

We've sanitised land administration, built sector to drive progress, prosperity in Edo —Obaseki ● *commissions built environment hub*

● *names GIS building after Nigeria's first Surveyor-General, Omoigui*

FAVOUR ANETOR

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, and former Minister of Foreign Affairs and chief-tain of the Peoples' Democratic

Party (PDP), High Chief Tom Ikimi, among other dignitaries, on Thursday commissioned the Edo Built Environment Hub, which houses the Ministry of Physical Planning, Housing, Urban and Regional Development;

Edo Geographic Information Service (EdoGIS); the Ministry of Roads and Bridges, and the Edo State Public Building and Maintenance Agency.

Speaking at the commissioning, Governor Obaseki said his

government has over the last eight years taken deliberate steps to improve land administration and sanitized the built environment sector to sustain investor confidence, as part of efforts to drive sustainable growth, pro-

gress and prosperity in the state.

Other dignitaries at the event include the Speaker of the Edo State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Blessing Agbebaku; the Candidate of the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) for the

2024 governorship election, Dr. Asue Ighodalo; deputy governorship candidate, Osarodion Ogie; Chairman of the Edo

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...that the people may know

Proposed tax reform bill not targeted against the North —Presidency

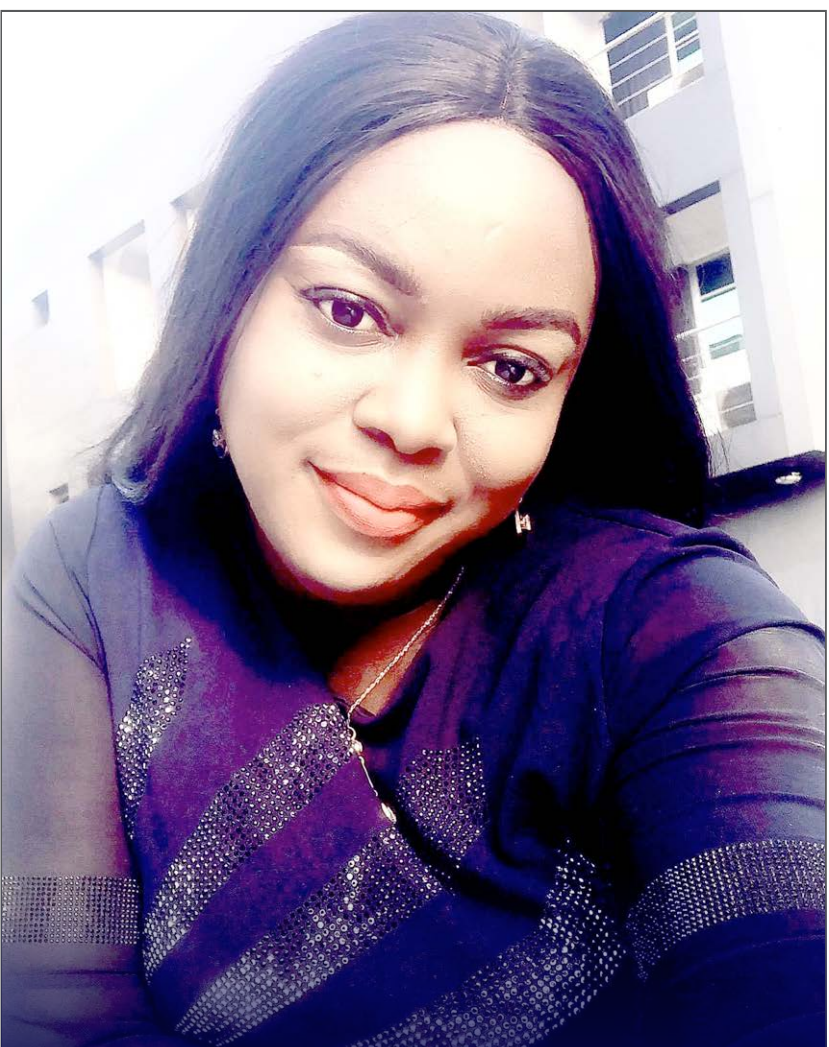
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Lovebest Ogie: Sustaining filmmaking via ethics

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Disruptions in online banking amid N250bn debt

- *FCCPC raises alarm*
- *as telcos call for tariff hike*

BILL OKONEDO

The distress in Nigeria's telecom space appears to be taking larger form and causing greater pain, with the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) raising an alarm about disruptions in online banking services across the country.

FCCPC, in a statement seen on its website Tuesday, said these disruptions, which have hindered customers from accessing their funds, making payments, and carrying out essential transactions, have negatively impacted millions and have serious implications for individuals and businesses alike.

"During service disruption, it is essential that banks keep their customers fully informed about the causes, scope, and anticipated duration of any service issues. Regrettably, many consumers are left in the dark, a situation that increases frustration and leaves customers feeling unsupported," it said.

The commission said the Federal

Competition and Consumer Protection Act allows consumers to seek redress for services that do not meet the necessary standards and, as such, bank customers can seek redress if they are adversely affected by sub-standard services.

"The FCCPC is currently reviewing the situation to determine if consumers' rights to redress are being upheld and if more action is needed to enforce accountability.

"The FCCPC is actively working with relevant regulatory authorities, financial institutions, and stakeholders to address these disruptions and ensure the protection of customers. The Commission will pursue all necessary actions to ensure the protections of the FCCPA are upheld.

"The Commission assures affected bank customers that their concerns are being taken seriously. We urge banks and financial institutions to take swift action to restore services, prioritise customer support, and enhance communication to manage customer expectations transparently and responsibly," it said.

There has been no word on the specific cause of the current disruptions but there have been two points of telecom industry challenges which promised to ripple into the banking transactions space over the past weeks.

This first is the strident complaints of the country's telecom operators - MTN, Airtel, GloMobile and 9Mobile - about mounting distress to their business arising from the devaluation of the naira, rising costs, and tariffs that have been static for 11 years despite spiralling inflationary trends.

Informed sources then warned that the telcos might be forced to embark on load shedding, which would significantly reduce quality of service on voice and data services, including internet and mobile banking transactions on mobile phones and other attached devices.

The telcos complained that current revenue levels are insufficient to sus-

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25m Nigerians get N25,000 conditional cash transfer —FG

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Proposed tax reform bill not targeted against the North — Presidency • as governors urge Tinubu to withdraw bill from NASS

TOBORE JEROME

The presidency has said that the Tax Reform Bill before the National Assembly is not targeted at the 19 Northern states.

The governors of the 19 Northern states had rejected the bill, especially the proposed amendment to the distribution of Value Added Tax (VAT) to a derivation-based model.

However, in a statement on Thursday, presidential spokesman, Bayo Onanuga, said the new proposal, as enunciated in the bill, is designed to create a fairer system that will benefit all states.

Onanuga, who is the Special Adviser on Information and Strategy to President Bola Tinubu, stated that the ongoing tax reform seeks to correct

the inequity in the current derivation model as a basis for distributing VAT revenue.

“While we commend the governors and traditional rulers for supporting President Bola Tinubu over the success recorded in addressing the country’s security challenges, we consider it necessary to address the misunderstandings and misgivings around the tax reform already embarked upon by the administration,” the statement read.

According to Onanuga, the new policy initiatives are aimed at streamlining Nigeria’s tax administration processes, enhancing efficiency and eliminating redundancies across the nation’s tax operations.

He explained that the reforms being proposed are critical to improving the lives of Nigerians and were not put forward by

President Tinubu to undermine any part of the country.

“President Tinubu and the Federal Executive Council recently endorsed new policy initiatives aimed at streamlining Nigeria’s tax administration processes, enhancing efficiency and eliminating redundancies across the nation’s tax operations.

“These reforms emerged after an extensive review of existing tax laws. The National Assembly is considering four executive bills designed to transform and modernise Nigeria’s tax landscape.

“First is the Nigeria Tax Bill, which aims to eliminate unintended multiple taxation and make Nigeria’s economy more competitive by simplifying tax

obligations for businesses and individuals nationwide.

“Second, the Nigeria Tax Administration Bill (NTAB) proposes new rules governing the administration of all taxes in the country. Its objective is to harmonise tax administrative processes across federal, state and local jurisdictions for ease of compliance for taxpayers in all parts of the country.

“Third, the Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Bill seeks to rename the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) as the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) to better reflect the mandate of the Service as the revenue agency for the entire federation, not just the Federal Government.

“Fourth, the Joint Revenue

Board Establishment Bill proposes the creation of a Joint Revenue Board to replace the Joint Tax Board, covering federal and all states’ tax authorities,” he stated.

Meanwhile, the National Economic Council, comprising members of the Nigerian Governors’ Forum, on Thursday advised the presidency to withdraw the Tax Reform Bill from the National Assembly.

They said this is to allow for wider consultations and consensus building among stakeholders.

Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde, said this formed part of resolutions reached at the 144th meeting of the National Economic Council at the State

House, Abuja.

Makinde explained that the Council members resolved that it was necessary to allow for consensus building and understanding of the bill among Nigerians.

Recall that the Federal Executive Council recently presided over by President Bola Tinubu had endorsed the new policy initiatives to streamline Nigeria’s tax administration processes.

While the Federal Government believes the new laws are meant to enhance efficiency and eliminate redundancies across the nation’s tax operations, the Northern elites are not favourably disposed to it.

The reforms emerged after a review of existing tax laws since August 2023.

We’ve sanitised land administration, built sector...

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PDP, Anthony Aziegbemi; the Edo State Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Oluwale Osaze-Uzzi, among others.

Obaseki, who shared the story of how his land with a Certificate of Occupancy (C-of-O) was reallocated and resold by land grabbers, said his government has sanitised the built environment sector and guaranteed security of lives and property, repositioning the state as one of the best places to live and do business in the country.

As part of the commissioning, the governor named the EdoGIS building after the late Daniel Omoigui, Nigeria’s first Surveyor General, who hailed from Edo State.

“I had the privilege of serving as head of the economic team before becoming governor and just looking at Benin City, Edo State, the biggest value and asset that we have is our location and therefore our land in Edo State is premium,” Obaseki said.

“Location is everything when it comes to land and real estate. Because of the location of Edo State, the land is premium and there’s no way to realize the value and benefit of our land if it’s not well organized. Edo is one of the richest States in this country in terms of land resources.

“Our land transverses every aspect; we have swamp, rainforest and savanna. We have minerals, large reserves of gas but all of these need to be mapped and because when information is not available, it’s as good as having dead assets,” he said.

The governor said it was clear before he became governor that one of the first things he had to do was to start the process of getting the information of the state’s land resources.

“One of the first processes we did was to make contact with one of the companies to help

us provide and source the information on what we need on our land assets. We have always had a planned environment and by the time I became governor, it was another story. Our land administration process had collapsed. Even as a governor, I had a C-of-O on a property at Iyekogba and yet that property was resold and the new owner built on it. It’s terrible and that was the situation we met; we can’t develop in this manner,” Obaseki said.

“The process of developing a house was hijacked by CDAs as you have to settle them in all fronts before you complete your house as if they are building control. Land is the greatest asset anybody can have and the moment you administer the land well; things move on well.

“We have provided security of lives and properties and Edo is now a place to live and do business as we have taken a deliberate step with sustained efforts, planning and hard work. The transformation in Edo State is as a result of proper planning,” he said.

On development of various hubs across the state, the governor said it is cheaper, easier, and more efficient when government agencies are located and situated in one place. He said his administration has acquired more lands for the built environment sector “as we have one in the right and the other in the left and this would amount to about nine hectares of land” and that “all the agencies that will need to do something about the built space will be located here”.

On immortalization of Nigeria’s first Surveyor-General of the Federation, Daniel Omoigui, the governor stated, “We have an outstanding Edo legend who is not here with us but when he passed on few years ago, during his funeral service, I made a promise that being the first Surveyor General of the Federation of the Edo extraction, that we were going to honour him.”



2025 APPROPRIATION BILL:

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri, laying the 2025 appropriation bill before the House of Assembly in Yenagoa on Thursday.

Disruptions in online banking amid...

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tain their network operations.

The second point of potential disruption to mobile banking services are tensions over a lingering N250 billion debt owed the telcos by Nigerian banks.

Karl Toriola, chief executive officer (CEO), MTN Nigeria, had said that the banks might be disconnected from the USSD platform due to debts arising from the use of the quick codes by their customers, which has now reached N250 billion.

USSD, also known as quick or feature codes, is a Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) protocol that is used to send text messages and initiate financial transactions such as cash transfers, balance inquiries, payments for services and others.

The Nigerian Observer had reported last Monday that millions of Nigerians using online and mobile banking services may begin to suffer transaction hitches or failures altogether in the days and weeks to come, as a debt crisis between banking services providers and mobile network operators lingers unresolved.

This is as the Federal Government had failed to intervene in the Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD) debt crisis between telecom operators and financial banks in the country.

The magnitude of the problem becomes glaring, considering that as at this year, 2024, an estimated eight percent of the Nigerian population aged between 16 and 64 were using mobile payment services.

In January 2023, mobile gateways were used 108.14 million times, a 230.72 per cent increase from the 32.69 million times they were used in the corresponding period the year before.

During the period under review, the value of mobile transactions surged by 124.85 per cent to N2.37tn from N1.05trn.

So far, no word has been heard from Dr. Bosun Tijani, minister of Communications and Digital Economy, and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) on the matter.

MTN’s CEO, Karl Toriola, however said mobile network operators (MNOs) might, subject to regulatory approval, suspend supporting the use of the service

on the network for banking operations, as the debt had continued to pile up and was becoming unsustainable to the operators.

Toriola, further said that the debt pile up was unsustainable for telecommunications companies who had pressing challenges requiring cash to resolve.

For his part, Gbenga Adebayo, an engineer and chairman of the Association of Licensed Telecom Operators of Nigeria (ALTON), described the services provided by telecommunication firms to the banks’ customers to use USSD, as for profit and not socially motivated.

Adebayo added: “The debt has been long overdue and the banks who owe the telcos have more or less turned us to beggars on getting them to pay our debt, so there is no choice. If the regulators do not resolve the matter, what has been foreseen will happen, the services will be withdrawn. We are leaving to the CBN to resolve, if it is not able to resolve this matter, there will be no choice than to withdraw USSD from the banks.”

In 2019, telcos sought to charge banks N4.50 for every

20 seconds of USSD usage, but banks opposed this, claiming it would drastically hike transaction costs.

In response to mounting pressures, the operators previously agreed to a new charge of N6.98 per transaction in 2021.

Despite this, the debt has escalated significantly, with Toriola urging the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to mediate a resolution.

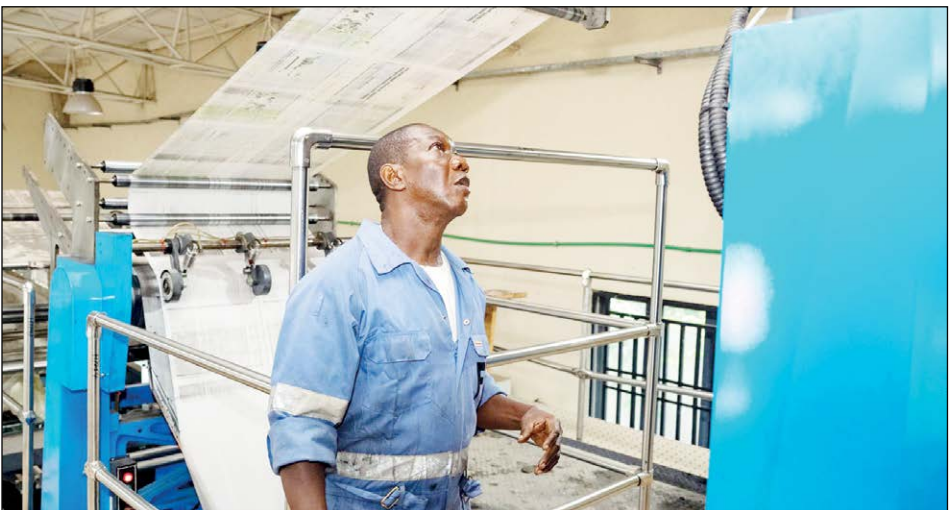
Toriola said if the situation remained unresolved, telcos may have no choice but to seek regulatory approval to cut off banks from USSD services entirely.

Nigeria’s mobile banking usage surged by 230.72 per cent year-on-year in January 2023 according to data from Nigeria Interbank Settlement System, despite multiple reported failures.

The leap in the use of banking apps and mobile gateways is traceable to the Central Bank of Nigeria’s decision to redesign the naira and the introduction of a new withdrawal limit policy, which made bank customers embrace mobile banking for their transactions.

PHOTOSPEAK

Commissioning of the rebranded Nigerian Observer newspaper in Benin City by the Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, on Tuesday, October 29, 2024.



Inside Edo

Best state GIS award: MD, staff of EDOGIS offer thanks to God

KEN ABU

The Managing Director, Edo State Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS), Osaro Grace Aihie, FNVIS on Sunday, led management and staff of the agency to offer thanks to God for being rated the Best State GIS in Nigeria by the Presidency.

The thanksgiving service held at the St. Paul's Catholic Church, Airport Road, Benin City, Edo State, attracted dignitaries from all walks of life, both far and near who joined the agency's staff to offer thanks to God for the feat.

Recall that on Friday, October 11, 2024, the Bureau of Public Service Reforms, in the Office of the Presidency, bestowed on EDOGIS the award of the Best State GIS in Nigeria following a painstaking online assessment conducted on GIS organizations across various media platforms in the country.

Fielding questions from journalists shortly after the well-attended thanksgiving mass, the EDOGIS MD, Mrs Osaro Aihie said the year 2024 would not be complete without showing appreciation to God who bestowed on her and her team of hardworking staff the wisdom and guidance to

pilot the affairs of the agency in the right direction under the enabling environment provided by the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration.

According to her, the agency recently won the enviable and lofty reputation as the Best State GIS in Nigeria, given by the Presidency through the Bureau of Civil Service Reforms, which is a culmination of other previous awards.

She said: "Firstly, last year we got an award from the Nigerian Institution of Estate Surveyors and Valuers acclaiming us to be the best and most organized GIS in the entire South-South region of the country.

"Again, we received an award from the immediate past Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Benin Branch, for efficient Service Delivery and Enhancement to our clients and people of Edo State

"Finally, this month, precisely on the 11th of October, in Abuja, the Presidency through the Bureau of Civil Service Reforms gave us a National Award as the Best GIS in Nigeria and at the same time, and on the same occasion, our amiable Governor, His Excellency, Mr. Godwin Nogheghase Obaseki was presented with an Award as the Best Digital Governor in Nigeria.

"To me, this and many other achievements were made possible by the Grace of God within the 2 years and 2 months that I came on board, and I promised God that if He enhances me, and members of Staff of EDOGIS we all will, in turn, troop out to acknowledge and appreciate Him. That is exactly what we have done today. Like that one leper in the Bible who only, among the 10 lepers that were cleansed, came to give God thanks."

The Managing Director, however, noted that the leadership qualities of Governor Godwin Obaseki in the last eight years have brought trans-

formation into the civil service through the implementation of innovative and effective policy reforms, which created the enabling environment for everyone to operate and function optimally in the state.

The introduction and implementation of these policies and reforms by Governor Godwin Obaseki, according to Mrs. Aihie, have led to a win-win situation for EDOGIS and her members of staff, investors and the people of Edo State, thereby reinforcing hope and credibility to the business of the seamless land acquisition and administration now prevalent in the state.

Kiddles Kollege visits The Nigerian Observer on educational excursion

NGOZI OKECHUKWU & VIVIAN OKAFOR

On Friday, October 25, 2024, 75 students from JSS1-JSS3 of Kiddles Kollege Secondary School located at Upper Igun in Benin City, embarked on an educational excursion to The Nigerian Observer, located at 24 Airport Road, Benin City. Accompanied by three staff members, the students aimed to broaden their understanding of the printing industry and newspaper production processes.

Upon arrival, journalists warmly welcomed them and introduced them to the exciting world of newspaper production. The students shared their expectations and future aspirations. Simeon Divine, a JSS3 student, expressed her desire to learn about news sourcing and writing.

The Managing Director of The Nigerian Observer, Mr. Osa Victor Obayagbona, delivered a thrilling lecture on news writing, emphasizing the importance of verification to avoid libel. He stressed that journalists must excel in their field, as the profession has become increasingly competitive. "Journalism will expose you, if you distinguish yourself," he noted.

The students were introduced to the various sections of the newspaper, including the different reporting beats. A curious student posed an intriguing question about the influence of print media on other media outlets.

The Managing Director commended the student's inquiry and responded, "The media complements each other." He illustrated this point by citing broadcast reviews of newspapers, explaining that broadcasting is an extension of print media, as print is the first medium of information.

During the tour, students visited various sections of the newspaper house, including the newsroom, where reporters write and gather news. At the Edo Printing Centre, they were amazed by the machines, including the web machine, folder, and page planning. They learned that the Web Machine printer, due to its speed, can produce 30,000-40,000 copies of newspapers, saving time and money.

The Editor, Mr. Chuks Oluigbo quizzed the students on their newfound knowledge, who also saw the Speed Master machine, used for printing magazines, notebooks, and textbooks, and the Large Format machine, which prints billboards, banners, and outdoor advertising materials on flex banners.

The educational visit successfully broadened the students' understanding of the printing industry and newspaper production, preparing them for future endeavours, and the students concluded their visit by taking memorable photos to capture the excitement and knowledge gained during their time at The Nigerian Observer.



Students of Kiddles Kollege visit to The Nigerian Observer on educational excursion



MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF THE AGENCY:

MD, EdoState Geographic Information Service (EDOGIS), Osaro Grace Aihie, led management and staff of the agency to offer thanks to God for being rated the Best State GIS in Nigeria by the Presidency.

Ozekhome sounds alarm: Nigeria's PWDs are suffering, demand justice, equality

EMMANUEL IKHENEBO

Professor Mike A.A. Ozekhome, a senior advocate of Nigeria (SAN), has shed light on the harsh realities faced by Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria.

In his paper delivered at the 12th Rights Above Charity Lecture, Ozekhome exposed the widespread discrimination, exploitation, abuse, and neglect that PWDs experience in various spheres of life.



OZEKHOME

The lecture highlighted the significant challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities, ranging from family and educational barriers to societal discrimination and a lack of public awareness. Mike Ozekhome stressed the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to dismantle these barriers, and called for robust government policies, stronger family support, provision of assistive devices, training for security personnel, and strict enforcement of existing laws to ensure the rights and inclusion of PWDs are fully protected.

In his address to commemorate the December 3, 2023, International Day for Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), in Benin City, the constitutional lawyer stated that individuals with disabilities do not require sympathy, characterizing it as a simple recognition of their pain without any genuine attempt to provide support.

Instead, he advocated for empathy an understanding that motivates affirmative action, and emphasized that a culture that does not demonstrate empathy to people with disabilities does them a huge disservice.

While underlining the importance of affirmative action, Ozekhome noted the gap in the implementation of the legal framework for people with disabilities, even though laws exist protecting their rights.

Citing "The Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018," which heralded hope for a better future, he remarked that the provisions of this act were still unmet.

While advocating for the rights of PWDs, the SAN asserted that "it is not the truism of the disability itself but the societal perception of disability that impairs the disabled person."

He pointed out that this perception, which is frequently

tinged with sympathy and neglect, is what hinders people and asks for a society that does not denigrate the uniqueness of those who live with disabilities.

Ozekhome's call to action is clear: Nigeria must shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based framework to safeguard the dignity and place of PWDs in society.

Consistent with its campaign, NAPVID will use the forthcoming 3rd December 2024 IDPD to evaluate societal response to disability inclusion and rekindle the discourse on disability rights.

The theme for this year's 'Rights Above Charity Lecture' is: "From Margins to Mainstream: Implementing the Edo State Persons with Disability Law 2022 for an Inclusive and Equitable Society".

The lecture is a critical move in the fight for inclusive society and a step away from legislation towards action.

'We are not a museum' —MOWAA

EMMANUEL IKHENEBO

The management of Museum of West African Arts (MOWAA) located in Benin City has clarified that the place is a cultural centre for education and research, and not a museum for holding artefacts and other art works.

Philip Ihenacho, MOWAA's executive director, made the clarifications on Tuesday, during a press conference ahead

of an official media tour of MOWAA Institute and Campus, in the state capital.

According to Ihenacho, MOWAA is designed to aid cultural professionals achieve their creative potentials, and not to showcase old objects where people come to see them as it is a facility for research, education, career development and job creation in the area of arts.

"We are not just a traditional museum, at all... We have shift-

ed away from that experience that was a legacy of colonialism to something that is more relevant to Nigerians and Africans", Ihenacho told journalists

Director of the institute, Ore Disu, who took journalists on a tour of the 15 hectare complex, said the centre provides for trainings for young professionals from across Africa and other parts of the world as well as possess physical and digital-base knowledge for cura-

tors, artists and other cultural experts interested in conducting research on objects.

Disu noted that, MOWAA collaborates with national archives, private collectors and libraries that have works that are of interest to the institute that offers training through partner cultural specialists from top Nigerian universities and other parts of the world.

"We have started the journey by developing a campus

right here in the heart of Benin City which will cater for all range of professionals, artists in a 15 hectare complex that will house various buildings designed to be a complementary and constellation of infrastructure or display for research, for production, for creative enterprise and for performance", Disu said

The centre, which is still under construction, is Museum of West African Art LTD/

GTE operated as an independent nonprofit organization housing a 4,000-square foot building with collections and archive facilities, materials and conservation laboratories.

Others are exhibition spaces, seminars and lecture rooms, conservation area for indigenous trees as well as rooms for the campus research, education, and public outreach programmes, among others.



DURING CAREER TALK WORKSHOP:

St. Mary Dedication British International School's Senior Secondary School students and teachers with the Chairman, Chartered Institute of Bankers, Edo State, Ibukun Akande (in light blue colour jacket), during career talk workshop in Benin City.

Reflect on passions, skills, careers that align with personal interests, Akande tells students

CHIDINMA KALU

The Chairman, Chartered Institute of Bankers (CIB), Edo State, Ibukun Akande, has advised that students should reflect on passions, skills and careers that align with their interests.

Akande, the keynote speaker, made the statement during the Institute's maiden career talk on Monday, at St. Mary Dedication British International School (SMDIBIS) in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

The event, aimed at guiding young students toward informed career choices, with SMDIBIS as the first beneficiary school, was chaired by Ibukun Akande.

It is the first time the Chartered Institute of Bankers (CIB), Edo State, is providing such a programme to a secondary school in Edo, with a mission to help students understand the importance of choosing the right career paths early.

Akande emphasized that

many students only discover their true career interests after their first degree, and this often leads to a need for further education and training.

"Some people after their first degree, that is when they choose their career plan, then go back for a second degree. To curb that, that is why we are doing this," he said, and advised SMDIBIS students to utilize their spare time wisely, focusing on skill-building activities rather than distractions.

"Start by doing things you love doing. When you join groups, you connect with like-minded people. Utilise your spare time, try to develop what you can do that others can benefit from, don't waste your spare time, it's not the time to play games, it's to reflect on what you want," he said.

The workshop covered practical strategies for achieving career goals, as Akande highlighted the value of volunteering, not just to gain experience but also

to build connections and potentially secure future employment. He urged the students to seek mentorship, take executive classes, and consider opportunities that align with their long-term goals.

Some students shared their takeaways from the session. Michael Olojokosoko, an SS2 student, appreciated the organisers for such the initiative, stating, "I was able to understand different careers and their paths, and the steps to obtaining them.

"It has also made me understand that you should know your career path and what it entails, and also seek mentorship from people who are well-informed".

On her part, Ivy, a SS1 student, expressed her appreciation, noting, "I was able to learn that when we want to choose our career path we need to develop our interest, learn skills, and focus on interests and how to build them.

"I will say thank you because it was really enlightening. Be-

fore, I thought when you have many interests you can juggle everything at once not considering the consequences. But now, I know you can have partners that can help you and encourage you".

Akande further counselled with a message on integrity, especially for those considering a career in banking, stressing, "Banking and finance industry looks for individuals of integrity. Programmes like this ensure that when students graduate, they have a clear vision and support system, and they are well-prepared to pursue a career that aligns with their interest without being tossed around".

Ultimately, the Chartered Institute of Bankers, Edo State, plans to engage with St. Mary Dedication British International School management to discuss how career guidance can be further integrated into the school's curriculum and how parents can play an active role in their children's career planning.

Police arrest 2 for alleged kidnap of Catholic Priest

JENNIFER ODUWARE & OJEABULU AMANDA

Edo State Police Command has announced the arrest of two persons connected with the recent kidnap of Rev. Fr. Thomas Oyode. The state commissioner of police, Umoru Ozig, disclosed this on Wednesday while parading seven suspects arrested for various crimes in the state.

Ozig said the suspects were arrested across the state for armed robbery kidnapping, cultism and car snatching, among other crimes.

This is as the Edo Special Taskforce on Anti-Cultism warned cult groups disturbing the peace in the state to consider leaving the state or get apprehended, as it condemned the killings by suspected cultists in parts of the state.

Rev Fr. Oyode, who is the Rector of the Immaculate Conception Minor Seminary of the Catholic Diocese of Auchi, in Ivhianokpodi, Etsako East Local Government Area of Edo State, was kidnapped last Saturday evening. A source stated that the gunmen stormed the seminary on Sunday at about 7pm and started shooting sporadically, and attempted to abduct two students. Thinking that the gunfire was from security personnel, the clergy came out to confront them, only to discover that two of his students were held at gunpoint.

When the Reverend saw what had happened, he pleaded with the gunmen to free the students and take him instead, as he is the rector and custodian of the seminary. The gunmen heeded the Reverend Father's plea, released the two students, kidnapped him, and took him into the bush.

Meanwhile, the abductors of Rev. Fr. Thomas Oyode reportedly demanded a N200 million ransom for his release. The Director of Communications of

the Catholic Diocese of Auchi, Rev. Fr. Peter Egielewa, confirmed the ransom demand in a text message to journalists in Benin City, saying, "It is true".

It was gathered that the kidnappers contacted the Auchi Catholic Diocese on Monday and asked them to pay 200 million if they wanted them to release the kidnapped priest.

Ozig, in response to the situation, said: "The Command has responded to the unfortunate incident of the kidnap of Rev. Fr. Thomas Oyode from Diocesan Minor Seminary by rejigging the security architecture in the area in synergy with the Community through the deployment of a Unit of Police Mobile Force (PMF).

"Two suspects have been arrested in this regard, while efforts are ongoing to rescue the Reverend Father and apprehend others."

Ozig also disclosed that the Command has reviewed the security situation of the cult-related killings that have claimed innocent lives in the Upper Sokponba area of Benin City.

"We have made robust security arrangements through the deployment of intelligence operatives to gather information, tactical teams have been charged to commence aggressive stop and search, as well as vehicular and foot patrols to curb cult activities and ensure a crime-free "ember" months.

"These efforts have led to the arrest of a cultist named Suleman Abba, aged 22, and the recovery of their operational vehicle, a Toyota Yaris car. Other members of the gang escaped arrest with their firearms, and investigations are ongoing," he said.

Meanwhile addressing newsmen in Benin City, Edo State Commissioner for Communication and Orientation, Chris Nehikhare, who is also a member of the Edo State Special Task Force on Anti-Cultism, said there would be no breathing space for cultists and cult-related activities in the state.

Nehikhare said the task force on anti-cultism expressed worry over the recent disturbance by suspected cultists on Sunday, October 27, 2024, saying that the violent clashes between rival cult groups in Benin City had been investigated with a series of arrests made, and efforts were ongoing to apprehend other key actors and fleeing suspects.

Tradomedical doctor extols virtues of Oba Ewuare II on 8-yr anniversary

ESTHER IJEH

The Chief Priest of Oguneren Tradomedical Home and its members have congratulated His Royal Majesty, Omo N' Oba N' Edo, Uku Akpolokpolo, Ewuare II, CFR, Oba of Benin, on his eight years on the throne.

Congratulating the Oba, the

Chief Priest, Dr Daniel Edebor, said that eight years on the throne has been very eventful in the kingdom where a lot of things have happened, such as peace, joy, happiness and unity of purpose.

He maintained that the 'Ugie'moro' is an annual festival celebrated by the Oba, regarded as new yam festival, which shows henceforth the people

can eat the new yam in their individual homes. Also, the Ugie'moro commences another New Year calendar while charging the Benis to be loyal to the palace at all things as our own Oba is very supreme, he said.

The soft-spoken gentleman enjoined all the Enogie, odionweres, youths as well as members of Ogidigan Noyanson Society

to support the unity purposes of the Oba for his fatherly role.

The tradomedical healer disclosed that the eight years of the Oba have been good for the people of Edo State for the relative peace, better development for the people of Edo State and Nigeria at large.

Dr Edebor revealed that the nation is passing through a very tough time since independence,

as the country is like we are ruled by the colonial masters, a situation where most of the resources are taken abroad to hide for their children yet unborn.

He maintained that Edo people should support the governor-elect, Senator Monday Okpebholo for good governance and better development as well as bring peace and unity of purpose for us all.

South-SouthReport

Akwa Ibom presents Q3 budget performance

PAULINUS NTA, UYO

Akwa Ibom State government Tuesday presented the third quarter (Q3) of 2024 budget performance of 26.9 percent to journalists in Uyo, the state

capital.

Presenting the budget performance, the state Governor, Pastor Umo Eno, told newsmen that the total performance for the period under review was 26.9 percent, with a balance of N528.4 billion of

revenue over total expenditure for the period.

The governor, represented by the Commissioner for Finance, Dr Nsikan Nkan, disclosed that the huge budget balance recorded in the Q3 resulted from the highly prudent financial management method adopted by the state government in managing the revenue.

“In the period under review, the state government has not made any borrowing from any source since the beginning of this administration. The huge balance in the budget has been earmarked for various projects that have already been contracted for commencement

during the dry season.

“In the next few weeks, the whole state is going to witness huge construction sites.” Nkan said.

The state government intends to spend the high savings/budget balance on the identified capital expenditure projects in the last quarter of the financial year with a view to raising this year’s budget performance to over 60 percent, he said.

Mr. Nkan further stated that, a three-day budget review organized by the state government aimed at streamlining the budgetary process in the state to achieve higher budget

performances inclusiveness, transparency and attainment of the overall agenda of the governor in the year 2025 was underway.

“This programme was organized as a process towards achieving the present administration’s commitment to maintaining a realistic budgeting standard, high budget performance and prudent resource management”, he noted.

Speaking, the Commissioner for Information and Public Relations, Comr. Ini Ememobong, commended the governor for calling for this budget performance presentation in line with the World Bank

guidelines to publish the performance of the state government from time to time.

Ememobong lauded newsmen for their response in making the briefing a success by honouring the invitation, saying the present administration will remain in partnership with the media in order to deliver the mandate entrusted to the governor by the Akwa Ibom people.

Others in attendance at the presentation were commissioners for Economic Development, Mr Emem Bob; Director of Budget of the state, Mr Otu Asuquo, Director General Fiscal Responsibility Board, among others.

Diri seeks Niger Delta govts’ support on environmental challenges

PHILIP EKE, YENAGOA

Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, has solicited the support of his colleagues in the Niger Delta in addressing the environmental challenges of the region.

Governor Diri, who made the appeal on Wednesday in Abuja during an International Conference on Petroleum Pollution and Just Transition in the Niger Delta, described the event as crucial as it provided another opportunity for the state to shed more light on its pressing environmental concerns.

Daniel Alabrah, Chief Press Secretary to Governor of Bayelsa State, in press statement, noted that the report of the Bayelsa State Oil and Environment Commission (BSOEC) titled: “An Environmental Genocide: Counting the Human and Environmental Cost of Oil in Bayelsa, Nigeria,” was unveiled at the conference organised by the Home of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) and the Social Development Integrated Centre with support from the Ford Foundation.

The Bayelsa governor said conversations and actions to improve the environment of the Niger Delta had become imperative as the people continue to suffer the effects of environmental degradation caused by the activities of the oil companies operating in the region.

He described the BSOEC report as a catalogue of the tragic situation faced by the people of Bayelsa and called for urgent action to preserve lives.

According to him, the report not only captured the plight of inhabitants of Bayelsa but that it also amplified their cry for decades, stressing that the future of children of the state and the region, born and unborn, hung in the balance.

Diri also stated that environmental pollution was no longer just an ecological disaster but a human rights challenge and humanitarian crisis, expressing worry that despite the magnitude of the issues, the international oil companies always deflected blame for environmental disasters claiming sabotage rather than

acknowledging the undeniable truth of their own negligence and failing infrastructure.

The state’s helmsman said the fight for Niger Delta’s environmental survival cannot be reduced to mere shadow-boxing, insisting that it demands concrete action, unwavering commitment and collective responsibility.

He expressed gratitude to his predecessor, Senator Serikake Dickson, for his vision in setting up the commission as well as all those who worked in the commission.

The governor also commended Ford Foundation for its contribution in amplifying the Bayelsa environmental experience.

He said: “Not too many decades ago, we could cast nets into abundant waters, reaping enough catch to nourish entire families. However, the oil boom has brought doom. Our lifeblood – our rivers – now flow with toxic oil residue instead of vibrant life.

“We are a people of the river and the land; fishing and farming were once our essence. These vocations, passed down through generations, taught us patience, respect for nature, and the value of hard work. But the unchecked activities of the international oil companies have turned the prolific rivers and fertile soil of Bayelsa into a wasteland.

“Indeed, oil pollution and relentless gas flaring have engendered a grim tapestry of alien health conditions in Bayelsa; children are being born with severe deformities, respiratory diseases flourish, stubbornly defying even the most advanced medical interventions and therapies. Cancers, once a rarity, have surged in prevalence, infiltrating the villages like a spectre that haunts the very fabric of daily life.

“The environment itself has become a crucible of suffering. The air hangs thick with toxins, while the water, once a source of life, now flows with pollutants that carry the weight of despair. This unrelenting barrage of environmental degradation has transformed Bayelsa into an epicentre of health crises, forging a reality where illness and suffering have become the norm rather than the exception.



ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES:

Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, giving an address at the International Conference on Petroleum Pollution and Just Transition in the Niger Delta in Abuja, where he solicited the support of his colleagues in the Niger Delta in addressing environmental challenges of the region.

Delsu VC gets award for excellence in public service

Vice Chancellor of Delta State University, Abraka, Professor Andy Ogochukwu Egwunyenga, has been honoured with an Award for Excellence in Public Service and Educational Administration by the management of Delta Printing and Publishing Corporation, Asaba, publisher of the Pointer Newspaper. The award was presented to the Vice Chancellor at the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Pointer Newspaper in Asaba, on Monday.

Speaking during the presentation of the award, the management of Delta Printing and Publishing Corporation, Asaba, said it decided to honour Prof Egwunyenga because of his dis-

tinguished career as a teacher, activist, Rector of Delta State Polytechnic, Ogwashi-Uku (2007 to 2011) and Vice Chancellor of Delta State University, Abraka (from 2019 to 2024). As Vice-Chancellor, he is credited with achieving full accreditation for all programmes offered at the university, significantly enhancing staff and student welfare, and elevating the institution’s national and international standing.

These efforts resulted in the university’s ranking as the 23rd best among all universities in Nigeria, the third best among state universities, and the top state university in the South-South and South-East regions. Under his leadership, Delta

State University also became the first Nigerian university to adopt a policy on the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education.

In a press statement signed by Patrick Ijeh, Deputy Director, Ceremonials, Information, and Public Relations, Delta State University, Abraka, while addressing journalists after the award, Prof Egwunyenga expressed gratitude to God for the grace to contribute his quota to the development of public service and education at different levels as teacher, researcher, unionist and chief executive of a head polytechnic and a university.

He promised to continue to contribute to the overall devel-

opment of the public service and the education sector even after he leaves office as Vice Chancellor of Delta State University, Abraka, on November 30, 2024.

The Vice Chancellor was accompanied to receive the award by a delegation of top management staff of the university, friends and well-wishers amongst whom are the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Prof (Mrs) Rosemary Ngozi Okoh, Provost of Oleh Campus, Prof Elo Ibagere, Dean of Postgraduate School, Prof Suny Awhefedaa and the University Orator and Director of Ceremonials, Information and Public Relations, Prof (Mrs) Enajite Eseoghene Ojaruega.

Gov. Otu proposes ₦498bn 2025 budget

PATRICK ABANG

Cross River State Governor, Senator Bassey Otu, has proposed the sum of N498 billion as the state's budget for the 2025 fiscal year.

Presenting the proposal

at the chambers of the Cross River State House of Assembly on Tuesday, Governor Otu attributed N328 billion (66%) to capital expenditure and N170 billion (34%) to recurrent expenditure.

In a press statement, Nsa Gill, Chief Press Secretary to

the Governor, noted a further breakdown earmarked N100 billion for infrastructure, N81 billion for education, N25 billion for health, while N20 billion was set aside for the judiciary.

"House of Assembly N18 billion, aviation N16 billion,

special duties/intergovernmental affairs N15 billion, power N14 billion, agriculture N11 billion, tourism N5 billion, science, technology and innovation N4.7 billion, women affairs N3.7 billion, information N3 billion, and others N181.6 billion," according to

the governor.

The governor outlined federal allocation, grants from international organizations, and internally generated revenue (IGR) as major revenue sources to fund the 2025 budget.

"The 2025 budget, like the previous year's budget, is benchmarked on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The decision to continue with the SDG benchmark is to guarantee continuity of projects and programs that may not be completed in this current budget cycle. This necessitated the need to roll over to the 2025 fiscal year.

"For this reason, we have deliberately placed emphasis on SDG 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 4 - Quality Education; SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being; SDG 2 - Zero Hunger; as well as SDG 16 - Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions," he stated.

He informed Cross River-

ians that his administration's adherence to strict financial prudence had placed the state as the ninth best out of the 36 states in the 2023 Fiscal Performance Ranking, adding that "These indices have gone to confirm that development is not a linear achievement; rather a multidimensional process, where our progress is not measured solely by economic indicators, but by various dimensions interconnected to contribute to the overall well-being of the citizenry."

While reassuring the citizens that his administration's policy preferences are meant to snowball into the common good of the people, the Governor also thanked the leadership of the State House of Assembly for building a common consensus among members to cooperate with the Executive and Judiciary Arms of Government to achieve a prosperous Cross River State.



ISOKO CHURCH LEADERS' FORUM:

Governor Oborevwori Sheriff (middle) and the leadership of Isoko Church Leaders' Forum, led by the Anglican Bishop of Oleh Diocese, Rt. Rev'd John Aruakpor, at Government House, Asaba.

Charkin Safety Centre, others call for need to intensify maritime safety

ELIZABETH AGBOEG-BULEM, PORT HARCOURT

The Managing Director of Charkin Maritime and Offshore Safety Centre, Dr Charles Wami, led other major stakeholders in the coastal states to call for more professional attention to safe practice at sea and other industrial safety issues.

The call was made at the Energy and Maritime Reporters (EMR) 2024 Seminar and Awards event held in Port Harcourt.

The stakeholders called on regulatory bodies to intensify safety measures in order to reduce the high rate of marine accidents and casualties in the nation.

While speaking at the event, Dr Wami emphasized the pressing need for enhanced safety measures in Nigeria's maritime sector.

This is coming as a result of the alarming statistics revealing frequent marine accidents, most recently resulting in the tragic deaths of 25 individuals in boat mishaps, Wami called on regulatory bodies like the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the National Inland Water Agency (NIWA) to take immediate and decisive action.

He highlighted that while these agencies play a crucial role in safeguarding lives on coastal and inland waters, their efforts must be bolstered to ef-

fectively address the ongoing safe concerns.

Dr Wami, who was represented by Dr. Egben Okore, went on to advocate for community engagement, suggesting that maritime professionals should lead public safety campaigns and donate life-saving equipment to improve conditions at jetties.

"As we are gathered here this morning, may we all be informed or reminded as the case may be, that safety in the maritime sector of Nigeria's economy continues to be a cause for concern.

"The rate at which marine accidents and casualties take place on our coastal waters and within the inland waters is highly worrisome. One needs only to read the newspapers or browse the internet to know what is going on with regard to marine casualties, especially along the inland waterway.

"Frequent accidents within and around Nigeria's coastal areas is no longer news. The problem or issue at the moment is how to find solution to it, and I think this is the crux of this Maritime Seminar as succinctly captured in the Sub - Theme "Maritime Safety Concerns and Approaches," he said.

He said Nigeria's maritime safety concerns centre on the many frequent accidents that take place on our coastal areas and waterways making them unsafe.

"Nobody can say it has nothing to do with me, if you are not

a practitioner, you might have someone who is, and especially if you live or work in the Niger Delta region you might have cause at one time or another to use the coastal sea or waterways.

"Maritime safety on Nigeria's waters is not the business of regulatory bodies alone but they play a leading role in finding solutions to the myriads of marine casualties taking place on our coastal areas. I believe that NIMASA and NIWA, the two agencies saddled with the responsibilities of safeguarding life and properties on Nigeria's coastal waters and inland waterways respectively are doing a lot already but more needs to be done.

"The causes of our maritime safety concerns are largely known already. They have been identified through numerous researches, including the one conducted by my humble self to investigate the causes of the incessant boat mishaps in Nigeria's coastal waters and to ascertain the measures to be adopted to prevent or at least minimize their occurrences.

"It is not my intention to prolong things by going into the causes of marine accidents in Nigeria and how they may be reduced or eliminated. The onus is now on the regulatory bodies and other stakeholders to leverage on the outcome or findings of these research projects that have been undertaken in that area."

He stated thus: "There is

much to do to address the issue and stem the tide of coastal and inland waters casualties in Nigeria. I want to use this medium to encourage NIMASA and NIWA and other stakeholders to leave no stones unturned in booting coastal and inland water safety and address the nation's maritime safety concerns.

"We all have to play our part, those of us in the maritime education and training sub-sector, first, we must make sure that those carrying our certificates can defend same in practice, no cutting corners. We can carry out maritime safety campaigns in different parts of the State and beyond; we can do research to know more about how to address the issues, with the collaboration of the State Government and NIWA."

Dr James Babalola an industry expert, commended EMR for putting up the seminar aimed at enhancing maritime sector reporting in the Niger Delta region.

According to Babalola, the policy summersault in the country, particularly in the maritime sector, was due to absence of professionals allowed into the appropriate places. He called for strengthened regulatory frameworks and collaborates with stakeholders to prevent accidents.

He also commended the Rivers State government for the port city project, noting that the project would open up the maritime sector and provide jobs.

Ijaw nation pledges sustained support for Oborevwori

AJUWA VICTOR

The leadership and other stakeholders of the Ijaw ethnic nationality in Delta State have pledged continued loyalty and support for the administration of Governor Sheriff Oborevwori beyond his first tenure.

Chairman of the Leaders and Stakeholders of the Ijaw nation and former Minister of Police Affairs, Alaawei Broderick Bozimo, made the pledge on behalf of the Ijaw nation during a courtesy visit to the governor at Government House, Asaba, on Wednesday.

The elder statesman said they had come to appreciate the governor for the good things he was doing for the Ijaw nation and Deltans in general.

Bozimo said: "It gives me special pleasure to be able to have an opportunity to come and see you and express our deepest appreciation for what your administration is doing for the Ijaw nation.

"I want to thank you very much for the wonderful things you have done for the Ijaw nation, personally, collectively and culturally. I need to draw the attention of everybody here that this is a Governor who surprises us all.

"Anybody who comes to Delta can see the good works you are doing. We have a list of some things you have done for the Ijaw nation and, like Oliver Twist, the ones we would like you to look into.

"We truly appreciate you from the bottom of our hearts. I recommend to every politician that 'Ukodo' has happened.

"Seeing is believing, and you don't need to go about campaigning, come 2027. We will

campaign for you and I know that we can't remain the same in Delta anymore.

"We, the Ijaw nation, have risen to support you. When we say it, we mean it and that's how it will be in your second term; we will stand behind you when the time comes because you are a 'talk -and -do' Governor."

Responding, Governor Oborevwori commiserated with Alaawei Bozimo whose daughter passed on recently at the age of 61 and prayed to God to grant the family the fortitude to bear the loss.

He thanked the Ijaw nation and indeed the Delta South Senatorial District for voting massively for his emergence as governor, saying that he never lost any local government area in the district.

Oborevwori commended the Ijaw nation for their political unity and lauded Bozimo for standing by the Ijaw nation, saying, "your leadership in Ijaw nation is worth emulating.

"You took a decision to support one of your own during the Governorship primaries; you had no choice. What you did was the right thing and I know that the Ijaw nation recognises that.

"I thank you for keeping the Ijaw nation together and I can see the trust they all have in you. I will take my time to look at all the things you have request for.

"I know the role you people played because we never lost election in Ijaw nation and the whole of Delta South but we lost some in my Senatorial District.

"We need more unity in this state and country and I want other ethnic nationalities to emulate the unity of the Ijaw nation."

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Formalising traditional medicine

With the cost of essential goods, including orthodox medicines continuing to spiral upwards unabated amidst a troubled economy, more and more Nigerians are turning to traditional medicines which are cheaper and more easily accessible.

Studies indicate that a variety of herbal medicines and applications are commonly used across the country.

Many of these are for the treatment of conditions such as malaria fever, typhoid fever, allergies, asthma, eczema, premenstrual syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia, migraine, menopausal symptoms, chronic fatigue, irritable bowel syndrome, and cancer, among others.

When people fall ill, they naturally want the best remedies possible. If the cost of the best remedies is beyond their means, then they seek out affordable alternatives and this is where traditional and herbal medicines come in.

Traditional and herbal medicines have a broad range of characteristics and elements which earn them the working definition from the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Traditional medicines are diverse health practices, approaches, knowledge and beliefs that incorporate plant, animal and/or mineral based medicines, spiritual therapies, manual techniques and exercises which are applied singularly or in combination to maintain well-being, as well as to treat, diagnose or prevent illness.

In developed countries, traditional medicine has been adapted outside its indigenous culture to “Complementary” or “Alternative” medicine.

These applications are popular among Nigerians but many appear to be ignorant of the potential toxicities. As such, it may be necessary to evaluate the safety, efficacy and quality of herbal medicines and their products through randomised clinical trial studies.

Public enlightenment programmes about safe use of herbal medicines may be necessary as a means of minimising the potential adverse effects.

Globally, people developed unique indigenous healing traditions adapted and defined by their cultures, beliefs and environments, which satisfied the health needs of their communities over centuries.

The increasing widespread use of traditional medicines has prompted the World Health Organisation (WHO) to promote the integration of traditional medicine and Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) into the national health care systems of some countries and to encourage the development of national policy and regulations as essential indicators of the level of integration of such medicines within a national health care system.

Herbal medicines, also called botanical medicines or phyto-medicines, refer to herbs, herbal materials, herbal preparations, and finished herbal products that contain parts of plants or other plant materials as active ingredients.

In folklore medicine in Nigeria Rauwolfia vomitoria (Afzel) is used for treating hypertension, stroke, insomnia and convulsion and Ocimum gratissimum L. is used for treating diarrheal diseases. The seeds of Citrus paradisi Macfad are effective in treating urinary tract infections that are resistant to the conventional antibiotics; pure honey heals infected wounds; dried seeds of Pawpaw are effective in the treatment of intestinal para-

sitosis; the analgesic and inflammatory effects of Garcinia kola Heckel is known to enhance its use for osteoarthritis treatment and Aloe vera Mill gel is as effective as benzyl benzoate in the treatment of scabies. Similarly, in South Africa, plant extracts with muscle relaxant properties are used by traditional birth attendants to assist in child deliveries.

Over 80% of the populations in some Asian and African countries depend on traditional medicine for primary health care. The WHO estimates that in many developed countries, 70% to 80% of the population has used some form of alternative or complementary medicine, including Ayurvedic, homeopathic, naturopathic, traditional oriental, and Native American Indian medicine. It is also recognised by the WHO those herbal medicines are the most popular form of traditional medicine, and are highly lucrative in the international medicine market.

Annual revenues in Western Europe were estimated at US\$ 5 billion in 2003-2004, in China the revenue was estimated at US\$ 14 billion in 2005, and in Brazil it was US\$ 160 million in 2007.

The Nigerian
Observer
Cartoon Corner

...that the people may know



@Steve_Hanke

Through the valley of the shadow of death

MATTERS ARISING DIASPORA CHRONICLES

With
OKWUDILI OJUKWU-ENENDU



If the Tinubu-induced inflation is your only trouble in Nigeria, then count yourself lucky and highly blessed. You may not appreciate this till you fall sick, get to hospital, watch people die and appreciate how close you are to the grave.

Such an opportunity has come my way twice recently. In the first instance, I was rushed to the Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH), Nnewi. Then, just a few weeks ago, I had to rush a cousin to the same hospital. Both occasions ended sweetly.

KUDOS TO NAUTH

Contrary to what one often hears, my admission to the hospital was seamless. A wheelchair was quickly provided taking me from the car to a bed, a very narrow bed - in the overcrowded accident and emergency unit. Patients and their relations filled practically every inch of the unit at that old site location.

Doctors and nurses arrived promptly, taking my brief and carrying out physical examinations. Infusions were quickly set up and specimens were taken for laboratory tests.

It was at the lab that payments were demanded and my minders paid. Minders - relations or otherwise - are a major necessity at this tertiary hospital. They are the ones that would queue up to pay the bills, run around to collect lab results, arrange for food (as the hospital doesn't provide food) and run sundry errands.

Without them, the unit would just be a holding bay for the mortuary. Strength returned to my body gradually and it was then that my eyes took in the environment. The small space was practically bursting at the seams. Even though the medical staff were not showing any obvious signs of stress, the number of patients far exceeded what I imagined would be the carrying capacity of these patient medics. I didn't see them snap at any patient or their relations.

Then, I noticed the absence of dignity in that unit. Patients relieved themselves in the open ward, with the assistance of their caregivers. The nurses were too few for the patients and their relations took care of them whichever way they could. The screens which provide some privacy were too few for the patient population.

I saw a few men lying down stark naked, and perhaps for gender equality, I sighted a middle-aged woman shorn of any clothing. She and others in that state were beyond care at that point. I could have been in that state too. I had collapsed while heading to the bathroom.

Then, I heard a wail go up; a woman's wail. I listened intently and confirmed that she had lost the person she brought to hospital. Some minutes later, two men in sombre uniform took out the body, covered in a white sheet, with a trolley.

As the bustle continued, I heard the

voice of a young man calling for water to drink from both doctors and nurses. I wondered if no relation came with him. Less than an hour later, I didn't hear his voice again. By the time he crossed my mind again, he was dead, covered with a white sheet. As the death brigade, as I called them took him out, he had a big erection. Two teenage girls looking after their brother on the bed next to mine, giggled that he must have taken drugs to wallop a woman, but it backfired. Stupid girls, I hissed in my mind. They could make speculations because it wasn't their brother. And in their little experience of life, they had not heard of men developing erections as they passed without remembering anything female. As we say in my area, when they are carrying someone else's body, it would look like banana stem to those who are not members of his family.

The teenage girls and their mother, a fine young woman on whom suffering was boldly etched, brought in their boy unconscious. The woman said he had malaria and typhoid fever and a nurse in their area treated him with infusion. In the course of that the fine young man who looked about 23, lost consciousness. For hours, the mother and younger sisters held a test tube and begged him to urinate so there would be a sample for lab test. But Emeka was too far to hear them. They shook him in every yearway, all to no avail.

As the day wore on, the deaths and signature wails kept piling. Then, the mind starts playing tricks. How soon before one's own wail?

WHAT'S THIS, NAUTH?

I needed to ease myself, and had my son lead me to the toilet. There, I had the shock of my life! The two units of

toilet which were open were incredibly messed. The water closet bowl was half-filled with waste; the part of the bowl visible was stained with age. The floor was wet and the walls were grimy. The much I could do was urinate before shuffling out. For two days that I was there, I couldn't use the toilet. The discomfort was killing, but the sight of the toilet was outright murder!

On the evening of Day Two, I was transferred to the Men's ward. I was happy, hoping for a better toilet. Imagine my disappointment seeing the toilet same as in the accident and emergency. I stayed four days on the whole without relieving myself. That was as far as I could go. I then reached out to a senior professor in the university outside the teaching hospital.

I expressed shock at the apparent ignorance of the authorities that cleanliness was the first level of care for patients. My professor friend got to the authorities, but they said their focus was on moving over to the permanent site. They however promised to do something. The following morning, a lady cleaner came and scrubbed the tired toilet bowl, and as soon as she was done, I rushed in.

Hours later when I went to urinate, the bowl was half-filled again, and the floor was a pool of water. For days, I noticed that a cleaner would always clean the toilet about 7am and then it would be left for the rest of the day. I complained to a cousin who visited, and he said it was a direct opposite to what obtained at the Federal Medical Center, Asaba. The FMC Asaba, he said, had a full compliment of toilet staff who check the facility practically after every use and make sure they are in order.

I forced the hospital to discharge me,

against medical advice. I was terrified at the prospect of contracting something dreadful from the toilet besides what brought me to hospital. The day I decided to go, I told the doctors to tell their consultant that if I passed the night there, they would be holding me against my will. They understood and discharged me.

NAUTH NEW SITE

An appointment with my consultant gave me the first opportunity of seeing NAUTH permanent site at Akammili, Nnewi. It is an expansive ground on the slope of a hill. Physically, it met my expectations of what a teaching hospital should look like. The architecture is modern and the paint fresh.

The operations at this permanent site are automated. To keep an appointment, you make a payment and get an automated teller machine (ATM) card customized for you which keeps all your information - lab results, payments, prescriptions, etc. Once logged in, the doctor sees all information about you and whatever he prescribes, he logs into his laptop and it gets loaded in your card.

The toilet at the outpatient unit was water-logged and even though there are more units of water closets, one was already boarded up and out of use and another had lost its flushing handle - all in a couple of months. But it had water, unlike the male ward of the old site where water was fetched about 70 metres away.

Ojukwu-Enendu is a former newspaper editor, and can be reached through: okwudiliojukwuenendu@gmail.com

The abuse of power: A case study of federal lawmaker, Hon. Alex Ikwechegh

In a country where socio-economic disparity is glaringly apparent, the relationship between Nigeria's elite and ordinary citizens often reflects a concerning trend. It is a recurring behaviour that causes anxiety in society.

Recently, Hon. Alex Ikwechegh, a House of Representatives member representing Abia North and South Federal Constituency, came under fire for allegedly assaulting a Bolt driver, Stephen Abuwatseya, in Abuja. The federal lawmaker assaulted the delivery driver and threatened to make him disappear for telling the former to come out of his apartment and collect the package the driver was meant to deliver to him. Although he has apologised publicly through various media channels, his apology was prompted by the backlash over his dishonourable deed.

The incident, led to Ikwechegh's interrogation by the Federal Capital Territory Police Command, which highlights a common trend of abuse and oppression of the underprivileged by those in power in Nigeria. While shocking to some, this behaviour has become far too common in Nigerian society, where the privileged frequently wield their influence with impunity, often at the expense of everyday citizens.

This case has garnered significant attention among netizens and the general public, not only for its details but also for what it reveals about the societal culture of elitism and entitlement pervasive among Nigeria's wealthy and powerful. The interrogation of a public official, while necessary, is only one step in addressing a deeper issue — the con-

sistent maltreatment of the downtrodden by those who feel shielded from the law by their privilege.

In Nigeria, incidents like the alleged assault by Hon. Ikwechegh are not isolated. Across the nation, elites repeatedly display behaviours that assert their dominance over individuals they deem 'beneath' them. This behaviour is often directed toward service providers such as drivers, domestic staff, and vendors — individuals working to make a living in an economy that does not favour them.

Numerous examples can be found where wealthy Nigerians, often in positions of authority, have mistreated or maltreated lower-income individuals without facing significant consequences. Whether it is verbal abuse, physical assault, or the withholding of payment for services rendered, such behaviour has become an ingrained aspect of Nigeria's societal structure. This trend is sustained by a cultural acceptance of hierarchy, where powerful figures view their influence as justification to trample on the rights and dignity of others who are below their socio-economic and political status.

At the heart of this phenomenon, is Nigeria's profound socio-economic divide, where elites occupy a space far removed from the realities faced by the average Nigerians. While a small segment of the population enjoys access to immense wealth and privileges, the majority struggle with limited access to basic needs. This disparity not only creates a tangible divide but also reinforces a sense of entitlement among the wealthy.

For many elites, the idea of account-

ability is a foreign concept. This has led to a system where the downtrodden is seen as dispensable or replaceable, with little protection from maltreatment. The case of Hon. Ikwechegh's alleged assault on a Bolt driver exemplifies this mindset. For the Bolt driver, as for countless others in his position, this incident likely reflects a routine experience of humiliation and disregard from powerful patrons.

The wealth gap, coupled with Nigeria's hierarchical society, provides fertile ground for these abuses. When public figures or wealthy individuals are rarely held accountable, a dangerous precedent is set, that some individuals are, in effect, 'above the law.' For a nation striving toward equality and democracy, this system of selective accountability and justice threatens not only individuals but the entire structure of society.

The Nigerian legal system has often been criticised for its susceptibility to influence, particularly in cases involving elites. Many public figures enjoy substantial connections within the judiciary, law enforcement, and political circles, enabling them to escape or minimise the consequences of their actions. Instances of bribery, favouritism, and intimidation have unfortunately become common elements within the justice system.

Law enforcement agencies often find themselves in a difficult position, especially when dealing with cases involving powerful figures. Whether due to external pressure or internal bias, investigations involving elite suspects are frequently downplayed or dropped

altogether. This disparity in legal consequences creates an environment where elites can act with impunity, knowing that the system will, more often than not, shield them from full answerability.

In contrast, everyday Nigerians who commit even minor infractions are often met with swift and severe consequences. This inconsistency undermines public trust in the legal system and strengthens the perception that the laws are made for the poor, not for the rich.

Social media have played an increasingly significant role in holding elites accountable for their actions. In a society where traditional media channels are often cautious about criticising powerful figures, social media provide a platform where ordinary Nigerians can voice their frustrations, advocate for justice, and demand action. Through viral posts, Nigerians have been able to spotlight abuses that might otherwise have gone unnoticed, forcing the hands of authorities to address situations they would prefer to ignore. This is evident in the case of the Bolt driver, Abuwatseya.

In the case of Hon. Ikwechegh, public reaction on social media brought further attention to the incident, amplifying calls for justice and accountability. Social media have not only exposed instances of abuse but have also empowered citizens to challenge the culture of impunity that pervades Nigerian society.

However, while social media platforms can draw attention to injustices, it is only a temporary solution. In

the absence of systemic changes, these moments of public outrage will remain isolated incidents rather than catalysts for meaningful reform. Social media can bring awareness, but true justice requires a fair and impartial legal system that applies the law equally to all citizens, regardless of their social status.

To address these issues, Nigeria must emphasise judicial reforms and implement systems that ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability within its legal framework. Equal treatment under the law is essential to bridging the divide between elites and ordinary citizens and to building a society rooted in justice and fairness. To this end, the new Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun has promised to champion judiciary reforms for effective justice administration.

Holding public officials and wealthy individuals answerable is not only a matter of legal necessity but a moral imperative. The recent interrogation of Hon. Alex Ikwechegh, by the Federal Capital Territory Police Command, represents a step in the right direction, but it must not end there. For justice to be meaningful, it must be seen and felt by all citizens. The rule of law should apply equally to everyone, regardless of wealth or influence.

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The Polity

• Policy • Legislation • Enforcement

Beyond the polls: Why voter apathy is on the rise

PEACE AKPOBOME

Voter turnout in Nigeria has been on a decline, reflecting a growing disinterest in the country's electoral process. This trend is becoming alarming as it suggests that citizens are increasingly getting disconnected from the democratic process.

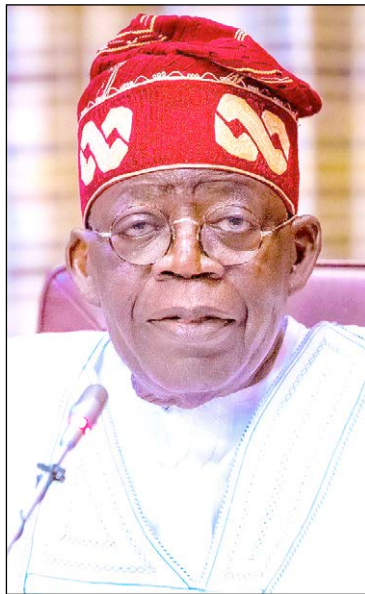
Voter apathy is not peculiar to Nigeria. It extends across borders. However, Nigerians' rapidly growing apathy in the electoral process is now a pressing concern.

When Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999, voter turnout was 52.3 per cent. The number grew to 69 per cent in 2003, but began a steady decline in 2007. It fell to 57.5 per cent in 2007, 53.7 per cent in 2011, 43.7 per cent in 2015, and 34 per cent in 2019.

Data compiled by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (I-IDEA), an intergovernmental organization, showed that the 2019 general election had the second-lowest voter turnout in the history of elections held in African countries. Some 82.3 million people registered to vote in the 2019 election but only 26.8 million voted.

But it was the 2023 general election that has recorded the lowest voter turnout since the return to democracy in 1999. Out of the 93.47 million people who registered to vote, only 24.9 million people voted in the presidential and National Assembly elections, representing just 26.72 per cent voter turnout.

There are a number of factors responsible for voter apathy. For one, many individuals who register to vote may lack enthusiasm for elections, and their mo-



TINUBU



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AKPABIO

tivation for registering might not be a desire to participate in the democratic process. They may see the voter registration card as a valuable document for other purposes, such as age verification or identification, or even to access other government services that require identification.

Election observers in the September 21, 2014 Edo State guber polls observed that the election had the poorest turnout among all elections held in the state. Israel Olatunji, one of the observers, told Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) that voter turnout was shockingly low, voters shunned the process and that the apathy could be linked to lack of trust in the process.

"There is a continuous lack of interest in the democratic process, and the electorate is blaming it on lack of trust

and the lack of civic education and orientation," he told FIJ.

Also, Nigerians tend to show more interest in executive office elections than legislative or local government ones. This is reflected in the relatively low voter turnout in National Assembly and local government elections. Many citizens seem to prioritize the presidency and governorship positions over other levels of government.

WHY APATHY GROWS

Nigerians' apathy towards voting stems from various factors. For many citizens, it is the fear of election violence that keeps them away from polling stations. Voters have faced violence like snatching of ballot boxes and voting materials, hired thugs intimidating voters, and clashes between supporters

of rival political parties.

The state of bad governance in Nigeria is another significant factor contributing to voter apathy. Citizens do not feel motivated to participate in the democratic process due to the country's dire situation that is marked by widespread poverty, crippling insecurity, and a general sense of hopelessness. With over 70 million people struggling to survive in extreme poverty, their daily concerns overshadow the importance of voting. When people struggle to make ends meet and face constant threats to their safety, voting becomes an afterthought.

Many people in Nigeria feel that their vote won't count, so they don't see the point in voting. This sense of powerlessness is fuelled by various factors, including a history of elector-

al malpractices, rigging, and unfulfilled campaign promises. When citizens feel their voices won't be heard, they are less likely to participate in the democratic process.

FINDING SOLUTIONS

To address voter apathy, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) must prioritize transparency and accountability in elections. INEC officials should not turn a blind eye to electoral wrongdoing. They should prevent vote buying, rigging, and manipulation of results, which erode trust and discourage citizens from participating. Along this line, the Executive Director of the International Press Conference, Lanre Arogundade, has charged INEC to ensure credibility and transparency ahead of Ondo State's gubernatorial election slated for November 16, 2024.

Political affairs commentators have been emphasising the need for Nigeria's election process to go digital. They argue that the current method is outdated and vulnerable to rigging and that embracing technology would not only enhance the voting experience but also ensure transparency and credibility. If digital solutions are embraced, Nigeria can revitalize its democratic processes, regain citizen trust, and join the ranks of modern democracies.

Additionally, elected officials have been urged to endeavour to deliver on their campaign promises to maintain public trust and encourage voter participation. Broken promises lead to disappointment and can cause citizens to question the effectiveness of the democratic process. Failure to fulfil promises breeds voter apathy.

Don't set Rivers on fire, Atiku cautions judiciary

TOBORE JEROME

The presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2023 general election and former Vice President of Nigeria, Atiku Abubakar, has cautioned the judiciary against acts capable of setting Rivers State on fire.

Atiku gave the words of caution in the wake of Wednesday's judgement wherein a Federal High Court sitting in Abuja ordered the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to halt all payments to Rivers State.

In a statement signed by his media adviser, Paul Ibe, Atiku said it was appalling that "some elements loyal to the Federal Government were pulling the strings from behind" the scenes.

He wondered why Justice Joyce Abdulmalik issued the order when it was public knowledge that Rivers State had already challenged the Court of Appeal's judgment on the legality of Rivers State's 2024 budget.

He said, "Last week, the Court of Appeal declared that the Rivers State budget was illegal because it was passed by an inchoate assembly. The

court ordered Governor Siminalayi Fubara to present the budget afresh.

"The Rivers State Government has already filed a notice of appeal so that the Supreme Court can hear the matter.

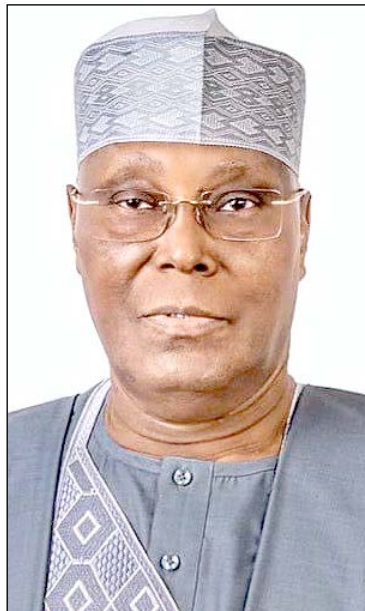
"However, some elements in the Bola Tinubu administration have procured a judgement intended to undermine the Supreme Court.

"Even before the judgment was delivered, legal luminary, Femi Falana (SAN) had alerted the Chief Justice of the Federal High Court, Justice John Tsoho of possible compromise after house gifts had been presented to judges in Abuja. Sadly, Falana's warning was ignored."

Atiku hailed the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Justice Kudirat Kekere-Ekun, for summoning judges sitting on the Rivers State cases.

He, however, appealed to the nation's top judge to ensure that those found wanting are disciplined in order to restore the fading glory of the judiciary.

The former Vice President further said, "Nigeria has descended into the theatre of the absurd since the Tinubu



ATIKU



JUSTICE KUDIRAT KEKERE-EKUN, CJN

administration took office.

"Courts are playing a more ignoble role in fostering political crises within political parties and even in states.

"From the emirship tussle in Kano

State to the Rivers imbroglio where courts are going as far as preventing elections from holding, taking Nigeria back to the dark days of June 12, 1993 where polls were annulled.

"Sadly, under the leadership of those who claim to have fought for Nigeria's democracy, the country is descending into chaos with conflicting orders from courts of coordinate jurisdiction flying all over the place while judges are being induced in the name of empowerment and provision of houses.

"The result is that Nigerians are gradually losing confidence in an institution which prides itself as the last hope of the common man. Foreign investors will avoid any place where judgments can be bought by the highest bidder.

"Nigeria should not descend to the Hobbesian state of nature where life is short, nasty and brutish, where citizens opt for self-help. Rivers State accounts for almost 25% of Nigeria's oil assets.

"For a country facing an economic crisis worsened by vandalism and banditry, Tinubu should put his 2027 ambition aside and put Nigeria's interest first.

"We call on the Nigerian judiciary to restore its image before it gets too late."

Yes Ikwechegh, we now know who you are

AUSTIN ISIKHUEMEN

Nigerians watched in horror a video posted on social media by a fellow Nigerian who had a raw deal, putting it mildly, in the hands of a Nigerian elected to make laws for the peace, security and good governance of Nigeria. What is baffling is that the dealings we saw in the infamous video now trending worldwide were mostly illegal on the side of the so-called Honourable Alexander Ikwechegh. I would have used stronger terms like criminal but I refrain from that because I am not a lawyer and may be unable to distinguish between a civil and a criminal act.

Stephen, the Bolt driver delivering snails to a famished lawmaker that interchangeably calls himself Senator and later Member of the House of Representatives, displayed impressive self-control beyond belief. But for the video, no one would have believed that, in spite of the unwarranted provocation, physical abuse, blows to the chest and massive slaps, the driver kept calm and managed to keep asking the lawmaker-turned-terrorist lawbreaker to pay for the service he rendered. He did not even raise his voice!

Stephen is a study in calmness in the face of massive provocation. I could not have done what he did. Let us imagine for once that this was in the USA where they swear by their Second Amendment as the holy grail. That driver would have gone to his pigeon hole, as we call it in Nigeria, and on return to his assailant it would have become a one-sided story. God forbid! The honourable should be advised not to try this wayward behaviour in Benin City!

Just what the hell did this Bolt driver, trying to eke out a living in these

hard times, do wrong in this episode? I am unable to find any. Why would this Ikwechegh man refuse to acknowledge the driver on arrival even while he saw him from where he was sitting outside? Why would he feel too big to pick his package but not feel too big to eat the snails later? We must ask that those snails be brought as exhibits to the investigation panel. Woe betide him if he has devoured them!

Could it be that Mr Ikwechegh was so hungry that he nearly went mental? Do not laugh! This hunger may have assailed the honourable to the point of going berserk. The hunger in the land is no respecter of status and can also afflict any lawmaker who has mismanaged his constituency allowance. I hear those beautiful belles in Abuja's highbrow neighbourhoods are considered by some as their own constituencies and the projects they demand for can lead to bankruptcy. It could also be that the snails were standing between the honourable and more serious loin arrangements that were looking interminably delayed. These are mere conjectures.

At some stage, the honourable called out to some lady out of sight for validation. It was as if he wanted her to know he was dealing with a poor man again as he probably usually does to massage his ego. We did not hear any call for restraint being voiced by the bodiless voice. Who was that voice? Could it be the legal spouse or the object for which the snail procurement budget was passed? She was obviously an accomplice, or so it seems to me. Can the honourable unveil her to VDM please.

I think the House Committee may also like to know if the honourable is ashamed to be a member of the Lower House. He falsely claimed that he was



IKWECHEGH

a Senator of the Federal Republic. It was long after he knew, or realised, that he was being recorded on video that he now pompously declared that he is a member of the House of Representatives. That was dishonourable indeed. The only other explanation could be if he was highly inebriated or under the control of those substances of interest to NDLEA.

The honourable has probably been listening too much to those Abuja

babes that call people like him 'fine boy' and it got into his head. Asking a Bolt driver whether he knows who you are was strange. He did not have to know anything about a snail receiver other than someone who ordered for snails because he could not cook same at home. For Ikwechegh to think that the Bolt driver ought to know he is an untouchable that Nigeria is lucky to have as a lawmaker; that he can make the driver disappear and no

one can ask him any question about it; that he can slap the driver and he dare not respond, and that he takes deliveries and dispatchers dare not ask for payments - that was expecting the driver to be a god. Besides, only an outlaw driver would know and accept to deliver snails to such an outlaw!

Now Honourable Sir, we know who you are. You are now the most famous member of the House of Representatives. You love snails. You order them at odd hours. You beat up people who cannot fight back or protect themselves. You sometimes claim you are what you are not. You feel sitting on a chair outside your house even inside your compound is infradig for your status. It could be that what you meant is that the driver should have entered your mansion to be awed by the interior decor and opulent accoutrements! You are not very good at hiding your ego even while tendering apologies, which, in most cases, may not be heartfelt.

You are lucky, Honourable, that Stephen, your victim, is not from your constituency. I would have been making a recommendation to have you recalled and replaced by him seeing that he is more befitting for that role, when temperament, demeanour and integrity - including paying for service rendered - are considered. He also does not have the means or desire to make people disappear. He would have made you disappear rather than taking those slaps.

Finally, since you have an unspent fifteen million naira disappearing budget, kindly settle the young man with five million per slap. That can make your malfeasance disappear and assuage the feelings of Stephen and the rest of us. That looks equitable to me.

Eulogising the legacy of Eboigbe Emmanuel Obayagbona

OSA VICTOR OBAYAGBONA

Every October 30th has become indelible in the heart of those children, family and friends, you left 22 years ago. Two days ago, we again remembered and celebrated the life of our beloved father, Mr. Eboigbe Emmanuel Obayagbona, who left us October 30, 2002. Though over two decades have passed, the memories of your love, guidance, and presence remain glowing in our minds.

Your legacy lives on through the values - integrity, steadfastness, selflessness, uprightness, hard work - you instilled in us, the laughter we shared, and the lessons you taught. Though a strict disciplinarian, saying always, 'hardwork does not kill'; sincerely, we say we miss your warm embrace and love, your comforting words, and your unwavering support, especially when we confide in you.

The children you left behind are all doing well except Monday who left us June 2022 to the cold hands of death through diabetes, but he is consoled where you are that he left you three grandchildren, who are also doing well. Since you left us some of your grandchildren are now fathers and mothers excelling in their various fields of endeavour. Be rest assured we are still transmitting the values you left us to our children and grandchildren, which we also know they will

pass onto their children's children.

As we reflect on all these years without you, we honour your memory by continuing to strive for the dreams you envisioned for us - approaching life with all seriousness, saying it is better to be honest and poor than to be rich with dishonesty. Your influence on our lives remains insightful, and we are indebted for every moment we share.

Continue to rest in peace, dear father. Your love and spirit, above all, the values you stood for and instilled in us, will continue to inspire us to live an upright life even in the face of hopelessness.



Senate leadership praised for professionalism in ministerial screening process

CAROLINE AMEH

The Office of the Special Adviser to the President on Senate Matters has commended Senate President Godswill Akpabio for his professionalism in overseeing the recent screening of seven ministerial nominees.

The Office also expressed appreciation for the collaborative efforts of the Senate leadership and all senators, acknowledging their prompt and comprehensive approach in fulfilling President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's vision for a capable and committed cabinet.

Special Adviser to the President on Senate Matters, Senator Basheer Lado, in a statement noted the importance of the confirmation process as a reflection of President Tinubu's commitment to addressing Nigeria's pressing needs.

"The quality of ministers selected by President Tinubu demonstrates his dedication to meeting the nation's challenges and driving economic revitalization," Lado said.

He said the new ministers were chosen for their expertise, wealth of knowledge, and extensive experience, qualities that will enable them to lead effectively

across key sectors. According to the statement, the appointments reflect the President's commitment to meeting the aspirations of Nigerians by delivering on the promises of democracy.

Senator Lado further stated that President Tinubu's choice of nominees underscores his commitment to fostering national unity, peaceful co-existence, and social harmony. He said the selected ministers represent a step toward a more inclusive Nigeria, supporting the administration's broader vision of a nation strengthened by diversity and committed to sustainable development.

Rivers crisis: Court strikes out pro-Wike lawmakers' suit against INEC, PDP, others

HAPPINESS ULUMEFOH

A Federal High Court sitting in Abuja on Wednesday struck out a suit filed by 27 pro-Wike lawmakers in the Rivers House of Assembly, led by factional Speaker, Martin Amaehwule, against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Justice Peter Lifu, in a ruling, struck out the suit after it was withdrawn by the lawmakers who were plaintiffs in the case.

"The court has painstakingly perused and carefully considered the notice of discontinuance of this suit dated and filed on the 30th of October, 2024 by the learned counsel to the

plaintiffs, J. Akubo esq.

"The court has equally perused and considered all the arguments of learned counsel for all the parties," he said.

Justice Lifu, who observed that the suit was commenced by a writ of summons, said hearing on the suit was yet to commence.

"There are pending applications for joinder in this suit. There is also an application for a change of counsel. "Aside, there is an application to regularise processes among other," he added

According to him, "It is therefore my considered view in line with the position of the law that a plaintiff can

discontinue as of right before the date fixed for the hearing of the suit as has been done in this case.

"Based therefore on the above reasoning and conclusion, the notice of discontinuance dated and filed on the 30th of October, 2024 hereby succeeds and the instant entire suit is hereby struck out."

NAN reports that the 27 lawmakers loyal to the former governor of Rivers and Minister of FCT, Nyesom Wike, filed the suit to restrain INEC from conducting a fresh election to fill their seats for defecting from the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressives Congress (APC).

Senate laments rate of drug abuse, calls for immediate action

CAROLINE AMEH

The Nigerian Senate has raised alarm over the escalating cases of drug abuse, particularly among young people, calling for urgent measures to curb the crisis.

During a one-day national event focused on involving parents in combating drug abuse and reckless behaviors,

the Senate expressed concern that failure to act swiftly could lead to socio-economic instability among Nigeria's youth.

Representing Senate President Godswill Akpabio, Deputy Senate Leader Senator Lola Ashiru addressed the gathering organized by the Joint Committee on Drugs and Narcotics in collaboration with the National Association of Nigerian Drug Monitoring (NAN-

DRUM) on Thursday.

Senator Ashiru emphasized the need for immediate action, stating that drug abuse is a root cause of crime and a barrier to quality education, underscoring that effective solutions begin at home with active parental involvement.

Event convener, Ambassador Cristabel Okoye, echoed the Senate's concerns, urging parents to positively shape their

children's characters from a young age. Okoye criticized the glorification of drug use in movies and music videos, highlighting the tragic loss of young lives influenced by these portrayals.

With the growing crisis of drug addiction among Nigeria's youth, the Senate and stakeholders at the event emphasized that the issue demands urgent and unified action.

EFCC says over N248bn crime proceeds recovered in one year

ESTHER OGBODO & HAPPINESS ULUMEFHOH

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) says it has recovered over N248 billion in the last year.

The commission's Director of Public Affairs, Wilson Uwajaren, made this known on Thursday when he gave an update on the achievements of the anti-graft agency so far.

He said the sum of over

£53,000 and €172,000 were also recovered, and €5,000 was also recovered for victims of crime in Spain, according to him, saying the commission is taking its rapid response a notch higher as it will lead to a drop in cybercrime.

The commission has also secured more than 35 convictions for Naira abuse by Nigerians at social events. According to Uwajaren, three new directors are set to emerge in Ekiti, Katsina and Anambra states.



GOOGLE GRANT:

Minister of Communications, Innovations, and Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani (2nd left), with Google representatives when the Nigerian government secured N2.8 billion Google grant to advance AI Talent and Innovation in Abuja on Thursday.

25m Nigerians get N25,000 conditional cash transfer —FG

NGOZI OKECHUKWU

The Federal Government on Thursday said 25 million Nigerians have so far received the N25,000 conditional cash transfer. The Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, said this while briefing State House Correspondents short-

ly after the National Economic Council meeting chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima.

He enumerated the steps taken by President Bola Tinubu's administration to provide relief for Nigerians following the sufferings occasioned by the removal of subsidies and other policy reforms being implemented by the government.

According to him, five million households have benefited from the direct transfer.

He also disclosed that in the last five days, no fewer than 11,000 beneficiaries have received ₦3.5 billion from the consumer credit scheme.

He further said over N90 billion has so far been disbursed to half a million Nigerian students

under the student loan scheme.

Meanwhile, the government revealed that no fewer than 321 Nigerians have lost their lives to the recent flood that ravaged most states of the country.

This was disclosed during the National Economic Council meeting chaired by Vice President Kashim Shettima at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Nigeria to advance AI talent/innovation with N2.8bn Google Grant

OJEABULU AMANDA

Nigeria has secured a N2.8 billion grant from Google, marking a significant boost in developing artificial intelligence (AI) talent across the country.

Nigeria's Minister of Communications, Innovations, and Digital Economy, Bosun Tijani, announced this collaboration at a press briefing in Abuja on Thursday, describing the partnership as pivotal for building Nigeria's AI and digital economy infrastructure.

The minister noted that the grant aligns with Google's \$5.8 million commitment to digital skill-building initiatives across sub-Saharan Africa, aiming to address economic hardship and bridge unemployment gaps.

"This support from Google is a testament to our commitment to positioning Nigeria as a leader in AI innovation," Tijani said. "By leveraging Google's expertise and resources, we are creating opportunities to equip Nigerians with the skills they need to thrive in the global digital economy."

Tijani added that the initiative will focus on sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, and governance, equipping startups to solve local challenges and drive sustainable growth.

He emphasised the importance of fostering a robust AI ecosystem, remarking, "I am a strong believer that the development we desire in Nigeria will not just come from the government. Government can set the agenda, but it is the ecosystem that a programme like this

will truly ensure we build the economy that we want to see."

Google's N2.8 billion grant will support Nigeria's "Three Million Technical Talents" (3MTT) programme, recently launched as a four-year initiative to train Nigerian tech talent and establish Nigeria as a global talent exporter.

Matt Brittin, Google EMEA President, detailed that the grant will prioritise AI skills training for 20,000 Nigerians. Brittin announced, "I am pleased to announce that Google.org is providing N2.8 billion (or approximately \$1.7 million) in funding to the Data Scientists Network Foundation, supporting the honourable minister's vision for AI growth in Nigeria. This funding will be directed toward critical initiatives that

advance AI skills and opportunities across the country."

As part of the programme, Google's Experience AI initiative will provide educational resources to train 125,000 young Nigerians in AI fundamentals, delivered by 25,000 educators in partnership with the Raspberry Pi Foundation.

Additionally, a collaborative AI Fund will equip ten Nigerian startups with N100 million in funding, \$3.5 million in Google Cloud Credits, and mentorship from Google engineers. Selected startups for this funding include BetaLife Health, Bunce, CDIAL AI, Farmspeak, Lendsqr, ProDevs, Rana Energy, SaaSPRO Health, Towntalk, and Trade Lenda, aiming to innovate solutions across various sectors of Nigerian society.

Gov. Diri demands \$12bn from IOCs for environmental restoration from oil exploration

ESTHER IJEH

Bayelsa State Governor Duoye Diri has demanded from international oil companies (IOCs) \$12 billion over the course of 12 years for the repair, remediation and restoration of the environment and public health damage caused by oil and gas exploration and to lay the foundations for Bayelsa's just transition towards renewable energy and opportunities for alternative livelihoods.

The governor made the demand on Wednesday in Abuja at the International Oil Pollution and Just Transition Conference.

He lamented: "Not too many decades ago, we could cast nets into abundant waters, reaping enough catch to nourish entire families. However, the oil boom has brought doom. Our lifeblood – our rivers – now flows with toxic oil residue instead of vibrant life."

"We are a people of the river and the land; fishing and farming were once our essence. These vocations, passed down through generations, taught us patience, respect for nature, and the value of hard work. But the unchecked activities of International Oil Companies (IOCs) have turned the prolific rivers and fertile soil of Bayelsa into a wasteland."

He equally decried that: "Our breadwinners, robbed of their ancestral legacy, toil on unforgiving, polluted land and fish in toxic waters, only to return with empty nets. Their families face crippling hunger and suffocating despair."

The governor, who revealed that he just received a report from the Bayelsa State Oil and Environmental Commission, titled "An Environmental Genocide: Counting the Human and Environmental Costs of Oil in Bayelsa, Nigeria," said: "One study estimates that in 2012 alone, oil spills in Nigeria, and predominantly in the Niger Delta resulted in over 16,000 additional neonatal deaths."

"Indeed, oil pollution and relentless gas flaring have engendered a grim tapestry of alien health conditions in Bayelsa; children are being born with severe

deformities, respiratory diseases flourish, stubbornly defying even the most advanced medical interventions and therapies. Cancers, once a rarity, have surged in prevalence, infiltrating the villages like a spectre that haunts the very fabric of daily life."

"The environment itself has become a crucible of suffering. The air hangs thick with toxins, while the water, once a source of life, now flows with pollutants that carry the weight of despair. This unrelenting barrage of environmental degradation has transformed Bayelsa into an epicentre of health crises, forging a reality where illness and suffering have become the norm rather than the exception."

Diri said the report notes that as a direct consequence, "Life expectancy in Bayelsa has plummeted to just 50 years" sinking well below levels deemed acceptable by global standards, adding that: "Despite these burdens, we continue to demonstrate an indomitable spirit, navigating daily struggles with a painful resilience that belies our longing for a healthier and more hopeful future."

"This Report therefore, has not only captured our plight, but it has also amplified our voice; a voice that has cried out for decades, unheard. For too long, we've pleaded for mercy, only to be met with indifference. Our children's futures, our heritage, and our very existence hang in the balance. And today, I bring that voice before you," he noted.

The governor said: "Let me echo a resounding call of the Commission to the IOCs that: "concerted international action to generate and invest at least US \$12 billion over the course of 12 years to repair, remediate and restore the environmental and public health damage caused by oil and gas and to lay the foundations for Bayelsa's just transition towards renewable energy and opportunities for alternative livelihoods, adding that: "This I believe is not limited to Bayelsa State alone, therefore, I call on my brother Governors from the oil producing states to join hands with us in this battle for environmental justice."

Arts & Heritage

● Culture ● Entertainment ● Tourism

Beads in Benin culture – royalty, beauty and more

FAVOUR UNIQUE ODA

Like many things in the Benin culture, beads, particularly those rooted in Benin, offer more than just a glimpse into Nigeria's cultural richness—they are a profound and complex representation of the Benin people's heritage. These beads have an artistic beauty that is immediately captivating, yet their real depth emerges in the stories they carry, the ceremonies they complete, and the pride they inspire. In Benin culture, beads are more than adornments; they hold the weight of history, tradition, and identity, with each string and clasp symbolizing the past intertwined with the present.

From a historical perspective, the origins of Benin beads trace back to ancient times, when they symbolized the economic power and extensive trade networks of the Benin Kingdom. Renowned for its artisans and craftsmen, Benin was a centre of artistry, and beads became one of the primary materials for both decoration and symbolic expression. These beads were often crafted from coral, glass, or even precious stones and were highly sought after, establishing their value both within and beyond the borders of the kingdom. Coral beads, in particular, were esteemed and were only accessible to those of high rank or nobility.

When discussing Benin beads, it's essential to understand the various types that have emerged over the centuries. Each bead holds its own unique significance and is often associated with specific roles within society, as well as particular ceremonies. For example, Ivie beads, crafted from coral, are among the most precious and revered types of Benin beads. These coral beads are exclusively worn by the Oba of Benin and other individuals of royal lineage. To see the Oba adorned in Ivie beads is to witness a visual expression of authority, strength, and respect that has been cultivated over centuries. Ivie beads represent continuity, as each Oba who wears them is reminded of those who came before him, reinforcing his connection to the ancestral roots of his people and the sacred traditions of his lineage.

The types of Benin beads extend beyond Ivie coral beads. There are also Ematon beads, commonly worn during major public ceremonies. Unlike Ivie beads, which symbolize direct royal connection, Ematon beads are more accessible to high-ranking individuals within Benin society, including chiefs and other dignitaries who hold significant roles in governance and cultural preservation. Ematon beads are known for their distinctive, bright red color, symbolizing valor, strength, and protection. These beads are often worn in layers, creating an eye-catching display that signifies a person's high status and commitment to the traditions of Benin.

Another type, known as Iru beads, is often worn by women during marriage

ceremonies and other rites of passage. Iru beads carry a more personal and familial symbolism, marking a woman's connection to her heritage and her role within the family. Typically passed down from mother to daughter, these beads have a cherished sentimental value, as they represent continuity through generations and the strength of familial ties. When a bride adorns herself with Iru beads, she is seen not only as a symbol of beauty but as a carrier of her family's legacy, ready to unite two lineages and contribute to the continuity of Benin culture.

The ceremonial use of Benin beads also highlights their versatility. At royal coronations, for instance, the different types of beads worn by attendees signify their positions and responsibilities. Chiefs, for example, are adorned with unique strands and colors of beads that differentiate their ranks and roles, creating a visual hierarchy that reinforces the social structure within the kingdom. The array of beads seen at such events is not just a colorful display but a coded language that conveys power, unity, and respect.

The process of creating these beads is a meticulous and revered art form, requiring a high level of craftsmanship and dedication. Artisans who specialize in bead-making are deeply respected, as they are responsible for preserving an age-old craft that has been passed down through generations. Most bead makers learn the art from older family members or master craftsmen, who teach them not only the technical skills needed but also the cultural significance embedded in each bead. This craft is not just a means of livelihood; it is a way of life, a dedication to honoring and sustaining Benin traditions.

In Benin City today, markets and craft stalls are filled with an array of these beads, attracting both locals and tourists eager to witness this aspect of Benin culture. Many visitors to Edo State take the opportunity to acquire Benin beads, not just as jewelry but as tangible pieces of heritage. Some buy them as souvenirs, others as symbols of identity or keepsakes that remind them of their cultural journey. The market for these beads has expanded internationally, drawing the attention of collectors and admirers who recognize the intricate beauty and historical weight of African traditional jewelry.

The global fascination with Benin beads is a testament to their artistic allure and the universal appeal of handcrafted work that embodies tradition and meaning. For the Benin people, however, these beads remain deeply personal and symbolic. They represent the pride of their ancestors, the strength of their community, and the continuity of a culture that has endured through the centuries.

Whether worn in grand ceremonies or passed down through generations as family treasures, Benin beads are not merely decorative items. They are enduring symbols of heritage, carrying with them the stories, pride,



and resilience of a people who have retained their identity through turbulent histories and changing times. As such, Benin beads are cherished, not only for their beauty but for the profound connection they offer to the soul of the Benin people.

For anyone fortunate enough to experience Edo State, these beads are an invitation to immerse oneself in a world where art and identity are inextricably linked, where every bead is a small but significant piece of a larger cultural tapestry. In their vibrant hues, intricate designs, and layers of meaning, Benin beads offer an authentic and enduring expression of the beauty, history, and spirit of the Benin people.



Faith

CHRISTIANITY

The Faith of Blind Bartimaeus

**Homily for 30th
Sunday in Ordinary
Time Liturgical Year B**
**First Reading: Jeremiah
31:7-9, Responsorial
Psalm: Psalm.126:1-2ab.
2cd-3. 4-5.6. Second
Reading: Hebrews 5:1-
6, Gospel Acclamation:
2 Timothy 1:10, Gospel
Reading: Mark 10:46-52.**

REV. FR. GODWIN C. IBE

The healing of Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, is one of the most amazing miraculous accounts in Mark's gospel, as told in today's gospel reading. The narrative demonstrates the significance of discipleship and faith. Jesus and his followers are on the last stretch of their journey to Jerusalem when the reading begins. They are accompanied by a sizable group of pilgrims travelling to the Holy City for the major Jewish holiday of Passover (Pesach).

The Israelites' freedom from Egyptian slavery was commemorated at this yearly feast. A blind man named Bartimaeus, who is sitting by the side of the road, hears all the noise and wonders what is going on as Jesus and his friends walk through Jericho, one of the oldest towns in the world.

He cries out, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me!" as he learns that

Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. (Mk 10:47). It is assumed that Bartimaeus is aware of Jesus' reputation for performing miracles. Initially, a few people in the crowd warn him to keep quiet. They don't feel much pity for him in spite of his condition. According to them, he is only an annoyance, a nobody who ought to be disregarded, and he is most definitely not permitted to stop Jesus from travelling to Jerusalem to perform his role as a messiah. Bartimaeus, however, will not be quieted.

He cries out even louder, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" in an attempt to catch Jesus' attention. His screams are so moving that Jesus pauses and beckons for him to approach him. The crowd's attitude abruptly shifts at this point, and they all stand behind Bartimaeus, urging him to get up because "he is calling you," they exclaimed (Mk 10:49). He leaps to his feet and approaches Jesus, discarding his cloak.

However, Jesus wants more than just Bartimaeus to approach him. "What do you want me to do for you?" is what he wants him to state explicitly about what he wants Jesus to accomplish for him. (Mk 10:51). Despite his poverty and blindness, Bartimaeus is a man who understands what he wants, and without hesitation, he responds, "Master, let me see again" (Mk 10:50). He is immediately healed by Jesus, who says, "Go, your faith has saved you" (Mk 10:52). The story's climax is Bartimaeus' reaction to getting his sight restored. He stays, in contrast to the wealthy guy who left in sorrow. Rather, he follows Jesus on his journey and becomes a follower of him.

Mark uses Bartimaeus as an example of faith and discipleship in this tale. Jesus reminds Bartimaeus that his faith



REV. IBE

is what has saved him just before he heals him. What is this faith, though? His actions speak louder than words when it comes to his beliefs. He demonstrates it by acknowledging his need, being steadfast in his belief that Jesus can and will cure him, and having the guts to follow Jesus in spite of his background. Even when some people tell Bartimaeus to keep quiet, he still cries out to Jesus because he knows he needs to be healed. He refuses to stop talking even though he is at the bottom of the social scale. He will not be intimidated into being silent. How easy the throng may intimidate us into quiet when, like Bartimaeus, we need to be demanding

to be heard and to voice our own needs as well as the needs of others around us who frequently endure silent suffering.

Bartimaeus had the discernment and wisdom to ask for what he actually needs, in contrast to James and John in last Sunday's gospel reading, who want prestigious positions next to Jesus in his glory. Jesus just asks, "That I would see again," in response to his query, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus is aware that Jesus has come to earth not just to grant us authority and dignity but also to let us see the "new earth and new heaven" that the reign of God's love has made possible. Bartimaeus is far more knowledgeable than the

sons of Zebedee about Jesus' purpose. Like Bartimaeus, we must acknowledge our true needs and make humble, trusting requests for them.

Bartimaeus has a sincere faith that Jesus will and can heal him. So, believing that Jesus would heal him, he throws off his cloak and goes to him. Typically, blind beggars would tend to hang onto what little they have, especially a cloak that would shield them from the night's chill. But Bartimaeus knows deep down that he will no longer need his one priceless property, so he tosses it. There will be no more reliance on handouts from onlookers. His situation is about to drastically alter.

After being healed, Bartimaeus finally finds the strength to accompany Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem. His experience with Jesus has changed him as a man. He used to be blind, but today he has both physical and spiritual sight. He is well aware of his destination and the people he is pursuing. After receiving a great deal from Jesus, he went from being a dependent beggar to a free man. He is now walking beside Jesus on the path rather than passively resting by the side of the road in the hopes of receiving charity. And Jerusalem—that is, suffering, death, and resurrection is where this route goes. Therefore, we beg the Lord to give us the wisdom to know what we really need, the humility to ask for it with confidence and faith, and the bravery to follow you all the way to Jerusalem. Amen.

Rev. Fr. Godwin C. Ibe, Asst. Parish Priest writes from St. Paul's Catholic Church, Airport Road, Benin City.

ISLAM

Swiftness in Virtuous Deeds

MALLAM HARUN UMAR, ABDUL-KADIR ABDULLAH

Bismillahi Rahman Raheem. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. May His peace and blessings be upon our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW), his noble family, and his righteous companions and on all those who follow the righteous path till the Day of Judgement.

Respected brothers and sisters, today, we continue our discussion on the importance of swiftness in virtuous deeds. As we explored last week, hastening in good actions is a profound characteristic of the believer. It reflects a deep understanding of the transient nature of life and the eternal rewards of righteousness.

To briefly recap what was discussed last week, we said the following virtuous deeds that demand swiftness, and they are performing the five daily prayers, as regular and punctual prayer is the foundation of our faith.

The second is seeking forgiveness

because constantly seeking Allah's forgiveness is essential for spiritual purity. Another is repaying debts as promptly fulfilling financial obligations is a moral imperative. We also said we should help conducting funerals due to the fact that hastening the funeral rites is a sign of respect for the deceased.

We also said we should perform marriages as expediting the marriage process is encouraged to prevent fitna.

Another important virtuous deed is delivering justice because swift and impartial judgment is a cornerstone of a just society. There is also the need to facilitate conversion to Islam which means assisting those who wish to embrace Islam should be done promptly. Then, the need for reconciliation. This is because resolving disputes quickly is a noble act.

Today, we will delve into some additional virtuous deeds that require swiftness:

Seeking knowledge: The pursuit of knowledge is a lifelong journey. We must seize every opportunity to learn and grow. Knowledge is light, and it illuminates our path in this world and

the Hereafter. As the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr." Satan is more scared of one knowledgeable person than a whole community. He feels that a knowledgeable person cannot be deceived to commit errors because, he knows.

Fulfilling promises: A person of integrity keeps their word. Breaking promises erodes trust and harms relationships.

Prompt payment of wages: Timely payment of wages is a basic human right. Delaying payment is unjust and can lead to dire consequences. It is sad to see people who after the labourer has completed his job, they start to find fault because they do not want to pay. Let us know that on judgement day, we will be called to answer.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil: Speaking out against wrong and advocating for righteousness is a duty for every Muslim. If you know the truth and you are silent, you are guilty of bidding the truth. And this can cause destruction. Also, speaking the

truth timely can help to prevent crisis.

Giving charity: Charity is a means of purifying wealth and seeking Allah's pleasure. It is a form of investment in the Hereafter. Do not think that giving charity will depreciate your wealth. Be informed that your wealth is a test.

Seeking medical treatment: Taking care of one's health is a responsibility. Delaying treatment can worsen illnesses and lead to complications. Do not delay it for any reason. The earlier, the better.

Performing dhikr and dua: Regular remembrance of Allah and supplication are essential for spiritual growth and protection from harm. Do supplication before and after every activity.

Speaking truthfully: Honesty is a hallmark of a righteous person. Always strive to speak the truth, even if it is bitter.

Eating breakfast: A healthy breakfast provides energy for the day and enhances focus and productivity. Even if you are fasting, please break according to the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Planting trees: Planting trees is a sustainable act of charity that benefits both the present and future generations. Islam has thought us the benefits of tree planting before forestry practices which encourages tree planting now.

Removing obstacles from the path: Clearing obstacles from the path of others is a form of kindness and compassion. It is sunnatic to do so.

Teaching others: Sharing knowledge is a noble act that can benefit countless individuals.

In conclusion, swiftness in virtuous deeds is a characteristic of the true believer. By hastening in good actions, we can draw closer to Allah, purify our souls, and contribute to the betterment of society. May Allah grant us the strength and wisdom to prioritize virtuous deeds and to act upon them promptly. Ameen.

Mallam Harun Umar writes from the Edo State Muslim Pilgrims Welfare Board's Central Mosque Benin City.

Health & Environment

• Community Health • Primary Health • Medicine • Climate

Obaseki commissions Edo College of Health Sciences and Technology • as College matriculates 433 students, celebrates 60th Anniversary

EGURE MICHAEL AND
NWOSU JUSTINA

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, alongside Zamfara State Governor, Dr. Dauda Lawal on Wednesday commissioned the newly reconstructed Edo State College of Health Sciences and Technology (EdoCOHEST), which has been modernized to meet global standards, The Nigerian Observer reports.

The event was a 3-in-1 celebration comprising the official commissioning of the institution, a matriculation ceremony for new students, and the 60th anniversary of the college.

Speaking at the event, Governor Obaseki highlighted his administration's achievements in the healthcare sector over the past eight years, noting that all healthcare institutions in the State have been revamped to build a resilient system capable of serving the health needs of Edo residents.

Governor Obaseki said he

“had no regrets bringing down the Central Hospital” in his address.

Obaseki explained that the decision allowed for the development of Primary Healthcare Centers (PHCs) across the State, which have since expanded significantly.

“Today, over 10 Primary Healthcare Centers serve the population previously reliant on the Central Hospital,” he said, citing improvements in Oredo, Amagba, Evbotubu, and other areas.

Reflecting on the lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, Obaseki said, “The pandemic exposed the poor state of our healthcare system, not only in Edo but in Nigeria.

“It outlined the need for a robust healthcare system focused on infrastructure and critically on people—professionals who are well-trained to deliver quality care”.

The Governor acknowledged that before these improvements, critical institu-

tions like the School of Nursing and the College of Health Sciences and Technology were shut down due to a lack of accreditation. He emphasized that with about 200 wards in Edo State, achieving comprehensive healthcare requires a minimum of 2,000 healthcare workers, and the newly revitalized institutions are now able to train these professionals.

Governor Lawal of Zamfara State praised Obaseki's dedication to uplifting healthcare training and urged the institution's management to consider a student exchange program

with health schools in Zamfara.

Following the commissioning, the matriculation ceremony welcomed a total of 433 students into the following programs: National Diploma in Epidemiology and Disease Control – 39 students; National Diploma in Environmental Health – 31 students; National Diploma in Community Health – 74 students; National Diploma in Health Information Management – 25 students and National Diploma in Public Health Technology – 7 students.

Others are Certificate in Community Health Extension Work (CHEW) – 86 students; Junior Community Health Extension Workers (JCHEW) Conversion to CHEW – 38 students; Medical Laboratory Technician Certificate – 64 students and Certificate in Pharmacy Technician – 76 students.

This milestone marks Edo State's commitment to building a capable and well-trained healthcare workforce to serve its communities effectively.

Other distinguished attendees include the Edo State Deputy Governor, Marvellous

Godwins Omobayo; the People's Democratic Party (PDP) candidate for the 2024 Edo governorship election, Dr. Asue Ighodalo, the Chairman of the Edo PDP; Dr. Anthony Aziogbemi, Honourable Commissioner for Digital Economy, Science and Technology, Ogbide Ifaluyi Isibor, Honourable Commissioner for Physical Planning, Housing, Urban and Regional Development, Isoken Omo, Edo State Head of Service, Anthony Okungbowa Esq. and the administrative Heads of the College, among others.

Edo College of Nursing graduates 81 at first convocation after revamp

● **Obaseki gets accolades for institution's upgrade to global standards**

EGURE MICHAEL AND
NWOSU JUSTINA

The Edo State College of Nursing Sciences (ES-CNS), has held its maiden convocation, marking the first graduation ceremony since the institution was revamped, upgraded, and reopened by the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration in 2021.

The event, held at the college's main campus, on Sapele Road, Benin City, saw 81 newly qualified nurses receive their diplomas, prepared to contribute to the healthcare sector both within the State and beyond.

The graduates were presented with the award of Diploma in Basic Nursing by the Provost of the College, Prof. Patricia Ukaigwe.

Governor Obaseki, while delivering his goodwill message at the convocation ceremony, charged the graduates to utilize the world-class education acquired to make a meaningful impact in the healthcare value chain and health ecosystem.

Obaseki, represented by the State Commissioner for Education, Dr. Joan Osa-Oviawe said, “You have received a world-class

education which will stand you out from your peers. It's left for you to go all out and conquer the world. Move your school forward, I urge you.

“It's my hope that as you go all out to conquer the world, remember when it started and come back and contribute your quota to the development of the school, State, and country at large. We thank the alumni for all they have done for the school.”

Delivering the convocation lecture, alumni of the school, Nurse Obi Anthonia, of the 1988-91 set, commended the governor for revamping and reopening the institution after eight years of inactivity.

Acknowledging the state-of-the-art facilities in the school, she said the institution ranks as the best in the country, urging the 81 graduating students to carry on the legacy of compassion, resilience and unwavering dedication to the profession.

On her part, Provost of the College, Prof. Patricia Ukaigwe urged the new graduates to be committed to the advancement of healthcare as she commended the governor for transforming the institution to meet global standards.



COLLEGE COMMISSIONING:

L-R: Anadach Group Consultant, Dr. Olubunmi Margaret Ogbodu, Governor of Edo State, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, Governor of Zamfara State, Dr. Dauda Lawal, and Ag. Registrar, Edo State College of Health Sciences and Technology, Michael O. Ekhovbiye, during the commissioning of the College, on Wednesday, October 30, 2024.

Revolutionizing affordable, quality healthcare services: NHIA unveils benefits to private facilities

ESOHE AIFUWA,
EKPO PRECIOUS AND
AJOKO AKINTIMOYE

The Association of Nigerian Private Medical Practitioners (ANPMP), Edo State, organized a monthly Hybrid CME meeting to strengthen efforts at revolutionizing affordable and quality healthcare services in Nigeria for the benefit of private health facilities.

The event with the topic: “Understanding the Operations of NHIA and its Benefits to Private Health Facilities”, was held on Wednesday at the ANPMP Secretariat in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

The keynote speaker, Amb. Dcn. Theodore Osas Ehannire, Edo State Coordinator, Nation-

al Health Insurance Authority (NHIA), in his remark, noted some advantages of NHIA in private health facilities, which include Increased Patient Volume, Financial Stability, Quality Assurance and Improvement and Access to Resources and Support.

NHIA, a federal government agency formerly known as NHIS (National Health Insurance Scheme) operates under the National Health Insurance Act (2004) and is overseen by the Federal Ministry of Health.

In an interview with The Nigerian Observer, the Chairman of ANPMP, Dr. Godfrey Imuetinyan stated that the vision of NHIA is to ensure that all Nigerians have access to quality healthcare without financial hardship.

“We are trying to discourage the act of pocket payment for health. Actually, the challenge of healthcare has been the finances, many people at the time of being ill may not have the resources to pay for their health services, and so the NHIA comes in to intervene and help in managing healthcare to bring down the cost, take care of the poor and those in the lower class.

“There are various strata of the NHIA, the enrollees, the government employees which is called the formal sector we also have the informal sector, the less privileged, and also those that are handicapped and cannot afford health care services,” Dr. Imuetinyan explained.

On his part, a distinguished medical practitioner, Hon. Dr. Otamere Aigbogun, stated that

private medical practitioners are discouraged because of the low number of enrollees administered unlike that of public and government hospitals.

“NHIA is a good initiative by the Federal Government but because of the implementation some of the constraints are the enrollees that are not enough in the private hospital,” Dr. Aigbogun said.

Furthermore, one of the speakers, Dr. Iyen Osbem narrated the limited interaction between physiotherapists and private hospital owners in Edo State.

“According to the survey, only about 10% of privately owned health facilities in Edo State have a physiotherapy consultant working for them in their facility,” Dr. Iyen Osbem said.

Health & Environment



Kate Okunrobo harps on commitment to raising, nurturing underprivileged children • as God's Grace Orphanage marks 2nd Anniversary

GODSPOWER EGUASA

The Founder and Chief Executive Officer of God's Grace Orphanage and Motherless Babies Home, Mrs. Kate Okunrobo Odianese has urged key stakeholders especially caregivers, partners, and supporters of the orphanage vision to render heartfelt services that stem from their genuine kindness and sincerity in nurturing young orphans, underprivileged children into a prosperous future.

Okunrobo who was represented by Pastor Wonderful Ro-

land Imade of Chariot of Love Ministry, gave the remarks at the second anniversary celebration ceremony of God's Grace Orphanage home, which was held on Thursday, October 24, in Benin City, the Edo State capital.

Suffice it to state that God's Grace Orphanage and Motherless Babies Home is a world-class infrastructure developed to cater to the well-being of young orphans, widows, and abused / underprivileged children.

"I am immensely grateful to God for bringing us this far, today marks 2 years of our impactful existence as an orphanage home,

and I want to say it is because of the good works and support of partners like you. I want to say a big thank you to all our partners and supporters around the world, we are where we are today because of your kind benevolence.

"I want to use this medium to thank the caregivers who have the responsibility of taking care of the children. As we mark 2 years today, it is my charge to you that you let everything you do be born out of your innermost being, from a heart of love and dedication, to ensure the proper and positive well-being and standard

of living of the children under your custody," Okunrobo said.

"For every service you render, let it be as unto God and not to any man. It is my greatest desire and commitment that this vision continues to blossom, and that, partners come from far and near to support this insightful work," she said.

Okunrobo who highlighted some of the gains accomplished in the humanitarian journey noted she was optimistic that the impact kick-started so far, will be felt globally.

"Whenever I reflect on this journey, how these children were brought here, and how they have grown and outgrown the trauma they came with, I give glory to God.

"The sound education, healthy diets, talented upbringing and experienced workforce provided in the place is a proof of God's handwork and a reaffirmation of our global calling to save children

around the world. Once again thank you," she added.

In his address, a humanitarian, Evangelist Osunde Ogbemudia of Believers Ministry Incorporation, commended the indefatigable strides of the CEO, Mrs. Kate Okunrobo Odianese in putting smiles on the faces of orphans and bringing hope to the less privileged, stressing despite the challenges faced, she was able to surmount and came out victorious.

FG calls for action on climate change

EKPO PRECIOUS

The Federal Government of Nigeria has raised an alarm for quick and effective ways to tackle the injurious impact of climate change in the country.

The Minister of Environment, Alhaji Balarabe Lawal, disclosed in a statement at the recently concluded Commonwealth Head of Government Summit (CHOGM) that was held in the capital of the independent state of Samoa, Apai.

At the summit, Lawal

stressed the effect of climate change as a general and international problem that needs urgent response.

Lawal said Nigeria is already facing an unpleasant and bitter experience in the destructive impact of climate change through rising sea levels, flooding, degrading lands, and unstable weather, noting that it is high time Nigeria collaborated with the Commonwealth of states to address these issues.

He underscores Nigeria's position in environment, security, and democracy issues prompt-

ed by current challenges ravaging the world.

"Nigeria also made its position clear in support of democracy, security, and protection of civil rights across Commonwealth nations, including the process for strengthening the Commonwealth to make it stronger and more vibrant," he said.

Lawal assured of Nigeria's dedication to the organization's regeneration, stating that the nation's focal point is on results-oriented value creation and a responsive Commonwealth.

Kano partners UNICEF on climate change policy

EKPO PRECIOUS

The Kano state government has made known its partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to draft a final climate change policy document for the state.

The Kano State Commissioner for Environment, Nasiru Garo disclosed in a statement at a stakeholders engagement on Tuesday.

Garo explained that the partnership is a significant step in the state, as it will help confront all challenges faced by climate change in Kano state, adding that the alliance with UNICEF will aid development

and secure the future of the state.

"The realities of climate change are no longer distant or abstract across the Sahel and northern Nigeria.

"Frequent droughts that threaten agricultural productivity causing food insecurity, and unpredictable rainfall patterns that disrupt the planting season," he said.

The Commissioner underscored the relevance of the project in the state, noting that climate change poses lots of threats to the environs, and if left unaddressed will hinder the state's economic progress and increase poverty.

"Desertification, encroach-

ing on fertile lands and forcing communities to migrate heat-wave and flooding, will lead to severe health risks, displacement and destruction of infrastructure," he said.

UNICEF WASH Programme Officer, Kano Field Office, Stella Terver reaffirmed the agreement of the agency to partner with the state in addressing the effects of climate change on children in the state.

According to Terver, the agency is committed to supporting great vision for development. She noted that UNICEF's mission is to empower children not only to survive but to flourish, exercising their inherent rights.

CLASSIFIED

ROSEMARY
That I, MISS ROSEMARY OMATSULI and HARUNA-OBIOHA ROSEMARY is one and the same person. Henceforth, now wish to be known and addressed as HARUNA-OBIOHA ROSEMARY. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSAMUYIMEN
I, formerly known and addressed as OBAAZEE MARVELLOUS OSAMUYIMEN, now wish to be known and addressed as ENABULELE MARVELLOUS OSAMUYIMEN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

GRACE
I, formerly known and addressed as NWOZOR GRACE, now wish to be known and addressed as OVBIAGELE EBUN GRACE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OMOROGBE
I, formerly known and addressed as OMOROGBE IYORE EMMANUEL, now wish to be known and addressed as OMOROGBE KEVEN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

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

IKPONMWOSA
That IKPONMWOSA IYORE EUNICE and UGIAGBE JOY is one and the same person. Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as IKPONMWOSA IYORE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

CHIZURUM
I, formerly known and addressed as IBEM CHIZURUM IFEOMA, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. OGBOGU CHIZURUM IFEOMA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGBEIDE
I, formerly known and addressed as ASOMBA FAVOUR AMARACHI, now wish to be known and addressed as OGBEIDE ANGEL AISOSA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGBEIDE
I, formerly known and addressed as ASOMBA ONYINYEGHUKWU GODWIIN, now wish to be known and addressed as OGBEIDE EFOSA GODWIN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

UFUMWEN
That I, UFUMWEN ENOKHUOMWAN JACKSON, UFUMWEN ENOKHUOMWAN J. UFUMWEN JACKSON and UFUMWEN E. JACKSON is one and the same person. Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as UFUMWEN ENOKHUOMWAN JACKSON. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

CAROLINE
I, formerly known and addressed as ESTHER BENJAMIN, now wish to be known and addressed as EGUASA CAROLINE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ITOHAN
I, formerly known and addressed as EKI MERCY ITOHAN, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. FOFANA MERCY ITOHAN. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

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

JEBBA
That my first name was wrongly captured on my BVN as AGBOKHADE instead of AIGBOKHIODE, that my full and correct name AIGBOKHIODE SUNDAY JEBBA, that JEBBA is my (surname), AIGBOKHIODE is my (first name) while SUNDAY is my (middle name). Henceforth now wish to be known and addressed as AIGBOKHIODE SUNDAY JEBBA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

JOHNSON
I, formerly known and addressed as JOHNSON OMON-OMON, now wish to be known and addressed as JOHNSON SOLOMON OMON. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ISOKEN
I, formerly known and addressed as MRS. ISOKPAN ISOKEN VERONICA but due to dissolution of marriage by High Court of Justice Edo State of Nigeria in the Abudu Judicial Division HOLDEN at Benin City on the 25th of November 2022. Wish Revert to my maiden name, ADUN ISOKEN VERONICA.

OWA
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS EDIGIN OWA JOY, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. OKOROMI JOY OWA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

EKPEN
That, OIKHALA EKPEN JOSEPHINE and OIKHALA HEPHIZIBAH JOSEPHINE EKPEN is one and same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as OIKHALA EKPEN JOSEPHINE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ABUGEWA
I, formerly known and addressed as ABIGAIL MOYOWA ABUGEWA, now wish to be known and addressed as ABUGEWA OLUWAMOYOWA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

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

MISSING DEED OF TRANSFER LAND DOCUMENTS (2X2)

That I, MRS. OSAGIEDE OGBEWKON RUKA WARNER is the rightful owner of a missing deed of transfer land documents of a parcel of land measuring 50ft by 100ft (Fifty Feet by One Hundred Feet) situate at Useh Quarters, Off Upper Siluko Road, Egor Local Government Area, Edo State of Nigeria. That the said Deed of Transfer Land Documents was Discovered Missing on the 2nd day of December, 1995 in Benin City, Edo State. That all effort made to trace the said missing deed of transfer land document proved Abortive. Concerned authorities should please take note.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Name of Organisation:
Saint in Light Mission Center

Address:
2A Omoma Street, Oko, Benin City, Edo State

Names of Trustees:
PASTOR OSEKHUEMEN. S. OTABOR (Chairman) – 09019534166
MR. STEPHEN O. NWABUEZE
MRS. AMEN L. OTABOR
MRS. AMEN. L. OTABOR (Secretary) – 08164695199

Aim/Objectives

- To extend God's love to the society
- To propagate the teaching of God's kingdom
- To support and raise godly leaders

ILOARIA
I, formerly known and addressed as EMENEDO OGHAE, now wish to be known and addressed as SOLOMON ILOARIA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ENOMA
I, formerly known and addressed as OMOIHO ENOMA BLESSING, now wish to be known and addressed as CHUKWUEMEKA ENOMA BLESSING. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ISIOMA
I, formerly known and addressed as MISS ISIOMA BEAUTY AJAYI, now wish to be known and addressed as MRS. ISIOMA BEAUTY OSADIAYE. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

MURTALA
I, formerly known and addressed as MURTALA MOHAMMED MAIMAL, now wish to be known and addressed as MUHAMMED MURTALA. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

SPACE FOR SALE

SPACE FOR SALE

Entertainment

Lovebest Ogie: Sustaining filmmaking via ethics

“When the door you have been knocking at finally swings open, you don’t ask why. You run through.” – Diane Lockhart, The Good Wife

DAVIDSON IZEGAEGBE

Alice Guy-Blache is noted to be the female film director in the world to film a narrative story while Dorothy Arzner happened to be the first woman in her time to consistently be involved in directing of feature length movies in the popular Hollywood in 1927 till she retired in 1943, making her the first woman to become a member of the Directors Guild of America.

In Nigeria and Edo State, Lovebest Ogie, a Nollywood actress, producer and director, became the first woman to be inducted into Directors Guild of Nigeria, Edo State Chapter. She has learnt on the job from way back as an actor, by attending various auditions, worked and still working with so many film directors and producers, which has helped to hone and upskill her creative capacities in filmmaking.

She got into filmmaking just like similar stories from other celebrities - driven by passion and then self-development. She then upskilled herself towards self-actualization in her area of filmmaking, through shared ideas and thoughts on all areas of the creative sector. This woman of many parts when it comes to filmmaking was quick to realize that, in the creative space, everything is workable with the right training in whatever profession you find yourself. She also realised that one needs to be consistent in the pursuit of one’s God-given purpose and leave the rest to TIME. She believes that a mixture of talent as a product and the marketability of same is all the creative person needs to survive in the creative space. Talent alone cannot



LOVEBEST OGIE

survive without an intention to create a market for it.

“I started acting while I was still in secondary school, after which I joined a theater group Trinity at Abuja and then become a member of Actors Guild of Nigeria (AGN),” said Lovebest Ogie, who is currently the only female in Edo State Chapter of Directors Guild of Nigeria and also the first elected Treasurer of the Benin Zone.

Just like stories off the literary bookshelf, she also mentioned that as an actor, it wasn’t easy back then, especially as an upcoming actor. However, God’s grace, passion and determination to

never give up saw her through those difficult moments.

“Even as a producer now, it is not an easy task especially as a woman, wife and mother to cope with the stress of producing in a movie set,” she said.

Madam Lovebest Ogie described the creative industry as something differently unique, that must as a matter of factual principle be sustainable through its own ethics and practitioners. The filmmaking industry, as a whole, is a lovely and noble profession that requires lots of training and retraining to enable anyone venturing into it to arm him/herself enough to



be deliberate in using film to drive cultural awareness into the fabric of our society and thereafter develop same through its philosophy for a cultural identity.

As a female film director and one in a male-dominated profession, Madam Ogie stressed that the journey in the apex guild, DGN, is not an easy ride for the untalented as producers are keenly focused on returns on their investments rather than drumming sentiments towards feminism or gender equality. To survive and remain relevant in this industry as a female, she said, simply means that you would need to drop the toga of gender equality and jump into the arena with your talents to survive in that male-dominated space and carve a niche for yourself.

Among the movies that she worked in as an Assistant Director include Rok2 series BLOOD OF ENOGIE, as well as ZARS END and ISSAKABA RETURN. She describes Edo State as “a lovely place with a lovely culture and rich tradition that is well respected anywhere in the world, which has

in no small measure inspired me as an Edo filmmaker to further explore the philosophy behind the Edo people, their culture, and approach to life generally”.

“Non-Edo people describe the people as deeply rooted conservatives, but therein lies their strength which has made their arts whether in bronze, wood carvings, music, or movies sought-after in the world. When you remember Lancelot Imasuen, Rema, Sir Victor Uwaifo, the great Waziri and so so many more, one would agree that the Edo people are worth studying like a book to be able to know them as a people as well as their arts,” she said.

The creative industry in Edo State has become a sort of beehive in the Nigeria film space as there has been a huge improvement with the outgoing government of Godwin Obaseki heavily investing into that space. This has attracted the crème de la crème of the industry into Edo State in the last three years via the Sir Victor Uwaifo Creative Hub, Film in Edo Project, the Edo State International Film Festival, and the Enina Theatre Festival which have become models used by other states to re-inject relevance to the creative industry. The fast pace at which the Edo creative sector has moved up the ladder points to the fact that both the professionals in the industry and the up and coming should never give up on their creative works and talents; rather, they must hold on to whatever they can offer, as they continue to upskill, upgrade and update themselves in areas pertaining to their craft.

Recalling her sad moments, Madam Ogie remembers how she almost lost an actor, whom she did not know was asthmatic, on the set of “Okosisi the Great Warrior”.

“This made me to understand the need for contract form because everything one would need to know about his/her actors are all spelt out in the contract form,” she said.

Filmmaking is fun when the rules of engagement are well understood, and defined methods are established to make the actualization of the project easy for both cast and crew.

The role of films in driving cultural patriotism

DAVIDSON IZEGAEGBE

For us to have a detailed grasp of what is expected of the impacts of films on the culture and ideology of a people in any given society, we must attempt to define the ‘force’ that may be triggered from the subconscious to the conscious of the actions of people with same beliefs and ideologies influenced by any form of what they see or feel from their emotional perspective.

Looking at the expressive manner in which Stephen Nathanson looks at patriotism, one would begin to understand the manner in which movies made in America and Europe are different from movies made in Nigeria. Though one might want to be tempted to say here that Nigeria is still developing but the ideological stance

of films made in Nigeria is very loud and very rich in Cinematography more than toeing patriotic lines.

Films all over the world have been appreciated greatly by film lovers in regards to how they creatively make people see movies differently. America have been able to make the world recognize the patriotic gestures of every American towards their national flag, fellow Americans in cultural ideology. As a people viewed through the film lenses by the collectives, every American is patriotic. This may not be true but people tend to believe what they see. For example, the 1917 American silent war drama film “The Birth of Patriotism” directed by E. Magnus Ingleton and starring Irene Hunt, Ann Forrest, and Leo Pierson has the following plot summary: “Careless-

ness on the part of Johnny Roberts and the growing drudgery of married life causes an estrangement between Johnny and his wife Mary. The final break comes when Johnny, sick with a fever, returns home to be accused of drunkenness by Mary. Johnny leaves his wife to seek solace in Anne, the innkeeper’s daughter, and the two live happily together until the outbreak of the war. When England is threatened, Johnny enlists and is sent to the front. In the meantime, Mary, with her little baby, seeks Anne out to ask for some of her husband’s money to take care of the child. A mutual understanding springs up between the two women and upon Johnny’s arrival home, the self-sacrificing Anne disappears and Johnny returns to his wife and child.”

Most movie made by Americans

then were basically war movies which hinged on the need to be patriotic and even till this century, American filmmakers still see the need to water the soil of patriotism in America and these are reflective in movies, but not limited to: TOP GUN (1986), THE PATRIOT (2000), MIRACLE (2004), BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY (1989), GLO-RY (1989) and so on.

The Westerners have deliberately and consciously evolved through films in imbibing patriotism in the people just like the Americans. They even went steps ahead in the application of the theorem of colonialism in Africa and other countries.

In Which We Serve is a 1942 British patriotic war film directed by Noël Coward and David Lean, who made his

debut as a director. It was made during the Second World War with the assistance of the Ministry of Information.

Let us look at some movies that truly attempted to not only reflect culture in their movies, but also use culture as crucially important in deliberate development or achievement of understanding the way of life of a people in a patriotic manner. Filmmakers in Nigeria have greatly attempted to portray the Nigeria people in terms of their divers cultural values and ideologies in a closed but holistic manner in their movies. By closed holistic manner, I mean the various clusters of the various cultures of the divers Nigeria community into categories of movies but with a general goal to show the richness of a people in the values they place on their culture and the level of their ideological stance.

'Everybody Loves Jenifa' coming to cinemas nationwide Dec. 13

JUDITH ANDREW

The excitement among Nollywood enthusiasts is reaching fever pitch with the upcoming release of "Everybody Loves Jenifa". The film, set to hit cinemas nationwide on December 13, 2024, is already the talk of social media and in town even though the trailer is yet to be unveiled.

Upcoming Movies

Funke Akindele, the visionary actress, producer, and filmmaker behind this beloved character, is back to deliver another unforgettable experience.

For over a decade, Funke Akindele

has held audiences spellbound with her portrayal of Jenifa, a character known for her larger-than-life personality, humorous malapropisms, and endearing charm. Funke Akindele's ability to balance comedy with social commentary has made her a household name and a respected figure in Nollywood. From the humble beginnings of "Jenifa" as a TV sensation, Funke Akindele has transformed the character into a cul-

tural icon that resonates with audiences across all age groups.

With "Everybody Loves Jenifa", Funke Akindele is set to push the boundaries once more, offering fans a fresh yet familiar look at the adventures of Jenifa. Although plot details remain tightly under wraps, the title suggests a celebration of everything audiences have grown to adore about the character, her unfiltered honesty, boundless energy, and knack for finding herself in hilarious situations. The film is expected to blend Funke Akindele's signature humour with heart-warming moments, ensuring that fans walk away entertained and inspired.

The movie also features a stellar ensemble cast, with some of Nollywood's brightest stars sharing the screen with Funke Akindele. Their combined talents are expected to elevate the storytelling, offering viewers an immersive cinematic experience. The anticipation for their chemistry on screen is one of the many reasons

fans are eager for the release. Early whispers suggest that this ensemble, under Funke Akindele's expert direction, will deliver a performance that captures the spirit of the season - joyous, reflective, and full of laughter.

While the official trailer is yet to be released, the mere announcement of "Everybody Loves Jenifa" has already ignited a wave of excitement on social media with fans expressing their eagerness to see Jenifa's latest antics unfold on the big screen. As the release date nears, the film is shaping up to be a major highlight of the holiday season, promising to draw viewers in for an unforgettable cinematic journey.

As the countdown begins, one thing is certain, "Everybody Loves Jenifa" will not just be a movie, it will be a celebration of Funke Akindele's extraordinary contribution to the Nigerian film industry. This December, audiences can expect to be transported into a world of laughter, nostalgia, and the unmistakable charm of Jenifa.



'Alakada: Bad and Bouje': Toyin Abraham's upcoming movie is a blend of humour and satire

JUDITH ANDREW

Fans of Nigerian cinema are in for a treat this December as Toyin Abraham gears up to release her highly anticipated film, "Alakada: Bad and Bouje". The movie is set to be a thrilling addition to the beloved "Alakada" series which has consistently delivered laughter, relatable storylines, and a unique blend of societal satire.

Toyin Abraham, a force in the Nigerian film industry, has once again taken the reins as both the lead actress and producer, promising audiences an unforgettable experience. Known for her dynamic storytelling and ability to bring characters to life, Abraham's work on the "Alakada" se-

ries has garnered a massive following over the years. With "Alakada: Bad and Bouje", she aims to elevate the franchise to new heights, adding a fresh twist while staying true to the comedic roots that fans adore.

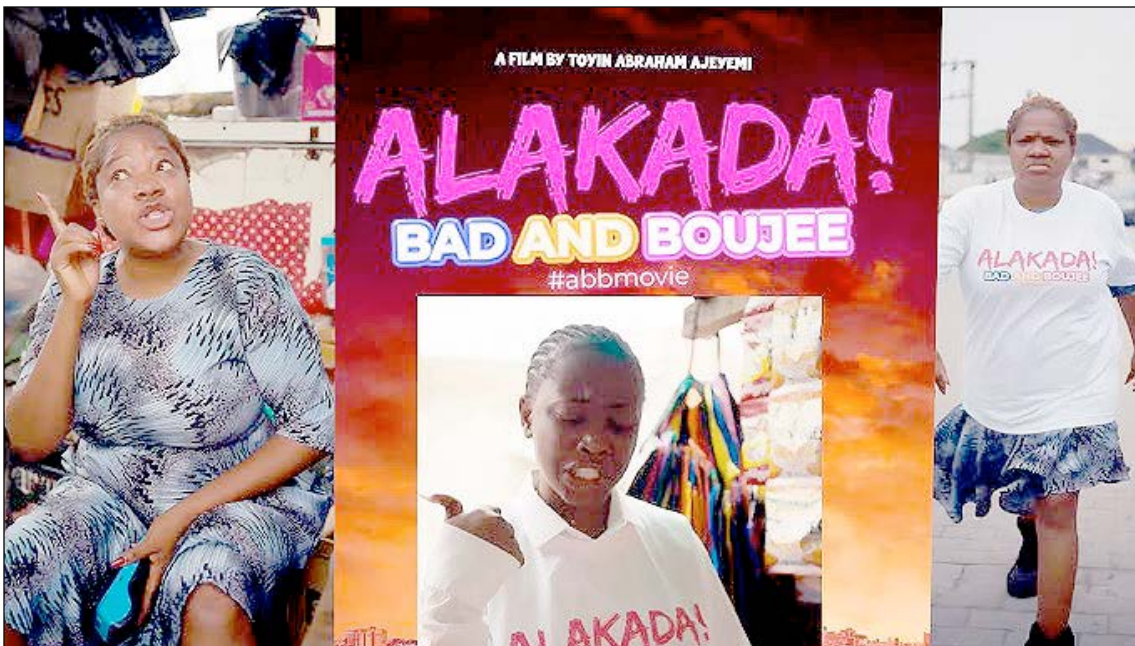
Although the official trailer is yet to be released, the buzz around "Alakada: Bad and Bouje" is already palpable. The star-studded cast is another reason for excitement as the movie features a mix of Nollywood veterans and emerging talents who are ready to bring their A-game.

The "Alakada" series has always been known for its sharp commentary on societal trends, especially around the theme of "fake it till you make it" lifestyles and this new instalment is

expected to push those boundaries even further.

Set against a backdrop of humour and satire, "Alakada: Bad and Bouje" will explore the pressures of social status, fashion, and the glamorous facade that many strive to maintain.

As the December 20 release date approaches, fans are encouraged to keep their eyes peeled for the upcoming trailer which promises to offer a first glimpse into the dazzling world of "Alakada: Bad and Bouje". With Toyin Abraham at the helm and a talented cast ready to deliver a memorable performance, this December promises to be filled with laughter, entertainment, and a story that will resonate with audiences long after the credits roll.



A cinematic triumph: 'Hijack '93' blends history with high production value

BLESSED MOMOH

"Hijack '93" is a recent Nigerian thriller film that premiered on Netflix on October 25, 2024. Directed by Robert Peters and produced by Charles Okpaleke, the movie dramatizes the real-life hijacking of a Nigerian Airways flight in 1993, an event steeped in social and political significance. This incident involved a group of young hijackers who sought to bring attention to Nigeria's dire political climate under military rule.

Their demands centre on political reform. As the hijackers hold the plane and its passengers hostage, they negotiate with foreign authorities who ultimately stage a counter-operation, ending the hijacking with arrests and tragic losses. The film portrays the young men's desperation, courage, and the political turmoil of the time, shedding light on a critical, often-overlooked part of Nigeria's history.

The film not only presents the high-stakes tension of the hijacking itself but also delves into the motivations and backgrounds of the hijackers, presenting them as complex characters rather than mere villains. The story builds on themes of youthful idealism, sacrifice, and resistance, capturing a moment when Nigeria's political future hung in the balance.

The hijackers, played by Adam Garba, Nnamdi Agbo, Oluwaseyi Akinsola and Allison Emmanuel, demand the reinstatement of their democratically elected president in within seventy-two hours. The air hostesses, played by Nancy Isime, Sharon Ooja, Jemima Osunde and Idia Aisien, try to cooperate with the hijackers in order to save their lives and the lives of other passengers. Efa Iwara takes on the role of Captain Odion (the main pilot) and John Dumelo takes on the role of Captain Ambrose (co-pilot). Bob Manuel Udokwu plays the role of a military officer named Captain Kenneth Dokunbo, while Sam Dede takes on the role of a leader and teacher known as Mallam Jerry.

One of the film's notable strengths is its ability to weave social commentary into a thrilling storyline. While it does not rely heavily on action-packed sequences, it effectively captures the emotional weight of the situation. The

hijackers articulate their grievances throughout the ordeal, highlighting issues like class struggle and systemic injustice in Nigeria. The script balances thrilling moments with poignant reflections on the consequences of political unrest, making the narrative both engaging and thought-provoking.

The film shows us a glimpse of what motivated the hijackers to risk their lives for the betterment of their country, highlighting the past struggles they experienced. We are made to know in the course of the movie that these hijackers all have a painful back story that may have prompted them to join the Movement for the Actualization of Democracy (MAD).

Critics have praised "Hijack '93" for its intelligent writing and for shedding light on a forgotten chapter of Nigerian history, making it relevant to contemporary audiences. The production quality is noted to be competent, despite its relatively modest budget, maintaining a steady pace and keeping viewers invested in the unfolding drama.

This film uses a visually intense and claustrophobic style to immerse viewers in the high-stakes atmosphere of the hijacking. Much of the action takes place within the confined space of the airplane cabin, amplifying tension among characters and giving the audience an intimate view of the unfolding drama. The film leverages close-up shots to capture the emotions of both the hijackers and hostages, creating a palpable sense of urgency and fear. Through lighting and shadow, the film also conveys the secrecy and danger surrounding the hijackers' mission, while contrasting this with brief, brightly lit flashbacks that reveal their motivations and pasts.

Overall, "Hijack '93" is more than just a thriller, it serves as a poignant reflection on Nigeria's past and the enduring quest for justice and democracy. It encourages viewers to reflect on the cyclical nature of violence and the importance of understanding historical grievances within the context of ongoing social struggles.

If you're interested in a film that combines suspense with meaningful commentary, then Hijack '93 is worth watching.

The hands behind the stars of Nollywood

UGO UGBOH

Nollywood is a powerhouse of remarkable actors and actresses who have made history over the years, dedicating their time and passion to the craft. However, these achievements would not have been possible without the invaluable efforts of the production crew, who work tirelessly to ensure that each production unfolds seamlessly. Regrettably, these professionals often go unrecognized, despite the crucial role they play.

Many of us watch films focusing primarily on the familiar faces on screen, judging performances and how well the roles align with our expectations. Yet, we rarely consider the hard-working individuals behind the scenes—the directors, cinematographers, editors, sound engineers, and countless others—whose expertise and dedication bring these stories to life.

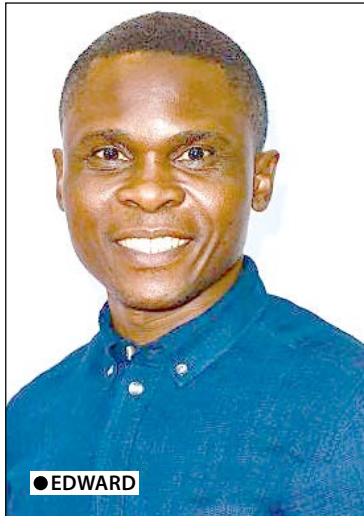
Directors and assistant directors meticulously plan each scene and guide actors to bring out their best performances, shaping the vision of the film. Cinematographers and lighting experts work tirelessly to create the perfect visual atmosphere, while sound engineers capture and refine every sound, from dialogues to background noise, to make sure the film feels immersive.

The makeup artists and costume designers transform actors into their roles, contributing deeply to character authenticity. Editors, who piece together countless scenes into a coherent story, often work behind the scenes without recognition, yet they play an essential role in building tension, flow, and emotional depth.

Then, there's the production manager and crew responsible for logistics, ensuring that everything runs smoothly on set—whether it's coordinating props, securing locations, or managing tight schedules. Each of these professionals works tirelessly to make sure the magic of storytelling unfolds



● AFOLAYAN



● EDWARD



● NEBO



● OKEREKE

seamlessly. To further acknowledge their contributions, let's explore a few additional roles whose work is just as crucial in bringing a story to life.

Scriptwriters: The scriptwriter crafts the foundation of the film—its story, characters, and dialogue. Without a compelling script, even the most talented actors and directors would struggle to deliver a memorable experience.

Art directors and set designers: Art

directors work closely with set designers to create visually striking, believable environments that reflect the film's mood, period, or theme. Whether recreating a historic era or constructing a fantastical world, these teams shape the physical space actors inhabit, enriching the storytelling through a blend of colour, texture, and form. Their creations often go uncelebrated, yet they play a significant role in immersing viewers

into the narrative world.

Stunt coordinators and special effects teams: For action-heavy Nollywood films, stunt coordinators design and oversee complex stunts, ensuring they're performed safely and believably. Special effects teams, meanwhile, use practical or digital effects to enhance dramatic moments. They create everything from fiery explosions to subtle visual touches that amplify a scene's impact, contributing to the film's overall polish.

Highlighting some of Nollywood's talented crew members brings their work to light, allowing us to appreciate their unique contributions. Here are a few prominent figures in various departments who have made a significant impact on the industry.

DIRECTORS

Kunle Afolayan – Known for films like “October 1” and “Aníkúlápó”, Afolayan has set high standards for Nollywood folktale storytelling.

Kemi Adetiba – Director of “King of Boys” and “The Wedding Party”, she's recognized for her unique style and strong narrative voice.

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

Yinka Edward – Known for capturing stunning visuals that bring stories to life, Edward worked on “93 Days” and “October 1”.

John Demps – An award-winning cinematographer, he worked on “Omo Ghetto: The Saga” and “The Trade”, bringing a cinematic polish to Nollywood productions.

COSTUME DESIGNERS

Yolanda Okereke – A top costume designer known for her work in “The Bling Lagosians”, “The Wedding Party”, and “King of Boys: The Return of the King”.

Toyin Ogundeji – Recognized for her work on “Aníkúlápó”, she uses culturally rich designs to elevate the authenticity of historical narratives in

Nigerian cinema.

SOUND ENGINEERS

Kulane Ikoye – Sound designer and editor for “Oloture” and “The Black Book”, Ikoye pays incredible attention to auditory detail.

Emamode Edosio – Edosio worked on films like “Kasala!”, bringing a unique audio experience that grounds audiences in the world of the film.

EDITORS

Chuka Ejor – Known for his work on “Road to Yesterday” and “The Milkmaid”, his editing style brings dynamism and rhythm to the screen.

Victoria Akujobi – An editor known for her work on “Hey You!” and “Lisa-bi: The Uprising”, she has a keen sense of timing and storytelling, making sure each scene flows smoothly and keeps viewers engaged.

PRODUCTION DESIGNERS

Pat Nebo – Nebo, who worked on “Lionheart” and “The Figurine”, was celebrated for his talent in creating immersive, culturally rich sets. Sadly, he has passed away.

Tunji Afolayan – Known for “Ijobon” and “Power of 1”, his designs create environments that are both visually engaging and authentic to the story.

These talented individuals represent the backbone of Nollywood, elevating each production through their skillful and creative vision. So it is high time we began to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of the production team. Giving due credit to these crew members would enhance our appreciation for the collaborative effort required to create the captivating stories we enjoy.

By shining a spotlight on these dedicated professionals, Nollywood fans can better understand the collective work involved in each production. Recognizing and valuing their contributions would strengthen the industry's support system, leading to even more polished and impactful films.

Karen Igho: A nasty fall from fortune and lessons for celebrities

PROMISE OGISO

Fame, fortune, and glory – the ultimate trilogy for celebrities. But beneath the glamour, a startling reality lurks – financial ruin. The entertainment industry's harsh truth is that even the brightest stars can fade, leaving behind a trail of debt and despair.

Karen Igho, winner of Big Brother Africa 2011, exemplifies this cautionary tale. Igho, who won \$200,000 prize, has apparently lost all of it and has since then been taking refuge in a homeless shelter.

Confirming her situation in a video showing herself in a shelter, Igho said, “I want to prove that it is me, and indeed I am homeless. I woke up in my homeless shelter, and I've been here for more than one year. I've been going up and down from shelter to shelter.”

In the video which was shared on X.com, she expressed gratitude for the support she had received and urged fans to donate to a GoFundMe account she shared, seeking assistance to secure a place to stay and regain custody of her children.

While it is not clear how or why Karen Igho fell from fame and fortune to her current state of penury and homelessness, fi-

nancial experts often blame such downfall on poor management and lavish spending.

But Igho is not alone on this table. Other Nigerian celebrities who have struggled financially include Femi Ogedengbe, actor, who went from fame to living in a rented apartment; Ayo Adesanya, actress, who faced eviction due to unpaid rent; Baba Suwe, comedian, who battled health issues amidst financial struggles, among others.

Similarly, international celebrities like Mike Tyson, who earned \$400 million but filed for bankruptcy in 2003, have faced financial woes. MC Hammer, Nicolas Cage, Lindsay Lohan, and 50 Cent have also struggled to manage their fortunes.

The implications are severe – damaged reputations, financial instability, strained relationships, and career decline. Financial instability can affect anyone, regardless of fame or fortune. The constant scrutiny and pressure to maintain a luxurious lifestyle can lead to poor financial decisions.

The causes of financial struggles are complex. Overspending, poor planning, and unrealized business ventures contribute to a celebrity's financial instability. Their lavish lifestyles, fuelled by fame and fortune, can quickly turn into financial nightmares.

To mitigate these risks, financial edu-

cation and planning are crucial. Seeking professional guidance, maintaining realistic spending habits, and diversifying income streams are key.

Just like anyone else, but even more so because they are constantly in the public glare, celebrities need to understand the value of money and how to manage it. Fortune, when not well managed, can easily vanish. They, therefore, need to prioritize saving, investing, and planning for retirement. Alternative income streams, such as entrepreneurship or real estate, can ensure financial stability beyond their celebrity status.

Karen Igho's journey from financial ruin to rebuilding offers valuable lessons. Her story serves as a warning: fame is fleeting, but financial responsibility is forever.



● IGH0

Nollywood star, Jegede inspires with ultimate sacrifice for craft

PROMISE OGISO

Yvonne Jegede, renowned Nollywood actress, has earned admiration for her unwavering dedication to her craft. Her bold decision to chop off her iconic natural hair for a movie role in the movie “Aja” showcases her commitment to excellence.

Jegede's stunning natural hair, admired by fans and fellow artists, was a signature part of her image. Yet, she sacrificed it for the sake of authenticity in her performance. This selfless act underscores her passion for storytelling and dedication to her art.

Jegede's move highlights the importance of authenticity in storytelling. Her commitment demonstrates that success demands sacrifice.

This remarkable gesture reminds us that hard work and dedication yield excellence. Jegede's passion drives her artistic expression, setting a high standard for her peers. Her sacrifice exemplifies the essence of professionalism, cementing her position as a Nollywood icon.

Yvonne Jegede's inspiring story serves as a beacon for artists striving for excellence. Her courage and dedication demonstrate that, with persistence and sacrifice, dreams can become reality.

“I love my job too much not to take risks. I see myself as a tool to convey the appropriate message. If the script deserves it, I will do whatever needs to be done to give the story life,” Jegede says.

“Apart from this drastic change, I am learning to speak proper Yoruba language,” she adds.

Her statement echoes the mindset of a true artist, willing to go the extra mile for creative fulfillment.

As Jegede continues to shine in Nollywood, her legacy extends beyond her performances. She inspires a new generation of artists, proving that dedication and passion can overcome any obstacle.

Yvonne Jegede's remarkable commitment ignites admiration, solidifying her position as a role model in the entertainment industry. Her story serves as a testament to the transformative power of hard work, dedication, and sacrifice.

PidginService

Tuke-Tuke Gossip with **Sam Imagbe**



Endless Alasa, chairman wey get swag

Another Friday don kome and man pikin still dey kampe. Not bikos na we get pawa pass but na bikos Baba God still dey for trone and him de merci for us. Baba you do well. Dis gift of life wey we dey enjoi for your hand so, no money go fit buy am, odawise pepo, espesially dose wey get money yanfu-yanfu, for no dey kpai for hospito. Dis na de tru talk.

Again, tank you Baba God. But sha, we still dey beg you make you kontinue to dey show us your merci in Jesu Kristi name, Amin.

Alasa Endless na one yong man wey dey kari de pepo wey dey for Osawaru Shopping Complex, wey face Oba Market, dey waka. Dis yong man na veri wondafu percin.

De first time wey him bekom de chairman of dis complex, everi percin de look am as small boy sake of say all de pepos for de complex fit be him senior for age. As some pepo dey talk am, age na numba. But edukashon na beta visa to life. Gbam.

Now, de bobo don do de first tenure and him kome get anoda tenure again. Nobodi even do kontest wit am. Na him be say un-opose. Up chair!

One good tin wey dis bobo don do na de police post wey him put for inside de complex from Oba Market Police Division. Dis na to stop dose kind challenge of oppreshion by some kustomas everi time.

But sha o, e get sometins wey Endless Alasa talk say dem no dey do for inside dis Osawaru Complex. Na him be say, dem no dey opress kustoma. Anybodi wey get office abi na shop for inside de complex no get permit to opress kustomas at all. Na rule number one be dat.

Even sef, dis Oga Endless Alasa don make sure say na light wey dey come from Ossiomo Power Plant dem dey use for de place instead of generator wey evri bodi dey take make noise for di place. If you visit de place today, you no go hear generator noise. Oga Alasa talk say him happy well well for dat achievement wey him fit do.

Make una no forget say we don talk am bifor say edukashon nahim be de visa for life. So dearfor, dis chairman dey always make sure say him dey lecture other traders for de complex de ways dem go take dey run komot for de tins wey koncine fraud mata abi na jibiti we dey kull am sef. Him no dey like any kind of fraud.

If na de first time you dey see Endless Alasa, nahim be say you go jus know say dis na pikin wey dey naturally calm and disciplined. Him na leader wey sopose be good ezampo to dose pepos wey put am for dat poshion.

By de time wey man pikin stat to dey take style ask am kuestion, bikos him be no wan talk to me, him kome talk say him own way to do him work na to give orders even as him stand

gidigba for truth. No be say some of de pepos no dey disobey but after later dem go kome see de truth and dem go obey.

As e be say him na youth, him kome advice de pepos of his generation make dem dey follow pepo wey de fire of greatness dey burn inside dia body. Him say taking shortcuts plus inkluding dubious means of making money no good sam sam.

Akording to Endless Alasa, make dem no dey hurry hurry to make money but make dem try to dey read book so dat dem go fit enhance dia career.

Him talk say as for him, na de kind books wey one percin wey him name be Miles Munroe dey write him dey like to dey read well well. Endless add join him advice say, "Listen to yourself, discover yourself on time."

Dat talk wey be show me your friend and I go fit tell you who you be na beta way to take stat good life.

Make I shock una small. Una sabi say this two-time chairman of dis Osawaru Complex na for dis same complex him learn de buzines of telephone sales and repairs? De oga wey teach am de buzines still dey operate for inside de complex wey him be chairman so. Him name na Okuomose Osakpolor Jackson aka 'No one knows tomorrow'. No be lie, who kuma know tomoro?

Make una no worry sha, we go talk about dis man next week. But how manage him come dey ansa Endless Alasa? De chairman say de name na de "derivation of endurance - meaning endless prosperity and endless positivity". Dis na turenchi abi big grammar.

As apprentice, him serve him oga, Jackson, aka No one knows tomorrow, for two years and also learn de trade for anoda two years bifor him do him freedom for him oga shop inside de same komplex. As we dey yan so, him oga dey feel proud and happy sake of say him no let am down.

Bikos of de way him take learn, him too don train more dan six boys who also dey do well well today. No be only de teknikal aspect him dey teach dem but inkluding good karata, tolerance, self-discover plus honesty. And him believe say na dat way be de only way man pikin go fit grow.

Dis Edo pikin na him also be de managing director of Endless Mobile Communication wey tanda gidigba for inside Osawaru Shopping Complex. Jackson aka No one knows tomorrow, wey train dis bobo be our next.

Una dooh.



● ENDLESS ALASA

TATAFO



Koshora filosofi and de role of films

DAVIDSON IZEGAEGBE

I trowey salut to all de koshora gurus wey nor waste time to helep awa pipo to undastand wetin koshor mean and how to use am wella to arrange de way we all take de run tins for awa difrent kabal. If not for dis pipo so, wey nor rest for de mata wey konsan koshor, I no sure say awa film industry for don fit improve reach wia e don reach so. Who no go, no fit no, as all lizards wey put belle for ground, no com let us no which one get stomak wahala.

Dis mata wey konsan koshor so, no be today e start. De mata don full ground as pipo wey respect dia koshor die, no fit trowey eye from any gbege wey fit make dem koshor be like wetin nor get level. All of us no say respect na resiproka, which mean say, na de kain level of respect wey you tro com my side like bancing ball, me too go tro go ya side for yonda. Dis one so, no cheating inside, infact no lele, bicos na as you do me I go also do you.

My kweshon now be say, bifor Oyinbos dem show for we area, we don hold koshor strong as na wetin we de take no who get some kain level. E nor de shock you wen e be say if you find yaself for some kain kabal, men go de ask you which level, wia you from come, who be ya papa or wia ya papa build house put? Dis kweshon nor de shock us as African pipo, bicos, na who ya papa be go show to odas who you be. You fit be stranger wey go build house for anoda community, but you must to respect de koshor of de pipo for dat community.

Oyinbos dem enta awa kontri with dem own koshor and com use am to konfuse us. Na de mata from dat time so we still de suffer as we de still de wonda wonda as to wetin nak us akpako like dis. Dat time so, afta de Oyinbos dem come use style style take enta us and com use bible to rearrange awa brains, na from dat time we com begin de strongu to take find awa level for inside awa community so dat awa koshor nor go com kpai. If una rison dis mata with adult eyes, una go see say, any community or kontri wey nor take dem koshor serious nor fit go far for anytin. Many of dis konfushon de among Wetin make Africa still de shake like barber chair and like blind man wey wan kross express road.

Koshor get e own filosofi wey be de rison why koshor nor fit de like pillar for junction. Na de filosofi of koshor still be de rison why awa koshor neva die and why e de improve evri day. Koshor na wetin kip us togeda as one pipo, na de rope wey tie us togeda as

one pipo and dis same filosofi, na wetin de helep us to no who we be and how to take kontinu to no wia we de from com, wia we don de and wia we de go. All of us no say, oyinbo discribe koshor as de way wey we all de take de awa de with awa selves and oda pipo. If we rison dis definishon so, we go also com see say, koshor be like riva water wey de always de flow instead of to de one place.

If una rison de way I take discribe koshor and filosofi, we go com see say, for koshor to develop, e need filosofi to use koret adult eyes to rison how human kretivity, human brains on how we take de wahala awa minds to make sure say tins de wella plus com use de experience of dis human beings for dis dia kabal to take develop dia kabal. So dia for, na filosofi be de driver wey de drive de motor wey we de call koshor. Now, de tin wey com de inside dis mata very jus now be say, how dis koshor plus dis filosofi of koshor take make sense for film mata? Again, nor be society wey wahala nor de shele evri day fit rison development mata? If to say, men nor mount dos days gidigba like gallant sojas, we for fit get mouth to de yan about koshor or filosofi?

Anyways, koshora filosofi or filosofi of koshor fit be like say dem mean de same tin, but sha small difrence de inside. Again, de mata wey konsan me inside all dis be say, we for Africa and Naija kpakpa, neva fit rison how we fit use dis koshora filosofi to take develop awa film bizness. True true, awa films don suppose mount guard for awa mind and evri pipo wey watch awa films for any wia arand de world, but e nor com be like dat. Again, na why?

Awa film pipo don reach de level to take no say, no be devel to get or kuza to gain be de only rison to make us de do films. We suppose to no awa koshor wella, find how we fit use film to make am get more level and to even arange de road to lead awa koshor to beta ogbonge development. True true, awa film pipo suppose Don undastand say, na wetin dem want de pipo to no or to learn dem fit use dia films to do. Film na anoda tin wey fit wear filosofi agbada to take give level to koshor and if dem fit make film to gallantly reach dis level, dat is to say, Naija don enta anoda level of rosinng be dat. Las las, na wetin we as African pipo even want sef? Na only wen you no wia you de go, you fit enta de right bus to de right place. As film pipo sef, we really no wia we de go, we don reach de right bus stop so? Na wen awa eyes don clear we all go fit com no if we don land de right bus stop. Until den, no kpai or delete yaself bicos, baba God gat us for him mind.

Fashion & Style

The distinctiveness of 2024 Lagos Fashion Week

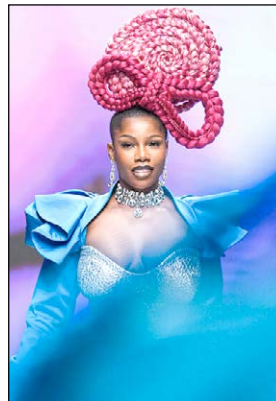
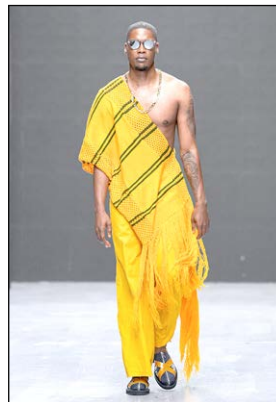
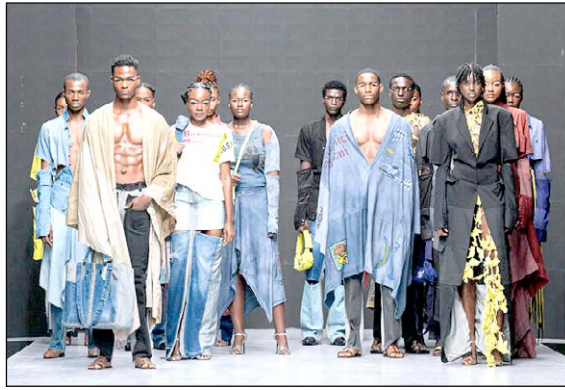
PRECIOUS AGBONGIASEDE AND
PRECIOUS IBEKWE

The theme for this year's Heineken Lagos Fashion Week which was held last week at the Federal Palace Hotel Ikoyi in Lagos State was COMMUNE. The event started on the 23rd of October and concluded on the Sunday, the 27th October 2024 and centred around showcasing and celebrating Africans who are the leading creative talents in the national and global fashion landscape whilst also highlighting the spirit of togetherness and inclusivity which binds the fabrics of Nigerian fashion landscape.

The Fashion Week, as it always has since its creation, encompassed a vibrant mix of creativity, singularity and inclusivity which continues to break barriers and redefine beauty standards, celebrating diversity in all forms.

The show included showcases which comprised lineups of a good number of notable individuals in the entertainment industry, some of which were former Big Brother Naija housemates and influencers such as Yemi Cregx, Shaun, Emmanuel, Kanaga Jr. and Anita Natacha Akide, also known as Symply Tacha, representing Lush Hair, whose striking hairstyle caused quite the sensation due to its singularity and sheer beauty, as well as the famous Nigerian music icon, Davido who, on the second day of the event, walked the runway decked in full traditional Nigerian clothing designed by renowned Nigerian fashion designer, Ugo Monye.

This highlighted the intersection of music and fashion, demonstrating how musical and entertainment icons can influence and elevate the fashion industry. Other famous personalities who made appearances on the runway include Dorothy Bachor who looked breathtaking in one of Hertunba's designs and well-known actress, Kate Henshaw, who was wearing a signature piece by Ejiro Amos Tafiri and actor, Mike Folarin. To further highlight the inclusivity of



this year's Lagos Fashion Week, kids, as well, walked the runway in Ejiro Amos Tafiri's "Symphony of Convergence".

In addition, several unique and tasteful collections by a diverse number of brands and designers, both in and out

of Nigeria, totalling more than 60, were put on display during the show with the aim of drawing in the attention and interest of those in attendance, a goal which they most certainly achieved.

Foreign African brands such as the

Kenyan brand, Lilabare, Boyedoe and Ajabeng from Ghana, as well as Loza Maléombho from Côte D'Ivoire and Malian designer, Awa Meite, were in attendance to showcase their Spring/Summer 2025 collections. Home based

brands and fashion designers such as Oshobor, Ugo Monye, Kilentar, Mai Atafo, Emmy Kasbit, Imad Eduso, Ajané and a lot more graced the runway with their various individual designs and collections.

This year's Fashion Week proved to be quite noteworthy better than the previous editions. This is so, not only due to the more unique and eye-catching designs which graced the runway, but unquestionably as a result of the more evolved, singular, authentic, audacious and timeless nature of this year's designs showcased at the event.

The tens of designers whose creations were put forth during the show certainly left indelible impressions on those in attendance due to the pure genius they showcased in the creation and presentation of these designs. From E.S.O by Liman's SS25 collection, 'NORTH, WEST & EAST', which was a blend of contemporary art and traditional Nigerian culture to Omolabake Temetan's 'Dust of Earth' which featured the rebranding of second-hand clothes and the conversion of shoelaces into wearable clothing, this year's Lagos Fashion Week can be said to be the most diverse and characteristic event since its founding thirteen years ago.

There was as well the aspect of inclusivity which cannot at all be separated from the theme of the event, and which the event adhered to on all fronts, from the aforementioned inclusion of celebrities and children's models to the presentation of models of various backgrounds, individual characteristics and body types who walked the runway during the event.

Credit ought to, as well, go to the many creatives behind the scenes in addition to those diverse models and personalities whose efforts in walking the runway and turning those designed pieces into remarkable works of art, all of which came together to shape the Fashion Week into what it proved to be— an immeasurably unforgettable experience.

Chic adornments: Elevating Nigeria's fashion with stunning Accessories and jewelries

PRECIOUS IBEKWE

Jewelry and accessories in Nigerian fashion encompass a wide range of ornamental items that enhance personal style and express cultural identity. It plays a significant role in Nigerian fashion, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage, diversity, and evolving contemporary styles. They serve not only as decorative elements but also as vital components of self-expression and identity. Accessories and jewelries can transform a simple outfit into a statement look, showcasing creativity and elegance.

In Nigeria, both traditional and contemporary jewelry and accessories hold multiple meanings and significance, making them essential components of various outfits, especially during special occasions, ceremonies, and festivities. There are several jewelries and accessories essential for every occasions

TRADITIONAL JEWELRY

Beaded necklaces: Beads are an integral part of Nigerian fashion, especially among various ethnic groups like the Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa. These necklaces are often handmade and can range from simple to elaborate designs, symbolizing wealth, status, and cultural heritage.

CONTEMPORARY JEWELRY

Gold and silver jewelry: The rise of luxury fashion in Nigeria has led to an increased interest in high-end jewelry made from precious metals. Gold and silver pieces are popular for both men and women's fashion, often worn for special occasions or as a sign of affluence, which are necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings, etc.

FASHION ACCESSORIES

Headwraps (Gele): A quintessential part of Nigerian women's fashion,

headwraps are often embellished with beads or other decorations. They serve both functional and decorative purposes and can elevate an outfit to a statement look. Also, scarves and shawls: Used for layering and providing warmth or elegance, scarves and shawls can complement traditional attire or modern outfits.

Hand bags: Handcrafted bags, often made from traditional fabrics or embellished with beads, are a common accessory. They enhance the overall aesthetic of an outfit and reflect the wearer's personal style.

FOOTWEAR

Traditional sandals: Made from leather or embellished with beads, traditional sandals are popular for both men and women. They often accompany ethnic attire, showcasing craftsmanship and style.

Modern footwear: The introduc-

tion of contemporary shoe designs, including heels and stylish flats, complements various outfits and adds to the fashion statement.

BODY JEWELRY:

Belly chains: Increasingly popular among women, these have become fashionable accessories often worn during special occasions, parties, and festivals.

Nail art and rings: Accessories like rings (especially statement rings) and intricate nail art have gained popularity, adding additional layers of style and creativity to personal fashion.

Sunglasses: Stylish eyewear can add a chic touch while protecting you from the sun. Sunglasses are available in a variety of styles, colours, and shapes, enabling individuals to express their personal taste and complement their outfits. Sunglasses can enhance traditional outfits, such as

Aso-Ebi or Ankara styles. They can make a bold fashion statement and add a modern touch to cultural attire.

Minimalist watches: A classic watch can enhance your formal attire and provide functionality, wearing a quality wristwatch can communicate professionalism and class in corporate or formal settings. It reflects attention to detail and can enhance business attire. Wristwatches can easily complement different outfits. A simple watch can suit everyday wear, while a more elaborate timepiece can elevate formal or traditional attire.

Having a versatile collection of jewelry and accessories is essential in Nigerian fashion, as these elements play a crucial role in expressing personal style and cultural identity across various occasions. By investing in key pieces that reflect both tradition and contemporary trends, you can ensure that you are always stylish and appropriately dressed for any event.

Sports

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

Osimhen dismisses January exit rumours

OLATOMIWA OYEDELE

● **commits to Galatasaray until season's end**

Super Eagles player Victor Oshimen has denied the belief that he might leave Galatasaray in the January transfer window, as he stated clearly that he will remain at the club until his contract expires at the end of the season.

The 25-year-old's move to Galatasaray has always been a

makeshift solution before he can secure a permanent move away from Napoli. He joined the club on a season-long loan deal before the close of the European window, in which he failed to secure a move to a top European club.

Chelsea had reached advanced negotiations with the Ni-

gerian, but they failed to reach an agreement before the deadline.

John Mikel Obi, the former Chelsea player and Super Eagles legend said that Chelsea could return for Oshimen in the January transfer window which gave validity to the reports that a break clause was included in the loan deal to

Galatasaray, which would allow him to leave six months early should a suitable offer arrive.

The Nigerian has found form at Galatasaray, scoring four goals in Super Lig with two assists. Hence, the possibility of him leaving six months ahead of schedule is a major concern for the fans.



Libya considers CAS option for appeal against CAF's verdict

FOLUSEWA AKINOLA

The Libyan Football Federation has decided to go to any length to make sure the verdict by the Confederation of African Football (CAF) is overturned even if it means taking the case to the Court of Arbitration of Sports (CAS).

The Libyan Football Federation (LFF) was found guilty by

CAF to have "breached Article 31 of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations Regulations as well as Articles 82 and 151 of the CAF Disciplinary Code" and therefore their match against Nigeria was declared "lost by forfeit (by a score of 3-0)" and this meant Nigeria would be awarded three points. The LFF was also mandated to pay a fine of USD 50,000.

This decision was said to be

"unfair" by the CAF. According to the LFF acting President, Abdunnaser Ahmed, in an interview with BBC Sport Africa, "Match points cannot be awarded in this way. It is a precedent that African football has never witnessed before. Whoever refrains from playing before any match is cancelled should be considered a loser."

Ahmed said they would see the case up to the CAS level if it

demanded it.

"We believe that our cause is just, we will see CAF's response to the appeal submitted by us and we will go to CAS, we will not give up our right," he said.

The point deduction leaves Libya at the bottom of the table with two matches left to fight for a qualification spot with the hope that Rwanda and Benin Republic fail to pick up points in their other matches.

CAF invites Nigeria's Yusuf Gbemisola to 2024 Young Referee Course in Cairo

CHIDINMA KALU

Nigeria's Yusuf Gbemisola has received an invitation from the African soccer governing body, CAF, to participate in the 2024 Young Referee Course in Cairo.

Gbemisola joins 20 other young referees from across Africa selected for this four-day course aimed at nurturing future officiating talents.

The invited referees, all aged between 15 and 21, were chosen from the best officials in the initial CAF African Schools Football Championship (CAF ASFC) finals. They will receive guidance from the CAF Refereeing Department on topics such as integrity in football, game positioning, and game management. Additionally, they will receive an introductory course on VAR Basics, among other key areas.

This program, which forms part of CAF's broader strategy to cultivate world-class referees, has provided international experience to over 170 young referees since its inception. The Young Referees Programme, conducted through the CAF African Schools Football

Championship, aims to prepare these rising talents for officiating on both African and global stages.

Participating Referees:

1. Mohamed Amine – Algeria
2. Istabrak Khalfoun – Algeria
3. Delcia Defatima Katchigavisa – Angola
4. Sailoussou Mohamed Awali – Benin
5. Ishimwe Rolande Cressy – Burundi
6. Pelori Ignese – Chad
7. Assimati Moussa – Comoros
8. Traore Kotoroum – Cote d'Ivoire
9. Omar Hassah Ibrahim – Djibouti
10. Mbombo Tamakunda Esperant – DR Congo
11. Muhamad Sanneh – The Gambia
12. Zakaria Elghaithy – Libya
13. Tsiaro Randriambololomana – Madagascar
14. Usi Musitafa Wyson – Malawi
15. Faith Gondwe – Malawi
16. Yusuf Gbemisola – Nigeria
17. Tuyihimbase Kevine – Rwanda
18. Rio Chris Dubignon – Seychelles
19. Habibu Hamad – Tanzania
20. Ojilong Jabeth Elly – Uganda
21. Jacinta Makasa – Zambia.

FIFA set to hold key meeting with Ghana FA on VAR implementation in Domestic Leagues

CHIDINMA KALU

The Federation Internationale de Football Associations (FIFA) will host a crucial two-day meeting with the Ghana Football Association (GFA) and other key stakeholders to discuss implementing Video Assistant Referee (VAR) technology in Ghana's domestic leagues.

Scheduled for Wednesday, October 31, and Friday, November 1, in Accra, the meeting will feature FIFA's full

VAR project team.

This "VAR kick-off meeting" serves as the first phase of FIFA's Implementation Assessment Approval Program (IAAP), a necessary process for any Member Association aiming to introduce VAR.

The sessions will cover all essential elements of the project, enabling FIFA and GFA representatives to evaluate requirements for effective execution. FIFA's approval following the meeting will mark the official launch of VAR in Ghanaian football.



Dubois' IBF title defense set for possible clash with Wardley as Joshua rematch stalls

CHIDINMA KALU

Daniel Dubois may defend his IBF world heavyweight title



DUBOIS AND WARDLEY

against Fabio Wardley, as plans for a rematch with Anthony Joshua have been delayed.

After Dubois' impressive fifth-round knockout win over Josh-

ua at Wembley Stadium, talks for an early 2025 rematch were paused due to concerns raised by Joshua's promoter, Eddie Hearn, about the quick turnaround. This has opened the door for British heavyweight Fabio Wardley to step in as a potential challenger.

Daniel Dubois retained his IBF world heavyweight title last month with a thrilling fifth-round knockout of Anthony Joshua at Wembley Stadium.

The IBF has confirmed that Dubois is permitted to make an "optional defense" against any ranked opponent before April 22, 2025. IBF President, Daryl Peoples stated that Dubois

"can make an optional defense against any ranked fighter".

Wardley recently climbed into the IBF rankings after an impressive first-round knockout victory over Frazer Clarke in their rematch. Speaking to Sky Sports, Wardley discussed his strategy for a potential title shot, emphasizing the importance of selecting the right opponent to enhance his standing.

"It needs to be a level of smartness going into this now about how we pick my next opponent, who they are, how they're ranked, how that fight and that win would set me up going forward.



GBEMISOLA

Edo People Forum 2024: 'We're going to win it again' – says Coach Douglas ahead today's final

FOLUSEWA AKINOLA | SUCCESS GEORGE | DANIEL NWEZE | OYEDELE OLATOMIWA

Coach Douglas of Idia College has expressed confidence in his girls to win the Secondary School's Football Competition ahead of Friday's final against Saint Angela Grammar School.

In an interview with The Nigerian Observers correspondents, he expressed his happiness for the win though according to him, "I expected six". He attributed his team's "lapses" to the fact that they were playing for the first time and said the next time "they would come out with their full potential".

He also expressed confidence in winning the competition for the third time in a row.

According to him, "We won it twice and this time around, we're going to win it again".

"We're going to be very swift in the final. Five minutes of play we should score at least two goals," he added.

The 2024 Edo People Forum Secondary School's Football Competition kicked off on Monday with a Semi-final match between Obiata Girls and Idia College which ended in a 2-0 win in favour of Idia College with Sandra and Success getting the ball into the net to get the win for the girls.

Favour (nicknamed Burna Boy) was awarded the Player of the Match in the game due to her brilliant display on the field as well as providing the assist which led to the first goal of the game.

Saint Angela Grammar School and Enyan Girls also

faced each other in the second Semi-final match to determine who would face Idia College girls in the final. Saint Angela Grammar School girls went riot against the Enyan Girls as they won the match 3-0 with Osilama Sarah, Ugboadaga Sutana and Odion Jennifer get-

ting their names accordingly on the score sheet. Jennifer was also named Player of The Match due to her fabulous display on the field as well as scoring the third goal with a right-footed strike from outside the box to seal the win for the girls.

Favour, Player of The Match for the Idia College girls' team, expect that they're going to the finals "to win and play better".

The Idia College girls will be slugging it out with the Saint Angela Grammar School girls in the final at the Samuel Ogbemudia Stadium on Friday.

"We need results" —Bendel Insurance Supporters' Club demands

● **gives coach Odigie, players a three-match ultimatum**

FOLUSEWA AKINOLA AND OLATOMIWA OYEDELE

The Bendel Insurance Supporters' Club has issued coach Monday Odigie and his team a three-match ultimatum to prove that they are ready to continue with the Club due to the recent rising and falling disappointing performance in the ongoing 2024/25 NPFL season.

Insurance Supporters' Club, led by Chief Osadolor Ojefa,

has expressed concern over the poor performance of Odigie's team both at home and away. He added that the club could not afford to go back to their nightmare days of relegation after just getting back from it.

"We can't continue to lose matches even at home. We are pained and bitter in our minds. We have come here to tell you our minds, we must try as much as possible to change our mindset. We need results because that is the only way we can make the govern-

ment happy and make ourselves happy too," Chief Ojefa said.

"Bendel Insurance is a household name in Africa... we don't want to go back to the dark days. All in all, we have unanimously agreed to give coach Monday Odigie and the entire team a three-match ultimatum, starting with this weekend's game against Sunshine Stars of Akure taking place in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State.

"He must win away matches and come back home to win three straight home games, or else they should be ready to leave Bendel Insurance. We know how much of our monies, time, and energy we have committed to supporting Bendel Insurance, the only way to make us happy is good results," he added.

Bendel Insurance are currently 15th on the NPFL table with nine points which is just three points above the bottom club, Akwa Ibom.

Insurance would be travelling to Akure on Sunday in anticipation of securing the needed three points to increase their chances of not making the bottom four.



Bendel Insurance's mgt motivates players ahead Sunshine clash

EDWARD OSEGHE

The management of Bendel Insurance Football Club led by the Executive Chairman, Edo State Sports Commission, Olympian Yussuf Alli has urged the players and officials of the Benin Arsenals to put the thoughts of the home defeat behind them and concentrate on their next match at Ijebu-Ode on Sunday.

The Edo State Sports Commission boss said that the Matchday 10 against Sunshine Stars on Sunday in Ijebu-Ode is more important than the 1-0 defeat to Abia Warriors on Saturday in Benin.

● **Meyiwa, Enaruna join CHAN Eagles' Camp**

Alli disclosed in a statement during his surprise visit to Insurance's evening training session on Wednesday with a pleasant motivation package of an undisclosed amount of money. He asserted that though management is not happy with their below-par performance so far this season, but will however continue to encourage them to strive for success which is near if the right attitude and energy are put up.

"I am here this afternoon to encourage you to put the thoughts of the home defeat behind you and have a hundred

percent concentration for the next match. Go to Ijebu-Ode and win to fully recover from the last weekend setback.

"I must tell you the truth that we are not happy with the results we are getting. There is a growing concern by stakeholders about our performance and the current situation in the league. We have done all that is required for you to succeed and it is not showing.

"However, we want to believe that soon, we will rise above the challenges and find our rhythm and winning mentality. Don't feel despair but continue to work hard and avoid distractions. You guys are good, it is just little mistakes we are making that are affecting us and we can correct them," Alli said.

He challenged the players and coaches to seize the opportunity of the Ijebu-Ode neutral ground for the match against Sunshine Stars to cover their lost grounds.

Responding, the Head Coach and Technical Director of Bendel Insurance FC, Monday Odigie expressed the team's

appreciation for the kind words and encouragement from the Sports Commission chairman against the expectation that the chairman was going to be hard on them.

"Mr. Chairman we sincerely appreciate you, Sir. We will continue to work hard and do our best to turn things around. We apologize for the outcome of the Abia Warriors game," he said.

Sunday Megwo's 40th-minute goal gave Abia Warriors a 1-0 victory over Bendel Insurance Football Club in the Match Day 9 of the Nigeria Premier Football League in Benin last weekend.

Bendel Insurance will be on the road to Ijebu-Ode on Sunday to face Sunshine Stars in the March Day 10 fixture. Kick-off time is 4:00 pm.

Meanwhile, the Bendel Insurance duo of Michael Enaruna (Forward) and captain Meyiwa Oritseweyinmi (Midfield) have been invited to the camp of Nigeria's home-based Super Eagles for the CHAN 2025 Tournament.



BENDEL INSURANCE PLAYERS

Flying Eagles defeat Ghana, retain WAFU B U-20 Title

OKEOGUALE ADOLOR

Nigeria secured the 2024 U-20 WAFU B Cup of Nations Championship title with a 2-1 victory over Ghana on Wednesday, October 30, marking their successful defense of the title they won in 2022.

The Flying Eagles dominated the first half and were rewarded for their efforts. Kparobo Arierhi opened the scoring in the 33rd minute with a precise finish and extended the lead 10 minutes later, finding the top left corner after pouncing on a loose ball inside the box.

Desmond Ofei's team went into halftime down by two goals after a challenging first 45 minutes.

The Satellites returned from the break with renewed intensity, enjoying more possession and creating opportunities in the final third, largely driven by Hayford Adu Boahen. Despite their efforts, Ghana struggled to capitalize on their chances.

Jerry Afriyie eventually pulled one back for Ghana in the 75th minute, heading in his fifth goal of the tournament to revive his team's hopes.

Despite Ghana's strong push in the final minutes, Nigeria held firm to secure the win and lift the trophy.

Both teams automatically qualify for next year's U-20 Africa Cup of Nations, regardless of the outcome of Wednesday's match.



AFCON Qualifiers: CAF sets dates for Super Eagles' final matches

OKEOGUALE ADOLOR

The Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has announced that the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has scheduled Nov. 14 and 18 for Nigeria's final qualifying matches for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations.

These games will see the Super Eagles face off against the Republic of Benin and Rwanda.

According to an NFF statement released on Tuesday, the Matchday 5 game against Benin Republic is set for Nov. 14 at the Stade Felix Houphouët-Boigny, with a kickoff at 8 p.m. Nigerian time.

Senegalese officials will oversee the match, with Issa Sy appointed as the referee, and joined by assistant referees Djibril Camara and Nouha Bangoura, and fourth official El Hadji Amadou Sy. Rene

Williams Sere from Cote d'Ivoire will act as the commissioner, and Inacio Manuel Candido from Angola will serve as referee assessor.

The final qualifier on Matchday 6, against Rwanda, will take place at Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo on Nov. 18, kicking off at 5 p.m. For this game, CAF has designated Moroccan officials, with Samir Guezzaz as the referee, assisted by Zakaria Brinsi and Abdesamad Abertoune, while Kech Chaf Mustapha will serve as the fourth official. Prosper Harrison Addo from Ghana has been appointed as commissioner, and Somalian Ali Mohamed Ahmed as referee assessor.

This match will be the last of the Group D qualifiers, determining spots for the 35th Africa Cup of Nations, set to be held in Morocco from December 2025 to January 2026.



SPORTS

International Friendly: Ijamilusi's hat-trick powers Super Falcons to 4-1 victory over Algeria

OKOEGUALE ADOLOR

The Super Falcons secured a dominant 4-1 victory over Algeria on Tuesday in the second of their two international friendly matches, with long-absent Folashade Ijamilusi shining with a hat-trick at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena in Lagos.

True to coach Farid Benstati's words, the Super Falcons displayed more poise and confidence than in their first match in Ikenne-Remo on Saturday. The Algerians also found moments to exploit weaknesses in Nigeria's defense, creating some scoring opportunities.



Ijamilusi, a former junior international, opened Nigeria's account in the 12th minute by converting a corner kick and doubled the lead nine minutes later, capitalizing on a loose ball after Blessing Ilivieda's shot rebounded off the crossbar.

The Algerian team, known as the Green Ladies, responded

with heightened intensity and nearly cut down the deficit in the 39th minute after Nigeria conceded a penalty. However, Lina Boussaha missed the chance. Shortly after, Laura Muller struck a powerful shot, but Nigerian goalkeeper Rachael Unachukwu made a crucial save.

Despite these efforts, Ouassila Alouache broke through Nigeria's defense in the 43rd minute, scoring Algeria's lone goal of the two-match series.

Determined to reestablish their two-goal advantage, the Super Falcons—who had won the first match 2-0 with a brace from Captain Rasheedat Ajibade—pressed forward, and Gift Monday scored Nigeria's third goal with a powerful header in first-half added time.

The thrilling second half saw only one additional goal, with Ijamilusi securing her hat-trick in the final minutes of the game, sealing a decisive win for the Super Falcons.



LOOKMAN

West Ham lead race to sign Ademola Lookman in €25M deal

CHIDINMA KALU

West Ham United are reportedly leading the pursuit of Nigerian forward Ademola Lookman as they aim to strengthen their attacking lineup.

The 27-year-old, who has garnered interest from top clubs like Manchester United, Arsenal, and PSG, is currently valued at around €25 million, according to GIVEMESPORT.

Lookman's standout season with Atalanta, capped by a historic hat-trick in the Europa

League final, has made him a sought-after player across Europe. The Hammers see Lookman as a prime target to boost their scoring potential and add creative depth to their squad.

If signed, Lookman could join forces with Ghanaian forward Mo Kudus, creating a formidable attacking partnership for West Ham in the Premier League. The Nigerian international, recently ranked 14th in the 2024 Ballon d'Or standings, could be a major acquisition for the London club as they push for greater offensive strength this season.

Manchester United to face Tottenham Hotspur in the Carabao Cup quarter-final

FOLUSEWA AKINOLA

The Red Devils are going to face Tottenham Hotspur next month in the Carabao Cup quarter-final after their impressive win against Leicester City.

With Erik Ten Hag sacked and conclusions being awaited at the camp of Ruben Amorim and Sportin Lisbon, Ruud Van Nistelrooy was appointed to be the interim coach of the club.

They seemed not to miss the services of Ten Hag as they went riot against Leicester City, defeating them 5-2 with Bruno Fernandes, Carlos Casemiro and Alejandro Garnacho getting the job done at the Old Trafford stadium yesterday night.

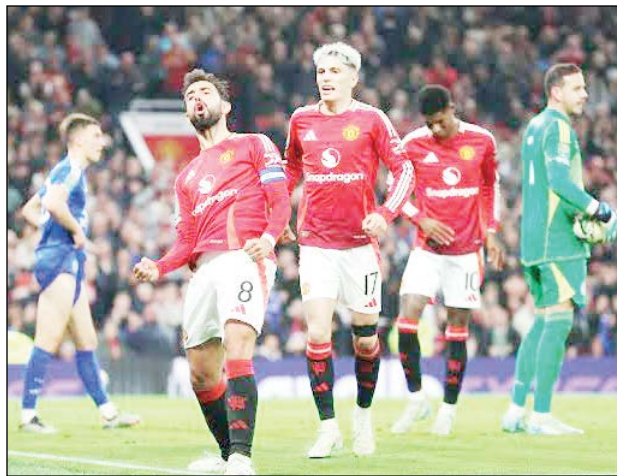
The first half was a six-goal thriller as Casemiro opened the scoring for the night as he blasted a right footed screamer from outside the box after receiving Garnacho's pass. The favour was returned to the 20-year old right winger by Diogo Dalot's cross in the 28th minute which he converted with a left-footed tap-in into the net.

The Leicester City tried to pull one back five minutes later when Bilal El Khannouss scored after Altay Bayindir tried to push the ball from a cross. They didn't have time to enjoy that moment as Bruno Fernandes's free kick was deflected into the post in the 36th minute. Casemiro once again scored a re-bound goal for a brace in the 39th minute after Rashford's header hit the crossbar.

Conor Coady took the opportunity of a defensive error by Victor Lindelof to score his first goal for the Leicester City side and reduce the goal margin.

In the 59th minute, Bruno Fernandes scored the second goal to make his brace when he took advantage of Caleb Okoli's pass, getting to the ball before the keeper and scoring the fifth goal to seal the win for the Red Devils.

They would now be facing The Spurs in the quarter-final of the competition after also knocking out Pep Guardiola's Manchester City 2-1. The quarter-final is set to be held on the 17th of December.



Expansion as 2025 World Indoor Tour kicks off January

FOLUSEWA AKINOLA

In what is going to be the tenth edition of the World Indoor Tour, there has been a major expansion of over 60 meetings in all competitions.

The competition is expected to be held in 19 countries

across Europe, North America and Asia with Estonia opening the competition as they host the first set of Track and Field events of the tour.

The tour has grown from just seven meetings in 2020 to 62 competitions for 2025. The upcoming World Athletics In-

door Tour begins on 2 January in Tallinn, Estonia, and ends on 13 March in Uppsala, Sweden.

The tour will feature nine Gold level meetings, more than any season in the past – kicking off on 25 January in Astana, Kazakhstan and closing in Madrid, Spain on 28 February.

The athlete with the most points in each scoring discipline at the end of the tour will be awarded a USD\$10,000 bonus after being declared winner. They will also be offered a wild card entry for the World Athletics Indoor Championships Nanjing 25, due to be held on 21-23 March.

Each Gold meeting will offer at least USD\$7000 in prize money for each individual discipline on the programme.



Ex-Super Eagles Coach Jose Peseiro Nominated for World's Best Coach by IFFHS

CHIDINMA KALU

Former Super Eagles manager Jose Peseiro has earned a prestigious nomination for the International Federation of Football History and Stats (IFFHS) Men's National Team Coach of the Year award.

Peseiro, who guided Nigeria to a silver medal at this year's Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON), joins a 20-man shortlist, including top coaches like Spain's Luis de la Fuente, England's Gareth Southgate, and Argentina's Lionel Scaloni.

The Portuguese coach received acclaim for his defensive coaching that helped fortify a Nigerian squad known for its attacking strength. Under Peseiro's guidance, the Super Eagles came close to securing their first AFCON title since 2013, showcasing a strong run despite personnel challenges in defense.

Peseiro's departure earlier this year, after his contract expired,

left the Nigeria Football Federation still seeking a permanent replacement. His legacy, however, continues, with this IFFHS nomination recognizing his contributions to Nigerian football.

Full List of Nominees:

1. Luis de la Fuente [Spain]
2. Gareth Southgate [England]
3. Didier Deschamps [France]
4. Ronald Koeman [Netherlands]
5. Julian Nagelsmann [Germany]
6. Vincenzo Montella [Turkey]
7. Murat Yakin [Switzerland]
8. Willy Sagnol [Georgia]
9. Lionel Scaloni [Argentina]
10. Néstor Lorenzo [Colombia]
11. Marcelo Bielsa [Uruguay]
12. Fernando Batista [Venezuela]
13. Jesse Marsch [Canada]
14. Thomas Christiansen [Panama]
15. Emere Faé [Ivory Coast]
16. José Peseiro [Nigeria]
17. Hugo Broos [South Africa]
18. Bartolomé "Tintín" Márquez [Qatar]
19. Hussein Ammouta [Jordan]
20. Darren Bazeley [New Zealand]