

Secondus, Sekibo, Omehia, others pledge loyalty for Tinubu, Fubara

ask President to caution Wike

TABORE JEROME

A former National Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Uche Secondus, and members of the PDP Presidential Campaign Council (PDP-PCC) for the 2023

general elections in Rivers State on Thursday declared loyalty and support for President Bola Tinubu and the state governor, Siminalayi Fubara. Former Minister of Transport and Director-General, PDP-PCC, Rivers State, Dr. Abiye Sekibo, made the declaration during a news briefing in Port Harcourt, the state capital.

He was flanked by Secondus; former Deputy Speaker, House of Representatives, Austin Opara; former governor, Celestine Omehia; former deputy governor, Tele Ikuru; Senator Lee Maeba; former Secretary to the

Rivers State Government, Dr. Gabriel Pidomson, among others. The council had supported the PDP presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, in the 2023 elections. Addressing the press on Thursday, they expressed their

displeasure at the direction of events unfolding politically in the state and asked the President to caution ex-governor Nyesom Wike, who is now the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). "The elections are over and the Supreme Court has ruled

on the finality of the contest and pronounced His Excellency, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, as the duly elected President of Nigeria. We stand by that verdict," Sekibo said on behalf of

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...that the people may know

Good Friday: Obaseki tasks Christians on sacrifice, tolerance

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Influence Akaba: Influencing with the power of music

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Good governance, environmental protection, devt seen solving Niger Delta crisis

as military declares 8 wanted over murder of soldiers in Delta

BILL OKONEDO

As government makes progress towards fishing out and bringing to book murderers of 17 officers and men of the Nigerian Army on a peace mission to a remote community in Delta State a fortnight ago, a report compiled for the World Bank suggests solutions to the seemingly intractable security

challenges in the Niger Delta region. The remains of the deceased military personnel who were murdered on March 14, 2024 while on a peace mission to warring Okuama and Okoloba communities in Delta State were laid to rest at the Nigerian Armed Forces Cemetery, Abuja, on Wednesday, with posthumous national honours and a commitment from the Federal Government to

provide houses for their families and scholarships up to university level for their children. On Thursday, at a briefing in Abuja, the Defence Headquarters declared eight persons wanted over their roles in the killing. Those declared wanted are Prof.

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NACCIMA decries MPR at 24.75%, warns of higher inflation, others

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Alleging rights violation, Binance executive Gambaryan sues NSA, EFCC

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Not yet uhuru for LP as INEC disassociates self from party's national convention

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The Nigerian Observer

Space for Sale

NACCIMA decries MPR at 24.75%, warns of higher inflation, other negative implications

NAOMI EWANSIHA

The Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA) has expressed concerns over the recent hike of the country's Monetary Policy Rate (MPR), also known as the benchmark interest rate, from 22.75 percent to 24.75 percent by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), noting that the change will come with unintended negative consequences including higher inflation among others.

In a statement in response to the MPR and Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) increases by the CBN, the National President of NACCIMA, Dele Oye Esq., advised that the CBN's policies should be recalibrated towards

addressing the excess liquidity primarily stemming from the public sector's borrowing habits and expenditure.

It should be noted that the CBN recently hiked the MPR in a bid to curtail rising inflation in Nigeria.

He listed some negative implications of the policies to include an increase in the cost of borrowing, restricted credit availability, pass-through effects on inflation, and stifling economic growth.

"In the wake of the Central Bank of Nigeria's recent decision to increase the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR) to 24.75% and the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) to 45%, the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture (NACCIMA) wishes to express

its perspective on the implications of these changes for the private sector and the broader Nigerian economy," Oye said.

He added that NACCIMA, that represents the collective voice of Nigerian businesses across commercial, industrial, and agricultural sectors, is deeply concerned by the Central Bank's approach to curbing inflation and managing excess liquidity through broad-based policy tools that inadvertently impose constraints on the private sector's ability to access affordable credit.

Oye added: "Our position, as detailed in our previous communication (Ref: NACC/NP22/23/1249 dated 13th March 2024), remains that the focus of the CBN's policies should be recalibrated towards

addressing the excess liquidity primarily stemming from the public sector's borrowing habits and Expenditure. The private sector, which has been effectively sidelined in the bank lending market due to the crowding-out effect, now faces even more severe repercussions."

NACCIMA listed the negative consequences of the rate hike to include an increase in the cost of borrowing, implying that "existing loans will incur higher interest rates, raising the cost of capital for businesses. This scenario discourages entrepreneurial activities and expansion plans, which are vital for economic growth and job creation".

He noted "Restricted credit availability: With the increase in the CRR, banks' ability to lend is further curtailed. This exacerbates

the challenges faced by the private sector, which is already grappling with limited access to finance.

"Pass-through effects on inflation: As businesses incur higher interest costs, they are left with no option but to pass these costs on to consumers through increased prices for goods and services, which can contribute to inflation rather than curb it.

According to Oye, stifling economic growth by tightening the monetary conditions may lead to a reduction in investment and consumption, which are essential drivers of economic growth. This could potentially stifle the economic recovery and dampen the prospects for prosperity."

The NACCIMA boss recommended that the CBN should pursue a more nuanced and targeted approach, focusing on

mechanisms that specifically address liquidity issues in the public sector without placing undue burden on the private sector.

"Additionally, policy directions should be clear and communicated on a quarterly basis, with a robust stakeholder engagement strategy to ensure that the views and concerns of the private sector are considered in policy formulation," Oye noted.

He said that while NACCIMA acknowledges the CBN's mandate to maintain price stability, we urge a re-evaluation of the current policy measures to foster a more conducive environment for private sector-led economic growth. We remain committed to engaging with the CBN and the Ministry of Finance to find sustainable solutions that will ensure the economic well-being and prosperity of all Nigerians.



AMANYANABO OF OKOCHIRI KINGDOM:

Rivers State Governor, Sir Siminalayi Fubara (right), after presenting the Certificate of Recognition and Staff of Office to King Ateke Michael Tom (middle), officially recognizing him as the Amanyanabo of Okochiri Kingdom.

Good Friday: Obaseki tasks Christians on sacrifice, tolerance

The Edo State Governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has charged Christians across the country to reflect on the significance of Good Friday by imbibing the virtues of sacrifice, love, tolerance and selflessness.

The governor made the submission in commemoration of Good Friday, a Christian holiday set aside for the Easter celebration.

"I celebrate with our Christian brothers and sisters as we mark Good Friday, a remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary for the redemption of mankind," Obaseki said.

"I urge everyone to, in the spirit of the season, reflect on

the significance of this day by imbibing the virtues of sacrifice, love, tolerance and selflessness.

He stressed the need to persevere, noting, "There is no better time to show this than now when we are faced with dire economic conditions which have put many in distress.

"As we celebrate this year's Good Friday, we must remember to be our brothers' keeper and look out for each other at this difficult time, while remaining resolute in our love for God and our nation.

"On behalf of the government of Edo State, I wish all our Christian brothers and sisters a blessed and peaceful Good Friday."

Good governance, environmental protection, devt seen...

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Ekpekpo Arthur, Andaowei Dennis Bakriri, Akevuru Daniel Omotegbo (Aka Amagben), Akata Malawa David, Sinclear Oliki, Clement Ikolo Oghenerukeywe, Reuben Baru, and Igoli Ebi.

During the briefing, the Director, Defence Media Operations, Major General Edward Buba, called on Nigerians especially residents of Delta and adjoining states to assist the military with credible information that would lead to the arrest of the eight persons allegedly responsible for the killing of 17 soldiers.

General Buba said the military remained determined to fish out the perpetrators of the heinous act, reaffirming its commitment to rescuing all kidnapped and abducted victims in Nigeria.

While the unfortunate episode draws attention to decades-long intractable restiveness, militancy, environmental abuse and resource theft in the Niger Delta, the source of 90 per cent of Nigeria's revenue genera-

tion, a report put together for the World Bank suggests means to a lasting solution.

The report, entitled 'Securing Development and Peace in the Niger Delta: A Social and Conflict Analysis for Change', was compiled by the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars.

The report suggests that a durable peace in the Niger Delta can be built on good governance and political participation, human security, wellbeing and development, protecting the environment, and securing livelihoods.

The report further attests that these solutions will require the involvement and participation of all of society, including government, civil society, local communities and their leaders, as well as oil companies and other corporates.

It then suggests 10 guides to conflict-sensitive development for the Niger Delta. These include being mindful of the region's vulnerability to a long history of conflict, underdevelopment, political marginalisa-

tion, and environmental harm.

It also lists the need to focus on local priorities, accelerated development, safety from crime, political rights, environmental protection, and opportunities for employment.

The report further states that maintaining dialogue with all types of local groups and listening to their separate expectations, opinions and concerns will come in handy.

Other solutions, the report says, include necessarily putting people in charge of their own futures through initiatives that are locally driven, managed, and monitored.

Every future intervention should be based on an assessment of the potential to exacerbate or mitigate local conflict dynamics, while care should be taken to avoid creating "winners" and "losers."

Conflict mitigation should further be linked to development strategies and aim to make peace a development outcome rather than a pre-condition for engagement or assistance.

A pooling of the risks of development investment should be undertaken by seeking reliable and committed partners in government, civil society, communities and the private sector.

There should further be encouragement of responsible corporate practices toward people and the environment in line with international performance standards.

The importance of promoting security and peace by upgrading the public relations skills of local police and armed service personnel and linking them to community peace building institutions is also highlighted.

Government and other stakeholders are then advised to strive to be flexible, but remain focused and persistent.

By supporting and applying these methods of conflict-sensitive planning, all friends of the Niger Delta can contribute to a durable peace that becomes an outcome of collective efforts for regional development and their crowning achievement, the report states.

Secondus, Sekibo, Omehia, others pledge loyalty for...

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the leaders.

"As law-abiding citizens and responsible leaders of our party in Rivers State, we recognise the elected President of our country and pledge our full support for the success of his administration for the benefit of all Nigerians.

"In effect, we subscribe to the President's efforts at strengthening our economy, fighting insecurity, and promoting peace and harmony in our dear country Nigeria," he said.

They also declared support for Governor Fubara, saying, "As indigenes of Rivers State, we give our dear governor our total loyalty and support for the progress of our state, and through him, the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As we believe that working together the good and interest of Rivers state will be protected.

"It is for this reason that we call on all our supporters to give unalloyed loyalty and support to

the governor of Rivers state and to Mr President.

"The peace of our state has been disturbed by the foolish actions of one selfish man who believes that more than seven million Rivers people are his slaves for electing him as their governor for eight years.

"Unfortunately, he has constantly abused the privilege that God bestowed upon him through the votes of the people by acting against the interest of the state.

"Lately, he has resorted to insulting our revered leader, Dr Peter Odili, and his wife, Justice Mary Odili because they refused to support his failed attempt to unjustifiably impeach the duly elected governor of Rivers State.

"We have nothing against Mr President compensating Mr Nyesom Wike with the office of FCT Minister. However, we owe the President a duty to explain some facts on the character and machinations of his appointee."

NEWS

Alleging rights violation, Binance executive Gambaryan sues NSA, EFCC

● **as lawyer withdraws appearance for fleeing Anjarwalla**

BLESSING IMAGBENIKARO
WITH AGENCY REPORT

The detained Binance executive, Tigran Gambaryan, has sued the National Security Adviser (NSA), Nuhu Ribadu, and the Economic Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over alleged violation of his fundamental rights.

Gambaryan, in the originating motion dated and filed March 18 by his lawyer, Olujoke Aliyu, from Aluko and Oyebo Law Firm, sought five reliefs before Justice Inyang Ekwo.

Also, Nadeem Anjarwalla, Binance's Africa Regional Manager who escaped from lawful custody March 22, filed a separate right enforcement suit before Justice Ekwo.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Gambaryan

and Anjarwalla, in the suits marked: FHC/ABJ/CS/356/24 and FHC/ABJ/CS/355/24, had sued the Office of NSA (ONSA) and EFCC as 1st and 2nd respondents.

They sought same reliefs. Gambaryan, a US citizen over-seeing financial crime compliance at the crypto exchange platform, in his application, sought a declaration that his detention and seizure of his international travel passport, contravened Section 35 (1) and (4) of 1999 Constitution (as amended).

He said the act amounted to a violation of his fundamental right to personal liberty as guaranteed by the constitution.

He also sought an order directing the respondents to release him from their custody and return his international travel passport with immediate effect.

Gambaryan equally sought

an order of perpetual injunction restraining the respondents and agents from further detaining him in relation to any investigation into or demands from Binance.

The official, who sought an order for the respondents to issue a public apology to him, also prayed for the cost of this action on a full indemnity basis.

In a statement in support of the suit, he said he is an American citizen who visited Nigeria on 26 February, along with fleeing Nadeem Anjarwalla, as a representative of Binance, to honour the invitation of the ONSA and EFCC to discuss issues relating to Binance in Nigeria.

Giving 11-ground argument why his application should be

granted, he said that he and his colleague, Anjarwalla, dutifully attended the meeting.

He said after the meeting, both of them were detained by the respondents and had remained in detention since then.

He said he did not commit any offence during the meeting, and neither was he informed in writing of any offence he personally committed in Nigeria at any other time.

"The only reason for his detention is because the government is requesting information from Binance and making demands on the company," he said, adding that he was not a member of the Board of Directors of Binance.

When the two suits were

called on Thursday, T.J. Krukrubo, SAN, who appeared for Anjarwalla and Gambaryan, told the court that though the respondents were served two days ahead, they were not represented in court.

The senior lawyer, however, drew the attention of the court to their notice of withdrawal of legal representation for Anjarwalla filed on March 26.

Although Krukrubo did not give details of why they were withdrawing their legal representation, this might not be unconnected with the disappearance of the applicant in custody.

Justice Ekwo said having withdrawn their legal representation, "it means that the applicant has no legal

representation and requires that the matter be adjourned for the applicant to seek legal representation and for the respondents to be given an opportunity to come to court". The judge adjourned the matter until April 8 for further mention.

Also, upon resumed hearing in Gambaryan's suit, Krukrubo said though the processes had been served on ONSA and EFCC, they were still within time to respond.

He therefore sought an adjourned date, saying the respondents' time to file their applications would expire next week Thursday. Justice Ekwo consequently adjourned the matter until April 8 for further mention.

Minimum Wage: TUC wants FAAC allocations of defaulting states paid to workers

AGENCY REPORT

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) says it is designing a clause in the framing of a new minimum wage that will sanction state governments who fail to pay the revised minimum wage when approved.

TUC President, Festus Osifo, made this known on Channels Television's Politics Today programme on Wednesday.

He said the sanction will require that the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) directly pay workers in states where governors default on the payment of the new minimum wage when agreed on by labour unions, federal and state governments as well as the organised private sector.

"We are designing a system as part of this new minimum wage negotiation on sanctioning. That when a new minimum wage is passed, there must be sanctions to governors that are not being responsive, may be their FAAC allocations, may be the Federal Government can pay some monies directly to the workers instead of giving it to the states," the TUC boss said.

Osifo said the current minimum wage of N30,000 can no longer cater for the wellbeing of an average Nigerian worker, lamenting that not all governors are paying the current wage award which will expire by April, five years after the Minimum Wage Act of 2019 was signed by former President Muhammadu Buhari. The Act is to be reviewed every five years to meet up with contemporary economic demands of workers.

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the TUC have at var-

ious times called on the administration of President Bola Tinubu to hasten the upward review of wage awards.

Earlier in January, the Federal Government inaugurated a 37-man Tripartite Committee on National Minimum Wage with a mandate to recommend a new National Minimum Wage for the country.

While the TUC demanded N447,000 as the new monthly minimum wage per worker, the NLC requested N794,000 per worker.

Osifo said inflation has affected the cost of living for an average Nigerian worker, noting that state governors can afford to pay every public servant N447,000 because they now get more monthly FAAC revenue allocation by the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC).

The TUC boss said, "This is a demand that we have put forward. Look at the states, as at April (2023), what was shared as Federal Allocation was somewhere around N400bn but as at last month (February), what was shared was close to N2trn."

According to FAAC, the three tiers of government shared N1.15 trillion last month and not N2trn.

Continuing, Osifo said, "So, what that means is that the portion of money that is accruable to states has grown up astronomically. And majority of that money is attributable to the exchange rate."

"If the money that are accruable to states from the Federal Account is about times four or times five today, most of the state governors should be able to do much more."



NASS JOINT COMMITTEE COURTESY VISIT:

Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu (middle); his Deputy Governor, Dr. Obafemi Hamzat (fifth right); Chairman, Senate Committee on Works, Senator Barinada Mpigi (fifth left); APGA Senate Minority Leader, Senator Eyinnaya Abaribe (fourth right); Senator Victor Umeh (third right) and others during the National Assembly Joint committee on works courtesy visit to the Governor at Lagos House, Marina, on Thursday, 28 March 2024.

Malabu Oil Scam: Court discharges ex-AGF Adoke, 6 others

RUTH ISIGBE WITH
AGENCY REPORT

A Federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court on Thursday discharged a former Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Mohammed Bello Adoke, and six others after dismissing charges filed against them over the controversial Oil Prospecting Licence (OPL) 245, otherwise known as Malabu Oil scam.

DAILY POST reports that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) dragged Adoke and other defendants before the court on an amended 40-count charge bordering on disobeying direction of the law, offering and receiving gratification, conspiracy and forgery,

among others.

Adoke, who served as AGF and Minister of Justice under the administration of former President Goodluck Jonathan, was prosecuted by EFCC in the suit marked FCT/HC/CR/151/2020.

Other accused persons are Aliyu Abubakar, Rasky Gbiniye, Malabu Oil and Gas Limited, Nigeria Agip Exploration Limited, Shell Nigeria Extra Deep Limited and Shell Nigeria Exploration Production Company Limited.

Ruling on the no-case submission filed by the defendants, Justice Abubakar Kutigi held that any trial processes are evidence driven but the prosecution failed to produce certain documents or call some witnesses to prove its case.

He further held that the prosecution has failed to prove the essential elements of the offences the defendants were charged with before the court.

According to him, though the defendants were constitutionally presumed to be innocent, to establish prima facie case against them, the prosecution had to produce sufficient evidence to warrant the court to call on them to enter their defence.

Justice Kutigi held that in the current case, the prosecution failed to establish any prima facie case against the defendants.

He cited the situation whereby about three counts involved forgery, yet the prosecution failed to tender relevant documents as exhibits.

The judge further held that a

charge must not be filed for the purpose of doing so, submitting that frivolous charge does damage to the judicial system.

He commended the prosecution counsel for accepting in his final written address that no case has been made by the prosecution against the defendants.

Justice Kutigi, however, lamented that it took the prosecution four years before realising it.

"The defendants ought not to have been charged in the first instance."

"This, stemmed from the fact that the prosecution failed to produce before the court the minimum evidence to enable the court to order the defendants to enter their defence," he said.

InsideEdo

Come learn to manage diversity for productivity from Edo varsity —Ojomo

LAMAI CASSIUS

Former Acting Registrar, University of Benin and Executive Director, Independent Television and Radio and member Governing Council Igbinedion University Okada, Lady Celerina Mercy Ojomo, has said Edo State University Uzairue should be one in which other universities should come and learn how to practice and manage diversity and inclusion for the overall productivity and performance of an organization.

Lady Ojomo, who was the guest lecturer at the 8th founder's day ceremony of the Edo State University Uzairue, was represented by Dr. Osa Oghator, Director, Institute of Pub-

lic Administration, University of Benin, said good leadership diversity and inclusion can be achieved in every institutions in Nigeria.

The guest lecturer, whose lecture titled "A Clarion Call for Diversity and Inclusion in University Administration," said the overall diversity and inclusion in university administration are imperative for creating an environment where all members of the community feel valued, respected and empowered to reach their full potential.

She highlighted some of the importance of Diversity and Inclusion to include, reflecting students' Diversity; enhancing decision making; promoting equity and access, setting a positive example; preparing

students for a diverse world and impact on employees.

In conclusion, she said enhancing diversity and inclusion in university administration is essential for creating a welcoming and equitable campus towards a more diverse and inclusive administrative team.

The keynote speaker, Professor Olayemi Durotimi Akinwumi, Vice Chancellor, Federal University Lokoja, who was represented by Professor Michael Ozavehe Ogirima, said university administration needs to be guided by the concept of diversity and inclusion in the management of the system as it captures one of the major criteria of ranking universities.

He said Edo State University Uzairue, just as others univer-

sities, the core objectives are anchored on teaching, research and community development, adding that these objectives must be first achieved in a conducive academic environment where diversity and inclusion are the watchdog.

The Edo State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, who is the visitor of the university, commended the management of the university for providing quality educational standard in the institution.

The governor, who was represented at the ceremony by Professor Theophilus Agweda, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration, Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma, said the institution had not only maintained standard in deliv-

ery quality education, but also maintained a steady calendar throughout its operations.

Governor Obaseki however thanked the management under the leadership of Professor Emmanuel Aluyor for their sacrifice in keeping the institution flag flying, admonishing the management to ensure a peaceful atmosphere for learning.

"I want to thank the management under the leadership of Prof. Emmanuel Aluyor for the great work he is doing to this university. Under my watch as the governor of Edo State, education at all levels in the state will continue to receive greater attention and will continue to ensure that the university is fully supported to play a vital role in the educational transformation of the state and Nigeria at large," Obaseki said.

In his remarks, the Pro-chancellor and Chairman, Governing Council of the university, Emeritus Prof. Thomas O.K. Audu, said, the "Founders' Day is a moment to remind ourselves of the institutional culture and principles that emphasized our mission. It is a time to celebrate those who had the vision to sow a seed of knowledge that benefits others and to say we are grateful for contributing to society."

He went further to state that the celebration is an opportunity to remind us to always sow a good seed because every seed sown has the potential to affect people either positively or negatively, but in our own case, it is affecting people positively.

According to him, Edo State University Uzairue is a definition of good seed that stimulates growth in the Nigerian universities system.

He stated further that in the last eight years, the university has made a lot of giant strides which include; Introduction of new courses, completion of students' entrepreneur eatery building to complement their recreational centre, construction of additional male and female hostels for suitable accommodations for students, expansion of postgraduate school, construction of table water company for the university, transformation and elevation of the central hospital in Auchi to a full-fledged Teaching Hospital.

He said the growth of the university is not a surprise as it took a lot by a hard working committed team to get this far, adding that the progression cut across all segments of the university administration down to the graduation of quality students who are thankable to

represent the university and the society at large.

The pro-chancellor however commended the clear vision and mission of the founding father of the university, Senator Adams Oshiomhole, for his vision and mission and expansion for quality education.

He also thanked the governor for believing in the vision and for the support for the university as one of the founding fathers having served as secretary of the implementation committee that started the university.

In his welcome address, the Vice Chancellor of the university Engr. Prof. Emmanuel Aluyor appreciated the management of the university and highlighted the various notable achievements the university has witnessed over the years.

He said the university began with two faculties and eight programmes, but with the expansion of nine Faculties offering over 30 undergraduate programmes.

He said the Edo State University Uzairue was honoured as the 10th best University in Nigeria, 2nd best State University in Nigeria, and the best University in the South-South geopolitical zone by the National University Commission (NUC) and Times Higher Education Impact Ranking.

According to him, the first of graduate from the faculty of law has accomplished a welcome feat in the Bar final examination

The College of Post graduate studies in the university has distinguished itself through its highly successful programs offering PGD, Masters, MBA, MPA, MPhil and PhD degrees across various faculties.

Additionally, in pursuit of its vision and mission, the university has established collaborative partnerships with renowned international institutions such as Worcester state university (USA) and the University of Sunderland (UK) that can afford the students invaluable opportunity for international exchange of programmes.

The VC further revealed that the university operates its own teaching hospital, the Edo State University Uzairue teaching hospital Auchi with the aid of teaching its own medical students.

Highpoint of the ceremony was the commissioning of male and female hostels as well as the inauguration of an eatery built by the Entrepreneurship Unit of the Edo State University Uzairue.



8TH FOUNDER'S DAY CEREMONY:

Group photograph of Members of the Governing Council, management team and academic staff of Edo State University Uzairue at the 8th Founder's Day ceremony.

Edo, LAPO deal to support small businesses across state

CHIDERA DUMBIRI

The partnership between the Edo State government and LAPO Microfinance Bank is expected to empower and support small businesses across the state's 18 local areas.

The Secretary to the Edo State Government, Osarodion Ogie Esq., signed the agreement on behalf of the state government, on Monday, at the Government House, Benin City, the Edo State capital.

While noting the future impact of the new deal, Ogie said micro finance schemes, all over the world, are the engine room

of the economy.

He said, "I congratulate the board, Edojobs and LAPO Microfinance Bank and appeal to all beneficiaries to make use of the loan facilities that will be given as it's not a grant and should be put into good use.

"Microfinance schemes all over the world are the engine room of the economy. These small companies you see around, the number of people they employ is a lot and the government doesn't take note of them. Governor Godwin Obaseki does take note because he is an investment banker. The governor is doing a lot for Edo people."

Earlier, the Chairman of the Advisory Board MSME Fund, Peter Obaseki, who commended the government for its sustained support for small businesses in the State, noted: "This is the mandate of Governor Godwin Obaseki for economic empowerment of small businesses. The difference is on the concessionary interest rate at 9 percent to enable residents of the State to benefit.

"This is part of the social transfer scheme to empower residents in Edo State and it must not be an urban phenomenon. It must get to each of the 18 local government areas of the State. Enumeration and dis-

bursement must go to each of the 18 local government areas."

He further stated, "This scheme is not a grant but a loan. It is a concessionary loan and the test of the scheme is the ability to revolve not to be stuck. We will ensure that enumeration, disbursement and refund is completely monitored, ensuring that the funds come back to enable others benefits."

Speaking on behalf of LAPO, the Executive Director, Corporate Services, Gloria Bassey, hailed the state government's commitment to youth development, reassuring sustained partnership with the government.

Etsako East empowers women in collaboration with DreamWorld Leadership

Over 500 Etsako East Local Government Area women drawn from the three geopolitical zones of Ibie, Okpella and Agenebode witnessed and benefitted from the gesture of the Etsako East Local Government Chairman, Hon. (Princess) Benedicta Attoh in collaboration with a non-governmental organization (NGO) - DreamWorld Leadership Initiative For Girls - as part of the celebration of the International Women's Day and distribution of palliatives.

Speaking on behalf of the DreamWorld Leadership Initiative For Girls, the representative of the organization, Miss

Blessing Igbon, said the NGO has been involved in amplifying the voice of women across Nigeria in the past years as an advocacy group with landmark achievements in the training and empowerment of widows.

She said the DreamWorld Leadership Initiative has scaled up awareness of gender-based violence and female molestation and torture by sponsoring and securing justice for girls. She called on mothers present to protect their children against all forms of molestation, saying that parents should not hide the evidence when any ugly incident happens to their daughters but promptly

report any issue of rape.

She thanked the Chairman of Etsako East Local Government who she described as the brainbox behind the success story of the DreamWorld Leadership Initiative For Girls. Hon. (Princess) Benedicta Attoh is known across Nigeria because of her advocacy programme for the less fortunate through her various NGOs. She called on other well-meaning Nigerians to support her in making life worth living for the less fortunate in society.

Also speaking, Princess Meriam, the Edo State representative, 50 Million African Women Speak Project (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs), said, "Women go through a lot to bring up children in addition to doing about 10 things almost at the same time: Bathing children, feeding them, taking them to school, washing dishes and clothes as well as preparing meal for her husband as he returns from work and many more. It is very important to balance these activities with our health."

Earlier in her presentation,

the Executive Chairman of Etsako East Local Government, Hon. (Princess) Benedicta Attoh, said the gathering was to celebrate motherhood and to celebrate women as March is a women's month, which coincided with her birthday.

According to a statement by Benjamin Atu, Chief Press Secretary, Etsako East Local Government, she, however, expressed worry that women are not always given the chance to exhibit their potentials due to cultural and religious prejudice, adding that Governor Godwin Obaseki should be applauded and appreciated for his deliberate steps to make more women visible in politics knowing that men alone can not make a society.

"Today, I am the first elected female chairman in the history of Etsako East Local Government and Edo North. The Governor of Edo State deserves commendation for making this history a reality and what does this mean to women? It means our day has broken. It means more women will be elected as Chairmen and vice chairman

as well as be appointed to sensitive and important positions such as Secretary to the council. Women must participate in politics so that our voice can be heard," Hon. (Princess) Benedicta Attoh admonishes the women at the well attended ceremony at the Council Secretariat, Agenebode.

"My birthday was Tuesday, last week and I decided to spread joy to our sisters and mothers today as part of the celebration. Whatever that is given to you here today, please, collect it with happiness. I have plans for women. Very soon we shall open a free training centre for women to learn various trades for free at the Ogbaki Primary School, Agenebode.

The process is ongoing and shall be completed soon. The Agenebode market lock-up stores will soon start and I am doing it so that our women can have a comfortable place to market their farm products. I am a mother and I know what mothers are going through. I will not let you down. I will continue to be the advocate of Women. My office is open any

time you have anything to tell me come to my office I will see you. One on one."

While pledging her continued support for women's affairs across the Etsako East local government she thanked the wife of the Governor, Mrs Betsy Obaseki for creating an enabling environment for Edo Women to be integrated into governance through various appointments and leadership responsibilities. She said women's visibility is key to self-actualization.

The Etsako East Local Government Chairman expressed the need for women to support themselves rather than pull down each other. Princess Benedicta tasked women to be proactive by educating rural women and helping to develop skills among them.

Women should stop positioning themselves as people who should be pitied. We have equal capacity at the stage of play with the male folks. That is why Nigerian women must be deliberate and intentional in their actions just like the men she said.

Groups, trade union reaffirm support for Asue Ighodalo

LUCKY EFESE

The chances of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) governorship candidate in the September 21 governorship election in Edo State, Dr. Asue Ighodalo, to be victorious, last weekend, became brighter as various socio-cultural groups of Afemai extraction, including trade unions, threw their support behind him.

The executive and members of the Afemai Youths Movement (AYM), led by Gen. Shaka Musa, AKA Gen. Caesar, and Comrade Amedu Matthew, AKA Am Express, as coordinator and secretary, respectively, inducted the gubernatorial candidate as member, a development that further brighten his winning chances.

The executive and members assured Dr. Asue of their support to enable him win the election, describing him as the most qualified among other candidates.

On his part, the investment banker thanked the executive and members of AYM for the honour done to him, saying it is a rare privilege for him to be inducted into the fame of AYM.

He urged them to remain committed to his project for the purposes of delivering dividends of democracy to their doorsteps.

He said he would not breach the confidence reposed in him if he wins the election and assumes leadership in the state as executive governor, just as he had advised them to work assiduously to protect their votes.

In the same vein, the governorship candidate also paid a solidarity visit to the corporate office of the Association of Tricycle and Motorcycle Owners and Riders, operating in the name of ANNEWATT, Etsako West Local Government Area chapter, and was received by the chairman, Comrade Elamah Jimoh who led thousands of his members to honour him with the pledge to work collectively

for his victory in the forthcoming governorship election in the state.

He recalled how the association had worked frantically in the past to increase the revenue base of government and contributed to the reduction of crime rates through the mechanism of registering their members on a database, without any blemish, pointing out that they will replicate same with the governorship candidate if he assumed office in November this year.

But acknowledging the dispositions of the executive and members, the gubernatorial candidate and legal luminary, Dr. Asue, thanked them for identifying with him in this critical period of governorship election in the state.

He said that he was in their office to pay a holy Ramadan visit, while urging them to use the holy period to pray fervently to bring peace, unity and love to the state and country.

Dr. Asue assured the members of his government's desires to fix the economic and insecurity problems which the opposition APC-led Federal Government has subjected the people to, stressing he will build on the legacies of Governor Godwin Obaseki since he has laid good foundation for good governance in the state.

He advised them to adapt to the use of helmets in their daily activities, just as he had made a case for insurance for them, while urging them to remain committed and focused.

Asue also visited the mechanic village and office of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), where he met with leadership of the two bodies.

He emphasised the need to work for his victory to give respite to them in terms of good governance, and assured them of his dispositions to fix the economic and insecurity to attract both local and foreign investment to the state.



CELEBRATING WOMEN:

Etsako East Local Government Chairman, Hon. (Princess) Benedicta Attoh (l), in collaboration with a non-governmental organization (NGO) - DreamWorld Leadership Initiative For Girls, celebrated women at the Council's secretariat yesterday, as part of the International Women's Day.

Edo hosts Nigeria's largest coated calcium carbonate processing plant

Edo State is set to host one of Nigeria's largest coated calcium carbonate factories in Lampese, Akoko Edo Local Government Area, on the back of reforms of the Governor Godwin Obaseki-led administration.

The Commissioner for Mining and Energy, Hon. Enaholo Ojiefoh, who disclosed this in a chat with journalists, said the facility is already under construction and will run at 200,000mt capacity.

Ojiefoh also noted that Rosatom, one of Europe's largest nuclear energy companies, has commenced exploration of lithium in Edo and has gotten the state government's approval to build a lithium processing plant.

According to him, "We have allocated land for the company to build a lithium processing plant and it will soon commence production of lithium batteries in the state."

"We are also very keen on driving the governor's holistic

industrialization plans and have performed the groundbreaking ceremony for one of the biggest coated calcium carbonate factories in Nigeria here in Lampese. It is under construction and will run at 200,000mt capacity.

"Also, a Commodities Trading and Mineral Analysis Center is being completed in Dangbala in Akoko-Edo."

According to him, the State Government has secured over 40 new licenses for solid mineral deposits in the State

through Associates Mining and Investment Company, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) promoted by the state government, noting that the State will rent the licenses to interested private investors to exploit the mineral deposits in the State.

The Commissioner further stated that not less than three multinational companies are constructing processing plants in the State, which is an indication that the state's solid mineral market is attaining maturity.

South-SouthReport

High construction cost won't stop projects in Bayelsa —Gov Diri assures • *appoints SSG, CoS, two others*

PHILIP EKE, YENAGOA

Governor of Bayelsa State, Senator Douye Diri, has said the high cost of construction materials will not deter his administration's commitment to development of the state.

The governor also said ongoing projects were a priority of the government and assured that cost variations will not affect them.

His Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Daniel Alabrah, quoted him as stating this during an unscheduled inspection visit to both the Nembe-Brass and the Yenagoa-Oporoma-Ukubie road projects.

Speaking on the Nembe-Brass road, Governor Diri said: "The question of whether or not my administration will continue with this project due to the high cost of materials does not arise because when it comes to development in the state, nothing will stop us."

"Development cannot be arrested as a result of the high cost of materials. The contractors will come up with the cost variation and the Ministry of Works will look at it, evaluate and assess it and agree on the amount due to variation. So, we will surely and steadily continue the construction of this road to Brass."

"I am very satisfied with the pace of work. This shows that we have never played politics with the development of this state as all parts of the state are our constituency."

While appreciating the Federal Government for its commitment to partner the state on the project, Senator Diri explained that he had met President Bola Tinubu twice and that he had directed the Federal Ministry of Works to collabo-

rate with the state government on construction of the second phase of the road.

"The collaboration with the Federal Government is looking very good and let me use this opportunity to appreciate His Excellency, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria whom I have met twice and he directed the Minister of Works to collaborate with the state in completing the second phase of this road."

"After my last meeting with him, the Minister of Works called me and sent a team to the state. So, the collaboration has already started."

He expressed satisfaction with the pace of work on the 21km first phase of the project, which has 10 bridges, saying in this second tenure, he looks forward to vehicles driving to Brass town.

While noting that the rehabilitation work on the failed portions of the Ogbia-Nembe road had stopped, he called on the Niger Delta Development Commission, which embarked on the remedial work before last year's governorship election, to ensure it is completed.

In his remarks, the Setraco project manager in charge of Bayelsa and Delta states, Mr. Joseph Cosme, explained that the company had achieved 65 per cent sand-filling of the road while almost 2.5km of the sand-cement and stone-base had been completed.

While inspecting the Yenagoa-Oporoma-Ukubie road project, the governor dispelled insinuations that his administration continued the Bayelsa Central Senatorial District road due to political consideration.

Speaking at the bridge construction site at Angiama community, Diri described the road

as crucial to development of the state, saying it is unthinkable for headquarters of the Southern Ijaw Local Government Area not to be accessible by road.

He stated that the level of progress on the project even after the November 11 election was enough to change the minds of skeptics and critics of his administration.

He also lauded the people of Southern Ijaw for their support for the project and urged them to sustain the tempo.

Meanwhile, the governor has approved the appointment of Professor Nimibofa Ayawei as Secretary to the State Government (SSG), and named Dr. Peter Pereotubo Akpe as the Chief of Staff (CoS), Government House.

A press release by his Chief Press Secretary stated that Mr. Irorodamie Komonibo has been appointed as the new Deputy

Chief of Staff (DCoS), Government House, while Mr. Daniel Alabrah retained his position as CPS from the governor's first tenure.

The governor's spokesman stated that the appointments take immediate effect.

Until this new appointment, Nimibofa Ayawei, a Professor of Analytical Chemistry, technocrat, public servant and university teacher was Executive Chairman of the Bayelsa State Board of Internal Revenue, a position he has occupied since 2016.

The former member of the state House of Assembly started his working career at the Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment before his appointment as member of the State Scholarship Board in 2001. In 2002, he was appointed Chairman, Bassan-Koluama Rural Devel-

opment Authority.

In 2003, he was elected to represent Southern Ijaw Constituency 4 in the state legislature after which he became General Manager/Chief Executive Officer of the Bayelsa State Housing and Property Development Authority in 2012. He was also appointed Commissioner for Housing and Rural Development in 2014.

Prof. Ayawei bagged a Bachelor of Education degree in Chemistry in 1995 at the then Rivers State College of Education, Port Harcourt (which was then an affiliate of the University of Ibadan) before obtaining a Master of Science in Analytical Chemistry in 2008 at the University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State and later a Doctor of Philosophy in Analytical/Environmental Chemistry at the state-owned Niger Delta University (NDU), Amassoma.

He was the first PhD graduate of the university in 2016.

He also took up appointment as lecturer in the NDU Department of Chemical Sciences in 2016 and is currently a Professor of Analytical Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry, Bayelsa State Medical University (BMU).

Dr. Pereotubo Akpe, the immediate past Deputy Chief of Staff and Acting Chief of Staff is a 1991 graduate of the University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt (now Rivers State University) where he obtained a B.Sc. in Technical Education, specializing in Electrical/Electronics.

He also holds a Master degree in Administration and Planning from the same university and a Ph.D. in same discipline from the University of Port Harcourt.



NEMBE-BRASS ROAD INSPECTION:

Bayelsa State Governor, Senator Douye Diri (m), immediate past Commissioner for Works and Infrastructure, Moses Teibowei (l), and the Setraco Limited Project Manager (Bayelsa and Delta states), Joseph Cosme, during the governor's inspection of the Nembe-Brass road project

EGOSGF, AfriTAL finetune plans to fight human induced methane emissions • *target to save 235,000 lives, prevent 775,000 asthma cases*

JEREMY GODSON,
PORT HARCOURT

Groups, led by Environmental Centre for Oil Spills and Gas Flaring (ECOSGF) and the African Initiative for Transparency, Accountability, and Responsible Leadership (AfriTAL), have moved to cut down at least 45 percent of human induced methane emissions.

By doing so, the stakeholders who rose in Port Harcourt last weekend mapped out plans to begin the war against emissions. This is said to be because methane emission from human sources is said to have doubled the volume

emitted from fossil fuel sources.

The objective is to cut down at least 255,000 deaths and 775,000 asthma-related hospital cases in one year. This is said to be what a mere 45 percent reduction of methane emission would achieve, according to the Nigerian stakeholders who quoted Global Methane Assessment.

Methane (CH₄) is said to be the second most significant contributor to emissions after carbon dioxide (CO₂), which has caused about a 30-percent rise in global temperatures since the Industrial Revolution.

Methane is indicated as an odourless, colourless, flammable gas that enters the atmosphere via

natural sources and human-related (anthropogenic) activities. It is formed from the decay of natural materials in landfills, marshes, septic systems, sewers, pit toilets, compressed dustbins, coal, gas, etc. It is used in manufacturing organic chemicals and as fuel for lighting and heating.

This is said to be the major reason some of the stakeholders showed concern about the issues associated with methane emissions in Nigeria.

ECOSGF and AfriTAL said they have worked to get funding to carry out activities to reduce methane from anthropogenic sources, including research and advocacy with civil society or-

ganizations (CSOs).

Their main worry is that while contending with and focusing on methane emissions from oil and gas production, little attention is paid to emissions from anthropogenic sources linked to man's natural activities like farming, waste management, etc.

The researchers say methane emissions from food waste, food systems' emissions, trash, landfills, livestock breeding, and bush burning, contribute about 60 percent of global emissions, but they don't seem to have the type of attention carbon dioxide has concerning climate change.

It has been proved that emissions from one landfill are able

to overtake emissions from 1.4 million cars.

A report at the end of the conference in Port Harcourt said in February 2024, TrustAfrica provided a take-off seed fund for the project. "It is hoped that as the project progresses, other funding partners will show interest in collaborating with ECOSGF and AfriTAL to achieve their project goals," according to the report.

In his opening remarks, Dr Louis Brown Ogbeifun, Executive Director at AfriTAL, stated that the project would focus on decreasing methane emissions from anthropogenic sources such as human wastes, landfills, the rearing of ruminant animals, rice

cultivation, and other agricultural processes. He noted that, from the information gathered thus far, there is a lack of knowledge about anthropogenic methane and its hazards to human health.

He stressed that Nigeria's methane emissions situation is more precarious because methane emissions from oil and gas activities like gas flares, pipeline vandalism, artisanal refining, etc., are already high; hence, CSOs must advocate for its curtailment as soon as possible.

Rev/Dr Edward Obi of the Environmental Centre for Oil Spillage and Gas Flaring said CSOs could do a lot to lessen the impact of global warming.

Gov. Fubara defies opposition, signs N80.8bn for Elele-Omoku Road • *to be funded from IGR in 24 months*

JEREMY GODSON,
PORT HARCOURT

The opposition seemed to stall implementation of the N800 billion 2024 budget of Rivers State by pressing the governor to represent the budget to the controversially divided Rivers State House of Assembly, but the governor has made a big move.

On March 26, 2024, the governor signed N80.89 billion chunk of the budget to an interstate road.

The road is the 33.5km Elele to Omoku Road project that would traverse three local government areas of the state. The local government areas include

Ikwerre, Emohua and Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni.

At the state executive council meeting on Tuesday, presided over by Governor Fubara, with his Deputy, Ngozi Odu in attendance, the Council approved a 24-month completion period for the project, which means two budget cycles.

The funding would come from internally generated revenue (IGR), and this method would also be used to fund other mega projects, especially the Trans-Kalabari Highway, according to the Commissioner of Information and Communications, Joseph Johnson.

The contract signing and approval seem to answer two crucial allegations against the

Fubara administration by the opposition in the state led by Tony Okocha, the caretaker chairman of the All Progressives Congress (APC). The APC had last week said the administration has not held cabinet meetings since December 2023, and that Governor Fubara was not active.

Briefing newsmen after the meeting, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works, an engineer, Atemea Briggs, said the project would be funded from the savings made from the IGR.

Explaining the specifications of the project, Briggs said: "I will like to mention that along this road, we have several kilometers of low land, wherein to build a road shall require replacement

and filling of the ground by more than three meters high."

Briggs further said: "This, the contractor can only achieve through hydraulic sand-filling and using laterite. And you know how costly these are.

"The road is also having a bridge of 99 meters long to be built side-by-side the existing one between Egbeda and Omoku. The cost of the project is N80.89 billion only. It is awarded to Craneburg Construction Company. The delivery period is 24 months."

Also addressing newsmen, the Commissioner for Health, Adaeze Oreh, talked of the success of the accreditation exercise conducted by the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria

(NWCN) at the State College of Nursing Sciences.

She explained that the State School of Nursing was recently upgraded to College of Nursing Sciences with an admission capacity now increased by 142 percent, and a 400-capacity classroom block being constructed for both midwifery and nursing students.

Oreh further explained that with a robust primary healthcare system because existing facilities in the state are upgraded, and their functionalities enhanced, gaps are being addressed in access to requisite services.

She noted that Rivers State also emerged as South-South zonal winner of the Primary Healthcare Leadership Challenge convened by UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Aliko Dangote Foundation, and the Nigerian Governors' Forum.

She disclosed a new partnership between the state government and UNICEF, which is donating oxygen manufacturing plants and equipment for the new-born neonatal unit at the El-

eme General Hospital, which she said, would be handed over soon. She also mentioned approval of the implementation of Rivers State Contributory Health Protection Programme, which is the State Health Insurance Scheme.

The information commissioner also stated: "Council also will be setting up a five-man committee made up of commissioners of Agriculture, Urban Development, Permanent Secretary of Lands and Surveyor-General of the State to deal with the issues of land grabbing.

"All that will be put together within the week, and Council will also provide all the necessary requirements for that committee to conclude its job within record time."

In her clarification, Acting Director-General of the State Bureau of Public Procurement, Ine Briggs, said all the road projects being undertaken by the government were scaled through due diligence and quality assurance and had been certified for delivery to Rivers people.



MULTIPLE ANNIVERSARIES:

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno (l), felicitates Archbishop Udemé Simon, on multiple anniversaries to mark his 66th birthday, 35th marriage anniversary and 6th Archbishopric anniversary, in Uyo.

Gov. Eno tasks clerics on humility in service • *felicitates Archbishop Udemé Simon on multiple anniversaries*

VICTOR AKAN, UYO

Leaders of faith-based organisations have been urged to exemplify the virtue of humility in their services to God and humanity, by glorifying Christ above themselves while carrying out their responsibilities.

Akwa Ibom State Governor, Pastor Umo Eno, gave the advice while addressing congregants at the grand finale of the 29th Anniversary Convention of Great Faith Ministries Int'l, Uyo.

Governor Eno, who was special guest at the event that also marked the 66th birthday, 35th marriage anniversary and 6th Archbishopric anniversary of the Church's General Overseer, Archbishop Udemé Simon, felicitated the Archbishop, his wife and the church on their elevation, resilience in service in the body of Christ and the se-

ries of anniversary celebrations.

He described Archbishop Simon as a model Christian leader who has exemplified humility in his service to God and humanity, noting that he has maintained a quiet disposition despite the huge impact he has created in Christendom.

This, the governor stressed, has been the distinguishing attribute for which he accords Archbishop Simon great respect, and therefore urged pastors and ministers of the gospel in the state to emulate Christ and give glory to God in their services and shun self glorification.

"We had to come here to honour you Sir. You're one man that is quiet but achieving a lot for the Lord. This man is a humble man. That's why I'm saying he operates silently but is making a great impact.

"When we come to church,

I believe that it is Christ we want to see and hear about not the number of things we have achieved, it is not very good to see some of our brothers indulge in self glorification. For this servant of God, he has my respect," he stated.

Governor Eno acknowledged the strong support base created by the church to ensure his emergence and restated his commitment to delivering good governance for which he was voted into office.

He reassured everyone of his commitment to due diligence in keeping the commonwealth of the people, expressing his administration's willingness to embrace creative ideas and innovations that will add value to the state and not to yield to wasteful and unaccountable distribution of the state's resources.

Archbishop Udemé Simon, in his thanksgiving speech, de-

scribed the four-in-one celebration as a manifestation of God's mercy for his 66-year sojourn on earth and grace to serve in His vineyard.

He expressed gratitude to Governor Umo Eno for gracing the event and described his emergence as an answered prayer and a blessing to the church and Akwa Ibom indigenes.

The Presiding Bishop of the Liberation Chapel, Port Harcourt, Bishop Samuel Akpan, who delivered a sermon on the theme "Unique Settlement," with scriptural reference from 1st Peter 5:10, assured that God does not call people without a purpose and does not abandon those He calls, but settles them in due course.

The cleric admonished believers to be steadfast, strategically positioned and show commitment in their service to God.

Be intentional in driving development, Gov. Otu tasks members of SMEDAN

PATRICK ABANG, CALABAR

Governor Bassey Otu of Cross River State has charged members of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) to contribute their quota to the present administration's prosperity programme by innovatively driving Cross River atop the enterprise development radar among the comity of Nigerian states.

The governor gave the charge recently while inaugurating the chairman and members of the SMEDAN at his temporary office in Calabar.

"If you look at all Federal Government's platforms where Cross River is, we have crept from wherever they left us to where it is but shocking to them. And you know that in about a year's time or more, they would see us atop in almost all fields. That is where we intend to be.

"So I want that spirit to be rekindled once more and make sure that we do our best for our people," the governor tasked the newly inaugurated team.

Reminding Cross Riverians of his administration's wave of well planned, foresighted and people-centric programmes, sweeping across the State, Otu enthused, "Innovations run the world. I want you to do your very best to make sure that the impact of your agency is felt by the people," while expressing optimism in team's vision and objectives.

"We are going into total mechanisation in agriculture. We want to do all the hard work, where it is most difficult. Because whether you like it or not, these people (small holder

farmers) sustained us through the period we could not mass produce. And going forward, we must not leave them out."

The governor sued for multi-stakeholder engagements as the state, through mechanised agriculture, strives to expand commercial, agro based productivity, and making agriculture the fulcrum of the state's economy.

"We are very intentional. We understand what is going on at the national platform. We just need a little bit of tinkering for it to fit with our system. We understand the 'Renewed Hope' agenda very well. Ours is the 'People First' mandate, so we are going to inject as many people as possible into the structures that are going to be set up. This particular activity needs proper synergy to know what is going on in agriculture, with the youths, women, as well as other areas of importance.

"With this team, I know that we are ready. I want us to put as much energy as possible. I appreciate the work that is going on already. I want you to co-opt as many people as possible to make sure that it is quite robust and dynamic to bring the required positive impact on Cross Riverians," Governor Otu concluded.

The committee is headed by the Special Adviser to the Governor on Medium Enterprises Development, Mr. Great Ogban, with membership drawn from the likes of elder statesman, Ntufam Fidelis Ugbo, Mr. James Anicha, Commissioner for Wealth Creation, Mr. Kingsley Egumi, Commissioner for Commerce, Mrs Abigail Duke, among others.

EDITORIAL

A quest for peace in the Niger Delta

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Seventeen slain Nigerian patriots and heroes have finally been laid to rest with due mourning, respects, awards and promises of care to their surviving family and loved ones from government and the generality of Nigerians.

At the burial of the deceased at the Military Cemetery, Abuja, President Bola Tinubu also announced scholarships and house gifts for the children and families of the slain military personnel.

The 17 officers and men of the Nigerian Army were murdered by criminals of the riverine community on March 14, 2024, while on a peace mission to warring Okuama and Okoloba communities in Delta State.

Our departed heroes were clearly victims of a situation which was no fault of theirs and beyond their control. Good a thing the authorities are hot on the trail of the criminals and have published names and photos of some of the suspects.

That said, Nigeria must take lessons from this and other similar unfortunate incidents.

The Niger Delta is a peculiar place. It is the place from which Nigeria generates the bulk of its national wealth. It is also plagued by conflicts, tensions and rifts, arising mainly from the exploration and exploitation of crude oil and the sensitivities, claims and expectations of an assortment of stakeholders.

There are also issues around environmental degradation, humongous theft of crude oil, bunkering, militancy, gaps in education and skills acquisition in the local communities and other security, social and economic challenges.

Nigerians have been inundated for decades with sad and unsavoury and seemingly intractable tales from the Niger Delta.

International conflict resolution groups have suggested over time that a durable peace in the Niger Delta can be built on good governance and political participation, human security, wellbeing and development, protecting the environment, and securing livelihoods.

They further attest that these solutions will require the involvement and participation of all of society, including government, civil society, local communities and their leaders, as well as oil companies and other corporates.

They then suggest 10 guides to conflict sensitive development for the Niger Delta. These include being mindful of the region's vulnerability to a long history of conflict, underdevelopment, political marginalisation, and environmental harm.

A need to focus on local priorities, accelerated development, safety from crime, political rights, environmental protection, and opportunities for employment is also listed.

It is further stated that maintaining dialogue with all types of local groups and listening to their separate expectations, opinions and concerns will come in handy.

Other solutions, it is said, include necessarily putting people in charge of their own futures through initiatives that are locally driven, managed, and monitored.

For every future intervention, it is said should be based on an assessment of the potential to exacerbate or mitigate local conflict dynamics, while care should be taken to avoid creating "winners" and "losers."

Conflict mitigation should further be linked to development strategies and aim to make peace a development outcome rather than a pre-condition for engagement or assistance.

A pooling of the risks of development investment should be undertaken by seeking reliable and committed partners in government, civil society, communities and the private sector.

There should further be an encouragement of responsible corporate practices toward people and the environment in line with international performance standards.

The importance of promoting security and peace by upgrading the public relations skills of local police and armed service personnel and linking them to community peace building institutions is also highlighted.

Government and other stakeholders are then advised to strive to be flexible, but remain focused and persistent.

By supporting and applying these methods of conflict-sensitive planning, all friends of the Niger Delta can contribute to a durable peace that becomes an outcome of collective efforts for regional development and their crowning achievement, it is said.

The Nigerian Observer

Cartoon Corner

...that the people may know



Kwankwaso: The unrivalled enigma and political juggernaut

ISSUES MISCELLANEOUS

With

KALU OKORONKWO
Leadership & Good Governance Advocate



Few personalities in the Nigerian political space stand as tall and unassailable as Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso, the former governor of Kano State and a veteran statesman. An enigma and a political juggernaut, Kwankwaso's influence on Nigeria's political landscape remains indelible. The attempts to suspend him by certain groups within the New Nigerian People's Party (NNPP) where he flew the flag as its presidential candidate during the last general elections have proven to be mere trivialities in the face of his unwavering resolve.

From his tenure as Kano State governor to his role as a Senator and Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Kwankwaso's politics has been consistently above board: upright, justice and fairness for all irrespective of tribe or religion, utilitarian policies, inclusion and fearlessness.

In an overall assessment based on available facts, Kwankwaso remains one

Nigerian who is detribalized building bridges of friendship from Osogbo to Auchi to Nnewi to Uyo to Kano, Abeokuta in equal passion and commitment to national integration and development.

Through the formidable Kwankwasia Movement, Kwankwaso was able to galvanize support across diverse socio-political groups just in less than a year after joining the NNPP, flying

its presidential flag during the last general election with high electoral value within the short period of time.

Or how could one have described the political powerhouse Kwankwaso has become after he emerged fourth from the highly contested presidential race, taking Kano State from the more formidable ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP). NNPP also has reasonable membership of the Nigerian Senate and House of Representatives members from the major Northern states, all because Kwankwaso's people-centred genre of politics.

The question in the mind of watchers of the unfolding political drama in NNPP is, what was the political value and membership of NNPP before the entry of Kwankwaso? What were the contributions to the electoral fortunes of the party during the last general elections among the dramatis persona, especially the so-called founder? If they succeed in their ill-advised plan to force Kwankwaso out of NNPP what will be left of the party? Methinks that this is another orchestrated power play from unseen forces already jittery of the rising profile of Senator Kwankwaso in Nigeria's political firmament.

Could it also be that the power that he is presently causing internal wranglings within the party just to pull down the Kano State-born politician.

This has been the fate of the Labour

Party (LP) in recent times with too many distractions from opposition within the party while fighting its political future at the election's tribunal as divided entity.

Kwankwaso's political career and story spanning over two decades is one of resilience, shrewdness, and an unwavering commitment to the betterment of his constituents.

However, even a figure of such stature is not immune to the complexities of Nigerian politics. Recent attempts by an amorphous group within the NNPP to suspend Kwankwaso from the party where he is already the only leading light has only served to underscore his unyielding influence.

In the face of these maneuvers, the enigma that is Kwankwaso remains unfazed, continuing to command respect from both his supporters and adversaries alike.

Kwankwaso's popularity and influence can be attributed to his unwavering commitment to the welfare of the masses, particularly in Kano State. His administration's emphasis on infrastructural development, quality education, and accessible healthcare earned him the trust and adoration of the people. These achievements continue to serve as a testament to his effective governance style and his ability to translate promises into tangible results.

Moreover, Kwankwaso's political savvy is undeniable. His strategic maneuvers and alliances have consistently positioned him as a key player in national politics.

His ability to bridge the gap between diverse groups, along with his deep-rooted connections across the country, reinforces his status as a political juggernaut who cannot be easily

sidelined.

Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso's name reverberates across the country as a symbol of steadfastness and principled leadership. While certain groups may attempt to undermine his stature, the reality is clear: Kwankwaso's legacy and influence remain unshaken, making him an enigmatic figure who continues to shape the destiny of Nigeria's political landscape.

But on the contrary, a cursory look at the root of the wranglings leading to the fiasco in the party points to the fact that politics remains the biggest industry in Nigeria and the rest of Africa. Therefore most people are willing to throw the kitchen sink at anyone perceived as standing on their way to getting a front row seat in the sharing of the National cake.

The result is that though Nigeria has been long recognized as a potential powerhouse on the global stage, as the years pass by, Nigeria as once-promising political giant finds itself in a state of limbo, grappling with a complex web of challenges that seem to have left its potential largely untapped.

An interrogation into most political office holders' private lives signifies people of low self-esteem and self-worth hence their deficit mentality and lack of leadership prerequisites which is fuelling under developments in Nigeria. From issues of bad governance and corruption to ethnic tensions and economic disparities, Nigeria's journey towards realizing its true political stature appears to be at a standstill.

The return of coups to the continent of Africa in recent times is a major concern and are traceable to the same issues, bad leadership across the across, especially the West Coast

and the Sahel. Military coup is now spreading like wild fire due to leadership without conscience.

When coups happen, the first thing that usually occur is that the masses rejoice, hoping that the military with solid hierarchy would rescue the system and provide succour to the common man. But the experiences across Africa prove otherwise hence coup of any kind is condemnable no matter the motivation.

As Kwankwaso navigates the turbulence of Nigerian politics, it becomes evident that the attempts to suspend him are merely a blip on his radar. His resilience in the face of challenges has further solidified his status as a force to be reckoned with, capable of weathering storms and emerging stronger than ever.

In a country like Nigeria where political fortunes can be fickle and power can be fleeting, Senator Kwankwaso's story stands as a vivid reminder that the true measure of a leader is not the absence of setbacks, but the ability to rise above them. How he handles the present crisis will only further his influence as he continues to inspire individuals across the nation who find strength in his story of resilience, determination, and the unyielding pursuit of a better Nigeria.

For now the NNPP should put its house in order to brighten the chances of the party in the off season elections in Kogi and other states.

Okoronkwo, a leadership and good governance advocate, writes from Lagos

Towards achieving comprehensive and equitable education reforms in Nigeria

JOE EJIOR

Education reform in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive approach to address the challenges faced by the education system. Reforms in education have been a recurring theme since independence in October 1960. The reforms instituted intermittently were aimed at improving the quality of education, making it accessible to all citizens, and, aligning it with national development goals.

In April 1959, on the eve of Nigerian Independence, the Ashby Commission arguably the first national-oriented reform was constituted with the mandate to investigate Nigeria's needs in higher education over the next 20 years. This was largely informed by the manpower needed at independence to replace expatriate officials. The Ashby report largely formed the bedrock of higher education development in Nigeria.

After independence, the country witnessed significant educational reforms including the expansion of infrastructure and the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in September 1976. The programme's launch marked the dawn of an educational revolution in Nigeria with pervasive social and economic implications. The policy was formulated to make primary education free for all children in Nigeria. This was a significant step towards increasing access to basic education. In

1988, the 6-3-3-4 education system was introduced. The system structured education into six years of primary school - three years of junior secondary school, three years of senior secondary school, and four years of higher education. The policy was aimed at providing a more comprehensive and structured frame for the country's education system.

In 1986, the Ibrahim Babaginda administration came up with the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The programme was set up to reduce dependence on the external sector and eliminate price distortions induced by an overvalued currency. The policy, which had a significant impact on the country's educational sector, led to budget cuts in education spending and decreased funding for school infrastructure, and resources. The devaluation experienced by the education sector over time has been attributed to this policy. National Policy on Education Policy (revised several times) was next. The policy outlined the goals, objectives, and strategies for the development of education in Nigeria. It emphasises the importance of education for national development and covers areas such as curriculum funding.

Universal Basic Education Programme was introduced in 1999 by the Federal Government of Nigeria as a reform programme designed to provide greater access to and ensure quality basic education for all children throughout Nigeria. The policy, a brainchild of the Obasanjo administration, aimed to

ensure that every child in Nigeria completes nine years of formal education covering six years of primary school and three years of junior secondary school. Over the years also, there have been various initiatives to improve the quality of teachers' education and training, this is in a bid to essentially address various key areas and challenges within the education system.

One of the fundamental pillars of comprehensive education reform is increased investment in the education sector. The government should allocate more funds to education to improve infrastructure, enhance teacher training update curricula, and provide resources for effective teaching and learning. Many schools in Nigeria from federal, and state to local governments are in dilapidated condition. They lack basic infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and sanitation facilities. Addressing these deficits is crucial for creating a learning environment conducive for students. Infrastructure development is a priority in education reform.

Recruiting qualified teachers and providing them with continuous training and professional development opportunities is essential for improving the quality of education in Nigeria. Teachers play a critical role in shaping the learning outcome of students, and investing in their capacity is paramount. The school curriculum should be reviewed regularly and updated to make it more relevant to the needs of the students, the job market, and so-

ciety. Emphasis should be placed on skill-based education, critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy to prepare students for the demands of the 21st-century workforce.

Education reform should not be an exclusive preserve of a few. It should aim to be more inclusive and accessible to all regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, or geographic location. Efforts should be made to ensure that marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities and girls, have equal access to quality education. Engaging parents, local communities, civil society organisations, and other education sectors is crucial for driving comprehensive reforms. Collaboration and partnerships with various stakeholders can help mobilize resources, improve accountability, and ensure the sustainability of reform efforts.

Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms is essential for tracking the progress of education reforms and identifying areas that require improvement. Regular assessments of student learning outcomes, teacher performance, infrastructural development, and policy implementation can help inform decision-making and policy adjustments. Leveraging technology for teaching and learning can enhance access to educational resources, promote innovative teaching methods, and develop digital literacy skills among students. Integrating digital learning initiatives into the education system can help bridge the digital

divide and improve learning outcomes.

Education reform efforts in Nigeria should focus on promoting lifelong learning and continuous skills development to prepare individuals for the evolving job market. Providing opportunities for vocational training, entrepreneurship education, and career guidance can help equip students with the skills needed for success in various fields.

Education reform is a complex, long-term process requiring sustained commitment and investment. Developing a clear roadmap for reform, setting realistic goals, and monitoring progress over time are essential for achieving lasting improvements in the education system. In Nigeria, reforms in education have been driven by the need to improve the quality of education, increase access, and align with national development goals. While progress has been made in some areas, there is still much work to be done to realize the full potential of Nigeria's educational system. By focusing on these key areas highlighted above and adopting a holistic approach to education reform, Nigeria can work towards building a more effective and inclusive education system that equips students with the skills they need to succeed in an ever-changing world.

Ejiofor is a Deputy Registrar with Yaba College of Technology, Lagos

CLASSIFIED

ISAIAH

I, formerly known and addressed as **EDE ISAIAH** now wish to be known and addressed as **EDEH ISAIAH EBERE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSAMAGIAGIEMWEN

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS OSAMAGIAGIEMWEN KATHERINE ARAKPOGUN** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. OSAMAGIAGIEMWEN KATHERINE GODSON AUGUSTINE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

SUCCESS

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

ESOHE

I, formerly known and addressed as **ESEWI ESOHE GIFT** now wish to be known and addressed as **OSARO ESOHE GIFT**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSAIVBIE

I, formerly known and addressed as **ONOFOMI COURAGE OSAIVBIE OMATSHOLA** now wish to be known and addressed as **ONOFOMI COURAGE OSAIVBIE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

KADIRI

I, formerly known and addressed as **KADIRI LUCKY** now wish to be known and addressed as **KADIRI EGBANAMHE LUCKY**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ONUGHA

That my name was wrongly captured in my bank account as **ONUGHA MICHAEL NDUBUISI** instead of **MICHAEL NDUBUISI ONUGHA**. My correct and full name is **MICHAEL NDUBUISI ONUGHA**. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

NADIA

I, formerly known and addressed as **WOGHIREN NADIA** now wish to be known and addressed as **NADIA PETER**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

DORNUBARI

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

OSAMUYIMEN

I, formerly known and addressed as **OMOREGIE JOY OSAMUYIMEN** now wish to be known and addressed as **EHIGIATOR JOY OSAMUYIMEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

AUGUSTA

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

OSEMEYOYEME

I, formerly known and addressed as **IGBINOSUN ANTHONIA OSEMEYOYEME** now wish to be known and addressed as **IDAHOSA CAROLINE OSEMEYOYEME**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OKEMA

I, formerly known and addressed as **OKEMA GLADYS** now wish to be known and addressed as **OKEMA VIVIAN ANITA OKAFOR**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities banks and the general public should take note.

OMOYEMWEN

I, formerly known and addressed as **EMOVON BLESSING OMOYEMWEN** now wish to be known and addressed as **IYAYI BLESSING OMOYEMWEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

IJEOMA

I, formerly known and addressed as **BLESSING IJEOMA DIMGBA** now wish to be known and addressed as **BLESSING IJEOMA OGBEIDE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

NOSAKHARE

I, formerly known and addressed as **NOSAKHARE FAITH** now wish to be known and addressed as **NOSAKHARE ANGELA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

GIFT

I, formerly known and addressed as **JAMES GIFT OSAYAME** now wish to be known and addressed as **OSAIBUEKUN GIFT IMUETIYAN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

EDEGBE

I, formerly known and addressed as **FAVOUR EDEGBE** now wish to be known and addressed as **CYNTHIA BROWNRIDGE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

MISSING LAND/HOUSE DOCUMENTS

That I, **MR SAMUEL OKUNBOR** is the owner and rightful owner of Land/Property lying and situates at **No. 6, Aimuamwosa Street, Off Oko-Ogba Road, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria**. The House/Land documents got missing around **4th April 2020** and all efforts to trace the said documents proved abortive. The general public and all concerned authorities should take note.

ASUHUIYIEN

That my name was wrongly arranged on my BVN as **ASUHUIYIEN EDOKPOLOR CEPHAS** instead of **ASUHUIYIEN CEPHAS EDOKPOLOR**. **ASUHUIYIEN** is my surname, **CEPHAS** is my first name and **EDOKPOLOR** is my middle name. Concerned authorities and banks should take note.

ELIZABETH

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS MERCY ELIZABETH IDEMUDIA** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS MERCY ELIZABETH THEOPHILUS OMOROGBE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

EGBOBOH

That my surname was wrongly captured on my BVN as **EGBOBOH** instead of **EGBOBOH**. My full and correct name is **EGBOBOH BONIFACE**. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **EGBOBOH BONIFACE**. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

UKOHA

That my name is **UKOHA CHIMEZIE POLYCAP** and my date of birth was wrongly captured on my BVN as **31st August, 1996** instead of **31st August, 1997**. My correct date of birth is **31st August, 1997**. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

UGHOTOR

That **AYO ENO, UGHOTOR AYO ENO**, and **UGHOTOR AYO ENOR** are name of one and the same person. Henceforth, I wish to be known and addressed as **UGHOTOR AYO ENOR**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should take note.

OKONKWO

That my name was wrongly arranged on BVN as **OKONKWO MARIAGORETTI NWAMAKA** instead of **OKONKWO NWAMAKA MARIAGORETTI**. **OKONKWO** is my surname, **NWAMAKA** is my first name and **MARIAGORETTI** is my middle name. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

MOMOH-JIMOH

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS IMOYE ROSELINE OMOADONI** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. MOMOH-JIMOH ROSELINE**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGHOMWENTITI

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

OKHOUSAMI

I, formerly known and addressed as **AHMED MUTARI OKHUOSAMI** now wish to be known and addressed as **MUTARI OKHOUSAMI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OGIEGOR

I, formerly known and addressed as **OGIEGOR OSARUGUE PEACE** now wish to be known and addressed as **AIMIENMWANWU OSARUGUE PEACE OGIEGOR**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

AIREMEN

I, formerly known and addressed as **ANTHONY AIGBODION AIREMEN** now wish to be known and addressed as **AIREMEN OHIKHUARE ANTHONY**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

AIZENOSA

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

EKHOROSIOMWAN

That my name was wrongly captured on my BVN/ bank account as **EHIRSIOMWEN ENOYOZE OVBOKHAN BLESSING** instead of **EKHOROSIOMWAN ENOYOZE OVBOKHAN BLESSING**. My correct name is **EKHOROSIOMWAN ENOYOZE OVBOKHAN BLESSING**. Concerned authorities should take note.

ITOHAN

I, formerly known and addressed as **ITOHAN JOSEPH** now wish to be known and addressed as **IGBINOBARO ITOHAN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

NGOZI

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

OTSEMAYE

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS OTSEMAYE DOMINO AFEJUKU** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. OTSEMAYE DOMINO OKHUOYA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OCHUKO

That my name was wrongly captured on my NIN/BVN as **UTIEYIN OGBEIFO OCHUKO** instead of **UTIEYIN-OGBEIFO OCHUKO**. **UTIEYIN-OGBEIFO** is my surname and **OCHUKO** is my first name. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

STEPHEN

I, formerly known and addressed as **STEPHEN BELLA** now wish to be known and addressed as **STEPHEN NOSAKHARE BELLA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

UKAMAKA

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS NWANKWO JECINTA UKAMAKA** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS EBEH JECINTA UKAMAKA**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

FUFEYIN

That my name was wrongly captured on my NIN as **GREGORY DAUEBIBO FUFEYIN** instead of **GREGORY FUFEYIN ORUBEBE**. **GREGORY** is my first name, **FUFEYIN** is my middle name and **ORUBEBE** is my last name. Concerned authorities and the general public should take note.

BOSE

I, formerly known and addressed as **AIGBEKAEN BOSE** now wish to be known and addressed as **IGBIWE BOSE MERCY**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

RITA

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

OSABUOHIEIN

I, formerly known and addressed as **OMOZUSI GEORGE OSABUOHIEIN** now wish to be known and addressed as **UHUNAMURE GEORGE OSABUOHIEIN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OKAKAH

I, formerly known and addressed as **PASTOR JOSEPH OKOJIE OKAKAH** now wish to be known and addressed as **PASTOR (DR.) JOSEPH OKOJIE OKAKAH**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities and the general public should take note.

ABDULLAHI

That my name was wrongly captured on my BVN as **ALIU ABDULLAHI MOHAMMED** instead of **ABDULLAHI ALIYU MOHAMMED**. **ABDULLAHI** is my surname, **ALIYU** is my first name and **MOHAMMED** is my middle name. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

UKOHA

That I wish to add **POLYCAP** to my names **UKOHA CHIMEZIE**. Henceforth I now wish to be known and addressed as **UKOHA CHIMEZIE POLYCAP**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OMOROGIUWA

I, formerly known and addressed as **OMOROGIUWA EGHAREVBA** now wish to be known and addressed as **OMOROGIUWA AGHAMWONYI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ISOKEN

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS OMOROGBE ROSELINE ISOKEN** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS ENABULELE JULIET ISOKEN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

ODIAKA-ALFRED

I, formerly known and addressed as **MISS ODIKA ANTHONIA MUANKEI** now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. ODIKA-ALFRED ANTHONIA MUANKEI**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

EVELYN

I, formerly known and addressed as **OB I ROSE EJIRO** now wish to be known and addressed as **SOLOMON EVELYN**. All former documents remain valid. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OJIMBA

That my name was wrongly captured on my BVN/Bank account as **OJIMBA FRANCISACA CHIWENDU** instead of **OJIMBA FRANCA CHIWENDU**. My correct and full name is **OJIMBA FRANCA CHIWENDU**. Concerned authorities, banks and the general public should take note.

OSAWA

That my name was wrongly arranged on my BVN as **EGHAGHE EDITH OSAWE** instead of **OSAWA EGHAGHE** (surname) and **EDITH** (first name). The correct arrangement of my name is **OSAWA EGHAGHE** as my surname and **EDITH** as my first name. Concerned authorities should take note.

AIGBOKHAN

That my name was wrongly captured on my NIN as **AIGBOKHAN ROSELINE EKI** instead of **AIGBOKHAN ROSELINE EKI**. My correct and full name is **AIGBOKHAN ROSELINE EKI**. **AIGBOKHAN** is my surname, **ROSELINE** is my first name and **EKI** is my middle name. Concerned authorities should take note.



PUBLIC NOTICE
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
PUBLIC DISPLAY EXERCISE ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) FOR THE PROPOSED EXPLORATORY WELL DRILLING IN OREDO EAST FIELD OML 111, OLOGBO, IKPOBA-OKHA LOCAL GOVERNMENT, EDO STATE BY NNPC E&P LIMITED.

In accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act Cap EI2 LFN 2004, which makes it mandatory for proponents of all new major development activities to carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of their proposal project, the Federal Ministry of Environment hereby announces a twenty-one (21) working days Public Notice for information and comments on the draft EIA report submitted by NNPC E&P Limited. The display is for the public to make inputs that shall enable the Ministry take informed decisions on the EIA of the project.

The Display Centers Are:

- Headquarters, Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area, Ologbo, Edo State.
- Edo State Ministry of Environment & Sustainability, Benin, Edo State
- Federal Ministry of Environment Office, Benin, Edo State
- Federal Ministry of Environment, Environment House (Brown Building), Independence Way, Central Business District, Abuja-FCT.
- www.ead.gov.ng

Project Description:
The proposed project shall entail the drilling of five (5) appraisal wells (Oredo-East A-E) in Oredo East Field (OML 111) located onshore about 34km Southeast of Benin City, at Ologbo, Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Area, Edo State. Other activities include; location and site preparation, Mobilization of personnel/equipment's rig up, drilling casing etc. The aim of the project is to evaluate subsurface prospects for commercial amounts of hydrocarbons within the OML 111 block.

Duration of Display:
Date: 27th March – 26th April, 2024.
Time: 8:00am – 4:00pm Daily.

ALL COMMENTS RECEIVED SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT MABUSHI, ABUJA F.C.T OR eia@ead.gov.ng ON OR BEFORE 6TH MAY, 2024.

SIGNED
PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR: HONOURABLE MINISTER

SPACE FOR SALE

SPACE FOR SALE

ThePolity

• Policy • Legislation • Enforcement

Edo 2024 and the benefits of foresight

AUSTIN ISIKHUEMEN

By September this year, a clear six months ahead of us, Edolites and other residents of Edo State will be filing out to vote for a new Governor and a Deputy to replace the outgoing Governor Godwin Obaseki and his Deputy. For now, we do not know who the handing-over Deputy would be, in view of the goings-on at the Anthony Enahoro Legislative Complex at Kingsquare in Benin City. It could be the crucifix-wearing, khaki-clad Philip Shai-bu or the rumoured bowler hat and dark suits-donning Hon. Paschal Ikemoghe-na Ugbome, popularly called Ominimini by his numerous fans in PDP where he has been 'forever'. Only time, defined as the next few days or at worst, weeks, will tell. Impeachment – to be or not to be. The lawyers are cashing out!

The gubernatorial campaigns in public will kick off on the 24th of April according to INEC's published Timetable and Schedule of Activities. So now, after the hard-fought party primaries, some of them cantankerous and violent, there is a lull of about two months of engagements with various stakeholders and 'private' campaigns across the state. Posters and billboards adorn the cities, towns and villages with large format printers and designers making hay while their sun shines. This has been a veritable window of opportunity for the candidates to market themselves in mini-conclaves and town-hall engagements without loud sloganeering. Party members and ordinary people get to hear, see and feel the pulse of the candidates at close quarters as they stay with the candidates on the ground without the presence of motorized platforms and deafening speaker systems.

The parties are many and so are the candidates. Some not-so-serious candidates who got a few posters printed, pretending to be in the race so as to negotiate 'stepping down' largesse and conjure a false sense of importance, have since evaporated! Others demurred at the first sign of the financial outlay required for drinks alone at ward meetings as well as the settlement of the we-are-loyal-my-leader crowd. Some who were deceived to cross over with a promise of the ticket have since realized that those promises do go up in smoke and are not justiceable! The chaff has since been separated from the wheat.

The field is clearer and the serious candidates, rather those who are considered by the voters and the general public as worthy of consideration, are few indeed. Monday Okpebholo of APC, Olumide Akpata of LP and Asuelimen Ighodalo are unarguably the front-runner trio. The rest have no chance of being a runner-up. But participating, as in the Olympics, is also a worthy endeavour for them. It builds political capital and can provide a negotiation weighting that could come in useful. After all, we have seen some folks parading complimentary (call) cards bearing "former gubernatorial candidate" or someone introduced at a public event as "Chief



IGHODALO



AKPATA



OKPEBHOLO

Manafiki, former nominee for the position of Chief-of-Staff!"

We have seen quite a number of these front-running candidates and more engage voters and the general public frantically using various platforms. Olumide Akpata has been around and about. So has Monday Okpebholo and Asuelimen Ighodalo. But in terms of statewide reach, message quality and the potency of messaging, in my view, Asue takes the cake! His adept use of social media has been phenomenal and impactful. His language has been civil, comradely and empathetic, without gragra, bravura and gbas gbos! The two-hour long engagement with Eranomigho – a US-based blogger and social commentator – was a masterclass in communication, deportment and civility with impressive display of his mastery of street lingo and youth issues awareness. So was the one with comedian MC Casino which made pidgin English so alluringly persuasive.

We all have a right to endorse candidates of our choice. Choice is the centre-piece of democracy. You can be in a political party and endorse a superior candidate of another party as demonstrated by Collin Powell who, though a Republican, publicly endorsed Barack Obama in a United States Presidential election. Locally, during the last Presidential elections here in Nigeria, Kassim Afegbua, then of PDP, publicly endorsed Asiwaju for President. So did Wike. I personally assert, everything considered, that one of the front-runners in the 2024 Edo governorship clearly stands out outstandingly! He has a resume that is good enough for a serious bid for Presidency. Edo State is lucky to have such a calibre of candidate at this time. That candidate, in my view, without any reservation, is Dr. Asue Ighodalo of the PDP. I endorse him without reservation.

”
You can be in a political party and endorse a superior candidate of another party as demonstrated by Collin Powell who, though a Republican, publicly endorsed Barack Obama in a United States Presidential election. Locally, during the last Presidential elections here in Nigeria, Kassim Afegbua, then of PDP, publicly endorsed Asiwaju for President. So did Wike

Someone I had told this asked me why a man like me who was "Obidient" in the last cycle would be rooting for a PDP candidate now. My answer to him was "Obidients are fierce independents and will only support capacity, competence, credibility and proven integrity wherever found". I stand by that statement. So does "The New Phase of Edo", a group that cuts across all political strata and walks of life, to which I belong. I can also state here that there is a very large group named "Obidients for Asue Ighodalo" made up of professionals many of whom run their private businesses while others are in public service, the arts, students in higher institutions as well as folks who believe in integrity and good governance. I know for sure there will be a massive upswell of Obidients' support for Asue because the gentleman lawyer, banker, investor and entrepreneur ticks all the right

boxes at this time in Edo's political trajectory.

There will, of course, be those to whom this would sound like an opponent's treatise. I have no issue with that and I understand their position too. We, in Edo, have never been led by the nose and will majorly do the right thing that furthers the state's interest. Stomach infrastructure would not persuade us this time. Neither will threat of the so-called centre power and corrupt use of security agencies because I do not think Jagaban would want to do Edo any harm through undemocratic arm-twisting. The 2020 elections were an eye opener and my endorsed candidate won.

There are also those who say, "Austin, what did you get as compensation for your massive involvement the last time around?" My answer to them: My involvement was not to make a personal fortune from Edo's resources; it was

primarily to support the best, and oppressed candidate, to win in the greater interest of Edo. There has been no regret in that effort as I can see a lot of developments ranging from education, healthcare, innovation, massive office and road infrastructure, security (I was involved pro bono at the initial stages of the development of the Emergency Response Centre through late Dr. Ona Ekhomu), capacity development in the public service, broadcasting (check EBS infrastructure at Aduwawa) and public communications. My article on Nigeria's profligacy is in the fantastic rejuvenated Nigerian Observer Newspaper published a week ago.

So, if I did not get a contract, appointment or there is an untarred road that I drive through, but the state benefits in several respects, that is good enough for me. I am ready to debate any of the Obaseki-did-nothing falsehood propagators who see a lot but pretend to see nothing. Did Kenny Rogers not sing, "No one is blinder than he who just won't see"? So, as we wait for the kick-off of the campaigns in April, let us use this period to really assess the candidates, on the premise of antecedents (proven track records), capacity, integrity (no unexplained wealth), futuristic predilection by technology capability as well as youth empathy and plans. Those worn-out lame excuses that oratory doesn't matter and winning by luck can be repeated must be debunked for the lazy thoughtlessness that they represent. They represent a call to remain in the past through an inertia induced by a lack of deep thinking or a mere visceral concern for the fortunes of Edo and its people.

ISIKHUEMEN CAN BE REACHED
VIA AUSTYNISI@YAHOO.COM.

Not yet uhuru for LP as INEC disassociates self from party's national convention

● **amid kicks from NLC, LP faction**

TOBORE JEROME

There seems to be no end to the troubles besieging the Labour Party as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Thursday disassociated itself from the party national convention held in Nnewi, Anambra State, on Wednesday.

The Chief Press Secretary to INEC Chairman, Mr Rotimi Oyekanmi, said in Abuja that the conduct of the con-

vention was not monitored by INEC, but declined to state further why it was not monitored.

This is coming after the Labour Party at its Wednesday convention re-elected its embattled National Chairman, Mr. Julius Abure, for a second term by a unanimous affirmation of delegates despite the protests by the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

Abure was returned alongside other serving officers of the party loyal to him at the conven-

tion which was attended by party chairmen from the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), members of states and national assemblies as well as representatives from LGAs.

The party also announced that it has reserved its 2027 presidential ticket for the party's leader, Peter Obi.

A communiqué signed by Abure and the party's National Secretary, Umar Faruk Ibrahim, also stated that Abia State Governor Alex Otti has the

right of first refusal for the Abia State governorship ticket should he decide to seek re-election on the party's platform.

This is even as the NLC has described Abure's re-election as "an illegality".

Reacting to Abure's re-election, NLC spokesperson, Benson Upah, said "the whole exercise was a charade".

"It is an illegality, a nullity. The whole exercise was a charade! Nothing can legitimise such brazen impunity," he said.

The NLC accused Abure of "financial rascality and contempt for the leadership of NLC", and of "unilaterally holding a National Convention in contravention of the constitution of the party".

Also, a factional chairman of the Labour Party in Anambra State, Mr Peter Okoye, has boasted that the Nnewi national convention would not stand.

Describing the convention as a sham, Okoye said: "This is not a convention. We are on top of the matter. It's purely illegal."

"There was no ward congress, no local government congress, no state congress, and now who and who are the elected delegates that are electing the National Working Committee, NWC, members?"

"The NLC was not there, TUC was not there, the owners of the party and members of the NEC and BOT members were not there too. So, who is holding the convention?"

Meanwhile, the Labour Party National Legal Adviser, Mr Kehinde Edun, had told news-

men that the party had duly informed INEC about the change in venue and date.

"No, it is holding in Anambra. Nnewi, to be precise, not Umuahia in Abia State again. In fact, Umuahia was not even the first venue we chose. Benin was the first choice before we changed to Umuahia and now Nnewi."

"So, we are at liberty to pick any venue of our choice. We only need to inform INEC about the change in venue and the time," Edun said.

Section 82(1) of the Electoral Act, 2022 states that political parties shall give INEC at least 21 days' notice of convention, congress, conference or meeting.

This includes the convention or meeting convened for "merger" and electing members of its executive committees and other governing bodies or nominating candidates.

Pundits say these unending crises may constitute a serious setback for the Labour Party as it goes into the off-cycle elections coming up in Edo and Ondo States later this year.



VISIT TO INNOSON VEHICLES:

The CEO of Innoson Vehicles, Chief Innocent Chukwuma (3rd left); Speaker, Abia State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Emmanuel I. Emeruwa (middle) and some members of the Abia State House of Assembly, when the lawmakers paid a visit to Innoson Vehicles in Nnewi, Anambra State.

Budget Scandal: Ningi seeks immediate reinstatement, threatens legal action

The suspended Senator representing Bauchi Central, Abdul Ahmed Ningi, has asked the Senate to lift his suspension without further delay or brace up for legal battle.

Ningi was suspended for three months by the Senate on March 14, 2024 after he accused the upper chamber of padding the 2024 budget to the tune of over N3 trillion.

Ningi, in a letter addressed to Senate President Godswill Akpabio, pointedly accused Akpabio of being the accuser, the prosecutor and the judge in his own case in utter violation of the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution.

In the letter titled 'Request To Lift The Suspension Of Senator Abdul Ahmed Ningi' and dated Wednesday, March 27, 2024, Senator Ningi threatened to seek legal action if his suspension was not lifted within the next seven days.

The letter, written by Ningi's lawyer, Mr Femi Falana, said, "We are Solicitors to Senator Abdul Ahmed Ningi representing the Bauchi Central Sen-

atorial District in the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (hereinafter referred to as 'our client') on whose behalf we write this letter.

"On March 9, 2024, our client granted an interview to the BBC Hausa Service on the 2024 Appropriation Act. He expressed his views on the budget of the Federal Government in exercise of his fundamental right of freedom of speech guaranteed by section 39 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended and Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act (Cap A9) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

"Dissatisfied with the interview, you caused our client to be put on trial before the Senate on March 14, 2024 contrary to the provisions of the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2018.

"Even though it was alleged that you were indicted by our client in the interview, you presided over the proceedings of the Senate.

"It is on record that you were the accuser, the prosecutor and the Judge in your own case in utter violation of the provisions of section 36 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended and Article 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Ratification and Enforcement) Act Cap A9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

"At the end of the trial, you pronounced our client guilty and declared that the Senate do suspend Senator Abdul Ningi (Bauchi North) for three (3) months and he should forfeit all his entitlements and be disallowed from the precincts of the National Assembly Complex during the period of the suspension.

"He should also apologise to the Senate in writing, thereafter the Senate can consider his remorse and recall him."

Ningi noted that by his suspension, the Senate did not only violate his fundamental right to fair hearing but also the rights of his senatorial district, the entire people of the Bauchi

Central Senatorial District, to representation in the Senate for three months.

He said that this was a clear breach of section 111 of the Constitution and article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights Act.

In the letter, Falana drew the attention of the Senate to the judgement of the Federal High Court that struck down the suspension of some members of Senate and the House of Representatives who equally accused the leadership of both houses of budget padding, corruption or abuse of office.

"Specifically, the court declared the suspension of the affected legislators illegal and unconstitutional," the letter said.

"As a senior lawyer, you ought to have drawn the attention of the members of the Senate to these decisions and several others where the high courts and the Court of Appeal have held that no parliament in Nigeria has the power to suspend or expel a legislator and confiscate his salaries and allowances," it said.

Ondo 2024: PDP screens 7 aspirants ahead April 25 primaries

TRACY FOLORUNSHO

The People's Democratic Party (PDP) on Wednesday cleared five of the seven aspirants for the 2024 Ondo State governorship election to contest the party's primaries scheduled to take place on April 25. Two aspirants were, however, not cleared on the grounds that they were yet to complete their documentation.

Those screened included Adeolu Akinwumi, Olusola Ebiseni, Bamidele Akingboye, Kolade Akinjo, Bosun Arebura, John Mafo and Agboola Ajayi.

Two of the aspirants, Ebiseni and Ajayi, displayed their certificate of clearance after receiving same behind closed doors but declined comments when approached by journalists.

The one-day screening exercise held at the National Executive Committee (NEC) Hall at the PDP National Secretariat started about 11:00 am and ended about 6:15 pm on Wednesday. Former Ebonyi State governor, Senator Sam Egwu, who headed the party's screening panel, told reporters that the Ondo State Senatorial Screening Committee started its work in the morning and completed it by evening.

"We have completed our screening. Only some of them whose documentation is not complete will still come back to complete that aspect of doc-

umentation and when that is done, we will continue with our screening and then make our report available. Because we feel like everyone should have level playing ground, a very good opportunity so they won't say they were screened out deliberately," he said.

He stated that the aspirants had had till 5:00 pm Wednesday to state their case.

"You can see the PDP is the party that wants to give the people the opportunity, provided you play by the rules of the game."

"If a candidate tells us he forgot and he's going to bring his documents before 5:00 pm, why not? We don't want to give them the impression that the party has a candidate they support. Only few persons are involved in this case," he stated.

Recall that the National Working Committee of the PDP had earlier scheduled March 27 for the screening of its Ondo State governorship aspirants, in line with the party's preparation for the upcoming election.

The election, set by the Independent National Electoral Commission for November 16, 2024, prompted the party to establish a timetable, with the congress to select the governorship candidate planned for April 25, 2024. The sale of expression of interest, nomination forms, and ad-hoc forms began on March 7 and ended on March 21, with a deadline for submission by March 25.

Health & Environment

• Community Health • Primary Health • Medicine • Climate

Essential first aid kit you must have at home

ENAJIYERIN OKIEMUTE

Having a first aid kit at home is usually under-emphasized, as accidents are inevitable in homes.

Domestic accidents such as falls, scrapes, cuts, bruises, burns, choking, sprains, and the like can be given immediate attention with a proper first aid kit at home.

According to recent statistics by St. Johns Ambulance, 140,000 people die each year in the UK from incidents where first aid could have possibly saved their lives.

First aid is the first and immediate assistance given to a person with either a minor or serious injury/illness, with care provided to preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening, or promote recovery.

First aid treatment can be administered to help various forms of accidents ranging from minor types such as bleeding, choking, and burns, to serious scenarios such as broken bones and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

A first aid kit, therefore, is a box, bag, or pack that holds supplies used to treat or care for minor accidents. It also includes survival supplies and life-saving supplies. It is also referred to as a collection of supplies and equipment used to give immediate medical care, primarily to treat injuries and

other mild medical conditions.

One fun fact about a home first aid kit is that you can purchase a fully prepared box or create one yourself; some of the items are often inexpensive. Either way, there are some essential items you must have in your first aid box at home and here they are;

• Pack of sterile gloves:

Gloves are used as protection; as a barrier between the victim and the first aider to prevent transmission of microorganisms.

• Antiseptic agents and Ointment:

Antiseptic agents, for example, hydrogen peroxide, Iodine can help to clean and also disinfect a cut or injury. Using ointment can also aid against infections, speed up healing, and lessen the degree of scars.

• Plasters, Gauze and Bandages:

These are very important items for arresting bleeding and securing a wound. Bandages can also be used to immobilize a wounded body part. Adhesives like plasters and bandages of all sizes are advised.

• Prescription and Pain relief medications:

Prescription medications such as inhalers for asthma, or other allergy medication for allergies, heart medications must always be in a first aid kit at home in case of any emergency. Pain relievers such as acetaminophen (paracetamol), Ibuprofen, and Aspirin can also help soothe

aches. They must be used as directed. Expiration dates should be checked from time to time.

• Special Instruments:

Instruments such as scissors, tweezers as well as a working thermometer (preferably digital) for temperature and sphygmomanometer for blood pressure. Scissors can be used to cut tapes, bandages, or clothing if necessary and tweezers can be used to pick at a particular dirt or debris.

• Cold and Heat Packs:

Cold and heat packs come in handy in cases of burns, falls, sprains, and strains. They provide instant relief for pains and aches. Also, relief balms should be kept as they often come in handy for sprains.

• Flashlights:

In the case of a power outage or an emergency at night, a flashlight would immediately save the day.

• Emergency phone numbers and first aid manual

There is nothing wrong with having a list of emergency contacts in your first aid kit in fact, it is essential to have one. This list may include contacts of physicians, nurses, or even family members. A first aid manual should also be in your first aid kit in case someone is trying to use it for the first time. It will serve as a guide.

A first aid kit can be a lifesaver and can come in handy at any time of our lives. Always

keep your first aid kit up-to-date and include these essential materials. Even with the fastest ambulance or emergency contact, first-aid treatment will always be helpful.

Learning first aid skills to go along with the kit is also important. Experts advise parents and guardians to teach their wards basic first aid skills in the advent of an emergency. If you don't have one at home yet, you should get one!



KANO CLIMATE CHANGE:

Prof Darlington Obaseki, Chief Medical Director, University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Harnessing digital innovations to safeguard wildlife: A new frontier in conservation

TRACY OHOVWORE &
AIGBEDE OSARIEMEN

In the age of rapid technological advancement, conservationists are increasingly turning to digital innovations to protect and preserve our planet's precious wildlife.

From high-tech tracking devices to cutting-edge data analysis tools, these innovations are revolutionizing the way we understand and safeguard endangered species.

Researchers and scientists have noted that there are many benefits in wildlife preservation ranging from the protection of biodiversity to ecosystem services that are crucial for human survival such as the pollination of crops by insects that leads to the production of fruits, carbon dioxide-oxygen cycle, and other carbon emissions that shows wildlife conservation pays a great deal on the ecosystem.

There are also the economic benefits of wildlife-based tourism as a major source of income or employment, as well as serving as a platform for increasing cultural and recreational value

among other benefits.

Technology and digital advancement can help in many ways. The latest developments and advancements in technologies can help in wildlife conservation and trade, for resourcing recognition, identification, and the provision of information about wildlife species which can be gotten through the latest technological gadgets that can take pictures and footage of wildlife species.

In addition, digital innovation in wildlife supports scientists, conservationists, and the general public with the advantage of better understanding animals, their habitats, and the threats they can face enabling the prediction of when an endangered species is at risk.

In recent years, countries around the world have been leveraging digital innovations to enhance their wildlife conservation efforts. From Africa to Asia, governments, NGOs, and researchers are utilizing cutting-edge technology to protect and preserve biodiversity. Here are some examples of countries leading the way in using digital innovations

for wildlife conservation

In Kenya, the Wildlife Service (KWS) has implemented an advanced monitoring system called "Instant Detect," which uses a network of sensors and cameras to detect and respond to poaching incidents in real time.

Also in some African coun-

tries like Namibia, the government, in partnership with NGOs such as the Namibia Nature Foundation, has implemented the "Cyber Tracker" program, which equips local community members with handheld devices to collect data on wildlife sightings and poaching incidents.

In Nigeria, acknowledging the need to leverage digital solutions in the fight against wildlife crimes and safeguarding biodiversity, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Mahmud Kambari stated the transformative impact of digital innovations in wildlife conser-

vation.

According to Kambari, projects leveraging artificial intelligence, data analytics, and citizen science have enabled the ministry to gather vital information, engage local communities, and implement targeted conservation innovations.

UBTH, five others sign MoU with FG, NSIA to boost cancer treatment in Nigeria

TELIAT SULE

The Federal Government of Nigeria, in partnership with the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) in a bid to boost cancer treatment in the country.

The historic event took place on Friday 22 March 2024, and is expected to bolster oncology care across the country, with the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) being among the six designated facilities set to benefit. This is in addition to assisting Nigeria to reduce medical tourism.

"Under the visionary leadership of the Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Ali Pate, and the Managing Director of NSIA, Mr. Aminu Umar-Sadiq, this collaboration heralds a new era in cancer treatment. The agreement entails the procurement of state-of-the-art oncology equipment for designated teaching hospitals, including UBTH, marking a crucial milestone in the fight against cancer," UBTH said in a statement.

Prof. Pate aptly described the event as a watershed moment, signaling hope for thousands of Nigerians battling cancer. He emphasized the urgent need to address the growing burden of non-communicable

diseases, particularly cancers, in the country.

"UBTH's inclusion in this transformative initiative underscores its critical role in advancing healthcare delivery in Nigeria. With the support of the Federal Government and NSIA, UBTH is poised to become a center of excellence for cancer patients nationwide," UBTH added.

Medical tourism, on the average, costs Nigeria about \$2 billion annually, adding to one of the sources of pressure causing naira volatility at the foreign exchange market. This new development is expected to reduce the rate at which Nigerians who are in need of oncology services travel overseas.

Radiotherapy and oncology unit at UBTH is equipped with the state-of-the-art line accelerator, CT Simulator, computerized treatment planning system, brachytherapy, among others. The unit parades specialists such as clinical and radiation oncologists, therapeutic radiographers, oncology nurses, biomedical engineers, nuclear medicine physicians, oncology pharmacists, medical physicists, paramedical group, and other administrative support staff.

The inclusion of UBTH among the six medical facilities to benefit from this project moves it closer to its vision of being the cancer treatment hub for the West African sub region.

Health&Environment

The Nigerian
Observer
...that the people may know

EDSPHCDA partners stakeholders, commits to eradicating TB

● **educates residents on TB infection** ● **embarks on free testing/counseling**

TRACY OHOVWORE

The Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCDA) in partnership with the United Nations (UN), Migration (IOM), Edo State Ministry of Health, and the Association

of Public Health Physicians of Nigeria, Edo branch (APHPN) joined efforts to create prompt awareness on the prevailing epidemic, tuberculosis (TB), in commemoration of the World Tuberculosis Day, celebrated globally on March 24.

During a press briefing on

Monday at the head office of Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency, the Executive Secretary, Dr. Omosigho Izedonmwun addressed the press on how Edo State Government and its stakeholders are committing to eradicating this deadly disease.

“As the executive secretary of the Edo State Primary Healthcare Development Agency (EDSPHCDA), I am proud to share with you the tireless efforts of our state government and our invaluable partners in the fight against TB,” Dr Izedonmwun affirmed.

Highlighting the current state of tuberculosis (TB) in Edo, the Executive Secretary stated that the state government has begun aligning various strategies to achieve global goals alongside implementing the World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General's flagship initiative for 2023-2027.

“We support the rollout of WHO-recommended TB preventive treatment options, shorter treatment regimens, rapid diagnostic, and innovations. These investments save lives and improve health outcomes.

“TB is a priority. By integrating TB screening with preventive treatment, we create efficiencies and protect our people from falling ill.

“In Edo state, we fight against Tuberculosis using collective efforts, and I commend the dedication of our health professionals, partners and citizens so far.

“We call for strengthened multi-sectoral engagement. Together, we will address the underlying causes and create a safe environment for all,” he added.

To show commitment towards eradicating tuberculosis, EDSPHCDA and other health

development partners, took to the open space at Uselu Market, in Benin City, the Edo State capital, for an outreach on tuberculosis to reduce stigma, raise awareness and enlighten members of the public such that efforts were made towards the reduction of the epidemic.

The event was attended by many beneficiaries and other dignitaries such as the Chairman of Egor LGA, Mrs. Eghe Ogbemudia, and other LGA stakeholders, educational representatives, community heads/leaders, religious leaders, civil societies organizations with various healthcare organizations and stakeholders.

Chuks Obianke Veronica, TB Desk officer, EDSPHCDA, while speaking to the Nigerian Observer correspondent, noted that there is still a knowledge gap among the people on tuberculosis awareness. She further urged residents to seek medical attention and go for regular checkups.

“A lot of people are not still aware of TB. Some might dismiss symptoms as normal coughs but we are creating awareness on why people should be involved in medical checkups.”



NTFC MEETING:

Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment and chairman of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), Dr. Doris Nkiruka Uzoka-Anite (4th left), flanked by members of the committee after their meeting in Abuja.

Oredo tackles erosion, desilts drains at Lagos Street, urges property protection

OSARHIEMEN AIGBEDE

The Oredo Government Council recently began the evacuation of silted drains at the popular Lagos Street and its environs, as part of its commitment to address the issue of flood in the area.

This is coming weeks after the Council Chairman, Dr. Tom Obaseki, in February, held a one-day interface meeting with traders and inhabitants of Lagos Street in Oredo Government Council.

The meeting which was held at the expense of the Council boss, aimed at proffering a solution to the indiscriminate dumping of waste in drains, the main cause of floods in Benin metropolis.

Speaking during the evacuation exercise, the Chairman of Oredo Government Council, Dr. Tom Obaseki expressed his satisfaction over the traders' collaboration and commit-

ment to carry out the desilting works, noting that the work commenced after the interface meeting in February.

He explained that it is the responsibility of the government to provide facilities for the citizens, just as he charged them to protect the facilities and property provided by the authority.

He enjoined residents to continue to partner with the government in the realization of a healthy environment.

According to Dr. Obaseki, “What has happened today is that the traders and residents have embarked on the evacuation and desilting of the drains while we provided support for them.

“It is not going to stop here because we have informed them to stop all forms of indiscriminate waste disposal that have blocked the erosion channels, resulting in a high flood around here which shouldn't be happening in a place like Lagos Street,” he said.

“You know Lagos Street has a lot of stone water drains around this environment and the flooding around the area is man-made and we have mandated all of them to set up their team to stop further littering of the street.

“You can see the massive litter and several tones and this is a collaboration we have today,” he added.

The Council Chairman believes that after the collaboration between the Community and the Council, the flooding being experienced at Lagos Street will be a thing of the past.

On his part, the Secretary of Lagos Street Traders Union, Monday Ologbese said there is no better time to carry out the desilting work given the support they have received from the Council Chairman, adding that the massive tonnes of waste in drains de-silted during the exercise is an attestation to a working partnership.

Monday pledged the union's continuous commitment to Dr. Tom Obaseki-led Council plans of making Lagos Street and by extension Oredo Council an environmentally friendly place for habitation.

On his part, the head of the Hausa Community in Edo State, Alhaji Badamasi Saleh, praised the State Governor, Godwin Obaseki, and the Council Chairman for their foresight, especially as the rains set in.

Alhaji Saleh said despite the work starting some two to three weeks ago, he is surprised by the kind of support from the Council Chairman and his work speed, adding that it is a testament to genuine interest in the issues concerning the people.

Recall that Dr. Tom Obaseki also launched the Project Clean & Green Oredo with the theme: “Beat Plastic Waste” on Monday, March 4, 2024, which seeks collaboration

from stakeholders to ensure steps are taken to avert dangers posed by the effects of prevailing floods in the metropolis.

Supervisor for Health & Environment, Hon. Raymond

Olaye, for Works, Hon. Smart Izevbigie, and Councilors representing Ward 12, Hon Etiosa, and Oredo HOD for Information, Harrison Oronsaye attended the exercise.

MISSING DOCUMENT

That my name is **JOSEPH OKOYE** and I am the current **President of the Monee International Modern Market Association, Benin City**, with Certificate of Registration No: **RC14329**. And that **Monee International Modern Market Association** is the owner of a parcel of land lying, being and situates at **Ward 40/A, Ogbeson Quarters, Benin City**. That the Association applied and was duly issued with a **Certificate of Occupancy No: EDSR 14757** dated **5th August, 2014** and registered at **No. 26, Page 26 in Volume B 221** of the Lands Registry in Benin. The original copies of the said Certificates were kept in the registered Secretariat of the Association at **No 95/97 Mission Road, Benin City**. That in the process of handling over of the Association's leadership to my Executive after a successful election, the original copies of the certificates could not be seen and were not handed over to me or any other member of my Executive Committee. And after several searches of the Secretarial and enquiries from past officers the documents were declared missing and lost. The Association thereafter applied and obtained Certified True Copies of the said Certificate of Occupancy No: **EDSR 14757** and the Certificate of Registration No: **RC.143E9**. The Association has decided to work with and rely on the Certified True Copies of the documents for all her transactions. Any member of the public who finds them is to return them to the Associations Secretariat. The general public and all concerned authorities should take note.

Wilbon ENT marks World Hearing Day, provides free medicare to 54 patients

JENNIFER SADOH

Wilbon Ear, Nose and Throat (E.N.T) / Head and Neck Clinic, based in Benin City, Edo State, marked this year's World Hearing Day by providing free Medicare to patients with varied hearing tests and treatment of ear conditions.

The Theme for the 2024 World Hearing Day celebration is “Changing Mindset: Let's Make Ear and Hearing Care a Reality for All”.

Speaking, the Medical Di-

rector of Wilbon ENT Clinic, a former Edo State Commissioner for Health, and an E.N.T Surgeon, Dr. Patrick Okundia, expressed satisfaction with the outcome of this year's event saying that the Hospital marks the event yearly as a way of thanking God for His abundant grace and also to give back to the Society.

“It was a day set aside by the Hospital to give back to the Society while aligning with the World Health Organisation and Ear Specialists all over the world to celebrate the World

Hearing Day, which is an annual event marked globally on the 3rd of March.

“There were several clinical activities carried out which were anchored by resident doctors of the Hospital, guest ENT specialists from the University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH) and the Delta State University Teaching Hospital, Ogharra,” Dr. Okundia remarked.

He said a total of 54 Patients benefited from the one-day event with varied hearing tests and treatment of ear conditions which ranged from in-

fections, and wax impaction to foreign body removals.

Dr. Eustace Oseghale and Dr. Atuyota Ucheffe, consultant ENT surgeons gave health education lectures on Ear Care and Prevention of Hearing Loss as part of activities to commemorate the 2024 World Hearing Day.

One of the beneficiaries, Mrs. Favour Chidi, on behalf of other patients, thanked the Hospital Management. She also commended the level of care and intervention especially as everything was given free of charge.

WomenAffairs

Endometriosis: What is it? How do you handle it?

OSAGIODUWA UHUNMWANGHO

Endometriosis is a condition where the tissue that lines the uterus, called the endometrium, grows outside of the uterus. It's estimated that about 10 per cent of women of reproductive age have endometriosis.

The exact cause of endometriosis is unknown, but there are several theories. One theory is that endometrial tissue travels through the fallopian tubes and attaches to other parts of the body, such as the ovaries or the lining of the pelvis. Another theory is that endometrial tissue grows in response to certain hormones. Some researchers believe that genetic factors may also play a role. There is no one single cause of endometriosis, and it's likely that a combination of factors is involved.

Factors involved in endometriosis

There are several risk factors that can increase a woman's chances of developing endometriosis. These include never giving birth; a family history of endometriosis; starting menstruation at a young age; menstrual cycles that last less than 27 days or more than 31 days; heavy menstrual bleeding; having certain gene mutations, and low levels of the protein CA-125.

It's important to remember that not all women with these risk factors will develop endometriosis, and not all women with endometriosis have these risk factors.

Symptoms of endometriosis

There are a variety of symptoms that can occur with endometriosis, and they can range from mild to severe. Some of the most common symptoms include pelvic pain, includ-

ing pain before and during periods, during intercourse, and while urinating or having a bowel movement; heavy periods, or bleeding between periods; infertility; fatigue; painful bowel movements; bloating; painful urination; and digestive issues, such as diarrhoea or constipation.

Symptoms can vary from person to person, so it's important to talk to a doctor if you're experiencing any of these symptoms.

Treatment and management of endometriosis

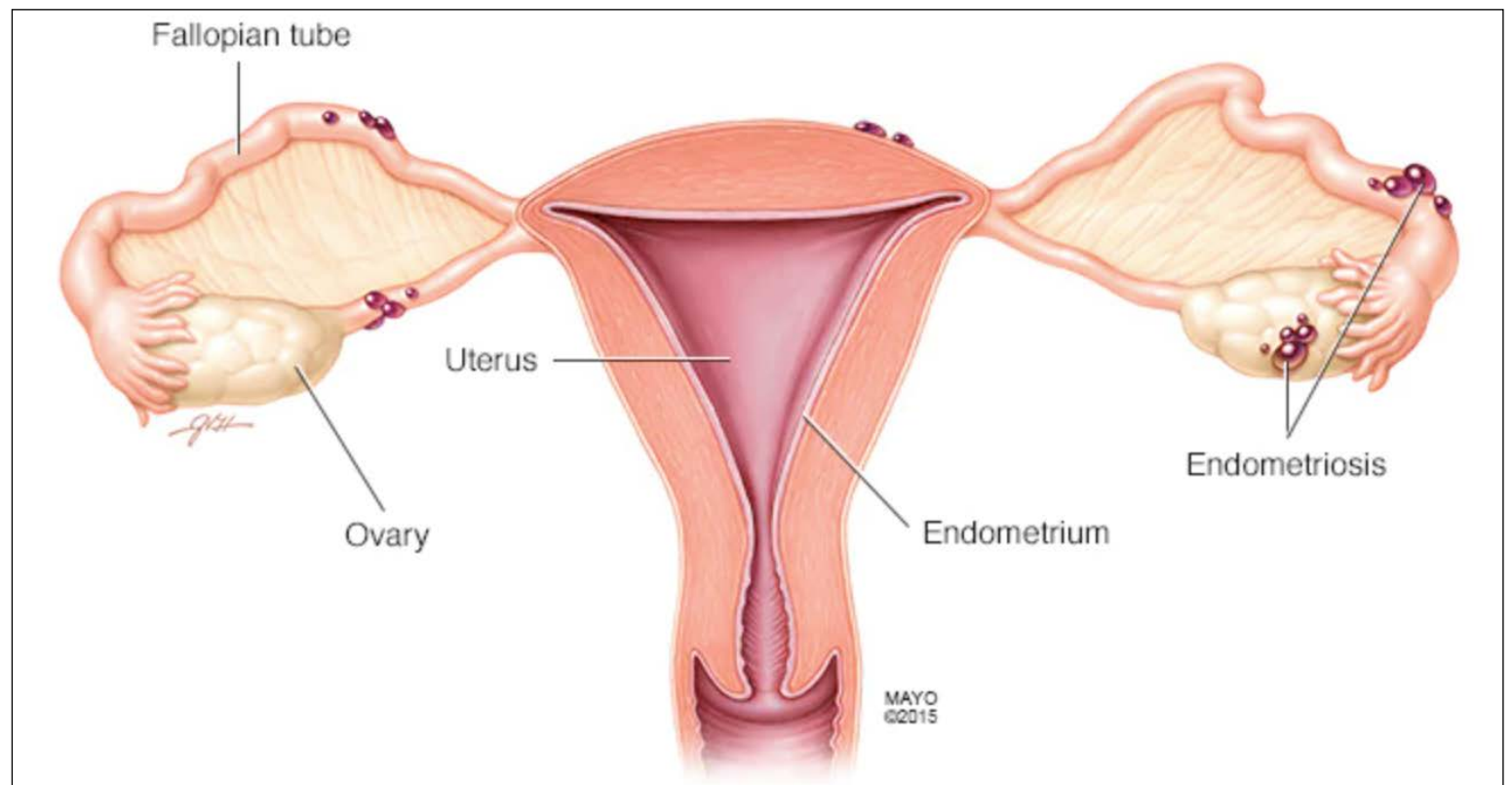
There are several treatment and management options for endometriosis, depending on the severity of the condition. For mild to moderate cases, the doctor may recommend pain relievers, hormone therapy, or surgery. For more severe cases, the doctor may recommend surgery to remove the endometrial tissue. In some cases, the doctor may recommend a hysterecto-

my, which is the removal of the uterus. However, this is usually only recommended as a last resort. The doctor may also recommend lifestyle changes, such as stress management and dietary changes, to help manage the symptoms of endometriosis.

While there is no way to prevent endometriosis, there are some things you can do to help reduce your risk. Some of these include maintaining a healthy weight; exercising regu-

larly; eating a healthy diet; avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption; limiting the use of hormone-based medications, such as birth control pills; reducing stress levels, and seeking help for depression or anxiety, if needed.

Once again, remember that not all women with these risk factors will develop endometriosis, and not all women who develop endometriosis have these risk factors.



What to know about female sex hormones

GIFT OSAIBUEKUN

For most ladies nowadays "sex" is like a constituent part of our lives. It could be in a relationship or just for fun. It might feel like a trendy thing happening around us and so on, but knowing about our bodies, learning about how our body system functions is a necessity that we should take seriously. Now let's talk about hormones.

Hormones are like the body's messengers that travel through the bloodstream to different parts of the body, regulating various functions like growth, metabolism, mood, and more. They play a crucial role in keeping our bodies working properly.

Sex hormones are like the body's special messengers that control sexual development and reproduction. They help regulate things like puberty, menstrual cycles, and fertility. These hormones play a big role in shaping our bodies and reproductive systems.

Sex hormones are involved in puberty and sexual development, reproduction, sexual desire, regulating bone and muscle growth, inflammatory responses, regulating cholesterol levels, promoting hair growth, and body fat distribution.

Sex hormone levels fluctuate throughout a person's life. Factors

that can affect the levels of female sex hormones include age, menstruation, pregnancy, menopause, stress, medications, and environment.

There are two types of sex hormones in ladies. Estrogen is probably the most well-known sex hormone. Although the majority of estrogen production occurs in the ovaries, the adrenal glands and fat cells produce small amounts of estrogen, too. Estrogen plays a crucial role in reproductive and sexual development, which begins when a person reaches puberty.

Progesterone is produced by the ovaries, adrenal glands, and placenta. Progesterone levels increase during ovulation and spike during pregnancy. Progesterone helps stabilize menstrual cycles and prepares the body for pregnancy. Having a low level of progesterone can lead to irregular periods, difficulty conceiving, and a higher risk of complications during pregnancy.

As we know, the hormones have different roles they play in our body, especially with focus on the sexual aspect. Estrogen, progesterone and testosterone all affect sexual desire and arousal. Having higher levels of estrogen in the body promotes vaginal lubrication and increases sexual desire. Increases in progesterone can reduce sexual desire.

Sex and life: Treading carefully

GIFT OSAIBUEKUN

STDs are an important public health issue that affect people of all ages and backgrounds. While the topic can be difficult to discuss, it's important to raise awareness about STDs in order to promote safe and healthy sexual practices, especially in women.

STDs stands for sexually transmitted diseases. These are infections that can be passed from one person to another through sexual contact.

Modes of STD transmission

STDs can be transmitted through various forms of sexual contact, including vaginal, anal, and oral sex. They can also be spread through sharing needles for drug use or from mother to baby during childbirth or breastfeeding. It's important to practice safe sex and avoid risky behaviours to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading STDs.

Most common STDs in women

Chlamydia: Chlamydia is a bacterial infection that can affect both men and women. It often doesn't cause symptoms, so getting tested regularly is important. If left untreated, it can lead to serious health issues like infertility.

Gonorrhea: Gonorrhea is another bacterial infection that can cause

symptoms like pain during urination and unusual discharge. It is essential to get tested and treated promptly to prevent complications.

Syphilis: Syphilis is a bacterial infection that progresses in stages. It can cause sores, rashes, and other symptoms. If untreated, it can lead to severe health problems affecting the heart, brain, and other organs.

Herpes: Herpes is a viral infection that can cause sores or blisters on the genitals or mouth. It can be managed with medication, but there is no cure. Safe sex practices can help prevent transmission.

HPV (Human Papillomavirus): HPV is a common virus that can lead to genital warts or certain types of cancer, including cervical cancer. Vaccination is available to protect against some strains of HPV.

HIV: HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system, leading to AIDS if untreated. It can be managed with antiretroviral therapy. Early detection and treatment are crucial for managing HIV.

Trichomoniasis: Trichomoniasis is a parasitic infection that can cause vaginal discharge, itching, and discomfort. It can be treated with antibiotics. Regular testing and safe sex practices can help prevent its spread.

Vaccines for STD prevention

Vaccines play a crucial role in preventing STDs by providing protection against specific infections. For instance, the HPV vaccine is effective in guarding against certain strains of the human papillomavirus, which can lead to cervical cancer and other health issues. By getting vaccinated, women can significantly reduce their risk of contracting certain STDs and safeguard their sexual health.

Sexually transmitted diseases can have different impacts on men and women, and these impacts can vary depending on the specific disease, but generally speaking, some STDs can cause more damage to the reproductive organs in women than in men, and some STDs can have more serious long-term health consequences for women. When women contract STDs, they can experience significant harm due to the potential for severe health complications. STDs like chlamydia and gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease, leading to infertility and chronic pelvic pain. Additionally, untreated STDs like HPV can increase the risk of cervical cancer. It's vital for women to prioritize their sexual health, practice safe sex, and seek regular testing and treatment to prevent these serious consequences.

Arts & Heritage

● Culture ● Entertainment ● Tourism

The place of cultural heritage managers in Benin City

NEHIZEME OGUNBOR

Culture and heritage constitute integral components of a community's identity, contributing to its social and economic prosperity and wellbeing.

Benin City, the capital of Edo State, Nigeria, possesses a rich cultural heritage that reflects its historical significance as a prominent African civilisation. However, the preservation and promotion of its heritage face various challenges which this paper aims to explore while looking at the roles of cultural heritage managers in protecting and preserving the city's cultural heritage.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF BENIN CITY CULTURAL HERITAGE

Benin City has a long and illustrious history dating back over 900 years old. The kingdom of Benin is known for its advanced socio-political system, artistic achievements, and wealth, which thrived from the 13th to the 19th century. The city was renowned for its bronze ivory and bead artworks. It was also recognised for its sophisticated court rituals and the legendary history stored in its richly produced bronzes art. The cultural heritage of Benin City continues to shape the identity of its people, making it an invaluable asset for preserving its unique past.

CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGERS AND PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE CITY

Cultural heritage managers undertake important duties aimed at preserving and promoting the cultural



heritage of Benin City. These roles include the following:

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

Cultural heritage managers oversee the preservation of artifacts, monuments and historical sites. They employ the best practices in conservation and restoration techniques to ensure the long-term survival of these artifacts, monuments and historical sites. They monitor and evaluate the state of conservation of these heritage properties, making reports to the appropriate establishment.

RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

The managers conduct research, documentation and inventory of the

cultural assets of the Benins, contributing to the expansion of knowledge and understanding of the people's heritage. Their research is made available to the public, enhancing the public information/awareness of the various heritage properties within the City.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND EDUCATION

Cultural heritage managers organise exhibitions, workshops, and educational programmes to raise awareness and disseminate knowledge about the importance of cultural heritage of Benin City among residents, tourists and scholars. This makes residents and other stakeholders to be aware of the value of the heritage.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

Managers play a crucial role in formulating policies, strategies, and plans for the sustainable development of Benin City's cultural heritage, aligning initiatives with local, national, and international guidelines. The managers also help to initiate policies in favour of cultural heritage presentation and act as lobbyists for new policy creations.

CHALLENGES FACING CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGERS

Cultural heritage managers experience some challenges in the course of doing their duties. These include inadequate funding, urbanisation,

neglect, looting and vandalism of artifacts, population migration, and insufficient awareness of its significance.

IMPACT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGERS ON THE BENIN CULTURAL SPACE

Here are some positive impacts of cultural heritage managers in the city:

Economic development: Preserving and promoting cultural heritage attracts tourists, provides employment and generates income opportunities for the local community. It also positions the city as a cultural tourism destination.

COMMUNITY PRIDE AND IDENTITY:

Cultural heritage managers strengthen the sense of local pride and identity within the community. This fosters a deeper connection between residents and their heritage. They also contribute to bringing the city to the limelight.

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The activities of the cultural heritage managers within the city contribute to the advancement of knowledge, enabling schools and researchers to explore and understand the history, art and culture of Benin City.

CONCLUSION

Cultural heritage managers play a vital role in safeguarding the city's cultural heritage, transmitting its rich legacy to future generations and promoting the city's socio-economic development. Despite the challenges faced by these professionals, they are the key stakeholders in ensuring the sustainability and appreciation of the city's invaluable cultural assets.

Telegraphic stool as a means of communication

JOVITA OGALA

Communication basically is an act of passing on or transference of information or data from one person/source to another. There are different means of communication depending on the circumstances and purposes as well the anticipated result. We have traditional and modern, as well as conventional and non-conventional means of communication.

The conventional mode of communication is one that involves the use of voice, sound and writing. You see and hear each other. There is physical or visible evidence to authenticate the sender or receiver. The non-conventional mode does not involve the use of sound or voice, rather it has to do with the thought or ideas mentality (mind and ideas) as well as symbols and signs.

Before the coming of the white man to Africa, Africans had been effectively enjoying good communication with themselves using different

means. In the ancient Benin Kingdom, for example, the telegraphic tool was used as an alternative means of communication.

The Ancient Benin Kingdom was well structured and the structures were very strong and complex. The cult system and the language differed from the other, and so were their operations. They held certain things or information sacred and secret. Most times they used coded language to transmit message or information.

The Obaship is a highly revered institution. Certain information or ideas are transmitted in a coded manner using unconventional mode between the Oba and the son or between the Oba and top chiefs or palace functionaries.

It is such that the bearer of the information or message may not have any idea as to what message he is to deliver or the import of the message.

This came into play during the period when Oba Ovoramwen was exiled to Calabar by the British authorities. While there in Calabar,

messages were sent to him. He needed updates on happenings in the kingdom, including the people's welfare. Information about these could not be passed across to him through writings as they were likely to be intercepted by the agents of the British government. The son had to devise a means of informing the father about happenings in the kingdom. He crafted a stool which later became known as a telegraphic stool. The stool contained drawings or artistic impressions of different sizes and dimensions. Each impression or drawing conveyed special information, message and meaning, which were passed across in a coded way. The meanings were only known between the sender and the receiver. This form of communication is known as telepathy. It is communication of thought or ideas by means other than the known senses. It is a communication with someone else's mind. The term telepathy was first coined in 1882 by a classical scholar, Fredrick WH Myers.

So, when the war between the Benins and the British was still raging on, the Oba was eager to know the true state of affairs of the kingdom, to authenticate or dispel information he was getting from people around him. The son had to devise a coded means to inform his father about the goings-on in the kingdom and the palace without being understood by the agents of the British.

For the Oba to be able to understand and interpret the message on the telegraphic stool means that this form of communication had been going on between him (Oba) and his son. It further shows the depth of the spiritual bond between father and son. The stool to the ordinary mind, including those who carried it to the Oba in Calabar, was an ordinary stool, a special gift from the son to his exiled father. But the stool conveyed special meaning or information. The inscriptions on the stool are spiritual words and it takes one with high spiritual powers like the Oba to be able to decode and understand it.

DECODING THE MESSAGE OF THE TELEGRAPHIC STOOL

The gun in the telegraphic tool sent to Oba Ovoramwen in Calabar by his son signifies the continued presence of the British forces in the kingdom. It means that there is still no peace, the coast is still not clear for him to attempt coming back. The clenched hands in the stool means the absence of peace and certain things. There are other inscriptions in the stool that clearly depict some ugly things going on in the kingdom and palace at the time. They show the desecration and sacrilegious acts being carried out in the kingdom and palace.

With all these information available to the Oba, he had to sit back in Calabar and call on the gods and the ancestors to intervene. It also gave him an insight into the level of complicity of some of his trusted friends in his betrayal to the British.

Apart from this particular telegraphic stool, there are so many others conveying different meanings, thoughts or ideas.

Love&Life

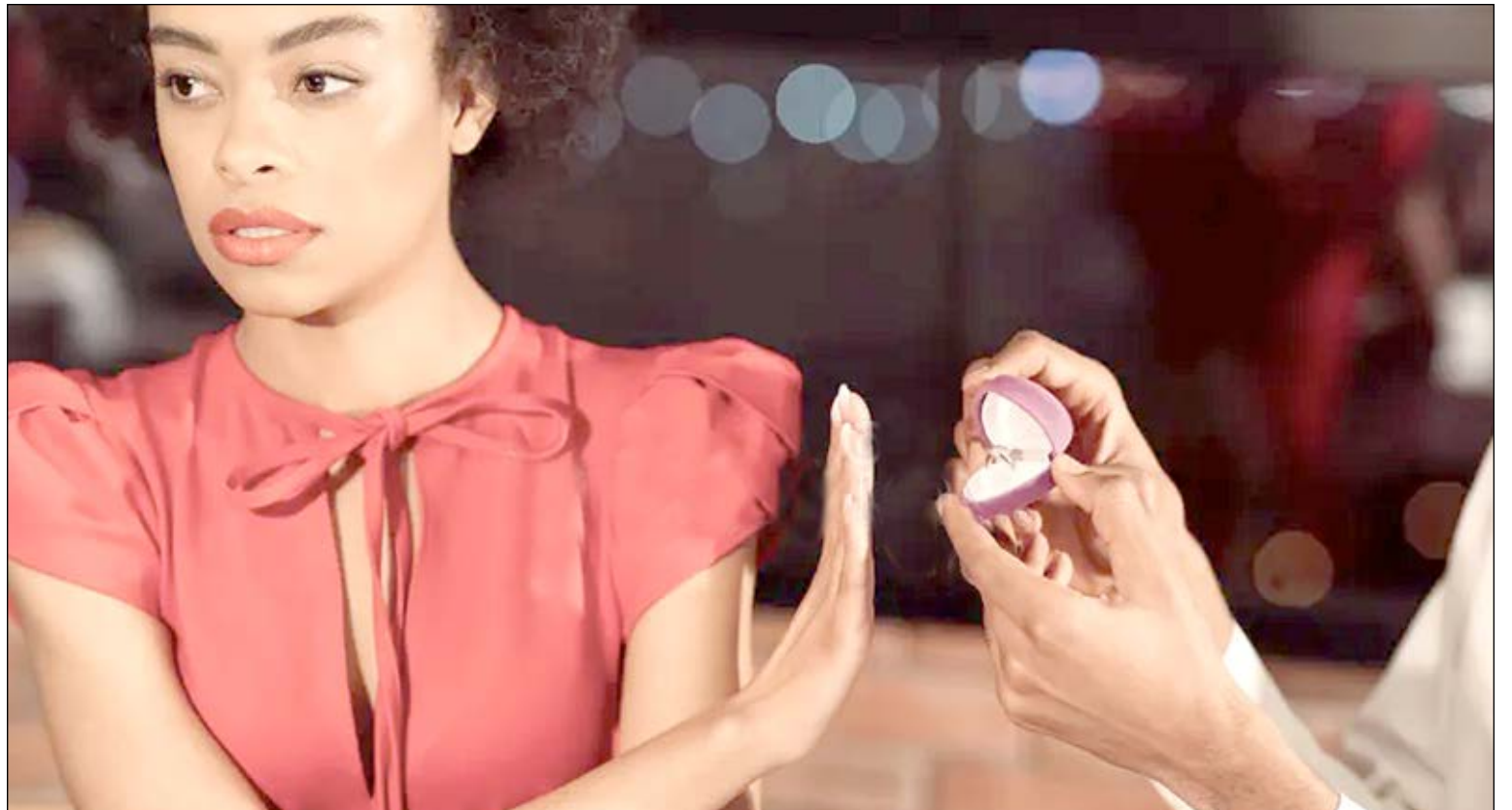
Here's what to do when a lover rejects your proposal

EMMANUELLA OKO AND
GODSBLESSING OKHUELEIGBE

One should expect that a romantic relationship between a man and a woman should lead to marriage, but not all we've seen ends up there. Different people date for different reasons; some date for fun, others for companionship, materialism, etc, and sometimes in expectation of a proposal. Many misunderstand the concept of a proposal. The idea a lot of people have is the entitlement that comes after it, i.e., fiancé & fiancée, but in reality, a proposal entails one individual expressing their desire for a deeper commitment, such as engagement or marriage, to their partner. It is a significant moment that often involves heartfelt words and gestures to convey love and the intention to build a future together.

However, not all proposals go as planned as there are instances when a proposal may be declined. Rejection in the context of a relationship proposal can be a challenging experience for both parties involved. It may occur due to differing expectations, timing, or a partner not being prepared for that level of commitment. It is sometimes crucial to handle the situation with grace, empathy, and effective communication as it presents an opportunity for an honest conversation about emotions, expectations, and future plans. Rejection can sometimes lead to personal growth and a deeper understanding of one another.

The consequences of such rejections can have a profound impact on the couples involved. It is reasonable to assume that these instances may have altered the dynamics of the relationships in question. The emotional weight of a rejection can bring about significant changes in how both individuals perceive and engage with one another. While the specific outcomes of these rejections remain known only to the couples involved, it is not unlikely to presume that the relationships underwent transformations fol-



lowing that occurrence.

No one ever wants their marriage proposal rejected, but what are you supposed to do if it is?

KEEP IT CLASSY:

This means avoiding behaviours that may be disrespectful or hurtful. Do not lash out or become confrontational towards your partner. Instead, maintain your composure and handle the situation with grace and dignity. Refrain from badmouthing or spreading negativity about your partner, as it can create unnecessary tension and damage relationships.

DON'T LINGER ON THE WHY:

Do not get caught up in overanalysing or obsessing over the reasons

behind the rejection. Instead of constantly questioning and dwelling on the why, it's healthier to accept the decision and focus on moving forward. Overthinking can lead to unnecessary self-doubt and prolong the healing process. It's better to channel your energy into self-reflection, personal growth, and finding happiness in other aspects of your life.

AVOID BROADCASTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA:

While it may be tempting to seek validation or sympathy from others, sharing intimate details of your relationship and the rejection can lead to unnecessary drama and potential harm. Broadcasting your feelings on social media can also make it difficult

to move on and heal from the experience. Instead, confide in close friends or family members who can provide support and guidance in a more private and personal way.

TAKE A STEP BACK AND ANALYSE THINGS:

While reflection and self-evaluation are valuable, it's crucial to give yourself time to process your emotions first. Rushing into analysis can lead to overthinking and potentially cloud your judgement. Instead, allow yourself to heal and gain clarity before diving into a deeper analysis of the situation.

ENCOURAGE SELF-CARE:

When faced with rejection, it's natural to experience a range of emo-

tions. Taking care of yourself physically, mentally, and emotionally can help you navigate through this challenging time. Engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, such as exercising, practicing mindfulness, spending time with loved ones, or pursuing hobbies. Prioritising self-care allows you to heal, regain confidence, and focus on your well-being.

It is important to remember that rejection does not necessarily signify the end of the relationship, but rather a moment for reflection and open communication to understand each other's perspectives. One should endeavour to approach the situation with kindness, respect, and the recognition that relationships require mutual understanding and compromise.

Tips for parents this Easter holiday

PEACE AKAN SEBASTIAN

Today is Good Friday. Good Friday is a Christian holiday commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus and his death at Calvary. It is observed during Holy Week and it is the Friday before Easter. Today is also the last Friday in the month of March.

Yesterday, all nursery, primary and secondary schools went on second term holiday to resume, depending on the school, last week of April or first week of May. For Edo State, it is the last week of April.

Hello, my highly esteemed parents, are you happy or are you among those parents who will look for holiday lesson teacher for the children to continue learning and not rest as the school has declared? Please let the children rest, no strict academic work again; allow them to do their holiday assignment from school, try to strengthen their weak areas.

Please those of us who still have

children in nursery, primary and secondary schools, how was their results? End of term could burden parents and children with expectations of high grades. For me, going to school should not just be about high grade; success goes beyond just being academically smart. As a parent there is need to help your children to develop character traits like grit, perseverance, curiosity, soft skills like growth mindset, self-control and motivation. For children to develop success mindset and be strengthened over time, grit, that is, the passion and perseverance to keep pursuing long-term goals, having a supportive family that provides structure, routine and encouragement can be a great opportunity for growth, exposing children to experience concerned teachers, mentors and peers can contribute a lot to a child's social and emotional well-being and success in life, not just overly concerned with passing examination with high grades. As parents, it is

important for us not to measure our children's success according to other parents' standard. Children succeed differently, everyone's progress looks different. Encourage your children to focus inward for outward success.

As parents, we are constantly pushing our children to be in a chronic state of fight and flight mode because of our definition and expectation of success. We rush them to school early in the morning, we make them compete with classmates for high grades, compete during sport for trophy and medals, compete with their siblings over who comes home at the end of the term with best results.

Dear fellow parents, the children's nervous system needs play, quietness, relaxation and creativity, even as we parents also need it. Our children are human beings, not machines. This holiday season is for rest and play time with parents. A thriving child is a wholesome child who will always look up and be seen and experienced



as a steady and calm child with minor mood fluctuation, able to appropriately adjust to changes and able to effectively communicate, but a surviving child will struggle in the above areas.

What kind of child will your child come out like after this holiday? It is easy to raise a thriving child with this knowledge. Increase these in the brain of your child and see a joyful thriving child emerge after the holiday season.

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that plays a role in pleasure, motivation and learning. It is a chemical messenger and signal to the brain. It is achieved through eating good food with your children, celebrating their success and win, playing outdoor

games, watching a family movie together with the kids, etc. Intentionally set out time to do children and parents enjoyment time with your children, plan to set up your leave during your children's holiday.

Gaba is a neurotransmitter. It is an anti-anxiety agent and we can help create it by creating time to play rough and tumble game with your children; riding a bike or running, swimming, teaching some form of mindfulness and meditation. Create time this season to teach your children mindfulness and meditation.

Serotonin is a mono amine neurotransmitter. When a child is happy, they are feeling the effect of serotonin.

Entertainment

INFLUENCE AKABA: Influencing with the power of music

NOSAZEME AIMIUWU

I was sleeping inside a bus returning to Benin City when I first heard the song “Ovbigbo” in this life. The song woke me up from sleep, induced by the boredom of an uneventful journey from Delta State to Benin City. I had come to visit family like I usually do. With sleepy eyes, I listened intently. The voice was clear and resounding. It was full of life and reverberated with intense emotions and musical energy. The melodious lyrics of this beautiful song went, “Ovbigbo marry Oviedo, Iye oh, wagienu ta gha ta oh, ehenhen, ahoevbonwan no-oh”, which translates to “An Igbo person has married (or is marrying) an Edo person. Let antagonists talk. This is about true love.” Upon research on the Internet and elsewhere in real life (asking questions), I learnt about Influence Akaba, the son of the legendary Akaba Man, another musical maestro. I immediately learnt that, aside from the fact that Influence Akaba makes universally appealing music, he ensures that it has the cultural element of language and generational relevance to the times we find ourselves. When it comes to music, if you capture the youths, you have already succeeded. Content matters, but so does form. Rhythm matters, but so does embellishing it in the prevailing sounds of the time.

This multi-talented musician and instrumentalist comes endowed with the ability to produce sensational and thoughtful music that transcends the imaginative barriers of language. After all, music is universal, is it not? Most of us have a favourite song in our playlist that might not be in English language. Personally, I believe that the exceptionally musical Influence Akaba is now so good at what he does that he cannot produce a bad song even if he went out of his way to do so. His stage performances are also incredible and he maintains cordial relationships with other musicians in the industry; after all, no man is an island and no one can succeed without the voluntary assistance of other people in this



● INFLUENCE AKABA

world. This pleasant encounter with Influence Akaba and his enchanting music heightened my curiosity and spurred me on to make some research on this indomitable musical son of Edo State. I began my research with:

Ovbigbo: The music video for this hit track was star-studded and it was worth it. Amb. Lance-lot Oduwa Imasuen played Influence Akaba's father. There was also Eunice Omoregie, with Kevin Ikeduba playing the Igbo girl's father. This is a great and important song because of its thematic relevance. We live in a

society that is “tribal-sensitive”. The annoying concept of parents telling their children which tribe to marry from - as if love can be controlled - is still widely prevalent. Parents - instinctively - do this out of love and genuine concern for their children's wellbeing and, by extension, the generational preservation of their genetic and cultural heritage. However, this song reminds us that in the end, while cultural preservation is important, it is more imperative that true love trumps cultural divisions. True Story: What is quite heartfelt about this “Ov-

bigbo marry Oviedo” song is that it actually resolved some premarital conflicts I know about in real life. An Edo lady was dating a guy from another tribe. She was hesitant to introduce him to her family. Initially her family members were sceptical until “Ovbigbo marry Oviedo” went viral. The same sceptical family members were repetitively singing and humming Influence Akaba's song until their resistance dissolved. In a subtle manner, music sure does resolve societal conflict which is the fundamental essence of social engineering.

Dodorima: This is another timeless hit song that no one has got tired of playing and replaying yet. This song emphasizes the essence of gratitude, especially to Almighty God who is the source of every good thing. One thing I have learnt about gratitude is that it tends to uplift the grateful person to upper levels. And as usual, the rhythm and beat of this beautiful song is incredible.

Osamakwe: “Osamakwe ye ghi-an eh” loosely translates to “God did not let my enemies win”. Other emphatic lines from this song are, “Wa do gu mwen ghogho” (Come and rejoice with me) and “Oghogho eri ighiye” (I am happy). In this song, Influence Akaba talks about his struggles to succeed and how God helped him surmount the evil machinations of his enemies, a.k.a those who wanted to see him fail. This song reminds me that whatever is happening around me doesn't matter; as long as I keep on trying my best, I will succeed, no matter what and no matter how long. God will surely open a way as there is no success in this life unless it comes from the Almighty.

CONCLUSION

I only touched a slice of Influence Akaba's discography, an artist who remains determined and committed to influencing The World With The Power of Music. It will be worth your while - wherever you live on planet earth - to examine this hardworking and great multi-talented musician from Edo State. There is always something vital to learn, especially from musicians who put a lot of heart, a lot of thought and care into their work. Musicians who don't just want to have fun, but want to use their art medium to pass along key lessons of life and uplifting messages. Considering how culturally relevant and widespread the profound messages in his songs are, it gives me great joy that I come from Edo State, a place that abounds with immense creativity and creatives worthy of celebration, and who will always reverberate the immutable concept of exporting Edo To The World.

What is Nollywood (3): A metaphor of the Nigerian spirit

KABAT ESOSA EGBON

Nollywood has not only transformed to be an industry, but a brand and a selling brand at that. It has become an Identity of our African culture or, should I say, our 'Nigerianness', which is our way of life and, above all, a metaphor of the unbreakable spirit of the Nigerian.

Structure and Organisation of Nollywood in the beginning

As mentioned earlier, the soul of filmmaking in Nigeria has primarily been individualistic in approach. It has always been fired by creative people with the passion for making films. With the advent of the video-film in

1990, it created a new set of financiers who were in the business for the profit they were able to rake in the shortest possible time. In this vein, therefore, it created its own structures of finance, production, marketing, etc. devoid of government participation. At least, not until 1991 and 1993, when the Nigerian Film Corporation (NFC) and the Nigerian Video and Film Censors Board were established, respectively. The Film Corporation had a film laboratory, 'antiquated filming equipment' (though much better now) and, later, a film training institute, which in the recent past produced a cream of very professional and talented filmmakers. While the Censors Board was charged

with the responsibility of vetting films and thus, limiting the possibilities of making movies on certain themes like the Nigerian Civil War, etc.

Not too long ago, there have been confrontations between some filmmakers and the Censors Board due to this. But looking back at where we are coming from till date, it could be said that there has been remarkable progress with classification of films.

A lot of the executive producers (whom we refer to as marketers) started out as traders who dealt in the importation and sales of video cassettes and electronics, like television, video players, radios, etc. They were frustrated by the poor patronage for blank video cassettes which they sold. The

video film opened the floodgate for them to not only make films, but at the same time sell their tapes which were actually used to mass-dub these movies. The early successes of these traders encouraged others to join in. They became the 'live-wire' of the industry by providing the needed finance. They were not initially too bothered about the technical quality of these films, as long as the story was 'sensational' and had the capability of recouping the investment in about two weeks after the film hit the shelves. To them, this meant good business.

To the creative professionals, it was at least a welcome relief. Some that could not weather this unprofessional attitude withdrew from the business

of making films. Those that remained stayed on because they discovered a conduit for their creative expression and prayed that with time, the attitude and approach to filmmaking would change.

Over two decades later, one would say that the changes have been slow and have come at a gradual pace. It could have been better, but there has been improvement since the beginning. Appreciable progress has been made in all areas of filmmaking in Nollywood that it is only apt to say, Nollywood is ready for the glorious future.

...to be continued

PidginService

Tuke-Tuke Gossip with **Sam Imagbe**



Anoda bad influence

My pepo, una gud morning. When some pepo go dey talk say dis world don change I no dey gree at all bikos na dis place wey Ikpoba River dey de time wey dem born me, na there e still dey. I know say this Ring Road wey tanda for center of Benin City so, na public field wey dey call am. Dat time dem dey come dey show us John Wayne Cinema for free. Even kpakpa we don dey see aboki wit melu melu plus dagar. Everybody dey mind him own jejeje. De only aboki we dey fear dat time na de one wey dem day call gbomo gbomo. Weda na tru or not na dis kind aboki dem say dem dey tiff small small pikins put inside de big bag wey dey don carry follow body.

Mens and womens also dey get dada for head. But dem no plenty as e be today. Even de ones wey dey get dis dada so, our papa and mama tell us say na so Baba God take make dem come dis world. We even know say na bikos of de juju way dem bring come from heaven make their hair be like dat. Dem also tell us dat time say even if person no get dada from heaven, dat breeze wey dey sweep ground fit carry dem go inside forest where dem go stay put for many many years. By the time dem comot from bush, their head go come produce dada.

All of dis na to make pepo believe say dem fit do any kind juju for person. Some dey even tie tie cowries and bead for de dada.

Anoda kind pepo wey we dey see dat time wit dada na de pepo wey their head don nock engine. Jos like de juju pepo, razor blade no dey toch dia head.

So therefore, dada no be de tin wey new at all at all. De new tin be say pepo don dey use their hair do dada by fire by fire. Up till today, origina dada still dey but na fake dada plenty pass. Wetin hapun wey our pikins wey be boy come dey like crase person hairstyle? Even sef those pepo wey get juju dada don yamutu plus say many don troway de juju come face God for church. Our boys dey para, dem no wan send!

Why person go like make him dey look like person wey him head no correct? Dis tin dey pain me well well like say dem press pin for my skin.

De time wey we dey grow up, barber go ask you de kind style wey you wan barb. Dat time we get sugar baby, police haircut, Afro and the Beatles. De same things with de kind trouser and shirt.

Pikins of dis time dey call dat kind dress old skool. Now, dem no dey put belt for their trouser again. Dem go take one hand hold their trouser, take the other hand dey press phone as dem dey waka for road. If you see de pant wey some of dem wear, boy-boy wey dey learn mechanic no fit wear am bikos of de kind dirty wey de pant dirty.

Haba! De show never finish ooh. De trouser sef go tear tear. Weda na dem dey tear am or na so dem dey

buy am, man pikin no fit talk. Man no sure say na e tear like dat before dem buy am.

Na dis kind tin wey make police dey give pepo like dis double wahala sake of say na de time wey Yahoo boys take arrive all dis yeye dressing start.

As for de girls, their mata don pass be careful. How rape go take yamutu when na de girls dey even provoke de boys? If fifty girls waka pass you, na only about two go fit bend down pick her money if it by mistake fall down. Bekos wetin dem wear too short.

Make you hear de tory wey tru tru hapun for dis Benin not too long ago. As me and my mama sit down for front of our house, three young girls dey waka pass. All of dem wear very short skirts. I nor know say Mama dey look dem. By de time dem come closer, dem greet us. Mama call one of them, de other two follow am. By de time dem don come close, Mama tell am say make she help am bring one stone wey dey for ground for am. Oturugbeke! Wahala don shele! As she bend down to take de stone, she dey struggle to use de other hand cover her bum bum with difikutu. Na so my mama come tell am make she rise up. She also tell am make she go home go change de dress wey she wear. De girl surprise me. She thank Mama, turn back go wear anoda dress. By de time she dey come back, Mama call am again, pray for am, advice am not to be wearing such cloth, come give her some gift for obeying her.

How many girls do dat kind tin? Instead she go pour out abusive words for de old woman.

De Edo chapter abi na verse of National Youth Council of Nigeria (NYCN) get plenty work to do. Agree say any person fit do wetin him like so far as him no come do am for your bodi, but nor forget say na de place wey your own human rite stop na there anoda man own begin. Somebodi talk say to be a crase person be good if not for de waka waka wey dey inside.

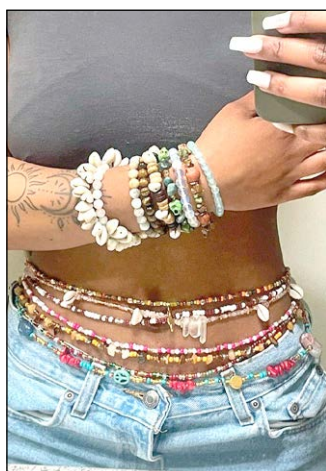
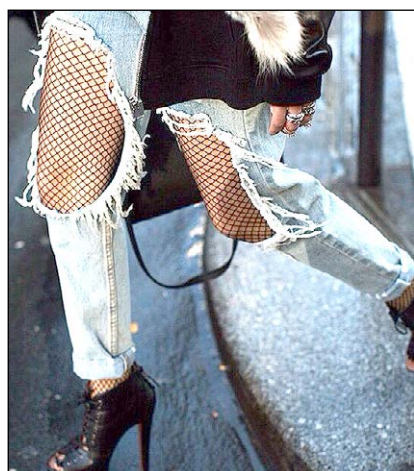
We dey shout say no job, how person wey get sense go fit take person wey dey dress like crase man put for work?

Oga Youth Council chair, make you put dis mata join your agenda for Edo Youths, I beg.

Benin people dey talk am say na de cloth wey you wear dey attract courtesy. If you take by mistake wear trouser wey tear without belt plus your fake dada go your in-law house for a visit, make you no vex if him ask you make you helep am break firewood. Na de way you take present yourself to am.

My pikins of dis generation, we gada beg una make una stop dis madness in practice. If una must kopi pepo, make una dey kopi de tins wey go make pepo happy and move forward like dose small small oyibo pikins wey sabi how to do computer so. Dressing like mad pepos no be de way at all.

Una doooh.



TATAFO



You wan blow & you nor de roll

DAVIDSON IZEGAEGBE

Anoda day don land again ooooo!!! If you not gat reason to celebrate, abeg park well. You tink say na all of us wey yan togeda or wey join follow us brit last wik naim see today? Whoosai! Many don delete dat same day, some kpai in-bitwin why some don sign dia own death warrant for today without even dia mind. For us to survive everi tin cum de our de to still write and jollificate show say baba God wedge awa side gidigba, in it?

Anyways, all of us no say na survival of who hold him side pass wella naim we de so. We nor fit by awaself fall awa own hand na. Dat one go cum be laik who de use hammer de nak him own head and still cum de complain say headache de ajasco for him head. As pipo wey de do film, how far we don waka with awa love and bizness of dis awa films? For Obodo oyinbo, pipo wey de do film de over enjoy but why awa own film pipo nor de fit enjoy laik dat? Why e be say if any of us receive knock out from any type of sickness, na to cum begin de beg pipo for money laik bambihala? Na becos say we not sabi save kuza or na de film de deceive pipo to tink say film pipo get kuza? If na de film de deceive pipo, how de film pipo fit take do am so dat kuza go fit de cum out of am yanfuanfu?

To make film pipo fit de make kuza wella, dat one go mean say, film pipo need to find many ways to take survive so dat man pikin no go bite finger cum de hala say "had I no". If we reason de way many pipo take start to de do dis film bizness, you go see say, many pipo start to do film from small level to big level. Wish one be small or big level? Anyways, wen we reason am like dis: small level-film festival, big level- cinema and oda platforms to make kuza. Make una neva de shout or shift yansh for chair. Una go still undastand de area from wish I take de jack dis mata so. Small level or big level, all na film. De only difference be say one na hustle to take make pipo no you before kuza go begin flow cum, while de oda na wen you turn akpruka for how to make kuza with ya brain sharp sharp.

Film festival na wia you as film person fit de do experiment to no how to do film with ya phone, small camera and submit for film festival. If de film festival na wia you fit travel go, travel to attend and watch ya film and odas own. No skool pass day one. No forget say, inside all dis film festivals dem,

wia dem for de train person de inside ooooo!!! So, you as who wan learn how to sabi do ogbonge film, must to also learn how dem take first de do film, so dat shame not go catch you or cum de cry at de time you cum go sell ya papa house to take do film, and de film not cum enta laik kalokalo.

Na for film festivals you go de hia from pipo wey don de do film for big level, cum de yan how dem take start, and de wahala dem face to fit cum reach wia dem don reach. Na for film festivals you go jam all de superstars dem and no how some of dem no go encourage you to kontinu to de do ya films. Na who no de laik better tins? As long as you laik film and wan grow from small level to big level, you must to start from some wia. Film festivals go open ya mind, ya heart, ya ears and ya eyes to de tink laik ogbanje pikin. Na wetin pipo nor fit reason, you self go de see. Nor be dat one oyinbo de call inspiration abi na creativity? If you not let ya mind de stretch laik blonblo, naim be say, you by yasef wan wound yasef bcos na you go still suffer am las las.

Many pipo wey start film from film festivals level don turn Oga today, as dem don use film festival to take open de doors to dem opportunities. Nor how you go start small and cum de regular with ya tin, wey you nor go succeed as a person. Na so life take de. Film festival go open ya eyes to de bizness of film, how to jump over Kuza wahala with oda pipo you wan add join yasef to do de film bizness, how to survive for de film bizness and how to make ogbonge films plus get market for am. My advice na say, you must start from somewia if you wan make am for dis film bizness. Na to quick go arrange yasef go attend any film festival, so dat you fit learn plenty tins about film and to no how to start to do film from de beginning to de ending.

De reason I de yan laik dis, na to let una no say film bizness sweet, but you must to ready to feel de heat wey de follow am for him own kitchen. Las las, if you prepare your mind to de strong laik cocoyam, and cum ready to learn join, why you not go fit make beta film for film festival wey even fit win award plus kuza? Tell me why you not go fit join de big film league to cum begin do film for cinema??? At dis junction, I hope I don fit konvince you and not to konfuse you say, na you alone hold your future like banga and starch. So, make you enjoy. We go see again nex wik.

Faith

Holy Week reminds us of what Christ went through for our salvation - Fr. Ehigie

Christians across the world, particularly Catholics, entered the Holy Week last Sunday in preparation for this year's Easter celebration. The Parish Priest of Saint Patrick Catholic Church Ugbowo, Benin City, Reverend Father (Dr) Augustine Ehigie, in this interview with OMI OMAGE, explains the significance of the Holy Week and other events surrounding it. Excerpts:

We often hear many Christians, especially Catholics, talk about Holy Week. Could you shed light on the significance of Holy Week in Christendom?

The Sunday before Easter, as we all know, is called Palm Sunday; and moving forward, Palm Sunday specifically marks the entrance of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem where he will be crucified, where he will suffer, die and will be buried. In earnest, it also marks what Catholics or Christians in general call the Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. In other words, these special days make up the Holy Week.

During the Holy Week, Christians recall the events leading up to the death of Jesus by crucifixion, and according to their faith, his resurrection. Also, it is paramount to know that every day of that week has its own major ceremony. For example, Holy Thursday entails a period when the Archbishop would bless the oils for the catechumens, for the sick, and for prison inmates. Most importantly, for the priesthood community, all the Catholic priests are gathered round the Bishop to make renewal of their promises before the Bishop.

In the evening of that same Holy Thursday, the Mass of The Last Supper would be held, when our Lord Jesus Christ instituted the Holy Eucharist and the disciples celebrated it after which he also washed their feet. He also gave a commandment; commandment of love: 'Love one another as I have loved you'. So he loved us to the end. That is what Holy Thursday signifies.

Good Friday entails the passion of Jesus which marks the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we talk about passion, we also bring to mind what he went through for our salvation. We remind ourselves of his betrayal by Judas Iscariot, when he would be betrayed on The Last Supper as he went to pray in Gethsemane. He would be arrested by the soldiers who came with Judas; this would mark the beginning of his passion. He would be beaten mercilessly and in the end crucified.

Holy Saturday is a quiet day, signifying that our Lord is in the grave (tomb, as it was known). Then, in the morning of Sunday, known as the the Sunday of Resurrection, he will rise again. It is worth knowing that Easter season takes about almost 50 days of celebration, so every Sunday is actually a 'Big Easter'.

So, we celebrate the suffering, death, and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ because of the sin committed by Adam and Eve. The Godly image - what God destined us to be at the beginning - was shattered by the sin committed by Adam and Eve, so Christ now is the image of God. He has come to renew that image that was shattered; and to renew that image, he had to undergo what is called 'Kenosis'. It means emptiness signifying that he had to empty himself. He became a slave unlike Adam and Eve who wanted to become God. He chose to become a slave and he became like us, because we are in human nature. He had a purpose which was to set us free. He descended into hell. He went there to deliver people. Then he resurrected, signifying that he has conquered sin and death.

Was it necessary for God to send his son, Jesus Christ, to save humanity from sin? Why didn't God save us himself?

One thing we should know is that sin was committed by man in the flesh, so Christ had to assume our flesh so that in death, he used his own flesh to conquer death. In essence, death was trying to defeat him in the nature of flesh, instead he overcame death. God would not have died if he hadn't assumed our nature. Why? Because God cannot die. Therefore, he had to become man to redeem us. That is why he could die, because he is God and he is man.

Tell us more about Palm Sunday. What does it signify?

The palm signifies two things: One is the victory of Christ over death by his death on the cross. The second one also serves as protection. By the time it is blessed by the priest, it is known as what we call 'sacramental' - that is, it is able to impart blessings on those who use it, and it is kept with the Reverend Father so that on Ash Wednesday, it will be burnt to start Lent, after which we go into Palm Sunday. It is all connected. It follows the principle: When we die, we turn to dust. Humus is new soil which springs up, which means we need to have a sense of humility, because in the end we are all becoming soil.



● REV. FR (DR) EHIGIE

What is the impact of Holy Week on the lives of Christians, especially at this time in our country Nigeria?

We have several institutions of life; we have economy, religion, and self education. They all depend on each other. Each one is as important as the other. Now, why is religion very important? Religion actually allows us to have a very deep introspection into our lives, and for Christians, it goes very deep, as far as the Old Testament. For example, whenever the people of Israel sinned, they attributed it to their sinful nature, and for this, they asked for penance from God which is likened to what Catholics do.

Penance for Christians is very important. Why? Whenever a Christian goes wrong (sins), the first step he/she does is to take a deep reflection, followed by examination of conscience to ask God for forgiveness of sins. This also helps to keep our moral values in check. A simple prayer as 'The Grace', though simplistic, the grace of God goes with it. It is not just an opium of the people but it is the grace of God that goes with it. It is the grace that God is releasing through Jesus Christ through the death and the resurrection and it enables us to withstand whatever may come our way. That is how important the grace of God is.

I observed that all the statues in every Catholic Church are covered on the fifth Sunday of Lent. What are the reasons?

Fifth Sunday is a time before we enter the passion. This process is to gradually take away Christ from the public. The statue is also covered on Holy Thursday. In fact, the altar and every of its surrounding would be kept bare to signify the absence of God. It also implies different meanings to several persons, such as: God is dead, the absence of God, and the absence of Jesus Christ.

What then do Christians do during Lent?

Easter is celebrated every year, and we also have Lent which can be termed the spring of life, which is a period of 40 days. What we

do during Lent is to do penance for our sins, because when we sin, we have to pray for God's mercy. And how do we do that? The first thing is to pray for ourselves. Secondly, we have to fast, denying ourselves of many things so that we can use it to help the poor. The third one is almsgiving. These three things are done within the 40 days' period, after which the climax of it would now be on Good Friday.

Good Friday involves fasting and abstinence. Catholics should fast. It is also very important to see that other religions, like Islam, also has something similar - the Ramadan fast.

In Catholic belief, we can sense when something has gone wrong and this is called original sin, which is sometimes termed total disorientation of human condition. In other words, we have distorted what God has made us to be; therefore, the next step is recovery. What Christ has come to do is to recover. It is a step to retrace that which has shattered.

Every year we celebrate it. It is a time when new persons are born. For God said, 'If you are not born again, you cannot be saved.' So every time like the days of old, people are born through baptism. For those who entered as adult or who have already grown up, they have baptism, confirmation and the Holy Eucharist.

Catechists are in the forefront of all these teachings. The mass involves series of practice, involving mass servers, so that they will know the role to play; those tasked with reading the scriptures; and the priest is not left out. He has his role to play, and so so and forth. The ceremony is similar to dramatization of the whole biblical event so that people can have it firsthand.

On Good Friday, we have The Stations of the Cross as part of the passion, which is followed by ceremony of the cross. On that day, the cross will now be unveiled, we honour it because it is the wood of the cross through which we were saved. We give special honour to that cross.

Fashion&Style

Influencers as channels for fast fashion

GODSBLESSING OKHUELEIGBE
AND EMMANUELLA OKO

The influencer culture in the fashion industry has become a significant phenomenon that has transformed the way trends are created, brands are promoted, and consumer choices are influenced. Fashion influencers are individuals with a keen sense of style and a large online following, who have leveraged social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube to share their fashion expertise and showcase their personal style. These influencers collaborate with fashion brands, attending events, and partnering with designers to create content that resonates with their audience. They provide fashion tips, style inspiration, and product recommendations through visually captivating posts, videos, and stories. Their influence extends beyond just fashion, as they often collaborate with beauty, lifestyle, and travel brands, creating a holistic lifestyle image.

Fashion Influencers have an incredible impact on their followers. They possess the unique ability to shape opinions, influence behaviours, and even drive purchasing decisions. This makes them extremely valuable to brands and businesses seeking to leverage their influence. By collaborating with influencers, brands can tap into their established audience, gain credibility, and ultimately increase their reach and sales. The power of influencers lies in their authenticity and ability to connect with their followers on a personal level, making their recommendations and endorsements highly influential.

Fashion influencers often find themselves navigating a delicate balance between authenticity and commercialization. On one hand, they strive to maintain their genuine voice and connection with their audience, sharing their personal style and honest opinions. This authenticity is what initially attracts their followers and establishes their influence. However, as they grow in popularity, fashion influencers also face the pressure to collaborate with brands and participate in sponsored content, which can sometimes compromise their authenticity.

In essence, the influencer culture in fashion has revolutionized the industry by democratizing style and giving a platform to individuals who are passionate about fashion. They have become a driving force in shaping trends, promoting brands, and influencing consumer choices, making them an integral part of the ever-evolving fashion landscape.

The challenge lies in finding a way to integrate brand partnerships and sponsored content seamlessly into their content, while still staying true to their personal style and maintaining the trust of their audience. It requires careful consideration of the brands they choose to work with, ensuring that they align with their own values and aesthetic.

A peek into future trends shows that the influencer culture is expected to continue flourishing in the fashion



world. One of the main reasons for this is the shift in consumer behaviour. People are increasingly turning to influencers for fashion inspiration and guidance, valuing their personal style and recommendations over traditional advertising. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok have provided influencers with a powerful platform to share their fashion content and connect with their audience on a global scale. This accessibility has allowed influencers to build dedicated communities of followers who trust their opinions and seek their fashion advice.

However, influencer culture has faced criticism for perpetuating unrealistic and unattainable standards in the fashion industry. Some influencers promote a lifestyle that revolves around materialism, showcasing luxurious products and experiences that may not be accessible to the average person, further creating feelings of inadequacy, contributing to the culture of comparison. Influencers often present a highly polished and perfected version of themselves, leading to a distorted perception of reality, making it difficult for followers to distinguish between genuine con-

tent and sponsored posts, blurring the lines between personal style and commercial endorsements.

However, not all influencers contribute to these problems. Many influencers strive to promote body positivity, inclusivity, and ethical fashion choices. They use their platforms to advocate for social causes and challenge the fashion industry's traditional standards.

The rise of influencer culture in fashion has definitely contributed to an increased consumerism. Influencers often showcase and promote a wide range of products, from clothing and accessories to beauty and lifestyle items. Their influence and persuasive power leads consumers to feel the need to keep up with the latest trends and purchase these products, sometimes without considering their actual needs or budget.

The constant exposure to influencers and their sponsored content can create a sense of FOMO (fear of missing out) among consumers. They may feel pressured to buy expensive products in order to emulate the influencer's lifestyle or to feel socially accepted. This can lead to impulsive buying decisions and a waste of funds on items that may not

bring long-term value or satisfaction. However, this pursuit of status through material possessions can lead to financial strain and a cycle of constantly chasing the next big thing.

For fashion influencers, the pressure to maintain a certain image, constantly produce content, and gain likes and followers can take a toll on their mental well-being. They may experience feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, and burnout as they strive to meet the expectations of their audience and brands they collaborate with. The need to constantly curate and present a polished version of themselves can lead to a loss of authenticity and a sense of disconnection from their true selves.

On the consumer side, the constant exposure to idealized and filtered versions of influencers' lives can negatively impact mental health. Consumers may compare themselves to these seemingly perfect lifestyles and bodies, leading to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and even body image issues. The pressure to constantly strive for the unattainable standards set by influencers can contribute to a culture of comparison and self-judgment.

To this effect, it's important for both influencers and consumers to prioritize mental health and well-being. Influencers can strive to be more transparent and authentic, sharing the ups and downs of their lives to promote a more realistic and relatable image. Consumers can practice self-awareness and limit their exposure to social media when it starts to negatively impact their mental health. Also, the need for consumers to be mindful of their purchasing decisions and to consider their own values, needs, and budget before succumbing to the influence of influencers should be encouraged. Taking the time to evaluate whether a product aligns with personal style, quality, and long-term usefulness can help avoid wasting funds on expensive items that may not truly bring joy or value.

Sports

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

Super Eagles focus is on 2026 World Cup – Omeruo

PRINCESS NZEREM

Super Eagles Defender Kenneth Omeruo has reassured Nigerians that the team is committed to giving their best to secure maximum points when the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers recommence in June.

Members of the Super Eagles' team departed Morocco on Wednesday after a series of friendly matches against Ghana and Mali in Marrakech. Most of the players returned to their European clubs after the matches.

Kenneth Omeruo was in action earlier this week when the three-time African champions were defeated by the Eagles of Mali in Morocco.

The Malian Eagles, scored twice against Nigeria in Marrakech to earn its first ever victory in more than four decades against the Super Eagles.

After the loss to Mali, Super Eagles captain Kenneth Omeruo reassured Nigerians that the team was determined to earn maximum points in the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers in June.

Nigeria would be playing the Bafana Bafana of South Africa in Uyo and thereafter play Benin Republic away from home in the international window of June 3–11, in Match Days 3 and 4 of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying campaign.

"We went into the match against Mali determined to win, just as we did against Ghana," Omeruo said.

"In the end, they took their chances, and we failed to take ours. That's football. You just have to take the chances that come your way.

"Having said that, June is only a few weeks away, and we are focused on the matches against South Africa and the

Benin Republic.

"Many players in the group have not played at the World Cup before, and they see this as a big opportunity to be there.

"We cannot afford to let ourselves and the nation down," he added.

The Super Eagles will continue their quest for a place at the mundial with two must-win fixtures against the Bafana Bafana of South Africa and Squirrels of Benin Republic in June.

Nigeria currently sits in third place in Group C of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers, with two points earned from two games played. Lesotho and Zimbabwe are also tied for third place with two points each.

Table-toppers Rwanda are on four points. They are closely followed by South Africa on three points with Benin Republic at the bottom of the table with one point.



Former Sierra Leone international, Lamin Bangura dies in bus crash

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

Former Sierra Leone international Lamin Bangura, aged 59, passed away following a road accident in the West African nation, on Tuesday night.

The accident happened in the village of Konta Line as a bus carrying Ports Authority FC, the club Bangura coached, hit a stationary truck.

The team was travelling from the capital Freetown to Keneba for a Sierra Leone Premier League fixture.

Idrissa Tarawally, the secretary general of Ports Authority, mentioned that Bangura was transported to a hospital in Freetown but succumbed to his injuries during the early hours of Wednesday.

"It's a sad day for Sierra Leone football. This is shocking and I'm devastated. I'm speechless. A legend and good coach has gone so soon," Tarawally said.

Six players were also injured in the crash in Tonkolili district, with some in a serious condition, and they are receiving treatment in Freetown.

Wednesday's Premier League game against Kahunla Rangers was postponed because of the tragic news.

Bangura, a centre-back helped Sierra Leone to qualify

for the 1994 and 1996 Africa Cup of Nations finals and featured in both tournaments.

He was also a member of the Leone Stars technical staff at the 2021 Nations Cup in Cameroon.

Sierra Leone coach Amidu Karim, who played alongside Bangura for the national side in the 1990s, said he had lost "a friend, brother and mentor".

"He was my senior in the

national team and he motivated us, the younger ones, at the time to do well.

"A true legend is no more. I'm very sad," Karim added.

Thomas Daddy Brima, president of the Sierra Leone FA, was among others who paid tribute to Bangura.

"He was a legend who gave his all for Sierra Leone both as a player and coach.



Victor Osimhen ranked 3rd in Super Eagles top scorers list



IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

Victor Osimhen has catapulted himself to the third position on the esteemed list of Super Eagles' all-time top scorers.

With an impressive tally of 21 goals in just 35 appearances for the national team, Osimhen's uprisingt underscores his emergence as a key figure in Nigerian football's storied history.

Surpassing iconic names such as Yakubu Aiyegbeni, Ikechukwu Uche, and Obafemi Martins, Osimhen's rise through the ranks epitomizes the relentless pursuit of excellence that defines Nigerian football. The 25-year-old striker's clinical finishing and

As Osimhen writes his name into the history of Nigerian football, it's important to recognize the legends who paved the way before him. Here are the top 10 all-time goal scorers for the Super Eagles:

1. Rashidi Yekini - 37 goals
2. Segun Odegbami - 23 goals
3. Victor Osimhen - 21 goals
4. Yakubu Aiyegbeni - 21 goals
5. Sunday Oyarekhua - 17 goals
6. Obafemi Martins - 18 goals
7. Ikechukwu Uche - 19 goals
8. Julius Aghahowa - 14 goals
9. Jay Jay Okocha - 14 goals
10. Kelechi Iheanacho - 13 goals

While Osimhen's ascent to the upper echelons of Nigerian football is cause for celebration, the shadow of Rashidi Yekini's towering legacy looms large. Yekini's record of 37 goals remains untouchable, serving as a reminder of the heights to which Nigerian footballers aspire.

tactical awareness has not only endeared him to fans but have also solidified his status as a talismanic presence on the pitch.

NPFL declares new date for Matchday 28 fixtures

MARY OGWUCHE

The Nigeria Professional Football League (NPFL) has rescheduled the fixtures for Matchday 28.

Initially, the matches were set to hold on Tuesday, April 2nd, 2024. The games are now rescheduled to be held on Wednesday, April 3rd at all venues.

This information was revealed by the NPFL in a memorandum distributed to all 20 clubs on Wednesday.



CAA advocates for Ghana to host 2026 Athletics Championship

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

Following the successful athletics event at the recently concluded 2023 African Games, the Confederation of African Athletics has extended an invitation to Ghana to bid for the hosting rights of the 2026 African Athletics Championships.

Bawa Fuseini, President of Ghana Athletics, affirmed this stance and voiced optimism regarding the Legon Stadium's capacity to bring about transformative benefits for athletes, underlining Ghana's bid to host international competitions.

With a capacity of 11,000, the Legon Stadium played a pivotal role in the recent African Games, hosting both the opening and closing ceremonies as well as various sporting events including athletics, football, and rugby.

Fuseini highlighted the success of the athletics events held at the stadium, which contributed to Ghana winning six medals.

"We have already started getting requests from the Confederation of African Athletics to bid for the 2026 African Athletics Championships.

"When they came and saw what we have put in place and the level of organisation, they told me that for the last 20 years, they've never seen any organisation like this before. We did three official courses. And the last one, we had 110, all of them passed. We had a lot of officials and equipment," he said.

Since its establishment in 1979, Ghana has never hosted the African Athletics Championships, with Nigeria being the host country twice, in 1989 and 2018.

Paris Olympics qualifiers: Oshoala, Nnadozie, Ajibade make Super Falcons' squad

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

Super Falcons head coach, Randy Waldrun has named a squad of 22 players for the forthcoming final round of Olympics qualifiers against South Africa. Among the 22 players in the squad called up are captain Rasheedat Ajibade, Asisat Oshoala, and goalkeeper Chiamaka Nnadozie.

Ashley Plumtre, Osinachi Ohale, Deborah Abiodun, Esther Okoronkwo, and Uchenna Kanu were also invited for the double-header in April.

Saudi Arabia-based defender, Ashley Plumtre, veteran Osinachi Ohale, and midfielder Deborah Abiodun also made the list.

Recalled that the Super Falcons reached the final round of qualifiers after defeating Cameroon 1-0 on aggregate last month.

The Super Falcons are set to take on South Africa in a two-match series, with the initial encounter slated for April 5 at the MKO Abiola National Stadium in Abuja.



dium in Abuja.

The return leg is slated for April 9 at the Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria.

The winner of the tie will clinch one of Africa's two tickets to the Women's Olympic Football Tournament.

The last time the Falcons played at the Olympic Games was in Beijing in 2008.

The 2024 Olympics is billed to take place in Paris, France,

from July 26 to August 11, 2024

All the invited players:

Goalkeepers: Chiamaka Nnadozie (Paris FC); Tochukwu Oluehi (Shualat Alsharqia FC, Saudi Arabia); Linda Jiwuaku (Bayelsa Queens)

Defenders: Osinachi Ohale (Pachucha Club de Futbol, Mexico); Ashleigh Plumtre (Ittihad Ladies, Saudi Arabia); Shukurat Oladipo (FC Robo

Queens); Michelle Alozie (Houston Dash, USA); Nicole Payne (Portland Thorns FC, USA); Chidinma Okeke (Mynavi Sendai Ladies, Japan)

Midfielders: Deborah Abiodun (University of Pittsburgh, USA); Halimatu Ayinde (FC Rosengard, Sweden); Christy Ucheibe (SL Benfica, Portugal); Jennifer Echegini (Juventus Ladies, Italy); Rasheedat Ajibade (Atletico Madrid FC, Spain); Toni Payne (Sevilla FC, Spain)

Forwards: Omorinsola Babajide (Coasta Adeje Tenerife Egatesa, Spain); Esther Okoronkwo (Changchun FC, China); Ifeoma Onumonu (SLC Utah, USA); Asisat Oshoala (Bay FC, USA); Uchenna Kanu (Racing Louisville, USA); Gift Monday (Coasta Adeje Tenerife Egatesa, Spain); Chiwendu Ihezuo (Pachucha Club de Futbol, Mexico)

Declan Rice sets sights on Arsenal captaincy amid stellar debut season

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

Arsenal's midfield sensation Declan Rice, has voiced his ambition to assume the captain's role at the Emirates Stadium, should the opportunity arise following the tenure of current skipper Martin Odegaard.

Since his high-profile £105 million transfer from West Ham last summer, the 25-year-old has emerged as an important figure in Arsenal's midfield engine.

Rice, who previously captained West Ham, attributes his leadership trait to his formative decade-long stint with the London club. Reflecting

on his time at West Ham, he remarked, "My tenure at West Ham, spanning a decade, has played a pivotal role in shaping my character."

While acknowledging Odegaard's leadership at Arsenal, Rice expressed his eagerness to step up if called upon, stating, "Martin Odegaard currently leads my club. While I'm not actively pursuing the captaincy, I would embrace the opportunity to captain Arsenal if the need arises."

With the prospect of leading England in their upcoming friendly against Belgium, Rice's leadership credentials continue to draw admiration both domestically and internationally.



Man United legend, Gary Neville warns against potential managerial replacement

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

Gary Neville has issued a cautionary message to the Red Devils, identifying three rumored managerial replacements he believes are unsuitable for the Old Trafford hot seat.

Neville's warning comes amidst mounting pressure on Ten Hag to convince the United hierarchy to retain him following a season marked by disappointment. Despite a promising start, which saw a third-place finish and a League Cup triumph, United has struggled this season, currently sitting

outside the Premier League's top four and suffering an early Champions League exit.

Despite rumors of potential change, including considerations from minority shareholder Sir Jim Ratcliffe, names like Gareth Southgate, Graham Potter, and Gary O'Neil have emerged in connection with the managerial role at Manchester United. However, Neville has expressed reservations about these candidates, emphasizing a preference for Ten Hag's continuity and track record.

"I would like to see him stay in the sense that I am not quite

sure at the moment who else is out there," Neville stated on The Overlap.

"If Jurgen Klopp was on the market or you could get a world-class manager in, it might be different, but when you look at the options, we could end up with someone who is not as good as Erik ten Hag and has not got his pedigree," he added.

Neville noted that Ten Hag's two years of experience at Old Trafford, noting that despite a challenging second season, he should be better equipped for the job.

"So for me, I don't like the idea of him leaving and United bringing in the kind of names that have been suggested. That doesn't feel right. I would rather stick with Erik ten Hag and believe in him."

As uncertainty hangs over Manchester United's managerial future, Neville's warning serves as a reminder of the importance of careful consideration in the club's decision-making process.



Former Brazilian teammate condemns Dani Alves, Robinho amid rape charges

PRINCESS NZEREM

Felipe Melo has strongly condemned the alleged rape charges against his former Brazilian teammates Dani Alves and Robinho, stressing the significance of accountability and respecting all individuals.

The legal issues confronting both Alves and Robinho could result in severe repercussions, damaging their previously esteemed reputations and possibly resulting in imprisonment.

Alves is currently appealing his conviction and has been

granted temporary release on bail, whereas Robinho is confronted with a challenging nine-year prison sentence for his role in a 2013 gang rape incident.

Considering the gravity of the situation, Melo, an experienced footballer currently playing for Fluminense in Brazil, has expressed his anger, especially as a father to a teenage daughter.

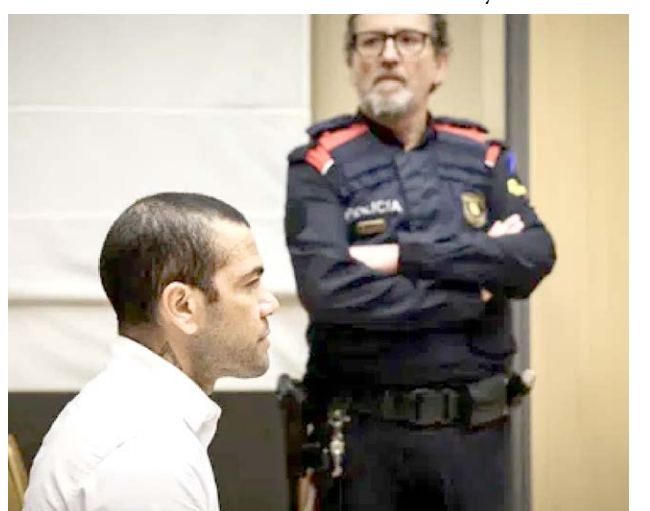
Melo emphasized the essential importance of respecting the dignity and rights of all individuals, regardless of gender, and highlighted the significance of ensuring that perpetrators are held responsible for their deeds.

Having played for clubs such as Juventus, Galatasaray, and Inter Milan, Melo's statements hold significance as he commented on the dishonorable behavior of his ex-teammates.

According to Globo Spor, Melo said, "I have a 15 year old daughter."

"If they [Alves and Robinho] had done that with my daughter, I don't think I would be here to give this interview."

"I believe we must respect other human beings, we must respect women, we must respect men. They have to pay for what they did. And let it serve as a lesson so that others do not do it. This is very serious."



Lionel Messi announces retirement timeline from football

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

Lionel Messi has shared insights into his retirement plans from football as he traverses the final stages of his illustrious career.

Since joining Inter Miami in the summer of 2023, Messi has demonstrated his skill, tallying 16 goals and delivering seven assists in 19 matches across different competitions.

Nevertheless, at 36 years old, Messi has had to contend with injury setbacks, sparking concerns about his durability in the sport.

During his appearance on

the Big Time podcast, the eight-time Ballon d'Or winner highlighted his self-awareness,

stressing his inclination to critically assess his performances, given his retirement intentions.



Messi expressed his readiness to step away from the game once he feels he is no longer capable of delivering peak performances or finding joy in playing, regardless of his age.

"I am very self critical of myself, I know when I'm good, when I'm bad, when I play well and when I play badly. When I feel it's time to take that step, I will take it without thinking about age," Messi said.

"I know that moment I feel I am no longer ready to perform, that I am no longer enjoying myself or helping my teammates

SPORTS

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Toni Kroos commits to one more season with Real Madrid

IKPONMWOSA ODIGIE

In a move that cements his allegiance to the esteemed Spanish Club, Real Madrid midfielder Toni Kroos has chosen to extend his tenure for another season.

The decision follows weeks of speculations regarding the future of the seasoned player, who has been a vital part of the team since his transfer from Bayern Munich in 2014.

Throughout his illustrious career at Real Madrid, Kroos has amassed an impressive collection of trophies, totalling 20 titles. Among these honours are three La Liga Championships and four UEFA Champions League triumphs, showcasing his prowess on both domestic and international stages.

The announcement of Kroos' contract extension was con-



firmed by renowned transfer expert Fabrizio Romano, who took to Twitter to disclose the news.

According to Romano, the agreement is imminent, with

direct negotiations between Kroos and the club already underway. It is anticipated that the new deal will span until 2025, ensuring the midfielder's con-

tinued presence at the heart of Real Madrid's midfield.

Kroos' decision to remain with Real Madrid comes as a boost for both the club and its supporters, who have become accustomed to his commanding presence on the pitch. With the upcoming season on the horizon, Kroos is poised to once again showcase his exceptional and leadership skills, both for Real Madrid and the German national team.

As anticipation builds for the forthcoming campaign, Kroos' commitment to Real Madrid serves as a testament to his enduring dedication to the club's success.

With his signature set to adorn a new contract, fans can look forward to witnessing the midfield maestro weave his magic on the field for at least one more season.

Euro 2024 group stage full list

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

The stage is set for the 17th edition of the UEFA European Championship (Euro 2024), with Germany poised to host the prestigious tournament.

As the excitement builds, the full list of qualified teams has been revealed, showcasing the diverse array of talent that will feature at the competition this year.

Teams qualified for Euro 2024 after the conclusion of the play-off rounds on Tuesday:

Group A: Germany, Scotland, Hungary, Switzerland

Group B: Spain, Croatia, Italy, Albania

Group C: Slovenia, Denmark, Serbia, England

Group D: Poland, Netherlands, Austria, France

Group E: Belgium, Slovakia,

Romania, Ukraine
Group F: Turkey, Georgia, Portugal, Czech Republic

The journey to Euro 2024 started in March 2023, marking the beginning of an intense qualification cycle that ended in November 2023. Over the course of this period, teams battled fiercely for the opportunity to secure their place among Europe's top footballing nations.

Twenty automatic qualification spots were up for grabs, with two teams advancing from each qualification group. The host nation, Germany, earned an automatic berth, while the remaining three places were determined through play-offs involving the best-placed teams from the 2022-23 UEFA Nations League.

Euro 2024 takes place in Germany from June 14-July 14.

CAF announces dates for Champions League, Confederation Cup finals

The Confederation of African Football, CAF, has announced dates for the finals of the Champions League and Confederation Cup.

The finals will be played on home and away basis in May 2024.

The first leg of the CAF Confederation Cup final will be played on Sunday, May 12, 2024.

The second leg will be played the following weekend, on Sunday, May 19, 2024.

Nigeria's representative, Rivers United will face holders, USMA of Algeria in the quarter-final.

Stanley Eguma's side will take on the Algerians in the first leg at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium, Uyo, on Sunday.

For the CAF Champions League, the first leg of the final is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024.

The second leg will hold on Saturday, May 25, 2024.



CONCACAF Nations League: USA triumph over Mexico 2-0 to claim title

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

Gio Reyna and Tyler Adams found the net as the United States secured a 2-0 victory over Mexico in the CONCACAF Nations League final on Sunday, marking a historic moment as the Americans clinched all three titles in the tournament's history.

Adams scored a long-distance screamer in the 45th minute and Reyna fired home a loose ball from the edge of the

box in the 63rd for the USA, who also won Nations League crowns in 2021 and 2023.

"It never gets old winning titles for your country. I'll never take any of them for granted."

"The group of guys and the energy we have, I always love coming to camp. I'm at a loss for words right now," Reyna said.

Reyna hoped the, "Threepeat" would provide inspiration for competing in Copa America on home soil this

summer against South America's top teams.

"It's big for momentum," he said. "We've been together with our core group now. We know what it takes to win big matches."

"We can hopefully keep the momentum going into Copa America and maybe lift a trophy there," he added.

The Mexicans appeared to have a lifeline into the match in the 73rd minute when a penalty was awarded after US defender Antonee Robinson was ruled to

have fouled Santiago Gimenez in the penalty area. But a video review overturned the decision, and instead, Gimenez was issued a yellow card for simulation, blunting the emotions for a Mexican fightback.

The Americans won both prior CONCACAF Nations League crowns, beating Mexico 3-2 in extra time in the 2021 inaugural championship match and Canada 2-0 in last year's final after dispatching Mexico 3-0 in last year's semi-finals.

Dani Alves is a free man again after coughing £860,000 posting bail

ADOLOR OKOEGUALE

Brazilian ex-footballer Dani Alves, who was convicted of rape in Spain in February, has posted a whooping £860,000 bail and has been granted release from jail while awaiting his appeal, as confirmed by a court on Monday paving the way for his return home.

"We hereby inform you that the deposit of Daniel Alves' bail has been registered in the accounts of the 21st section of the Barcelona Court," said a statement.

A Spanish court on February 22 found the ex-Barcelona star, Alves guilty of raping a woman in a Barcelona nightclub in the early hours of December 31st 2022.

It took him until Monday to present the funds, meaning he remained in jail while his entourage tried to raise the money.

Alves had been in jail since he was arrested in January 2023. He made several attempts before his conviction to get bail,

but they were turned down partly on the basis that he was a flight risk since Brazil does not extradite citizens sentenced in other countries.

No date has been set for the appeals trial at a higher court in Barcelona. After that, the case could go to the Spanish Supreme Court in Madrid.

Alves' lawyers are seeking his acquittal while prosecutors want his prison sentence increased to nine years. The victim's lawyer wants him jailed for 12 years.

Tennis: Zverev cruises into semi-finals, face Alcaraz or Dimitrov next in Miami Open 2024

Alexander Zverev powered into the semi-finals of the Miami Open with a straight-sets triumph over Fabian Marozsan.

World No. 57 Marozsan had already upset Holger Rune and Alex de Minaur this week, but Zverev proved a step too far as the Ger-

man claimed his place in the last four in Miami for the first time since 2018 with a 6-3 7-5 win.

Having not dropped a set in the event so far, Zverev will be confident of continuing his bid for glory and will next face the winner of Carlos Alcaraz versus Grigor Dimitrov, who play later on Thursday.

It took Zverev just two attempts to break his opponent's serve with the Hungarian being made to pay for a host of unforced errors.

There were signs that Marozsan was beginning to grow into the game, though, as he forced a break point which he was unable to convert.



Zverev held out to clinch the opening set, although his body language suggested he may have been a little frustrated with the mistakes creeping into his game.

The umpire bore the brunt of Zverev's irritation when he was warned for a shot-clock violation. The disagreement continued during the break, as the second set continued to go with serve until Zverev finally secured his second break of the match to make it 7-5 and wrap up victory.

Zverev was quick to praise his opponent in his post-match interview.

He said: "Fabian is a great player, he played a fantastic match."

Sporting Lagos crash out of Federation Cup

Nigeria Premier Football League, NPFL, side Sporting Lagos have been knocked out of the Federation Cup.

Paul Offor's side were eliminated by Nigeria National League, NNL, side, Inter Lagos.

Inter Lagos claimed a 2-0 victory over their rivals in the semi-final fixture at the Mobolaji Johnson Arena, Onikan on Thursday.

Tony Obia and Abubakar Taheer scored for Inter Lagos in the game.

Inter Lagos will face the winner between Ikorodu City FC and First Bank in the Lagos State Federation Cup final on Sunday.

Sporting Lagos joined the likes of Remo Stars and Heartland among the big guns that have been eliminated from the competition.