove OKON from my name, now wish to be known and addressed as JOHNSON GODSPOWER. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

CHINENYE
That my name was captured on my NIN as DENNIS MARYANNE CHINENYE instead of DENNIS MARY-ANNE CHINENYE, now wish to be known and addressed as DENNIS MARY-ANNE CHINENYE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGBEBOR
That OGBEBOR DOUGLAS PHILLIP and OGBEBOR OSAROBO is one and the same person, Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as OGBEBOR DOUGLAS PHILLIP. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ESOSA
I, formerly known and addressed as ORIAKHI RITA ESOSA, that OKAN is my (surname), RITA is my (middle name) while ESOSA is my (first name), now wish to be known and addressed as OKAN RITA ESOSA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ODION
I, formerly known and addressed as EGHOMWANRE SUCCESS ODION, now wish to be known and addressed as AIGBOSA SUCCESS ODION. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

BEKEDEMOR
I, formerly known and addressed as BEKEDENOR HELEN CONSTANCE that I wish to remove CONSTANCE from my name now and add ONOME. I now wish to be addressed as BEKEDENOR HELEN ONOME. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

GOMMENT
That my name was wrongly captured on my BVN as ISEMEH GOMMENT CHRISTIANA instead of GOMMENT ITSEMEH CHRISTIANA. GOMMENT is my (surname), ITSEMEH is my (first name) and CHRISTIANA is my (middle name). Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as GOMMENT ITSEMEH CHRISTIANA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ONOKHUA
I, formerly known and addressed as SUCCESS NGOZI ONOKHUA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. SUCCESS NGOZI ONOKHUA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

CHIOMA
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS NJOABUZIA CHIOMA HENRIETTA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. ISAAC CHIOMA HENRIETTA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

EFUA
I, formerly known and addressed as NOAH EFUA HENRY, now wish to be known and addressed as NOAH EFUA IGBENOREMEN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OJOMO
I, formerly known and addressed as MAGDALENE EVBU OJOMO, now wish to be known and addressed as LUCY EVBU OJOMO. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

IDUSEMEN
I, formerly known and addressed as IDUSEMEN IDUOZEE OKUN, now wish to be known and addressed as IDUSEMEN IMUWAHEN IDUOZEE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE
I, NNAMDI IFEANYI ARINZE, wish to inform the public that I have misplaced the original copy of my University Degree Certificate issued by the University of Benin (MB. BS Degree).

CAVEAT EMPTOR
Notice is hereby given to the general public that the family house built on a piece/parcel of land measuring 50ft by 100ft lying, Situate and being at No. 5, Oghene Street, Off 2nd& 3rd East circular Road, Benin City, belongs to LATE MR. PETER OGUNSERI ERHARUYI EKEGBIAN. It has come to the knowledge of the family that some persons have been making plans to sell the said property which is the Igiogbe of PETER OGUNSERI ERHARUYI EKEGBIAN. The general public is hereby warned that any person(s) who transacts business over the property with these miscreant(s) does so at his/her own risk.

VIOLET
I, formerly known and addressed as VIOLET MONICA OJI, now wish to be known and addressed as VIOLET MONICA OMONKIERE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

MAUREEN
That I, MAUREEN IGUEHI INEGBEDION and MAUREEN EDUWA IDELE is one and the same person, Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as IDELE MAUREEN INEGBEDION. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGBEIDE
I, formerly known and addressed as SYLVESTER EDUWUIFO IMAGBENIKARO, now wish to be known and addressed as OGBEIDE IZIEGBE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OKUNDAYE
That I, OKUNDAYE OGHOMWEN NOSAZE and OKUNDAYE OGHOMWEN NOSAZEME is the same and one person, now wish to be known and addressed as OKUNDAYE OGHOMWEN NOSAZE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OLOHIMIA
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS SUSAN OLOHIMIA UDUGUOME, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. SUSAN OLOHIMIA EDORE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

IGBINEDION
I, formerly known and addressed as IGBINEDION SUSAN, now wish to be known and addressed as IGBINEDION OMOWUNMI SUSAN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

IBHAFIDON
That, I wish to add ORIABURE to my name on my BVN which was written as SAMUEL IBHAFIDON AINERHONMITON instead of SAMUEL ORIABURE IBHAFIDON AINERHONMITON, Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as SAMUEL ORIABURE IBHAFIDON AINERHONMITON. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

CHIMA
I, formerly known and addressed as CHIMA CALEB, now wish to be known and addressed as CHIMA TOCHUKWU CALEB. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

TINA
That OSAIKHUWOMWAN PRINCESS TINA, OBARETIN TINA OSARO, and OSAIKHUWOMWAN TINA OSARO are one and the same person, Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as OSAIKHUWOMWAN PRINCESS TINA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ESE
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS NOGUSEKHARU ESE UBEBE, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. ASEMOTA ESE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

HOPE
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS HOPE EMATAVBOHI IGBARUMA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. HOPE EMATAVBOHI UWAYA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

SPACE FOR SALE

Entertainment

Remembering Nigeria's reggae greats

UGO UGBOH

The reggae revolution in Nigeria wasn't just about the music; it became a powerful voice for the people during a time of great struggle. In the 1980s and 1990s, Nigeria was in the throes of military dictatorships with the consequent human rights abuses, fear, intimidation, and lack of freedom that made life incredibly difficult for many citizens. The absence of democratic rule left the population frustrated and angry over rampant corruption, poverty, and abuse of power. In the face of these challenges, reggae music emerged as a way for ordinary people to express their struggles and dreams for a better future.

Reggae in Nigeria became a form of protest, a musical outlet where the everyday person could voice their frustrations and hopes. Although other genres eventually gained prominence, the legacy of the reggae artists from that era still resonates today, inspiring anyone who believes in justice, unity, and the importance of standing up for what is right.

Through reggae, people found strength and hope, believing they could make a difference. The music united them during tough times, becoming more than just a genre; it was a movement celebrating resilience and the spirit of the Nigerian people.

Renowned Nigerian reggae musicians of that era include Majek Fashek, Ras Kimono, Sonny Okosun, Orits Wiliki, The Mandators, Maxwell Udoh, Andy Shoreman, Evi Edna Ogholi, Wale Man, Isaac Black, Daniel Wilson, among others. These artists were instrumental in shaping Nigeria's reggae scene with their socially conscious and uplifting messages.

MAJEK FASHEK

Majekodunmi Fasheke, popularly known as Majek Fashek, was one of the most iconic reggae musicians to emerge from Africa. Born in Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, Majek Fashek's career took off in the 1980s with the release of his groundbreaking hit "Send Down the Rain". This song became a cultural phenomenon, earning him the nickname "The Rainmaker" after it seemed to cause rain whenever he performed it. His music had a deep connection to African spirituality and Rastafarianism. His hit song "Send Down the Rain" was seen by many as a prayer for blessings and relief, carrying a powerful spiritual message about the need for renewal and healing in both the land and the people. Majek often talked about his connection to God and how his music was inspired by the divine, using his songs to call for spiritual awakening and justice.

Majek's 1989 album "Prisoner of Conscience" was both a critical and commercial success, coming at a time many Nigerians were facing political oppression and social difficulties. He gained international recognition by signing with Interscope Records. His other songs include "Spirit of Love" (1991), "Religion Na Politics" (1991), "Love and Affection" (2008), and "Kpangolo" (1997).

However, despite his early success, Majek Fashek struggled with personal



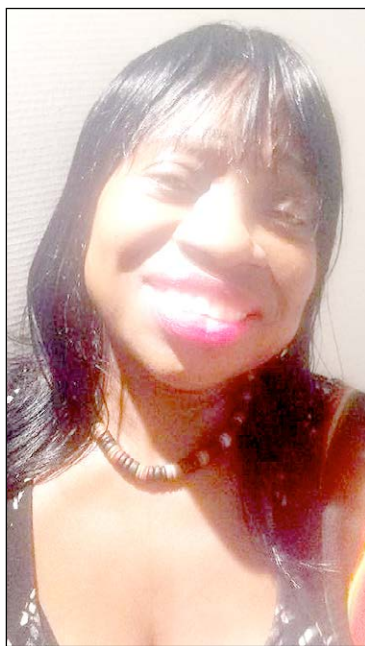
MAJEK FASHEK



RAS KIMONO



SONNY OKOSUN



EVI EDNA OGHOLI



ORITS WILIKI

challenges, particularly with substance abuse, which affected his career in later years. He made several attempts to revive his career and remained a beloved figure in Nigeria's music setting until he died in 2020. His legacy as one of Africa's greatest reggae musicians remains.

RAS KIMONO

Oseloke Augustine Onwubuya, popularly known as Ras Kimono, was a native of Onicha Olona, Delta State. Born on May 9, 1958 in Ekeleke Elumelu, Delta State, Ras Kimono began his career as a student at Gbenoba Secondary School in Agbor before joining the Jastix Reggae Ital band, alongside Majek Fashek, Amos McRoy Jegg, and Black Rice Osagie. His music was deeply shaped by the poverty, inequality, and hardship he experienced during his early years.

Ras Kimono gained significant fame in the late 1980s with his debut album, "Under Pressure", in which he addressed issues like corruption, inequality, and oppression in Nigeria and Africa at large. His songs, such as "Under Pressure", "Rumba Style", and "What's Gwan", were entertaining and enlightening. He was seen as a voice for the oppressed,

using reggae to advocate for justice and peace. He believed that through faith and unity, the people could overcome the oppression they were facing.

For Ras Kimono, reggae was a tool for not only protesting injustice but also for calling people back to their spiritual roots, emphasizing a connection to God and African identity. His influence helped shape the reggae music setting in Nigeria and secured his legacy as one of the pioneers of the genre in the country. His other songs include "Rastafari Chant", "Natty Get Jail", and "Slavery Days".

Kimono was both a voice and a champion for the people, in word and action. Despite the fame he achieved, he never distanced himself from the struggles of the oppressed, choosing to stay close to them to understand their tribulations firsthand. In many interviews, he said Jehovah and the suffering of the common man were his primary musical inspirations.

"I live where the people live so I can witness their tribulations—the suffering and humiliation—so we can put it into our music and reveal it," he once said.

Kimono wasn't just a conscious reg-

gae artist who talked the talk; he genuinely believed in and lived by what he preached. He once remarked, "If I don't expose hardship and injustice, who will do it for the people?"

Ras Kimono who passed on in 2018, now resting among Jah's soldiers in Zion, was a passionate advocate for the masses, using reggae music as a weapon in his lifelong fight for equal rights and justice. His music and impact remain a strong part of Nigeria's cultural and musical history.

SONNY OKOSUN

Another legend was Sonny Okosun, a Nigerian musician who became famous for his unique blend of reggae, Afrobeat, and highlife. Born in 1947 in Enugu, but hailing from Edo State, he was the leader of the band "Ozzidi". Okosun used his music as a platform for activism, addressing issues of oppression, African unity, and the fight against apartheid.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Okosun emerged as one of the leading voices in African music. His hit song "Fire in Soweto" (1977) was a rallying cry against apartheid in South Africa and gained international recognition. Through songs like "Papa's Land" and

"Which Way Nigeria?", Okosun not only celebrated Africa but also called for social justice, peace, and progress across the continent. His other songs include "Mother and Child", "Holy War", and "No More War".

Though he wasn't exclusively a reggae artist, Okosun's music was heavily influenced by reggae's political and spiritual themes. Okosun was also a devout Christian, and in the later years of his career, he shifted towards gospel music.

Sonny Okosun passed on in 2008, but his music continues to inspire, particularly his work that championed the fight for African liberation and unity.

EVI EDNA OGHOLI

Evi Edna Ogholi, known as the "Queen of Nigerian Reggae", was born July 6, 1966. She made her mark onto the music scene in the late 1980s and became one of the first female reggae artists to gain popularity in Nigeria. Her unique sound combined reggae beats with her beautiful voice which made her a standout artist.

Evi Edna's songs spread messages of love, peace, and hope. One of her biggest hits, "Happy Birthday", is still a favourite birthday song for many Nigerians today. Other songs, like "Riri-ovara" and "Oghene Me", also touched on important social issues, promoting unity and togetherness.

As a devout Christian, Evi Edna Ogholi's faith inspired her music, though her style was different from some reggae artists who followed Rastafarian beliefs. Instead, her songs carried gentle messages about love and kindness, which connected with people during a time when Nigeria was facing many challenges in the 1980s and 1990s.

Even though she took a break from the spotlight for a while, Evi Edna's contributions to Nigerian reggae are still remembered and celebrated. Today, her music continues to inspire fans and reminds people of the power of love and unity.

ORITS WILIKI

Orits Wiliki is one of Nigeria's reggae pioneers known for using his music to speak out against social injustice and inequality. Born in the Niger Delta, Orits Wiliki, who is still very much alive, grew up seeing the struggles of everyday Nigerians, which deeply influenced his music. Songs like "Heart of Stone" tackled issues like corruption and oppression while spreading messages of hope and unity, along with a strong belief in one God (referred to as Jah in Rastafarian culture). Similarly, songs like "Tribulation" and "Fire in the Wire" reflect his belief in the spiritual struggle between good and evil and the need for moral righteousness. Other songs include "10 Commandments", "Wha' Dis Wha' Dat", and "Mubalamumbe".

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Wiliki was a key figure in the Nigerian reggae scene. He not only created powerful music but also mentored younger artists, ensuring that reggae's legacy lives on. Even as music trends shift, Orits Wiliki stays true to his roots, remaining a respected voice in the industry for his commitment to social change and his timeless sound.

“
Reggae in Nigeria
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protest, a musical
outlet where the
everyday person could
voice their frustrations
and hopes. Although
other genres
eventually gained
prominence, the legacy
of the reggae artists
from that era still
resonates today

Entertainment

The Nigerian
Observer
...that the people may know

Excitement heightens as 'A Night in 2005' hits cinemas today

JUDITH ANDREW

The Nigerian film industry is buzzing with anticipation as "A Night in 2005", directed by Temidayo Makanjuola, is set to light up cinema screens today, October 11, 2024.

Ahead of the release date, the film's gripping trailer sparked widespread excitement offering a glimpse into a story filled with suspense, emotion, and nostalgia.

The official trailer of "A Night in 2005" immediately immerses viewers in the vibrant nightlife of the mid-2000s, a time defined by its distinctive youthful energy. It opens with lively scenes: friends laughing over drinks, and the pulsating beats of the era's hottest tracks. The setting captures the essence of 2005, inviting audiences to step back into a time when life was sim-

pler, yet simmering beneath the surface with untold stories.

However, as the trailer progresses, a dramatic shift occurs. What starts as a carefree night of camaraderie and celebration soon unravels into a web of secrets and tension. It becomes evident that this particular night will change the lives of everyone involved forever. The tension builds with scenes of heated arguments, whispered conversations, and fleeting moments of panic, hinting at an undercurrent of mystery that threatens to explode.

Director Temidayo Makanjuola's cinematic style shines through the trailer, offering a visually captivating narrative that combines both emotional depth and suspenseful storytelling. His approach appears to seamlessly blend the nostalgic elements of 2005 with a contemporary lens, creating

a film that feels both familiar and fresh. Makanjuola's keen eye for detail ensures that each scene is packed with clues, challenging viewers to piece together the puzzle before the film's shocking conclusion.

The film's characters, as glimpsed in the trailer, are complex and layered, each harbouring secrets that could unravel their lives. The snippets of dialogue hint at buried pasts, unresolved conflicts, and the haunting impact of decisions made in the heat of the moment. These elements suggest that "A Night in 2005" is more than just a trailer, it's a story about the fragility of human connections and the enduring power of memory.

With its intriguing storyline and dynamic ensemble cast, "A Night in 2005" has become one of the most talked-about releases of the year. Social media is abuzz with theories and

speculation as fans dissect every frame of the trailer, eager to uncover the truth behind the film's mystery. Early reactions suggest that the film will not only deliver a thrilling ride but also resonate deeply with those who lived through the era as well as younger viewers curious about a time just beyond their reach.

"A Night in 2005" offers more than just entertainment. It promises to be a journey through time, exploring themes of courage, friendship, betrayal, and the unexpected twists that life can take.

As the movie hits the cinemas, one thing is clear: "A Night in 2005" is shaping up to be a must-watch offering a compelling blend of nostalgia, mystery, and emotional depth. Get ready to discover what secrets the night will reveal. Make it a must-watch on your movie list.



'Sex for tracks', Diddy, and the music industry

PROMISE OGISO

The music industry, known for its glamour and excitement, conceals a sinister reality. "Sex for tracks", a pervasive scandal, exploits aspiring artists, mostly women, coercing them into trading sexual favours for music opportunities. This exploitative practice has been normalized, leaving victims traumatized and silenced.

Sex for tracks refers to the exchange of sexual favours for music collaborations, recording deals, industry connections, and career advancement. This perpetuates a culture of coercion, manipulation, and silence, resulting in emotional trauma and psychological distress, as well as limited career opportunities.

This syndrome, which just came undone in Nigeria's music industry, speaks volumes about systemic sexual

exploitation, where artists are forced to yield to opportune circumstances that demand sex in exchange for tracks. It is staggering how no accountability exists and little support for victims.

It is similar to what artists are said to go through in the American music industry, recently highlighted by the alarming allegations against music mogul Diddy. A closer look at the parallel scandals reveals a systemic problem that is more pervasive and demands urgent attention.

Three commonalities arise in comparing the "sex for tracks" scandal and the Diddy situation. First, there is a clear power imbalance between someone well established in the industry and new talent; second, that this power is to be nurtured through sexual coercion, meaning the victim is forced to grant sexual favours because of the career opportunities offered; and third, great

silence arising thereafter, for victims might face repercussions of the results and may not speak up.

The Diddy situation has exposed decades-long patterns of exploitation, manipulation, and coercion with industry-wide complicity. But this scandal is just a symptom of a greater problem facing the industry, where sexual exploitation appears to have been normalized, while women and other groups have limited opportunities; gender-based violence at the same time is being condoned and continued in the music industry. Accordingly, there will be several serious implications. These include distrust of the industry, lifelong psychological trauma of victims, reduced creative potential, reinforcement of negative gender stereotypes, and a blow to the industry's reputation.

This scourge demands an intervention that is as immediate

as it is concerted. For these reasons, it must involve education and consent workshops, strict policies and codes of conduct, avenues for reporting, support structures, industrywide accountability, and transparency in all ways.

There is the need for a full range of support for the organizations fighting against this sexual exploitation, demanding accountability from industry leaders, and empowering victims to share their stories. It's time to change.

The "sex for tracks" scandal serves as an eye-opener, exposing the dark underbelly of the entertainment business, amidst all the glitz and glamour. It is thus everyone's responsibility to try and ensure that such a systemic problem is dealt with, along with the provision of space for artists that is safe and inclusive, and ultimately restores integrity to the music industry.

Uchechi Justin Duru: Seasoned photographer honoured with Media Watch International Award

PROMISE OGISO

Uchechi Justin Duru, popularly known as Zaddie Papi, a talented photographer who is making significant strides in the creative industry, was recently honoured by Media Watch International, receiving their prestigious award for excellence. The recognition, given to him as one of the most outstanding photographers, further solidifies Duru's growing influence and talent in an ever-competitive field.

The award ceremony, held at the luxurious Di Marriott Hotel and Suites in Benin City, was a grand affair. It brought together media practitioners, industry leaders, and prominent figures from various sectors to celebrate excellence in the media industry.

Duru's journey in photography has been nothing short of impressive. He has worked with some of the biggest names in the creative world, showcasing his ability to capture not just moments, but emotions and stories through his lens. Among his most notable works include covering the Nigerian singer-songwriter Temilade Openiyi, popularly known as TEMS, during a major UK festival. This assignment was a significant moment in his career, positioning him alongside global creatives.

Another major achievement was his direction of a viral video for the popular Nigerian artist ODUMODUBLVCK. The video, which garnered over 400,000 views on TikTok, became a social media sensation, further highlighting Duru's versatility and ability to create impactful visual content. His unique style and ability to tell stories visually have set him apart in an industry filled with talent.

Speaking at the award ceremony, Duru, who was represented by his friend, Tony Olokwu, expressed gratitude for the recognition, stating that he was honoured to see his work appreciated by society.

"It's always a great feeling to be recognized for your work. Photography has been my passion, and seeing it resonate with people on this level is truly humbling," he said.

The Media Watch International Award is a significant accolade in the media industry, and for over a decade, the organization has been recognizing and celebrating individuals who demonstrate excellence in their fields. Speaking at the event, the Executive Director of Media Watch International, Comrade Phillip Imafidon, praised Duru and the other honourees, stating that the awards are based on merit, recognizing hard work and dedication.

Ayra Starr, Asake, Burna Boy, Rema, Tems nominated for 2024 MTV Europe Music Awards

PROMISE OGISO

Nigerian music sensation Ayra Starr has secured four prestigious nominations for the 2024 MTV Europe Music Awards (EMAs) announced on Tuesday. This remarkable achievement solidifies her position as a rising star in the global music industry.

Ayra Starr's nominations include 'Best African Act', 'Best Afrobeats', 'Best Push', and 'Best New Artist' categories, demonstrating her versatility and talent. Fellow Nigerian artists Asake, Burna Boy, Rema, and Tems are also contenders for the 'Best Afrobeats' award, showcasing the country's vibrant music scene.

Asake makes his debut at the 2024 EMAs with nominations for 'Best African Act' and 'Best Afrobeats', underscoring his rapid rise to prominence. South Africa's Tyla achieved four nominations, including 'Best New', 'Best Afrobeats', 'Best R&B', and 'Best African Act', highlighting her impressive breakout year.

Other nominees for 'Best African Act' include Diamond Platnumz, DBN Gogo, and TitoM & Yuppe, representing the diverse musical landscape of

the continent.

The 2024 MTV EMAs will hold at Manchester's Co-op Live in the UK on November 10, 2024, marking the award show's 30th anniversary. This milestone edition promises to be an unforgettable celebration of global music, featuring performances and appearances by international artists.

AFRICAN MUSIC ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

The MTV EMAs have consistently recognized African talent, featuring a 'Best African Act' category for nearly two decades. This early adoption has helped pave the way for the global recognition of contemporary African music.

This year's nominees exemplify the rich musical heritage and innovative spirit of Africa, from Nigerian titans Ayra Starr and Asake to iconic Tanzanian singer Diamond Platnumz, South African artiste Tyla, and the "Tshwala Bam" duo TitoM & Yuppe.

VOTING AND LIVE STREAMING

Music fans can vote for their favourite artists on the MTV EMA website. The ceremony will be broadcast live globally, allowing audiences to join in the celebration.

From Warri to stardom: Kellyrae's journey to the big scene

PROMISE OGISO

The Nigerian entertainment industry has witnessed the emergence of numerous talented artists, but few have captured the hearts of fans like Kellyrae.

Born Kingsley Sule on February 15, 1991 in Warri, Delta State, Kellyrae has evolved from a local music sensation to a household name.

Kellyrae's musical journey began in his hometown in Warri, where he nurtured his passion within his Christian family and community, quickly becoming a sought-after performer at local events. His reputation grew, and he began to perform at larger shows across Delta State.

During his university years, Kellyrae participated in numerous music events, honing his talent and gaining recognition.

In 2020, he released his debut EP "Success", featuring seven tracks, including "Life No End For There", "Upgrade" (feat. Graham D), "Success" (feat. Erigga), "Thank You Lord", "Don't Go", "Show Me Love", and "Cash Out". These songs showcase his artistic prowess. His early start paved the way for a successful music career, marked by impactful lyrics and soothing vocals. His music often carries messages of perseverance and legitimate hustle, which resonates with many listeners.

However, it was his participation in BBNaija Season 9 ("No Loose Guard" edition) that catapulted Kellyrae to national fame. In August 2024, Kellyrae and his wife were announced as contestants on Big Brother Naija Season 9, adopting the moniker "Double Kay". They planned to present themselves as best friends rather than a married couple to enhance

their strategy on the show.

Alongside his wife, Kassie Sule, with whom he tied the knot in February 2024, Kellyrae throughout the BBNaija show, which entailed 10 weeks of emotional challenges, demonstrated resilience, charisma, and determination. After being unpaired with his wife, he continued to captivate audiences, ultimately emerging victorious and claiming the grand prize of N100 million, that is, a brand-new SUV and a cash prize of N60 million.

While Kassie was eliminated before the finale, she remained a steadfast supporter of Kellyrae, whom she dated for 10 years prior to their marriage, urging fans to vote for him during her absence. Their journey together showcased their dedication and love, even amidst challenges.

Kellyrae's personal life has also contributed to his widespread appeal. His loving relationship with his long-time partner with whom he shares a daughter played a significant role in his popularity during the show. This was evident in the way both of them successfully navigated relationships with fellow housemates.

A graduate of Delta State University, where he studied Music, Kellyrae's educational background has equipped him with the skills to excel in the industry. His primary and secondary education in Warri laid the foundation for his future success.

Today, Kellyrae stands as a celebrated figure in Nigeria's entertainment industry. His remarkable journey serves as a testament to hard work, talent, and dedication. With a bright future ahead, fans eagerly anticipate Kellyrae's next move, whether in music or beyond.



'Farmer's Bride': A captivating tale of love and tradition

JUDITH ANDREW

The movie 'Farmer's Bride', produced by Filmone Studios and directed by Adebayo Tijani and Jackenneth Opukeme, is a captivating tale that tells the story of love, loss, and impossible choices amidst cultural traditions.

The movie centres on Funmi, a beautiful and ambitious young woman whose future takes an unexpected turn when her mother forces her into an arranged marriage with Odun, a wealthy but elderly farmer. In a common practice for such unions, Funmi's feelings are ignored as soon as the bride price is paid symbolized by a plot of land. Her hopes and aspirations are pushed aside, leaving her trapped in a life that satisfies societal expectations but silences her own voice.

Her story takes a twist when she meets Femi, Odun's nephew. Upon his arrival at Odun's home, Funmi feels a spark of love and hope. She resents her older husband and yearns for the freedom she was denied from Femi. Morenike, Odun's former love and the widow of his late brother, adds another layer of complexity to the story. She is also a herbalist and a healer in the movie. As Funmi and Femi's secret affair unfolds, the film transitions from a romantic drama into a suspenseful thriller.

Odun is portrayed as a respected

Movie Review

figure in his community known as "Our Father" for his generosity and hospitality. His home is a gathering place where stories are shared and no one leaves hungry. Despite his efforts to find companionship and comfort with his new bride, Funmi's resentment toward him deepens. Their household becomes a stage for secrets and tension as she and Femi develop a bond that threatens to tear everything apart.

The film's strength lies in its visual storytelling. The cinematography, led by Emmanuel Igbekele, ensures that even scenes set predominantly in Odun and Funmi's bedroom remain visually engaging. Igbekele's use of varied angles and perspectives keeps the scenes dynamic, avoiding the potential boredom of filming in the same space repeatedly.

The production design, along with the costume and makeup departments, shines brightly. They transform "Farmer's Bride" into a feast for the eyes, capturing the vibrancy of rural Nigerian life and cultural aesthetics. With much of the film shot indoors, these elements draw viewers into Funmi's world, emphasizing her isolation

and confinement. The story's intimacy is reflected in its choice of setting, mirroring Funmi's own limited freedom.

Despite the visual flair, the film struggles with its script which at times feels uneven. Certain scenes and dialogue lack the depth to fully capture the characters' emotions and motivations. For example, Funmi's shift from a passive bride to a rebellious woman feels rushed and Femi's decision to abandon his education for a supposed love of sculpting is not well fleshed out. His character is mostly seen using the workshop as a hideaway for secret trysts rather than pursuing any real passion for art.

For Jackenneth Opukeme, "Farmer's Bride" marks an important milestone in his growing career as a director. As the film garners attention and attracts audiences, it raises curiosity about what he'll create next. With only a few projects under his belt, Opukeme shows promise and his future in Nollywood is one to watch.

Overall, "Farmer's Bride" is an important addition to the Nigerian cinema landscape. It blends traditional storytelling with modern filmmaking, providing a narrative that is both culturally rich and emotionally stirring, while its captivating visuals, strong direction, and deep themes make it a story that resonates beyond the screen. Make "Farmer's Bride" a must-watch if you haven't seen it yet.



Nollywood's dirty secret: Sexual exploitation of up-and-coming actresses

PROMISE OGISO

The glamour of the entertainment industry often conceals a sinister reality. Sexual exploitation of actresses is a pervasive problem that transcends geographical boundaries, affecting women in Nollywood, Hollywood, Bollywood, and beyond.

According to New York Times, over 38 women have accused writer-director James Toback of sexual harassment.

In 2004, Bollywood filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar was accused of rape by actress Preeti Jain, who alleged that the filmmaker raped her 16 times for a role in his film.

This corrupt culture, popularly known as casting-couch syndrome, isn't just a Hollywood or Bollywood problem. No-

llywood, Nigeria's thriving film industry, has a dark underbelly: the exploitation of female actors. This shocking reality was highlighted by veteran actress Blessing Egbe, known for hits like "The Women" and "Lekki Wives", in 2019.

In an exclusive interview with Pulse Nigeria, Egbe shared her harrowing experience with a prominent producer/marketer.

"He walked in, looked at me for a while, and said, 'Nna, this girl will be very good for epic film ooo...'" Egbe recounted. "I returned his words with a polite smile, which he mistook for softness. Next thing, he came to me and started to caress me."

Egbe's response was swift and decisive: "The push slap that followed shocked the other producer, who exclaimed, 'Ah, Blessing, that is big mar-

keter o!' And my reply? 'And so what?'"

This disturbing incident is not an isolated case. Many up-and-coming actresses face similar exploitation, often under the guise of "discussions" or "meetings" in secluded locations.

A typical scenario plays out like this: an older actor or industry figure asks a young actress to meet for a "discussion". When she expresses hesitation or asks why the meeting can't take place in a more public setting, she's often met with resistance or even intimidation.

For instance, a young actress may receive a message like: "Come to this hotel to discuss your next project." When she seeks advice from a trusted friend or mentor, the response is often: "Why must it be in a hotel? And why must you go alone?"

PidginService

Tuke-Tuke Gossip with **Sam Imagbe**



Shedrack Chidozie Chukwuka aka Agape

Tru tru, na kondishon dey make man do some tins wey him no go fit do for him normal clear eye. Dats why bukuru pepos dey talk say nesecity nahim be the mama of invention. De tin wey man neva do bifor, na one day, only one day him dey start am.

Today tory na the kind tory wey man pikin dey take learn him lesson wey life dey teach us. If na church pepos, dem go call am the mirako of story to glory.

Abeg, bifor we continue, make we tank Baba God for making us to see today again. Baba no dey vex for all the bad bad tins wey we dey do with our hand, leg, bodi plus including our eyes. Even kpakpa Him still dey give us free air to dey breathe with our nose. Even when de nose block for the sake of kata, we fit use our mouth. Baba, you do well.

Ehen, as we dey yarn bifor, dis our obodo Naija don take style make pepos stat de do tins wey dem for no do bifor. But bikos man must survive, pepos don begin dey do anything so far make food dey for table.

Dis na de tory of one bobo wey him name na Shedrack Chidozie Chukwuka, aka Agape. Na true life tory as dem dey call am for Nollywood cinema.

As Chidozie, aka Agape, come see say if man pikin no get handwork for dis our kontri and wit de way tins dey go so, na suffer go end am or even sef, die fit come. Him come decide one day say instead of make him just siddon for house dey wait for manna from heaven, make him kukuma go dey stay with him friend wey dey repair telephone handset for inside Ring Road. Dat time, na only Abuma be de place wey evribodi sabi.

Play play, play play, Chidozie stat to dey visit dis him friend. No be say him go just go dey follow him friend dey gist oh, but him dey take koni koni dey look how him dey repair fone. Na from there him come also sabi repair fone, just like dat. Him too come get de skill to repair fone well well. Even though him no get fone dat time, nearly all him friends get and dem dey always go dey repair dia fone. So dearfor, him come feel say dis kind money wey him friends dey take go repair fone for anoda place for dey come him own pocket if him know de trade well well. As him don sabi now, him kom become de percin wey dey repair fones for him friends for cheap money.

Aplus Dynamics wey tanda gidgba for Shop B, Osawaru Complex near Bob Izua Park nahim be de present office wey aka Agape from dey operate today. Apart from afuta sales repairing, dis man wey dey take koni koni dey learn how to repair fone don be come oga wey dey sell, swap, buy and even sef join oda pepos wey dey sell fone materias wey dem dey kall acesory, weda na patch, JBL plus includin to dey help pepos dey charge dia fone sake of say man no dey rely for BEDC abi na NEPA.

De way him staff take dey respect pepos, you go no say dis man don taste suffer. For inside de office, if na needo fall for ground, you go see am sharp sharp bikos de whole place bright.

By de time wey man ask dis Chidozie wetin him wan do again afuta dis fone mata, aka Agape talk say even for now dis fone mata na like side hussle for am now sake of say him go get anoda stream of income.

Chidozie aka Agape say make youths try to de learn handwork bicos de time of white collar job don pass for Naija. Him add say make dem also make sure say dem dey diligent, persistent and honest for

anytin wey dem dey do.

De tin be say, no be say de going just smooth for dis bobo as him talk say e get sometin wey him no dey forget lai lai till him die and na dis be one regret for him life. Dis na wen him travo comot from Naija thinking say him go make am for outside our obodo. But him kom dey disappoint. Na dis disappoint make am realise say commitment, diligence and honesty be de rock of success.

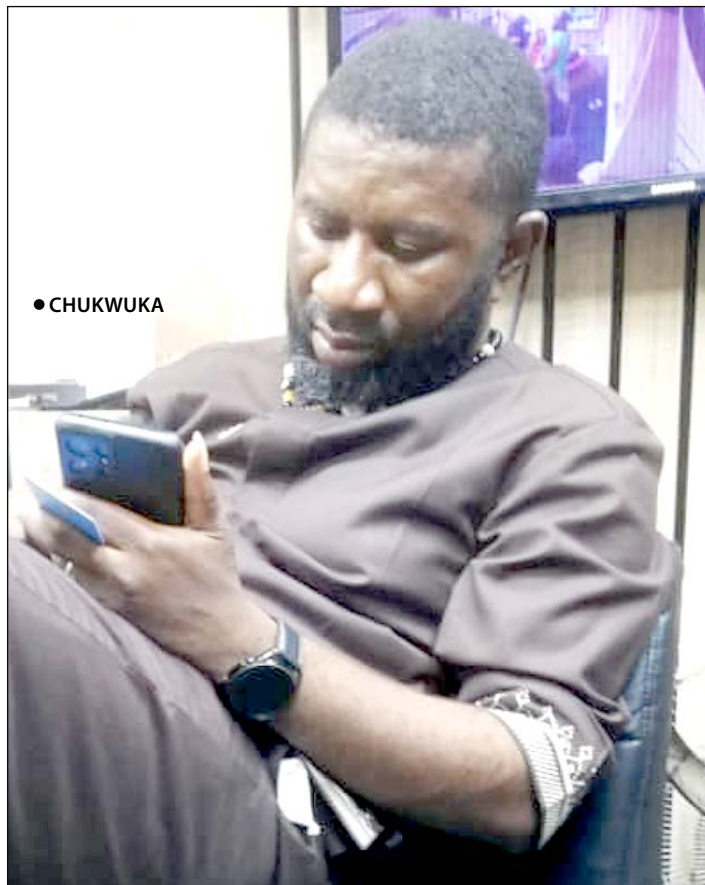
Shedrack Chidozie Chukwuka aka Agape no get time for politics mata. Dat one no mean say him no dey vote for percin wey him like.

Dis self-made bobo na philanthropist, entrepreneur wey don train plenty boku boys and girls in the business of repairing of fone plus oda trades wey dem fit say dem one do.

Me pepos, na so Naija be now. No more white collar job. Unless you want to dey do dose kind tins wey go land you for jail, you beta make your mind to learn handwork like dis our broda.

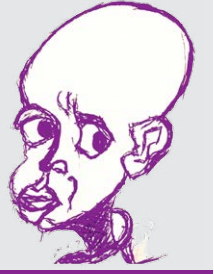
I rekomend 3 gbosa for Shedrack Chidozie Chukwuka aka Agape.

Una doooh. See you for next week for anoda man wey choose handwork lane.



● CHUKWUKA

TATAFO



Make we de package awa films

DAVIDSON IZEGAEGBE

Like pipo de always yan; dem go say wahala nor de finish and na true. If we use fisheye look awa selves, we go see say all of us be like Ekpo, awa traditional masquerade, wey don ready wan dance for market square. Dat nor even be de real real, as e be say only de Ekpo nor fit just carry de dance. Sometin, wey nor far from de masquerade must to de beat drum, wey him de dance kokoma put for am.

True true, if we sidon like dat old man for him rock chair, wey de smoke tobacco from him koko unda dat mango tree, but allow him ears de hia wetin de spirits dem de yan, we go see say dis life true true easy like using panded yam to collabo with hot ogbono soup.

Wetin make some pipo de do film and wetin com still make some pipo de wait to watch films wey film pipo do? If una look dis mata wella, una go see say, pipo wey de do film only de tink of which kain tori dem need to package for film giv de pipo dem to watch. At dis point so, de only tin de film pipo brain de tink of only, na wetin to gada to take make plenti films wey go make dia viewers to wan to de hungry to watch dia film.

I rememba dat time wen e be say, nobodi wan use home vidio take play. So tey, vidio rental shops com full evri wia like wen Chinese de attack American Sonjas for film. Even censors board dem selves kpakpa, kukuma tire to de arrest rental pipo wey nor de use eye see home vidio to rent out without permission from de pipo wey get de films. Why I de rememba us about dat time na to let us no say, as pipo de do films na so pipo de watch dem. Dis one once come mean say, dis film na koret place wey gofment and us fit use to package anytin to sell like awoof giv de pipo as de Oyinbos dem do us dat time to take colonize us.

Film na wetin pipo no fit just trowey eye comot like dat and yet na wetin awa gofment nor gree put dia kuza to take achievement anytin. De time don come for film pipo to com begin package dem films reach wia e go becom hot akara wey pipo no fit miss to choplate evri moni. All of us no say evri naija person na eda actor, producer or person wey love film die! And all de pepino wey I just mention so, if dem de any kontri wey dia gofment head rest well for for him shodas, dat means say dat kontri go dust America for dat wayo to use film take make person wey be wan go chop leave rice with orishirishi to com choplate hot akara with agidi. Na de pawa wey film get be dat, so why we as naija pipo not fit use am wella?

Sometimes beta laff wey nor get kontro go de hungry me bicos of de way all of us

take don see awa film bizness finish. We not com even de regard awa films at all. De see-finish gum like poster wey dem use start gum during hot sun. Sha, we as film pipo need to com de rison awa selves for man mata wey konsan us and awa kontri. If we not fit use film to take develop awa kontri and awa selves, naim be say tins don kpafuka be dat. All of us nor see as de new media don take style style to take gbab evri pipo mind? If you nor belif me, make you enta social media, walahi you go shocktalize wen you see wetin pipo don use film tak do. So dia for, if awa gofment no gree wan see de goodies wey we fit use awa films to take do to helep awa society to achieve, na awa duty to let dem open dem eyes and dia ears to see and hia wetin films don do for many kontris.

My own be say, make de film pipo nor tire at all for de way wey gofment nor take send dem, but to kontinu to de do wetin dem sabi do until dia films and dem blow big time. To use film to take do packaging for any Kain tin, no be by mistake as na wetin even you suppose don cross ya mind put so dat you fit achieve all de tins wey you wan use de films to take achieve. If you look arand you, nobodi suppose tell you, as ya bodi suppose don phone you, say awa society and awa pipo nor fit do without films as films fit do without dem. Naija gofment suppose make film pipo get respect pass who de work for oil company bicos, film pipo don fit use fit take solve many problems wey ordinary pipo nor fit solve. So dia for, make film pipo nor give up as one day be one day, wey gofment eye go open like okpolor eyes and com see say without film, dem nor go fit develop dem society plus de pipo. Film to take develop awa society and awa selves, na wetin we no suppose loose-guard, but as e com be so, we all nor go let water find him level for dis one as gofment must stand with us gidigiba. We as film pipo must also need to learn many new ways of how to package awa films like goods to awa selves and pipo arand us. Las las, weda gofment like it or yes, dem must to invest for film pipo bizness to make dem get beta levels.



Fashion & Style

Natural hair vs. hair extensions: The shift

ERHIRE ERHERIENE

Hair trends frequently evolve, reflecting shifts in styles and fashions.

In recent years, women of colour have increasingly embraced and celebrated their natural hair over chemical treatments and hair extensions. The natural hair movement gained significant visibility during the 2018 NYFW, where models showcased their authentic textures. This trend is not limited to the runway; it signifies a broader transformation in how we perceive beauty.

Currently, there is a noticeable shift back toward hair extensions, wigs, and chemical treatments. This change is more than just a fleeting fashion; it represents a cultural evolution span-

ning generations.

African women have been adding pieces of many different material to lengthen their hair or to create certain styles over the centuries.

Black women are asserting their hair autonomy, opting for styles that resonate with them personally. Their choices reflect a rejection of Eurocentric beauty standards and a reclamation of elements from their rich African heritage, embracing everything from goddess braids and locs to short Afros.

Today, hair extensions, wigs, and colour treatments are increasingly popular. Many people use extensions to enhance their natural hair, whether to add length, volume, or vibrant colour. The growing interest raises the question of whether extensions are merely a trend

or an essential part of hair routine? Extensions cater to various hair types.

Moreover, hair extensions offer a quick means of transformation and favoured options for special occasions, providing a way to elevate one's look for events. Ultimately, hair extensions have emerged as a significant trend in beauty and fashion.

BUT WHY THE QUICK COMEBACK?

Many people choose hair extensions because natural hair can be difficult to manage; understanding hair types and finding suitable products can be challenging. Some argue that maintaining natural hair can be more expensive than using extensions.

Natural hair growth is often slow and can be hard to notice due to shrinkage, leading people to use hair extensions to achieve their desired length.

To retain and protect their natural

hair length, many individuals adopt protective styles, often utilizing hair extensions or wigs.

Hair extensions for some serve as a necessity especially for those with thinning hair helping to enhance confidence and self-esteem.

Whichever it is, a trend or a necessity, it's evident that hair extensions can significantly change one's appearance and also maintain the health of our hair against damage and breakage.

This shift toward hair extensions has made bone straight wigs, along with popular brands like Darling, X-pression, and Lush, the go-to hairstyles for Nigerian women, driving up demand and prices. Statistics indicate that the market for bone straight hair in Nigeria exceeds a billion dollars annually.

In a conversation with a shop owner in Benin City who imports hair from Vietnam and India, she provided in-

sight into the enduring popularity of bone straight hair. She believes this trend will outlast the Chinese straight hairstyles that dominated in the 1990s and early 2000s, citing the sleek, shiny appearance and the perceived status that owning a bone straight wig confers.

Extensions for weaves, braids, faux locs, and twists are also popular among African women and women of colour in the UK and the USA. Companies like X-pression, Darling, and Lush have maintained high demand by continually introducing new, trendy styles that align with global hair trends. Their numerous retail outlets in Nigeria, combined with on-line shopping options, have solidified their status as leaders in the market.

Overall, the hair extension industry in Nigeria is thriving, suggesting that this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.



2024 Lagos Fashion Week: Celebrating African culture through fashion

UGO UGBOH

Preparations are in top gear for the 2024 Lagos Fashion Week scheduled to run from October 23 to 27 at the John Randle Centre for Yoruba Culture & History, Lagos.

The event, which is in its 14th year, will bring together Africa's best fashion designers and artisans to showcase their work, with a focus on creating innovative and eco-friendly designs while celebrating African culture and heritage.

This year's event comes under the theme "COMMUNE", demonstrating its place as a platform for creativity and collaboration designed to inspire both industry insiders and fashion enthusiasts across the continent.

The Lagos Fashion Week founder, Omoyemi Akerele, is a key figure in Nigerian fashion, known for pushing African fashion onto the global stage. As a visionary and industry leader, she has played a major role in shaping the future of fashion in Africa by supporting emerging designers and creating platforms for them to thrive.

Her work has made her a driving force in the African fashion industry.

This fashion week is not just about clothes but also about pushing for change in how fashion is made, promoting sustainability, and protecting African traditions. A group of upcoming designers, the Green Access finalists, will showcase collections that highlight responsible and environmentally friendly fashion practices. These designers have been mentored on how to create beautiful pieces while keeping the environment in mind.

The 2024 Lagos Fashion Week is set to showcase a talented lineup of African designers making waves both locally and globally. Among them is Orange Culture. Led by Adebayo Oke-Lawal, Orange Culture stands out with its gender-neutral styles that beautifully blend traditional African aesthetics with modern flair. Andrea Iyamah is known for her vibrant swimwear and ready-to-wear pieces inspired by African art, while Abigail Ajobi is known for her bold, streetwear-inspired pieces that reflect her Nigerian heritage.

You'll also see fresh faces like the Green Access finalists—Dimeji Ilori,

Garbe, Malité, Oya Abeó, and Revival—who are focusing on eco-friendly fashion. Their collections will highlight the importance of sustainable fashion while staying true to African craftsmanship and creativity.

Sponsors of Lagos Fashion Week 2024 include well-known brands like Heineken, Bioderma, Lush, TOMS, Prosper Africa, and Afrexim. These companies are backing the event to help promote African fashion and give designers a chance to shine on a global stage. Thanks to their support, the event can highlight both famous and upcoming designers, showcasing the creativity and rich culture behind African fashion in a way that reaches a worldwide audience.

As Lagos Fashion Week 2024 approaches, it promises to be an exciting event that celebrates talent and creativity while promoting sustainability and African culture. Attendees can expect vibrant runway shows, engaging talks, and opportunities to connect with designers and fashion lovers. Join us in celebrating style, artistry, and the future of fashion that honours Africa's unique heritage!

Sports

● Football ● Athletics ● Golf ● Basketball ● Tennis ● Boxing

AFCON 2025 Qualifiers: Eguavoen targets maximum points today

● **Sports Minister warns Super Eagles against underestimating Libya**

CHIDINMA KALU

Super Eagles caretaker coach, Augustine Eguavoen, has emphasised that the national male team is fully focused on securing maximum points in their double-header against Libya in the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifiers.

“We have to be practical about it: our best and surest route to the finals will be to pick up six points in the matches with Libya.

“This will almost guarantee our place in Morocco, even before Match Day 5. We do not want any anxiety in the latter stages of the qualifying campaign,” Eguavoen told nff.com.

Despite the absence of star striker Victor Osimhen, Eguavoen expressed confidence in the other forwards available to him.

Meanwhile, the Honourable Minister of Sports Development, Senator John Owan Enoh, has warned the Super Eagles not to underestimate their North African opponents. Speaking ahead of the match, which will take place at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo today at 4:00 pm, Enoh stressed the need for caution in a statement released by his spokesperson, Diana-Mary Nsan saying, “The Mediterranean Knights will be

coming with the intent to at least secure a draw in Uyo.

As the Super Eagles prepare to take the field, both Eguavoen and Enoh have urged the team to stay focused, with the nation rallying behind them in their quest for early AFCON qualification.

Notably, Eguavoen now has all

the invited players at his disposal. The trio of Kelechi Iheanacho, Chidera Ejuke and Bright Osayi-Samuel joined their teammates in camp on Wednesday. Twenty players were at the team's Four Points by Sheraton Hotel camp on Tuesday.

Coach Augustine Eguavoen

has said the Super Eagles will guarantee qualification to next year's AFCON with home and away wins over Libya.

Leaders Nigeria have four points from their two matches so far, one point ahead of Benin and two ahead of Rwanda.

The Eagles will go to 10 points with a double win over Libya, while both teams on Nigeria's heels are in attrition and are bound to chop at each other's advantage one way or the other.

Wins for Benin in both matches will take them to nine points, still short of Nigeria's probable tally of 10, but Rwanda will remain stuck at two and Libya one, with only two matches left in the campaign.



AFCON 2025: NFF dismisses alleged poor treatment of Libya players, officials

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has rejected claims of poor treatment by Libya captain Faisal Al-Badri.

The NFF insisted that the Libyan Football Federation (LFF) created chaos for its team, the Mediterranean Knights.

NFF's Assistant Director (Protocol), Emmanuel Ayan-

unmi, said the Libya Federation only informed the NFF that its team was landing in Port Harcourt, and not Uyo, only three hours before the team's arrival on Tuesday.

Ayanunmi added that the Libyan delegation jettisoned road transportation arrangements made for them by the NFF and instead hired buses

on their own.

“If they travelled on buses that were not air-conditioned, that had nothing to do with the NFF as they hired their own buses,” he stated.

“We provided security for them, with men and vehicles in front and behind their buses, so we are unmoved about their complaints and threats.”

Top 5 contenders for 2024 Ballon d'Or: Ceremony date, time announced

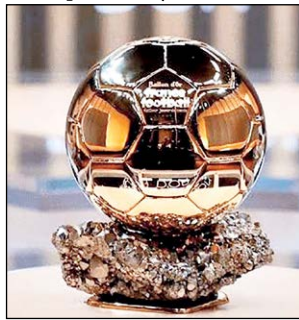
OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

The Ballon d'Or, an annual football award presented by France Football, is widely regarded as one of the most prestigious individual accolades in the sport.

First awarded in 1956, with Stanley Matthews of England and Blackpool as its inaugural recipient, the honor recognizes the best footballer each year.

Lionel Messi is the most recent winner, having secured the award ahead of top contenders like Erling Haaland, Kylian Mbappe, Kevin De Bruyne, and Rodri. Since 2008, Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo have

largely dominated the Ballon d'Or, winning 13 titles between them—Messi with a record 8 wins, including last year, and Ronaldo with 5. However, for the 2024 edition, both players are considered unlikely to feature prominently in the race.



Based on a recent fan poll conducted on the Ballon d'Or's official website, here are the top five players currently leading the race for the 2024 award:

1. Vinicius Jr. (Real Madrid):

The Brazilian winger leads the poll with 64.6% of the fan votes, largely thanks to his stellar form last season. He scored 15 goals in 26 La Liga matches and 24 goals in 36 games across all competitions, contributing to Real Madrid's triumphs in La Liga, the UEFA Champions League, and the UEFA Super Cup.

2. Lautaro Martinez (Inter Milan): The Argentine striker ranks second with 8.2% of the vote. Martinez had a prolific season, scoring

27 goals in 44 appearances for Inter Milan, including 24 goals in Serie A. He also netted 8 goals for Argentina in 2024 and won numerous accolades, such as the Copa America Golden Boot, Serie A MVP, and Serie A top scorer.

3. Jude Bellingham (Real Madrid): Also receiving 8.2% of the vote, Bellingham impressed after joining Real Madrid, scoring 19 goals in La Liga and 23 across all competitions. He played a key role in England's run to the Euro 2024 final, earning two goals in the tournament. His stellar performances earned him titles such as La Liga Player of the Season and UCL Young Player of the Season.

Why French coach omit Mbappe from France squad following Real Madrid pressure rumours

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

France head coach Didier Deschamps has addressed his decision to leave Kylian Mbappe out of the national team squad for the current round of UEFA Nations League matches, refuting claims that pressure from Real Madrid influenced the call.

Mbappe, who made his

high-profile transfer to Real Madrid during the summer, was a notable absentee from the Les Bleus lineup, sparking concerns and criticism in France. Many were surprised by his exclusion, particularly since the 25-year-old forward featured in Real Madrid's 2-0 victory over Villarreal, despite reports of him carrying a minor injury.

Speaking to reporters ahead of France's Nations League

clash against Israel on Thursday, Deschamps made it clear that the decision was entirely his own, based on Mbappe's fitness and not due to any external influence from his club.

“Mbappe was not fit against Villarreal.

“There was no request [from Real Madrid]. The decision is mine. He played the Villarreal game without being 100 per-

cent fit,” Deschamps explained.

The exclusion of Mbappe, who is widely regarded as one of the best players in the world, has sparked debate in his home country, with some questioning the wisdom of allowing him to play for Real Madrid if he was carrying a knock. Deschamps, however, has stood firm on his choice, citing the need to prioritize the player's long-term fitness.

Osimhen sets for Oct. 19 comeback

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Galatasaray striker Victor Osimhen has confirmed that he will return to action immediately following the international break, according to

The 25-year-old sustained an injury during Galatasaray's 3-3 draw with Kasimpasa, but in a video update, Osimhen announced he expects to be back for the club's next league match against Antalyaspor on October 19.

This news has come as a relief to Galatasaray fans, who initially feared the striker could be out until November due to a muscle strain, which Osimhen had initially downplayed as a minor knock.

The injury occurred after Osimhen scored twice in the Kasimpasa match, forcing his substitution at halftime. The club promptly began treatment, but the injury ruled him out of Nigeria's Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers against Libya.



OSIMHEN

Sokoto United set to resume training ahead of 2024-25 NNL Season

CHIDINMA KALU

Sokoto United has scheduled Monday, October 14, as the start date for their training camp ahead of the 2024-25 Nigeria National League (NNL) season.

The club announced the resumption date in a statement on Wednesday as they prepare for the upcoming campaign.

Sokoto United has been placed in Group D of the NNL Northern Conference, where they will compete against teams such as Adamawa United, Wikki Tourists, and Barau FC.

Other clubs in the group include Mailantarki Care, Mighty Jets, Gombe United, Ijele United, and Zamfara United. The 2024-25 NNL season is set to kick off on Saturday, November 30.

Southgate rules out coaching return in 2024 amid Man United links

CHIDINMA KALU

Former England manager Gareth Southgate has confirmed he will not be returning to coaching next year, dismissing speculation linking him to the Manchester United job as a potential replacement for Erik ten Hag.

After eight years in charge of England, including a run to the Euro 2024 final and a

World Cup semi-final in 2018, the 54-year-old will take an extended break before considering his next move.

Speaking at the European Club Association general assembly in Athens, Southgate said, “I won't be coaching in the next year, I'm certain of that. After such a big role, you need time to allow both your body and mind to recover. I'm enjoying life and there's no rush.”



SOUTHGATE

BOWFT aims to empower women in Nigeria and beyond, says Betsy Obaseki

● **Chioma's 89th-minute strike seals quarter-final berth for Edo Queens as 14 teams battle for 4th edition's Cup**

EDWARD OSEGHE AND
OLATOMIWA OYEDELE

The ongoing 4th edition of the Betsy Obaseki Women International Football Tournament (BOWFT) was officially declared open on Monday by the Edo First Lady, Her Excellency Dr. (Mrs.) Betsy Obaseki with an opening ceremony kick-off match between Edo Queens FC and FC Robo at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

The Edo Queens vs FC Robo BOWFT 2024 tournament match opener showcased a football titanic clash between the two teams with the score-line ending in a 0-0 stalemate.

Other Day 1, October 7, Preliminary Group Matches Results are:

1. @ UNIBEN Sports Complex: Bayelsa Queens 6-0 Bravehearts FC
2. @ Uniben Sports Complex: Espoir FC 1-0 Naija Ratels FC
3. @ Western Boys High School: Heartland Queens FC 3-0 Fortress Ladies FC
4. @ Western Boys High School: Delta Babes FC 4-2 Benin Republic Aigle Royal FC

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, Chioma Moses' 89th-minute strike was enough for Edo Queens FC in Wednesday's encounter against Remo Stars Ladies to gain their first free three points and a quarter-final ticket on Matchday three of the BOWFT competition, as they beat Remo Stars Ladies 2-1 in a highly competitive match.

After 4 minutes of play, Goodness Osigwe opened the scoring for the Benin-based side. The ladies from Ogun State fought back valiantly to get an equaliser in the first quarter of the game, Monle Omini goalkeeper of Edo



Queens was available to rescue the situation, with the first half ending with the Queens preceding by a goal to nil.

Both teams returned for the second half looking more dangerous, with the high hope of finding the back of the net. The players added more vigour in the second quarter of the match. Remo Stars Ladies finally got their equaliser through Cynthia who scored a free kick

just a few meters outside the 18-yard box, after the referee spotted an encroachment against an Edo Queens defender.

Edo Queens who are sure table-toppers in their group, will await the result of the Group A games between FC Robo and Remo Stars Ladies to ascertain who tops the group. Nevertheless, Edo Queens have already qualified for the next stage.

During a media parley in

Benin City on Monday, the Edo State first lady said the Betsy Obaseki Women International Football Tournament (BOWFT) is beyond playing football but seeks to touch the lives of women in Edo State, Nigeria, and beyond.

Mrs. Obaseki added that 14 teams out of which nine premierships clubs are participating in the event which will last for 10 days.

Former Barcelona and Spain legend Iniesta retires at 40

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

Former Barcelona midfielder Andrés Iniesta, a key figure in Spain's illustrious football history with two European Championships and a 2010 World Cup title, announced his retirement from football on Tuesday at the age of 40.

"Being on the pitch is over. I can't stay away from football; it's my life and will continue to be my life. Now, I need to continue my education.

I'm currently working on my coaching diploma, and that's my next step," Iniesta said, visibly emotional, during a news conference in Barcelona.

He added, "I will try to come back and do a great job, but it won't be by running after the ball; it will be from a different perspective."

Iniesta rose through the ranks at Barcelona's prestigious La Masia academy, making his first-team debut in 2002 at just 18 years old. He became a pivotal figure in the midfield, remaining

with the club for 16 years. During his time at Barcelona, he secured nine La Liga titles and four Champions League trophies.

However, his most memorable moment came in the 2010 World Cup final when he scored the decisive goal against the Netherlands in extra time.

After leaving Barcelona in 2018, Iniesta played for five years with Japanese club Visel Kobe before concluding his career with a final season at Emirates in the UAE.

African Nations Championship: Ghana to clash with Nigeria for spot in 2024

CHIDINMA KALU

Ghana to clash with Nigeria for a place at the 2024 African Nations Championship (CHAN) after the West African rivals were paired together at the Wednesday's qualifying draw.

Recall that the teams previously met before the 2022 finals, with Ghana emerging victorious via a penalty shootout following a 2-2 aggregate draw.

A total of 42 teams are competing for spots in the 2024 tournament, which focuses on domestic-based players across Africa. The entrants have been divided into six regional zones.

Five of these zones will produce three qualifiers each, however, the Cecafrica region has been allocated a fourth qualifying spot, as Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda will participate in the preliminaries despite having qualified automatically as joint hosts. According to the Confederation of African Football (CAF), the team with the

"best result in the Cecafrica qualifiers" will secure advancement

As a result the finals, which will be held from February 1 to 28, 2025, will feature 19 teams - an increase on the 18-team 2022 edition.

The regional qualifiers will be conducted over two rounds, concluding with the second round set for December 27-29. Notably, two-time champions Morocco, 2011 titleholders Tunisia, and 2014 winners Libya are the only representatives from North Africa and are guaranteed places in the finals.

Defending champions Senegal will meet either Sierra Leone or Liberia in the second round of qualifiers. Additionally, CAF has increased the prize money for the 2024 finals by 60%, with the winning team set to receive \$2 million (£1.53 million).

The 2024 CHAN finals will be hosted in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, serving as a preparatory event before these East African nations host the 2027 Africa Cup of Nations



Greece international, George Baldock dies at 31

England-born Greece international George Baldock was found dead in the swimming pool of his house in Glyfada, Southern Athens on Wednesday

According to reports Baldock signed for Panathinaikos this summer after a seven-year spell at Bramall Lane, making his debut in August.

The Greek club posted a tribute on Instagram, writing: "We are shocked, we are shocked by the loss of our George. Pana-

thinaiikos' family mourns his unexpected loss. We stand with the family and relatives of George Baldock."

Although Baldock, who featured in Panathinaikos' 0-0 draw with Olympiacos on Sunday, was not named in Greece's latest international squad, there will be a period of silence when the team meets England at Wembley Stadium on Thursday evening to mark his sudden passing. Both sets of players will wear black armbands.



GEORGE BALDOCK

Rafael Nadal announces retirement from professional tennis after historic career

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

Rafael Nadal, one of tennis' most celebrated champions, has officially announced his retirement from professional tennis.

The 38-year-old Spaniard, revered for his achievements on the court, shared the news through a video message posted on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter).

In his message, Nadal said,



RAFAEL NADAL

"Hello everyone. I'm here to let you know that I am retiring from professional tennis," bringing an end to an extraordinary career that spanned over two decades.

Nadal's career is a collection of remarkable achievements. He won 22 Grand Slam titles, ranking him among the most successful players in tennis history.

His dominance on clay courts, especially at Roland Garros, is unparalleled, with 14 French Open titles to his name, a record that has yet to be matched.

Beyond his French Open triumphs, Nadal also secured 4 US Open titles, 2 Wimbledon titles, and 2 Australian Open titles, demonstrating his versatility and excellence across all

surfaces. His relentless energy, fighting spirit, and athleticism earned him respect from peers and fans alike.

Nadal's career achievements include:

- 92 ATP singles titles, placing him fourth on the all-time list.
- 36 ATP Masters 1000 titles, showcasing his dominance in elite tournaments.

Stephanie Zambra announces retirement from football

CHIDINMA KALU

Former Republic of Ireland striker, Stephanie Zambra has announced her retirement from football at the age of 35.

Zambra, who has earned 58 caps for Ireland and netted 14 goals during her international

career, was known by her maiden name Roche during much of her career and gained global attention in 2013 when she scored a stunning goal for Peamount United against Wexford Youths.

The goal, which involved two flicks followed by a volley into the top corner, earned her sec-

ond place in the 2014 Puskas Award, finishing just behind Colombia's James Rodriguez.

Throughout her career, Zambra played for several clubs in Ireland and had stints abroad with ASPTT Albi in France, Houston Dash in the USA, Sunderland, and Fiorentina.

Petrol price hike, tithe-mongering and allied matters

CHUKS OLUIGBO

The biggest news in Nigeria this week was the hike in the pump price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), otherwise known as petrol. What this means is that within a space of about 18 months Nigerians have moved from buying petrol at about N195 to above N1,000 currently.

The pump price of petrol jumped to between N448 and N557 per litre on May 29, 2023 when Tinubu, in his inaugural speech, uttered the now damning verdict: “Subsidy is gone!” The petrol price would eventually edge up to N617, N897, and now N998 in Lagos, N1,030 in Abuja, N1,025 in other South-West states, and N1,045 per litre in the states of the South-East.

I don't intend to go into the economics of it all or even the wrangling between Dangote Refinery and the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) over crude sales and pricing. Up until Wednesday officials of Dangote Refinery were still debunking reports that the latest petrol price hike was triggered by an increase in the ex-depot price of the product at the refinery. This came after online reports claimed that Dangote Refinery had raised the price of petrol to N977/litre, prompting NNPC to also push up its rate.

Whatever the case, the reality is that for every time the price of petrol goes up, more Nigerians are thrown into poverty. Somehow, petrol is at the centre of virtually every economic activity in Nigeria. Whether you are moving from place to place or you're powering your generators so as to provide electricity for yourself where the government has failed to do so, petrol is at the centre of it all. So, it is not surprising that whatever happens to petrol affects transportation cost, prices of goods and services and everything in-between. The market woman selling fish or vegetables or pepper and tomatoes will factor in transportation cost in fixing the price of her commodity. So, get ready to pay more for that plate of nkwoji or isiwu as you go to indulge yourself this weekend.

What is even more troubling, and that is the irony, is that this is coming from a government that ran its campaign on the promise of Renewed Hope. A look at the faces you see on the streets every day will tell you that there is no one person whose hope has been renewed by this government. If anything, even the faintest iota of hope that Nigerians were hanging on during the eight harrowing years of Baba Go-Slow has been completely wiped by the government of T-Pain. Indeed, as some people have observed, this is an era of renewed shege. And the shege is not raining, it's pouring.

For so long, the Tinubu administration has been promising to cush-



ion the impact of petrol subsidy removal by introducing Compressed Natural Gas-powered vehicles as an alternative. So far, it appears that it's more talk and less action. True, we have seen pictures and read reports of CNG-powered vehicles being launched. The reality on ground, however, is that the surface has yet to be scratched.

Questions have been asked about why this administration is so focused on petrol. If it is not talking subsidy removal today, it is talking petrol price the next day. But in case the President and those around him do not know, Nigerians are going through the toughest times ever. Nigerians have been pushed to the wall by the policies of this government. It has gone beyond breaking point. Someday soon, something may give. What will that be, I don't know.

I have heard some people talk about a revolution, and my response has been that it will not happen. Even those talking about revolution know that it won't happen. My reason is simple: those calling for a revolution always find a way to remove themselves from it, to push it to others as if there are those whose heads are good for the bullet. We keep kicking the can down the road. We all understand that the cat needs to be belled for the rats to be safe, but the crux of the matter is, who will bell the cat?

Nigerians will adjust and have already starting adjusting. In fact, I will not be shocked if the high price

”
But in case the President and those around him do not know, Nigerians are going through the toughest times ever. Nigerians have been pushed to the wall by the policies of this government

of petrol turns into an opportunity for some Nigerians to show others that they are bigger than everyone in the neighbourhood. After all, it is not for nothing that a certain power-generating set is called “I pass my neighbour”. So for those Nigerians, this is a time to know who is who. In case you don't understand, in the coming days just watch out for those who would drive into the filling station and ask the attendant to “fill up my tank”, shifting their shoulders from place to place so that others would see. Also watch out for those who drive past you, all glasses fully wound up, an indication that the

AC is on. Some would challenge you to do the same if you say you're a big boy or big girl. Watch out for those in the neighbourhood who will run their generators through the night if even there is power supply from the national grid. These may become the new yardstick to measure the big boys and the big girls in the neighborhood.

The news of the petrol price hike has naturally drowned all other issues that were in the public domain in the recent weeks. Before now, there was the case of Very Dark Man versus Bobrisky versus the Falanas and other matters in-between.

TITHE OR NO TITHE

And then there was the issue of one father in the Lord taking back his words on the controversial issue of tithing. Sometime in 2018, this same father in the Lord told his congregation that those who refused to pay their tithe will not go to heaven.

“I want to give every one of you pastors an opportunity to repent tonight. And then to go back, immediately after this convention, to retribute your ways with your congregation,” the father in the Lord said in April 2018.

“Make it clear to them...Anyone who is not paying his tithe is not going to heaven, full stop”, he said.

More than six years after, same father in the Lord has reversed himself, with an apology that it was a mistake as what he said isn't in the bible.

Well, so many questions. Whose words was Baba speaking in April

2018? Who ministered to him? Didn't he know what he said then wasn't in the Bible even before saying it?

Nobody knows how many people who would have starved themselves, watched people around them suffer, and gone through several other hardships while squeezing themselves dry to pay their tithes in order not to miss heaven. Many things could have gone wrong, but now, there is an apology, and no mention is made of the people who went through hell for fear of losing heaven because the father in the Lord said so.

Anyway, I am not a theologian but the way some fathers and mothers in the Lord are going about this tithing thing, you would think that that is all there is to Christianity. One father in the Lord was quoted as saying that Adam was chased out of the Garden of Eden because he ate his tithe. Another father in the Lord said that Job lost everything that he had because he didn't pay tithe.

I know what some readers are going to be saying right now. They would be quoting the part of the Bible that says, “Touch not my anointed and do my prophet no harm.” That's right. Some would say I should mind my business. They are right, too. I won't say more than that. My simple advice is that all people of faith should endeavour to read the articles of their faith and not rely entirely on someone else's interpretation. The person interpreting to you may just be a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Enough said.