

Judiciary workers on fitness exercise

P. 15



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Editorial

POWER SUPPLY: Geometric power plant as the game changer

P. 5

South East governors restate commitment on good governance

P. 3



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Tinubu Commissions 3 newly rehabilitated roads in Abia

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

President Bola Tinubu, has commissioned three newly rehabilitated roads in Aba, as part of Gov Alex Otti administration's commitment towards stemming the degradation of the city.

The commissioned roads include, Queens Street, Jubilee and Omoba Roads, aimed at repositioning Aba, as the industrial hub of the South East.

It also marked the first time President Tinubu would be commissioning any road constructed by the current set of governors in the country.

Speaking at the event, the President, represented by the Vice President, Sen. Kashim Shettima emphasized that quality leadership remains essential in the development and transformation of any society adding that the people of Abia are witnessing democracy dividends under the present administration of Governor Alex Otti.

"Within the last nine months, people of Abia state have witnessed changes in their fortunes. Abia is working, Tinubu is working and tomorrow is here", Shettima affirmed.

Contd on Page 2



The Vice-President, Sen Kashim Shettima (centre), Gov. Alex Otti (right) and Deputy Gov, Engr. Ikechukwu Emetu (left) and others during the cutting of tape to inaugurate one of the rehabilitated roads in Aba.

Aba agog as Geometric commences 24hrs Power distribution

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Aba business community was agog as President Bola Tinubu switched on the operations of the Geometric Integrated Power Project heralding the commencement of 24 hours power supply to Aba, the commercial hub of South East.

By the commissioning of the 188 Megawatts power generation and distribution facility, Abia state has become Nigerian's foremost

metropolis with 24 Hours uninterrupted Power Supply.

The independent Power Plant, is expected to accelerate rapid economic development of the Aba business community and households as well as address the electricity challenges in nine out of the 17 Local government areas in Abia

state.

Speaking while commissioning the project, President Tinubu acknowledged the power of dreams, resilience and persistence as exhibited by the Chairman of the Geometric Group, Prof Barth Nnaji despite facing challenges since the inception of the

project in 2014, and noted that his steadfast commitment has culminated in the realization of the remarkable project.

Represented by the Vice President, Senator Kashim Shettima, Tinubu said that the power project is dear to his administration, hence the support by the Federal government in ensuring that

the power project comes on stream for the benefit of Nigerians.

He emphasized that quality leadership was essential to the development of any society and described the project as a testament of good leadership and conducive business environment exemplified by Abia state governor, Dr Alex Otti, and encouraged the governor to continue his commendable efforts for the betterment of the society.

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News

Aba agog as Geometric commences

Contd from Page 1

In his address entitled "The Power To Dream", Governor Otti said the Geometric integrated power project has heralded a new era in electricity distribution and underscores the significant collaboration between government and private sector in advancing the nation's electricity value chain.

Governor Otti who reflected on his personal involvement in facilitating the project's funding during his tenure in the private sector, emphasized the transformative potential of the Geometric Power Project in driving economic and social rejuvenation, particularly in Aba.

"This city is very pivotal

to the economic trajectory of Nigeria and West Africa Region and I knew for a fact that if we got the fundamentals right, Aba will not just be a city that makes millionaires of dreamers, it would become a land of solutions to the many socioeconomic problems that assail us including worrisome levels of huge unemployment and pervasive poverty.

He said that his faith in Aba as an economic power house made him to get involved, in the proposal, the first time he saw the Geometric Integrated Power Plant.

According to him, his involvement was not due to the 50% of what had

been proposed could be achieved from the industrial output from this great city and it's environs but the millions of new jobs that would be created directly and indirectly in the short to medium term.

He further stated that the success of the power project would not just validate his unyielding belief in Aba but would send a clear signal to local and international investors that Aba is open for business.

Governor Otti highlighted the pivotal role played by stakeholders including former Governors, especially Senator Orji Uzor Kalu who issued initial waiver for the project, Igwe Alfred Achebe who played significant role

in resolving the ownership tussle and Professor Okey Oramah of AFREXIM Bank who got his bank to support the project.

The Governor stressed the importance of timely payment of electricity bills by citizens to ensure sustained operations and emphasized the need for adherence to regulatory standards, urging accountability from both consumers and the company.

Governor Otti while appreciating Professor Barth Nnaji, whose unwavering vision and resilience culminated in the realization of the project, said his administration would offer the necessary support to

Geometrics adding that the doors of the state government would remain open to engage them and guarantee the success of the project.

In his remarks, the Minister of Power, Chief Adebayo Adelabu expressed satisfaction that the project was commencing during his tenure and described it as a significant step towards overcoming Nigeria's power challenges.

He commended President Tinubu's consistent support which lead in resolving all bottlenecks surrounding the Geometric project as well as Professor Barth Nnaji's dedication in seeing the project to full operation.

In his address, the Chief

Executive Officer Geometric Integrated Power Generation Company, Professor Barth Nnaji, noted that the project, with an investment of approximately \$80 million, was initiated two decades ago to provide reliable power to the Aba business community to foster economic growth and improve the quality of life of the people.

Nnaji, a former Minister of Power and Professor of Manufacturing Engineering, expressed gratitude to President Tinubu for backing the project as well as Governor Otti for his support alongside other stakeholders who contributed to the project's realization.

Aba residents in jubillant mood over Geometric plant commissioning

From Blessing Nwokoma Aba

It was a moment of celebration, excitement and positive anticipations as Geometric Integrated Power commissioned one of its first 3 in 1 private power plant, capable of generating and distributing expandable 181 mega watts of electricity to Aba and its environs.

The commissioning brought a renewed hope for business to thrive and for citizens to enjoy 24 hours uninterrupted power supply and brought together people from all walks of life.

Geometric Integrated power plant which started 20years ago and have gone through many dirty waters, has been commissioned and hopes are high that the coming on board of Geometric powerplant would bring to an end the

incessant power failures in Aba and its environs.

Some Aba residents who spoke to our Reporter expressed optimism that the Aba business community would heave a sigh of relief with the coming on board of Geometric.

Speaking, the member representing Osisioma Ngwa South in the State House of Assembly, Hon Fyne Ahuama, applauded the laudable project situated in his constituency and prayed for the sustainability and maintenance of the facility, stating that the consistency and improved performance of the project will attract homogeneous investors to Abia and indeed Nigeria.

In his own reaction, the Chairman of Abia state

Market Traders Association, Chief A.E Udeigbo, commended the vision and creative innovation of Geometric group stating that the coming alive of the independent integrated power project (IPP) in Aba was a good omen to the business community. He reemphasised that it would make for improved cost effective production. The business mogul reiterated that the regular supply of power will attract more business interests to Aba and it's environs.

He then tasked the company to set up genuine taskforce who would ensure that customers who pay their bills are not short changed in any way; also for the taskforce to apprehend and deal decisively with anyone who may attempt to

sabotage the distribution of power in anyway.

The ASMATA boss further called on the company to train their staff on customer relationship hence he enjoined consumers to always pay their bills as at when due.

His Royal Highness EZE Chidil Nkoro Ocham II of Umuocham Autonomous community and the Chairman, Osisioma Ngwa Traditional Rulers Council eulogized the project and the man of the day Prof. Barth Nnaji who doggedly stire to have the power project come through despite all odds.

The traditional ruler said that the Aba power project which is 3 in 1 pack will illuminate the city of Aba, Abia State and indeed Nigeria.

He prayed that the

various stakeholders in the project should not in any way deviates or compromise so as to witness a regular power supply, that is pocket friendly which will meet the yearnings of Aba people.

The traditional ruler prayed that God should not allow any bottleneck/obstacle of any sort that would want to messmarize the dream of regular supply of affordable electricity.

The Mayor of Osisioma Ngwa Local Government Area, Hon Israel Nweke, could not hid his excitement over the commissioning of Geometric Power in his domain and in his time as mayor of Osisioma Ngwa. The council boss said the coming on board of the integrated private power plant will bring a lot of furtunes to the council, Abia state and Nigeria at large.

He stressed that regular supply of power would boost the IGR of the various levels of government, create employment opportunities for our teaming youths thereby reducing to the barest minimum the level of crimes and criminalities. He further opined that New industries will be attracted to relocate to Aba while the ailing ones will be revived

Reconciliation of Name

This Is to affirm that Samuel Eze Nwosu and Nwosu Eze Samuel, including Michael Otutu Nwosu are same person. I now wish to be known and addressed as NWOSU SAMUEL EZE. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. General public please take note.
NWOSU SAMUEL EZE

Tinubu Commissions 3 newly rehabilitated roads in Abia

Contd from Page 1

The Vice President who noted that governor Otti has brought his accomplishments, wealth of experiences, intellect and exposure to bear in the development of Abia, expressed optimism that many great things would still come to the people of the state.

Earlier in his remarks, governor Otti who said that

the rehabilitation of the roads were aimed at giving the people of the area unhindered access to all parts of the state also, aligns with his administration's promise to develop all parts of the state in line with his rebuilding agenda.

Governor Otti revealed that the roads are strategic to the development of the state, cited the case of Omoba road, which leads

to two major Local government areas of Aba South and Obingwa while the Queens street rehabilitated in about six months of his administration leads to the General Hospital and other strategic businesses in Aba.

The Governor while noting that the roads were built to quality standards according to specification with street lights, drainages

and storm water channeled to the Aba River, assured that the roads would stand the test of time.

He thanked the Presidency and people of the state for the support given to him since assumption of office as governor of the state as well as the contractor for working tirelessly to deliver the roads on time.

Reconciliation of Name

This is to affirm that Ikpeazu Obinna which appeared in some of my documents and Ikpeazu Obinna Stanley is same and one person. I now wish to be known and addressed as IKPEAZU OBINNA STANLEY. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. The general public should please take note.
IKPEAZU OBINNA STANLEY

Correction of Name and Date of Birth

This is to affirm that Chukwuekezie John Onwume, and Chukwu Ekezie John, which was wrongly written in my Bank Verification Number (BVN), are same person, and my date of birth is 8th February, 1967. I now wish to be known and addressed as CHUKWUEKEZIE JOHN ONWUME. All documents bearing my former names remain valid. General public should please take note.
CHUKWUEKEZIE JOHN ONWUME

Photo Speak

Pictorial activities of the commissioning of Geometric Power Plant and rehabilitated roads in Aba



News

NIAS moves to combat day-old chicks adulteration in South-East

By Precious Ekebuisi

The Nigerian Institute of Animal Science (NIAS), has moved to combat day-old chicks adulteration in Nigeria, adding that over \$3 billion is lost to agricultural input counterfeiting in Nigeria.

In a one day workshop organized by NIAS, in collaboration with Promex Multi-Services Nigeria Limited in Umuahia, Abia State, the Registrar/CEO, NIAS, Prof. Eustace A. Iyayi decried the huge losses Nigerian farmers suffer due to incessant counterfeiting and low quality agricultural inputs.

The NIAS boss who introduced 'Farmsured Technology'; a regulatory instrument to combat day-old chicks adulteration to farmers, noted that the institute is committed towards enhancing food security in Nigeria.

In his keynote lecture titled; 'Farmsured technology: A regulatory instrument for checking day-old chicks adulteration in Nigeria', the CEO, Agdyna Limited, Mr Ayo Okediji, expressed worries over noncompliance with good agricultural practices, such that there was a huge reliance on imports, which further denies farmers access to profit.

He said that the Farmsured technology, would enable farmers to access high-quality agricultural inputs, gain insights, and track quality day-old chicks.

The technology, he said would help add value to NIAS operations in terms of standardising livestock service centres, combating multiple taxations, product tracking and supply chain traceability, and protecting the interests of breeder farms and hatchery operators.

Speaking also, NIAS' Head, Inspectorate and Compliance, Mr Olufemi Atunbi, said that the use of technology to guarantee day-old chicks' protection and quality was long overdue.

He explained that with the technology, the agro-inputs will come in sealed, unadulterated, and protected form, free from tampering and diversion.

Meanwhile, the Abia state government has reiterated its commitments towards promoting agriculture in the state.

The Abia state Commissioner for Agriculture, Prof. Monica Ironkwe who disclosed this at the event, added that Gov. Alex Otti-led administration would collaborate with NIAS in uplifting Animal Husbandry in the state.

In her words: "We will do things differently to ensure food security in the state. This government is going to promote animal production as we all depend so much on it".

She commended NIAS for their commitments towards the growth and development of agriculture in Nigeria, urging the participants to take the knowledge gained in the workshop on animal production seriously.

Ironkwe further revealed that Abia state would soon establish an animal feed mill to help cut down the challenge of sourcing for good feeds for animals.

In his remark, the representative of NIAS Council, Prof. Kelvin Amaefula, noted that the institute is interested in the development of animal production in Nigeria; hence, the need to train poultry farmers in Abia state and beyond.

He expressed optimism that the Farmsured technology would improve traceability, transparency and guarantee sustainable profit.

Fielding questions from our reporter, one of the poultry farmers at the workshop, Okere Ugochinyere, thanked NIAS and other stakeholders for organizing the training, maintaining that it was timely, owing to the hyper-rise in input prices, implementing technologies that optimise feed production processes among others.

She promised to use the knowledge gained from the workshop to improve her poultry business.



Gov. Alex Otti receiving a souvenir from General Overseer, Dominion City Church, worldwide Bishop David Ogbueli.

Abia to prioritize job creation amidst rising insecurity

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Abia State Governor, Dr Alex Otti has reaffirmed the commitment of his administration to prioritize job creation as a way to bolster economic growth and curb rising insecurity.

Governor Otti stated this when he received in audience a delegation of the Dominion City Church, worldwide led by the General Overseer and Founder, Goldenheart Foundation, Bishop David Ogbueli.

Dr Otti highted the significance of job opportunities for fostering economic development and social stability in Abia, and

restated the pivotal role of employment in uplifting the well-being of the residents.

He underscored the correlation between unemployment and insecurity, noting that addressing joblessness was essential in mitigating various forms of societal unrest.

The Governor, also expressed gratitude to Bishop Ogbueli for proposing a partnership aimed at tackling unemployment which he said aligns with the state government's agenda.

Dr. Otti, welcomed the idea of collaborating with the Church in addressing the collapse of moral values and empower the youths through

skills acquisition programs so as to tackle unemployment.

Earlier, Bishop Ogbueli said that the Church has evolved programmes that will be used to conduct value reorientation and skills acquisition training for the youths in Abia.

The clergyman added that the church equally embarked on a programme called "Southeast Redemption and Development" to address the collapse of moral values in the society.

He highlighted the Church's role in societal transformation, and noted that the church is poised to work in partnership with the government to facilitate youth development because of its

Varsity Don bemoans female genital mutilation in Nigeria

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru and Adindu Stephanie

A university lecturer, Prof Mabel Onwuka has decried Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a destructive practice that has no health benefit in the society.

Prof Onwuka who is the Director, Centre for Gender Youth and Child Development, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike (MOUAU), Prof. Mabel Onwuka who disclosed this, called for a collaborative effort to end FGM in Nigeria.

Fielding questions from newsmen as part of celebration of International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM 2024 in Umuahia, Abia State, Prof. Onwuka maintained that the practice has no benefits bearing to the girl child..

Prof. Onwuka said that rather the practice causes severe bleeding, urinating problems, cysts, infections, as well as complications during childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths.

The Professor of Soil Science, further revealed that over 200 million women and girls within the age of 15 to 49 years are living with the consequences of FGM worldwide, while Nigeria with a total of 19.9 million females was listed as having the world's third highest number of females who have undergone FGM.

She described this year's theme; Her Voice, Her Future, as apt and timely, calling on government at all levels, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and

other critical stakeholders to promote the elimination of female genital mutilation, through collaborative and systematic efforts.

In her words: "There's an urgent need to invest sufficiently to reach the target set in the Sustainable Development Goals of eliminating FGM by 2030".

She added that MOUAU, through its Centre for Gender Youth and Child Development remains open for collaboration with relevant agencies to amplify the voices of survivors and support their efforts to reclaim their lives, based on their bodily autonomy.

Prof. Onwuka maintained that the time was ripe for a collective efforts to eliminate this unhealthy practice against humans.

This, she said violates girls' child rights to good health, right to be free from torture and inhuman treatment, right to security and physical integrity.



Prof. Mabel Onwuka

Abia Chief Judge assures JUSUN of improve staff welfare

By Chinyere Nwachukwu

Abia State Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Lilian Abai has restated her determination towards ensuring the improved welfare of Abia State Judiciary workers.

Justice Abai gave the assurance while receiving new officers of the Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) who paid her a courtesy visit at the High Court complex Umuahia and pledged her cooperation to the new JUSUN leadership.

She promised that the issue of 2022 -2024 promotion would be attended to, while the staff of the Judiciary Service Commission who were skipped in the CONJUS arears has been channeled to the appropriate quarters for prompt attention.

She congratulated the new officers of the JUSUN on their peaceful election and urged them

to be lawful in their responsibility of fighting for the welfare of the staff of the judiciary, disclosing that some staff of the judiciary were assigned some ad-hoc duties from time to time.

Speaking earlier, the State Chairman, JUSUN, Comrade Chinedu Eze said the visit was to present the new leadership of the union to the Chief Judge and thanked her for her continual support to the union.

He used the forum to solicit the assistance of the Chief Judge in respect of JSC staff who were skipped during the payment of the CONJUS arrears; as well as delay in the release and implementation of 2022-2024 staff promotion, while

pledging the continued support and loyalty of the JUSUN to the Chief Judge.

Recall that recently, JUSUN, Abia State chapter elected new officers to lead the union for the next four years. Amongst those elected include, Comrade Chinedu NwachukwuEze, Chairman, and OkpanChijioke, Vice-Chairman. Others are, Chibueze Nwachukwu, Assistant Secretary, Onwuchekwa Kelechi, Treasurer, IhesiahaChinenye, Assistant Financial Secretary, EkekeUchechukwu (Esq), Legal Adviser, NwoguUtomdinachi, Internal Auditor, Comrade Ukonu Edward, PRO, AkwaranduChimaobi, Organising Secretary and NdukakuNwagbara as Financial Secretary.

NATIONAL Ambassador

"Uplift the people, project the nation" Tuesday 16th January 2024

Power Supply: The Geometric Power plant as the Game Changer

After Several years of hard work and overcoming manner all of obstacles, the Geometric Power Plant has finally come on stream. It was switched on by no less a personality than the president of the federal Republic of Nigeria President Ahmed Tinubu who was ably represented by the Vice President, Kashim Shettima, on Monday 26th February 2024.

The Commissioning was witnessed by top personalities that included the Abia State Governor His Excellency Dr. Alex Chioma Otti.

The Geometric power plant couldn't have come on stream at a better time than now that Nigeria is currently witnessing grave epileptic power supply across the length and breath of the country.

Countless number of manufacturing concerns have folded on account of inadequate power supply, The situation in

Abia and its environs appears to be worst.

The pumping into the National grid of the 141 mega-



watts from the Geometric Power Plants is expected to ensure uninterrupted power supply to Abia metropolis, and its environs. This is quite a cheering news for the numerous manufacturing concerns in Abia whose utmost need is constant electricity supply. Such a situation will enhance the manufacturing environment and ensure the growth of SmEs in the State

The Abia State Governor Dr. Alex Otti has also

promised to extend the uninterrupted power supply to all parts of the state this is equally gladdening to the hearts.

We have to give kudos to Prof Bath Nnaji, his wife Mrs. Agatha

Nnaji and indeed the entire management and staff of Geometric Power Plc on their resilience and hardwork in ensuring the success of the plant.

There are no doubts that the plant is the game changer which Abia desperately needs. With the aggressive road infrastructure, efficient security mechanism, enhancing the ease of doing business all being put a place, and now an uninterrupted power supply, Abia is already on its way to being the number one investment destination centre in the country.

We also have to Commend the Abia State Governor, Dr. Alex Otti for ensuring that all these came into fruition

To God be the glory.

LETTERS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO:
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Geometric Power Plant in Aba

Dear Editor,

The coming on board of the Geometric Power Plant is a welcome development which is expected to trigger positive economic activities and development not only in Aba but in its environs.

There is no doubt of the role power can play in the development of growth of any society. The absence of regular electricity in Aba has affected the survival of many industries and hinders the growth of its economic potentials for years, Aba has remained the milk cow for many agencies like the power distributing companies.

These Federal agencies have seen Aba as an exploitative ground for years. Aba groaned under darkness and high traffic payment.

The people were made to pay for darkness in the name of paying for light which they were tasked to pay for transformers were not delivered.

Often and on, Cables were cut which always threw the city into total darkness, yet bills are sent to consumers for payment.

Today, the story is about to change with the coming on board of this Geometric Power Plant. The company promised a 24 hours electricity to the city.

The residents are optimistic that the promise will be kept and they would no longer be made to bore the brunt of replacing stolen cables, aged and burnet transformers.

Also, they expect that they will be paying for services rendered and that pre-paid meters will be issued to them to avoid exploitative billings of the past era.

Chima Eze
Aba

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OPINION

ENSURING INTERDEPENDENCE OF CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

— SIR CHRISTOPHER IGWE

Culture and development are two important life transforming concepts which shape the affairs of a people when properly harnessed.

However, while both culture and development may complement each other if properly integrated; each may serve as a constraint to other if both are misconceived or allowed to run parallel to each other in development planning.

Culture is defined as a system of ideals, values, norms, beliefs and customs of a people.

It is a pervasive agent of social stabilization which is transferred from one generation to another to give social character to a people.

On the other hand, development is concerned with the extent a nation is able to expand the output and productive capacity of her socio-economic processes to satisfy felt needs of the People.

Such expansion must, no doubt, be capable of producing quality goods and services that will meet the people's needs and aspirations. Thus, for the expansion to be meaningful, it must principally achieve a sustainable growth rate that is far higher than the growth rate and needs of the human population.

Invariably, therefore, the economy of a national development must, and should be able to, attain an appreciable reduction in unemployment, reduce inequality and eradicate cyclical poverty in the population.

Customarily culture, whether ascribed or universally held, is expressed and translated through social structures and institutions of role articulation in any society. Preferences and

limitations, including symbols and expressions of societal ideals and values, are therefore culture-driven and culture-specific.

For instance, the idea of corruption and social vices takes the shape, sensitivity and meaning which culture accords to them. Equally, an acceptable social value of honesty, integrity and approved candor of responsible citizenship in any society most descriptively reflects the culture of the people. In this regard, one should see culture as an important factor not only in development but also in policy formulation.

Similarly, development should not be seen as a mere statistical evidence of marginal rise in per capita income, rather, it must be seen as a more encompassing generic process of positive multiplication of tangible and intangible goods and services. More importantly therefore, between development and culture lies a narrow region of perception and interpretation of the real needs and aspiration of the people.

Consequently, not only must such need be for the present population, it must address the needs of succeeding generations. This however, can only be expressively realized in terms of cultural relativity and dynamism because culture is relative and dynamic.

It is pertinent therefore that at this interjection are development and culture conceived as a multi-dimensional process of goal attainment, goal differentiation, goal divergence and goal convergence.

Consequently, the outcome of the inter-relationship of culture and development must be

☉ one should see culture as an important factor not only in development but also in policy formulation. ☉

capable of reducing inequality and promoting a sustainable level of eradication of poverty in the population and enhance welfare of the people.

Regrettably, the Nigerian civil war which should have been used to re-position the country for an enduring industrial development filtered away without any lesson learnt.

Instead, Nigeria has constantly been faced with inconsistency of policies in harnessing issues concerning culture and development.

Nonetheless, it is obvious that any nation that must develop, must first identify or combine between technological, scientific, medical, industrial or agricultural revolution to prioritize its development, or may as well remain the dumping ground of other developments.

Therefore, there is need to establish and to domesticate institutional paraphernalia that is capable of generating the necessary value and attitudinal rebirth through a cultural rearmament to attain expected heights and greatness.

Need to Restore Peace in Nigeria

By Eze Urasi

Pace is an essential ingredient in the growth and development of any community, state or nation and absence of peace in any setting engenders fear, disillusionment, destruction and other negative vices.

Nigeria as an entity for decades has been engulfed by insecurity challenges in all political regions of the country including armed robberies, kidnappings, rustling, killings of people and wanton destruction of properties.

In fact, the situation has degenerated to an extent that some groups are now calling for legalizing of the use of firearms, while some wealthy Nigerians now move about with security agents.

The problem of insecurity has led to the formation of local security outfits called vigilantes by some communities to assist the formal security agencies in their various

domains.

Sadly, these vigilante groups though commendable, have not yielded the desired peace everyone yearns for. For instance, the Federal government

has

continued to draft

the military to the

North East region,

yet the Boko Haram,

bandits and the herdsme

n have

continued

in attacks in that zone, killing the people and destroying their farmlands and cattle.

Unarguably, the Southern States of

Nigeria are not free from the insecurity threat. The states in the South-South, most of which produce basic food items in Nigeria over the years, have been enmeshed in oil

bunkering,

and

stealing of petroleum products,

kidnapping of oil workers for ransom

and sea piracy.

Also, the South West and South East

have all

had their

fair shares in their fight for self

determination and the problems of abduction and kidnapping for ransom and armed robberies. On the

whole, no section of Nigeria is left out in the insecurity saga.

The formation of a regional vigilante group has proved very successful as some states are calling for State Police, but the fact remains that this ugly trend should be halted for growth and development to thrive in the country and save the nation from sliding into political and economic oblivion.

Interestingly, our leaders have now realized that the use of force cannot achieve the peace which the nation desires.

Therefore, the Federal government must rise up and entrench policies that will grow the economy, so that our youths can find jobs and be useful.

The judiciary and political institutions should be strengthened and their pronouncements strictly carried out to the letter, while our traditional rulers, religious and political leaders should objectively support every good move genuinely to restore peace in the country.

☉ our leaders have now realized that the use of force cannot achieve the peace which the nation desire. ☉



THE SECRETARIAT

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CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF MEMORANDA

Following the recent inauguration of the Full Visitation Panel for Abia State University (ABSU) by His Excellency, Dr Alex C. Otti, OFR, the Panel respectfully invites memoranda from interested individuals, groups and communities — including but not limited to — University officials, staff, retirees, students, alumni, parents, landlords (including the host communities), property owners, business operators and all other interested members of the general public.

Such Memoranda are to be written in line with the Panel's Terms of Reference as follows:

1. To inquire into the level of the implementation of the white paper on the last Visitation Panel Report.
2. To look into the leadership quality of the University, evaluating the roles of the Governing Council, the Vice Chancellor and other principal officers and determine how they align with international best standards in university administration.
3. To look into the financial management of the University including statutory allocations, grants and support from local and international development institutions/intervention agencies; internally generated revenue within the recommended period and determine whether it is in consonance with international best practices and appropriate regulations.
4. To investigate the application of funds; particularly special grants and loans meant for specific projects; to determine the status of such projects and their suitability for further funding.
5. To examine the adequacy and quality of staff and staff development programme of the university within the period in review and identify gaps.
6. To assess the teacher student ratio and make recommendations based on best practices.
7. To determine the relationship between ABSU and the various statutory bodies it interacts with according to the laws for the purpose of supervision, planning, finance,

discipline, guidance and any other layer or structure of relationship including the NUC, the University Governing Council, State Ministry of Education and others.

8. To examine the laws establishing the University — including the relationship between the various internal organs, units, offices and indicate the way the laws have been observed by competent authorities and also suggest modifications.

9. To trace the historical evolution of the university and the stock of its general achievements; determine what needs to change.

10. To examine the general security measures within the University and the suitability of these measures for realities of the times.

11. To examine the process and structures of discipline of students in the University in line with extant laws.

12. To consider any other factor that may support the transformation of the University into a world class centre of learning, research and administration and make appropriate recommendations.

Each memorandum shall be typewritten; double line spaced and set to Times New Roman, font Size 12. Additionally, authors are required to reproduce their memoranda into ten copies and address same to the Panel's Chairman through the Secretary. Interested stakeholders are encouraged to submit their memoranda to the Panel's Secretariat at Room 18, Political Block, Government House, Umuahia on or before March 5, 2024. Submissions can also be done electronically as a PDF attachment to the Panel's email address: absuvs2024@gmail.com on or before the said date. Submitted memoranda are to be sealed. Authors are encouraged to state how they can be reached by the Panel.

Mr Dodoh Okafor,
Panel Secretary

Health

Effect of good emotional/mental health care

By: Jacqui Iwu

Iwelcome everyone to my first Edition of **-YOUR BODYIMAGE!** In this space, I will be talking about several neglected characteristics/factors of life which either add or rob us of our total health and bodyimage. Let me also say that, I am not going to sugar coat anything i am saying in this column so we can really understand how bad certain things we deal with are.

In Africa, there are certain aspects of life that are taken for granted which also turn out to be the most vital aspects that fuels/destroys good living and success in our businesses, career.

Have you heard of anyone in Nigeria sharing his/her mental situations? Infact when you hear such discussions, they are talking about the mad man or woman roaming the streets. I am sorry but ... it might sound harsh to say this, but we have a lot of Nigerians with mental issues in suits, designers' gowns walking the streets of Nigeria. You see such persons in our banks, business offices, shopping malls, local markets, even churches and mosques. Don't even get me talking about the husbands/wives and children we have in our homes.

You walk into a shop and after pricing an item, you quietly left either because, you noticed the item is not exactly what you want or the price is beyond your budget. Next thing, the shop owner starts to abuse you, cursing you with all kinds of ugly names. At times you see them shouting at you as you walk away asking you to come and take it for free. Oleshi...barawo!

Seriously? All these names because you refused to buy from them?

Hahhaaa!! Anger+desperation + lack of emotional control+ mental problem rolled up in one bubble huhhhh?

How about your boss walking into the office and you said- Good morning sir! He snapped at you and slammed his door at your face! Transferred aggression?

Now don't even get me talking about the daily drama that happens with most husbands/wives at home. Infact some of these emotional dramas has become a routine that, if one partner decides to calm down one good day, the other one will be suspicious...of the partner having a hidden agenda. Can you believe a situation so bad that when someone is not acting abnormal, his/her spouse starts suspecting there is fire on the mountain? In other words, normal has become abnormal to such couples.

There are people whose moods swings like a pendulum and God help you if you call /visit them at such moody conditions... God help you! The funny part is that, most of them are even bold enough to tell you their mood is bad daily and they can't deal with anything you need as if it's healthy to be regularly moody & bitchy. We all have our good and bad moods but when it becomes a daily stuff, cracking you up to scream at your children, workers, spouses, then it's a mental condition that should be treated.

Is there still need to list the causes of these emotional /mental disorders? We all are aware of the hardship going on in our country. There are various factors that trigger these



mental disorders like sour love relations issues, divorce, stale marriage, terminal diseases, failure to succeed etc. Apart from these, the accumulation of STRESS due to the fight to survive in a downward spiral economy like Nigeria can turn an "Angel into a crack head".

The socio-economic rot in

Nigeria which have pushed everyone old and young into hustling everybody to survive hunger, avoid ghetto life, enjoy luxurious life has messed with lots of people's mental health. Some people just walk the streets looking for ways of survival but nothing comes up. Those who swore to die in the process dip their mind and souls into all kinds of ugly stuff you don't even want to hear about. For this group of people, their own mental issues/torture is way beyond what I am talking about here. You can only live with them to observe their own mental instability and torture.

For the regular man and woman who decides to earn a living in an honest way, if by mistake, he lost all either by robbery attacks, kidnapping, or natural disaster, the emotional and mental disorder is unbearable. Such people will not come out dressed in rags like the usual mad persons in the streets. They will

still be mingling with the society. You would not know they have a mental issue till you trigger it by mistake.

Question now is, how do you tackle Emotional /Mental health? First, you can't solve a problem which you fail to acknowledge is there with you. Most Nigerians do not even want to believe they have mental issues. To such person, you are insulting them and calling them crazy. So how can such person with such mindset seek help?

Abroad, no one is shy of being certified as having mental breakdown. Such persons go all out to seek for clinical therapy, counselors depending on the area of the mental issue. They believe in speaking out and getting the necessary help unlike in Nigeria.

I guess, the patient/doctors confidentiality also plays a huge role here. I have heard many Nigerians talk about their doctors, counselors exposing their mental health to the public so this has hindered most people not to share their private matters with therapists.

If you ask me, I think Nigerians still have this believe that mental health is not serious health issue so, if you are lucky to have read this today and this sounds like you, stop the negative mindset and seek help. Mental Health is very much real and lots of people in Nigeria are walking around with mental problem disrupting other people's life, career, and business.

Hey, there is nothing to be ashamed of too. It's better for you to get help you need than to allow yourself fall apart to the extent that people will be avoiding to either see you, associate with you or even do any business transactions with you. By the way, doing a business transaction with someone with a mental health is very difficult because, he/she keeps disorganizing your plans/actions and focus.

Let us continue this discussion by adding your voice too!!

X - @businesswithjak



I read but don't understand

Dear Auntie Eberechukwu, I have problem with my study, I read but cannot understand. Please help me so I can understand what I read.

Chidiebube - Umuahia

Chidiebube, whenever you are reading, make sure that there is no distraction around you. Concentrate on what you are reading, focus on the materials you are using for study and stay in a quiet place. Do not lie down on the bed while reading, sit on a chair and keep books on top of the table. Sit upright and ensure you get every materials ready to avoid standing up to search for anything while studying which could bring distraction and loss of concentration. After reading, evaluate yourself by asking questions. Write the answers down and look for the correct answers from your materials. Try this often until the habit of reading and understanding is fully inculcated into you.

I cannot accommodate her

Dear Auntie Eberechukwu, I have a sister-in-law, who is about 30 years old. She took in out of wedlock, when my husband told me about it, I advised that he should take her to the person responsible, but my husband refused stating that she is

confused about the person that is responsible. He told me she is coming to stay in the house with us which I refused. The next day, he brought her with all her luggage. Now, the lady is lazy, she does not know how to do house chores or manage things. She is causing trouble between my husband and I. She has no respect or regard for me, she beats my children anyhow and gossips with my name. I want to leave the house for them so that I will have rest of mind and peace. I can't accommodate her

Cecilia - Umuahia
Madam Cecilia, leaving the house will not solve the problem, you have to stay and make sure that there is peace in the house. Call her to order and make her understand that she is supposed to be in the house of the man who impregnated her and not in her brother's house.

So, she is supposed to be ashamed for being pregnant out of marriage. At the same time, try to render help to her as a sister-in-law. Understand your husband, he is protecting his sister's interest. That shouldn't mean he will keep quiet and watch her misbehave. She has roles to play in the house, especially some duties she can do because of her condition. Please forgive her and make her your friend.

Let her put to bed before any other thing. Pregnancy can cause some women to be aggressive and nagging until they put to bed, then they change to their normal self.

Both of you should understand and tolerate each other.

He cannot satisfy me in bed

Dear Auntie Eberechukwu, My husband will only stay on top of me for few minute and goes out. He cannot satisfy me in bed, just tell me how I am going to enjoy sex. The most painful part of it all is that whenever I am charged, ready to enjoy the fun, that is when he will go out. I will be on the bed shouting because I need sex seriously. At that time, his penis will be very cold and fallen no matter what I do, it will not rise again. Please help me, I don't know what to do.

Jessy - PH

Jessy, I suggest both of you go to the hospital and see a specialist who will give you informed advise and best solution, since this platform is an interactive one, if I tell you to hold him on the bed when his penis falls and not performing, of what benefit is that? If he cannot satisfy you, live to endure and hold yourself. Maybe he acts according to his Libido while you are more sexually active than him.

Probably, you want a man on you for hours or more, yet without satisfaction.

Your husband will get weak since his Libido is lower, ejaculation requires strength.

Are you sure your quest or sexual satisfaction is normal or artificially induced? Both of you should see a doctor.

Cheers.

Who will I choose?

Dear Auntie Eberechukwu, Please help me to choose. There are two beautiful ladies presented to me last Christmas to choose from for marriage. Two of them look alike. I fell in love with both. Their jobs are the same, though I am not interested in their money. I don't know whom to choose. Do you know that their names are the same? This is a big task before me because what I am looking for is in both of them. Please help me.

Joromi - Abuja.

Joromi, you have to apply wisdom in this task before you. Since both of them are beautiful, go for the one that has good manners. I mean the one that will not cause problem or lead you into problems. Frame something and narrate to both of them, watch out and see how they are going to expose their real selves. The one who will keep the secret will be your wife. Tell them you don't want anybody to hear whatever story you narrated to them, watch out and see their reactions. Let them know that you are not interested with the marriage. Remember your actions should be individualized. None is supposed to know what you discussed with the other, monitor them for a long time, then find out who will obey your instructions. You can then make your choice.

News

Magistrates end workshop on criminal justice

By Chinyere Nwachukwu

Abia state Chief Justice, Hon. Justice Lilian Abai has charged magistrates in the state to be efficient, resourceful and current in their practices.

Justice Abai gave the charge while declaring open a workshop for all Magistrates in the state judiciary, describing training and re-training as indispensable in the field of Law.

She promised that the leadership of the state judiciary would not rest on its oars, in ensuring that Magistrates are in tune with the time and urged them to be attentive and serious with the workshop.

In his paper presentation, the Chairman Abia State Law Reform and Review Commission, Justice K.O. Wosu (Rtd) who lectured on the topic: "Issues and misconceptions of statutory provisions of bail in criminal procedure and practices", highlighted certain issues that are overlooked in adjudicatory functions in criminal practices as it relates to bail.

He also stated that it was incumbent on every courts to constantly update themselves with the current position of the law on every subject in order not to be swaged to misapply the law or fail to exercise their discretion appropriately.

According to Justice Wosu, bailable offences are those felonies not punishable with death or capital offences, while other offences are classified as misdemeanor or simple offences and identified

the following factors as conditions for granting or refusing bail in court; nature of charge, strength of evidence, punishment in event of conviction, previous criminal records among others.

In his paper presentation, Hon Justice A. U. Kalu, who spoke on "Understanding the Abia State Administration of Criminal Justice Law No. 12 of 2014, said that his paper aimed at creating a deeper awareness of the provisions of the Abia State Administration of Criminal Justice Law already in operation adding that all the stakeholders in the sector have to be vigilant and have the responsibility to make sure that the provisions of the law are implemented faithfully so that the intention of the legislature in providing an avenue for a speedy dispensation and conclusion of criminal trials in Abia state would be realized.

Speaking, the Deputy Registrar in charge of Special Duties, High Court Umuahia, Mrs. Nnenna Kalu described the workshop as very resourceful, appreciated the leadership of the judiciary for putting up the programme and advised the beneficiaries to utilize the knowledge acquired.

The workshop also featured a health talk on "Stress Management" by Princess Orié Agonmou of Ministry of Health, Umuahia.



Vice President, Kashim Shettima (c), Gov. Alex Otti (r) And member Representing Aba North & South Fed. Constituency, Hon Mascort Ikwecheghe arriving the venue the one of the commissioned projects in Aba

We are committed to non-partisan approach to governance, regional development

-- South East governors

By Amarachi Uzoukwu

Governors of the South East geo-political zone have restated their resolve to work collectively irrespective of political affiliations to address the regional challenges in order to foster development and economic revitalization of the zone.

Governor Alex Otti of Abia state disclosed this, when he received in audience, a delegation of the Joint Body of South East Council of Traditional Rulers and representatives of Igbo Archbishops and Bishops, led by the Obi of Onitsha, Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe.

Dr Otti who emphasized the imperative of setting aside political differences to prioritize governance and address pressings issues facing the Southeast region, pointed out that no meaningful development can take place in an atmosphere of insecurity.

He noted that regional security challenges require a unified approach by the governors to curb youth restiveness and provide employment opportunities for people of the zone and highlighted on-going efforts by the governors to address regional issues through regular meetings and discussions.

Addressing the economic concerns in the Zone, Governor Otti emphasized the need to create a conducive environment to attract investments and businesses back to the region and stressed the importance of government intervention to stimulate economic growth and job creation in the South East region.

He added that governors of the region must take deliberate decisions to safeguard the economy by creating jobs.

"Government needs to come in and support the private

sector to create jobs, if not for anything at all to ensure that insecurity is reduced to the barest minimum", he said.

The Abia Chief Executive highlighted some on-going initiatives in Abia State aimed at revitalizing key economic hubs like Aba and Umuahia to attract investments and spur development adding that his administration has a clear plan to fix the state.

Dr Otti, who noted that Aba has the capacity to develop the entire South East region if properly harnessed disclosed that power supply was the major enabler required to spur development in Aba and the entire South East region.

He revealed that the commissioned 141 Megawatt Geometric Power Plant in Aba would provide uninterrupted power supply to Aba and its environs pointing out that

his government has entered discussions with the investors on how to provide 24 hours power supply to all parts of the State.

The Governor pledged continued engagement with the joint body and assured that he would take into account the concerns raised during the meeting as part of their ongoing efforts to promote unity, development, and prosperity in the Southeast region.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation and Igwe of Onitsha, Igwe Nnaemeka Achebe said the aim of the body which came into existence three years ago was to foster peace and reconciliation in South East.

Igwe Achebe, who stated that the visit to Governor Otti was their first physical meeting, as the group engaged with some governors in the zone virtually.

He said that they are

committed to projecting peace, mutual respect, love and wellbeing of Ndi Igbo and commended governor Otti for his achievements, describing him as a standard for Igbo leaders.

The revered monarch, called on the South East governors to come together with integration plan for the South East region and stressed the need for Ndi Igbo to build a nation within a nation for economic prosperity.

In their separate speeches, the Chairman, South East Traditional Rulers Council, Igwe Lawrence Agubuzu, the Chairman, Center for Values and Leadership, Professor Pat Utomi, the Methodist Archbishop of Umuahia Archdiocese, Most Rev Chibuzo Opoko and Dr Uju Agomoh amongst others, said that the body expects the South East Governors Forum to champion the integration of the region irrespective of party affiliations.

Abia lawmaker offsets JAMB fees of indigent students

By Chukwuemeka Egejuru

The Chairman, House Committee on Public Service, Abia State House of Assembly, Hon Erondu Uchenna Erondu Jnr has paid the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) 2024 examination registration fees for 120 indigent students in his constituents.

Speaking with newsmen shortly after the enrollment exercise at Comprehensive Secondary School, Osusu Amaukwa, Obingwa Local Government Area, Hon Erondu, who represents Obingwa-West State constituency, reiterated his commitment towards human capital development to his constituents and beyond.

He noted that there are many brilliant students in Obingwa-West State constituency particularly and Abia state in general with great potentials for the state and the country at large, whose parents cannot afford the JAMB registration fee while some lacked proper mentorship on which course to study and institution to apply, hence, the need for the exercise.

The lawmaker also disclosed his readiness to use everything at his disposal to attract dividends of democracy to his people.

Hon. Erondu further charged beneficiaries of this benevolence, to take their studies seriously to ensure they perform excellently in their chosen academic career.

In their responses, one of the

related beneficiaries, Miss Enyioma Gift, from Mgboko Umuahia, thanked the lawmaker for the magnanimity, adding that she has already given up hope on the registration of 2024 JAMB due to her family's financial difficult situation until help came through Erondu Jnr.

Miss Enyioma prayed God to bless the founder, Igodo Igwe Foundation, and also promised to take her studies seriously.

Also, Mr. Nwandiko Victor Uchekukwu, the father, of one of the beneficiaries; Miss Chioma Rejoice Uchekukwu from Osa Okea, Ahiaba Ward Five, expressed joy and happiness over the huge financial burden taken off their shoulders.

Milestone

Judiciary workers' road fitness walk

By: Chinyere Nwachukwu

Abia state Judiciary staff, last weekend embarked on a road fitness exercise aimed at ensuring a sound and physically fit workforce.

The fitness walk, which took the workers from High Court through the Government Station Layout, back to the High Court, Umuahia, witnessed the participation of the top notch in the judiciary.

Speaking after the exercise, the state Chief Judge, Hon Justice Lilian Abai said that the road with was initiated to enhance both the mental and physical health of the staff.

Hon. Abai also disclosed that the initiative would be a monthly exercise adding that health remains an important ingredient for an effective and efficient service delivery of the staff.

She expressed her profound gratitude to all categories of staff who turn out en mass for the road health walk and thanked God for a successful outing.

Barring his impression on the exercise, the President Customary Court of Appeal, Justice Okey Nwamuo described the initiative as apt and called on all staff who could not make it to ensure that they turn out in subsequent editions.

Also speaking, the Attorney General and the Commissioner for Justice, Abia State, Chief Ikechukwu Uwanna described the walk exercise as fun, interesting and advised that the state should adopt same.

In her own speech, the DCR Protocol, Magistrate Uzaro Onuoha expressed joy and thanked God for a miracle healing she received during the health walk adding that the innovation has a numerous advantage, health wise and called on those who did not join in the exercise to wake up.

Speaking also, the Director for Finance, Mrs. Chimuanya Nneoma Christy and the Chairman, Welfare Association, Mrs. Obioma Herbert lauded the exercise as the first of its kind in the history of the Judiciary and commended the Chief Judge of not allowing any form of discrimination among the staff participation in the exercise and pray God to continue to give her more wisdom in the discharge of her duties.

In a vote of thanks, the Acting Chief Registrar, Mrs. Ngori Anagha Nwoke thanked the staff for their impressive turn out and noted that the exercise has ignited joy and unity in their hearts.

The exercise was equally attended by members of the Bench, Bar, Staff of the Judiciary and also Security Agencies among others.



Milestone

Judiciary workers' road fitness walk contd.



News

ASUU urges FG to save public universities from imminent Collapse

By Okere Ugochinyere

The Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), has decried the underfunding of Federal and State universities in Nigeria, calling on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to save the public University system from imminent collapse.

They also called on the Federal Government to immediately set in motion the process that will lead to the reviewing and signing of the Nimi Briggs-led renegotiated draft agreement.

The President of ASUU, Prof Emmanuel Osodeke, made this known while briefing newsmen at ASUU Secretariat, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State.

He noted that the call was part of the union's resolution at the end of its recent National Executive Council (NEC) meeting, at the Niger Delta University Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa.

Osodeke said that such action would show a mark of goodwill and assured hope for Nigeria's public universities.

According to him, Nigerian academics are tired of platitudes laced with disdain for intellectuals, as such only concrete steps to restore their eroded dignified lives can guarantee lasting peace on our campuses.

The ASUU President, said that the then Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr Chris Ngige, truncated the process at the point of finalising the reviewed draft agreement.

He said: "From 2021 till date,

the document has remained in its draft form.

"The most obvious implication of the truncation of the renegotiation of the agreement is that the university teachers in Nigeria have been on the same salary regime since 2009, when the value of naira to a dollar was N120.

"Today, it is above N1,500.

"It is no longer news that the salaries of the highest paid professor, on the average, has been reduced to a meagre \$210

activated through the National Wages, Salaries and Income Commission.

He expressed worry that the January salaries of its members were paid in the guise of 'new IPPIS (Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System), despite government's announcement of the exit of tertiary institutions from the system.

Osodeke, revealed that the union's position had been that the government should revert to

quarterly releases of university funds to enable them design and implement their salary payment plans.

"In addition, government should release promotion arrears and pay all academics who were unjustly denied their salaries arising from the obnoxious imposition of IPPIS," he said.

On the hike in school fees, the ASUU National President disclosed that

NEC condemns it in its entirety, the wave of fee hike without inputs of the victims across our campuses, insisting that it would jeopardise aspirations of many students.

He maintained that students

and their parents would have been saved the additional burden of hiked fees had the federal government kept faith with the agreement in 2013 which provided for N1.3 trillion over a period of six years.

Osodeke alleged that the daily scandalous reports of stupendous funds diverted from government treasuries at state and federal levels have continued to reinforce their belief that resources available to the country could support government-funded university education.

He listed other unresolved ASUU grievances to include, withheld seven and half months salary in federal universities and varying months in state universities, arrears of earned academic allowances, illegal dissolution of governing councils and Integrated Personnel And Payroll Information System (IPPS).

The Union further called for the stripping of former Minister of Communication and Digital Economy, Isah Patami, of the status of full-time Professor, saying that the Vice Chancellor and management of FUTO were wrong to award a serving Minister, a professorial status.

They also accused the VC of FUTO, Professor Nnenna Oti of allegedly victimizing members of ASUU in the Owerri-based Federal University.

In his words, "We call on other patriots in the media, labour movement, student groups and civil society organisations to join our resolve to reposition the Nigerian university system for a transformed Nigeria".



ASUU President, Prof. Emmanuel Osodeke

per month.

"This is one of the least in the world!"

Osodeke regretted the non implementation of the unilateral award of 35 and 25 per cent by President Muhammad Buhari administration, which had been

Govt. inaugurates ASMATA, charges them on professionalism

By Blessing Anienwe

The Abia State government through the Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Industry, Dr. Chimezie Isaac Ukaegbu has inaugurated the Amalgamated Market Traders Association (ASMATA) with a charge for them to be professional in carrying out their duties. Dr. Ukaegbu also disclosed that the governor, Dr Alex Otti is committed towards turning things around positively and in choosing people of capacity who can deliver.

During the event which took place recently in the commissioner's Office in Umuahia, Dr. Ukaegbu stressed that the executives should consider themselves highly privileged to be among the chosen ones.

He reminded them that they have not been chosen to intimidate or extort money from people but to serve, warning that if found cutting corners, they would be eased out.

The Commissioner added that they have been called upon to serve so as to make things easier for the state and not for themselves.

Dr Ukaegbu made it clear that their appointment was not for self aggrandizement or enrichment but to add values to the state and ASMATA as a highly elated office. He also assured them that the Ministry would always assist and support them once they are on the

right track.

In his speech, the Special Adviser to the Governor on Internally Generated Revenue, Chief Chimereze Okigbo, stated that the state was focused on increasing internally generated revenue and thanked the ASMATA Executives for accepting to work for the State, adding that if Abia becomes better, investors would flow into the state.

He revealed that the government was focused on the resuscitation of more industries so that they can be functional and increase the revenue base of the state.

Chief Okigbo reiterated that their appointment was not an opportunity to extort money for personal gains but to work for the government, stating that their loyalty lies with the government.

He also advised the executives to learn to manage situations in markets and control them, avoid all illegal revenue collection and dealings and solicited their assistance in revenue collection and sanitizing the system.

The governor's aide reminded them that their position was not permanent but could be withdrawn once they failed to live up to expectations and prayed that their tenure would be the best of the best.

Also speaking, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Lolo Magdalene Onwu

Kalu congratulated the executives and read out the terms of office to the ASMATA executives.

The Ministry's legal practitioner, Barr Chioma administered the oath of office to the ASMATA Executives which they affirmed to be faithful and impartial in discharging their duties to the best of their abilities in accordance with the constitution and the State Government's constitution, by-laws, and ethical principles, with integrity and transparency.

In his acceptance speech, the President, Abia State Amalgamated Market Traders Association, (ASMATA), Chief Alphonsus Udeigbo thanked the state government for the opportunity given to them to serve and stated that they have accepted the task and will represent the government well in the various markets and serve diligently.



Commissioner for Trade, Commerce and Industry, Dr. Chimezie Isaac Ukaegbu

Group decries gender inequality in the study of science

By Adindu Stephanie

The Coordinator, Organization for Women In Science for the Developing World (OWSD), Umudike Chapter, Abia state, Prof. Mabel Onwuka has decried the low participation of girls in science.

The Professor of Soil Science who disclosed this at Girls Secondary school, Amuzukwu Umuahia Abia State, recently, during their awareness programme to commemorate the 2024 International Day for women and girls in Science, added that gender inequality affecting the girl child in the study of science was not healthy for the society, hence, the need to take urgent actions to reverse it.

Prof. Onwuka, who described this year's theme; 'Women and Girls in science Leadership: A New Era for Sustainability', as apt and timely, revealed that OWSD has made provisions to mentor young female scientists into leadership positions, to compete favourably with their male counterparts.

Onwuka called for a renewed effort from critical stakeholders towards mobilizing female students in the study of science, maintaining that expanding women and girls participation in the study of science is key to a sustainable development in our society.

Contributing, the Assistant Coordinator of the group, Prof. Judith Simoyan, identified factors responsible for low participation of girls in the field of science to include; unequal access to education, fear, intimidation, lack of female role models, unconducive classroom environment, inadequate teachers, among others.

Prof. Simoyan who also charged girls not to shy away from their academic responsibilities, revealed that there is a huge opportunity for girls who wish to build a career in science.

Earlier in her remark, the Principal, Girls' Secondary School, Amuzukwu, Umuahia Abia State, Mrs. Emilia Odo Kalu, thanked OWSD for their efforts in the development of women and girls in Nigeria.

Mrs. Kalu who further described science as very key towards the development of the society, urged female students to take up an academic career in science.

She also thanked OWSD for choosing the school for this year's awareness, adding that they would not relent in promoting science subjects in the school.

Highpoints of the event were the payment of charges owed by some indigent students, distribution of gift items like books, adoption of five students for a two-year mentoring programme, refreshment, among others.

Meanwhile, one of the beneficiaries of the kindhearted gesture, Miss Chimbo Joy, thanked OWSD for the benevolence towards them, praying God to bless and replenish their pockets.

'Work with other contestants for victory of Labour Party' - Emetu tasks Akpata

By Charles Ogbonnaya

The Abia State Deputy Governor, Engr Ikechukwu Emetu has charged the Labour Party, Edo state governorship Candidate, Barr. Olumide Akpata to extend a hand of fellowship to other aspirants who contested with him during the party's governorship primary elections.

Emetu who spoke in his capacity as the Chief Returning Officer and Chairman of the Edo State, Labour Party governorship primary elections, thanked other aspirants for their spirit of sportsmanship and conduct during the primaries.

He further advised Barr. Olumide Akpata to ensure the involvement of other aspirants in his general campaign council to give them a sense of belonging as that would afford them the opportunity to contribute their quota towards the victory of the Party in the general election come September, 2024.

In their reactions, some observers and party faithfuls lauded the exercise, nothing that the primary election was conducted in the most transparent, unbiased, free and fair manner.

Responding after being declared the winner, Barr. Akpata thanked all the party men and delegates who believed in his vision, capacity and commitment to fly the party's flag at the general elections.

He enjoined everyone to support his candidature towards a resounding victory for the Party at the polls, while promising to work with everyone for the betterment of Edo State if elected governor.

Barr. Olumide Akpata, a former National Chairman of the Nigerian Bar Association, polled a total of 316 votes to emerge the winner of the Labour Party Governorship Primary Elections exercise in Edo State.

Niger Delta

Quest for excessive profit; cause of economic problems - Dr. Nwasurum

From Nzeuzor Jane PH

An Economics lecturer at the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Dr Edward Nwasurum, has said that the private sector was taking undue advantage of loopholes in government to make excessive profits.

Dr. Nwasurum in an interview with our Reporter explained that the pursuit of huge gains adversely impact consumers' purchasing power.

He said that in addition to weak economic policies, the private sector plays a role in exacerbating the existing economic challenges.

Dr. Nwasurum further explained that, despite the fact that government policies actually affect the private sector investment and development, the sector takes advantage of certain policy somersaults to make excess profit, and the continuous quest for excessive profit remains the major factor that has driven the country into its current economic problems.

He however opined that improving the local industry

remains the only way government would be able to overcome the present economic challenges and solicited for substitution of many of the imported commodities with the locally made ones irrespective of the fact that their qualities and quantities may not be enough.

The lecturer, further stressed the importance of a price control mechanism as a crucial step for the government to address the hike in prices of goods. He explained that to get out of this economic challenges, government should ensure that they implement policies and programmes that would stimulate local productions. He also encouraged the government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to ensure that the price control mechanism in this country becomes functional.

According to him, if the price control mechanism and other regulatory bodies of the Federal government work optimally, most of the problems we are having in this country would be a thing of the past.

Relief as Calabar witnesses first rain of the year

From Julie Okoroafo, Calabar

Residents of Calabar, the capital city of Cross River State, have heaved a great relief as the first rain of the year, 2024 hits the city.

The rain was a great succour from the excessive heat of the past weeks, which made the atmosphere unbearable for people to have sound sleeps and move about comfortably for their daily businesses.

Before the rainfall, many households were experiencing heat rashes, and in some cases sun burns as a result of the extreme heat amidst epileptic electricity supply and high cost of petrol to power their generators to cool their rooms.

As the city experienced its first down pour of year, it brought coolness, refreshment and hope and the evenings are now cooler unlike before.

The temperature is generally becoming milder and more conducive throughout the day.

Apart from the reduction in heat, farmers were excited

as most of them have started clearing their lands for this year's planting season.

Almost every compound is being cleared for a small scale farming, especially now that the cost of commodities in the market are very high. The residents are trying to cultivate at the back of their houses just to help ease the hardship and cost of essential goods in the market.

One of such people seen cultivating at the back of her compound, Mrs. Rose Okon Bassey, who spoke to our Reporter, said that she plans to plant corn, pepper, tomatoes, water leave, okro and pumpkin at the back of her compound as she can no longer afford to buy them in the market.

She stated that by the time the crops grow and are harvested, it would ease the hardship she is passing through.

The residents prayed that the downpour would mark the beginning of more rainfall before the actual rainy season sets in, so that their crops would not wither and dry up.



©NDDC Corporate Affairs

NDDC commences distribution of palliative to Delta flood victims

From Aligwe Stella P/H

Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC), has commenced the distribution of palliative to victims of flood disaster in Delta State.

The beneficiaries, selected from the 25 local government areas of the state who were victims of 2022 flood disaster were being assisted to cope with the current economic hardship in the country.

Delta State representative on the

board, Rt. Hon. Monday Igbuya, who spoke during the presentation ceremony, assured that the commission was committed to programmes that will affect the lives of people positively; while emphasizing that the board was engaging in activities that truly reflects the people's needs and mandate of the board.

According to him, the benevolence was in line with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope agenda to reduce to the barest minimum the effects of the 2022 flood disaster in the

state. Insights into the truckloads of items distributed revealed bags of rice, bags of beans, mattresses, vegetable oil, noodles, toiletries, tomato paste, boats, cassava peeling machines, sewing and grinding machines, salt, among other relief materials.

Expressing profound happiness at the event, Onoriode Ogo of Sapele-Okpe community, commended the commission for the palliatives shared, stating that: "The items will go a long way in supporting

those who lost homes and means of livelihoods during the flood."

Also in his own view, President-General of Elume community, Mr. Felix Emuobo, hinted that: "With the materials in the right hands, we can rebuild and support our people through c difficult times. I commend the NDDC for their effort towards bringing relief to us."

However, the community leadership across the 25 local governments of the State, received the items on behalf of their people.

Akwa Ibom governor lauds wife @ 57 ... pledges support for her pet project

By Lovina Emole

Governor Umo Eno of Akwa Ibom state, has paid special tributes to his wife, Mrs Patience Eno as she celebrates her 57th birthday anniversary.

Speaking at the event held in Ibom Hall, Uyo Akwa Ibom State, the governor commended the state's First Lady for her ingenuity in humanitarian gestures to her local community and church.

He said that this might have accounted for why God has granted her a bigger platform to be a blessing to the larger collective Akwa Ibom families.

His words, "I want to say that I am incredibly proud of your dedication and compassion. On this day that we celebrate your 57th birthday, and the launching of your pet- project, I can assure you by the love of God that I will walk side by side with you, support you and do whatever I can to ensure that you fulfill this lifelong ambition of touching lives."

The governor also pledged his support to ensuring optimum success of the pet project, "Golden Initiative For All (GIFA)."

Addressing the issue of the harsh economic situation currently plaguing

Nigerians, the governor appealed to everyone across all facets of the society to take advantage of the rich soil the State is blessed with to support programmes that would produce food to sustain their families.

He directed the State Ministry of Agriculture to take further measures towards attaining food sufficiency, expressing the confidence that the bulk-purchasing programme of the State government which is before the House of Assembly, would boost food security.

Performing the official unveiling of the GIFA emblem and launch of the pet project, Pastor (Mrs.) Patience Eno expressed gratitude to the Governor whom she affirmed, has been her greatest supporter in ensuring that the project, which was borne out of her compassionate yearning to address specific needs in families, has come to fruition.

CAVEAT EMPTOR /PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform the General Public that the plot of land with the purported survey plan No IIL/2844/AB010/23 bearing the name of MR EMESIH MICHAEL CHIDI belongs to the family of Late MAZI JULIS ORJI EMESIH and not any individual. Any person claiming ownership or trying to purchase it without the consent of the whole family is doing that at his/her own peril, so beware.

Signed
Barr. Peter
Chukwuemeka Emesih
For the family



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Comment

HALTING CIRCULATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN NIGERIA

By Okechukwu Ukegbu

Several gun control efforts have been applied both within and internationally. Recently, the immediate past President, Gen. Muhammad Buhari (Rtd.) in his gun control efforts reportedly signed a law to revoke all firearm or shotgun certificates or licenses in Nigeria. The implication of the law was that nobody in the country was allowed to own or carry firearms in the country, except only authorized officers of the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Army, as well as select authorized security agencies.

The implication of the law was that nobody in the country was allowed to own or carry firearms in the country, except only authorized officers of the Nigeria Police Force and the Nigerian Army, as well as select authorized security agencies.

The law also prohibited officers of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps [NSCDC], as well as relevant security organizations to carry arms, and required all arms owners to forthwith surrender all types of firearm licenses or certificates issued to them in the past to the nearest police headquarter in one's state of residence.

As usual, the law received huge knocks and was painted in combined colourations that portray ethnicity; religious undertones which may allegedly contravened the true spirit behind the law.

Gun control measures are not entirely out of place. They are initiated by countries from time to time to check illegal flow or circulation of guns and to strengthen the security fabrics of a country. But here the approach is counter-productive and ill-timed, and has generated widespread suspicions.

The questions that beg for urgent answers include how many gun users in Nigeria operate with licences? If small number of gun users operate with licences, then how are small arms and light weapons proliferated in that unprecedented dimension in the country?

This emphasizes the need to mop up the sources of small arms and light weapons. The fundamental truth is that our borders are very porous and smuggling these weapons becomes easy.

Part of government's efforts that would be

considered serious is to strengthen our borders to stall the smuggling of these weapons.

Furthermore, those locations in Nigeria that are gifted with foundry artistry where the locally-made weapons emanate, the government should tap from the ingenuity by gathering them together and deploying their ingenuity to good use.

What is happening in Nigeria currently has an international input both in funding and Supply of arms. The question is how prepared are we to ensure that the international sources of these groups are plugged up so that their strength could be sapped? We know of recent that some sister African countries were and currently engaged in one internal strife or the other, when eventually these strife are abated, the arms used for that purpose must find their ways into other locations. Unarguably, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Nigeria and West African sub-region exerts negative impact on socio-political and economic development. It is also a major national security challenge in the country. The insecurity resulting from insurgency, banditry, militancy, kidnapping, armed robbery, ethno-religious and communal conflicts are fuelled by the proliferation of light weapons.

Therefore; government should step up efforts at forestalling the anomaly of proliferation of illegal light weapons in the country.

CURTAILING THE INGLORIOUS ACTIVITIES OF POWER GENERATING AND DISTRIBUTING COMPANIES

By Ifeanyi Ogbonna

In recent years, the power sector has experienced broad challenges such as electricity policy enforcement, regulatory uncertainty, gas supply, transmission system constraints, and major power sector planning shortfalls.

For example, in 2022 the country's national grid collapsed eight times, and has continued to reoccur to date.

It is appalling that despite the huge amount of money spent in the power sector by previous administrations, the country has remained very low on power generation and distribution despite supplying electricity to Niger Republic, Benin Republic and Togo as well as gas to Ghana.

Unfortunately, the huge investment in this sector has remained a mirage with industries and households bearing the consequences of paying heavily for the power not supplied by the distribution companies.

It is an act of impunity that millions of Nigerians are still being subjected to epileptic power supply and estimated billing by this power distribution company in the face of their inability to provide adequate power supply to the people.

Regrettably, the privatization of power in 2013 which saw the emergence of eleven distribution companies has not yielded the needed results.

According to an energy progress report released by the United Nations, Nigeria has the lowest access to electricity supply globally, despite having a population that is Over two hundred million.

According to an energy progress report released by the United Nations, Nigeria has the lowest access to electricity supply globally, despite having a population that is Over two hundred million.

It is also laughable that the 23 power plants in Nigeria which has the capacity of generating 22000 megawatts is generating below 12. 53 and dispatching what is below 5000 megawatts for a nation that is regarded as the giant of Africa.

Nigeria is regarded as the country with the highest in the importation of generating sets, neglecting the power sector which has the capacity to enhance the economic fortune of the citizens.

Indeed, as a nation that is blessed with resources, Nigeria has the capacity of replicating what China has done in the power sector in building the biggest power plant in the world generating 103. 649 billion kilo Watts per hour and this can be achieved when the leaders show capacity and patriotism in the service to the nation rather than pursuing their selfish interest

The present federal government led by President Bola Tinubu must go beyond mere promises to revive the power sector and put to an end, the

epileptic power supply in Nigeria which is critical to growth of businesses for economic emancipation.

A city like Aba, the commercial nerve centre of the state and houses the popular Ariaria international market is in dire need of constant power supply. Therefore, the coming on board of Geometric Power Plant Company in Aba which was commissioned by the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu on 24th February, 2024 is a welcome development to the people.

The place of Aba as an economic hub in the South East, Nigeria and Africa cannot be overemphasized, considering the abundant talents that the city is blessed with, that needs to be sufficiently harnessed through adequate power supply to sure up the Internally Generated Revenue of the State.

The expectations are that the Geometric Power Aba should live above board in enhancing power supply in Aba as well as avoid usual excuses that have characterized the lives of other power distribution companies in Nigeria amidst their failure to meet the expectations of the people.

In the midst of obvious economic reality, where millions of Nigerians find it difficult to feed their families, the National Assembly as the representatives of the

people should make laws that will make it an offence for the electricity distribution companies to embark on estimated billing and ensure provision of prepaid meters to all households in Nigerian.

News



THE WORLD BANK



FEDERAL REPUBLIC NIGERIA

ABIA STATE GOVERNMENT

MINISTRY OF WOMEN AFFAIRS AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

**RURAL ACCESS AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING PROJECT (RAAMP)
(WORLD BANK/AFD ASSISTED)**

No. 11 Okpara Avenue, Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

Telephone: 08033403369, 08033667090 E-mail address: abiarampspiu@yahoo.com

SPECIFIC PROCUREMENT NOTICE

RFB Reference NG-ABIARAAMP-408845-CW-RFB

RFB Description: CONSTRUCTION OF ITUNGWA - MGBOKO - AMAIRI - AMAISE-AHIABA UBI - NKWOELECHI - OMOBA, 19.1 KM DEMONSTRATION ROAD IN ABIA STATE

Project: Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP)

Employer: Abia State Project Implementation Unit

Country: Nigeria

Issued on: 27th Day of February, 2024

Submission deadline: 26th March, 2024 at 12 Noon

1. The Federal Government of Nigeria through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has received financing from the World Bank

toward the cost of the Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP), and intends to apply part of the proceeds toward payments under the contract for Construction of Itungwa-Mgboko-Amairi-Amaise-Ahiaba Ubi - Nkwuelechi - Omoba, 19.1km Demonstration Pilot Road in Abia State. This contract will be jointly financed by the L'Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency or AFD). Procurement process will be governed by the World Bank's Procurement Regulations.

2. The Abia State Project Implementation Unit, Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Itungwa-Mgboko-Amairi-Amaise-Ahiaba Ubi - Nkwuelechi-Omoba (19.1km) Demonstration Road in Abia State. The project is a network comprising of roads as stated in the Table below:

SN	DESCRIPTION	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	LGA /LOCATION	BID SECURITY	FINANCIAL CAPABILITY (NGN NAIRA)	AVERAGE ANNUAL CONSTRUCTION TURNOVER (NGN NAIRA)	SPECIFIC CONTRACT & CONTRACT MANAGEMENT
1	Construction Of Itungwa - Mgboko - Amairi - Amaise - Ahiaba Ubi - Nkwuelechi - Omoba, 19.1 Km Demonstration Road	Upgrading of an existing rural feeder road having a total length of 19.1km. The works include but not limited to; Site clearance and Earthwork, Culverts and Drains, Pavement and Surfacing as well as strict undertaking of Social and Environmental Safeguard	Obingwa Local Government Areas	N82 Million	N687 Million	N5 Billion	2 Contracts each of N2.6 Billion within the last Three years

The project involves upgrading of an existing rural feeder road having a total length of 19.1km. The works include but not limited to; Site clearance and Earthwork, Culverts and Drains, Pavement and Surfacing as well as strict undertaking of Social and Environmental Safeguard. The project is located in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State having its Coordinates as follows:

Road 1: Itungwa Junction - Amairi - Omoba Road - 7.1km

Beginning of Project: 329999.69E 573761.49N

End of Project: 323445.72E 579794.76N

Road 2: Amairi - Obete - Nkwuelechi Road - 9.007km

Beginning of Project: 325534.77E 577561.47N

End of Project: 322075.00E 569807.00N

Road 3: Obete - Mgboko Road - 2.974km

Beginning of Project: 324039.09E 572597.67N

End of Project: 321289.64E 573322.81N

The total length of this road network is about 19.1km. The work is expected to be completed within 18 months.

1. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding (NCB) procurement method using Request for Bids (RFB) document as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers- Procurement in Investment Projects Financing" November, 2020- Fourth Edition ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all eligible Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

2. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the State Project Coordinator (abiarampspiu@yahoo.com) Abia State Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP), State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU) and inspect the bidding document during office hours 0900 to 1600 at the address given below.

3. The bidding document in English Language may be purchased by interested eligible Bidders upon the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of NGN50,000.00. The method of payment will be

direct deposit to the specified account below. The document will be made available at the address given below;

Bank Name: UBA PLC

Account Name: Abia State Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project

Account Number: 1021738879

Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **12:00 on 26th March 2024**.

Electronic Bidding will **NOT** be permitted. Late Bids will be rejected. Bids will be publicly opened in the presence of the Bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend at the address below on 26th March, 2024 by 12 noon.

4. All Bids must be accompanied by a "Bid Security" of NGN82,000,000.00

5. Attention is drawn to the Procurement Regulations requiring the Borrower to disclose information on the successful bidder's beneficial ownership, as part of the Contract Award Notice, using the Beneficial Ownership Disclosure Form as included in the bidding document.

6. The address(es) referred to above is (are):

Abia State Rural Access and Agricultural Marketing Project (RAAMP),

State Project Implementation Unit (SPIU),

No. 11 Okpara Avenue, Umuahia;

Abia State, Nigeria

Tel: 08033403369, 08033667090

E-mail:

abiarampspiu@yahoo.com

Signed:

ENGR. CHINEMERE OGBONNAYA, FNSE

State Project Coordinator

Discourse

A new hope of horizon in the energy sector

The Power Sector as the Microcosm of Nigeria has been bedeviled by corruption and ineptitude in service delivery.

Every successive government in Nigeria appears to be worse than their predecessor. Today, due to high cost of living and inflation rate, Nigerians are wishing for a return to the infamous day of former President Buhari's government, just as we desired for a return to President Jonathan's government down to President Obasanjo's administration at the Advent of Buhari's regime.

The general inertia in the country is most prominent in the Power sector, where NEPA was celebrated posthumously during the PHCN era. The return of EEDC service era has become a prayer point to energy users in Aba. Aba Power Limited (APL) otherwise known as Geometric Power have dashed the expectations of the Aba-Ariaria ring-fence distribution consumers. The docility of the people has emboldened Aba Power Limited (APL) to reinforce the exploitation of electricity consumers.

Aba Power Limited (APL) is taking advantage of the exploitative estimated billing system to make the people pay for services not rendered. APL has nothing to lose whether there is light or no light in one month. The supply of light does not determine billing.

There is even a new exploitative twist to the estimated billing system. In addition to the automated estimated billing system, the customer service agents are empowered to invoke their discretion on what a Consumer

would be asked to pay or face disconnection. If a consumer's bill is N15000, on the automated estimated billing even when no energy was supplied, the customer service agent is empowered to use pen and instruct the service user to pay N30k to avoid disconnection.

The 11kv and 33kv transmission lines dichotomy is worsening an already bad case. The 11kv transmission line is equivalent to darkness while the 33kv transmission line enjoys relative service but at the end of the month, both are bullied to pay by a bunch of half-baked ladder carrying technicians climbing electric poles installed by service users to disconnect lines without lights.

The actions of the half-baked ladder carrying

technicians are designed in connivance with the technical units in charge of rationing energy supply to consumers. It has become customary that few hours to the disconnection exercise, they will flash the lights for few hours. It has become an open secret that those who are saddled with the responsibility of rationing light compromises the arrangement by collecting money from some zones especially

companies including hotels to give them undue advantage in the rationing arrangement. The zones short-changed in the rationing arrangement are not exempted in paying for the service not rendered. The estimated billing system has become corporate extortion and exploitation. What is

delaying the installation of pre-paid metres to make consumers pay for electricity consumed? Why must we manipulate the pre-paid metres before installation? Why would APL continue to rob Peter to pay Paul? Why would consumers continue paying for services not rendered by a distribution service company (Disco)? At what point, will the National Electricity Regulatory commission (NERC) look into the complains of manipulated pre-paid metres to cheat consumers and discourage them from demanding for the installation.

I must not fail to balance the tendency to cheat by condemning service users who attempt to or bypass the installed pre-paid metre to cheat the service providers. They should be made to face stiff penalties as a deterrent.

APL management must intervene to control the excesses of their customer service agents, half-baked ladder carrying technicians and those saddled with the responsibility of rationing energy to balance the usage between zones in 11kv and 33kv transmission lines. The docility of service users should not be misinterpreted as ignorance, cowardice or handicap. The Nigeria Police and Government were taken unawares by the ENDSARS protest led by the Sorosoke group. Discos and service providers should not rule out END-PAYMENT-FOR DARKNESS protest. Ctz. Ukoha Njoku Ukoha Omeifuku writes from Ukaegbu Road Transformer, Aba.

I must not fail to balance the tendency to cheat by condemning service users who attempt to or bypass the installed pre-paid metre to cheat the service providers. They should be made to face stiff penalties as a deterrent.

NIGERIA: AFRICA'S MOTHER ELEPHANT IN COMA.

By James Agbagha Ochunkwo

There is need for special supplications to mother creation to intervene and reset the mind construction of most civil, political and religious leaders in the country.

Our leaders should have a new mindset of living up to expectations away from their current selfish and nepotism disposition and interests.

Sadly, everything about Nigeria is in coma. The public institutions and infrastructure have been running aground, nothing works.

The refineries built more than 40 years ago, remain a pipe drain outfits that have brought more hardship and pains instead of succor and have become obsolete plants that cannot produce/refine a drop of oil despite trillions of Naira sunk into them under the name of turn around maintenance

The banking sector appears to be the worst, rather than being the engine room of economic activities and development, they engaged in sharp malpractice that undermined the people and the country's economic growth.

The banking operations needs to be constantly be monitored and their policies reviewed to ensure that best practices and results are achieved.

Currency trading have been used to loot the country dry and there is need to jettison or allow a separate independent body to oversee the activities of the bureau de change.

The forex and local currency speculators lacked common basic patriotic acts for the economic survival of the country as the money changers have been used to loot the country dry. The bench mark in the sea port is something else through which both the country and the people are ripped off. Nigeria is the only country in the world where import and export duties are generalized. Importers should be made to pay according to the value

of goods in their containers to checkmate price hike of goods on consumers. Certain commodities must be declared and treated as strategic products. The manufacturers, importers and monopolists must be under the radar of the government or the appropriate authorities charged with the responsibilities in order to protect the consumers.

Because of the sharp malpractice in the maritime/custom sub-sector, all the gains made under local rice production, have been lost and we are back to square one.

The effect of loans and grants given to the big farmers are now useless as local rice have become more expensive and less accessible than foreign rice.

Today, bags of rice, beans and even garri are beyond the reach of the poor ordinary Nigerians.

At independence, food was in every home, our cocoa, groundnut and palm oil took care of our trade balance, we owed no nation, developing nations like ours came to borrow from us but today, those nations have gone beyond food level.

They are meeting the challenges of the 21st century while we are wallowing in abject poverty and specializing in corruption, looting and other forms of economic malpractice.

Many public office holders have compromised their offices by using their access to public purses to buy up dollars as to keep their loots outside the country and this must be checkmated and discouraged.

We appeared to have forgotten that all these anti economic activities endangered the corporate existence of the country and there will be no opportunity to serve and loot, if there is no country called Nigeria.

We have a duty to preserve our hard earned democracy and stop the shortchanging of the National economy by allowing and

supervising the banks to make available foreign exchange to genuine businesses and manufacturing outlets. The Mallams must be dislodged from dominating the FX market to save the country from the imminent doom.

Our blessed fathers in our episcopal centers should have mercy on the Nation and her ordinary citizens by desisting from demanding and changing the contributed tithes and offerings into dollars to avoid adding pressure on the already weakened Naira.

Street urchins have broken the valor of life following the rich and ruling class like hordes of flies prying fervently for meals all to the degradation of the Negros race.

Scavengers have all migrated out of country at noon to other climes because our space is cleared of carcasses of any decomposing animals which humans are now helping themselves with. Leftovers has been added as a means of survival to the poor man's menu list

Indeed, our day have been turned to night. More worrisome is the fact that men have dissipated their energy fighting kiths and kins and strangers from distant countries. There is no more strength, safety and time left to till the soil and we helplessly watch weed overgrow our crops.

At War time Nigeria managed the economy without debt. Post war Nigeria is a debtor and mortgaged nation with every flying birds frequenting the financial homes for loans and grants.

The head gear of it all is selfishness, self-centeredness and tribalism. Nigeria has created more Billionaires and millionaires than all African nations put together. This is the aftermath. The cash cow called Nigeria has bleed beyond capitalist consciousness. The country is in coma and lying lifeless in the intensive care unit in need of emergency

resuscitation before it is declared dead. Is a strange and difficult time indeed! We pray for the grace of creation to intervene on our behalf as the sky remains bright without shadow.

People can only go to church if there is a country, they lived in.

Our diaspora remittances must be given a ledger in the Central Bank and cumulative foreign exchange put together to fund international trades.

We must come together to wage a patriotic war and show our love to the country over and above self or ethnic affiliation. Yes, We Can Make Nigeria Great Again. Musa, Kalu, Balogun, Effiong must have a country to call theirs before they can engage in any kind of activities. A country that can guarantee their greatest freedom; freedom from Fear.

All hands must be on deck to save the giant of Africa from coma.

Chief James Agbagha Ochunkwo was former executive Chairman, Aba North Local Government, former Chairman, and Author of the Book 'Turning Point'

The cash cow called Nigeria has bleed beyond capitalist consciousness. The country is in coma and lying lifeless in the intensive care unit in need of emergency resuscitation before it is declared dead.

Why liberalising the exchange rate is bad for Naira

By Zuhuman Dapel

In recent years, the naira-dollar market in Nigeria has so far been liberalised twice. The first, in June 2016 and the second, in June 2023. Both moves have significantly contributed to the rapid decline in the value of the naira. If the monetary authority firmly embraces and continues to stick to this option, the strength of the currency will yet again continue to shrink at an accelerating pace.

The fall of the naira is fast diminishing the international (purchasing power of the currency and consequently) buying strength of Nigerian residents. For instance, as recently as 10 years ago, Nigerians schooling or buying foreign education services abroad in the United Kingdom needed roughly two million naira to pay a tuition of £10,000. Today, they will need close to 20 million naira to pay the same school fees. A tenfold increase.

To liberalise a currency is to let the forces of demand and supply of the currency solely determine the value of the currency. The technical term for this in economics is called "floating". For instance, if Nigerians rush to buy the dollar more than Americans are rushing to buy the naira, the value of the dollar will go up at the expense of the value of the naira. In other words, the value of the naira will fall. Similarly, if there is more demand for the naira by Americans and less demand for the dollar by Nigerians, the value of the naira will rise. It will become stronger.

In this opinion piece, I share my perspectives - grounded in data-driven evidence - on why liberalising the Nigerian forex market (was and still is) a policy error. I also argue that the premise ("to attract foreign direct investment") motivating the most recent liberalisation is not a compelling one for many observers. Finally, I offer suggestions - short-term, medium-term, and long-term - solutions in dealing with Nigeria's currency crisis. When the 'float' cleans out the naira. On 17 June 2016, the naira was 'freed' by the central bank. But the 'freedom' set the currency on a freefall such that within a few months, by the end of that year, it had fallen in value by 60 per cent against the US dollar (see the chart below). Before this, the naira was pegged at 197 to the dollar. The sharp drop in the value prompted the apex bank to rescind its initial forex policy, thus intervening in the market to save the naira.

Seven years down the line, on 14 June 2023, the naira was yet again 'floated'. This time around, after hovering around 400, the naira crashed to about 1200 naira to the dollar as of February 2024.

The scarcity, the error, and the fall. When the dollar is scarce - its demand greater than its supply - and you 'float' the naira exchange rate, you have automatically placed the naira on a



glide path to losing its value. There is no convincing economic justification for floating the naira in a dollar-scarce situation and a fragile financial system for some reason.

The naira cannot compete with the dollar. The United States of America, being the primary supplier of the dollar and as a world economic super-power, has more to bring to the international trade table or the world market stage than Nigeria. Therefore, Nigeria letting its currency 'float' or roam about in search of its value in the international market is equivalent to inflicting self-damage. The naira cannot compete with the currencies of world economic giants because these stronger economies, more than Nigeria, bring more economic value to the rest of the world. For example, Nigeria's daily crude oil output, the country's major foreign exchange earner, is not sufficient to meet America's two-hour oil consumption as the United States consumes approximately 20 million barrels a day.

Also, 'floating' a currency in an unstable monetary system opens the possibility of speculative attacks on the dollar. Dubious traders will get the dollar at an official rate and sell it through the black market at a whopping premium.

The forces behind the fall of the naira

The increasing scarcity of the dollar and its growing demand in Nigeria are at the root of the collapse of the naira. Why is the dollar scarce in Nigeria? I have identified four contributing factors.

First, falling oil revenues. In eight years, between 2007 and 2014, Nigeria earned over US\$340 billion in oil revenues. This figure has fallen to US\$110 billion (more than three times) in the recent eight years between 2015 and 2012, thus, shrinking the nation's capacity to pull in more dollars into its economic system.

Second, in late 2015, the then government through the central bank activated capital control measures such as shutting out access to foreign currency withdrawals and imposing limits on how much cash Nigerians can withdraw using foreign ATMs. These interventions did not pay off as the currency further depreciated. As a result, factories that could not obtain dollars to import raw materials and capital goods shut down and eliminated tens of thousands of jobs. By mid-2016, the economy had fallen into a recession.

Third, foreign investors have been fleeing out with their dollars, draining the system of cash. Within five pre-election and election years (2013-15 and 2018-19), a total of over US\$100 billion was withdrawn from Nigeria through the financial services forex utilisation. There is no guarantee that these dollars are coming back given that more foreign companies have recently exited the Nigerian market.

Fourth, the demand-pull effect. Rising inflation in Nigeria is affecting the portfolio behaviour of many income savers given that the rising cost of living weakens the future purchasing power of the local currency. Instead of saving in naira, they prefer to save in dollars, thus pushing up the demand for the dollar. It has been alleged that Nigerians have US\$30 billion in savings vainly sitting in their domiciliary accounts across domestic commercial banks. The central bank recently quelled down a public rumour that it intends to convert these deposits from dollars to naira.

Another side of the dollar-demand effect is the rising exodus rate of Nigerians especially to Europe and North American countries. According to World Bank numbers, Nigeria's net migration pace has been progressively negative since 2014, implying that more people are leaving the country than are entering the country.

Tellingly, those relocating from Nigeria to other parts of the world add to the demand for foreign currencies to defray their resettlement costs abroad.

Foreign direct investment is not the silver bullet

Investors move money across borders for one primary reason: to make a profit. While FDI injects the dollar into the host economy, profit repatriation withdraws dollars out of the economy. The latest World Bank figures on Nigeria's foreign direct (net inflows) investment are negative. This implies that Nigeria is losing more dollars than it is attracting into its economy. Moreover, the proceeds of foreign commercial airlines are still being trapped in the country. Can the naira be salvaged?

Engineering a revival of the naira is not easy as this will require three cumulative layers of approaches: short-term, medium-term, and long-term solutions.

Short-term solution. Revert to the initial status quo: regulated peg exchange rate policy regime. This can be done within 15 minutes. Before June 2016, the dollar was pegged and sold at less than 200 naira via the official market. The central bank, being the nation's chief financial regulator, should impose a cap on the dollar price of commercial banks.

Medium-term solution. The primary goal of a central bank is to stabilise prices, that is, exchange rates and inflation. The apex bank will not be effective in achieving these targets if it is not independent of the federal executive branch of government, otherwise, its policies will always be driven by political interests. How do we detect a central bank that is not independent?

Two ways. First, if the president of the country appoints a central bank governor from his [the president] region, state of origin or has once served in the cabinet of the president. Second, if the turnover of central bank governors is high, that is, they serve a single term of five years instead of the maximum 10-year two tenures. Nigerian presidents from 1999 to date are all guilty of this.

As a nation, we have always admired America for being a beacon of world economic prosperity. We can learn from them as they have managed to insulate, to a greater extent, their central bank from political interference. Their longest-serving central bank governor (Fed Chair Alan Greenspan) was in office for 18 consecutive years, serving under five presidents, both Republicans and Democrats. He was kept there because he was very good at the job before he later resigned.

Long-term solution. Import substitution. Revamp four key sectors to substitute for the importation of food, clothing/footwear, building materials and pharmaceutical products. These are heavily consumed goods in Nigeria, gulping a significant fraction of the nation's forex via imports.

Culled from: *TheCable.ngr*

SPORTING AMBASSADOR

With Jacob Joseph



Super Eagles after AFCON: What next?

The 34th edition of the African Cup of Nations AFCON has come and gone with the Super Eagles of Nigeria settling for silver after losing the final to host nation, Elephants of Cote d'Ivoire by 2-1. No matter how painful that loss was, life goes on and the million dollar question worth asking is: What does the future hold for the Super Eagles of Nigeria?

The Super Eagles will have to battle for the qualification of the 2025 AFCON slated for Morocco. The preliminary qualification will commence in March, but Nigeria will join the qualifiers in the group stage in September.

There is also the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualification, which the Super Eagles have started in the most shambolic way. They drew their first match at home with Lesotho 1-1 and recorded the same score line against Zimbabwe in their second match. This has left the Super Eagles third on the table behind Rwanda and South Africa. Their next match will be in June against South Africa and the Super Eagles must start winning or bid farewell to their dreams of participating in the 2026 World Cup.

The Nigerian Football Federation NFF gave Jose Peseiro the mandate to reach the AFCON semi-final in order to renew his contract. While he reached that target and is entitled to get a renewed contract, it is pertinent to state that Peseiro is destroying our football.

Nigerian football culture



is not just about winning; it is about playing good football that satisfies the yearnings of the fans. We often hear Nigerian fans say, "Though they lost, I'm proud of the way they played."

Most Nigerian soccer fans are no longer proud of the way the Super Eagles play. They sit-back to defend and hope to hit their opponents on counter-attack. It puts the team under pressure for most part of the game. The best form of defense is attack, because if you have possession of the ball your opponents cannot score. The more possession

you let your opponents have, the more chance they have to score like we saw at the AFCON final.

In the 1990s when we had Finidi George and Emmanuel Amunike running riots in the right and left flanks respectively, and sending in dangerous crosses into the opponents vital areas, Austin Okocha dazzling in the mid-field with his sublime dribbling skills and deft touches, Samson Siasia, Daniel Amokachi and Rashidi Yekini charging into the opponent's penalty area like angry bulls, the Super Eagles were a delight to watch and fewer

fans died watching the Super Eagles. No wonder Nigeria was adjudged the second most entertaining team after Brazil at the 1994 World Cup.

Peseiro has made it a nightmare to watch the Super Eagles with fans having to get their doctors sitted beside them and checking their blood pressure throughout the duration of a match. He has shoehorned our players into his pack-the-bus tactics and has stifled creativity in the team.

While we thank him for taking the Super Eagles to

another AFCON final after 10 years, he must change his tactics or quit the job before he completely destroys what is left of our dear Super Eagles.

This AFCON has also shown that now is the time to hand the Super Eagles captaincy to William Troost-Ekong and Ahmed Musa should bow out.

Furthermore, Nigeria, finally, has a confident and dependable goalkeeper in Stanley Nwabali. He is determined to return to his club Chipper United of South Africa despite threats from angry South African fans and

speculated interests from clubs in France and Saudi Arabia.

Moving forward, the Super Eagles need creative mid-fielders who are not afraid to take the ball into opponents' vital areas, dribble, commit opponents and lay defense-splitting passes for strikers like Victor Osimhen to score.

While Nigerians try to put the AFCON final loss behind them, the Super Eagles must qualify for the 2025 AFCON and they must not lose the 2026 FIFA World Cup ticket to South Africa.

2023 AFCON: The good, the bad and the ugly

The 34th edition of the African Cup of Nations has come and gone with the host, Cote d'Ivoire defeating Nigeria 2-1 to win their third title. All that happened during the AFCON can be classified as good, bad and ugly.

THE GOOD

Many soccer pundits have heaped praises on the referees that officiated matches at the AFCON for their professionalism. The VAR assisted the referees to make the right decisions rather than controversial decisions as is often the case in Europe. With such near-perfect officiating, teams that lost were happy to accept their defeat in good faith. CAF's referee committee must ensure that this level of

officiating should be sustained and replicated in all other CAF organized competitions both in the male and female categories.

Kudos must be given to the government and people of Cote d'Ivoire for organizing one of the best AFCON tournaments with very few hitches. It's time for West African countries to submit a joint bid to host the FIFA World Cup.

THE BAD

Once again the Super Eagles of Nigeria raised the hopes of millions of Nigerian soccer fans only to shatter it in the finals, losing to the host. In football, you don't win all the time, but Nigerian fans will

accept defeat if the team had played well. But that was not the case in that final defeat.

Granted they got to the final, this team is far below the standard of our national team. Nigeria is known for free-flowing entertaining football not the 'sit back, defend and wait for few counter-attacks' display we saw at the AFCON. Jose Peseiro should give us our free-flowing attack-minded brand of football or he should step aside for someone who will do that.

The World Cup and AFCON qualifiers are on, therefore, the NFF should provide all that the team will need to qualify for both

competitions.

The death of some Nigerian fans during the nerve-wrecking semi-final match against South Africa is very painful. While some reports have it that five persons died, some unconfirmed reports put the tally at 13.

There have been calls for people with certain health conditions to avoid watching such high profile matches. However, football is addictive and some fans cannot engage in any hobby during the match than to watch it.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the families that lost their loved ones during the match.

THE UGLY

After Stanley Nwabali's heroic saves eliminated South Africa and took Nigeria to the final, the South Africa based goalkeeper received threats from South Africans urging him not to return to their country. This is very ugly and does not depict the pan-Africanism that Africa needs as it strives to compete with other continents.

The Ivorians jubilated after the final, but that was a stark contrast to their reaction when their team was beaten 4-0 by Equatorial Guinea in their last group match. With only one win in their three group matches, it was expected that Cote d'Ivoire will not qualify. Their fans

attacked the team bus took to the streets and destroyed a lot of social amenities. This is not right and goes against the spirit of sportsmanship.

Cameroon mascot was arrested in Douala Airport when he returned from the AFCON. Ngando Pickett was arrested for soliciting for funds to cater for his transportation and that of his group back home after he claimed that the Cameroon Football Federation had abandoned them. He should be released unconditionally.

African sports managers should stop embarrassing the continent by making adequate arrangements for their contingents participating in sporting events.

Enyimba storm Eket for Akwa United

By Joseph Jacob

Nigeria's Premier Football League enters week 23 this weekend with Enyimba International storming the oil rich city Eket, to keep a date with Akwa United of Uyo.

It will be a match of teams with contrasting fortunes. While the defending champions are battling to successfully defend their title, Akwa United are on the 18th position fighting to avoid relegation.

In the reverse fixtures played at the Enyimba International Stadium on October 15, 2023, 22 year-old Alalibo Somiari Orinate scored the winner as Enyimba defeated the Promise Keepers 3-2.

Innocent Gabriel Okey and Mbaoma Chijioke had given the People's Elephant a 2-0 lead in a quarter of an hour, but the visitors pulled one back just before the break through Kufre Ebong. David Philip made it 2-2 four



minutes after the hour mark and it seems the visitors will be leaving Aba with a point until Orinate scored the winning goal. Abia Warriors will take on Kano Pillars at the

General Sani Abacha Stadium. Kano They are comfortable at the middle of the table but their hosts are among the top four battling for the league title.

In the reverse fixture played at the Umuahia Township Stadium, Sunday Megwo's 31st minute goal was all the Umuahia Warlords needed to snatch all three points.

In other matches for this weekend, Doma United will tread tackles with Sporting Lagos.

Kwara United and Rivers United will lurk horns while the Remo Stars Stadium Ikeme will come alive when Remo Stars welcome Bayelsa United.

Gombe United will attempt to dim Shooting Stars as Lobi Stars attempt to outshine Katsina United.

In Jos, Plateau United will battle Bendel Insurance as Niger Tornadoes welcome Enugu Rangers.

Heartland of Owerri will take on Sunshine Stars of Akure at the Awka City Stadium.

Manchester Derby: City, United battle for glory

By Joseph Jacob

One of the oldest rivalry in English football, will be renewed this weekend when Manchester United storm the Etihad Stadium to confront city rivals, Manchester City in the 192nd Manchester Derby.

In their previous 191 meetings in all competitions, Manchester United have the upper hand with 78 wins, City have won 60 times while they have settled for a draw 53 times.

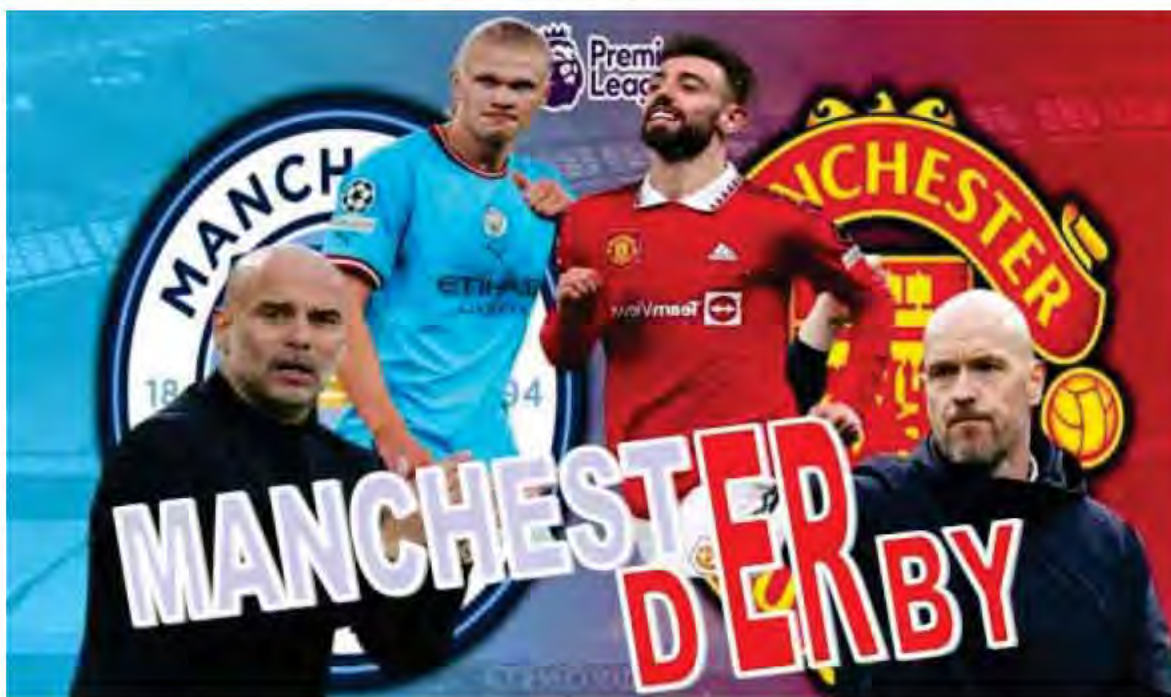
In the reverse fixture played on October 29, 2023, Manchester City turned the Theatre of Dreams into Theatre of Nightmares with a comprehensive 3-0 demolition of United.

Erling Haaland put City ahead from the penalty spot after 26 minutes when Rasmus Hojlund was penalized for dragging down Rodri following the intervention of the Video Assistant Referee.

After the break, Erling Haaland scored his second goal with a glancing header. Rodri's shot from outside the penalty area was palmed into the path of Haaland by Andrey Onana, who was in goal for Manchester United. Rather than attempting to score a hat-trick, Haaland squared the ball to Phil Foden, who only had to tap in the ball for City's third goal.

Last season they met three times with the Citizens claiming a 6-3 victory on October 2nd, 2022, with Erling Haaland grabbing a hat-trick.

Manchester United came from behind to win the reverse fixture 2-1 on January 14th 2023. Jack Grealish had put City ahead in the hour



mark, but United fought back to equalize through Bruno Fernandes, before Marcus Rashford netted in the 82nd minute to give United all three points

The Red Devils were the only English side to win the league, the FA Cup and the UEFA Champions League in the same season. A feat they achieved in 1999.

Ten hag and his men had the opportunity to stop Manchester City from matching that 1999 record when both sides clashed in last season's FA Cup final. But, Manchester City won the FA Cup and proceeded to equal United's treble record.

This Sunday's derby will be titanic as the battle to clinch the title is still on. While City have a brighter chance to successfully defend

their title, Manchester United can still make the top four and will be happy to be the cog in the wheel of the Citizens winning the league this season.

Last weekend they had contrasting results. Manchester United hosted Fulham while City stormed the vitality Stadium to confront Bournemouth.

After a goalless first half, Calvin Bassey opened scoring for Fulham five minutes after the break. Harry Maguire restored parity with a minute to go, and it seemed at least United will take a point. But Alex Iwobi scored late into stoppage time to humiliate United at Old Trafford.

Will this defeat give United the positive anger to fight against their city rivals this weekend?

Conversely, Manchester City denied Bournemouth of every vitality to play at the Vitality Stadium as Phil Foden's 24th minute goal was enough to give the Citizens all three points, which placed them a point behind leaders Liverpool, who they will play against next weekend.

It will be a 90 minutes of nerve wrecking encounter, that will have a far reaching effect on both clubs depending on the side that wins.

It will be a battle of wits between Pep Guardiola and Erik Ten Hag, two men that have similar style of haircut.

The injury suffered by Rasmus Hojlund will take the wind off United's sail, as the Den has been in to-p form in recent times. At the end of the day, it will be a battle to determine the colour of Manchester: will it be red or blue?

In other fixtures for this weekend, Newcastle United will hope to redeem their image after suffering a humiliating

4-1 defeat at Arsenal when they host Wolverhampton Wanderers as Tottenham Hotspurs confront Crystal Palace.

Basking in the euphoria of clinching the EFL Cup, league leaders Liverpool will storm the City Ground to take on Taiwo Awoniyi's Nottingham Forest while Brentford will lurk horns with Chelsea.

Goodison Park will go up in flames when Everton host West Ham United as Fulham attempt to re-inact their victory over Manchester United against Brighton.

Luton Town will host Aston Villa as Burnley take on Bournemouth at the Turf Moor.

Arsenal will be in action on Monday against Sheffield United.