

# LEADERSHIP<sup>®</sup>

www.leadership.ng

No. 3, 460

N200

WEDNESDAY NIGERIA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL NEWSPAPER f Leadership Newspapers @leadershipNGA

## NSE Market Capitalisation Sheds N1.87trn In Q1

BY OLUSHOLA BELLO, Lagos

The Nigerian Stocks Exchange (NSE) market capitalisation which represents the market value of all listed companies lost N1.870 trillion in the first quarter of this year.

Nigerian stocks during the

period suffered high volatility which was deepened by the impact of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and the oil prices crash.

The market capitalisation

declined by N1.870 trillion to close the period under review at N11.101 trillion from N12.971 trillion at which it opened for trading activities on January 2,

2020. Also, the overall market performance measure All-Share Index (ASI), which tracks the general market movement of all listed equities on the Exchange, de-

clined by 20.73 per cent to close at 26,867.79 points in the first three months of the year.

Also, the sector performance was bearish as all indices closed the period on decline as at March 27, 2020. NSE Consumer

**Inmates Protest In Kaduna, Demand Release** Pg. 6

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

### LOCKDOWN

# FG To Roll Out More Palliatives For Vulnerable Nigerians 4

● Osinbajo c'ttee compiles data of beneficiaries ● FCT, Lagos residents comply with restriction order ● COVID-19 cases rise to 139 as Nigerian doctor dies in UK ● One discharged, NCDC traces 5,000 contacts



President Muhammadu Buhari washing his hands at the Presidential Villa, Abuja, yesterday. Washing hands regularly with soap under running water is a recommended drill for avoiding coronavirus infection.

## Army Redeploys, Promotes Generals

BY TUNDE OGUNTOLA, Abuja

In what it described as a routine exercise and in line with the rekindled spirit of professionalism, the Nigerian Army has announced the postings and appointments of some senior officers, mostly in the ranks of Generals.

The exercise has been approved by the chief of army staff (COAS), Lt-Gen. Tukur Buratai, according to a statement issued by acting director, Army Public Relations, Col. Sagir Musa.

Col. Musa said that "it is a routine/normal exercise intended to reinvigorate the system for greater professional effectiveness and efficiency."

Those affected by the posting and appointment are Maj-Gen. A.C.C. Agundu from Special Task Force (STF) Operation SAFE HAVEN, Jos to Nigerian Army Resource Centre (NARC), Abuja as senior research fellow; Maj-Gen. H.I. Bature from Defence Headquarters (DHQ) Defence Liaison Office National Assembly, Abuja, to Army Headquarters Department of Civil Military Affairs and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

NHIS Releases 3-month Payment For Enrollees 9

Electricity Tariff Hike Now Insensitive, NLC Warns 8

Military Neutralises Terrorists, Destroys Logistic Base In Borno 10

Reps Donate 2-month Salaries To Fight COVID-19 9



Vice President Yemi Osinbajo(right) and Director General of NCDC, Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu during a Google Hangout with young and innovative Nigerians developing and contributing innovative/tech solutions to confront Covid-19 in Abuja, yesterday.

# Dantata Donates N300m To Kano COVID-19 C'ttee

BY ABDULLAHI YAKUBU,  
Kano

An elder statesman and business mogul, Alhaji Aminu Alhassan Dantata, has announced the donation of N300million to the Kano State COVID-19 Fund Raising Committee.

Similarly, another Kano-based businessmen, Alhaji Abba Sumaila and Alhaji Abubakar Dalhatu, chairman of Al-Amsad Group, have donated 500 sacks of Spaghetti and N5 million respectively to the committee

Also, all commissioners and political office holders in the state have donated

50 per cent of their salaries to the noble cause.

The first donation of N28.5million from UBA was yesterday announced by Governor Ganduje at the inauguration of the committee while

Africa's richest man, Alhaji Aliko Dangote, pledged to provide all the needed facilities for the earmarked 600-bed Isolation Centre at Sani Abacha Stadium, Kano.

The 38-member committee was set up

to seek for and receive donations from corporate organisations and individuals in cash or kind and to distribute same to those in need so as to cushion the harsh effect of the measures being taken by the government

against the spread of COVID-19 in Kano.

The committee, therefore, urged organisations and individuals within and outside the state to donate generously towards the humanitarian

project.

"Anyone willing to donate to the committee in cash should pay/transfer to this account: Kano State COVID-19 Support, UBA, Account No: 1022751785," it said.

## Ogun Residents Stay Indoors Despite Lockdown Shift

BY KEHINDE SALLAH, Lagos

Despite the postponement of the total lockdown by the Ogun State government to Friday for the residents to shop for their basic needs, the residents yesterday remained indoors as

banks, shops were shut.

Our correspondent who went around Sango, Ota and Idiroko road axis of the state noticed that shops and eateries were closed, while a few super marts opened to a few customers.

Although the Central

Bank of Nigeria (CBN) directed banks to operate skeletal operations, most of the banks on Idiroko Road were lockdown, but Zenith Bank Automated Teller Machine (ATMs) served those who queued to withdraw cash.

At First Bank, all the ATMs were shut down while those of Stanbic IBTC did not dispense cash.

Some bank officials, who spoke anonymously, explained that they may resume operations today and allow customers into

the banking halls for them to perform last-minute transactions before the lockdown.

One of the officials said that they would ensure that their ATMs were loaded with enough cash for easy withdrawal before the lockdown.



# our stand

## CBN, Corporate Nigeria Unite Against Covid-19

**A**s Coronavirus (Covid-19) anxiety continues to heighten among Nigerians, the government, at all levels, have pulled all stops to assuage that feeling before it becomes part of the problem. From border closures to outright lockdown, it is obvious that the powers that be accept that there is crisis on ground and that they are committed to doing the needful to confront it headlong.

In our view, of particular mention is the move by the management of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), under Godwin Emefiele who, reacting proactively even before President Muhammadu Buhari announced far reaching measures to confront the pandemic, had put in a place a financial package, a targeted credit facility estimated at N50 billion for households and Small and Medium-Scale Enterprises that have been adversely affected by the Covid-19 virus.

The outlined objectives of the fund are to cushion the adverse effects of Covid-19 on households and Medium Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs); support households; throw a life line to those whose economic activities have been significantly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic; and stimulate credit that will enable them to expand their productive capacity through equipment upgrade, research and development.

To ensure that the real target segment benefitted from it, CBN made it clear that among the MSMEs will be households with verifiable evidence of livelihood adversely impacted by Covid-19, they must have existing enterprises with verifiable evidence of business activities affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and they must also be enterprises with bankable plans to take advantage of opportunities

arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Remarkably, there is already in existence within the CBN monetary system, a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund (MSMEDF) scheme from which this Covid-19 package will be financed. It is also noteworthy that that facility will attract a meagre interest rate of five per cent per annum till 28 February 2021, after which the interest rate will be increased to nine per cent which is still, admirably, in our view, within the single digit band.

For Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the maximum loan amount will be N25 million and N3 million for households. Tenor of the loan, going by these guidelines, will be a maximum of one year for working capital loans and a maximum of three

years for term loans with at least one year moratorium. The scheme will be done in partnership with NIRSAL Microfinance Bank (NMFB) and collateral requirement will be as acceptable by NIRSAL.

We, as a newspaper, are of the firm belief that this credit stimulus will help in mitigating the adverse effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on already beleaguered household businesses as well as SMEs. It is from this perspective that we commend the management of the apex bank for its forthrightness in putting together this credit stimulus which will help in keeping them afloat in the interim, at least, pending when normalcy returns to economic activities.

We also note with satisfaction the process adopted by the CBN to mobilise the Private Sector to

form a Coalition Against Covid-19 (CACovid). This coalition will put together funds from individuals and corporate bodies that will be used to provide and equip medical facilities in the six geopolitical zones. This, according to the government banker, will involve the creation of testing, isolation and treatment centres, and include the provision of Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and molecular testing laboratories in stipulated areas.

This pull of resources from the private sector is already being deployed to put facilities in place in Lagos, the epicentre of the pandemic in Nigeria which will get 1,000 beds, Kano 500 beds, Rivers 210 beds, Abuja 200 beds, Enugu 200 beds and Borno (200 beds). The expectation is that these facilities will become operational within 10 days in those cities. The next phase will bring in Katsina, Ogun, Bayelsa, Anambra, Bauchi and Plateau among the beneficiaries and this will be ready, all things being equal, within three weeks. The remaining states of the Federation will be set up in the last phase within the next five weeks.

Based on the population of Lagos, this coalition will also be creating a permanent structure within the next four to six months just as teams have been set up and world-class standards employed to aggressively pursue a solution to this pandemic.

We appreciate the recognition by these public spirited individuals and corporate bodies about the enormity of the problem at hand. Even more than that, we commend the CBN governor, Emefiele for driving these processes, the N50 billion fund and spearheading of this massive private sector effort. Evidently, when all these are established and stabilised, Nigeria and Nigerians will be able to look Covid-19 straight in the face and tell it; we are not afraid of you.

### LEADERSHIP

**EDITOR:** Raliat Ahmed-Yusuf

**DEPUTY EDITORS:** Chika Okeke, Adebiji Adedapo

**EDITORIAL DIRECTOR:** George Agba

**COORDINATOR, EDITORIAL BOARD:** Suleiman Abdullahi

**POLITICAL DIRECTOR:** Jonathan Nda-Isaiah

### LEADERSHIP NEWSPAPERS

**CHAIRMAN**  
Sam Nda-Isaiah

**MANAGING DIRECTOR:** Muazu Elazeh

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS:**

Rasheed Yusuf

Felicia Ogbonlaiye

Christian Ochiama

**AGM (CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE):** Nangar Dul

### mission statement

LEADERSHIP is a national paper symbolically embedded in the nation's capital.

We shall stand up for good governance. We shall defend the interest of Nigerian people even against their rulers, and we shall raise our pen at all times in defence of what is right. These are the values by which we intend to be assessed.

We shall never, ever for any reason forget the noble reason of our coming into being:  
**FOR GOD AND COUNTRY!**

# FG To Roll Out More Palliatives For Vulnerable Nigerians

BY OUR CORRESPONDENTS

Barely 72 hours after President Muhammadu Buhari reeled out certain measures to mitigate the impact of the lockdown of the federal capital territory (FCT) as well as Lagos and Ondo States, the federal government is set to announce more palliatives to cushion the effect of the restriction order on vulnerable Nigerians.

The president, while announcing the shutdown of Abuja and the two southwest states in a live broadcast to the nation on COVID-19 last Sunday, approved two months cash transfer for vulnerable Nigerians, deployment of relief materials to citizens living in suburbs and satellite towns, and two months of food rations in the coming weeks for internally displaced persons, among others.

Although, more states had joined the lockdown to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, the federal government has so far limited it to the FCT, Lagos and Ogun States.

Vice President Yemi Osinbajo who disclosed the plan of the government to roll out more palliatives to cushion the effects of the lockdown said that President Buhari has mandated him to handle the task as the head of the Economic Sustainability Committee.

Speaking on the readiness of government to tackle the fallouts of the pandemic, the vice president restated the palliatives mentioned in the president's speech on Sunday, even as he explained that the Buhari administration's Social Investment Programmes would be scaled up.

Asked about how the Buhari administration intends to grapple with the consequences of the restriction of movements in parts of the country and support vulnerable Nigerians, the vice president said the president has actually just established the Economic Sustainability Committee, which he has asked him to chair.



Buhari

The committee, he noted, is to take care of the economic challenges and fallouts of the pandemic and the attendant movement restrictions in the FCT, Lagos and Ogun States.

He said the committee will also develop further palliatives, and a sustainability plan to reposition the economy and grow the non-oil sector.

He said, "First of all we must admit that there is very little precedent for what we are doing today. This is not the sort of situation that anyone necessarily prepares for. But fortunately for us we have in the past few years designed a social investment programme that tries to address some of these types of concerns.

"Part of the work of the Economic Sustainability Committee that has been constituted is to look at some of the concerns that affect the poor, especially in the context of what has already been done and the data that we already have on informal workers and informal traders and how to implement some strategy that will be able to alleviate the sufferings of the poor (and the informal workforce) at this time, and how to integrate some of the data that we have in other respects.

"So, we have data of the poorest of the poor. With the assistance of the World Bank, we have developed what is called the National Social Register where we mapped out, in prac-

tically all local government areas in Nigeria, those who are considered the most vulnerable.

"Already, some of them get conditional cash transfers but again, compared to the numbers, it is not large enough. Now we have an opportunity of doing much more in terms of giving the poor and vulnerable some kind of assistance.

"The N-power is one of our schemes where we provide opportunities for young Nigerians who have no jobs at the moment. Again the president has asked that we take a look at that and see how we can enhance that and do more. This provides yet another opportunity to widen the scope and provide more.

"One of the critical things is the fact that the whole Home Grown School Feeding Programme also has a large number of cooks; there are over 100,000 men and women scattered across the local government areas in this country who cook for these children.

"So, at the moment, they may well be out of work. So, part of what we are also looking at is for them to continue to earn a living even with the current closing down of schools. They are also obviously endangered. The Honorable Minister is working on that and I will be working closely with her to see what can possibly be done to deliver on the president's directive on that."

Osinbajo also faulted Nigerians questioning the legality of the presidential order restricting movement in the FCT, Lagos and Ogun States, saying measure was backed by the country's extant laws.

The vice president made the submission in Abuja while responding to questions on Monday at the Google Hangout Programme organised by HACK COVID-19 Call Centre, a private sector initiative supporting Nigeria's fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

A statement by his spokesman, Laolu Akande, quoted the VP as

saying: "Regarding the legality of the shutdowns announced by the president on Sunday, I think it is entirely legal. These steps are proactive, very relevant; important and backed by law. I am not so sure some of the people who have commented on the issue have come across the Quarantine Act.

"There is a Quarantine Act of 1926; it has been published in all of the Laws of Nigeria. Every edition of the Laws of Nigeria, it is there. What the Act does is that it allows the president to designate any local area, any part of the country, as a place that may be infected or under the threat of a communicable disease, and then make regulations of any kind.

"For instance, he can say people should not go out; no public gatherings, among others. So, it is a regulation that gives the president powers and these powers come from the National Assembly because, of course, it is an act of the National Assembly".

According to Osinbajo, by virtue of the constitutional rules, the 1926 Act is deemed to be an Act of the National Assembly.

He said that the president as well as governors had extensive powers under the Quarantine Act of 1926.

Osinbajo urged all interested individuals and groups to personally go through the legislation in order to understand the provisions therein.

He noted: "It is barely one-page legislation, so it is not particularly difficult to find the relevant provisions and it is not particularly difficult to read, very straightforward. So, the president has all the powers.

"Many of us are not familiar with the Influenza pandemic that killed several millions around the world in 1918. At that time, regulations were made here, very similar to what we have today, although that was under the colonial authorities.

"They also banned public gatherings, banned gatherings in places of worship then. So, there is even good historical precedence for some of what we are doing today".

The Vice President however assured that though the challenges are daunting and expectations high, government was ready and willing to address all of them.

On incorporating local manufacturers in the production of some of the items needed to manage the pandemic, the vice president said, "We have been working with many clusters of private sector manufacturers under the MS-MEs clinics.

"For example, a lot of the clusters like the tailoring cluster in Aba have come together to give us different samples of some of the protective equipment that health workers wear. They have sent us one or two samples and the NCDC will tell us whether any of them is appropriate for the circumstances so that they can begin to manufacture on a larger scale.

"Similarly, those who are making hand sanitizers are working on something. These are all local manufacturing concerns. Also, some people are even looking at local fabrication of ventilators."

Addressing issues raised about how government could help private organizations to scale up their respective interventions, the vice president said state governments have been encouraged to fully support all private initiatives aimed at addressing issues relating to the pandemic.

## Army Redeploys, Promotes Generals

FROM COVER

appointed as chief of Civil-Military Affairs; Maj-Gen. U.M. Mohammed from Nigerian Army Property Limited (NAPL) to the Office of the Chief of Army Staff and appointed special adviser, Nigerian Army University Biu/deputy chairman, Board of Trustees NAPL while the former special adviser, Nigerian Army University Biu, Maj-Gen. C.C. Okonkwo now redeployed to STF Operation SAFE HAVEN, Jos and appointed commander; Maj-Gen. F. Yahaya from Headquarters 1 Division, Kaduna to Headquarters Theatre Command Operation LAFIYA DOLE (OPLD), Maiduguri, and appointed commander, while Maj-Gen. O.G. Adeniyi is redeployed from Headquarters Theatre Command (OPLD), Maiduguri to NARC as senior research fellow; Maj-Gen. S. Idris from Sector 2 OPLD Damaturu, Yobe State, redeployed to DHQ, Abuja and appointed director liaison.

Others are Maj-Gen. A.A.

Adesope from Office of the Chief of Army Staff Directorate of Audit and Financial Management to NAPL and appointed group managing director; Maj-Gen. M.G. Ali from Headquarters Theatre Command (OPLD), Maiduguri, to Headquarters 4 Special Forces Command, Doma, Nasarawa State as commander while former Chief of Civil-Military Affairs AHQ, Abuja, Maj-Gen. U.S. Mohammed has been redeployed to 1 Division, Kaduna and appointed General Officer Commanding (GOC).

Similarly, Brig-Gen. H.I. Daniel from the defunct Army Special Forces Command, Maiduguri, to Headquarters, Training and Doctrine Command, Minna and appointed director, Army Training Support; Brig-Gen. B.E. Onyeuko remains in DHQ, Abuja as acting director, Defence Media Operation; Brig-Gen. N.M. Jega, from Training and Doctrine Command, Minna, to Infantry Corps Centre, Jaji and appointed chief of staff; Brig-Gen. L.A. Araba from Ni-

gerian Army Welfare Limited by Guaranty, Abuja, now redeployed to Sector 2 OPLD Damaturu, Yobe State as acting commander; Brig-Gen. V.O. Ita from DHQ, Abuja to Headquarters, 402 Special Forces Brigade, Azare and appointed commander while Brig-Gen. J.A.L. Jimoh from Sector 3 Artillery Brigade OPLD, Monguno to Headquarters, 31 Brigade, Minna and appointed commander, and Brig-Gen. G.T.O. Ajetunmobi, redeployed from 31 Brigade, Minna to Nigerian Army Welfare Limited by Guaranty, Abuja, as executive director (Operations).

There are also Brig-Gen. L.G. Lepdung from Headquarters, Infantry Corps Centre, Jaji to DHQ, Abuja and appointed deputy director of Procurement (Logistics); Brig-Gen. M.O. Ihanuwaze to remain in the Office of the Chief of Army Staff, Directorate of Audit and Financial Management as acting director; Brig-Gen. E.C. Obi-Osang from the defunct Headquarters, 707 Special Forces Brigade, Makurdi to Headquarters,

401 Special Forces Brigade, Makurdi as commander while Brig-Gen. G.M. Mutkut is redeployed from the defunct Nigerian Army Amphibious Command OPLD, Baga to Headquarters, 403 Amphibious Brigade, Baga and appointed commander, and Brig-Gen. J.R. Lar from Nigerian Army School of Artillery, Kachia to Sector 3 Artillery Brigade OPLD, Monguno as commander.

Also, Col. D.J. Abdullahi from the defunct Headquarters, Nigerian Army Special Forces Command, Maiduguri to Headquarters, 4 Special Forces Command, Doma, Nasarawa State and appointed acting chief of staff; Col. E.C. Emere from Nigerian Army Archives to Nigerian Military School, Zaria as deputy commandant and Col. M.O. Agi is to remain in Headquarters, Nigerian Army Armour Corps, Bauchi, as acting chief of staff, among others.

All the postings and appointments take effect from 1st April 2020, Col. Musa said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



# FG To Roll Out More Palliatives For Vulnerable Nigerians

FROM PAGE 4

Responding to participants at the hangout, the vice president added: "If you have specific cases, and ideas you may channel it through the HACK COVID-19 Call Centre, so at least we can identify those specific ones that may require some assistance."

"But what is happening now is that there are so many private initiatives and a lot is happening at the state level. We have had conversations with the Governor of Lagos State, the FCT Minister, and the Governor of Ogun State, between yesterday and today, on this matter."

"Again, with respect to moving relief items from point to point, especially with the lockdown, already exceptions have been made for this. The president made specific provisions for those who are moving relief items or rendering essential services in one form or the other."

"The state governors have been charged to ensure that this is done properly and that people are assisted, that relief organizations, charitable organizations who are concerned with these services are helped along the way. If there are specific problems, those could be fed back to us."

The online event, Google Hangout, was moderated by Ms Ore Disu, a development expert and researcher with other technology innovators as participants.

## FG Meets Service Chiefs To Review Lockdown Protocols

Meanwhile, the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 has met with service chiefs in the country to review the protocols for implementing the lockdown in Lagos, Ogun and Abuja.

Chairman of the taskforce and Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Boss Mustapha, disclosed this yesterday during PTF briefing on COVID-19 in Abuja.

According to him, the lockdown was for the benefit of the country and its citizens.

He said, "The presidential task force has met with the security chiefs to smoothen rough edges of implementation within the first day of implementation and we are working on issuing an appropriate restriction protocol and exemption guidelines, which will guide the subsequent days of restrictions."

"Initial feedback is that there is substantial compliance but, however, there are violations of those restrictions by citizens that we desire to protect. Let me emphasize that the decision to lock down is to prevent community spread which might be dangerous to manage."

"It can only be done by Nigerians and for Nigerians. So, we use this medium to implore our people and plead with them to please respect and honour restrictions that have been imposed for the good of our people and nation."

The SGF also stated that newspaper vendors were exempted from the restriction in Lagos and Ogun States as well as Abuja, saying the president's speech was clear on that.

He said, "I used to have a friend who was the Chairman of the Newspaper vendors association and they have their identities."

"Provided they can establish that that is their trade, and of course, a vendor cannot operate from his house, he has to be on the streets to distribute the papers. I believe Paragraph 41 of Mr President's speech adequately covers that."

## Lagos, FCT Residents Stay Indoors, Count Losses

Residents of Lagos and Abuja complied with the lockdown order as the Police and other law enforcement agencies continued with the enforcement of the directive that all markets, churches and mosques be closed as part of efforts to contain the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the state.

As at the time LEADERSHIP went round the densely populated Abuja border towns, including Ado, New Nyanya, and Masaka in Nasarawa State shops were under lock and key.

Mrs Elizabeth Ikwu who was at the New Nyanya market buying food items said prices had gone „a bit up“.

"My fear about this whole thing is that if it continues like this, we may not be able to cope with the

stay-at-home order," she said.

On her part, a shop owner, Nkechi Efurun, who sells food items in the market, said prices of commodities are bound to rise in accordance with the „principle of demand and supply“.

Chukwuma Oke who owns a building material shop in the area also narrated his ordeal.

Oke who fell and broke his hand while being threatened at gun point by the security operatives said his shop was closed but he came to release materials to his customers who had paid for them the previous week when the policemen in mufti appeared to arrest them.

Another shopkeeper who escaped from the police station (names withheld) said they were asked to go to the court where they would bail themselves.

Another arrested suspect who also did not give his name said they were told to bail themselves with N10,000.

However, LEADERSHIP observed that residents of the area were confused as to whether it was the federal government shutdown order for Lagos and Ogun States and Abuja in the face of the pandemic that is being executed the security operatives.

Abuja Airport road and a popular supermarket on the road experienced low traffic in both human and vehicles movement yesterday.

When this reporter visited Sho-

prate at the parking area, it was nearly empty with not more than 7 vehicles parked.

Meanwhile, some residents of Pyakasa, a suburb in Airport road, who spoke to LEADERSHIP, expressed satisfaction with the government directive.

One of them, Abdullahi Ina said, "It is a welcome development and I am highly impressed with the decision but they need to do more because as we stay at home, there are certain things we need to do."

Another resident, Emmanuel Amodu, expressed support for the government decision, saying "most of the time we blame certain government decisions, but on this, it is a welcome development, and I am urging all Nigerians to obey the order, anybody who violates the order should face the music."

## Security Agents Impound Vehicles, Motorcycles In Ekiti

Erring vehicles and motorbikes were yesterday impounded in Ekiti State as enforcement of total lockdown to stop the spread of coronavirus in the state commenced.

Governor Kayode Fayemi had in a state-wide broadcast on Sunday ordered total shutdown of the state to prevent further spread of the dreaded virus.

The governor ordered the restriction of human and vehicular move-

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

# NSE Market Capitalisation Sheds N1.87trn In Q1

FROM COVER

Goods index depreciated the most by 44.84 per cent while NSE Banking index followed with a decline of 30.64 per cent, as NSE 30 index shed 23.03 per cent.

Others are NSE Pension, Oil and Gas, Lotus 11, Premium Board, Insurance and Industrial Goods, which went down by 20.30 per cent, 19.44 per cent, 15.49 per cent, 12.69 per cent, 6.14 per cent and 3.21 per cent in that order.

The global pandemic, coronavirus now popularly referred to as COVID-19, has virtually "afflicted" many stock markets and devastated economies across the globe, whether developed or developing.

2020 has been a whirlwind for the global oil market, following the outbreak of the virus, which has hampered oil demand from one of the largest consumers of oil, China represent 13.1 per cent of world demand.

With the virus spreading across other key demand regions, Europe (14.4 per cent) and United States (20.9 per cent), the outlook for oil prices is weak. While relation among the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) was meant to provide support for falling oil prices, a failed agreement turned into a full-blown price war, with major oil producers offering significant discounts on their April Official Selling Prices (OSP).

Analysts agreed that the continued slide reflects the lack of li-

quidity in the market, mass existing of foreign investors as a result of COVID-19 pandemic and oil price war, among others.

Commenting on the market performance, the CEO, Sofunix Investment and Communications, Mr. Sola Oni, said that the market has been fragile since the beginning of first quarter due to massive exit of foreign portfolio investors and their Nigerian counterparts due to uncertainties in the system and fear of naira devaluation.

He added that coronavirus had further compounded the problem at a higher scale as it has dire implications on economic activities across the board, saying that "we expect first quarter to be flat in this regard while second quarter will most likely be negative growth."

According to Oni, the problem at hand is multifaceted and as such because there is total slowdown of all economic activities. The government should develop a comprehensive schedule of addressing multifaceted issues, including fixing of infrastructure, provision of power, review of taxation in view of the current situation and implementation of measures already announced to combat coronavirus challenges and put the economy on the right track.

The chief operating officer of Invest Data Consulting Limited, Ambrose Omordion said that "however, the COVID-19-driven

bear market has provided new opportunities for value investing among intelligent investors, which is as old as the stock market.

"Value investors look for juicy margins of safety in equity investment as a result of which they seek to buy value, while at the same time protecting their capital by avoiding poor decisions and market downturns. In summary, this is a situation when a stock is worth much more than its market value."

Omordion said that "before the onset of this ravaging virus, the global markets carried a positive momentum into the New Year, amidst trade tensions between the world's two largest economies, the US and China, a situation that had dominated market trends for most of 2019, and eased, following the signing of the phase one trade deal by both parties."

"This was, nonetheless, short-lived following the spread of the Coronavirus from Wuhan in China to other countries beginning from the middle of January that saw markets tumbling, eroding early gains made earlier."

He noted that the commodities' market was not left out with the price of crude oil falling sharply and remaining depressed at around \$26.35 per barrel on the expectation of lower demand after factories in China, the largest consumer began to shut down as a result of the

ensuing lockdown. Also, the infectious disease gave way to concerns amongst global investors as appetite for risk declined, while they sought safe havens in instruments like government bonds.

He advised investors to start

accumulating on fundamentally strong stocks whose valuations have fallen so cheap and hold in anticipation of a market recovery in the long-term as the Nigerian market remains one of the most attractive in emerging markets.



Onyema



Security personnel on guard at the entrance of Nigeria Correctional Services, Kaduna after protest by inmates in Kaduna, yesterday.

## Inmates Protest In Kaduna, Demand Release

BY ISIAH BENJAMIN, Kaduna

For fear of possible infection of the coronavirus, inmates at the Kaduna Correctional Centre yesterday staged a protest demanding that they be released from the centre.

The protest which resulted in gun shots apparently to disperse them created a lot of tension and apprehension within the area and Kaduna metropolis.

The inmates in their numbers it was gathered engaged prison officials and insisted that they must be released from their congested condition to avoid being infected by the coronavirus.

It took the intervention of sis-

ter security personnel who were called upon to assist to bring the situation to normalcy after firing some shots to the air as part of measures to disperse them.

The comptroller of the Kaduna Correctional Centre, Mohammed Babangida who confirmed that there was a protest from the inmates also informed that the situation has been brought under control and that there was no casualty recorded.

Babangida said they were able to put the situation under control with the help of sister agencies who were on ground.

According to comptroller of the command, "there was a problem within the house and it

has been addressed accordingly and all the inmates are now back in their cells."

Meanwhile, members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN) have expressed fears over the safety and security of their leader, Sheikh Ibraheem Zakzaky and his wife Zeenat who is being held in the centre.

IMN in a statement by the president of its Media Forum, Ibrahim Musa following news of the protest at the correctional centre called on all relevant authorities to ensure that the security and safety of the Sheikh and his wife is guaranteed.

According to the statement,

"Credible reports emanating from the Kaduna Correctional Centre where the government is wrongly detaining Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife has reached the Islamic Movement in Nigeria of a turmoil leading to the opening of fire and blocking of all access roads to the Centre.

"We are rightly concerned about these developments and we strongly call on all relevant authorities to ensure that the security and safety of the Sheikh and his wife are guaranteed.

"We would hold the federal government responsible for any harm to them. It is the responsibility of governments to pro-

tect all inmates in such homes, especially with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic ravaging the world, especially as the law presumes all to be innocent until proven otherwise by a law court.

"The case of Sheikh Zakzaky in particular, is quite different, where a federal high court had declared his arrest and detention as unconstitutional and a violation of his fundamental rights. Furthermore, the charges for which he is standing trial at the moment have been punctured by two different courts, who tried nearly 200 members on the same charges and discharged and acquitted them all."

## LIRS Extends Deadline For Filing Annual Returns

Citing the coronavirus pandemic, which has altered socio-economic activities around the world and the need to mitigate its effect on businesses and taxpayers, the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service (LIRS) has extended the deadline for filing of annual returns for individual taxpayers including self-employed persons from April 1 to May 31, 2020.

Statutorily, the filing of annual returns expires on the March 31st of every fiscal year, and attracts stiff penalties for defaulters, LIRS said in a statement issued yesterday by the head, Corporate Communications, Monsurat Amasa.

She quoted the chairman of LIRS, Mr. Ayodele Subair, as saying that the extension of deadline was in response to appeals made by taxpayers

as well as a policy shift by the agency to assuage the effect of COVID-19 on the taxpayers and residents of Lagos State.

Amasa said: "We implore the taxpayers to access our eTax platform for all tax operations and

## Virologist Calls For Rapid Test Kits In Nigeria

A renowned Nigerian virologist and vaccinologist, Dr Simon Agwale, yesterday, called on the federal government to expedite action in introducing rapid test kits to contain the spread of coronavirus in the country.

Agwale, who is the chief executive of Innovative Biotech, Keffi, Nasarawa State, and Innovative Biotech, USA, said the kits remained the fastest

administration matters, including filing of annual returns from the comfort of their homes and offices. They can do this, by simply logging on to the eTax platform via <https://etax.lirs.net> or calling our Customer Care Centre on 0700 CALL LIRS

(070022555477)."

She said that further updates on business operations and alternative payment platforms of the service can be obtained by visiting the LIRS website, ([www.lirs.gov.ng](http://www.lirs.gov.ng)), and its various social media

way in tracking fresh infections.

He said that "the Rapid Test Kits differentiate between recent infections. This is because any fresh infection would make the body generate antibodies, which can easily be tracked. The IgM/IgG, both positive, suggest recent exposure, while IgG positive suggests previous infection, or latent infection, with current

infections to be confirmed by Real-Time Reverse Transcriptase (RT-PCR) or viral gene sequencing."

Agwale, one-time researcher at the University of Jos, and the National Institute for Pharmaceutical Research and Development (NIPRD), as well as some institutions in Germany, UK, China and the US, commended the molecular

handles. She appealed to the residents of Lagos State to support the efforts of the Lagos State Government by adhering strictly to the COVID-19 safety guidelines as issued by relevant health authorities.

diagnostic approach which is used in conducting coronavirus tests in Nigeria. He, however, said the approach is not proactive enough to contain the widespread of the virus.

He said, "With COVID-19 IgM/IgG Rapid Test Kits, the test will become easy. Coronaviruses belong to a large family of zoonotic viruses.

## 34 Persons Test Negative For COVID-19 In Plateau - Gov Lalong

BY ACHOR ABIMAJE, Jos

Plateau State governor, Simon Lalong has said that out of 38 suspected cases of coronavirus in the state, results of 34 persons have returned negative while that of four other suspects are being expected, urging citizens to continue to abide by directives given to keep the state free from Covid-19.

The governor who spoke at the installation of the new Archbishop of Jos, Archbishop Matthew Audu noted that Plateau State is not immune to the coronavirus which is dynamic in nature hence, government policies would change from time to time to reflect the reality on ground.

Lalong who was represented by the Secretary to the State Government, Professor Danladi Atu commended citizens for adhering to government's directives to contain the disease and stated that it was unfortunate the situation has robbed Plateau people of the opportunity of coming out to welcome the new Archbishop.

According to him, "We welcome the new Archbishop to Jos, government has noted your giant stride in Lafia, you left legacy of dialogue, advocacy and peace, we hope to harvest these to sustain peace in Plateau State.

## 48,000 To Benefit From Conditional Cash Transfer In Nasarawa

BY DANJUMA JOSEPH, Lafia

No fewer than 48,000 persons from Nasarawa State are to benefit from the federal government's conditional Cash Transfer policy.

Governor Abdullahi Sule disclosed this during a meeting with the state distribution committee members in Government House Lafia, yesterday.

He said the payment of the N10,000 (ten thousand naira) conditional cash transfer programme of the federal government is to commence today.

Governor Sule who said the credibility and confidence reposed in the state by the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management can not be jeopardized added that all precautions and preventive measures against the spread of COVID 19 must be adhered to in order to keep the state safe.

"The payment of N10,000 each to beneficiaries of this programme in the state will commence tomorrow in six local governments" Gov Sule said.

He further stated that the state is in the process of procuring foodstuffs and other essentials that will reduce the hardship faced by the people at this trying moment and also protect the people against the Coronavirus pandemic.

## Assist Vulnerable Nigerians, HDAN Tells Public, Private Sectors

BY JONATHAN NDA- ISIAH, Abuja

The Housing Development Advocacy Network (HDAN) has called on all public and private stakeholders to provide succour to the most

vulnerable people in the society in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic ravaging the world.

In a statement signed by the group's president, Festus Adebayo, the group said this

call is important because it has critically evaluated the CBN economic intervention policies at this time of coronavirus pandemic and observed the lack of provision for the real estate sector.

"This is not right because a lot of the people we are asking to stay home don't even have a home. Many real estate developers and mortgage banks are operating based on loans. How is government

intervening in that respect?

"At this crucial time, we call on the government to roll out palliatives in the area of rental payment, mortgage payment obligations, downward review of interest rates," it said.



L-R: Deputy director, Media Operations, Defence Headquarters, Brig.-Gen. Bernard Onyeuko; coordinator, Defence Media Operations, Maj.-Gen. John Enenche and Nigerian Navy Liaison Officer, Commander Abdulsalam Sani during a press briefing on the update of Nigerian Armed Forces' preparedness against COVID-19 pandemic in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO BY OYEDELE OMOKAGBO

## 'Air Peace Flight Didn't Land In Calabar'

BY RICHARD NDOMA, Calabar

The Cross River State government has described as untrue, media reports that Air Peace flight carrying 35 Americans or any other flight landed at the Margaret Ekpo International Airport in Calabar

The special adviser to the governor on Media and Publicity, Mr Christian Ita, who released a statement on the issue, said: "While there was indeed a curious arrangement to have the flight come to Calabar, Governor Ben Ayade, however, refused outright to allow the airline fly into the state in line with his order to restrict flights as well as other cross border movements on land, air and sea."

Ita said the Ayade administration cannot compromise the safety of its citizens, no matter how tempting the prospects.

He said that the purported Air Peace flight never came to Calabar.

## Lockdown Begins In Abia Today

BY KALU EZIYI, Umuahia

Barring any unforeseen circumstances, Abia State will be locked down today. This followed a directive by an inter-ministerial committee on COVID-19 constituted by Governor Okezie Ikpeazu.

The directive which was signed by five top government officials and obtained by LEADERSHIP said inter-state boundaries and markets will be closed for an initial period of one week in the first instance.

"Within this period, the people are expected to stay at home with only food and grocery sellers allowed to operate in front of their houses. Further guidance will be issued in this direction in due course," the committee said.

"We strongly encourage the people to maintain good hygiene through regular washing of hands with soap and running water, use of original hand sanitizers when available as well as maintenance of social distancing is strongly advised," it said.

In preparation for the lockdown, the governor has approved the setting up of a food security sub-committee to plan necessary palliative interventions in case of a prolonged period.

# Electricity Tariff Hike Now Insensitive – NLC

BY MICHAEL OCHE, Abuja

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has described as insensitive the decision of the Electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos) to go ahead with their planned electricity hike today.

In a reaction yesterday to media reports that the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) was yet to reverse the decision taken in December 2019 to hike electricity tariff from April 1, 2020, NLC president, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, said that there are very strong concerns that the NERC might go ahead with the proposal.

He said that at a time like this, when other countries are expanding social welfare and putting in place economic stimulus including distribution of free foods, free healthcare services, sanitary kits, utility bills reduction, debt moratorium, and cash support to insulate their citizens from the harsh realities of the war against the novel Coronavirus, Nigeria can't be inflicting more pains on its citizens.

Wabba, therefore, said that the NLC "completely condemns and totally rejects any plan to inflict further pain on Nigerians at this very trying period of the novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic through increase in electricity tariff."

He said that, "if there is any time to show that peoples' lives are all that really matters, it is now! If there is any time to show that it is people before profit, it is now. If there is any time to show that the very essence of government is the security and welfare

of citizens, it is now. The war effort right now is how to beat the Covid-19 health insurgency and not scare-mongering already beleaguered citizens with electricity bills they cannot afford."

The NLC president

warned that any hike in electricity tariff would only convey a deafening expression of insensitivity to the plight of the Nigerian people who are currently dealing with the social scare, income hemorrhage, economic squeeze and mortal

dread of Covid-19.

He urged NERC not to embark on any fruitless adventure that would cast aspersion on the good intentions of President Muhammadu Buhari, saying that Nigerians and indeed the global community have a

real enemy to deal with and that is COVID-19.

Wabba also cautioned that it would be totally unwise to make enemies out of ourselves and exacerbate the high voltage social tension that currently cascades all over the country.

## Yobe Gov Warns Against Price Hike Of Essential Commodities

BY HUSSAINI JIRGI, DAMATURU

Yobe State governor, Mai Mala Buni, has warned traders to desist from hoarding or hiking the prices of essential commodities due to measures taken by his administration to curtail the spread of coronavirus in the state.

In a statement signed by the director-general, Press and Media Affairs to the governor, Mamman Muhammed, he said that the action would inflict more hardship on people.

He, however, urged the people to complement the government's effort at ensuring the prevention of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He directed the closure of the state boundaries to guard against importation of the dreaded Coronavirus into the state which has zero status.

Buni disclosed that, a Rapid Response Team was also established to closely monitor any suspicious case and also urged the people to adhere to medical advises, avoid

gatherings and ensure regular washing of hands.

He gave assurance that government had taken adequate measures by establishing isolation centres with equipment and constituting a committee on coronavirus under the chairmanship of the deputy governor, Idi Barde Gubana.

## StarTimes Offers Subscribers One-month Free Viewing

Digital pay TV company, StarTimes Nigeria has announced a one-month "free to view" service for four local television stations on its platform for active and non-active subscribers.

The local stations include the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Silverbird News 24, Channels Television (AIT), and Africa Independent Television (AIT).

StarTimes also announced the debut of the nation's leading entertainment station, Ebony Life TV on all of its bouquet.

The free viewing on some of the local stations, the company said is to ensure steady and up-to-date information offering to its subscribers on issues relating to the coronavirus pandemic while the debut

of Ebony Life is to boost the provision of entertaining content for the teeming subscribers who are compelled to sit at home in the nation's quest at managing the pandemic.

The chief executive officer, StarTimes Nigeria, Mr. David Zhang, who spoke on the offerings, noted that aligning with the directive of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), the one-month free viewing on the local stations will have the stations run even after subscribers had exhausted their subscription. This arrangement, he added, could be further reviewed subject to the issuance of further directives by the NBC.

He said: "We know that everyone needs updated reportage of happenings in

their environment on the coronavirus pandemic and we have leading news and current affairs channels on our platform that is poised to provide our subscribers with the needed information from across the country." while programmes that would focus on education, climate change and equally enlighten the youths.

In his response, general manager, southern operations of LEADERSHIP, Mr. Abdulwasii Kehinde thanked the 5-man member who visited his office, assuring that LEADERSHIP will always support them at all times.

Recounting his encounter with NASFAT, Kehinde commended the group, saying that he had an encounter with the group in

one of his trips to the United State of America which has attested to the fact that they are widely spread globally.

Corroborating NASFAT position on its spread worldwide, Kehinde said, "concerning what one of your member said on your spread. I remember I had my Sallah prayer one time I went to Texas in the US".

The GM however, advised NASFAT to do more in other levels of education, apart from tertiary educational level which they seem to focus more on.

In her comment, Member of NASFAT Council of Elders, Alhaja Samiat Mumuni pointed out that NASFAT, since inception has been focusing on the empowerment of the needy, health, education and people living in poverty.



Trailers at the border between Lagos and Ogun due to the lockdown to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO BY KOLAWOLE ALIU

## 'Smokers Risk Fatal Complications From COVID-19'

BY ONYEAÑUNA ONYEDIKACHI,  
Abuja

As Nigeria battles to contain the raging COVID-19 pandemic, the Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria (ERA/FoEN), has warned that smokers are at higher risk of developing fatal complications from contracting the virus.

The group, in a statement issued by its head, Media and Campaigns, Philip Jakpor, said that while there is currently no conclusive evidence that people who smoke tobacco are at higher risk of being infected with the virus, researchers have confirmed that smokers are at greater risk of other respiratory infections.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has similarly warned that because smoking involves repeated hand-to-face motions, it creates a route of potential viral transmission, like the current COVID 19.

In view of the growing number of donors seeking to support government efforts to combat the spread of the virus, ERA/FoEN cautioned government at all levels from receiving donations from tobacco companies, saying such gestures are hypocritical of an industry whose products are directly and indirectly fueling the pandemic.

According to the group, the largest study investigating the link between COVID-19 and smoking published till date looked at clinical outcomes from 1,099 patients with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection from 532 hospitals across China.

The research discovered that 12.4 per cent of current smokers either died, were admitted to an intensive care unit or required mechanical ventilation, compared with 4.7 per cent of non-smokers. Along similar lines, 21.2 per cent of current smokers had severe symptoms, as opposed to 14.5 per cent of non-smokers.

According to the group several countries have taken far-reaching actions to prevent imminent upsurge of smoking-induced fatalities as the COVID-19 virus ravages on. For instance, Russia has banned the use of Hookah (Shisha) in all public catering facilities. On March 16 the Governor of Cairo banned Hookah (Shisha) in cafés and restaurants. Other nations that have equally banned Hookah in the last one month are Iran, India, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Oman, Turkey, Uzbekistan and the United Arab Emirates, among others.

## Reps Donate 2 Months Salary To Fight COVID-19

BY KAUTHAR ANUMBA-KHALEEL,  
Abuja

All members of the House of Representatives have resolved to donate their two months' salaries to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, Speaker Femi Gbajabiamila has announced.

The donation, according to the speaker, will be independent of the contributions by individual lawmakers to alleviate the hardship

that their constituents face at this time of national emergency.

He said that starting from March salary, the 360 lawmakers' donation will be transferred directly to the National Relief Fund account for the fight against COVID-19.

In a video message to Nigerians as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Gbajabiamila said: "We have in the House of Representatives jointly committed to contributing one hundred per cent (100%) of our

salaries for the next two months to the fight against COVID-19 in Nigeria.

"Our contribution will support provisions for the welfare of frontline medical professionals and health workers, and other interventions to provide for the wellbeing of all Nigerians through these trying times.

"Accordingly, I have directed the Clerk to the National Assembly to see to it that all members' salaries are transferred to the National Relief

Fund for this month and the next.

"This is independent of ongoing individual efforts by members to alleviate the suffering brought on by this virus and to improve the living conditions of citizens in their various constituencies."

He said the House would exercise its oversight power to ensure faithful administration of all emergency funds and contributions made so far to ensure they serve the purpose for which they were intended.

## NHIS Releases 3 Months Payment For Enrollees

BY PATIENCE IVIE IHEJIRIKA, Abuja

The National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) has released funds for the payment of capitation and fee-for-service for its enrollees for the second quarter (April to June) of 2020.

This, the scheme said, would guarantee uninterrupted access to healthcare services by its enrollees in these challenging times.

In a statement signed by head, Media and Public Relations of NHIS, Ayo Osinlu, he said that the action was to ensure that no enrollee will be turned back from any facility for non-payment of appropriate fees by any Health

Maintenance Organisation (HMO).

According to him, the Scheme took the step to ensure that the looming threat of COVID-19 is not compounded for the enrollees by inability to access healthcare services at the points of need.

Osinlu further stated that the NHIS has issued guidelines to the HealthCare Facilities (HCFs) and the Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs) on certain actions to be taken towards protecting the interests of the enrollees in the current situation.

These guidelines, he said, contain concrete provisions to prevent service failure, and also

ensure that enrollees enjoy prompt and effective healthcare services in spite of general restrictions and outright lockdown in certain parts of the country.

"The guidelines gave clear order to healthcare providers to ensure the safety and protection of their personnel against COVID-19 infection, provide timely and appropriate level of care for all NHIS enrollees as may be required, and ensure that no NHIS enrollee is denied access to care.

"It also directed the providers to note that all NHIS and HMO Call Centres are open 24hours daily. They are also to ensure the issuance of authorisation codes

and resolution of all other issues, ensure prompt report of all cases of denial of authorisation codes by HMOs, as well as maintain high index of suspicion and promptly report suspected cases to NCDC or State Ministries of Health.

"On the other hand, the guidelines for the HMOs instructed them to also ensure the safety and protection of their personnel against COVID-19 infection, ensure prompt payment of capitation and fee-for-service to all healthcare facilities, while also ensuring the provision of timely and appropriate level of care for all NHIS enrollees by the healthcare facilities".

## Kwara Youths, Beggars, Transporters Defy Restriction Order

BY ABDULLAHI OLESIN, Ilorin

The stay-at-home directive issued by the Kwara State government to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the state is being abused by some residents, especially youths,

commercial vehicle operators and beggars.

The partial lockdown of the state is effective only between the early hours of the day and 6 pm.

Anything after 6 pm, residents, especially marketers

and commercial vehicle operators troop out to ply their trade.

The youths have turned virtually every available place within compounds to football fields, without regard for social distancing order.

At popular Oja-Oba, near Ilorin Central Mosque and Gambari area, regarded as beggars' colony, beggars are found in large numbers, begging for alms. They are always there from morning till dusk.

## Gov Ayade Releases N500m, 20 Vehicles For COVID-19 Fight

BY RICHARD NDOMA, Calabar

Cross River State governor, Prof. Ben Ayade, has approved the sum of N500 million for the state's newly inaugurated COVID-19 Response Team.

The team which was inaugurated yesterday by Ayade at the open field of the Governor's Office, Calabar, was also given 20

vehicles for its operations.

The mandate of the Response Team, according to the governor is to safeguard the state against the global scourge.

Ayade used the opportunity to appeal to the federal government to give special treatment to the state as a result of its strategic border location.

He said: "Cross River is an

international border state, and with the incident in Cameroon, I call on President Muhammadu Buhari, the minister of Health to treat Cross River in a very peculiar way. We need the obvious and express attention of the federal government."

The goernor charged the team headed by the commissioner for Health, Dr. Betta Edu, to work

assiduously to ensure that all preventive measures against the spread were adhered to.

Ayade thereafter announced the release of N500 million and 20 vehicles to support the activities of the Response Team, saying it was the desire of his administration to ensure that Cross River remained COVID-19-free.

## Kogi Workers Receive March Salaries

BY SAM EGWU, Lokoja

The Kogi State government has advised workers to brace up for tough times ahead as it commenced the payment of their March salaries.

Mukadam Asiwaju Asiru Idris, the commissioner for Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, made the disclosure to newsmen in Lokoja, yesterday. He said despite the shortfall in the monthly allocation to the state, the Yahaya Bello administration has demonstrated its commitment to workers' welfare by paying their full salaries.

Idris said that the shortfall was occasioned by the COVID-19 scourge now ravaging the world, stating that the pandemic alongside the ensuing austerity measures owing to the fall in oil prices, called for retrospection amongst the citizens.

While observing that oil, which is the nation's main source of revenue now sells for \$20 in the global market, the commissioner expressed fears of economically gloomy months ahead.

He explained that as from 1st April, Saudi Arabia, which is an oil-producing competitor with Nigeria, will sell Arab Light at \$10.25 per barrel discount to Dated Brent.

Similarly, he expressed more worries that Kuwait dropped \$7 of its prices to NW Europe ; Iraq dropped \$4 of its price to Europe and Iran dropped \$6 of its price for April Cargoes to Europe. It means that tougher times lay ahead for the economy.

In his words, "the shock has amplified the epic battle between Russia and Saudi Arabia. First, Russia refused to cut production despite the obvious need for less supply. That refusal is driven by its desire to drown high-cost US producers in a sea of cheap crude in hopes of recapturing market share.



L-R: Jigawa State governor, Alhaji Badaru Mohammed Abubakar exchanging pleasantries with Sen Danladi Sankara while Sen Ibrahim Hassan Hadejia looks on, at the government house, Jigawa, recently.

## Military Neutralises Terrorists, Destroys Logistic Base In Borno

BY DAVID TARKAA, Abuja

The Armed Forces of Nigeria have destroyed another logistics base of the boko haram terrorists at Ngoske in the fringes of Sambisa Forest Borno State.

The feat was achieved during an air raid by the Air Component of Operation LAFIYA DOLE in a subsidiary operation, "Decisive Edge"..

The air strikes were carried out based on credible intelligence reports indicating existence of some structures within the settlements used by the terrorists to store their arms and other logistics items.

In a statement issued yesterday by acting director, Defence Media Operations at the Defence Headquarters, Brig-Gen. Bernard Onyeuko, he said that "following confirmatory Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions, which showed significant activity in the settlement, Nigerian military fighter jets were

dispatched to attack the location. The jets' bombs and rockets recorded accurate hits on target

leading to the destruction of the base as well as the neutralization of some Boko Haram fighters.

"The Armed Forces of Nigeria, in furtherance of the objective of restoring peace and security in the

Northeast, will continue to sustain the offensive against the enemies of our dear nation," he said.

## Kano NASS Members Donate N22m To COVID-19 Fund

BY ABDULLAHI YAKUBU, Kano

Federal lawmakers from Kano State have shown their solidarity with the state government through individual donations to the state's Fund Raising Committee on COVID-19, which was inaugurated by Governor Abdullahi Umar

Ganduje.

A press statement issued by the commissioner for Information and member of the committee, Malam Muhammad Garba, indicated that Senator representing Kano North, Barau Jibrin, donated the sum of N4million, while Senators Ibrahim Shekarau and Kabiru

Gaya representing Kano Central and Kano South respectively offered N2 million each.

In the same vein, the House Leader at the Green Chamber, Hon. Alhassan Ado Doguwa and 10 other members donated N1million each.

The members are Hon. Kabiru Alhassan

Rurum, Hon. Mustapha Bala Dawaki, Hon. Nasir Ali Ahmed, Hon. Tijjani Abdulkadir Jobe, Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi, Hon. Abdullahi Mahmud Gaya, Hon. Abubakar Jibrin Bichi, Hon. Sha'aban Ibrahim Sharada, Hon. Aminu Suleiman Goro, and Hon. Hafizu Sani.

Malam Garba also

announced that 13 other members of the House of Representatives collectively made a donation of N3.250million.

He said the director-general, National Civil Aviation Authority (NCCA), Musa Nuhu Shu'aibu, contributed N1million.

## .... HoS, Permanent Secretaries Donate Relief Items

BY BIDON MIBZAR, Abuja

In their efforts to help the federal government fight the COVID-19 pandemic, the body of permanent secretaries headed by the head of civil service of the federation (HOS) has donated items to be used for personal and home hygiene.

A press statement signed by the director, Information, Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation, Mrs Olawunmi Ogunmosunle, revealed that the HoS, Dr Folasade Yemi-Esan, during the presentation, yesterday, said that the permanent secretaries contributed a large chunk of

their salaries to get the items for the cleaning of hands, bodies, clothes and homes.

She said the items were chosen because healthy hygiene is important in the fight against the pandemic.

The items to be distributed to the most vulnerable in the society include bar soaps for

washing clothes (100ctns), Dettol antiseptic soaps (100ctns), Dettol disinfectant liquid (80ctns), Ariel and Sunlight washing powder (100ctns).

The HoS handed the items to the federal government through the secretary to the government of the federation

(SGF), who is the chairman COVID-19 Presidential Task Force, Boss Mustapha.

Mustapha, expressed gratitude to them for the gesture, commended the show of solidarity and commitment of the officials to the Muhammadu Buhari administration.



# FG To Roll Out More Palliatives For Vulnerable Nigerians

FROM PAGE 5

ments across the state commencing from yesterday.

Combined forces of security agencies who patrolled Ado Ekiti Metropolis and other towns arrested and impounded the vehicles to enforce the order.

Soldiers, men of the Department of State Services, Police, operatives of Ekiti State Peace Corps, Ekiti State Traffic Management Agency, Federal Road Safety Corps and Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps were all over the place enforcing government directive.

The defiant motorists and commercial motorcyclists were arrested by the operatives with their vehicles and motorbikes impounded for violating the order.

Hundreds of vehicles and motorbikes arrested were impounded inside the main bowl of the Fajuyi park pavilion in the state capital.

The security personnel mounted barricades at all the entry points and highways, while their men took over major junctions like Ijigbo, Okeyinmi, Fajuyi and Odo Ado to control in and outflow of humans and vehicles.

## Imo Residents Observe Stay-at-home Order

The shutdown order by the Imo State government on markets and other socio-economic activities witnessed very impressive compliance by traders and the general public within the state capital.

The teams monitoring the various market locations witnessed that the popular Ekeukwu market in the heart of Owerri was largely deserted, with only pockets of street traders at Ekeonunwa and School Road axis.

The entire Douglas Road, usually over-run by street traders, was also devoid of any trading activity, with the doors of most shops lining the road firmly shut.

Towards Orji axis, there was total compliance up to the traditional Nkwo-Orji market which was totally empty as convoys of combined Security Teams patrolled the area.

Even shops along the stretch of Okigwe Road to Obilubi Mbieri in the neighboring Mbaitoli local government area were all under lock and key, including major super markets and eateries.

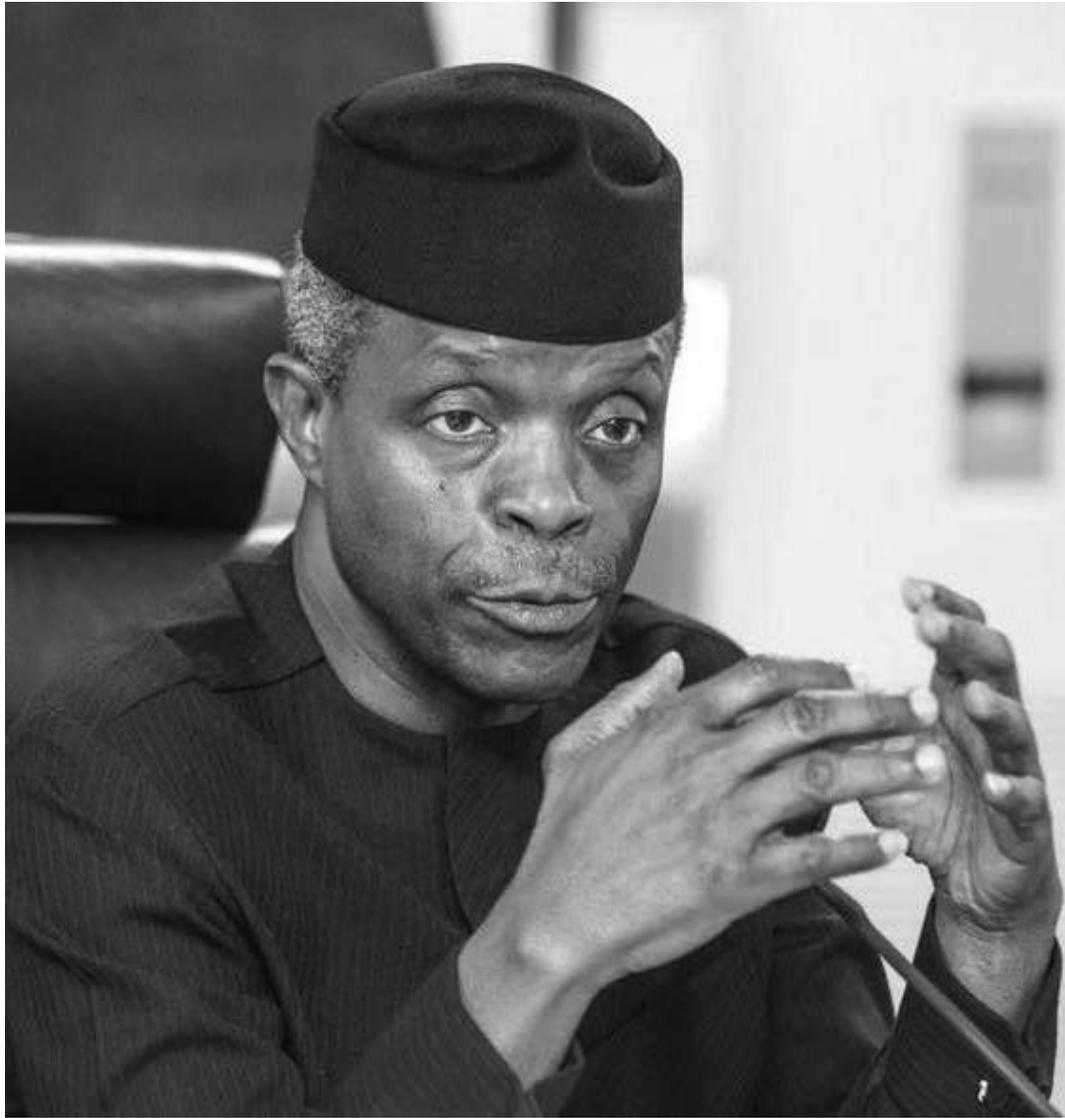
The same scenario played out at Egbeada Main Market along Orlu road axis which was fully shut, while contrastingly, the Amakohia mini-market, a centre for food stuff was booming.

However, upon getting wind of imminent raid by the enforcement team, the traders scampered away, wityh many abandoning their wares.

## Last-minute Shopping In Asaba As Soldiers Force Foodstuff Price Cut

Asaba residents yesterday embarked on last minute shopping despite the outrageous increase in prices of commodities following the commencement of stay at home order by the state government.

LEADERSHIP gathered that military personnel who came for shopping at the popular Ogebeogongo market in Asaba and discovered a sharp increase in prices of commodities demanded that the traders must



Osinbajo

reverse to normal prices, which they complied with as price of garri which was sold earlier in the day for N1500 per bucket was reversed to N700.

Prices of commodities especially garri, rice, beans and yam have reportedly skyrocketed as a result of panic buying by residents of the state ahead of the lockdown beginning today.

The situation in Cross River State was tense, with rumours that one or two persons who may have been infected with the COVID 19 pandemic failed to open up that they were infected with the deadly virus.

## Ganduje Monitors Compliance, Orders Arrest Of Defaulters

Kano State governor, Abdullahi Umar Ganduje, yesterday paid an unscheduled visit to boundary towns linking Kano State and other states.

The governor ordered the arrest and prosecution of all those violating the border closure instruction.

LEADERSHIP reports that the defaulters were loaded in two tippers, two trucks, two buses and one coaster but along Zaria - Kano road.

Governor Ganduje instructed them to return back to their respective states where they would be made to face the wrath of the law for violating the order imposed by the state.

„We are here to see how people are complying with the directive we gave for boundary closure. Those you are seeing here are from Madallah in Abuja. And most of them were not screened to ascertain their health condition. And

more so, there is a directive banning all kinds of movement which they all violated”, he stated.

## Cases Rise To 139 As Nigerian Doctor Dies In UK

Meanwhile, the federal government revealed yesterday the number of COVID-19 cases has risen to 139

It also hinted that over 300 Gene Xpert machines that are used for tuberculosis diagnosis will be converted to be used for COVID-19 detection within the next two to three weeks.

The minister of Health, Dr. Osagie Ehanire, who stated this during the Presidential Task Force Briefing on covid-19, yesterday in Abuja, also said that more laboratories will join the network of molecular diagnostic laboratories for COVID-19 in Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt and Sokoto.

According to him, more testing sites have been opened in Ibadan and Abakaliki, while existing laboratories are being optimized in their performance.

On Covid-19 confirmed cases in the country, Ehanire said, „As of today the 31st of March 2020, we have recorded 135 confirmed cases of Covid -19 in Nigeria, of which 81 are in Lagos, 25 in the FCT, 8 in Oyo, 4 in Ogun, 3 in Kaduna, 2 in Bauchi, 2 in Edo, 2 in Osun, 2 in Enugu, and one each in Benue, Ekiti and Rivers.

He further stated that majority of persons from overseas and others were traced, as well as their close contacts, noting that the high number of cases in Lagos and Abuja was because of their functions as a gateway for international air travel.

He stated: „Additional strategies are being developed to intensify contact tracing to support prompt case detection, isolation, and treatment in order to reduce the spread of this infection.

„The incidence of new cases into Nigeria as a result of the closure of the airport and land borders will reduce the number of implications so that we will be dealing largely with those which have already been brought into the country and are being transmitted from person to person“.

On preparedness and treatment, Ehanire said the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has engaged hundreds of ad-hoc staff to support call centres, contact tracing and laboratory work, adding that many retired staff of the NCDC and also of the Ministry of Health, have reported for duty.

Meanwhile, a Nigerian medical doctor, Alfa Sa'adu, has died in the United Kingdom after being infected with Coronavirus.

The 68-year-old man, who is a native of Kwara State, died yesterday.

Until his demise, Sa'adu worked at Princess Alexandra Hospital NHS Trust and was a former medical director of London Hospital.

A family member, who confirmed the news to SaharaReporters on Tuesday, said that the victim's wife, who is also a medical doctor in the UK, was also infected with the virus and was currently in a critical state at a hospital.

Ahman Makams, a nephew of the late 68-year-old said Dr Sa'adu contracted the virus after going to a hospital as a con-

sultant to help patients struggling with the disease.

He said, „I just lost my uncle this morning In London. Until his death, he was Galadima of Patigi and former Medical Director of London Hospital.

„May his soul rest in peace and may Allah grant him with Aljannah. He went as a consultant to help and it was in the process that he contracted the virus. His wife also has the virus but is receiving treatment currently.“

Dr Sa'adu graduated from University College, London, with a BSC in Anatomy in 1973 and from University College Hospital Medical School with MB.BS in 1976.

He returned to Nigeria in 1979 for his National Youth Service before teaching and training at Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital in Zaria, Kaduna State.

Sa'adu, who is the third Galadiman Patigi and was turbaned in March 2000, returned to London in 1984 and rose to become the Medical Director and Deputy Chief Executive at Ealing Hospital NHS Trust.

## One Discharged As NCDC Traces 5,000 Contacts

Meahwile, the NCDC has said it was tracing about 5,000 contacts across the country.

This is just as the coronavirus index case in Ekiti state was on yesterday discharged.

The patient was discharged after completing his treatment and was confirmed negative to the test for the dreaded virus.

The patient had been receiving treatment since March 18, 2020 at the Ekiti State Infection Disease Control Centre in Oba Adejuyigbe General Hospital Ado-Ekiti.

Speaking after he was discharged, the patient said that the state government had been up to the task throughout the period he was quarantined at the center.

„I appreciate the state government, the medical team and the entire Ekiti people for standing by me at my trying moment,“ he said.

Confirming the patient's discharge, the commissioner for Health and Human services in the state Dr.Mojisola Yaya-Kolade disclosed that the index case was given best treatment and was confirmed free of the virus with all test carried out.

„We are happy to inform Nigerians most especially the Ekiti residents that the only index case in the state has been discharged today, he has been treated of the deadly Corona virus,“ she said.

Yaya- Kolade said the 41 contacts of the patient that had been put in self-isolation are being closely monitored and all necessary tests have been done to curb the spread of the virus in the state.

She urged all Ekiti residents to adhere hygienic life style and obey the stay at home order of the state government.

## Bauchi Records 3rd Case Of Coronavirus

Bauchi State has recorded its third case of coronavirus, the deputy governor Senator Baba Tela said yesterday.

The deputy governor who spoke to journalists while unveiling a 150-bed capacity isolation centre in Bayera said the third case is a 55-year-old „and we have isolated him and he is under our management“.

Baba Tela said the state government will continue to partner with NCDC to conduct more test.



People making last minute purchases at the popular Ogbete main market, Enugu to beat the March 31 deadline of government's order for total lockdown of activities to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Enugu, yesterday.

## Niger Govt Extends Curfew Till Midnight

BY ABU NMODU, Minna

The Niger State government has extended the curfew imposed in the state from 10 am to 12 midnight even as it acknowledged the understanding showed by the people to the precautionary measures taken by Governor Abubakar Sani Bello to contain the spread coronavirus in the state.

The governor announced the extension of the curfew in a statement issued by secretary to the state government (SSG) and chairman,

Niger State Task Force on COVID-19, Ahmed Ibrahim Matane.

He commended the people for their "patience, dedication and perseverance in this trying moment of our history."

The SSG explained that the state is yet to record any single case of an outbreak, but informed Nigerlites that the measures taken by government became necessary in order to ensure that the virus does not find its way to the state.

The chairman noted with gratitude the effort of Nigerlites, health

workers, journalists, security agencies and other emergency response team for their untiring commitment in ensuring that the precautionary measures put in place by government against COVID-19 are well observed and urged them to sustain the tempo.

He called on people to maintain the social distancing by avoiding crowded areas such as clubs, bars, burial, marriage and naming ceremonies and all forms of gathering which are requisite measures to curb the spread of the pandemic that has become a global threat. Ahmed Matane assured

the citizens that government is not resting on its oars towards addressing the emergency challenges being faced by the people as a result of measures taken by government to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the state through the provision of palliatives to the vulnerable members of the society.

He warned that the lackadaisical attitude of some people towards the pandemic will worsen the situation as the virus is real and can only be curtailed when all preventive measures are observed.

## IPMAN Lauds PMB, Orders Members To Open Fuel Stations

BY EMAMEH GABRIEL, Abuja

The Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN) has commended President Muhammadu Buhari's approach to the current coronavirus situation in Nigeria, praying for the speedy recovery of infected persons in the country.

In a statement signed by IPMAN's national president, Alhaji Sanusi Fari, the group said the measures rolled out by the federal government are enough to break the circle of spread of the pandemic that recently took the life of one of their former colleagues, an ex-MD of PPMC.

According to Alhaji Sanusi, "The measures he (Buhari) rolled out are capable and can stop the spread of this pandemic, COVID-19".

"We, like every other Nigerian are calling on our members to sacrifice by obeying the directives of Mr. President.

"We have directed our members to continue operation in line with the directives of Mr. President by ensuring that our petrol stations remain open while observing the strict guidelines from our health authorities."

Alhaji Sanusi added that while the group remains grateful

to NUPENG's President, Comrade Williams Akporeha and his executives, NARTO President, Alhaji Yusuf

Othman and his executive and National Chairman, PTD of NUPENG, Comrade Salimon Oladiti for their cooperation

so far, he called on PEF Board to continue payment of marketers' bridging claims as promised to lessen their

burden especially at this time to enable them to continue to provide service to the public in the interest of the country.

## Security Agents Enforce 24-hr Curfew In Rivers

BY ANAYO ONUKWUGHA, Port Harcourt

Security operatives yesterday took over parts of Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor local government areas of Rivers State, as the state government imposed a 24-hour curfew on the affected areas.

LEADERSHIP observed

that the security operatives include soldiers, police and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), the Nigerian Air Force and Department of State Service (DSS).

They barricaded major roads leading to Education Bus Stop to Agip Junction, Ikwerre Road, in Port Harcourt City local

government area as well as Obiri Ikwerre Junction to Ozuoba, Rumualogu and Choba, in Obio/Akpor local government area.

Commuters in the affected areas were stranded as commercial vehicles were not allowed to operate while residents were forced to raise their hands up while walking along the streets.

LEADERSHIP recalls that Governor Nyesom Ezenwo Wike had, in a statewide broadcast on Monday, declared a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the affected areas following the decision of the State Security Council to that effect.

However, residents of the state woke up to see large number of security

## Group Demands Transparency On COVID-19 Funds

BY ERNEST NZOR, Abuja

A group, Connected Development (CODE) has tasked the Ministries of Finance, Health and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) on transparency and accountability in the management of the donations made by Nigerians and organisations to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

Its chief executive, Hamzat Lawal, made the appeal, yesterday in a statement issued in Abuja. He said that the organisation is following the donations and interventions to tackle the current pandemic threatening the Nigerian healthcare system and other aspects of the nation's wellbeing.

According to CODE, trust in Nigerian public institutions has recently been measured by lack of transparency, poor accountability and poor communication adding that the current crisis provides an opportunity for the Nigerian government to regain the citizens' trust.

While commending donations by well-meaning Nigerians and organisations, CODE's chief executive, Hamzat Lawal, noted that although donations have risen to N44 billion and counting, there is no clarity from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health on proper collation and disbursement.

"The group managing director of NNPC, Mele Kyari, had stated that NNPC and its 30 partners are donating about N11 billion," he recalled, and asked "which partner donated what? How much is cash and how much is in kind? The vagueness of this response makes it impossible to hold either NNPC, its partners or the NCDC to account."

operatives on the affected areas.

Announcing the imposition of the 24-hour curfew, the commissioner for Information and Communications, Pastor Paulinus Nsirim, said the action was in the state government's quest to prevent spread of the coronavirus in the state.

## Foundation Donates Bio-hazard Suits To A/Ibom NMA

BY BERNARD TOLANI DADA, Uyo

As part of its continuous efforts to offer strategic assistance to stakeholders and organisations in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic, the Ini Ememobong Foundation has donated bio-hazard suits to the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) Akwa Ibom State.

The donation which was handed over to the chairman of the Nigerian Medical Association, NMA, Akwa Ibom State, Dr Nsikak Nyoyoko is coming on the heels of series of sensitisation visits and donation of hand sanitizers by the Foundation.

Handing over the items to the Nigerian Medical Association Akwa Ibom Branch, chairman of Ini Ememobong

Foundation and publicity secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Akwa Ibom State, Comrade Ini Ememobong said the donation of the Bio-Hazard suits was the foundation's way of providing support to organisations at the forefront of the fight against the dreaded Coronavirus pandemic.

"At the Ini Ememobong Foundation we believe

that the fight against this pandemic should not be dumped on the table of government alone. That is why we are not resting on our oars in offering any kind of support or assistance within our abilities to different segment of our population and stakeholder groups. We believe that in this fight, every effort and second counts," Ini Ememobong said.

The chairman of the Nigerian Medical Association, NMA, Akwa Ibom State, Dr. Nsikak Nyoyoko thanked the Ini Ememobong Foundation for the donation which he said was timely.

Nyoyoko said the bio-hazard suits will be transported to the Infectious Disease Hospital (IDH) to help shore up the state's preparedness to fight the pandemic should a case be recorded.



## 3 Killed, 2 Injured In Niger Communal Clash

BY ABU NMODU,  
Minna

Three persons have been killed and two others injured in a communal clash between Dabogi and Ek-kun communities in Kpada ward of Lapai local government area of Niger state.

LEADERSHIP gathered that the clash was fuelled by a lingering dispute over a piece of land in the area which has been a subject of litigation in the court.

Sources said that some youths from one of the communities involved in the dispute were preparing part of the disputed piece of land for the farming season on Monday when the other viallge mobilised to stop them prompting the attack and counter attack.

The youths allegedly used dangerous weap-

ons which led to the death of three persons and the injured before policemen were mobilised from Lapai to the scene

The state command police public relations officer, Wasiu Abiodun, who confirmed the incident to LEADERSHIP, stated that the Lapai Divisional Police Office had returned normalcy to the communities.

He said the village head and youth leaders of the affected communities were invited and after that, those found to have caused the clash might be taken for questioning.

Abiodun said that the police will continue to ensure that peace was sustained in the communities as men of the command were stationed in the area to forestall further breaking of law and order.

## Gov Emmanuel Signs Quarantine, Restriction Regulations

BY BERNARD TOLANI  
DADA Uyo

The Akwa Ibom State government has prohibited all public burials, weddings and other forms of gatherings till further notice.

It came into effect following the signing into law the quarantine and restriction of movement regulations 2020 by Governor Udom Emmanuel.

The government also set up a task force to enforce the new law that will be in place till the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

In a statement signed by Sir Charles Udoh, the commissioner for Information, the

government vowed to prosecute defaulters under the new law.

The law directed that all places of religious worship, churches, and mosques shall strictly observe the social distancing prescription of a minimum of one metre and not more than 20 persons per gathering. In addition to hand washing facility with running water, soap and sanitisers shall be made available.

Also, all public parks, shops, eateries, clubs, restaurants, markets and offices within the state shall remain closed except for the sale of foodstuffs, drugs and other essential commodities.

# Lockdown: NHRC Cautions Against Impunity By Security Agents

BY MOSES ORJIME, Abuja

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has cautioned against impunity by security agents in the enforcement of the federal government's directive on the containment of COVID-19 in the country.

It also said that it stands in solidarity with the government and Nigerians over the pandemic which has posed serious public health

challenges worldwide.

NHRC, in a statement issued yesterday by the executive secretary, Tony Ojukwu, urged the government to take measures to stem the tide of the disease to protect the right to health and life of the people.

Ojukwu commended the efforts of the various health workers who have exhibited professional and patriotic zeal to contain the virus and ensure the safety of all Nigerians and also recognised the efforts

of patriotic Nigerians and businesses who have risen to the challenge to contribute resources to fight the scourge.

He further asked the Presidential and State Task Forces on Covid-19 to ensure accountability, transparency and inclusiveness, making sure that no one is left behind especially vulnerable groups like IDPs, refugees, persons with disability, almajiris, orphaned children, the aged and single headed households

etc.

The statement reads in part: "The Commission notes that the Federal and State Governments have in attempt to control the spread of this pandemic, employed some restrictive measures including total lockdown in some cases.

"These measures are directed at public safety and health and therefore should not in any way be abused by those charged with the responsibility of enforcing the directives.



Security men warning an Okada man at Ahmadu Bello Stadium roundabout in compliance with the stay-at-home order of the state government to curb the coronavirus pandemic in Kaduna, yesterday. PHOTO BY GBENGA ABIOLA

## Stop Demoralising Troops, CSOs Tells Online Medium

A group, the Conference of Civil Society Organisations for Peace, Security and National Development has criticised the continuous attack of an online news portal, Sahara Reporters, on the Nigerian Army, alleging that it was designed to ridicule the efforts of men and officers of the service.

It said what was required from all peace-loving Nigerians and organisations, especially the media, was support and not bashing of the Nigerian Army to defeat boko haram insurgents, who have made life miserable for the people in the Northeast region.

The CSOs, in a statement signed by its conveners, Mike Msuaan and Comrade, Adamu Kabir Matazu they described a video clip published by the news portal alleging that the Army was overpowered by the insurgents in the war front as in bad faith.

The duo maintained that the current global challenge occasioned by the dreadful coronavirus ought to ignite humanity in the management of the news portal and lamented that Sahara Reporters' actions were unpatriotic.

The news portal had alleged that by the admission of the Theatre Commander of

"Operation Lafiya Dole" that over 100 RPG's and mortars were fired by boko haram terrorists showed that they possessed more superior weapons than the Army.

But the CSOs argued that the news portal failed to acknowledge the gallantry of the Army that overpowered the terrorists who engaged them with sophisticated weapons but was rather quick to insinuate that the men and officers were weak and incapable of taking on the terrorists.

Msuaan said that "the action of the news portal smacks of professionalism and patriotism.

It is sad that any sane human being would at a time when the world is literally shorting down as a result corona virus that is ravaging would decide to take side with terrorists to demoralise the troops.

"A cursory review of the video will reveal that the Theatre Commander was encouraging an officer who was becoming demoralised as a result of the attacks, but the news portal rather reported that the men and officers were weak and running away from the battle field. We find this deliberate mischief disturbing and should be condemned by all well-meaning citizens.

## Kaduna PDP Chieftain Unveils N10m Package For Constituents

BY ISIAH BENJAMIN,  
Kaduna

APeoples Democratic Party (PDP) chieftain, Lawal Adamu Usman, popularly known as Mr LA, has rolled out a N10 million stimulus package for his constituents in seven local government areas that make up the Kaduna Central Senatorial District.

Usman, who made this known in Kaduna, said that politicians must learn to support their people at all times and not only when they seek votes from them.

He said that the current state of immobility imposed as a measure to curtail the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has come with severe hardship on

the general population particularly the vulnerable communities.

While encouraging people to adhere to all the public health instructions in order to stay safe and ensure the safety of others, Mr LA said it is at the same time the responsibility of the privileged class to support the less privileged through these

trying times.

"To this end, I have donated the sum of N10million through the Mr LA Cares Foundation for the purchase of food items to be distributed to 81 Wards of the seven Local Government Areas of Kaduna Central Senatorial Zone.

"This token is to cushion the effect of the lockdown resulting from

the global COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic that has caused serious socio-economic hardships to our people.

"Our coordinators in the 81 wards will be assigned the responsibility of distributing the food items to the beneficiaries within the identified communities and households of Kaduna

Central Senatorial Zone with immediate effect.

"While wishing those who have contracted the virus a quick recovery, I wish to remind the good people of Kaduna Central Senatorial Zone to always observe the instructions and advice of medical experts on protective measures against the spread of the virus," Usman said.



The popular Ahmadu Bello way in Kaduna deserted due to the stay-at-home order of the state government to curb the spread of coronavirus in Kaduna, yesterday. PHOTO BY GBENGA ABIOLA

## Delta To Assist Children Of Residents Killed By Herdsmen

BY INNEH BARTH, Asaba

The Delta State government has announced plans to institute a N10 million education endowment funds for families of victims of herdsmen attacks in the state.

The secretary to the state government (SSG), Mr Chiedu Ebie, made this known yesterday when he presented cheques to the next-of-kin of the victims of Fulani herdsmen attack at the palace of the Ovie of Uwheru, Ughelli South local government area.

Ebie said that the state government was desirous of improving the security in the state, hence the partnership with the Nigeria Police Force to host the South-South Regional Security Summit aimed at tackling the security challenges being experienced by the states in the region.

He said that the governors in the region took a decision to strengthen the BRACED Commission which he noted, had been mandated to set up a regional security outfit to bring peace and security to the region.

The SSG noted that the state government commiserated with the people of Uwheru for the lives that were lost during the herdsmen attack while stating that the government would support them to overcome the grief they went through.

## Workers Abandon Upgrade Of Akanu Ibiam Airport Project

BY NNAMDI MBAWIKE, Enugu

Plans by the federal government to reopen the Akanu Ibiam International Airport, Enugu by Easter are no longer feasible as workers handling the project have abandoned site following the outbreak of coronavirus.

The minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, who visited the airport, yesterday, expressed shock that the workers could take such action after concerted efforts by the government to meet their demands.

He expressed regrets that the action could be taken when they had achieved almost 93 per cent

completion of the upgrading process.

The minister stressed that a total rehabilitation would have been achieved if they had worked for seven more days.

The Akanu Ibiam International Airport was shut down last year to pave way for upgrading of its runways and other facilities. It is being handled by PW Construction Company.

After inspection tour of the facility, Sirika said that there was nothing else to do than to suspend further work until the ravaging covid-19 ends in the country, adding that, when work resumes, it would take at least 15 days to complete the

rehabilitation process.

“We are sad to announce today that because the workers who ought to be on site had to close down shop to go back to their families because of the covid-19, we will no longer continue. We had planned to surmount this problem; we had pushed as far as we can to defeat this problem and to deliver this project by Easter. We were on our way to achieving that, we needed only seven days to deliver this project unfortunately, the workers based on the advice of their families abandoned site.

“As much as we would have loved to continue and deliver before Easter,

we think that life is much more important. What we are trying to do here is to save life and create a new environment for safe operations and we will not in the process also lose other lives.

“The workers have taken the decision themselves, the governors of the southeast region had had dialogue with them, the company PW even though it had closed worldwide was willing to continue, we in the ministry were willing but in view of this, the workers said it is extremely difficult for them to continue with social distancing and in the circumstance, we will wait until the monster is conquered”.

## Gov Umahi Gives Marching Order On Abducted Chinese Nationals

BY OBINNA OGBONNAYA, Abakaliki

Ebonyi State Governor, Dave Umahi has directed Ivo council chairman, the leadership of herdsmen in the area and security agents to ensure the immediate release of the two Chinese nationals kidnapped in the area.

Umahi stated this in Abakaliki during a statewide broadcast on the preventive measures taken to stop the spread of coronavirus to Ebonyi.

The governor said that he received security report that the two Chinese were kidnapped following the withdrawal of their security personnel to enforce the closure of the state borders.

Governor Umahi who expressed regret over the kidnap assured that security personnel are currently working round the clock to ensure the release of the Chinese expatriates and urged the people to remain claim in the midst of the crisis.

He noted with dismay

the alleged compromise by some security personnel at the boundaries who assist people to come into the state and warned that the state government would not hesitate to hold them responsible

should anything go wrong in the fight against the pandemic.

“We have reports that security personnel posted to the boundaries compromise and assist people who want to come into the state to have

their way despite our warnings. We will not hesitate to hold them responsible should anything go wrong.

“Any policeman or soldier who is not on essential duty and wants

to come into the state would be arrested. The directive does not exempt anyone. Anyone one who is not on essential service and comes into the state would be arrested and prosecuted”.

## Gov Obaseki Names Okungbowa Head Of Service

BY PATRICK OCHOGA, Benin City

Edo State governor, Mr. Godwin Obaseki, has appointed Mr. Anthony Osas Okungbowa, as the state's new Head of Service.

This followed the

retirement of the former head of service, Mr. Isaac Ehiozuwa, after the mandatory 35 years of service.

In a statement issued by the secretary to the state government (SSG), Osarodion Ogie., he said

that “this is to inform the general public and in particular Edo State Public Service that with the retirement of Mr. Isaac Ehiozuwa as Head of Service, following the mandatory 35 years of service, His Excellency,

Mr. Godwin Nogheghase Obaseki in exercise of his powers under Section 208 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, has approved the appointment of Mr. Anthony Osas Okungbowa as Head of

the Civil Service of Edo State.”

Ogie said that Okungbowa is a serving permanent secretary in the state Civil Service, adding that “this appointment takes effect from 1st April, 2020.”

## Fika Emirate Council Honours NNPC Chairman

BY ALIYU MUSA, Damaturu

The Emir of Fika and chairman of Yobe State Council of Chiefs, Alhaji Muhammad Ibn Abali Muhammad Idrissa, has conferred the traditional title of the Matawalle of the Emirate on the chairman, Board of Directors of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Retail

Limited and the group's chief operating officer (Gas and Power), Engineer Yusuf Usman.

Usman was born and brought up in the ancient town of Potiskum in Yobe State.

A statement issued by Alhaji Mohammed Abubakar, the special assistant on Media to the Emir of Fika, described

the new Matawalle as “hardworking, experienced, trustworthy and God-fearing,” who has distinguished himself in every aspect of human endeavours.

The emir urged the new Matawalle of Fika to see the new appointment as a call to continue with his selfless service to his domain, Yobe State and Nigeria as a whole.

“It is our hope and prayer that you will be good ambassador of the Emirate,” he said.

The new Matawalle began his early education at Damboa Primary School, Potiskum, upon completion proceeded to Government Secondary School Munguno, Borno State and Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria where he studied Chemical

Engineering and had his NYSC at the Shell Petroleum Development Company in Lagos.

After finishing his mandatory one year service, he got employment with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) where he served in various offices and departments of the company in various capacities in the country.

# LEADERSHIP business

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

www.leadership.ng

NEWS | MONEY | CAPITAL MARKET | INSURANCE | INTERVIEW | ANALYSIS

f Leadership Newspapers @leadershipNGA

|      | INFLATION RATE (%) |       | INTER BANK LENDING RATE (AS AT MARCH 30) |            |       |
|------|--------------------|-------|--|------------|-------|
|      | 2018               | 2019  | RATE                                     | CHANGE (%) |       |
| JUNE | 11.22              | 11.23 | O/N                                      | 11.2500    | -0.19 |
| JULY | 11.08              | 11.14 | 1M                                       | 9.5144     | 0.47  |
| AUG  | 11.02              | 11.23 | 3M                                       | 9.6759     | 0.19  |
|      |                    |       | 6M                                       | 10.1983    | 0.26  |

## Insurers Eye Real Estate Investment Post-recapitalisation

By ZAKA KHALIQ, Lagos

Most insurance companies in the country are eyeing investments in real estate sector post-recapitalisation exercise in the insurance industry.

LEADERSHIP learnt though, real estate investment is not admissible as part of the paid-up capital in the ongoing exercise, there are strong indications that underwriters see real estate as another investment haven and have penciled it down post-recapitalisation.

It was learnt that many insurance companies after the regulatory induced exercise, will have enough funds at their disposal to invest in lucrative sectors. The plan, according to findings, is to give good investment returns to their respective shareholders.

In the current exercise, the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) had raised the minimum paid-up share capital of a Life insurance company from N2 billion to N8 billion; Non-Life insurance from N3 billion to N10 billion and Composite insurance from N5 billion to N18 billion.

Re-insurance companies were directed to raise their capital base from N10 billion to N20 billion. Post-recapitalisation, experts said, there are expectations that the surviving underwriting firms would be over-



NNPC GMD, Mallam Mele Kyari announcing the N11 billion donation by the Petroleum Industry recently. With him are Medical Director of NNPC Medical Services Limited, Dr. Mohammed Zango (middle) and Chief Operating Office, COO, Upstream, Engr. Yemi Adetunji.

whelmed by a lot of cash that they will be looking for where to plug it, and in this case, real estate seems to be one of the options.

The likes of LASACO Assurance Plc, Cornerstone Insurance Plc, Anchor Insurance Plc, Royal Exchange Plc, among others, are already planning for post-recapitalisation, while investigation shows that real estate is one of the investment options they are eyeing.

Although, there is a glut in the property market currently, experts said, the return on investment (ROI) in real estate still gives one of the best investment returns, thereby, making the property market the toast of operators.

Prior to now, companies like NICON Insurance, AXA Mansard Insurance Plc, Niger Insurance Plc, LASACO assurance Plc, among others have sizeable investments in real

estate and are currently looking for buyers of some of these properties to augment their capital in a bid to meet the deadline.

Although, they are planning to sell now to resolve a short term challenge which is the capitalisation, they are mooting the idea of reinvesting in that market after the conclusion of recapitalisation exercise.

Speaking on this development, the group managing director/CEO, LASACO Assurance Plc, Mr. Segun Balogun, promised that his insurer will diversify into real estate and hospitality business post-recapitalisation, as part of plans to increase returns on investment to shareholders and investors.

He said, currently, the company's volume of investment in real estate business is at N3.3 billion, noting that, most top insurance companies outside Nigeria make good returns

by diversifying their interests and not solely depending on insurance operations.

To him, "We have discovered that for companies outside Nigeria that are making good returns, it is not only via insurance that they make income, but also by what they divert or direct the money into that makes good returns for them. They diversify into some other sectors of the economy to augment the income that is being made from insurance business."

In the next few years, he said, LASACO would be a major player in the hospitality and the real estate industry.

Similarly, the group managing director/CEO of Cornerstone Insurance Plc, Mr. Ganiyu Musa, who disclosed that the insurer had to sell its investment property to recoup fund to recapitalise, added that, the

insurance firm can still reinvest in real estate in the future as long as it will be profitable for the underwriting firm.

According to him, "Of course, our original intention was to hold it for the long term but shortly after we completed it, NAICOM then came up with the recapitalisation programme and unfortunately, one of the provisions of the exercise is that investment properties would not be allowed as an admissible asset. So, we are now in a situation where we have invested about N4 billion of our funds and the regulator is saying, 'Oh sorry! This N4 billion will not count.'"

He added that, "We took the big decision to sell the property, which we did at a very handsome price. And just in one swoop, it resolved many issues. We now have significant amount of liquidity. We don't have the headache of recapitalisation and we have done what the regulator wants, which is to convert any property to cash."

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*we are now in a situation where we have invested about N4 billion of our funds and the regulator is saying, 'Oh sorry! This N4 billion will not count.'*

Group MD/CEO of Cornerstone Insurance Plc, Mr. Ganiyu Musa.



Musa

Group Business Editor  
Joseph Chibueze  
08099400168

Business Editor (Lagos)  
Chima Akwaja

Assistant Business Editors  
Tony Awunor  
Correspondents/Reporters  
Chika Izuora  
Mark Itsibor  
Bukola Idowu  
Olushola Bello  
Abah Adah

## STOCK INDEX (AS AT MARCH 31)

| Gainers    |       |          | Losers      |      |          |
|------------|-------|----------|-------------|------|----------|
| Symbols    | CP    | % change | Symbols     | CP   | % change |
| Glaxosmith | 4.40  | 10.00    | Jaizbank    | 0.48 | -9.43    |
| Maybaker   | 2.14  | 9.74     | Ikejahotel  | 0.90 | -9.09    |
| NEM        | 2.07  | 9.52     | Courtnville | 0.20 | -4.76    |
| Wemabank   | 0.50  | 6.38     | Sterlnbank  | 1.15 | -4.17    |
| Unilever   | 11.00 | 4.76     | Transcorp   | 0.66 | -2.94    |

## STOCK INDEX (AS AT MARCH 31)

|                          |           |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| ASI (Points)             | 21,300.47 |
| DEALS (Numbers)          | 3,448     |
| VOLUME (Numbers million) | 422.005   |
| VALUE (Nbillion)         | N1.72     |
| CAP (Ntrn)               | N11.101   |

## Equities Market Nosedives By 0.14% To End March Trading

BY OLUSHOLA BELLO, Lagos

The Nigerian equities market yesterday lost 0.14 per cent to close the month of March trading activities.

The All-Share Index (ASI) decreased by 30.32 absolute points, representing a dip of 0.14 per cent to close at 21,300.47 points, as the year-to-date losses increased to 20.72 per cent. Similarly, the overall market capitalisation size lost N16 billion to close at N11.101 trillion

The downturn was impacted by losses recorded in medium and large capitalised stocks, amongst which are; Zenith Bank, UAC of

Nigeria (UACN), Guaranty Trust Bank, Lafarge Africa and Access Bank.

Analysts at Afrinvest Limited said that "We expect the bearish sentiment to continue however, there exist bargain hunting opportunities in the equities market."

The chief operating officer of InvestData Consulting, Ambrose Omordion said "The market's outlook remains unstable during this lockdown period and beyond, due to the notably high volatility in developed and developing markets, the seeming positive sentiment on quarter-end window dressing and the bouquet of stimulus packages have been un-

able to support the market.

"There is no clear road map for implementing these fiscal and monetary measures and ensuring that it is devoid of the usual bottlenecks, or even ensuring that the stimulus package unveiled by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) gets to the end-users seamlessly."

Market breadth closed negative, with nine gainers versus 11 losers. GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Nigeria recorded the highest price gain of 10 per cent, to close at N4.40, per share. May and Baker Nigeria followed with a gain 9.74 per cent to close at N2.14, while NEM Insurance rose by 9.52 per cent to close N2.07, per share.

## SMEDAN Grants 3 Months Moratorium To OLOP Beneficiaries

BY BUKOLA IDOWU, Lagos

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) has granted a three months Moratorium extension to beneficiaries of its flagship programme the One Local Government One Product (OLOP). A statement from the Corporate Affairs Unit of the agency, quoted the director-general and chief executive officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria SMEDAN, Dr. Dikko Umaru Radda as saying that the three months moratorium extension on repayments will take effect from April 2020. Dikko Radda noted that this was a management decision taken in view of the COVID 19 Pandem-

ic and the recent Presidential relief Packages for Micro enterprises in the country.

"Let me use this opportunity to implore relevant participating Micro finance Banks to ensure strict compliance" stated Dr Radda. The One Local Government One Product (OLOP) programme is adapted from world-famous One Village One Product (OVOP) Movement, first implemented in Japan's Oita Prefecture in 1979. As a regional economic development model, it mobilizes local people to translate naturally-available resources (i.e. unique skills/raw materials) of rural communities into value-added, economic activities/products or services.

OLOP emphasizes bottom-top

development approach (i.e. Government's role limited to facilitation only), and the expected value-addition is achieved through processing using modern production technologies, quality control through relevant certifications or licenses and product branding for domestic and foreign market.

Under the Scheme, a participating community or cooperative may focus on one (or a few) products for which it enjoys comparative advantage (or local pride).

SMEDAN vision is to cover the 774 local government areas of the country under its OLOP programme, so far the agency has covered 218 local governments' areas with the support of the federal government.

## Covid-19: Prudential Zenith Life Reassures Customers Of Protection

BY OLUSHOLA BELLO, Lagos

In the face of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and the resulting lockdown, Prudential Zenith Life Insurance said it is rolling out a range of services to help customers cope with the lockdown.

The new services include a range of additional Covid-19 insurance cover enhancements, without additional premium charges, and a waiver for 'pandemic' exclusions as contained in its policy language.

In line with the recent pronouncement of the federal government, the company will be temporarily locked down and has therefore set up a dedicated claims team with remote working capabilities, to enable customers make and receive claims virtually.

According to the statement from the insurance company, the claims procedure will be simplified to allow customers make claims through the WhatsApp channel. This development makes it possible for customers to buy insurance products without any physical interface with sales personnel or visit to a physical branch.

Speaking on the changes, CEO of Prudential Africa, Matt Lilley said, "we realise this is a worrying time for everyone and we want to reassure you that protecting the health and wellness of our customers, employees and partners is our primary concern.

"At Prudential, we have been delivering promises for over 170 years and this time will be no different. I am proud of the measures we are announcing today and I know that they will provide

our customers additional peace of mind."

He added that the waiting periods for new cover have been reduced, and the company is providing additional training and incentives to sales personnel to continue providing advice and access to insurance, even as they work remotely.

He encouraged Nigerians to stay safe and adhere to the directives from the Ministry of health, Nigerian centre for disease control (NCDC) and other relevant authorities. We are going to get through these trying times together."

Prudential Zenith Life Insurance was born when Prudential Plc, one of the oldest and most strongly capitalized life insurance companies in the world, acquired a majority stake in Zenith Life Assurance.



L-R: Global Head of Public Relations Manager, Jumia, Abdesslam Benzitouni; Global Head of Communications and Public Affairs, Jumia, Dana Al Mubaidin; Member of Board of Directors Jumia Group, Andre Iguodala and CEO, Jumia Nigeria, Juliet Anammah during a media briefing with Andre Iguodala & Jumia co-founders held at Jumia office, in Lagos, yesterday. PHOTO BY KOLAWOLE ALIU.

## Covid-19: AMPAN Lauds NAMA Workers' Commitment

By ANTHONY AWUNOR, Lagos

Members of the Airspace Management Pensioners Association of Nigeria, (AMPAN) under the leadership of Engineer Kester Omotayo, we wish to seize this opportunity to convey our unflinching solidarity to all members of Staff of NAMA, particularly those who are on essential duties during this critical period in our nation in various airports across Nigeria."

In a solidarity message issued yesterday to workers of NAMA, the newly formed aviation body stated "On behalf of the National Executive Council of the Air-

space Management Pensioners Association of Nigeria, (AMPAN) under the leadership of Engineer Kester Omotayo, we wish to seize this opportunity to convey our unflinching solidarity to all members of Staff of NAMA, particularly those who are on essential duties during this critical period in our nation in various airports across Nigeria."

It further stated that "As you may be aware, Senior Citizens are said to be the most vulnerable to Covid-19 and therefore prone to its attack. We howev-

er, deem it necessary, as partners while we remain at home, to thank you for your commitment to the cause of the Nation and pray that at the end of this unseen war, none of us shall be missing but live to glorify the Almighty, all sufficient God.

"As usual, we wish to admonish you while at work or home to protect yourselves by adhering strictly to the guidelines of the World Health Organization and the Nigerian Centre for Diseases Control (NCDC)", the union stated.

# IPMAN Directs Members To Open Outlets

BY CHIKA IZUORA, Lagos

The national president of the Independent Petroleum Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), Elder Chinedu Okoronkwo has directed all IPMAN members nationwide to open their outlets for service, while assuring effective distribution of petrol to customers at this time of a national partial shutdown due to COVID-19 pandemic.

This was contained in a statement signed by the national operations controller of IPMAN, Mr Mike Osatuyi, on Monday informing marketers that restriction

on CONVID-19 'Stay at Home' does not apply to food processing, distribution, retail companies and petroleum distribution and retailing petroleum stations nationwide.

Osatuyi stated that President Muhammadu Buhari in his broadcast on Sunday 29th March 2020 emphasized that petroleum distribution and retailing were not included.

According to Osatuyi, "All members of the association should work with other stakeholders in the downstream sector in ensuring seamless operation in loading in both private depots and

NNPC depots nationwide.

"The federal government has assured security for our staff and members who are serving the country at this trying moment.

Osatuyi enjoined all IPMAN staff and members to wear their identification card either Ipman identity card or our filling station company identification card in case of screening on the road and highway.

He said: The National Executive Committee of IPMAN commended members nationwide and advised them to sell petrol at N125 approved price. "IPMAN also stand with all Nigerians and

the federal government in this trying period.

"We commend the efforts of the Ministry of Health, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), all state governments and Federal Government and wish to reassure them of our commitment towards effective distribution of petroleum product across the nooks and cranny of the country will not be compromised.

"We appeal to Nigerians to adhere to government directives and maintain regular hygienic, sanitary practices as well as social distancing," he said.

Osatuyi commended the management of NNPC under the leadership of Mallam Mele Kyari, the Group managing director for assuring marketers of sufficient and prompt petroleum distribution.

It would be recalled that Kyari on March 29 2020 urged Nigerians not to engage in panic buying of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), as the country has adequate stock of the products to last for over 60-days.

Kyari assured that the NNPC had the support of all stakeholders to ensure adequate supply of petroleum products in the country.

He said: "There is absolutely no scarcity anywhere; our supply is robust, we have fuel that will last this country even for 60-days if assuming we do not import any. Of course people because of the pandemic, stay at home, may try to conserve fuel, there is no need to do this.

"Maintain your normal life, we have secured all assurances that trucks will be moving freely across the country throughout this period of difficulty and supply will be sustained." He appealed to Nigerians not to flood fuel stations as there was no need for that.

# Stanbic IBTC Bank Offers Customer Relief Initiatives

BY CHIMA AKWAJA, Lagos

Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc has introduced customer relief initiatives aimed at reducing the difficulties its customers are facing as a result of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

The movements of individuals had to be curtailed to discourage physical contact between people as a way of containing the spread of the virus. Stanbic IBTC Bank has also announced the closure of some of its branches, to safeguard the lives of its customers and employees.

Branches that are operational can be found on the

bank's website. The bank has also encouraged its customers to make use of its digital banking platforms for transactions during this period.

The management of the bank has introduced further relief measures for its customers beginning from April 1, 2020: Full Waiver of Merchant Settlement Charge (MSC) for two weeks for all merchants who accept payments using Stanbic IBTC Bank Point of Sale (POS) terminal for two weeks.

Others are: Full waiver of Current Account Maintenance (CAM) fees and inter-

bank transfer charges for one month for customer who reactivate their Dormant or inactive accounts; and Waiver of transfer charges on the first five Interbank transfers they effect within the month of April 2020 for other customers with active accounts.

Speaking on the customer relief initiative, chief executive, Stanbic IBTC Holdings Plc, Mr. Yinka Sanni, said the measure was aimed at ameliorating the pains of the customers while also preventing the spread of Covid-19.

He said: "As a responsible financial institution, we are

not unaware of the effect of Covid-19, especially on our staff and customers. The decision by the bank to set aside the Merchant Settlement Charge for two weeks for those who use Stanbic IBTC POS terminals.

"We also waive current account maintenance fees and free interbank transfers for inactive/ dormant account holders and zero interbank transfer charges for the first five transactions for all other customers within the month of April; is our way of easing the pains and discomfort they are going through during this period."

## Aviation Expert Advises Against Airport Closure, Others

BY ANTHONY AWUNOR, Lagos

A United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) licensed Flight Dispatcher and Ground Instrument, Mrs. Victoria Jumoke Adegebe has called on President Muhammadu Buhari to review the continued shutting down of airports and other economic activities as a way of curbing the spread of COVID - 19.

The Aviation Consultant and chief executive officer of Insel Networks, said continuous lock down will spell doom for the airline's industry.

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) licensed Flight Dispatcher and Ground Instructor canvassed the destruction of screening tray at airport terminals, a development, she said provides fluid contact from one passenger to another.

Mrs Adegebe proposed a ban on the use of such trays which she noted provides contact during check in. She also suggested the use of disposable trash bags to be placed at screening point and trashed after use.

Adegebe said, "The solution may not be a total lockdown when airlines are grounded and the passengers are stranded all over the world. There is need to look at some things around the airport including automatic terminal doors, which opens on own accord without passengers touching any handles.

"Then you get to the screening point. Here you put your carry-on in a tray for screening while you pass the screening machine empty handed. Then you pick the tray containing your personal effects, take possession of your items and the tray is picked by the officials

to be used by someone else.

"You check in, board, not touching a single person, not assisting anyone to carry any bag for security reasons; no hugs or kisses. So tell me, how come this COVID -19 spread so fast when airline passengers never touched each other? Simple, I believe you've seen it too- it's the trays."

Speaking further she said "Here's the solution, I hope Nigeria implements it first so it goes on record all over the world! Throw out all the trays, better still, burn them all.

"Use disposable trash bags placed at screening points where you put all your items inside and trash them yourself when done. I believe that's just what we need to do."

Adegebe cited a report published by The New York Times on Sept 5th, 2018 where it stated that the plastic trays used at airport checkpoints around the world and touched by millions of passengers as they drop their carry-on and other items for X-ray scanning harbour a variety of germs.

She also cited a Forbes publication by Bruce Y. Lee which supports germ spreading capacity of airport trays.

She said "The trays were described as disgusting and from facts gathered from the Helsinki airport in Finland, research indicated that they carry various viruses such as rhino virus (which causes common cold), Coronavirus, Adenovirus and influenza A.

"There you go. Airports have to do away with the trays. Dear President, we do not have to halt everything and bring our economy crashing", Mrs. Adegebe advised.

## Covid-19: Berger Paints Provides Paints For Isolation Centre

By OLUSHOLA BELLO, Lagos

As part of its strategic partnership with the Lagos State government, Berger Paints Nigeria Plc has supported the State government's efforts in combating the devastating Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic through the provision of paints towards building more isolation centres in the State.

The gesture, consummated last weekend is expected to reduce the financial burden of providing decent accommodation for the victims of the pandemic. In a statement, the company's management explained that the move was made in recognition of the fact that the crises at hand was not one that could be solved by the state government alone, but by all stakeholders, especially a strategic stakeholder like Berger Paints Nigeria Plc.

Managing director of Berger Paints, Mr Anjan Sircar, said that "We are proud to be part of the urgent processes that will enhance lasting solution to eliminate the scourge of coronavirus in Nigeria. This is the basis upon which the board and management approved the donation of our products to the Lagos State Government towards building more isolation centres

to be established in the state.

"As a good corporate citizen, we identify with the Governor of Lagos State, Babajide Sanwo-Olu and his administration on the on-going rigorous efforts being made to curtail further spread of this coronavirus in the State. Our support is consistent with our corporate social responsibility policy."

Berger Paints noted that aside the donation, the Company was interested in supporting the state government's laudable initiatives, disclosing that there were ongoing strategic discussions on how to further assist the state government towards improving the lot of indigenes within the state through vocational training and education.

Berger Paints Nigeria, which commenced operation in Nigeria on January 9, 1959, has grown to be a leader in the Coating and Allied Industry in Nigeria. The company has a reputation for being the first in setting standards in the paint industry in Nigeria, evidenced by its trajectory of achievements and consistent financial performance and delivery of shareholder value. It has pioneered a wide range of specialty products that are much sought after in this dynamic and ever-changing market.



L -R : Lord Mayor of the City of London, Charles Bowman; chief executive officer, The Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), Oscar Onyema ; chief executive officer, London Stock Exchange Group (LSEG), David Schwimmer and president, National Council, NSE, Abimbola Ogunbanjo, during a business networking event hosted by the British High Commission in Lagos, recently. PHOTO BY KOLAWOLE ALIU

## IFest Set To Create Job Opportunities For Young Africans

By ADENIYI ADUNOLA, Lagos

Innovation Festival, (IFest), a pan-African platform, is set to empower Nigerians and create job opportunities by harnessing talents that will address societal problems and challenges in critical sectors of the economy.

During a media parley in Lagos, the project director, Olumide Odofin, revealed that, "IFest as a platform would encourage and collate great innovative works from young Africans, especially in key areas that would assist to drive the continent out of poverty.

It would create jobs opportunities for millions of Nigerians/Africans through the convergence of all stakeholders- government, venture capitalists, businesses and innovators and implementing some of the great ideas discovered."

She maintained that, "Africans are talented and it is ev-

ident in the way and manner African youths have been able to advance the course in other western countries. Young talented Africans and Nigerians are all over without necessary support, exposure and capacity building to unbundle their hidden talent.

"We've seen that Africa are talented and sat down to review this, we thought that we needed a platform where this people can be celebrated where we can get to reach out to more people doing very creative things and looking for ways to solve problems in Africa", she said.

According to her, "What we have done is to create a space where we bring together a lot of people across various sectors we know that we as Africans, we as Nigerians, we are blessed by God with a lot of ideas, we are problem solvers."

She explained that, "IFest is not just about technology.

I understand that once you talk about innovation, the first thing people think about is technology. They think it is a tech event or all about science technology or work on building one mechanical design that is new."

"We have the sense and we know that innovation is much more than tech. Tech is just like a driver or a tool to achieve your innovative ideas.

"At IFest, we welcome every innovation ideas, either technology enables or not. What we want to achieve is to address societal issues, we don't just want to talk about it. We're going to start from this space of the solution to every challenge into its execution", she noted.

Odofin also noted that, "IFest is going to make sure that each of those challenges are being addressed to meet in the area of agricultural needs in the area of health, within the area of entertainment or life-

style, science and technology, which is also key, and all other areas that we can think about.

"We are looking at bringing about 14 new ideas. And imagine how much 14 ideas will go in creating jobs to this society and also solving societal problems.

"So, we know that we've been able to identify the issue of unemployment, we also want to address the issue of poverty, too. So basically, we will be able to get at least up to 2000 people off of the streets with our first edition," Odofin said.

She urged people with innovative ideas to online, submit their ideas. Adding that, "We have seven sectors, which you can submit your ideas to. There, you pick your sector, you submit your ideas, and selection and judging with our judges will be reviewed in due course. She noted that a lot is going on in banking/finance sector, so it's not included.

# Oil Edges Higher After 18-year Low Post US- Russia Talks

BY CHIKA IZUORA, Lagos

Oil prices firmed on Tuesday after U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed to talks on stabilising energy markets, with benchmarks climbing off 18-year lows, though the coronavirus-related demand hit capped gains. Brent crude LCOc1 was up 7 cents at \$22.83 a barrel by 1346 GMT after closing on Monday at \$22.76, its lowest finish since November 2002. It hit a session high of \$23.87. U.S. crude Clc1 was up 52 cents at \$20.61 after settling in the previous session at \$20.09, its lowest since February 2002. It traded as high as \$21.89 a barrel earlier in the session.

Oil markets have faced a double whammy from the coronavirus outbreak and a race

to win market share between Saudi Arabia and Russia after OPEC and other producers failed this month to agree on deeper supply cuts to support oil prices.

Trump and Putin agreed in a phone call to have their top energy officials discuss stabilising oil markets, the Kremlin said on Monday. Although the futures market is seeing a recovery, physical cargoes are selling in some regions at single digits, with sellers offering hefty discounts.

“The gap between physical assessments and futures reflects the differences between the realities on the ground and speculation about efforts to ease that pressure going forward,” JBC Energy said.

With a plunge in prices that has knocked about 60 per cent off oil prices this year, a

commissioner with the Texas state energy regulator renewed a call for restrictions on crude production because of a national supply glut.

In a sign of how well the market is supplied, the front-month Brent futures contract for May is trading at a discount of \$13.95 a barrel to the November contract LCOc1-LCOc7, the widest contango spread ever seen.

A contango market implies traders expect oil to be higher in the future, encouraging them to store oil now to sell later.

Saudi Arabia, de facto leader of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), plans to boost its oil exports to 10.6 million barrels per day (bpd) from May on lower domestic consumption, a Saudi Energy Ministry official said.

Global oil refiners, meanwhile, have cut their throughput because of the slump in demand for transportation fuel, with European refineries reducing output by at least 1.3 million bpd, sources told Reuters.

Exxon Mobil Corp closed a small crude distillation unit at its 502,500 bpd Baton Rouge refinery in Louisiana because of low demand, sources said. The chief economist for global commodities trader Trafigura said that oil demand could fall in the coming weeks by as much as 30 per cent from consumption at the end of last year.

A Reuters survey of 40 analysts forecast Brent crude prices LCOc1 would average \$38.76 a barrel in 2020, 36 per cent lower than the \$60.63 forecast in a February survey.

## FAAN Tackles Covid-19, Disinfects Abuja Airport

BY ANTHONY AWUNOR, Lagos

As part of the efforts geared towards curtailing the covid-19 scourge, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) yesterday started the decontamination and disinfection of the new terminal of the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport (NAIA), Abuja against the corona virus pandemic.

The exercise is embarked on barely a week the Lagos International airport was disinfected.

The Authority had ear-

lier made known that the closure of the 4 major airports in the country due to the pandemic would afford them the opportunity to ensure any traces of the virus is eradicated.

According to the aviation agency, the Abuja airport decontamination and disinfection would be followed by fumigation against pest and rodents. The Mallam Aminu Kano International airport, Kano and the Port-Harcourt International airport are also expected to be disinfected soon.

## IMF Approves Framework For New Bilateral Borrowing Agreements

BY CHIMA AKWAJA, Lagos

The IMF Executive Board approved yesterday a framework for a new round of bilateral borrowing by the IMF from January 1, 2021, to succeed the current bilateral borrowing agreements (BBAs) currently in place through end-December 2020.

The framework is broadly the same as that agreed in 2016 for the current BBAs. The new BBAs will have an initial term of three years through end-2023, which is extendable by one more year through end-2024.

These new agreements will help maintain the IMF's lending capacity of \$1 trillion for the next few years, ensuring its ability to respond to members' needs.

The BBAs are the

IMF's third line of defense after quotas and the New Arrangements to Borrow (NAB). Today's Executive Board decision is part of a broader package on IMF resources and governance reform endorsed by the IMF membership during the 2019 Annual Meetings, and builds on the Board's January 2020 approval of a doubling of the NAB and guidance on quota reforms.

The new BBAs and the doubling of the NAB are expected to take effect on January 1, 2021, subject to timely approvals by creditor member countries and their institutions. These are critical steps to ensure that the IMF can support its membership through the global pandemic now unfolding and beyond.

## CIBN Holds Visual AGM, Postpones April Exams

The Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) has approved the adjustment of all its programmes scheduled to take place between March 23 and June 30, 2020 following an increase in the number of Coronavirus cases in the country.

The adjustment was done out of the concern to safeguard the health of its members, other stakeholders and members of the general public and in adherence to the social restriction order by the Lagos State Government and some other states in Nigeria.

According to a statement signed by the registrar/chief executive, Mr. 'Seye Awojobi, three of its statutory programmes would hold as earlier scheduled but digitally and virtually through video conferencing. These programmes are Pre-Annual General Meeting, Annual General Meeting

and 2020 CIBN Election designed to take place through e-voting platform.

However another five of the statutory programmes were postponed till a conducive period. The programmes are April 2020 Diet Banking Professional and Certification examinations, Presidential Valedictory Address and Investiture, CIBN USA Branch International Biennial Conference and Annual Lecture.

The Statement also indicated that new dates would be announced as soon as the situation permits while all the Governing Council and Committee meetings shall henceforth be conducted virtually through video conferencing and other streaming technologies.

The Institute however apologised for the inconvenience it caused its members and other stakeholders.



Apo shoprite under lock and key in compliance with the federal government's lockdown order to contain the spread of COVID-19 in Abuja, yesterday. PHOTO BY IBRAHIM MOHAMMED

## 7 African Countries To Benefit From World Bank \$379m Data Initiative

BY CHIKA IZUORA, LAGOS

The World Bank has set aside a total of \$379 million in International Development Association (IDA) credits and grants to help harmonise and strengthen statistical systems in seven West African countries.

The seven countries are Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Togo. The funding will also be allocated to support the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in their efforts to deepen regional integration in Africa.

The new project, Harmonising and Improving Statistics in West Africa (HISWA), aims to strengthen the statistical systems of participating countries and regional and sub-regional bodies, in order to help them harmonise, produce, disseminate and enhance the use of core

economic and social statistics.

“High-quality and harmonised statistics are essential to support economic activity and regional integration as a way to address some of the key challenges facing countries in West Africa”, said Deborah Wetzel, World Bank Director of Regional Integration for Africa.

“Through its regional approach, the HISWA will allow for more cost-effective data and harmonisation of data across countries, which is instrumental in key areas such as promotion of free trade, convergence of economic policies, and many others”, she added.

Good data are essential to address the socio-economic development challenges facing the West Africa region in general, and the seven beneficiary countries in particular.

Regular population censuses, household surveys, data of critical social concerns and key

economic statistics such as agricultural and enterprise censuses and surveys are key to inform the decision-making process, enable efficient allocation of resources, and assess the effects of development policies and interventions.

Despite progress over the past 20 years, institutional weaknesses and inconsistent financing limit the quality of statistics in West Africa, leading to poor knowledge management and difficulties in addressing emerging challenges in various development sectors.

HISWA is a regional project that will stimulate demand for data and increase the capacity of the National Statistics Offices in the beneficiary countries.

Key activities include, inter alia: the harmonisation of methodologies by the ECOWAS Commission; strengthened production of core economic and social statistics, including

demographic and poverty statistics, national accounts and price statistics; the improvement of targeted administrative statistics; capacity-building, data dissemination; and institutional reforms.

The project will also help to improve and modernise physical and statistical infrastructure to help achieve its stated objectives.

Beyond the National Statistics Offices and the regional bodies, HISWA will provide reliable microdata, data platforms and statistics bulletins to a larger audience, including universities, researchers, students and the general public.

The project is also relevant to the Strategy for Harmonization of Statistics in Africa, SHASA2, the continent-wide initiative aimed at addressing the constraints facing African statistical systems and promoting its regional integration agenda.

## TCN Wants Gas Shortage Addressed To Avert Grid Collapse

BY ABBAH ADAH, ABUJA

The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) has stressed the need to urgently address the issue of inadequate gas supply to thermal generating power plants nationwide to avert serious system disturbance.

TCN in a statement said, "The power sector has in the past weeks continued to experience power supply shortage due to serious gas constraints to most of the nation's thermal generating stations.

"TCN hereby note that there is need to urgently address the issue of gas shortage to thermal generating power plants nationwide to avert serious system disturbance.

Recall that the transmission company reported the low gas supply to many power plants few weeks ago.

The statement note with regret that the gas shortage has persisted to date.

"This has restrained optimal generation into the grid and consequently the quantum of electricity transmitted to distribution load centres," it said.

According to the statement, the thermal power plants most affected by gas supply constraint include; Geregu Gas station now generating 0MW against 435MW, Geregu NIPP generating 81MW with a shortfall of 354MW, Sapele NIPP now generating 0MW against 230MW, Olorunsogo NIPP generating 0MW

against 112MW and Olorunsogo Gas plant generating 70.5MW with a shortfall of 195.5MW while Gbarian plant is generating 0MW against 112MW.

Also affected by the gas supply constraint are: Omotosho NIPP generating 110MW with a shortfall of 220MW, meanwhile Egbin power plant, Alaoji NIPP, Delta, Okpai are equally affected by gas shortage.

Egbin is currently generating 596MW with a short fall of 264MW. Delta II-IV gas is generating 306.81MW with a shortfall of 128.19MW and Okpai Gas plant is generating 159MW with a shortfall of 291MW.

On the other hand, Rivers IPP, AFAM IV-V and Paras Energy are also generating with a shortfall of

40MW, 60MW and 30.2MW respectively. AFAM VI does not have gas supply problem but one of its units is out on fault.

Presently, Azura and Odukpai power plants are the only two thermal power generating stations generating at full capacity into the nation's grid.

"With the current situation therefore, a few of the distribution companies that can pick more load are unable to, because what is generated into the grid is what TCN strives to distribute equitably to DisCos nationwide," the statement noted.

## Covid-19: Unitrust Insurance To Serve Customers Via Online Platforms

By ZAKA KHALIQ, Lagos

Following the coronavirus outbreak of which 139 people are now infected in Nigeria as well as measures taken by the government to curtail its spread, Unitrust Insurance Company Limited has provided alternative communication lines to interact with its policyholders and stakeholders.

The move, according to the firm, was to key into the federal government 'Stay At Home' order while equally serving the customers and the business community better during the order.

A statement from the firm and made available to LEADERSHIP yesterday, said: "In view of the escalating Health concerns relating to Covid-19, the outbreak of and the restriction of movements by our governments, we have provided alternative communication lines for business continuity aside from our self-service website unitrustinsurance.com."

com."

It stressed that it has been closely monitoring developments, especially as it concerns its spread to and in Nigeria, stating that, it is conscious of the complexities and challenges the pandemic virus poses. According to the managing director/CEO of the firm, Mr. John Ijerheime, "While government is putting in measures to further prevent the spread of this pandemic, and the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as our Federal Ministry of Health is constantly undating all on steps to take to avoid contacting it, we have proactively been doing all we can to protect you, our clients, employees and our families because our customers are the reason we are in business."

His company, he added, remains very accessible through its e-commerce website, its E-portals for Motor Third Party and Travels insurance for purchase of the aforementioned policies.



L-R: Assistant brand manager, Adult Premium Non-alcoholic Drinks, Guinness Nigeria, Odedere Ifeoluwapo; CEO, Consumer Choice, Auscar Ikoro; senior brand manager, Ifeoma Agu and assistant brand manager, Cynthia Ufele, during a private dinner to celebrate the brand's winning of its Consumer Choice Award in Lagos. PHOTO BY KOLAWOLE ALIU

## Analyst Seeks Aggressive Responses To Keep Investments In Nigeria

BY BUKOLA IDOWU, Lagos

In addition to the palliative measures that have already been put in place, senior research analyst at FXTM, Lukman Otunuga has said there is need for both the fiscal and monetary authorities to become more aggressive in their responses in order to keep the confidence of foreign investors in the country.

Otunuga in an emailed note yesterday said aggressive monetary policy and strong fiscal responses must be put in place to cushion the damage inflicted by the coronavirus outbreak in Nigeria. According to him, such steps would increase confidence for foreign portfolio investors' to keep investing in Nigeria's financial instruments and posi-

tion the economy on the path to recovery after the pandemic is over.

The Central Bank of Nigeria in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the country had launched more than N3 trillion stimulus package as the presidency announced palliative measures for small businesses and low income households.

President Buhari had approved a N10 billion grant to the epicentre Lagos to fight the outbreak in the region and a five-billion-Naira grant to support the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

Otunuga noted that the coronavirus pandemic is expected to have an unprecedented impact on the Nigerian economy. To this end he said the CBN may be forced to cut interest rates in the second half

of the year if global conditions fail to improve.

"Fiscal measures may need support from an IMF loan after the fund expressed concerns over the global landscape and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on African countries, extending emergency financing of up to \$50 billion."

Noting that the disease represents a major threat to the economy because of plummeting Oil prices and close trading ties with China, he said "the emergency should be a wake-up call for Nigeria to reduce its dependence on the Oil industry in order to weather future storms and black swan events.

"This was the direction taken by the CBN during its Growth 2.0 roundtable. Along with an initiative to depreciate the rate of foreign exchange

sales to foreign portfolio investments (FPIs) to roughly N380, the reinvigorated drive towards diversification may help to stimulate interest in Nigeria's financial instruments."

He added that oil prices could fall further than the 60 percent they already have since the beginning of the year. "The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates that with each 10 percent fall in Oil prices, Oil exporting countries like Nigeria will see a 0.6 percent drop in GDP and an increase in fiscal deficits of 0.8 percent of GDP. Under the current circumstances, the federal government appears well aware after announcing a 10.6-trillion-Naira cut in the 2020 budget and a change in the benchmark Oil price from \$50 to \$30 per barrel."

## Petroleum Marketers Retain N125/Litre Pump Price As Lockdown Starts In Lagos

BY CHIKA IZUORA, Lagos

Petroleum marketers yesterday complied with directives of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), by opening their outlets and also selling petrol at regulated price of N125 per litre.

During day one of the lockdown directive by the federal government, most filling stations in the metropolis were open for business even though sales were dull because of restrictions in vehicular movements.

Our Correspondent who monitored the situation in Ikeja, Ikorodu, Apapa, and other parts of the Island observed that outlets operated by both major and independent petroleum marketers were open for business.

As early as 7am most of the stations have their attendants waiting to attend to customers.

"We are here in compliance with the directive. Our manager asked some of us not to go home because we may not get transport to come out today. So we slept here to resume this morning an attendant at Total filling

station at Fadeyi told our reporter.

"We opened before 7:am but there are no buyers, except individuals who come to buy small quantities for their power generating sets" he said.

At Apapa, our Correspondent observed loading by petrol tankers. It was business as usual with long queues of petroleum tankers waiting for their turns to load.

LEADERSHIP reports that the National President of the Independent Petroleum Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), Elder Chinedu Okoronkwo has directed all IPMAN members nationwide to open their outlets for service, while assuring effective distribution of petrol to customers at this time of a national partial shutdown due to COVID-19 pandemic.

This was contained in a statement signed by the National Operations Controller of IPMAN, Mr Mike Osatuyi, on Monday informing marketers that restriction on CONVID-19 "Stay at Home" does not apply to food processing, distribution, retail

companies and petroleum distribution and retailing petroleum stations nationwide.

Osatuyi stated that President Muhammadu Buhari in his broadcast on Sunday 29th March 2020 emphasised that petroleum distribution and retailing were not included.

According to Osatuyi, "All members of the association should work with other stakeholders in the downstream sector in ensuring seamless operation in loading in both private depots and NNPC depots nationwide.

"The federal government has assured security for our staff and members who are serving the country at this trying moment.

Osatuyi enjoined all IPMAN staff and members to wear their identification card either Ipman identity card or our filling station company identification card in case of screening on the road and highway.

He said: The National Executive Committee of IPMAN commended members nationwide and advised them to sell petrol at N125 approved price. "IPMAN also stand with all

Nigerians and the Federal Government in this trying period.

"We commend the efforts of the Ministry of Health, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), all state governments and Federal Government and wish to reassure them of our commitment towards effective distribution of petroleum product across the nooks and cranny of the country will not be compromised.

"We appeal to Nigerians to adhere to government directives and maintain regular hygienic, sanitary practices as well as social distancing", he said.

Osatuyi commended the management of NNPC under the leadership of Mallam Mele Kyari, the Group Managing Director for assuring marketers of sufficient and prompt petroleum distribution

It would be recalled that Kyari on March 29 2020 urged Nigerians not to engage in panic buying of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), as the country has adequate stock of the products to last for over 60-days.

## Terminal Operators Foresee Imminent Congestion At Ports

Seaport Terminal Operators have said that massive congestion is looming at the ports in Lagos because consignees and their agents are not taking delivery of their cargo. This was disclosed yesterday by the Seaport Terminal Operators Association of Nigeria (STOAN). STOAN said that whilst it is good that the seaports will be working to support government's effort at curtailing the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), there is need to allow full movement of cargo across the country, to ensure their operations are not hampered. "All terminals in Lagos are between 90 per cent and 95 per cent full. Most of the cargo is non-essential. If cargo doesn't flow, within days, there will be no space in the terminals to discharge other cargo. And some of the cargo awaiting to be discharged in-

clude food and medicine. There is a need, therefore, to appeal to importers to pick up their cargo and not return empties for next two weeks in order to allow the prioritization of imports coming in. "If consignees do not remove their cargo in the next couple of days, the ports will become fully congested and it will be near impossible to discharge incoming vessels," STOAN spokesman, Bolaji Akinola, said.

Akinola said that the multiplicity of government agencies at the ports and at the ports' exit gates at both Tin Can and Apapa ports is compounding the "painfully slow delivery of cargo."

"These government agencies are working at odds with the Federal Government's policy on the Ease of Doing Business. There are too many government agencies in-

involved in the cargo release process, and after the cargo is released in the terminal, these government agencies including the Nigeria Customs Service conduct another round of checks at the port gate.

"The situation has resulted in long truck queues inside the ports because the rate at which trucks exit the main port gate has is extremely slow due to these multiple checks," he said.

The STOAN spokesman also said that the challenge of slow cargo delivery is compounded at the Apapa Port due to the ongoing reconstruction of the exit gate. "Operational continuity at the port is vital to our fight against the coronavirus disease. The ports cannot stop working. The only way to ensure that the country does not run short of vital supplies including food, medicaments, hand-

santisers and nose masks, which are essential kits in curtailing the spread of the deadly virus is to keep the ports working. This is why everyone involved in the cargo release process and the logistics chain must sacrifice personal interests at this time for the national good.

"We appeal to the comptroller-general of Customs, Col. Hameed Ali (retired) to prevail on his officials at the ports to reduce these checks. At present, cargoes are checked inside the terminal, at the port exit gate and on Wharf Road. Three layers of checks by the same organization is excessive. It is killing businesses and negatively affecting the ports. We think the exit gate should be made to move fast so as to reduce the blockade inside the port," he added.

## Africa Exploration & Production Summit To Hold In October

BY CHIKA IZUORA, Lagos

The Africa Exploration and Production (E&P) Summit, which was due to be held on May 20-21, has been pushed back to October 21-22.

Organisers Frontier said this was the "difficult but obvious" decision and that it would be held at the same venue. The decision for the postponement was taken as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and the importance of all attendees.

Frontier said it would launch an online series in order to show off the best of its programme, to provide "timely analysis and views".

Various government officials will be presenting on topics including Ghana's second licence round, Senegal's licence round and Nigeria's marginal field round,

in addition to exploration opportunities in Namibia.

A number of conference organisers have taken similar steps. An announcement from organisers Africa Oil & Power announced that its inaugural Senegal Oil & Power conference would be postponed in response to measures taken to contain the coronavirus.

This Senegal event had been due to be held on May 27-28. The country has declared a state of emergency as a result of the pandemic and instituted a curfew.

The conference was due to promote Senegal's deepwater licence round. Given the number of conferences being pushed back into the autumn, more and more organisers look likely to compete with each other in a packed schedule.

## Jumia Implements Contactless Delivery, Cashless Payments

BY HANNAH ONI, Lagos

Africa's leading eCommerce platform Jumia has announced the implementation of 'contactless' delivery for prepaid packages on the platform. The company is taking additional measures to keep consumers, delivery agents and partners safe in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In order to drive the initiative, the 'contactless safe delivery' option has been implemented on JumiaPay, the payment platform. This enables consumers to make prepaid payments for products online and get it delivered without a direct body contact or cash exchange with the delivery agent.

SVP Logistics at Jumia, Apoorva Kumar said, "The health and safety of our customers and delivery agents is our absolute priority. We are uniquely positioned to step up and be part of Africa's response strategy in this challenging time. We have implemented a "Contactless" delivery option, which eliminates any

possibility of physical contact. Convenience, social distancing and cashless measures are woven into one solution to combat the current situation."

He expressed, Jumia's delivery agents have been trained to enforce necessary standards during delivery. They are instructed to call or text when they arrive at the customer's place and drop off the package at their doorstep, then step back to the safe distance limit and will wait for the customer to take the package before leaving.

However, consumers are strongly encouraged to pay "cashless" on Jumia through JumiaPay. This will ensure less physical cash coming into contact with delivery riders and the wider population and will in turn help reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission.

Jumia "Contactless" delivery payment option is available on all JumiaPay/Prepaid Packages and all cashless delivery modes that are contactless such as mobile money.



MD/CEO, GTBank, Segun Agbaje (2nd left) discussing with Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu (left) and Lagos State commissioner for Health, Prof Akin Abayomi (right), during the handover of the 110-bed isolation center by GTBank to Lagos State govt in Lagos, recently. PHOTO BY KOLAWOLE ALIU

## Facebook Commits Additional \$100m To COVID - 19 Fight

BY CHIMA AKWAJA, Lagos

Facebook said it is investing additional \$100 million to support the news industry in the fight to contain the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic crisis.

It said the news industry is working under extraordinary conditions to keep people informed during the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when journalism is needed more than ever, ad revenues are declining

due to the economic impact of the virus.

Facebook noted, local journalists are being hit especially hard, even as people turn to them for critical information to keep their friends, families and communities safe.

Vice president, Global News Partnerships, Campbell Brown, and Facebook said, "Today we're announcing an additional \$100 million investment to support the news industry— \$25 million in emer-

gency grant funding for local news through the Facebook Journalism Project, and \$75 million in additional marketing spend to move money over to news organisations around the world.

"Through the Covid-19 Community Network grant programme, direct funding is helping journalists cover important stories when we all need them most. We're building on this work and will direct a portion of these funds to

publishers most in need in the hardest hit countries. The first round of these grants went to 50 local newsrooms in the US and Canada.

"This money will not only help keep journalists reporting right now amidst the crisis, the funding will also fuel opportunities for local media to accelerate business transformation toward a more sustainable digital footing," said Nancy Lane, CEO of Local Media Association.

## Mouka Donates Mattresses To Abule Ado Victims, COVID-19 Isolation Centres

BY KINGSLEY OKOH, Lagos

Mouka has donated 700 mattresses to the victims of the Abule Ado pipeline fire explosion and the Coronavirus isolation centres in Lagos.

It donated 200 mattresses to the fire victims and made available 500 mattresses to Lagos State government towards strengthening and equipping its isolation centres used for the treatment of the (COVID-19) pandemic patients.

Chief executive officer of Mouka, Raymond Murphy speaking on the donation of 700 mattresses said: "The well-

being of the Nigerian people is the reason why we are in business. Mouka exists to provide comfort to Nigerians and we stay true to our mission even at this period of national and global crisis."

The donation of mattresses to Abule Ado victims was made through the Lagos State Government to the affected families who are in dire need of assistance due to the havoc wreaked by the pipeline explosion. The 500 mattresses for the isolation centres were presented to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs.

Dr Taiwo Olufemi Salaam, who represented the commissioner for Local Government and Community Affairs, Dr Wale Ahmed, at the State Secretariat Complex, Alausa, Lagos, received the 200 mattresses for the Abule Ado victims.

Also, the director-general, Lagos State Emergency Management Authority (LASEMA), Dr. Damilola Oke-Osanyitolu, was at LASEMA office were both donations were made on Monday, March 30, 2020.

Murphy affirmed that as a responsible organisation, the management of Mouka deemed it necessary to assist the govern-

ment in bringing succour to victims of the Abule Ado pipeline explosion that led to loss of lives and property, as well as Nigerians infected with the COVID-19 virus, who are currently being treated at the various isolation centres in Lagos.

"Mouka sees itself as a partner of the government during this crisis period adding that we need to play our part in providing the necessary support required by victims of the gas pipeline explosion. We commend the efforts of the Lagos State Government in rehabilitating the victims of the fire disaster," Murphy said.

## Collaborating To Conquer COVID-19 With CSR, The Oil & Gas Industry Initiative

Amid fears of the threat posed by the entrance of the Coronavirus into Nigeria, the oil and gas industry has rekindled the spirit of unity and collaboration which Nigerians are known for. FESTUS OKOROMADU, writes on the rescue initiative deployed by the NNPC and other stakeholders to overcome the pandemic

As the wave of coronavirus pandemic is sweeping through Asia, Europe and the US, Nigeria which hitherto had watched from the sidelines as advanced economies with better developed health care systems have buckled under the strain, has come to have its own share.

Unfortunately, as some analysts have already noted, the peculiarity of the Nigerian situation as with most developing countries is the shortage of medical facilities such as hospital beds, of protective clothing and life-saving equipment, as well as all important ventilators.

Indeed, Coronavirus as a pandemic, otherwise referred to as Covid-19, has come to reshape the unpalatable story of human miseries and death with a consequential economic devastation of nations.

As the disease takes its toll on human lives, the economy is not spared as it continues to plummet from every aspect. Globally, what appears to be major trend towards salvaging the situation is governments imposition of various forms of restrictions on human movement as a way of restraining spread of the virus amidst other hygiene practices.

However, even in the face of such actions, it has become very obvious that human and material resources must be mobilized to effectively tackle the challenge thrown at humanity by the ravaging virus. To this end governments globally have come to accept the need for a collaboration with the corporation world.

For instance, President Muhammadu Buhari, while addressing the nation on Sunday, March 29, 2020, acknowledged the role individuals and organizations should play in curbing the danger posed by the disease when he said, "Every nation in the world is challenged at this time. But we have seen countries where citizens have come together to reduce the spread of the virus."

Applauding various contributors he said, "We are very grateful to see the emerging support of the private sector and individuals to the response as well as our development partners."

In what can be described putting former structure in place to ensure proper utilization of such resources, Buhari said, "At this point, I will ask that all contributions and donations be coordinated and centralized to ensure efficient and impactful spending. The Presidential Task Force re-

mains the central coordinating body on the COVID-19 response."

### Premium Sectorial Move

Prior to the presidential announcement, operators in the Nigerian oil and gas sector under the leadership of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) on Friday 27 March, 2020 announced a collective initiative by operators of the Nigerian Petroleum Industry to support the efforts of the Federal and State governments to curtail the spread of Covid-19.

Addressing a press conference in Abuja, the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mallam Mele Kolo Kyari, disclosed a donation of N11 billion by the Sector to support the fight against the pandemic and bring succor to Nigerians.

The initiative according to him is a combined effort of the NNPC, International Oil Companies (IOCs) as well as Independent Oil Companies in the Upstream and Downstream Sector. He described the efforts which involved 33 companies as a collaboration between the NNPC and its partners in the Upstream and Downstream Sector of the nation's oil and gas value chain.

Speaking on the need for the support to the health sector, Mallam Kyari said,

"Government cannot do this alone. Health systems, the world over, are getting overwhelmed. Countries with stronger health systems are struggling to contain the pandemic. In light of this, the Oil and Gas Industry is collaborating to strengthen Nigeria's response to the pandemic. These efforts, coordinated by the Honorable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Chief Timipre Sylva, will support Government agencies in providing urgently needed resources both human and materials required to curb this pandemic."

He added that, "The intervention initiative is in alignment with the ongoing Federal Government's efforts and in collaboration with the NCDC to curb the pandemic. It is aimed at supporting our national healthcare delivery facilities and covers three key thematic areas: Provision of medical consumables; Deployment of logistics and in-patient support system; and Delivery of medical infrastructure. The three thematic support initiatives amount to USD30million (N11 billion naira) and will be delivered in phases, starting today."

He noted that there is a rising demand for medical services, medical consumables covering testing kits, medical



**NNPC GMD, Mallam Mele Kyari announcing the N11billion donation by the Corporation, recently.**

protective suits and ambulances due to the spread of impacted areas across the federation, stressing that the donation is made to help in that regard.

Mallam Kyari stated that as a responsive and responsible stakeholder, the Oil and Gas Industry took the action to strengthen the collective national resolve to stem the pandemic.

He added that Nigeria needed the Oil and Gas Industry now and always, saying the Industry was prepared to make further contributions to the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

Beside, the combined effort, the NNPC on its own, boosted the capacity of the University of Abuja Teaching Hospitals in Gwagwalada, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) through the donation of medical equipment to the institution to enable offer better service to patients affected by the pandemic.

Items donated to the teaching hospital by Mallam Kyari included: an oxygen generating plant; one brand new ambulance, six NNPC operational ambulance vehicles, one big ventilator, one small ventilator, patient monitor, hospital beds, bedside cupboards, overtop tables, air conditioners, fully automated 5-part hematology analyzer and semi-automated chemistry analyzer.

Other items are: alert blood culture analyzer, UPS, pro-express Samsung printer, binocular microscope, table top centrifuge and pipettes.

Speaking at a ceremony to handover the equipment, Mallam Kyari commended the Honorable Minister of Health and the entire Ministry, the NCDC, the Public Health Department (PHD) of FCT, University of Abuja Teaching Hospital and the entire medical community in the Country for their efforts in combating the virus, stressing that the NNPC remained grateful for their dedication in safeguarding the lives of Nigerians.

"It is obvious that to fight this menace, we all have to collaborate to ensure that Nigeria defeats this virus," Mallam Kyari appealed.

On his part, the Medical Director of NNPC Medical Services Limited, Dr. Mohammed Zango, said the corporation, as a responsible organization, was making the donation to meet the urgent medical needs of the isolation centre in Abuja and to make the centre more effective in delivering on its mandate.

Earlier, the Chief Medical Director of the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, Professor Bissallah Ekele, commended the NNPC for rising up to the occasion by supplying the essential medical equip-

ment to the hospital, noting that the gesture would go a long way in helping the hospital to save lives.

He observed that the teaching hospital had never been given such a huge and generous support in the 26 years history of its establishment, assuring that the equipment would be judiciously used.

Responding on behalf of the Director General of NCDC, Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu, who was unavoidably absent at the occasion, the Director of Administration of the NCDC, Alh. Yahaya Abdullahi, described the medical equipment donated by NNPC as the largest intervention so far received, even as he called on other corporate organisations to emulate the National Oil Company.

### NUPENG Vow Join The Way Against Covid 19

On their part workers in the sector has pledged their total support towards winning the battle against the dreaded virus in the country. They have as a sign of solidarity promise to continue to offer their services while the battle last.

The Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) in a press statement signed by its National President, Comrade Williams Eniredonana Akporeha and the General Secretary, Comrade Afolabi Olawale, dated 27th March 2020 said the leadership of the union met to examined the critical roles her members play in the socio/ economic landscape of the nation vis a vis the current rampaging coronavirus epidemic the global community is currently facing.

The union said it unanimously resolved that all her members are to avail themselves to serve the nation at this critical time.

Part of the statement reads, "We are quite aware that these workers in the course of serving the nation become highly vulnerable to the virus, but at this point in our national life, we must all rise to defend humanity and no price should be too high to pay. "We shall provide whatever necessary safety kits we can afford at various loading points and to all Petroleum Tanker Drivers and also urge all Petroleum Depots Owners, Operators, Petrol Stations Owners and industrial set ups to provide necessary mechanisms and tools including social distancing at their various locations and support the Workers with necessary kits and logistics .

"The Union will provide within our meager resources whatever assistance we can to mitigate various unforeseen circumstances that may arise in the course of our service to our fatherland and we im-

plure other Stakeholders to support the initiative of our Union in whatever manner."

The Union, however, warned her members against disobeying government's efforts towards salvaging the crisis such as the stay-at-home, stressing that "any worker who is not in direct line of loading and distribution of petroleum products on any particular day are directed to stay at home to avoid unnecessary crowd at operational locations."

Members were called upon to be abide by recommended regulations. "We urge all our members to continue to adhere strictly to social distancing and high level of hygienic behavior at work, at home, on the streets and with everyone they interface with in their daily activities so as to reduce the spread of the contagious Covid-19 and keep the socio-economic activities of the country alive industrially, domestically and commercially."

Similarly, leadership petroleum products markets under the aegis of Independent Petroleum Association of Nigeria (IPMAN), has assured availability of products in their filling stations nationwide.

The National President of IPMAN, Elder Chinedu Okoronkwo gave the assurance stressing that the association's members will support government by ensuring effective distribution of petrol to customers during shutdown.

A statement issued by the National Operations Controller, IPMAN, Mr Mike Osatuyi, on Monday, said, "All members of the association should work with other stakeholders in the downstream sector in ensuring seamless operation in loading in both private depots and NNPC depots nationwide.

While assuring them of protection while on duty, he said, "The Federal Government has assured security for our staff and members who are serving the country at this trying moment."

As part of their commitment to government initiatives, IPMAN charged its members nationwide to sell petrol at the approved pump price of N125 per litre.

Pledging to stand with all Nigerians and the Federal Government in this trying period, Elder Okoronkwo assured sufficiency of products, saying, "There is absolutely no scarcity anywhere; our supply is robust, we have fuel that will last this country even for 60-days if assuming we do not import any."

One cannot but agree with industry experts who have submitted that the Coronavirus pandemic has ravaged the world in recent times, infecting the high and the low around the globe, may have provided a platform for operators of the Nigeria oil and gas industry to further express their commitment of the wellbeing of the nation.

What is left is for other key sectors of the economy to emulate the initiative and make meaningful contributions towards chasing away the virus from our shores. Same way the corporate world in China collaborated with their government to ending the scourge from its place of origin.

The NNPC and its operating partners must be commended for re-enforcing the Nigerian spirit of togetherness which has helped us to overcome difficulties in the past. The Coronavirus pandemic, certainly cannot overcome the Nigerian spirit, together we will emerge victorious.

# Agriculture Driven By Technology Will Provide Jobs—Salako

Prof Felix Kolawole Salako is the vice chancellor of Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAAB). In this interview with CHIBUZO UKAIBE he speaks on the state of affairs in the agricultural sector viz-a-viz the institutions that cater to the sector.

**Since you took over as the 6th vice chancellor of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, (FUNAAB) on November 1, 2017, how has the journey been?**

I applied for the job because I had a mission and vision at the personal level. But I have been subsuming my mission and vision within the overall mission and vision of the university. If you apply for a job and you don't have anything to drive you, then you will see it as a child's play. And the job of a vice chancellor is not a child's play. I will say it has been so far, so good. There is no way you will leave a life and in the lifetime, you will not have your ups and downs. There are times you will be on top and there are times you will be in the valley. I have no regrets being the vice chancellor in spite of the challenges that I face but I am more excited about our achievements.

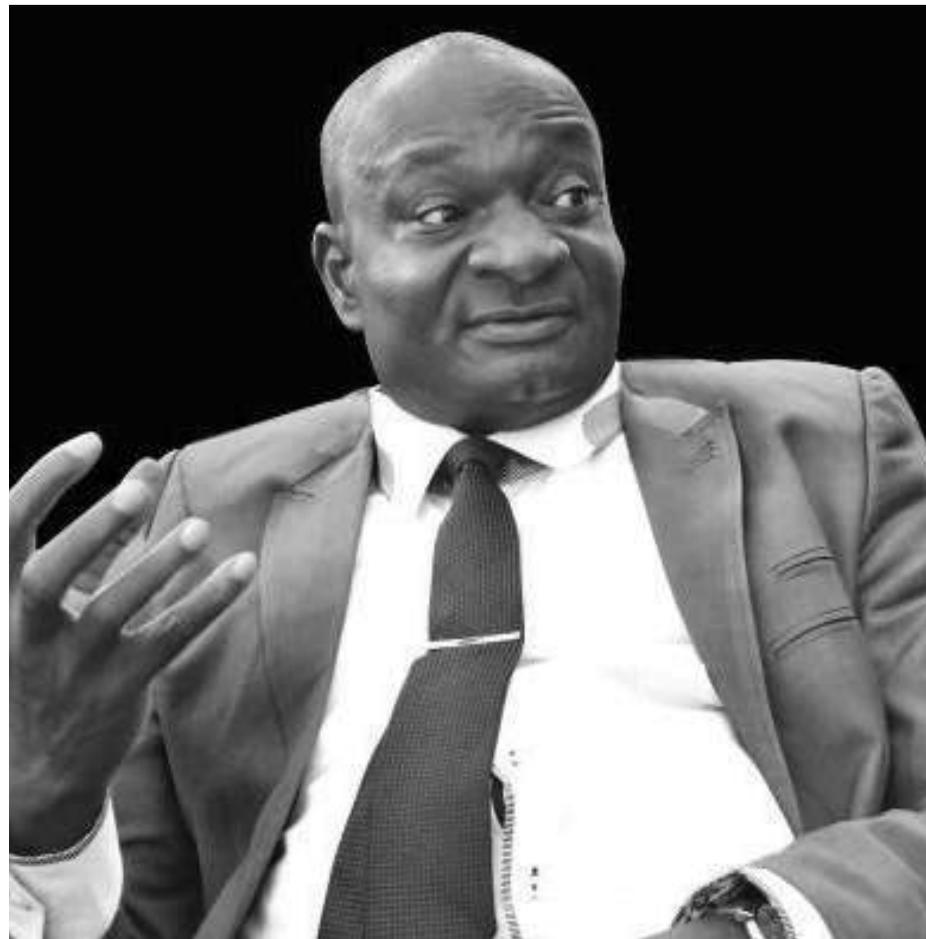
**What were these challenges about and how were they addressed?**

In the first place, I emerged as the vice chancellor after a prolonged crisis period. I was deputy vice chancellor (Development) for four years. I became vice chancellor during a crisis. One thing that became my immediate responsibility was to reconcile factions. When I came on board, the feeling was that this man will be very tough, dealing with everybody especially those who offended him. When I said offended him, there were people who openly challenged the management then concerning its decision. These people believed that I would take a pound of flesh on them. I then referred to a Yoruba proverb which says when God has enthroned you as a king, will you go about looking for charms to make you prosper again? What else are you running around for rather than to rely on God to keep helping you the way He has made you, to overcome the crisis period? Some people felt that I will come and bother them on what they did in the past but I told them that I will not. I have not done it and I will not do it. My philosophy is that when you hold grudge against people, you are killing yourself and not the people you hold grudge against. One thing why people are scared of me is the fact that when the facts are down, we abide by what the facts are. I don't shift ground. I can be compassionate but I can only be compassionate to the extent that the system is not destroyed. I think that is what many people are scared of when it comes to Felix Kolawole Salako.

**Are those who contested the seat of the vice chancellor with you still in the system?**

Only two persons within the system were shortlisted. Professor Okeleye and Professor Ajisegiri. Professor Okeleye is still a staff. As a man of God, he has allowed the past to go. I have also allowed the past to go. I am also a man of God. Professor Ajisegiri has left the university courtesy of the university council.

**The ambition of most vice chancellors is to get all their courses accredited by the National Universities Commission**



**Salako**

**(NUC). How many courses in your institution have not been accredited?**

All our courses are accredited. We got a good news from NUC last week for the 2019 accreditation. All the 18 courses presented were accredited fully except one which is Mechatronics Engineering. It is an emerging programme. It was given interim accreditation. We presented 18 courses for accreditation in 2019 under my administration. One other accreditation that Nigerians may not be aware of is international accreditation for our Centre of Excellence For Agricultural Development and Sustainable Environment. FUNAAB is the first among 18 universities that went to request for that accreditation. I want to tell you that we got all the courses under the Centre of Excellence accredited. It is an international accreditation in the sense that the centre was established with World Bank fund and of course, through the NUC. It is basically a post graduate centre. The accrediting team came from all parts of the world.

**There used to be FUNAAB Garri in the past, produced by your students. What is the situation like now?**

We still have FUNAAB Gari. We also have odourless fufu. We have honey. We have cashew nut. Our products are still there. We are still producing. We added water long ago, under Professor Israel Adu. We have expanded on FUNAAB water with modern equipment when I came on board. That is why you see FUNAAB water everywhere. We now tell people not to bring their water here. We need to protect our students. Some people call it monopoly. It is not monopoly, it is monopoly for development because the health of our students matter to us. You can't just pick water from anywhere when you do not know the source. The challenge is: are we producing enough? I think we are producing enough now. Does the water have NAFDAC backing? Of course, yes. We couldn't have gone into production without NAFDAC's consent. That would have been outrageous.

**To what extent would you say that your students**

**have the capacity to engage in private practice rather than seeking white collar jobs after graduation?**

The capacity is there because of the training they have. There is the capacity potentials. But if you have capacity and you don't have somebody to back you by way of funding, how can that capacity come into reality? There is nowhere in the country and indeed, the world where they don't have indigent people. Even if you want to do something and the fund is not readily available, you may be underproductive or underemployed. And many Nigerian youths are either not employed or underemployed.

**What is your recommendation to the government in this regard?**

My recommendation is that governments at all levels should invest more in agriculture. When we talk about agriculture, people should stop the notion of hoe and cutlass. The agriculture we are talking about is a value chain agriculture; from the production level to the point of putting the food on the table. I am talking of agriculture that will involve use of your laptop, that will require application in your computer to manage your farm, agriculture that will require that you have electricity, water, manageable road to take your products to your desired destination storage facility, etc. It should be technology-driven agriculture that can engage anybody who is a graduate from any discipline. Even a graduate of theatre arts can go to the agricultural community to entertain them and get some money. Everybody does not need to be in the cities. Agriculture is life and that is how we must see it. It is not about that old man in the farm bringing vegetable to the market. Agriculture that will provide jobs will be technology-driven.

**More funding only?**

I am advocating for more funding and more seriousness. We have been funding agriculture in Nigeria. It is not only the question of more funding. We need more seriousness; more commitment.

**Seriousness and commitment on the part of who?**

Everybody. Every Nigerian. The blame has become a circle where every point has a contribution to everything that has gone wrong. It is like the scenario of the electorate and the politicians. If you elect people that will do your job, you will get good result. I will keep mentioning Chief Obafemi Awolowo whom I have studied over the years. All what Papa did, he did them with dedication. Awolowo was a good Nigerian leader; a patriot. Where are his legacies now? Who are we going to blame for lack of continuity and lack of improvement? If the farm settlements created by Chief Awolowo are well maintained with the facilities that are available there, why do people have need to come to town in search of food? Chief Awolowo had a great vision. Some of us never met him one on one but we idolise him till today.

**What is your take on the sex-for-mark syndrome in some universities?**

I don't agree with the term sex-for-mark. Rather, I will say sexual harassment. It is not necessarily between students and lecturers but between people who think they have the power to subdue others. That can happen between student and lecturer. It can happen between staff and staff. It can happen in a situation where one needs promotion and she is told this is what to do. How is that different from money for mark? What is really known to the world is this issue of sex for mark. All in all, it is not good for the image of any institution anywhere in the world. It is not morally right. It is not ethically right.

**What transpired between one Mr Ifemosu Michael and the vice chancellor that became a social media issue recently?**

I am the vice chancellor of this university and I am the vice chancellor of more than 15,000 students. Nothing transpired between Ifemosu and I. I only did my work as I should do it. He has taken us to court and I will not want to make prejudiced statement but the truth is that the vice chancellor of the university saw something and took due process, to the point of the expulsion of the student. Just last Friday, we counted 82 online links including a supposedly reputable one where the said Ifemosu abused the vice chancellor and the university. I don't know how it got to this level where On-line editors won't see the need to hear the other party before going on air. One of them even wrote that the university management told students to write an undertaking that if they were robbed, they should not report or protest.

**Was there any robbery incident inside the campus as claimed by an on line medium?**

That is not correct. The hostel they mentioned was outside. The robbery incident also took place outside the campus. We visited the hostel. We found the hostel to be in remote areas. Even the Ogun State Commissioner of Police also visited. Let me state that the jurisdiction of the university's security men is within the four walls of the university. Anything outside the university, the law enforcement agents have their duties to perform.

# Galleria

ENTERTAINMENT & TOURISM EDITOR:  
ANTHONY ADA ABRAHAM  
EMAIL: tkmmedia2012@gmail.com  
SMS ONLY: (+234)08092721737

Events ● Arts ● Features

www.leadership.ng f Leadership Newspapers t @leadershipNGA

## Pastor Browne Arrested For Violating Social Distancing Order

Howard-Browne has officially been arrested and looks none too pleased in his mug shot. He's been booked for unlawful assembly and for violating health and safety rules.

Tampa's controversial Pastor Rodney Howard-Browne is now a wanted man after holding services Sunday at his River Church -- openly defying the law and science during the coronavirus pandemic.

Pastor Browne bragged during the service that River Church would remain open for the duration ... but TMZ reported that the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Dept. now has a warrant for the Pastor's arrest.

According to records, he's wanted for unlawful assembly. Although he boasted, "The only time the church will close is when the Rapture is taking place" ... the fact is the County had already issued a "safer-at-home" order banning gatherings of no more than 10 people.

The rule also stated that people were not to stand within 6 feet of one another ... another clear violation in the video from the church's service.



Pastor Browne

## Covid-19: Give Nigerians N50,000 Each, Says Yul Edochie

BY KENECHUKWU ENEKWECHI

Nollywood actor, Yul Edochie has beckoned on Nigeria's President, Muhammad Buhari, to give out at least N50,000 each to all Nigerians to aid them during the coronavirus lockdown.

He made the statement after President Muhammadu Buhari addressed the nation on the spread of coronavirus in Nigeria, announced complete lockdown in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun for the next two weeks.

"Dear President @MBuhari Pls provide an economic relief package for Nigerians, even if it's 50k each, it will go a long way. People are hungry, locked down with no money, begging left, right & centre. With the situation like this, it'll be difficult to keep people at home", Yul Edochie wrote.

The measure, he said is to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), said to have been linked to persons who have travelled from these centres.

Buhari said interstate and intercity movements are restricted to prevent further spread.



Yul Edochie

## BTS Entertainment Boss Celebrates Anniversary

Sunday, March 29, Egbe Pax, the CEO BTS Entertainment excitedly marked his first wedding anniversary to his pretty wife, Helen.

The Artist and Talent Management Company boss recalls the romantic moment he proposed to his wife when she least expected it.

He said, "One year ago, I married the woman of my dream. There were a lot of things I wanted to say to her that day, but didn't have the chance to. So, this year 2020, our first anniversary, we talked about a lot.

I wouldn't say our relationship started as love at first sight, we actually clicked right away after we met at a mutual friend's birthday party. We became friends for a couple of months, then I decided to take the friendship to the next level when I began to see her good qualities. I planned for dinner with me, my wife, her friend, Alhaja Bikilsu and my brother, Uche at the Hilton Hotel, Abuja. During the dinner, I asked for the Food and Beverage manager and told him my plans and he worked perfectly with me serving the ring in a beautiful plate as a dish to my wife. When she opened it, it was a ring and she was overwhelmed. Then, I went on my knees and proposed. I have never felt so comfortable with anybody in my entire life."



Egbe Pax and wife

He also advised young celebrity couples on how to maintain a peaceful marriage, 'have each other's back. Be loyal. Don't talk about your partner to outsiders, especially to family. You

need to be each other's best friend. If you have a problem, work it out. Don't go airing your dirty laundry to other people. Stick together and work it out," he added.

# Phyno Thrills Music Lovers At TraceLive Event

BY SAMUEL ABULUDE, Lagos

Indeed indigenous rapper, Phyno is a delight to watch. He was the artiste on parade at the latest edition of TraceLive recently held in Lagos, with many music lovers turning out at the exquisite venue, Terra Kulture.

TraceLive in the past had showcased performers like Flavour, Omawumi, Falz, Adekunle Gold, 2Baba, Wande Coal, Reekado Banks, Runtown, Simi and Reminisce, therefore many looked forward to seeing Azubuike Chibuzo Nelson, better known as Phyno on stage.

As an act whose stage name is derived from the word phenomenal, the Nigerian rapper, actor and record producer, has lived up the billing, standing today as unarguably one of the biggest indigenous rap influences from the Eastern part of Nigeria.

Known to blend both Igbo and English languages in his songs, thereby carrying the old and young generation of indigenous music lovers across Nigeria and the global spectrum along, the “Fada Fada” singer’s time on stage was nothing short of exhilarating.

According to Trace’s management, unlike previous



Phyno

editions, the session will be about putting Phyno’s journey on stage through the Deal With It which itself sheds a spotlight on his growth, truth and his stand as one of the biggest indigenous rappers out

of Eastern Nigeria.

Phyno who broke into the Nigerian Rap scene in 2010, left Enugu and relocated to Lagos to pursue a professional music career that would later shoot him into limelight in

the later years. In September of 2012, Phyno released “Ghost Mode” featuring Olamide which remains one of the biggest highlights of the rapper’s career.

Subsequently, the indigenous

rapper has gone on to release countless Music and numerous projects including “No Guts No Glory” in 2014 which had hit singles like Ghost Mode, Man Of The Year, O Set and Alobam.

## Wizkid’s Followers Hit 10 Million On Instagram

Sensational singer, Wizkid has become the second male Nigerian artiste to reach 10 million followers on Instagram.

Social media goes a long way in giving artistes the reach they desire. The larger the fans base the better it shows that people actually enjoy their music.

One of Africa’s biggest music

stars just got the encouragement he needed from his fans after his followers hit 10 million on the popular photo-sharing platform.

Only four people have been able to achieve this feat, Davido was the first to hit the 10 million milestones followed by Tiwa Savage, Funke Akindele and Yemi Alade.



Wizkid

## Ryan Reynolds And Blake Lively Donate \$400k For Covid-19 Relief

Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively are cutting more fat checks to help coronavirus relief efforts and this time they’re donating to folks on the front lines.

According to TMZ, Ryan and Blake donated \$400,000 to four New York hospitals that are getting hit hard by the pandemic.

The famous couple just made personal \$100,000 donations to 4 hospitals getting slammed with COVID-19 cases ... NYU Hospital, Mount Sinai, Northern Westchester and Elmhurst.

As you know ... New York is considered the epicenter of coronavirus in the United States, and hospital staffs are working around the clock to fight the virus and save lives.

We’re told Ryan and Blake are also encouraging folks across America to help their local hospitals, healthcare workers and communities during this difficult time.

It’s the second major donation from Ryan and Blake ... earlier this month, they donated \$1 million to Feeding America and Food Banks Canada.

Rihanna, Kylie Jenner and



Ryan Reynolds and Blake Lively

more have also opened their wallets for coronavirus relief ... as well as Conor McGregor,

Drew Brees and Steve Ballmer, who is pledging \$25 million.



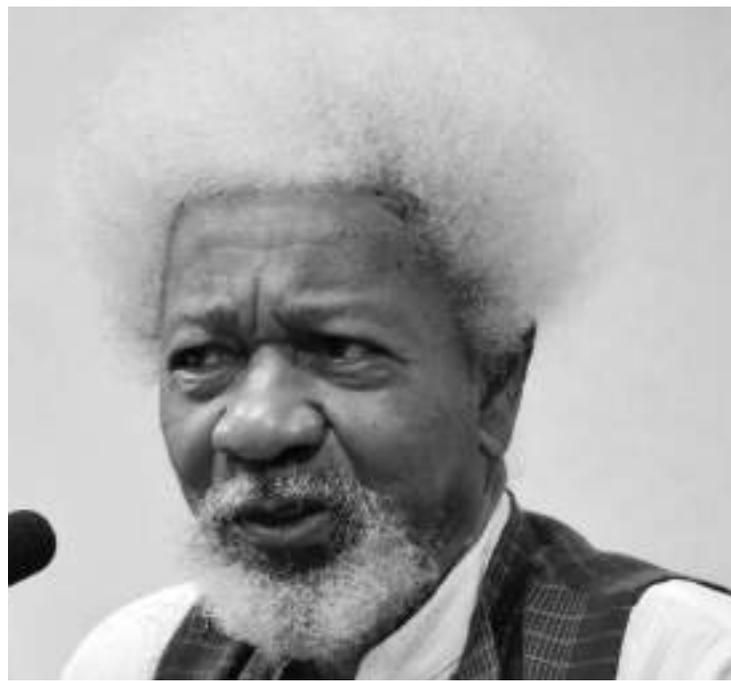
# politics today

REPORTS ANALYSIS REVIEWS INTERVIEWS

GROUP POLITICS EDITOR: CHIBUZO UKAIBE 08035373825 (SMS ONLY)



Buhari



Soyinka

## COVID-19: PMB's Address And Matters Arising

MARY AMODU, in this report, examines the reactions that have continued to trail President Muhammadu Buhari's national broadcast on the coronavirus pandemic.

“

*However, in a somewhat deft move, President Buhari after meeting with the minister of Health, Osagie Emmanuel Ehanire and director-general of the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, made a national broadcast last Sunday with far reaching measures*

As the Coronavirus pandemic raged in Nigeria leaving in its trail two dead and crippling fear. It also led to a barrage of fake news on the health status of President Muhammadu Buhari as it information filtered in that his chief of staff, Mallam Abba Kyari, tested positive to it.

As the unfounded rumours hit the social media, there were also calls on the president to address the nation on efforts of government to address the virus. The calls were led by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Coalition of United Political Parties (CUPP). However, in a somewhat deft move, President Buhari after meeting with the minister of Health, Osagie Emmanuel Ehanire and director-general of the Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu, made a national broadcast last Sunday with far reaching measures.

The president ordered complete shutdown of Lagos and Ogun states as well as Abuja, the nation's capital, for a period of two weeks to stem the continuous spread of Coronavirus across the country.

According to him, from March 30, 2020, all citizens in the restricted areas are to stay in their respective homes, just as travelling to and from other states were postponed.

In a live broadcast to Nigerians on the Covid-19 pandemic aired on na-

tional television and radio stations at 7:00pm, the president said, "We are fully aware that such measures will cause much hardship and inconvenience to many citizens. But this is a matter of life and death, if we look at the dreadful daily toll of deaths in Italy, France and Spain.

"However, we must all see this as our national and patriotic duty to control and contain the spread of this virus. I will therefore ask all of us affected by this order to put aside our personal comfort to safeguard ourselves and fellow human beings. This common enemy can only be controlled if we all come together and obey scientific and medical advice," Buhari appealed.

He pointed out that the government would use the containment period to identify, trace and isolate all individuals that have come into contact with confirmed cases and ensure the treatment of confirmed cases while restricting further spread to other states.

Buhari, however, said commercial establishments such as food processing, distribution and retail companies; petroleum distribution and retail entities, power generation, transmission and distribution companies as well as private security companies were exempted.

For telecommunications, broadcast, print and electronic media staff, the president said those who could prove they will be unable to work from home would also be ex-

empted.

The president also approved two months cash transfer for vulnerable Nigerians to cushion the effect of the total lockdown.

"For the most vulnerable in our society, I have directed that the conditional cash transfers for the next two months be paid immediately. Our Internally displaced persons will also receive two months of food rations in the coming weeks", he stated.

While declaring the total shutdown in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun, Buhari said, "Based on the advice of the Federal Ministry of Health and the NCDC, I am directing the cessation of all movements in Lagos and the FCT for an initial period of 14 days with effect from 11pm on Monday, 30th March 2020. This restriction will also apply to Ogun State due to its close proximity to Lagos and the high traffic between the two States.

"All citizens in these areas are to stay in their homes. Travel to or from other states should be postponed. All businesses and offices within these locations should be fully closed during this period.

"The governors of Lagos and Ogun states as well as the Minister of the FCT have been notified. Furthermore, heads of security and intelligence agencies have also been briefed."

But barely hours after the broadcast diverse reactions began to pour in. In the opposition camp,

there was division. While the PDP knocked the address, the CUPP and Conference of Nigeria Political Parties (CNPP) hailed the measures adopted by the administration.

In its reaction, PDP, in a statement by its national publicity secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, noted that outside the social distancing and isolation, which Nigerians had already imposed on themselves, Mr. president had no new solutions to offer the nation.

PDP said, "It is unfortunate that Mr. president failed to respond to demands on hope for medications, direct social palliatives, cut in taxes as well as reduction in the pump price of fuel even with the cut in the price of petroleum and crude oil in the international market.

"Our party notes as saddening that even in areas where Mr. president announced an ambitious intervention, such remained largely cosmetic as there are no clear palliative content but moratoriums on loans with no clear data for implementation.

"Mr. president is reminded that already, the COVID-19 had affected the performance of those loans. Granting them moratoriums is therefore of no consequence to the capital and interest on them.

"It is rather unfortunate that Nigerians had to wait this long for an address that came out empty and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

# COVID-19: PMB's Address And Matters Arising

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

failed to respond to anxieties.

"Moreover, Nigerians expected Mr. president to articulate an across-the-board and far-reaching strategy that would have captured the need of each state of the federation as they were today, instead of a parochial approach to a national anxiety.

"President Buhari should therefore go back, listen to the nation, retool his policy framework and implementation strategy to properly address the fears as well as the needs of Nigerians, including health safety measures and the real remedies that meet the anxieties of our nation at this critical time," the party said.

But PDP's opposition ally, CUPP backed president Buhari's order for 14 days lock down, hailed suspensions of loan repayments by small businesses, stressing that the president's broadcast is better late than never.

A statement by the spokesperson of CUPP, Ikenga Ugo-Chinyere, said the opposition political parties are of the view that the order will go a long way in salvaging the health crisis which the virus has thrown the nation into.

"We also hail the decision of the Federal government to suspend loan repayments by small businesses, describing it as laudable.

"The CUPP also describes the decision to convert public infrastructures like stadiums etc. to isolation centers as a welcome development.

"Although the president's address to the nation was late in coming, we believe very strongly that it is better late than never.

"We urge Nigerians residing in the affected areas to use the 14 days of this lockdown to report suspected cases of coronavirus infections to the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control promptly.

"Nigerians should remain united and resolute at this period. This is the only way to tackle and win the war against the virus together. We wish all Nigerians the best at this period," CUPP said.

In same vein, CNPP in a statement issued by its secretary general, Chief Willy Ezugwu urged the government to ensure that the presidential directives were fully complied with, including relief for the most vulnerable groups in the states under lockdown and the FCT.

"We urge the federal government to ensure that the conditional cash transfers ordered by President Buhari for the most vulnerable in our society, for the next two months and the relief materials for the internally displaced persons do not become another conduit pipe for syphoning the national treasury.

"We call on President Muhammadu Buhari to sustain such briefing at this challenging time to give bite to the activities of the stakeholders in the fight against the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

"We urge citizens across the country to abide by the standard protocol in managing the spread of the coronavirus pandemic in all parts of



Secondus



Falana

the country.

"Restriction of movement is key to winning the war against coronavirus spread, we urge every Nigerian resident to follow through with all medical advice from the Federal Ministry of Health and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control.

"The CNPP appreciates public spirited Nigerians who have been contributing in cash and material donations towards tackling the pandemic.

"We urge more Nigerians to show the true Nigerian spirit of love for one another by contributing cash and materials to assist the most vulnerable in the society at this trying times as most of the Nigerian masses live by daily incomes they earn," the CNPP secretary stated.

Interestingly, the PDP minority caucus in the Senate joined in the opposition commendation spree for President Buhari over the measures he announced to combat COVID-19.

In a statement released in Abuja by the Senate minority leader, Senator Enyinnaya Abaribe, the caucus

ing the president had no right to make such a proclamation without recourse to the National Assembly.

Soyinka, in a statement titled, "Between COVID-19 and constitutional encroachment' signed from his Autonomous Residence of Ijebu, Ogun State, where he's on 'self-quarantine," said the country was not in a war emergency.

He said, "So, before this becomes a habit, a question: 'does President Buhari have the powers to close down state borders?' We want clear answers. We are not in a war emergency. Appropriately focused on measures for the saving lives and committed to making sacrifices for the preservation of our communities, we should nonetheless remain alert to any encroachment on constitutionally demarcated powers. We need to exercise collective vigilance, and not compromise the future by submitting to interventions that are not backed by law and constitution."

In same vein, Falana said the no-movement order was not enforceable. The human rights activist said the order had no legal backing and therefore unconstitutional.

He argued that the president lacked the powers to restrict movements in any part of the country without the consent of the National Assembly.

But the attorney-general of the federation, Abubakar Malami (SAN), in a statement in Abuja, said Buhari did not commit any illegality.

Malami who berated Adegboruwa for describing as illegal the order of the president, said that Buhari did not commit any illegality.

He said: "It is important to inform the discerning members of the public that the president did not make a declaration of a state of emergency under Section 305(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) which would have required the concurrence of both Houses of the National Assembly.

"Even at that Section 305(6) (b) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) permits a proclamation of a state of emergency to run for a period of 10 days without the approval of the National Assembly when the parliament is not in session as in the present situation wherein the National Assembly has shut down.

"The learned silk also goofed when he questioned the president's powers to restrict movement and claiming that such powers can only be exercised by the state governors and the respective state assemblies," Malami said.

Another lawyer, Inibehe Effiong, has said he would approach a Federal High Court to stop the president from restricting the movements of Nigerians living in Lagos, Ogun and the FCT, despite the partial closure of courts by the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Tanko Muhammad.

For pundits the days ahead would be interesting in light of the legal back and forth over the matter, but what is clear is the magnitude of the pandemic which has wrecked havoc globally.

“  
But the attorney-general of the federation, Abubakar Malami (SAN), in a statement in Abuja, said Buhari did not commit any illegality



# COVID-19: ACF Backs PMB On Lockdown Measures

BY AZA MSUE AND ISIAIH BENJAMIN, Kaduna

The apex northern socio-cultural organisation, Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) yesterday commended President Muhammadu Buhari on the measures he has taken to tackle the outbreak of coronavirus in the country.

In a statement issued by the national publicity secretary of ACF, Emmanuel Yawe, the northern body urged residents to obey the federal government's instruction pending the discovery of a cure for the disease.

ACF also commended the efforts of the Nigerian Private Sector Coalition which organised a successful launching against Covid-19 during which billions of Naira was raised to support the

war against virus.

The statement reads: "The Arewa Consultative Forum wishes to commend President Muhammadu Buhari for the outline of measures, he announced on Sunday to be taken by the federal government in the face of the global pandemic known as coronavirus.

"The various regulations intended to maintain the principle of social distance may sound harsh especially to residents of Lagos, Abuja and Ogun states. Even so, we call on the residents of these places to obey the instructions of the federal government more so when there is no alternative in the form of treatment yet discovered for the ailment"

"The Forum also wishes to commend the efforts of the Nigerian Private Sec-

tor Coalition which organized a successful launching against COVID -19 during which billions of Naira was raised to support the war against coronavirus."

The forum however added that as commendable as the efforts of the organised private sector are, there is need to track the money so far raised because similar funds raised by noble minded people to fight equally noble causes in the country "have on several occasions been subjected to criminal abuse to the amazement of all patriots."

ACF added, "The forum believes that the funds should be applied mainly for developing the required infrastructure in which Nigeria is solely deficient and without which we cannot have the capac-

ity to fight the pandemic.

"The forum believes that coronavirus is global pandemic and calls on all Nigerians to see it so. Nigerians should not read local ethnic, political or religious meanings into its emergence" the statement said.

Meanwhile, former President of the Senate, Senator David Mark has urged Nigerians to join forces with federal and state governments in the total battle against the dreaded disease called Coronavirus code named COVID-19.

Senator Mark said the unabating spread of the virus reinforces the urgent need for all citizens to comply with the Stay-at-home Order including observation of personal hygiene, regular washing of hands and the applica-

tion of hand sanitizer to curtail the spread.

In a statement on the lockdown in some parts of the country as one of the measures to contain the scourge, Senator Mark urged citizens to accept the discomfort and cooperate with authorities in order to curtail and ultimately end the virus.

The former Senate helmsman urged the Federal Government to work out modalities towards palliatives for citizens in order to ameliorate the pains of the lockdown like it is done in other countries affected by the pandemic.

He however enjoined authorities especially the Law Enforcement Agencies to apply the internationally accepted standards of enforcement by respecting the human

rights procedures, the rule of law and operating with human face.

He said: "It is necessary to observe all safety measures on both sides so that we would not unwittingly create more problems rather than solving them. After all, the whole essence is the safety of all".

He reminded authorities that the primary objective of government is the welfare and security of the citizenry, a task he described as sacred and covenant with the people.

Senator Mark expressed optimism that the scourge would be surmountable only if all citizens comply with the preventive measures no matter the discomfort saying "it is better to be inconvenienced temporarily than the consequences of the virus".

## HEDA Urges Ayade, EFCC To Probe C'River Forestry Commission

BY CHIBUZO UKAIBE, Abuja

The Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre) has called on the Cross River State Governor, Prof Ben Ayade and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to investigate alleged corrupt practices ongoing in Cross Rivers State forestry sector, particularly the illegal logging activities.

In a statement issued by HEDA's chairman, Mr Olanrewaju Suraju, said: "We had expected that the appointment of Mr Odey Oyama, Chairman of the ATF in November 2019 would help to protect the Cross Rivers communities from the dangerous inhuman activities of illegal loggers. However, the resignation of Mr Oyama shortly after appointment was as shocking as the serious allegations contained in his resignation letter."

According to the statement, the ATF chairman resigned on March 27, 2020, alleging the "consistent interferences in the operations of the ATF by other agencies of Government; without any attempt at joint consultations or synergy. In particular also, the total lack of security cover over all the field staff and operatives that had been deployed by ATF into strategic positions all over the State."

In the resignation letter, directed to the state governor, the ATF chairman cited various instances of corrupt practices, including that: "whenever consignments of timber are impounded, the Chairman of Forestry Commission and the Special Adviser (SA)

of Afforestation appear at the scene for the purpose of issuing counter instructions for the release of the consignments. Curiously, their action is being carried out without any documentary evidence or authorization from the Governor, who initiated the operations of the ATF."

The statement added, "referencing an ATF Report of March 2020, the resigned ATF Chairman cited an instance where three trucks carrying an estimated 1,928 pieces of timber resources illegally logged at Biajua community in Boki local government was apprehended by the ATF at Nde community of Ikom local government.

"Mr Oyama also raised the issue about lack of appropriate security architecture for the operations of ATF which has made it possible for the undue interference by unauthorized persons and security agencies. He decried the absence of security cover for all field staff and operatives which has led to cases of brutal attacks and physical injuries on volunteers and special agents of ATF who were deployed into strategic monitoring positions in the state."

Mr Suraju therefore called on the EFCC and Governor Ayade to shine the spotlight on the circumstances surrounding the resignation of Mr Oyama and the serious allegations that have been raised forthwith. He called for the investigation of the situation and prosecution of offenders as well as ensuring that adequate recovery of resources lost to the illegal activities.



**Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers State (middle) with the state security chiefs monitoring the level of compliance with the stay-at-home directive by the government to contain the Spread of COVID-19 in Port Harcourt, yesterday.**

## PDP Reconstitutes Ondo Exco As Caretaker Committee

BY CHIBUZO UKAIBE, Abuja

National Working Committee (NWC) of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has approved the reconstitution of the current PDP Ondo state exco into the state caretaker committee with effect from April 5, 2020 when its earlier tenure is due to expire.

The party said its NWC's decision is predicated on the party's inability to conduct the state congress scheduled for Tuesday March 24, 2020

due to the outbreak of COVID-19 leading to the stay at home and social distancing directives issued by the Federal Government to curtail the spread of the virus.

A statement by the party signed by national publicity secretary, Kola Ologbondiyan, said "By the approval of the NWC, the state exco is empowered to act as a state caretaker committee until such a time that it is possible for the conduct of the state congress for the election of state officials, provided that

they shall not serve in such capacity for more than three months from April 5, 2020.

"Furthermore, the NWC has approved the ward and Local Government Congresses and consequently affirmed all the elected executive committee members of the party at those chapters in the state.

"Consequently, the NWC has directed the Ondo state PDP Chairman, to inaugurate the elected ward and Local Government executive committee members, whose tenure in office, pursuant to in

pursuant to section 47(1) of the PDP Constitution 2017 (as amended), shall be from March 30, 2020 to March 30 2024 for the ward executives and April 2, 2020 to April 2, 2024 for LG executives respectively.

"It will be recalled that the PDP successfully conducted its Wards and Local Government congresses in the state on the 7th and 21st of March 2020 respectively and produced elected exco members at both levels," the party said.



# THE NATION'S Capital

## NEWS AROUND THE CAPITAL CITY



AYM SHAFRA filling station carrying out partial sales following the lockdown of FCT to curtail the spread of the dreaded coronavirus in Abuja, yesterday.

PHOTO BY OYEDELE OMOKAGBO

### COVID-19: Group Donates Protective Equipment To FCTA

BY DAVID ADUGE-ANI

As part of its cooperate social responsibility, an indigenous company, Faxx Stores and Trading Nigeria Limited has donated assorted personal protective equipment to health workers in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to aid them in the fight against the spread of the coronavirus. Delivering the items in Abuja yesterday, the chief executive officer of the company, Francis Abu, explained that the donation was in appreciation of the FCT Administration and the federal government's prompt response to curtail the spread of the coronavirus since its outbreak in Nigeria.

Abu, who also commended the administration in particular for the treatment of the cases identified in the territory, also appreciated the emergency response team for making available additional bed spaces for asymptomatic patients of the virus.

"In times of unforeseen and unexpected crisis of this nature and magnitude, it is imperative that we come together as a community to assist government and together, we can play an important role in addressing this emergency and helping those affected by it.

"In light of the foregoing, and in a move to help curtail further spread of this virus and alleviate the shortage of medical supplies in the country, Faxx Stores wish to donate these items to the administration for onward distribution to health workers on the frontline working day to day to combat the virus," he affirmed.

Receiving the items on behalf of the administration, minister of state for the FCT, Dr. Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu, noted that the donation was in line with the administration's vision of take responsibility and being your brother's keeper.

## Lockdown: Residents Of Dutse Community Defy Stay-at-home Order

BY IGHO OYOYO

Despite the stay-at-home order by the federal government to control the spread of the dreaded coronavirus, some residents of Dutse and Bwari communities, in Bwari area council, yesterday defied the order, lamenting that they cannot stay at home when there are no palliative measures to ease their suffering during the two weeks period.

When LEADERSHIP visited Dutsen Alhaji, Dutse Saukale, Dutse Makaranta and Dutse Baupma, residents were seen in their shops doing normal business, while other sat in groups discussing and playing games, and not maintaining the social distancing preventive measures.

Also, some barbing salon shops in the areas were opened

for business, even as some mini drinking parlours were also in operation and people were seen moving about in their numbers without observing any preventive measures, which made it seemed as if the communities were not part of the lockdown.

One of the residents of Dutse Makaranta community, Mama Jennifer, said she decided to defy the order because the way it was announced, she and her family were not prepared for it, adding that the government did not make any provision for the people who would stay in their houses for two weeks period.

"My brother, not that I like coming out to do my business when we are trying to avoid that virus, but what will my family eat when we lock our selves inside our house? There

is no provision anywhere for us to survive. We do not have food or anything at home. My husband is a civil servant and he has not been paid his salary. Do you want us to die inside our house of hunger?," she said.

Another resident of Dutse Saukale, Mr. Omale Joseph, said that the lockdown would have been very good and effective if necessary things that would make the people a bit comfortable in their homes were provided, but that the reverse is the case.

"Imagine locking yourself inside your house when the whole place is very hot and there is no electricity. This is the period that the government is supposed to tell the electricity distribution company to supply at least 18 hours electricity, if not 24 hours. There is no way you

can stay indoor with this kind of burning heat and nothing to make you a little bit comfortable at home," he said.

A resident of Dutsen Alhaji community, Janet Idoko, said that she believed that the people decided to defy the stay-at-home order because of lack of proper sensitisation about the virus to the people at the rural communities like Dutse and other communities in the FCT.

"If you look around now, you will notice that the well enlightened residents are in their houses observing the lockdown, because they know what the virus is all about, while the ones that have defied the order are those less educated or complete illiterate residents who do not know how deadly the virus is, because they see it as mere rumours".

## ...AMAC Residents Comply

BY DAVID ADUGE-ANI

Residents of some communities in Abuja Municipal Area Council (AMAC) yesterday complied with the stay-at-home order, by the federal government in an effort to avoid the spread of the deadly coronavirus in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

When LEADERSHIP visited some of the areas, which included, Wuse, Garki, Life Camp, Karmo, Gwagwa and parts of Dei-Dei communities, it was a total lock down, as most people were indoors,

while places of businesses were under lock and key.

At Wuse, it was a complete lock down as vehicular and even human movements were curtailed, except for those on essential services, such medical personnel, security operatives, journalists and others.

The popular Wuse Market was like a ghost town as no single shop was opened as at the time of the visit, except security personnel, who were manning the gates of the market, while men of the Nigeria Police were seen at strategic points in the area.

The picture is the same in Jabi, Life Camp, Gwagwa, Kado and Karmo, where the popular weekly market did not hold, as a result of the lock down, even as policemen had blocked the major entry points into these communities.

A resident of Karmo community, Abdullahi Sani told our reporter that he has to obey the stay-at-home order by the federal government to help in curtailing the spread of the deadly coronavirus in the territory.

"We residents of this community has no choice than to obey the federal

government's order on stay-at-home to avoid endangering the life of each other. You know that government is the next to God, so whatever government decides is what the citizens must follow."

Sani however regretted missing the weekly Karmo Market yesterday, adding that it is during the market days that he and other business people get money for the sustenance of their families, just as he appealed to the federal government to begin the supply of the palliatives to save residents from starvation.

## ALGON Urges Residents To Comply With Govt's Directive On COVID-19

BY BLESSING BATURE

The Association of Local Governments of Nigeria (ALGON) has urged residents of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) to adhere strictly to the federal government's directive on the preventive measure to contain Coronavirus disease.

Chairman of ALGON, FCT chapter, Hon. Mustapha Danze, who made the call in Abuja yesterday, also urged residents to remain calm, obedient and to be more prayerful.

"As FCT and Lagos enters a difficult times in history today, we are restricted for the next 14 days, I urge you all, particularly the good people of Gwagwalada area council to be calm, obedient, steadfast and obey all directives and advice by health experts and the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for us to curtail this pandemic."

Danze explained that COVID-19 has no cure now, adding that the only cure is to obey all the instructions outlined by the health experts by washing our hands regularly, avoiding social interaction, distancing yourselves from overpopulated area.

He noted that although this are difficult instructions, which an African man cannot avoid, but added that residents have no choice than to obey in other to be safe, adding that this is indeed a trying time.

"It is agreed that the most effective way to contain the disease is to wash hands frequently, practice good hygiene and avoid large gatherings and staying at home for the prescribed duration as directed by President Muhammadu Buhari in his broadcast to the nation on the disease," he said.

# world NEWS

## Prince Harry, Wife Bid Farewell To Royal Roles

Prince Harry and his American wife, Meghan posted their last message as working members of Britain's royal family on Monday before officially embarking on new careers without their "Royal Highness" styles.

Harry and Meghan shocked Queen Elizabeth and the other Windsors in January by announcing plans to step back from their royal roles. A later deal brokered by the 93-year-old monarch means they will go their own way from April.

So from Wednesday, the couple, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, will be free to pursue new careers, earn their own money and spend most of their time in North America.

But they will no longer be able to use the word "royal" in their branding or carry out official duties and have agreed not to use the style of HRH - His or Her Royal Highness.

Harry, 35, the queen's grandson and sixth in line to the throne, will remain a prince but relinquish his military appointments.

"While you may not see us here, the work continues," the couple said in the last message to their more than 11 million followers on their

Sussexroyal Instagram page.

"We look forward to reconnecting with you soon. You've been great! Until then, please take good care of yourselves, and of one another."

Harry, and Meghan, a former actress, married in a lavish ceremony in May 2018, a wedding which was heralded at the time as infusing a blast of Hollywood glamour and modernity into the monarchy, and making them one of the world's biggest celebrity couples.

Their son Archie was born a year later, but by then relations with the media and with Harry's elder brother Prince William were becoming strained, and in January they announced plans to step back from their royal roles.

It provoked a crisis, and in a subsequent deal thrashed out with the queen, her son and heir Prince Charles and William, it was agreed the couple would have to give up their royal jobs altogether.

As a result, the couple will no longer use their Sussexroyal handle on Instagram nor update their SussexRoyal.com website. The Sussex Royal Foundation, which they were setting up, will be wound up.

## Tunisia Releases 1,420 Prisoners Over Coronavirus

Tunisia's President Kais Saied on Tuesday ordered the release of 1,420 prisoners in an amnesty to combat the spread of the coronavirus in prisons, a presidency statement said.

Tunisia has declared a general lockdown to slow infection rates, and has confirmed 362 cases of the coronavirus, with nine deaths.

The government said in a separate statement that it would provide food assistance to thousands of families in their homes, starting Friday, for a period of about two months.

Saied last week ordered the army to deploy in the streets to force people to respect the lockdown.

## Belgian Girl Becomes Europe's Youngest Coronavirus Victim

A 12-year-old girl died in Belgium of the coronavirus, a spokesman for the health ministry said on Tuesday, and local media reported she was Europe's youngest victim of the disease.

"It is a rare event but one that devastates us," virologist Emmanuel Andre told Belgium's official daily news conference on the spread of disease.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), an EU agency, has also recorded deaths in the age range of 10-19 years old in Spain but did not provide details.

While the COVID-19 respiratory disease caused by the virus has affected the elderly more, the girl's condition deteriorated after three

days of fever, Belgian officials said.

The officials did not provide details on whether or not she had any previous medical conditions at the time.

Overall, Belgium's death toll rose by 98 to a total of 705 people on Tuesday. The country reported 876 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of confirmed infections to 12,775.

Some 4,920 people were hospitalized, meaning around a half of the medical services' capacity was taken up by the coronavirus. Belgium expects the spread of the virus to peak in the coming days and weeks.



Trump

## US Coronavirus Death Toll Passes 3,000

With more than 3,000 killed by the coronavirus in the United States, according to numbers released Tuesday, the US death toll is approaching that of China where the pandemic broke out.

Meanwhile, Spain saw a massive surge of 9,222 new confirmed cases and 849 deaths in a single day, its Health Ministry announced, bringing total cases to 94,417 and deaths to 8,189.

However, Spain and Italy each held a moment of silence to honor their dead at 12 p.m. (6 a.m. ET). The two countries account for more than half of the deaths globally.

On Monday, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo warned the situation in his state is a sign of things to come if other parts of the country don't act fast.

"There's nothing unique about New Yorkers' immune system. There is no American who is immune from this virus," he told Lawrence O'Donnell on MSNBC's The Last Word. "New York is just the test case for this. We're the canary in the coal mine".

The number of people confirmed to be infected with the virus in the US reached 163,838 as of 2:30 a.m. ET, according to NBC News' tracker the highest number for a single country in the world. More than a third of the cases are in New York state.

Also Monday, President Donald Trump said at a press conference that support was being rolled out across the country, including the construction of a 2,900-bed hospital in New York and thousands of more beds and equip-

ment being distributed by the U.S. Navy and the Army Corps of Engineers.

"It's been really pretty amazing what they've done," he said.

"I think we're going to be in very good shape," he added about preparations for the country to manage the growing rate of infections.

Trump also approved disaster declarations for the states of Rhode Island and Pennsylvania on Monday.

In China, the rate of deaths has slowed with only one more reported from Monday, bringing the total to 3,187. As the country eases restrictions following the slowdown of the spread of the virus, factories have reopened, allowing for China's manufacturing industry to rebound this month.

## ...UK Death Toll Rises To 1,808

The number of UK coronavirus deaths has risen to 1,808, officials have confirmed.

Yesterday the number of deaths stood at 1,415 and the increase of 393 in the last 24 hours is more than double the increase of 180 across the

previous day.

Today's figures include people who died in hospitals, but do not those who passed away in their homes.

The tragic update comes hours after new figures revealed an additional 40 deaths which had previously

not been included in the country's death toll.

A further 367 patients have died in England, Public Health England confirmed. This takes the total for England alone to 1,651.

## Paris To Transfer Coronavirus Patients To Other Regions

Paris health officials will begin transferring 38 critical coronavirus patients by high-speed train from the Paris to regions that have been less overwhelmed to ease pressure on the capital's intensive care capacity, officials said

on Tuesday.

"What is planned from the Paris region by TGV transport is (to transport) 38 sick people", Bruno Riou, who heads up the crisis team for the Paris hospitals, told reporters.

He declined to say where they would be transferred. A second official said the operation would take place on Wednesday.

France 3 TV reported the patients would be moved to the western Brittany region.

## Congo Ex-president Dies Of Covid-19

Former Republic of Congo president, Jacques Joaquim Yhombi Opango has died in France on Monday of the Covid-19 coronavirus, his family has said.

Yhombi, 81, who led Congo-Brazzaville from 1977 until he was toppled in 1979, died at a Paris hospital of Covid-19, his son Jean-Jacques said.

Yhombi Opango had been ill before he contracted the virus, his son said.

Born in 1939 in Congo's northern Cuvette region, Yhombi Opango was an army officer who rose to

power after the assassination of president Marien Ngouabi.

The troubled, oil-rich former French colony was aligned with the Soviet Union during Ngouabi's 1968-77 rule.

Yhombi Opango was ousted by longtime ruler Denis Sassou Nguesso.

Accused of taking part in a coup plot against Sassou Nguesso, Yhombi Opango was jailed from 1987 to 1990. He was released a few months before a 1991 national conference that introduced multi-party politics in the central Afri-

can country.

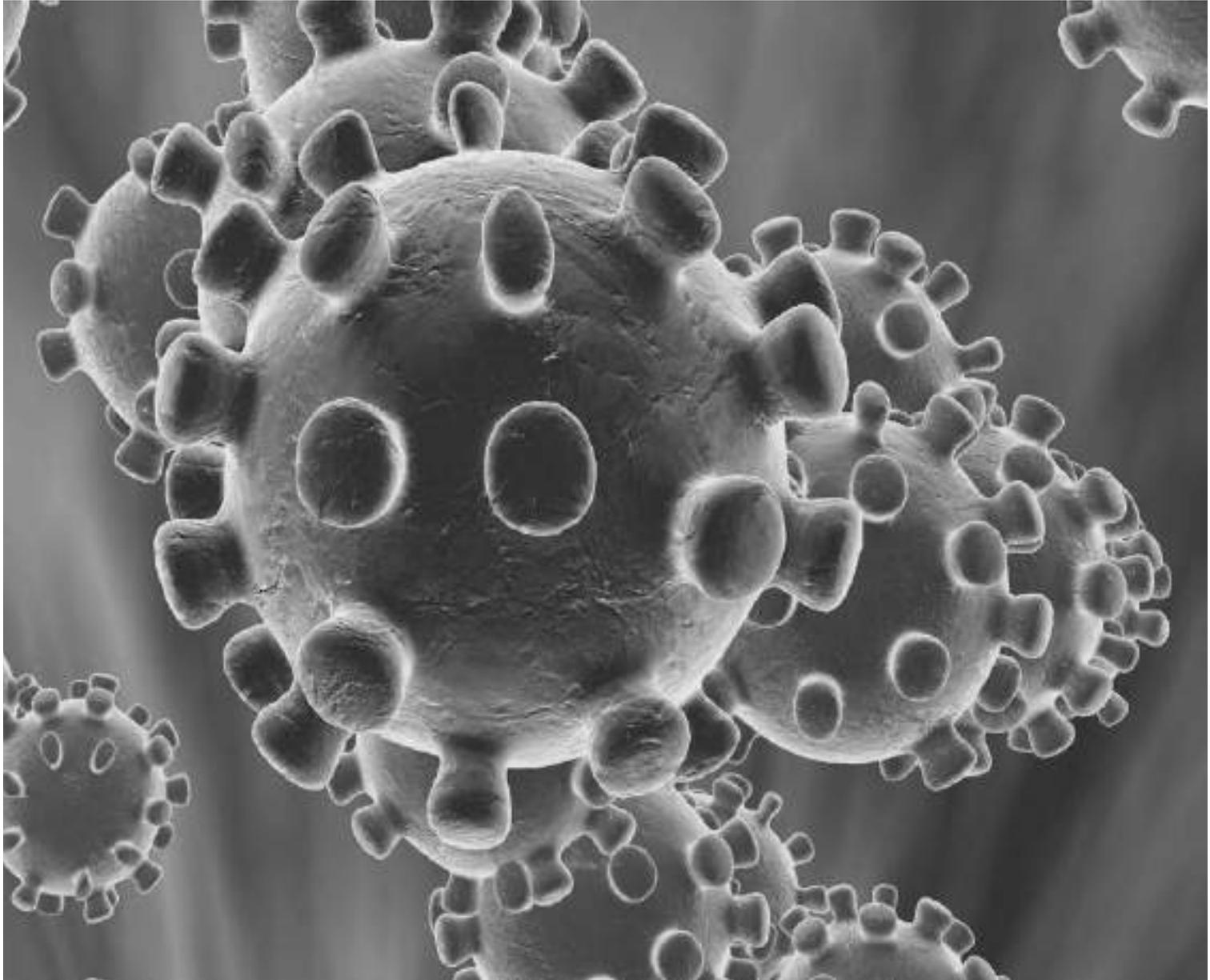
He founded the Rally for Democracy and Development party but lost in a 1992 presidential election.

Yhombi Opango later allied with elected president Pascal Lissouba, becoming his prime minister between 1994 and 1996.

When civil war broke out in Congo in 1997, Yhombi Opango fled into exile in France. He was finally able to return home in 2007, but then divided his time between France and Congo because of his health problems.



# Covid-19: History's Verdict On Trump Will Be Devastating



BY MICHAEL D'ANTONIO

After a lifetime devoted to avoiding responsibility and accountability -- for his lies, his deceptions, his hype, and his cruelty -- President Donald Trump has met his match in the pandemic of 2020. His bluff and bluster are powerless as thousands of Americans die and the blame falls, in part, on his failure to heed the warnings and execute a robust national response. This occurred even though a pandemic playbook had been left behind by the Obama administration. Early in the crisis, Trump said "We have it totally under control. It's one person coming from China. It's going to be just fine." Weeks were wasted and now the price of this fiasco will likely be a loss of life far greater than 9/11 or Hurricane Katrina.

On one level, Trump's failure can be traced to his original lie: the false image

he sold to the American people in order to hide his shortcomings. Never a competent manager of complex organizations -- witness his many bankruptcies -- Trump rose to fame pitching the illusion that he was a great businessman. As he sought the presidency he used counterattacks, lies, and skillful denials to avoid answering for his record and gain the White House.

As someone who has studied Trump for years, I thought it was inevitable that he would eventually reach a moment of reckoning as president. I couldn't have imagined that it would come with the catastrophic consequences now facing the nation as Covid-19 overwhelms health care systems and brings the economy to a standstill. Trump's profound personal shortcomings -- deficiencies of his heart and mind -- helped bring us to this moment.

The first of Trump's weaknesses? His lack of

emotional intelligence and empathy, which causes him to struggle to relate to human suffering. The developer who made tenants miserable so they would move out allowing him to build luxury condos, became the president who downplayed hurricane deaths in Puerto Rico, and now barely speaks of those stricken and killed by the coronavirus. Instead, he obsesses over TV ratings and the economy as if his image in the media and the ups and downs of Wall Street indices matter more than life itself.

The second of Trump's deficiencies is a habit of mind that discounts expertise and elevates convenient opinions supported by cherry-picked sources of misinformation. Businessman Trump exhibited this willful ignorance when, for example, he said the scientific connection between asbestos exposure and disease was a matter of a conspiracy carried out by mobsters. Candidate Trump

discounted the expertise of experts leading the war on terror. And President Trump has claimed to have extensive knowledge on a vast array of topics from forest management to drones.

Trump's arrogance as a businessman and a candidate was obnoxious but not terribly dangerous. In a president, it puts America's fate into the hands of a man who was incapable of learning even from his own aides. Faced with an enemy that is literally killing people he stayed true to form as he pushed an unproven coronavirus treatment that's still under scientific review. "What do we have to lose?" Trump asked musing that people could just get prescriptions for the drug. But without clear messaging there's plenty to lose. A man died and his wife was under critical care after the two tried to self-medicate for the novel coronavirus with

continues on next page

“

*Trump's arrogance as a businessman and a candidate was obnoxious but not terribly dangerous*

# Covid-19: History's Verdict On Trump Will Be Devastating

Continued from previous page

chloroquine phosphate -- an additive used to clean fish tanks. The wife said she heard people on TV talking about the drug chloroquine.

Ignorant as he can seem, the President seems to sense that this moment will establish his reputation in perpetuity. He said as much last week when he observed that, "the history books will never forget" America's response to the coronavirus. What he did not mention, however, is that his response to the pandemic will be examined in minute detail -- it is this prospect, the prospect of accountability, that looms over him now.

Until this crisis, Trump had avoided accountability with remarkable consistency. Born into astounding wealth, he avoided accountability by persuading creditors that he was too big to fail even after he ran businesses into the ground. In politics, he deflected accountability by blaming others, especially the press and Democrats, for problems that occurred on his watch. Recently, when asked about the dreadful federal failures on coronavirus testing, he said, bluntly, "I don't take responsibility at all."

Historians will eventually write books detailing what journalists already know about the Trump administration's dereliction of duty when the pandemic hit. America's Covid-19 death toll now passes 2,800 and the caseload exceeds 157,200 cases. But through much of the time that the number of cases was growing, the White House offered no coherent national response to the crisis. There have been sparse moments when Trump has sounded like a leader capable of handling this crisis -- like during his briefing on Sunday, in which he announced that he was extending social distancing guidelines through the end of April. But these moments don't last long before Trump back to pitting states against each other and attacking journalists who ask legitimate questions about his response to the pandemic.

No federal agency is rallying health care workers to move to hot spots where



Trump

they are needed. Instead of assertively coordinating and distributing vital equipment, the administration is letting states, hospitals, and federal agencies compete against each other. Trump even went so far as to accuse medical workers of hoarding supplies.

Recently Trump introduced a bit of personal petulance to this dynamic, suggesting that governors who aren't sufficiently deferential should be ignored by the White House. (He leavened this remark by noting that Vice President Mike Pence is not following his lead.) Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, whom Trump singled out for criticism, reported that orders made for equipment had been canceled as suppliers favored the feds over her state.

The president's complaints about not being appreciated remind us that he takes everything personally and that his personal qualities of heartlessness and intellectual dishonesty will hobble his response to our suffering. Acutely attuned to his own

feelings, he's so numb to the pain of others that he avoids talking about it. If he has shed a tear or allowed his voice to tremble with grief during this pandemic I have not observed him do it. Likewise, he remains devoted to discounting reliable scientific information that shows things getting worse in favor of happy talk. With health care workers reusing disposable masks and using trash bags as protective gowns, Trump considered the federal effort to supply hospitals and announced, "It's hard not to be happy with the job we're doing."

Meanwhile, governors across the country are demonstrating what competence, empathy, and intelligence look like. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, for one, has used his televised briefings to offer accurate information and authentic human concern. He doesn't ignore the pain and grief but rather acknowledges it and shares his own. Everything about Cuomo's briefings, right down to the concise slides flashed

to accompany his words, reeks of competence. Where Trump repeats buzzwords and tries to sell himself as all-powerful, Cuomo demonstrates that he understands the pandemic and can communicate the facts.

At the epicenter of the nation's and the world's pandemic, Cuomo has been reminding us that the worst of the crisis is just beginning. The same is true for history's assessment of President Trump. The coronavirus is immune to his manipulation and spin. It is the defining challenge of his presidency and of his life. Compared with other presidential crises, like the 9/11 attacks or Hurricane Katrina, it has occurred slowly, with ample warning, giving the president many opportunities to act and, we see now, fail.

The accounting will continue. And like the pandemic, it will be devastating.

—Culled from CNN

“  
At the epicenter of the nation's and the world's pandemic, Cuomo has been reminding us that the worst of the crisis is just beginning

# Oil Markets Are On The Brink Of Armageddon



BY MITCHELL MCGEORGE

“Two boys are in a closed garage with several inches of gasoline on the floor. One has six large matches, the other has seven smaller ones. They debate as to who is strategically superior”. J.K. Galbraith

The world's oil markets are at a crisis point arguably not seen in its history.

Since the last meeting of OPEC/OPEC+ concluded, global oil prices have collapsed to close Friday at 53.14% down for WTI and 51.14% down for Brent. These prices are the lowest seen in almost twenty years. Oil prices have tumbled as the fallout of that meeting compounded the unprecedented hit to consumption from the coronavirus pandemic.

As we remember all too well, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told reporters leaving the meetings in Vienna that without

reaching an agreement on production, members could now pump what they liked starting April 1st. Taking this as a declaration of war, Saudi Arabia has since raised the stakes with its plan to flood the global oil market with increased oil volumes.

With global oil demand curtailed by an estimated twenty million barrels per day due to the coronavirus led shutdown in the world's economy, the oil war would turn an already dire economic outlook for global energy demand into a catastrophe that could change the energy landscape forever. An increasing number of producers are now losing money on production, wells are being shut-in and in certain areas (e.g. Canada) the oil industry may never recover – a generational destruction of personal livelihoods and the end of a reliable source of national wealth and revenue.

Yes, the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus has severely affected the global oil markets but, the actions of the

participants in reaction to this crisis have shown an industry in the grips of a mass suicide.

The question has to be asked, in starting an oil war during a global pandemic that has already seen demand fall by twenty million barrels per day in a matter of weeks, have we all forgotten about the theory of Mutually Assured Destruction?

In 1962, the concept of Mutually Assured Destruction started to play a major part in the defence policy of the United States. President Kennedy's Secretary of Defence, Robert McNamara, set out in a speech to the American Bar Foundation in Chicago, Illinois, the beginnings of the US policy on nuclear deterrence, that would remain US policy throughout the Cold War.

Thus, the true philosophy of nuclear deterrence became to be established. If the other side knew that by initiating a nuclear strike it would lead to a response that would be so massive that they would inevitably suffer 'assured

destruction', they would be irrational to press the button.

In the past, wars had been fought by defeating your opponent on the battlefield by superior use of force. But MAD was a radical departure that trumped the conventional view of war. As governments around the world have worked to quickly commit trillions upon trillions of dollars to shore up the global economy, efforts have been short-lived as more and more of the global economy succumbs to the coronavirus led shutdown.

Yet, in what can only be described as a strict adherence to the theory behind MAD, Russia, Saudi Arabia and others have given no signal that they are slowing down in their attempts to flood the world with oil and grab market share at the expense of each other. Saudi Arabia has also turned OPEC into a 'you're on your own now' proposition. While Saudi Arabia, with arguably the lowest cost of production and

Continued on next page

“With global oil demand curtailed by an estimated twenty million barrels per day due to the coronavirus led shut-down in the world's economy

# Oil Markets Are On The Brink Of Armageddon

Continued from previous page

deepest pockets in OPEC, will offset some of the collapse in oil prices with the boost in volumes, almost all of its fellow OPEC members are much less fortunate.

It is clear, that with the enormity of the current (and projected) overhang in global oil supply, only a globally co-ordinated attempt that includes all major producers, would help address this attempt at energy market MAD.

It is also clear that any co-ordinated attempt would have to include the United States.

Whilst Trump believes that lower oil prices is a positive message for domestic US voters, members of the US Administration have started to appreciate the dangers posed to the US energy industry and the theory of 'energy independence'. Only last week the US began the public pressuring of Saudi Arabia. The State Department reported on Wednesday that Secretary of State Pompeo in a call with Mohammed Bin Salman "stressed that as a leader of the G20 and an important energy leader, Saudi Arabia has a real opportunity to rise to the occasion and reassure global energy and financial markets when the world faces uncertainty".

As often the case since 2017, the US is looking for others to do the 'heavy lifting' when it comes to the supporting of the global energy market. OPEC and OPEC+ have legitimate gripes that their support of the global oil price through production cuts has directly led to continuance the US shale industry's exponential production growth.

US shale production has grown to such an extent that it has helped the US eclipse both Russia and Saudi Arabia in becoming the world's largest oil producer. This has been trumpeted by the US President as the US achieving energy independence.

To the often-made complaints by OPEC and OPEC+, the US has always cited 'free market' forces. How ironic now that there are calls by domestic US shale producers for tariffs, duties and even limits on foreign oil to provide an 'artificial' oil price floor.

Saudi Arabia's position is that only a collective effort by all producing nations to put in place significant output cuts, rather than unilateral cuts by Saudi Arabia, can address the



oil price destruction.

No doubt there have been many 'behind-the-scenes' discussions between all major oil market participants to address the obvious problems. But, to this date all calls have gone unheeded and all participants seem to be hell bent on the path to energy market Armageddon.

Eight months after Robert McNamara's speech, the Cuban Missile Crisis was in full swing. Thankfully, after a number of crisis flashpoints, we know that the participants reached a solution that backed away from the mutually assured destruction that seemed destined at the time.

As we approach the 1st of April, we are at an energy market crisis point, where oil producers are free to produce and sell as much oil as they like. Saudi Arabia has talked of offering 12.3 million barrels per day to the market. We do know that Saudi Aramco has never before produced those amounts of oil (even at full production) thus implying that

it will draw down crude stored at home and in tanks in Japan, the Netherlands and on Egypt's Mediterranean coast. If true, it will signal to the market its strength of commitment to the destruction of the theory of oil market balance.

Even then it may be that no matter what the price, there isn't enough of a market (or storage capacity) to absorb all the barrels purportedly on offer. Refineries have started to close, even in the US and analysts at Rystad Energy estimate that the world is likely to run out of storage at current production rates by April, estimating that 76% of the world's storage is already full. In some regions, like Western Canada, where Western Canada Select is trading sub-\$5 storage could be full by the end of this month – that is tomorrow. IHS Markit forecasts that by the end of June 2020, surplus oil will have already reached 1.8 billion barrels, exceeding their estimate of current available storage of just 1.6 billion

barrels.

In seemingly echoing the course of events of October 1962, when the world seemed on the inescapable path to nuclear Armageddon, it seems that all participants are staring into the abyss ready to jump and the global oil market is spinning out of control.

But, looking back to the lessons learned from October 1962, there is a small window of opportunity for the 'combatants' to come together in a co-ordinated effort to share the responsibility of reassuring the global market and pull back from the brink of energy market Armageddon.

If this does not happen the world will be entitled to exclaim "the global energy markets really have gone MAD".

–By Mitchell McGeorge for Oilprice.com

“

US shale production has grown to such an extent that it has helped the US eclipse both Russia and Saudi Arabia in becoming the world's largest oil producer

# news Lagos



BRINGING THE SOUTH-WEST TO YOU



The gate of the federal palace under lock and key in compliance with the lockdown order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Lagos, yesterday.

PHOTO BY KOLAWOLE ALIU

## FETHI Assures Of Quality Medical Services

BY ALO ABIOLA, Ado Ekiti

The Federal Teaching Hospital, Ido-Ekiti (FETHI) has said the poor and vulnerable could access quality healthcare service in its facility, saying it offers the cheapest medical services compared to others in the region despite huge spending on facilities upgrade and new equipment.

Speaking to newsmen after the on-the-spot assessment of the new gadgets procured by the institution, the chief medical director, Prof. Kunle Ajayi expressed joy over the development.

He said it was made possible through the cooperation of critical stakeholders in the institution.

The tertiary hospital restated its avowed determination to deliver quality healthcare to the people of the state and the country.

It added that a novel way of expanding the revenue base of the institution has been devised, which eventually assisted it in meeting some immediate needs.

This it said assisted the institution in the procurement of medical equipment worth millions of Naira to enhance and boost its medical services to the people.

The state of the art equipment were injected into the key departments and sections of the tertiary health institution.

Some of the newly procured equipment,

## Army, Police Takeover Lagos Streets To Enforce Lockdown

BY ISMAILA OGUNTADE AND ADENIYI ADUNOLA, Lagos

In line with President Muhammadu Buhari's order on restriction of movement in Lagos, Ogun states and Federal Capital Territory, many personnel of the Nigeria Army and Nigeria Police Force were yesterday seen on the streets of Lagos trying to enforce the order.

The commissioner of police, Lagos State Police Command, Mr Hakeem Odumosu and some contingents of police and army officers were deployed

to different parts of the metropolis to enforce the order.

The commissioner advised the residents on the need to observe social distancing, imbibe the culture of regular hand, washing in order to stop the spread of COVID 19.

He urged them to go back to their houses, emphasising that the essence of the sit at home order is to minimise social interactions.

He thereafter ordered his officer after dispersing the youth to pick up about 16 tyres the youth used in blocking the road.

Commander, Rapid Response Squad (RRS) DCP Olatunji Disu and his men at Majidun, Ikorodu, dispersed tens of youth playing football on Ikorodu Expressway while enforcing Lagos Lock Down.

He also enlightened youths who were playing football in Ikosi Road on the need to observe social distancing and watch their hands regularly to avoid the spread of COVID 19 in Lagos.

LEADERSHIP observed that some residents opened their shops for business early in the morning in areas like Isheri, Ojodu- Berger axis of

the state, while street hawkers were also seen hawking food items from one street to another.

The residents who spoke with LEADERSHIP on separate interviews said they were not happy with the way Lagosians are not complying with the order of Stay-at-home order.

They noted that exemption of food vendors from the lockdown had made many people to throng the streets, saying law enforcement officers should be able to sift those loitering about from the food vendors.

## Akeredolu Signs Public Health Regulations Order On COVID-19

BY TOPE FAYEHUN, Akure

To further curtail the spread of Coronavirus pandemic, the Ondo State governor, Oluwarotimi Akeredolu, has signed regulations for the good order, safety, security and public health of the state.

Akeredolu, in a statement issued by commissioner for information and orientation, Donald Ojogo, noted that the regulations were made on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic and could be cited as the Ondo State Dangerous Infectious Diseases (COVID-19) (Emergency Prevention) Regulations, 2020.

The governor informed that, all acts done prior to the commencement of these regulations to curtail the spread of the Coronavirus Disease, 2019 (COVID-19) are hereby ratified.

According to him, "These regulations are part of government's heightened efforts to stem the spread of the deadly COVID-19. It is, therefore, our collective responsibility to take maximum advantage of the provisions to help government in this regard.

"This is in exercising aspects of the powers conferred on him

by the Public Health Law, Cap. 124, Volume 3, Laws of Ondo State of Nigeria, 2006, and pursuant to other Laws and enabling powers.

"It is pertinent to emphasise that the purpose of these regulations is to prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 within the local area as it seems necessary.

In this regard, areas designated as part of the local area include the following: all the local government areas in Ondo State, all the area, including roads, bridges, pathways, waterways or anyway howsoever surrounding and

circling the Akure Domestic Airport Complex, especially cargo and private wings;

all the area, including roads, bridges, pathways, waterways or anyway howsoever surrounding the Ondo Deep Seaport under construction; all the jetties within the geographical boundaries of Ondo State; and all land, sea, lagoon, river and other entry points into Ondo State, within the meaning and intendment of Section 2 of the Quarantine Act, Cap Q2 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004.

## Makinde Will Bounce Back- PDP

BY ADEBAYO WAHEED, Ibadan

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has expressed optimism that Oyo State governor, Seyi Makinde would surmount the present challenges of battling with COVID-19 pandemic, saying he had before now demonstrated

exemplary leadership of people who can win any battle.

The chairman, People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the state, Alhaji Kunmi Mustapha, stated this while reacting to the news of the governor testing positive to the dreaded Coronavirus.

Mustapha said the governor

had continued to exhibit traits of an astute and brave leader, doing everything to make easier for his people even in the wake of the spreading virus.

He called on God to heal the governor in no time so that he could continue his good work for the benefit of the people of the state.

"It is with rude shock we heard of the result of the test conducted by our governor on the dreaded COVID-19, my people have been so apprehensive about his condition while I assure them that the governor is alright, he will soon be certified cured of the virus.

## SMARTNEWS

### COVID-19: Adebayo Donates Items To Lagos Govt

BY SAMUEL ABULUDE, Lagos

The general overseer of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Pastor Enoch Adebayo has donated 8,000 hand sanitisers, 8,000 surgical face masks and 200,000 hand gloves to support efforts of the Lagos State government in equipping the medical staff with necessary protective gears needed to contain the Covid-19 pandemic.

Presenting the donations at Mainland Hospital (Formerly Infectious Disease Hospital), Yaba, Adebayo who was represented by Pastor Johnson Funsho Odesola (AGO Admin/Personnel RCCG) said, "We commend the sacrifices that all medical personnel are taking at this time, the church continues to pray for them as they give their sacrifice of love even as the RCCG as a church agrees that combating COVID-19 is by no means a work for ALL."

According to him, the donation of the medical supplies was in addition to other supports given by the RCCG to the Nigerian health sector, ahead of the Corona virus pandemic, adding that the RCCG delivered on its commitment to strengthen and support the Nigerian healthcare system with the donation of 11 ICU beds fully fitted with ventilators in Lagos, Ogun and Plateau states to contribute to improvement of healthcare facilities in Nigeria which is now found to be very useful as the government works round the clock to curtail Covid-19 pandemic.

"The first ICU attached to Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH) Lagos was delivered in 2017. In 2019 the ICU in Jos Specialist Hospital, Plateau and an Ultra-Modern Intensive Care Unit at the RCCG Health Center, Mowe, Ogun State were both delivered and fully functional to address the immediate health needs of Nigerians and host communities.

"The fear we nurse is not out of place, judging from the fact that this man has provided an exemplary leadership trait, both in politics and governance, we will continue to support him in prayer, my Governor is going to bounce back with full vigour soon."

## Why I Shunned Coaching – Aghahowa

Former Super Eagles striker, Julius Aghahowa, has revealed that the poor treatment of Nigerian coaches discouraged him from coaching.

Stephen Keshi and Shuaibu Amodu were two prominent former managers of the Nigeria national team who made key impacts during their time.

Keshi, a former Super Eagles captain, helped the West Africans claim their third Africa Cup of Nations title in 2013 in South Africa and qualified the side for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil.

The duo complained of being owed a backlog of unpaid salaries before their deaths in 2016, while Augustine Eguavoen and a number of other former Nigerian coaches also went through similar treatments.

With Aghahowa's former teammate, Joseph Yobo now Nigeria's assistant coach, the 38-year-old, who is currently a football agent, has explained why he is not looking to follow in the same direction.

"First of all, I'll say it's not compulsory that after your football career you must be a coach," Aghahowa told AOI.

"Looking at how some of my senior colleagues were treated during

their time as coaches, that's enough to discourage me from wanting to be a coach.

"Some of them were even owed until they died. May their souls rest in peace.

"Look at what is happening in the league. Is it the players that are hungry that you'll go and coach?"

"Even the coaches demand money from players before they're given a chance to play, mind you most footballers are from poor homes and the hunger to succeed is very high because of where they are coming from. I am talking from experience.

"As for the football business, not too long ago I got licensed by the Nigerian Football Federation as an intermediary agent and I work with a lot of other agents to scout young talents across the country."

Aghahowa, who is famous for his stunning back-flip celebrations, shone for the West Africans during his playing years, scoring 14 goals in 32 appearances, including Nigeria's only goal at the 2002 World Cup, against Sweden.

The 38-year-old also had an illustrious career playing for Shakhtar Donetsk, Wigan Athletic, and Kayserispor, among others, before his retirement in 2013.

## Udeze Urges Ighalo To Dump Man Utd For Return To China

Former Super Eagles defender, Ifeanyi Udeze has urged Odion Ighalo to return to Shanghai Shenhua when his loan deal with Manchester United expires.

Ighalo arrived Manchester United on transfer deadline day and has made big impact with the Red Devils.

United are reportedly willing to make the move permanent at the end of the season with Ighalo expected to

take a pay cut for the transfer to materialise.

Shanghai Shenhua are however not prepared to lose one of their prized assets easily and have offered him a new deal worth £400,000 per week.

"At 31, what's left? Who does he need to impress? No one – I will jump at the Shanghai's offer immediately, Udeze told Brila FM

"£400,000 is a lot of money and



## Tokyo 2020 Olympics New Date A Silver Lining – Gumel

BY SALIFU USMAN, ABUJA

The President of the Nigeria Olympic Committee, Engr Habu Gumel, has described the new date announced by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics as a silver lining as the world continues to battle against Coronavirus pandemic.

He said the new date of July 23

to August 8, 2021 fixed by the IOC will give athletes, coaches, investors and governments a new sense of purpose as they continue preparation for the Games.

To this end, he said it was imperative for the NOC to update Nigerians about the games which will still be known as Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.

"We are all aware that the Games of the XXXII Olympiad, officially known as the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and a new date announced."

"The IOC is aware that all Olympic Movement stakeholders and the athletes face significant challenges in securing the final qualification places for the Tokyo Games. Even in some countries, athletes are finding it difficult to continue their regular training schedules but the IOC has reassured that all the athletes will have their time for the qualification window as new dates will be made available very soon so as to give clarity to all the actions," he said.

## Saudi Arabian Takeover Interest In Newcastle Intensifies

Newcastle takeover talk re-emerged over the weekend with fresh claims a deal could be in the offing.

Yasir Al-Rumayyan, the chairman of the Public Investment Fund being linked with a £300million takeover of Newcastle, registered a new company with Companies House in January – just before the first reports of a deal being close for

Gumel, who doubles as the treasurer of the Association of National Olympic Committees of Africa (ANOCA) and IOC executive committee member, assured full commitment of the IOC to the delivery of Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, expressing confidence that with the measures being taken by various authorities around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic will soon be curtailed.

He therefore encouraged all Nigerian athletes across the world to continue their preparation for the Games with a renewed vigor.

"The Nigeria Olympic Committee is equally hopeful for speedy solutions to the health challenges posed by Covid-19. On a brighter side, we all can take advantage of the extended period to adequately prepare our contingent for a glorious outing at the Tokyo Olympic Games."

Meanwhile, the IOC has established a Task Force, code named "Here We Go" to ensure coordinated actions by all stakeholders with a mandate to constantly keep all stakeholders abreast of the situation.

the Magpies.

The firm was registered on January 21, four days before the Wall Street Journal claimed Saudi interest was ramping up.

The consortium fronted by Amanda Staveley and with input from the billionaire Reuben Brothers is in advanced discussions with United.



Ighalo



## Murray, Serena Beaten In Fantasy Mixed Double

Andy Murray and Serena Williams were beaten by Jamie Murray and Martina Hingis for the LTA's fantasy mixed doubles trophy.

With tennis fans crying out to see their favourite stars back on the court, the LTA has taken to social media to bring the spirit of the sport back to life.

This week, the governing body has been hosting the first of its Fantasy Tennis Tournaments, starting with the best of British mixed doubles. Each day, two of the all-time best British pairings faced off against each other on their way to the grand final.

Sunday's final saw the 'battle of the Murray's' as brothers Andy and Jamie Murray, and their partners Serena and Martina, went head to head.

To mark the occasion, renowned tennis commentator Russell Fuller stepped in to call the final shots of the match in a creative social video. Judy Murray also got involved in the fun on Twitter as she watched on with fans voting for their favourite pairing.

The pundits were split. Tennis fans torn. Imagine the tension in the Murray family! Can someone please tell Judy it's now safe to come out of hiding? Her boys have had a big, emotional hug at the net after a magical final that had a myriad tennis fans hop-

ing, wishing, praying a draw was possible.

It was not of course, and after one hour and 55 minutes of highly skilled exchanges, Jamie and Martina beat Andy and Serena 6-4 7-5 to lift the inaugural fantasy mixed doubles trophy.

In doing so, the 2017 Wimbledon and US Open mixed doubles champions extended their unbeaten run to 13 matches and three titles. In terms of doubles versus singles success, bragging rights in the Murray family remain a status quo, which must count as a sort of win-win situation for Judy.

Afterwards a euphoric Hingis, 39, who came out of retirement a third time to resume her partnership with Jamie, said, "It has been a great adventure."

Williams, as competitive as ever, acknowledged she's taking a lot of positives from this second wild card pairing with Andy, "To play with him, in front of such appreciative crowds, at this amazing tournament means a lot to me. I look forward to coming back to try and win it next year."

Right up to the end, the Grand Slam singles champions were throwing all they had at the situation.

At 6-5, 30-30 in the second set - Jamie serving for the title - Serena's

scorching forehand return was met with a reaction volley from Hingis, and down the line came a classic winner from Andy. Break-back point. Jamie shrugged off the pressure to whack down an ace. Deuce! Fine hand skills from Hingis at the net brought up Championship point.

Another fine serve from Jamie... a chip lob return from Andy, and Hingis smashed the ball away to take the

## Players' Union Blasts Belarus Over League Games

Players in Belarus are worried about playing games in the only European top-tier league still in action during the coronavirus pandemic, their global union (FIFPro) said on Tuesday.

"Frankly, it's not comprehensible how this can be going on," Jonas Baer-Hoffmann, general secretary of the FIFPro players' union, told reporters in a conference call. "Yes, there are players who are reaching out concerned," Baer-Hoffmann said, noting there are union members in Belarus though the FIFPro network does not have an affiliate in the former Soviet country.

Baer-Hoffmann said failing to complete the current season was not an option at the moment. "Everyone in foot-

ball will lose out if that happens," he said.

"I don't think it's responsible to make that consideration at the moment." "If we have any chance of finishing the season, we have to do so because the impact for players and everyone else in the game will be great if we don't."

There have been some suggestions that the current season could extend to August or September, with the subsequent campaign beginning later. However, some clubs have indicated that the current season should be scrapped. Baer-Hoffmann said FIFPro had seen both good and bad responses to the crisis.

## Kehinde Rates Eagles High, Commends Rohr

Nigeria striker, Lanre Kehinde has rated the Super Eagles as one of the best national teams on the African continent.

Kehinde who is eyeing a move back to Europe from his K League 1 club Incheon United noted that the Eagles have also achieved a lot in world football to receive the high rating, while noting that the current crop of players have the ability to take Nigeria football back to the zenith.

Going down memory lane, the former Ankaragücü of Turkey player said that the Eagles exploits at the USA 1994 World Cup where the team was adjudged the second most en-

tertaining side behind Brazil and the gold medal-winning feat at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta were defining moments in the history of Nigerian football.

"It is nice to see all that the country has achieved in Africa and world football.

"We have won the heart of millions of fans with our scintillating brand of football and hopefully we will get back to the zenith of world football with the present crop of players," he stated.

The 6ft 4 1/2 in tall player, scored 20 goals in 32 appearances for Israeli second division outfit Hapoel Afula in the 2014/15 season.

## COVID-19: Dare Wishes Governor Makinde Quick Recovery



Makinde

The Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Mr. Sunday Dare, has joined other concerned citizens of Oyo State, family and friends of the state's Governor, Seyi Makinde, to wish him a quick recovery after he confirmed testing positive to COVID-19.

The minister commended Makinde for reinforcing the key messaging for slowing down the spread of the virus by deciding to self-isolate, though he is currently asymptomatic.

According to Dare, "Your Excellency, I am sorry to learn

about your test result on the coronavirus. I join all concerned citizens of Oyo State, your family and friends to wish you a quick recovery from the effect of the virus.

"I pray that God will heal you and see you through the period of isolation. Thank you for the courage to be open about it. I believe you will soon bounce back fully ready to continue to govern Oyo State.

"I am certain that you will overcome this condition soon having promised to go into self-isolation as required."

## Augusta Golf Club Donates £1.6m To Fight Coronavirus

Augusta National Golf Club is donating £1.6m (\$2m) to help the Augusta area in the fight against the coronavirus that has seen this year's Masters Tournament postponed.

The club, the only permanent home for one of golf's four majors, said £800k (\$1m) would go to Augusta University to help ex-

pand coronavirus testing, while another £800k (\$1m) would go to the Central Savannah River Area's recently-launched coronavirus Emergency Response Fund.

Augusta National chairman Fred Ridley said: "It is our hope these gifts will help address the many challenges brought about

by the coronavirus throughout the city of Augusta and the greater region.

"We believe Augusta National has an important responsibility to support and protect the community who has so generously and consistently supported us for many years."

Tiger Woods was scheduled to

begin the defence of his Masters title on April 9, but earlier this month the event was postponed until "some later date" this year because of the coronavirus outbreak.

It is the Masters' first postponement since World War II, which stopped the tournament in 1943, 1944 and 1945.



# Coutinho Regrets Leaving Liverpool For Barca

Brazilian star, Philippe Coutinho has reportedly told friends that he regrets leaving Liverpool for Barcelona.

Coutinho left Liverpool for £142million after pushing hard for a move to Barcelona in January 2018.

Unfortunately, things have not been rosy in Catalonia and the LaLiga champions are now ready to offload him after two and a half years.

The Spanish champions have told the 27-year-old he will be allowed to leave, and that his number seven shirt will be passed on to Antoine Griezmann next season.

Coutinho, according to the Daily Mirror, has “admitted to friends that he made a big mistake in forcing his way out of the Merseyside club to join Barca”.

Coutinho is currently on loan for the season at Bayern Munich, but they have little desire to make that deal permanent in the summer via a €120m option clause.

And Barca will be forced to find another loan club for him, with the potential of a permanent deal.

The tabloid report that “Liverpool have made definitively clear there

is zero interest in bringing Philippe Coutinho back to Anfield”.

Liverpool reportedly pulled out of the running to re-sign Coutinho last summer.

According to the Daily Mirror, Jürgen Klopp and sporting director Michael Edwards met to discuss the possibility of bringing Coutinho back to Anfield in a sensational summer move in 2019.

However, the deal was off the table after the tabloid claimed Barcelona wanted a fee of £8million for the Reds to take him on loan, while they also wanted the Reds to pay his £250,000-per-week wages in full.

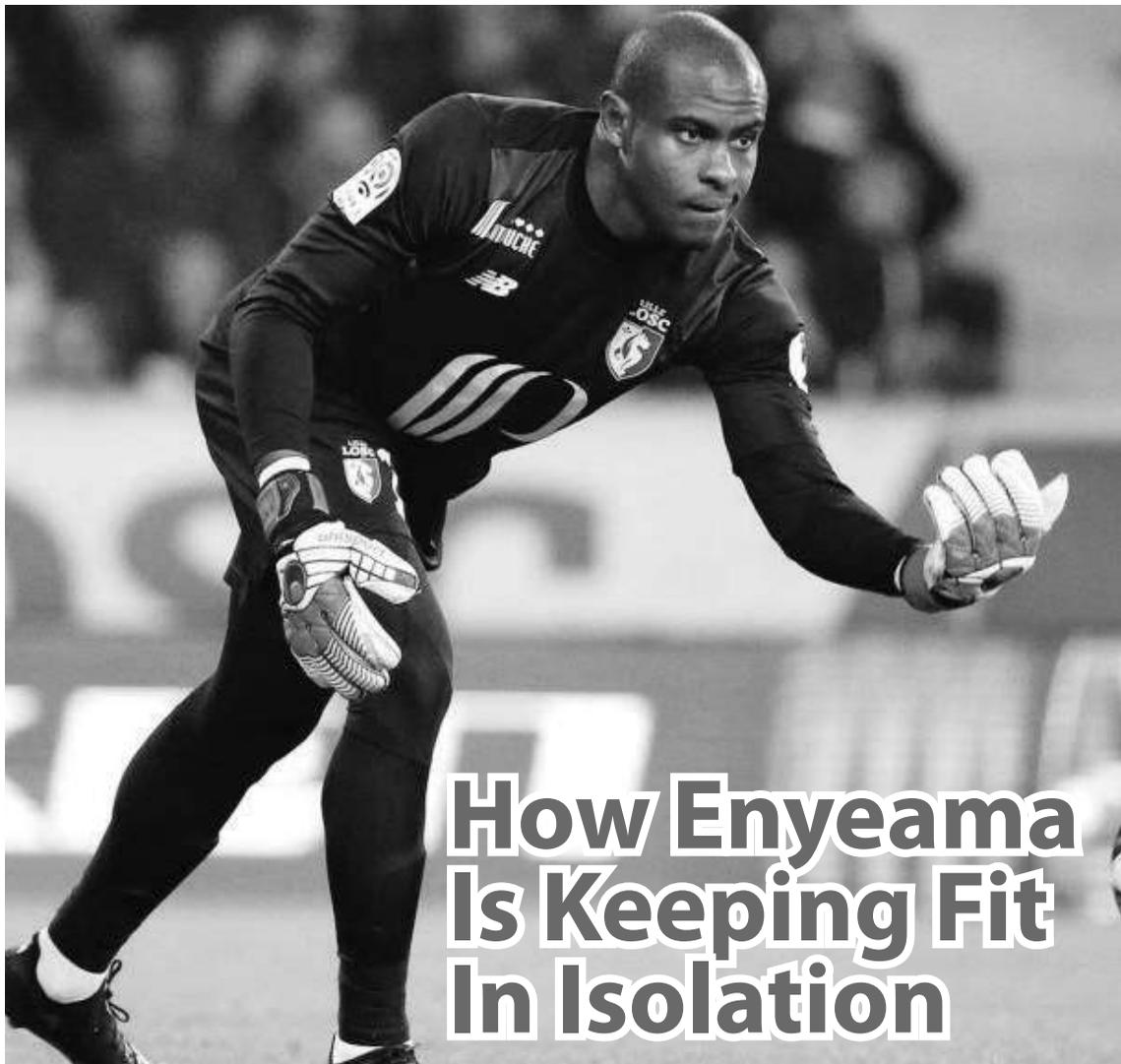
Chelsea, Manchester United and Arsenal are all believed to be in the hunt for Coutinho as he eyes his next

step, with a return to the Premier League potentially the best option for him to rebuild his career.

Sport claim that Coutinho would prefer to join London rivals, Chelsea or Arsenal, rather than United – while Manchester City are not interested.

Tottenham were interested last summer and Daniel Levy was keen on making the transfer happen, but the deal fell through and Coutinho was said to be angry with Levy and the collapsed deal and would not entertain a move there this time around.

However, Coutinho’s agent Kia Joorabchian told the Mirror: “Philippe Coutinho has no personal issue with Daniel Levy and claims otherwise are totally false. The deal did not collapse due to financial reasons.”



## How Enyeama Is Keeping Fit In Isolation

Former Super Eagles goalkeeper, Vincent Enyeama, seems not to be troubled despite being in isolation.

The goalkeeper has been without a club since he left Lille at the end of his contract in 2018, while his three-day trial at Dijon hit the rocks.

Nevertheless, he is not discouraged from staying fit despite not knowing when next he will take to the field.

In his latest Instagram post, the 37-year-old shared a video of him trying to gain his balance on a

Swiss Ball while his son watched.

Accompanying it are words of hope to his followers on Covid-19 that has crippled all activities around the world.

“Happy new week friends, let’s keep holding on to the hope of a better day; the day that we will be back on the streets like before,” he wrote.

“The day that will be back in a crowded place, the day that we can hug and shake hands again; the day that the world will find a way out of the fear that we are all

living in,” he wrote.

Enyeama was a member of the Super Eagles’ squad that won the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations in South Africa before calling time on his international career in October 2015.

The 2014 Goal Nigeria Player of the Year still holds the most appearances [101] alongside Joseph Yobo in Super Eagles history.

His last competitive match dates back to March 2018, when he played for Lille’s reserve team in the Championnat National 2.

## COVID-19: Jamie Murray Wants Wimbledon Cancelled

Two-time Wimbledon mixed doubles champion, Jamie Murray expects this year’s tournament to be cancelled for the first time since 1945.

The All England Club is holding an emergency board meeting on Wednesday to discuss the fate of the 2020 Championships, with a cancellation widely expected to be agreed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The French Open has already been postponed, shoehorned into the schedule in late September, and it will be difficult for Wimbledon to rearrange.

The grass-court season is only six weeks long and is played at the height

of the British summer when daylight hours are at their longest.

For those reasons Murray, who won the 2007 and 2017 mixed doubles titles at the All England Club, thinks that this year’s tournament will be wiped off the calendar, making it the first year since 1945 that Wimbledon will not be played.

Asked whether he thinks a cancellation is more likely than a postponement, he told Today on BBC Radio 4: “I think so, I think for them it is difficult to move the tournament back for many reasons, because you are running into other tournaments.

“I guess for the moment it is still on the schedule. Even things like daylight, to host the event, each week that passes you get less light to play the tournament. They play until 9 or 10pm each night at Wimbledon.

“I guess everyone has been waiting on it, it is obviously the next big event in the calendar that is on for the moment.

“I think there are meetings today and tomorrow about what their plans are. That will give us insight into what that means for our grasscourt season but also the rest of the season going forward after that.”

## Messi Never Rejected Wage Cuts, Says Barca President

Barcelona president, Josep Maria Bartomeu has said Lionel Messi agreed with pay cuts at the Liga champions, after the captain criticised senior club figures behind the scenes.

Barca confirmed a massive wage cut to help the club during the coronavirus pandemic, with players agreeing to reduce their salaries by up to 70 per cent and making further financial contributions to ensure all employees are able to take home the full value of their wages.

The news came following reports of a disagreement between senior Barca players and club directors over the degree of wage reduction, with Messi denying the squad turned down the proposal to reduce salaries.

Bartomeu said Messi never opposed Barca’s decision to carry out salary cuts. “Messi told me from day one that this reduction had to be made.

“This proposal came from the captains. It is a gesture that demonstrates their commitment to the club,” Bartomeu said.

Messi issued a statement on behalf of the players on Monday, saying the players had always been happy to reduce their pay in order to help the club and their staff during the nationwide lockdown, with La Liga under indefinite suspension while Spain attempts to arrest the spread of Covid-19.

The message accused those in charge of Barca of placing the players under unfair levels of scrutiny while negotiations over wage cuts continued.

Bartomeu added: “Perhaps [the players] have been frustrated by things said by people inside and outside the club, who do not have all the information.

“But the negotiations were carried out only by Oscar Grau and me and we have not said anything.”

La Liga is currently suspended indefinitely as the coronavirus pandemic sweeps through Spain, with the country suffering 7,716 deaths and 87,596 people still suffering from the illness.

With Spain still in a state of emergency as the government attempts to curtail the spread of Covid-19, La Liga and the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) have agreed professional football will only return when the authorities believe it poses no risk to public health.

“The RFEF and La Liga agree the suspension of professional soccer competitions until the competent authorities of the government of Spain and the general state administration consider that they can be resumed and this does not pose any risk to health,” an RFEF statement read.

the tournament, even then your mind is ready to go to the next event because that is what you’re programmed to do.”



# Mickelson Eyes Tiger Woods Rematch

Phil Mickelson has hinted that a sequel to “The Match” against Tiger Woods is in the pipeline, and could even take place during the current suspension of professional golf.

Mickelson was asked on social media about the possibility of a rematch with Woods being live streamed in the near future, and the left-hander surprised many when he replied: “Working on it.”

And when another fan tweeted Mickelson asking him not to “tease”, the veteran responded: “I don’t tease. I’m kinda a sure thing.”

The original instalment of “The

Match” took place in November 2018 at Shadow Creek Golf Club on the outskirts of Las Vegas, with Mickelson winning the \$9m showdown on the fourth play-off hole.

Mickelson finally landed the lucrative prize with a birdie under floodlights on a specially-constructed 93-yard par-three, although the encounter was notable for its general lack of quality and interaction between the two star draws.

Woods and Mickelson also contrived a number of side bets during the encounter, wagers which totalled \$800,000 that were dispersed around various charities

afterwards.

The showdown did not sit well with Sky Sports Golf commentator Ewen Murray, who said: “I thought “The Match” between Tiger and Phil was grotesque.

“I hope that is not an indication of the future for golf. I don’t want to dwell on it too much, but I just think the sport can do without that kind of format.

“To have two players with a combined age of 90 playing for \$9m was completely unnecessary. It’s just wrong to play for that amount of money in a one-off, made-for-television exhibition. And I sincerely hope this was

a one-off event.

“Woods and Mickelson are in the autumn of their careers and I felt they should have had no part in this. It represented everything that I do not want to see in our great sport.”

Mickelson has often said he would be keen on a rematch, with the introduction of celebrity partners suggested, but such a match going ahead in the current climate would appear to be doubtful.

The PGA Tour season current-

## NBA Players To Compete In 2K TV Tournament

The NBA has plans for players-only NBA 2K video game tournament to be shown American television, according to reports.

The league hopes to launch the event on Friday and involve some big-name players including Utah Jazz All-Star Donovan Mitchell and four-time All-Star DeMarcus Cousins, among other big-name players. According to reports, each team is expected to have a representative.

The NBA regular season was suspended on March 11 after Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert tested positive for coronavirus. Almost every other sport in the United States have been shut down and are expected

to remain shut down for some time.

Various e-sports have continued across the United States, with many moving planned live events into a virtual format. The NBA 2K League - which features 23 teams, including 22 who are affiliated with NBA franchises - has postponed its own season, which was scheduled to start March 24.

The Lakers’ Anthony Davis was chosen for the cover of the latest edition of the game, NBA 2K20, after Milwaukee’s Giannis Antetokounmpo was on the cover for 2K19.

Other recent cover athletes include Kyrie Irving, Paul George, Stephen Curry, James Harden, Kevin Durant and LeBron James.

## Eze Makes Championship Team Of The Season

Queens Park Rangers midfielder Eberechi Eze has been included in the



Championship Team of the Season for U-23.

The list which was published on Infogol’s Twitter is for players under the age of 23 years.

Also on the list is Manchester City’s Tosin Adarabioyo who is currently on loan at Blackburn Rovers.

Eze, 21, has been one of the outstanding players in the Skybet

Championship this season.

He has notched up 12 goals provided eight assists in 39 games in all competitions this campaign.

His impressive performance has seen him being linked with Premier League clubs among which include Tottenham Hotspur.

Former England international Les Ferdinand hinted Eze could be in line for Three Lions call-up.

**KhromeADS**  
 Advertise in LEADERSHIP Newspapers on www.khromeads.com and get 20% discount now...  
 For more enquiries call 08118854052 or 08135989979  
 It's that simple and just notified when published

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF  
**LEADERSHIP**  
 SPECIALISED CLASSIFIEDS PAGES



**GRACE TABERNACLE OF ZION BIBLE MINISTRY**

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE ABOVE NAMED HAS APPLIED TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION (CAC), ABUJA FOR REGISTRATION UNDER PART C OF COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT 1990 (CAP C20, LFN 2004).

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Pastor Edwin Akembaikomen
2. Mrs. Nkechi Akembaikomen
3. Emmanuel Akembaikomen

**THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:**

1. To preach the everlasting gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ as well as to educate and to reform people through the Holy Spirit as presented in the Holy Bible in all parts of Nigeria and the whole world at large.
2. To promote service to God (guided by the direction of the Holy Spirit and the doctrine of the Holy Bible).
3. To promote Christianity, encourage the study of the Holy Bible and promote the knowledge and acceptance of the Holy Spirit.
4. To seek to help members find and fulfil their God-given purpose and to teach members principles essential for a successful life to enable them be the best God has called them to be in every sphere of life.
5. To reach out to members and to empower them to have the necessary resources to make informed decisions about real life issues.

ANY OBJECTION TO THIS REGISTRATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION, PLOT 420 TIGRIS CRESCENT, OFF AGUIYI BOASA STREET, MAITAMA, ABUJA WITHIN 28 DAYS OF THIS PUBLICATION.

Signed: SECRETARY.

**AJOSE FOUNDATION**

THIS IS TO INFORM THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE ABOVE NAMED HAS APPLIED TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION (CAC), ABUJA FOR REGISTRATION UNDER PART C OF COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS ACT 1990, CAP C20, LFN 2004.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Oluwalake Josephine Fatagbe
2. Adedayo Benjamin-Lasidi
3. Babalola Oluwalake

**THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:**

1. To undertake economic empowerment and social reform programs for the development of underprivileged individuals, groups and communities in Ogun State and Nigeria as a whole.
2. To ensure that all children are given the opportunity to receive quality education and attain excellence.
3. To improve the conditions of life of underprivileged Nigerians through the provision of financial goods, goods or services.
4. To assist underprivileged Nigerians to identify, harness, work and obtain optimum advantage by utilizing their innate resources for creative and innovative thinking.
5. To promote financial independence and business entrepreneurial skills among underprivileged and marginalised Nigerians, by improving their skills through the provision of training, seminars and workshops.
6. To advocate for healthy lifestyles and provide access to quality health services by providing and equipping health centres within communities in Ogun State and Nigeria as a whole.

ANY OBJECTION TO THIS REGISTRATION SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO THE REGISTRAR GENERAL, CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION, PLOT 420, TIGRIS CRESCENT, OFF AGUIYI BOASA STREET, MAITAMA, ABUJA WITHIN 28 DAYS OF THIS PUBLICATION.

Signed: SECRETARY.

**LOSS OF DOCUMENT**

This is to inform the general public of the loss of Offer Letter in respect of **Plot No. 541 of about 1,620sqm, bearing Patrick U. Nkeonye, located at Gwagwalada Expansion Layout, Gwagwalada, FCT - Abuja.** It was reported that the said document got missing sometime in **18/2/2019** and all effort made to trace the loss documents proved abortive. Please if found, contact the AGIS or the nearest police station.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**NDI OGANIGWE UGA FRIENDS CLUB**

The general public is hereby notified that the above named organization has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission, Abuja for registration under Part C of the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Ezenwaigbo Nnamdi Innocent - Chairman
2. Nwaka Obasi Ongebuchi - Secretary
3. Akabogu Chikwena - member
4. Indigwe Chikwena - member
5. Omonwika Chikwena - Chikwena - Member
6. Oke Nwani David - Member
7. Ezebebe Chikwena Nwani - member

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:**

1. To develop our community
2. To assist the poor and less privileged

Any Objection to the said registration should be forwarded to the Registrar - General Corporate Affairs Commission, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

O & B Management Services  
 23, Macchase Road, Apapa Lagos

Signed: Secretary

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**GRACE OF GIVEN FOUNDATION.**

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the corporate affairs commission (CAC).

**TRUSTEES ARE:**

1. Gordon Yvonne R.
2. Agborsalo U. Isaac
3. Osaro E. Francis.

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE:**

1. To enhance the quality of life by giving.
2. To inspire hope.
3. Helping individuals to acquire basic needs for daily living.
4. To inspire love for each other.

Any objection to this notice must reach the Registrar-General of corporate affairs commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed: SECRETARY

SPACE FOR SALE

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF  
**LEADERSHIP**  
SPECIALISED CLASSIFIED PAGES

**CHANGE OF NAME**

**VISIT:**  
**ABUJA OFFICE:** LEADERSHIP GROUP LIMITED 27 IBRAHIM TAHIR LANE, OFF SHEHU MUSA YAR'ADUA WAY, UTAKO DISTRICT, ABUJA

**FOR ENQUIRIES, CALL:**  
**KATO:** 08038375940  
**HAPPINESS:** 08062267745

**KEMI:** 08158820866  
**CHIKA:** 08032976516  
**MARY:** 08054370466

**ABDULLAHI:** 08034539895  
**ISAAC:** 08063485946

**IBRAHIM**  
I formerly known as **STEPHEN TIYA SAPIYA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **IBRAHIM SAPIYA UMAR KASSIM**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**YAHYA**  
I formerly known as **ABUBAKAR HALIMAH**, now wish to be known and addressed as **YAHYA HALIMAH**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**AMINU**  
I formerly known as **AMINU MOHAMMED**, now wish to be known and addressed as **AMINU MAMMAN**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MUSA**  
I formerly known as **ILYASU AMADU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MUSA AMADU**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MRS VICTORIA**  
I formerly known and addressed as **MISS WOODUPE FOLASADE AGRANA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS VICTORIA WOODUPE FOLASADE OSARINYE**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note. University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPH) and general public take note.

**MRS. BASIL-AFUAH**  
I formerly known as **MISS ASHWEDUA, ESTHER CHIBUZOR**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS. BASIL-AFUAH, ESTHER CHIBUZOR**. All former documents remain valid. The general public please take note.

**AGADA**  
I formerly known as **AGADA ANDREW OLUWA**, now wish to be known and addressed as **AGADA ANDREW OWOICHO**. All former documents remain valid. First Bank PLC and General public take note.

**DAVID**  
I formerly known as **DAVID UNOKWU OJO JOY**, now wish to be known and addressed as **DAVID UNEKWU OJO JOY**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**SARAH**  
I formerly known as **KABADON SOLOMON**, now wish to be known and addressed as **SARAH EMMANUEL**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**WILSON**  
I formerly known and addressed as **WILSON ODORO JOSEPH**, OLD DOB: 10/06/1979 now wish to be known and addressed as **WILSON JOSEPH**, CURRENT DOB: 01/12/1979. All former documents remain valid. The general public take note.

**ALANG**  
I formerly known and address as **ALAN EDWARD MODESTY**. Now wish to be known and address as **ALANG EDWARD MODESTY**. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public take note.

**MOSES**  
I formerly known as **MOSES OKON INI-OBONG**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MOSES OKON AKPAN**. All former documents remain valid. The general public please take note.

**ABDULHAMEED**  
I formerly known as **ISAH JIMOH AMOTO** now wish to be known and addressed as **ABDULHAMEED JAMIU AMOTO**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

**BUKAR**  
I formerly known as **WAZAMDA TUJA BUKAR** now wish to be known and addressed as **BUKAR TUJA**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

**TAJUDDINI**  
I formerly known as **TAJUDDINI AHMED** now wish to be known and addressed as **TAJUDDINI AHMED ALIYU**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

**ODIBA**  
I formerly known and addressed as **ODI-BA-KNIGHT** now wish to be known and addressed as **ODIBA ALADI ACHENEJE**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME**  
Name as either **OKAFOR COLLINS ADIMABUA** and/or **OKAFOR COLLINS .A** I am the one and only person refers to either as **OKAFOR COLLINS .A** Or **OKAFOR COLLINS ADIMABUA**.

**ISMAIL**  
I formerly known as **LUKE CHIBUZOR**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ISMAIL AHMED**. All former documents remain valid. The general public please take note.

**ABDULLAHI**  
I Formerly known as **ABDULLAHI ABUBAKAR** and **ABUBAKAR UMAR** but now wish to be known and addressed as **ABDULLAHI ABUBAKAR UMAR**. NECC, Unity Bank First Bank and the General public should take note please.

**GBADU**  
I formerly known as **MONDAY ADAMU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **GBADU MONDAY ADAMU**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MUHAMMAD**  
I formerly known as **MUHAMMAD JOKE HASANAT**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MUHAMMAD JAGUN HASSANAT**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ABDULRAHAMAN**  
I, formerly known as **SALAMAT OYIZA O**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ABDULRAHAMAN SALAMAT**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**MRS JOSEPH**  
I formerly known and addressed as **MISS AKINSIPE CHRISTIANAH IDOWU**, now wish to be known and addressed as **MRS JOSEPH CHRISTIANAH IDOWU**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**YAKUBU**  
I formerly known as **YUSUF O NANA** now wish to be known and addressed as **YAKUBU BERIKISU OJENBO**. All former documents remain valid. The general public please take note.

**ALIYU**  
I, formerly known as **ARIGI KHADUAT**, now wish to be known and addressed as **ALIYU MUNIRATU OZOHU**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**AISHA**  
I, formerly known as **HAUWA YA'U**, now wish to be known and addressed as **AISHA BASHIR**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**SAMAILA**  
I, formerly known as **SAMAILA ALHAI USMAN**, now wish to be known and addressed as **A. USMAN SAMAILA**. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

**ADEWUMI**  
I formerly known and addressed as **JEGEDE OLUBUNMI GLORIA** now wish to be known and addressed as **ADEWUMI OLUBUNMI GLORIA**. All former documents remain valid. The general public take note.

**MRS. OKAFOR**  
I formerly know and address as **SUNDAY JOSEPH CHINEDU** Now wish to be know and address as **MRS. OKAFOR JOSEPH CHINEDU**. All former documents remain valid. Banks and general public take note.

**YAKUBU**  
I formerly known as **YAKUBU EMMANUEL**, now wish to be known and addressed as **YAKUBU DAUDA EMMANUEL**. All former documents remain valid. The general public please take note.

**EMMANUEL**  
I formerly known as **IDRIS GLADYS OJONUGWA** now wish to be known and addressed as **EMMANUEL GLADYS OJONUGWA**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

**IORKUMBA**  
I formerly known as **ATSUA MERCY MSURSHIMA** now wish to be known and addressed as **IORKUMBA MERCY MSURSHIMA**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

**KABIRU**  
I formerly known as **KABIRU SAMAILA FALGORE** now wish to be known and addressed as **KABIRU ISMAIL**. All former documents remain valid general public should please take note.

**CONFIRMATION OF NAME**  
This is to inform the general public that the names: **GOODLUCK UDOKA NWEKE** and **LUCKY UDOKA NWEKE JOHNSON** refer to the same and one person. I wish to be known as **LUCKY UDOKA NWEKE JOHNSON**. All documents bearing both names remain valid. General public, take note.

SPACE FOR SALE

SPACE FOR SALE

**SAPIENTIA UNITATIS FOUNDATION**

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), Abuja for Registration under part 'C' of Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990.

**TRUSTEES ARE:**  
1. PATRICK IRABOR  
2. OSAS EDEBIRI-AKONGIE  
3. ASHLEY AIZE MOMOH  
4. ABRAHAM OYIAYE ESQ.

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE:**  
1. IMPACTING TECHNICAL SKILLS AND TRAINING, HUMANITARIAN SERVICES AND ORGANIZING SEMINARS AND SYMPOSIUM TO EDUCATE THE MINDS OF OUR YOUTHS.

Any objection to this Registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

SIGNED: **GRACE OKWOLI**

**UNIVERSAL REFUGE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 1990.

**NAME OF THE TRUSTEES ARE:**  
1. OLUNJO OLUKUNLE OLADIMEJI  
2. ZUBIRU HAZIQ DAN MUSA  
3. MOSES JOHN  
4. OLUKUNLE TAYO A DESOLA  
5. BANIBERO TAMO JACOB  
6. USE ANTHONY JUNIOR  
7. DUKAR SHITTINA  
8. CHAN JULIE SHERRA

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:**  
1. To help care for the less privileged in the society  
2. To provide community services and charitable deeds  
3. To create awareness about drug abuse among youth and adolescents  
4. To cater for the well being of members  
5. To propagate love and unity among members  
6. To solicit for grant from local and international bodies/NGO to give support to less privileged to actualize their dreams and potential

Any objection to this registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420, Tigris Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed: **SECRETARY**

**TIV YOUTH INITIATIVE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP & AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for Registration under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

**TRUSTEES ARE:**  
1. Aberagi Piusu Godwin ... Chairman  
2. Ahye Samuel ... Secretary  
3. Takeru Japheth Teryange  
4. Makpurn Amondona Francis  
5. Dagi Terver Francis

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE:**  
1. Youth Development in Entrepreneurship and Agriculture.  
2. Real estate acquisition and development

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

Signed: **SECRETARY**

**BENUE STATE UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

This is to inform the general public that the above named has applied to the Corporate Affairs Commission for Registration under Part 'C' of the Companies and Allied Matters Act of 1990.

**TRUSTEES ARE:**  
1. PROF. CHARITY ASHMEM ANGYA  
2. DR. BEN DUE YAW  
3. MRS. JANE IHAI  
4. COMR. AYDOSU JAMES  
5. Dr. Ben Ugoth

**AIM AND OBJECTIVE:**  
1. To foster unity among members.

Any objection to the registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, Plot 420 Tigris Crescent off Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama Abuja within 28 days of this publication.

SIGNED: **ADEJIR KASEMAOR ESQ**

**COVENANT OF PEACE TABERNACLE ABAKALIKI**

The general public is hereby informed that the above named has applied to Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied matters Act 1990.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**  
1) OGBORNA BARTH USE  
2) TOCHURUWA DANIEL KELVIN  
3) NNAKGO CHURUMUNOYEREM GLORIA  
4) ODEKE LINDA PAUL

**MEMBERS THAT ELECTED THE TRUSTEES:**  
1) MRS NDOO E. OGBORNA  
2) OS DERORAH JI. ASABA  
3) SS EBERE JI. DEMEAL  
4) BRO DANIEL KELVIN TOCHURUWA  
5) BRO BENJAMINE OYEDERA UMEKOWE

**THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ARE:**  
**VISION STATEMENT**  
1) To raise and train soldiers for the Lord Almighty (Judges 7:1-7)  
2) To build Gods' empire through discipleship (Luke 14:27)

**MISSION STATEMENT**  
1) To teach the untaught through evangelism.  
2) To prepare the lost souls for the second coming of Christ.

Any objection to the said registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, within 28 days of this publication.

Signed: **NNAKGO CHURUMUNOYEREM GLORIA**

**HELPPASSION YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION**

The general public is hereby informed that the above named has applied to Corporate Affairs Commission for registration under part 'C' of the Companies and Allied matters Act 1990.

**THE TRUSTEES ARE:**  
1. ONYEBUCHI IFEOOMA CHRISTIANA  
2. ONYEBUCHI JOHN OKWUCHIKAWU  
3. ONYEBUCHI OZIKOMA JOY  
4. ONYEBUCHI MERCY EBERE  
5. ONYEBUCHI BLESSING PRINCESS  
6. DANIEL PATRICK  
7. ONYEBUCHI CHRISTIAN ERENE  
8. ONYEBUCHI CHUKWUDUM SARWEL  
9. SYLVESTER ONYEBUCHI

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**  
1. To help the youths and less privileged.

Any objection to the said registration should be forwarded to the Registrar General, Corporate Affairs Commission, within 28 days of this publication.

Signed: **Secretary**

**NIGERIA'S  
MOST  
INFLUENTIAL  
NEWSPAPER**

SPACE FOR SALE

**AMUSEMENT PARK**

EVERYONE SHOULD PAY THEIR INCOME TAX WITH A SMILE. I TRIED IT BUT THEY DEMANDED CASH — JACKIE MASON

**01.04.20**

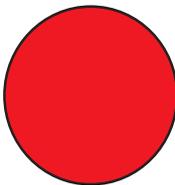
FOR GOD AND COUNTRY **WEDNESDAY**

**LEADERSHIP**

www.leadership.ng

No. 3, 460

N200



SPACE FOR SALE



**Wednesday  
Column**

# Humanity Convene Against Covid-19

Hannatu **MUSAWA**

E-mail: [hannatumusawaspokenword@gmail.com](mailto:hannatumusawaspokenword@gmail.com)

Popular martial artist, actor and film director Jackie Chan once said that “we live in a global village and we are in one single family.” With the current coronavirus pandemic facing the world, it isn’t far from the truth. No continent or clime has so far been exempted from the virus and with the numbers of cases that have tested positive to the virus thus far, shows that the virus is no respected of person, regardless of age, status, gender, creed, political affiliation or race.

We’ve seen the likes of Idris Elba, Boris Johnson, Prince Charles, Tom Hanks just to mention but a few, testing positive to the virus. Coming home, the likes of Abba Kyari, Bala Mohammed, Seyi Makinde and Nasir El-Rufai have also tested positive to the virus. My prayer goes to every one of them and I wish them a speedy recovery. The reason I highlighted these prominent individuals is to buttress the fact that the coronavirus is real. Across social media, there are still naysayers and conspiracy theorists spreading fake and unverified news, deluding a considerable number of the global populace.

The year 2020 will definitely go down in the annals of history as the year the world faced a single threat to human existence – the coronavirus threat. Already, the pandemic is causing a global recession and back home; we have had to review the 2020 budget in light of current realities. Already, far-reaching consequences beyond the spread of the disease and efforts to quarantine it are being felt. As the pandemic has spread around the globe, concerns have shifted from supply-side manufacturing issues to decreased business in the services sector.

Reports have shown that countries that took measures for the coronavirus quick-

ly, such as allocating medical resources and issued social distancing measures, have recorded better success rate than countries that didn’t. South Korea, for example, has one of the worst outbreaks outside of China but it moved fast, and in recent weeks its caseloads have stabilized. There are concerns that countries like the United States, Italy, Iran and the United Kingdom, were slow to act, hence, the huge number of cases.

We are living in unprecedented times no doubt, and as the coronavirus pandemic deepens and more restrictions are put in place around the world, the impact on our lives can be troubling and confusing. So many countries around the world are in total lockdowns and restrictions are being enforced.

In Nigeria, lockdowns in many states are also in effect and our international borders have long been shut. As such, there is justified fear of what may be coming. The anxiety is palpable and as we remain indoors, parents have taken up the challenge of home-schooling, teenagers have forgone social lives, and weddings as well as religious services have been shelved.

However, it is in times of crisis such as the current pandemic, where communities come together even more. As the pandemic continues to unfold, it is crucial to remember that we are stronger together. United we stand, divided we will surely fall. So far, the pandemic has inspired an unprecedented widespread, drastic action from countries across the globe.

As the disease spreads, governments and individuals have undertaken unprecedented measures akin to wartime efforts. Thus, the coronavirus pandemic is proving that when we come together, it is possible to make dramatic changes and economic sacrifices to



Ehanire

save lives. In Nigeria, so many organizations and individuals have pitched in, donating huge sums of money to the coronavirus pandemic challenge.

It is in times like this that the gospel and protest song during the civil rights movement in America “we shall overcome” comes to mind. Indeed we shall overcome this pandemic particularly when we act as a people. This is not the first time the world is facing such a pandemic. The 1918 influenza pandemic also known as the Spanish flu was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world’s population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States. However, in time, we overcame the pandemic.

As a student of history, we were taught that the “black death” hit Europe in 1347, claiming over 200 million

lives in four years. For centuries, Smallpox was endemic to Europe, Asia and Arabia and when it arrived in the 15th century with the first European explorers to the indigenous peoples of modern-day Mexico and the United States, the virus cut them down by the tens of millions. Centuries later, smallpox became the first virus epidemic to be ended by a vaccine.

In the early to mid-19th century, cholera tore through England, killing tens of thousands. While cholera has largely been eradicated in developed countries, it’s still a persistent killer in third-world countries lacking adequate sewage treatment and access to clean drinking water. While these epidemics of old were once defeated, I strongly believe that the current coronavirus pandemic will be eradicated.

As we face this pandemic as a people, I know the future is looking bleak especially with the stay at home measure around the world. However,

there is light at the end of the tunnel and like Madiba once said, “It always seems impossible until it is done.” We shall overcome and this pandemic shall come to pass. Leo Tolstoy, author of war and peace once said, “The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.” This is also applicable with the coronavirus pandemic currently facing the globe. We need to be patient during this time and adhere to all the necessary precautionary steps in curbing the pandemic. And in time, the pandemic will surely be brought under control and our daily lives and routine will return to status-quo.

Lessons from other countries have shown that self-isolation and prompt diagnostics is vital towards curbing the spread of the virus. As such, as members of the global community, we all have a responsibility of self-isolate and notify the appropriate authorities if one suspects he or she has contracted the virus. Taking precautionary measures is also critical towards the fight against the disease. Also, personal hygiene is key and washing of hands cannot be over-emphasized.

Social distancing has also been identified as a major way of preventing the escalation of the novel virus. Social distancing or physical distancing is a set of non-pharmaceutical interventions or measures taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus or any other contagious disease by maintaining a physical distance between people and reducing the number of times people come into close contact with each other.

As we live this nightmare together, one would like to beam the spot light of the following uncelebrated individuals in times like this. One must use this opportunity to really appreciate doctors, nurses, emergency medical practitioners, scientists, pharmacists, law enforcement officers, journal-

ists, amongst others. They are doing a stellar job, risking their lives in these times and must be highly commended.

I have full confidence that if all Nigerians play their part... if nothing is neglected and all adhere to the advice of constantly practicing personal hygiene and maintaining social distancing, we shall prevail over this threat to humanity.

Honestly, we must all stand as one against a common enemy. While we each stay at home, remain hygienic and adhere to distance socialization, we shall defend our homeland Nigeria, whatever the cost may be. From North, West, East, South-South and the Middle Belt, Nigeria shall never surrender to COVID-19.

We will hold on to our humanity, stop the spread, remain alive and carry on the struggle, until, in The Almighty’s good time, our nation Nigeria, with all its commitment, unity and might has arrested and beaten this Coronavirus.

With The Almighty’s Grace, Nigeria will beat it, persevere and step up to be an example for the World in this fight. May The Almighty help us in fighting this war? May Humanity Convene against Covid-19?

**GHANA MUST GO**

**Nasarawa  
councillor marries  
2 brides same day**

— News



**His local government  
just received FAAC?**