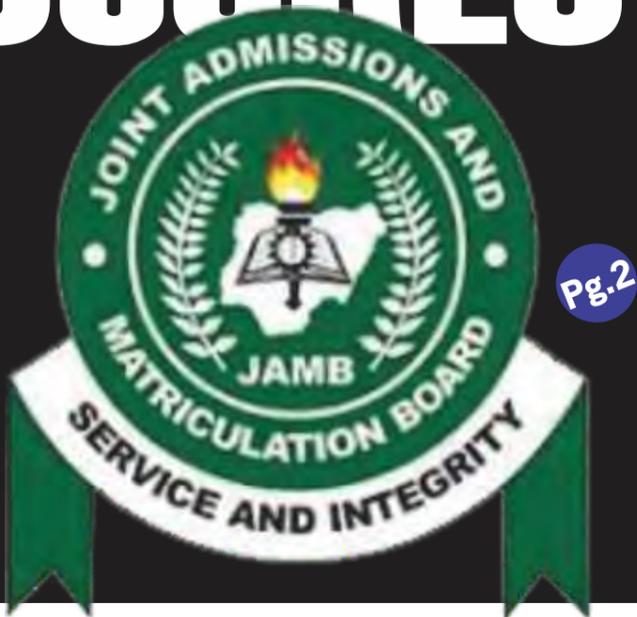


FREE UTME FORMS RAISE CANDIDATES' SCORES



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At least one Lagos candidate in the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination, UTME, has always emerged among the 10 highest scores in the last three years.

A report by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board shows that in 2023, a candidate, Gbolahan Ayinde from Lagos state scored 357 and he is among the 10 highest scores across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.

Ayinde was three marks lower than the highest score by Nkechinyere Umeh from Anambra who scored 360.

In 2022, a Lagos candidate, Ajayi Eberechukwu Isaiah, was the fourth best candidate, a male, with registration number 10067858JC. He scored 349. He hails from Lagos and sat for the examination in Lagos.

In 2021, a candidate from Lagos, Monwuba Chibuikem scored 358, according to the examination board in a statement issued at its policy meeting and that the score was the highest.

According to the document, Qomarudeen Alabi from Osun and Adeogun Oreoluwa from Ogun jointly came second as they both scored 350.

This Lagos position has been attributed to stiff competition due to the high number of registered candidates from the state. This high volume, investigation shows is due to the efforts of some Local Government and Local Council Development Areas in providing free UTME forms to brilliant indigent candidates.

In 2023, according to JAMB, Lagos registered a total of 270,573 followed by Oyo 94, 911 and Ogun with 91,970 candidates at the close of the extended period of registration.

Echonews collated some of the free UTME forms given by local government and local council development areas, individuals, lawmakers and Non-Governmental Organisations as candidates prepare for 2024 UTME in a few weeks.

In 2023 UTME, Echonews gathered that about 6000 free UTME forms were given to indigent candidates by local government and local council development areas, which accounted for 18 per cent of the total number of registered candidates in the

Free UTME Forms Raise Candidates' Scores

By Kunle Awosiyun



year.

For the 2024 UTME, our correspondent observed that the number of free form may not be as high as in 2023, judging by a few number of the lawmakers, local government and local council development areas that have provided the opportunities.

At present the number of free UTME forms given to candidates is below over 7350 put together by the estimation of our correspondent, For instance, a federal lawmaker, representing Amuwo-Odofin Federal Constituency Olawande Adegeye, presented 1000 free UTME forms to indigent youths.

Beneficiaries cut across major groups like: Christian and Muslim Associations, Resident Associations, Professional Groups, Market Associations, Labour Party, Peoples Democratic Party, All Progressives Congress, and other political parties. Adegeye, popularly called

'Omogeye' by his followers and political admirers, while giving out the forms to beneficiaries, stressed that it was part of measures to uplift the educational standards among the demography of youth in the area.

He said it was purely an avenue to help as many youths as possible in the constituency with bright prospects to attain their set goals through education.

According to Adegeye tertiary education has the potential of building a virile and viable community but the major setback encountered by many families is financial constraints.

He said "It is targeted at ensuring that more deserving youths have equal opportunities to pursue higher education. That is the main reason behind this initiative to provide free JAMB forms to indigent youths.

"It is geared towards alleviating the financial

burden many families had to bear within the constituency and to ensure that a good number of youths are not denied the opportunity to further their education due to financial constraints."

At Mushin Local Government, the Chairman Emmanuel Bamigboye, gave free UTME forms to hundreds of indigents candidates.

Though he refused to mention the number, he said the gesture would assist those who may not have the means to pursue their dreams of higher education.

Bamigboye said, "I count it as a sense of pride and purpose to embark on a noble mission to empower the indigent students of the community with free JAMB Forms as educational palliative, in order to assist their parents.

He added that significant steps are taken towards ensuring that every deserving student has a fair chance to excel academically.

"The JAMB forms that we are distributing will serve as a passport to a world of knowledge, growth and endless possibilities, with the aim to enable our students in Mushin compete on an equal footing with their more privileged peers," he said.

He added that his administration will not relent in providing the best for youths and students in all ramifications.

About 200 indigent students were given the forms by the Chairman of Apapa-Iganmu Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Mrs. Funmilayo Muhammed, saying she has contributed to their academic pursuit.

The council boss stated that the forms would give beneficiaries the zeal to pursue their academic dreams for greater career in future.

She implored them to do away with the social media for now and focus on studies to achieve success that will make the LCDA and their parents proud.

Free UTME Forms Raise Candidates' Scores

To her the distribution of the free JAMB forms is part of the dividends democracy encapsulated in APC led administration.

A lawmaker representing Kosofe constituency 2 in the Lagos state House of Assembly, Hon. Femi Saheed also provided 400 free UTME forms to candidates in his constituency, saying that he had done so to pave way for more medical doctors, engineers, financial experts and other professionals in Nigeria have influenced his decision to distribute free 400 Jamb forms to indigent students in the constituency.

Tagged Femi Saheed Education Support Initiative (FSESI). the lawmaker said education is the best legacy a society could bequeath her youths for prosperity, saying that

the initiative was to grow more skilled and knowledgeable youths that would add value to societal development.

Saheed, who acknowledged the shortage of manpower in the health sector, said that he was certain that out of the beneficiaries there would be trained medical doctors, structural engineers and financial experts who would scale up the shortage currently suffered.

The chairman of Agboyi Ketu Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Hon. Dele Oshinowo, distributed free UTME forms to 500 indigent students in the council area.

To him, the distribution of the forms aligned with his administration's commitment to developing education in the council area.

"Today, we are distributing UTME forms to 500 indigent students in Agboyi Ketu. The forms are meant for those students who cannot afford them. They are the indigent ones, so we are doing this to uplift them. We are giving them this opportunity because if they do not sit for the UTME, there is no way they can go to the university. What we are doing today is to give equal opportunity to all the students in the council area. We are sure that so many students are financially challenged and so, we are doing this to support them," Oshinowo said.

In Oshodi/Isolo area of Lagos, a lawmaker representing Oshodi/Isolo constituency 2, Okey Joe Onuakalusi gave free UTME forms to 300 students.

He said that the

initiative marks not just a fulfillment of a campaign promise but a step towards reshaping the educational landscape of the constituency.

"The distribution of free JAMB forms in Oshodi/Isolo 2 is a testament to a deeper commitment towards educational development. The beneficiaries, a mix of hopeful youths, have been given more than just examination forms; they've been entrusted with a responsibility to excel and to justify the faith placed in them. This is not just about passing an exam; it's about proving that we can be the leaders this community needs," he said.

In Ikeja Local Government, a foundation, the LOK Foundation doled out free UTME forms to 500 youths, describing

the gesture as an effort to eradicate poverty at the grassroots.

The founder and CEO of LOK Foundation, Engr. Luqmaan Olabode Kehinde Akerele, alluded that the reason for forming the foundation in 2019 was to promote and improve the quality of life of the people at the grassroots level and education is an integral part of it.

He noted that the free UTME form is an annual event and it is the fifth since the formation of the foundation. However, the former Lagos State House of Assembly candidate further encouraged the beneficiaries not to let him down but make judicious use of the JAMB form by studying well so as to get high scores to gain admission and come out of their respective schools with flying colors.

In Ibeju-Lekki Local Government Area, the current supervisor for education Hon. Ogungbo Temitope Sofwan flagged off the free tutorial classes and distribution of UTME form to over 200 candidates.

He said the initiative was geared towards complimenting the efforts of the Council Chairman of Ibeju-Lekki Local Government, Hon. Abdullahi Sesan Olowa on education.

The Vice Chairman, Chief Hakeem Olalemi, Lagos Central Senatorial District of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), also distributed 70 free UTME forms to indigent students in Surulere.

To him education remains a powerful weapon to reset the society, hence the need to invest heavily in it. "Today, I have just distributed 70 UTME forms to indigent children in our communities in Surulere Constituency 1 of Lagos State to give

them opportunity to pursue their educational dreams.

Olalemi said that the free UTME forms were distributed to children of PDP members and other less privileged children drawn from the six electoral wards in the constituency.

In Ikorodu Local Government Area, a federal lawmaker Babajimi Benson who facilitated a free form scheme said that 120 indigent candidates had benefited from the free UTME forms.

Tagged, "Oba Ayangbure Free JAMB Form" a former Executive Assistant (EA) to the Governor of Lagos State who is also the donor Prince Yommy Olusegun Shopitan said that the gesture extended to the 120 students who are residents of Ikorodu Division, is part of efforts to give back to the community.

Speaking on his expectations from beneficiaries, Prince Shopitan charged the beneficiaries to make good use of the opportunity by passing their JAMB examinations and gain admissions into various institutions of higher learning, and also emerge as professionals in their field of studies.

The Executive Chairman of Itire-Ikate LCDA, Hon. Ahmed Olanrewaju Apatira, distributed free UTME forms to 250 beneficiaries within the district.

The beneficiaries were drawn from the market groups, religious bodies, political parties, artisans and the physically-challenged.

The Council chairman urged beneficiaries to invest quality time studying in order to record success in the examinations to be able to advance in their learning.

Table showing the positions and high scores UTME candidates in Lagos in four years

Name of Candidate	Year of UTME	State of Residence	UTME Score	Position Out of Best 10
<u>Maduafokwa Epaarwagwu Agnes</u>	2020	Lagos	365	1st
<u>Monwuba Chibuikem</u>	2021	Lagos	358	1st
<u>Ajayi Eberchukwu Isaiah</u>	2022	Lagos	349	4th
<u>Gbolahan Ayinde</u>	2023	Lagos	357	3rd

Free UTME Forms Raise Candidates' Scores

"Our administration recognises the importance of education hence our investment in the sector. This initiative is a testimony to our administration's commitment to ensuring that quality education is accessible to all."

Hon. Apatira urged the beneficiaries to concentrate on their studies and aspire for excellence in their educational pursuits while calling on parents and guardians to encourage their wards to focus on their studies.

Another federal lawmaker, representing Alimosho Federal Constituency, Hon. Ganiyu Adele Ayuba (Mayor K.K.), also joined the number of free UTME form donors, adding that he embarked on the programme because there are many students with outstanding potential from low-income households who may wish to continue their education beyond secondary school but whose parents cannot afford the fees.

The Federal lawmaker, who also serves as the Deputy Chairman of the House Committee on Interior, believes that education is the cornerstone of a sustainable society. He expressed this belief to the applicants during his speech at his Constituency office, telling them that he would reward the top three candidates among the beneficiaries in the UTME exam to further encourage them to do their best.

Orile Agege LCDA Chairman, Johnson Babatunde gave out 200 free forms to the UTME candidates while enjoined them to be dedicated to their studies, burn the midnight candles, go through several past questions and pray that at the end of it all, their efforts will be crowned with success.

LGA/LCDA/NGOs Free UTME Form Table

FREE UTME FORMS BY	LGA/LCDA/NGOs	LAWMAKERS
Lawmakers		2,500
Mushin	Number not mentioned	
Apapa-Iganmu	200	
Agboyi-Ketu	500	
Oshodi/Isolo	300	
Kosofe	400	
Ikeja	500	
Ibeju Lekki	200	
Surulere	70	
Ikorodu	120	
Itire Ikate	250	
Alimosho	Number not mentioned	
Oril Agege	200	
Eredo	100	
Ikosi Ejirin	500	
Epe	750	
Ejigbo	60	
Badagry	200	
Somolu	500	

The chairmen of Eredo LCDA, Monsuru Akinloye, Ikosi-Ejinrin LCDA, Wale Anomo and member representing

Epe constituency II, in the Lagos Assembly, Sylvester Ogunkelu also announced the offer of free UTME forms to

students in their councils area and constituency respectively.

This initiative is part of the effort by stakeholders in the Epe division to provide free access to educational opportunities for students in the division, giving them a level playground with their peers in other Local Governments and States in the Federation.

Akinloye announced the distribution of Free JAMB/UTME 2024 forms to 100 students in his LCDA, who cannot afford but are eligible while Anomo has directed that 500 free UTME forms be given to indigent residents and

indigenes of Ikosi-Ejinrin interested in sitting for the 2024 Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination.

Ogunkelu, on his part, announced to offer 750 free 2024 JAMB forms to qualified youth in the constituency which is an excellent opportunity for the youth of Epe Constituency II to further their education and build a brighter future for themselves and their community.

The All Progressives Congress chairmanship aspirant for Ejigbo LCDA, Prince Daniel Olusegun Oduse (DOO) also doled out forms to indigent students of the community.

Oduse gave out free 60 UTME forms, adding that the purpose of the free UTME forms is to provide a positive impact on students in the community he wish to serve.

The chairman of Lagos Island, hon. Prince Tijani Adetoyese Olusi said that his administration also gave out free UTME forms, however he did not mention how many. Olusi said the best legacy you can give a child is qualitative education urging the beneficiaries to study and come out victorious in the exam.

The Chairman, Badagry Local Government, Mr Olusegun Onilude, gave 200 free forms Onilude saying that his administration is committed to making education accessible to all.

A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Ejalonibu Foundation also gave 400 free UTME forms in Badagry. Mr Ismaila Wusu, the founder of the Foundation said the motive behind the gesture was to support candidates who could not afford it.

According to him, Badagry is an historical town where civilization started, but we are not where we should be in

Nigeria.

"So, we believe the only thing that we can use to gain access to where we belong is education.

In Somolu Local Government Area, a federal lawmaker, Ademorin Kuye offered 500 free UTME forms to residents. He said the Educational Support Initiative (ESI) which started in 2018 was aimed at giving the masses in his constituency equal opportunity for education.

One of the beneficiaries, Adelaja Oyinkansola, a graduate of Eva Adelaja Senior Secondary School, Bariga thanked the donor for the gesture.

For Osho Babatunde, another beneficiary, the initiative has restored hope to many who are financially challenged.

Mrs. Olanrewaju Bamidele, a widow who is the mother of one of the beneficiaries, described the gesture as "timely." "The gesture is a good one and I pray that God continues to give him the needed grace to sustain it, especially amongst many of us, who really do not have much in Amuwo Odofin who could not afford to ensure their children further their education.

"A parent that could barely boast of having N500 to feed daily now got a form for his or her ward which is worth close to N10,000 or more you can imagine how happy such a parent will be," Bamidele said.

Miss Promise Owoyemi, one of the beneficiaries, applauded the council boss for the forms, saying it would help actualise her dream of going to the university.

Also, Master Abdul-Gafar Adekoya, another beneficiary, thanked the chairman for the forms, saying the distribution meant the chairman cared about the future of young people in the council area.



Chairman of the Conference 57 Chairmen in Lagos State, Hon. Kolade Alabi David

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Lagos Govt To Prioritise Infrastructural Development of Lekki Free Zone

Lagos State Government is committed to giving priority to the development of infrastructure that will optimise the economic benefits of the Lekki and Lagos Free Zones for the State and the people.

Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade & Investment, Mrs. Folashade Ambrose-Medebem stated this during her working tour of the zone recently.

According to her, the Babajide Sanwo-Olu's administration is committing huge resources to develop and upgrade the Lekki-Epe Expressway while the construction, expansion and upgrading of the Ibeju Lekki road through Public Private Partnership (PPP) is being fast-tracked to complement the many developments ongoing in the axis in line with its T.H.E.M.E.S Plus Development Agenda.

Her words: "We understand that infrastructure is critical to the corridor and that is why the administration is showing strong commitments to providing the same to further drive the growth of the area. I feel excited about the various strides so far



made by stakeholders to attract businesses into the Zones. The various developments already embarked upon and the contributions being made in terms of job creation and economic empowerment are truly remarkable.

"I am also glad to know that some companies operating here are already feeding other markets in Africa, thus generating foreign exchange, which we need as a nation. I implore those who are still supplying local markets to focus more on export as that is one of the major purposes of setting up a Free Zone".

The Commissioner stressed the importance of prioritising local content in skill and raw

materials as there are rich manpower resources that businesses can pull for optimal operation at a cheap cost. She further charged them with Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainability practices to strengthen relationships with the host communities and mitigate operational impact on their environment.

"We cannot continue to export employment to other nations, we need to move up the economic statistics of Lagos State and Nigeria by leveraging your expertise to further train and build the capacity of our people, while I assure you that Governor Sanwo-Olu is committed to providing the support that would further drive the development of the zones.

She noted that the State

will work with stakeholders, through Lekki Worldwide Investments Limited, to address the challenges as concrete steps will follow the working tour beginning with more stakeholders' engagement.

Consul General, People's Republic of China Consulate General, Lagos, Yan Yuqing described the Lekki Free Zone as one of the landmarks of the relationship between Nigeria and Lagos with China and described it as very important. "I can see progress, I can see success and I can see a great future. On our part, we will give all necessary support including granting of a visa, to promote the bilateral relations while I invite everyone to attend the United China - Africa

Cooperation Summit scheduled for September 2024 in China.

Managing Director, Lekki Worldwide Investments Limited, Dr. Tunde Sodade described the development of Free Zones as a long-term project and expressed satisfaction with the progress being recorded while emphasising that infrastructure will continue to play a major role in facilitating further developments. He acknowledged the cooperation and partnership of stakeholders that helped in resolving some challenges while the State is doubling efforts to address outstanding issues about the growth of the zones.

Managing Director/CEO, Alaro City, Yomi Ademola, commended the consistent level of professionalism and commitment on the side of all the parties, which has led to the modest achievements recorded by the City being promoted by Rendevour, saying there is no Alaro City without Lagos State.

"Lekki Free Zone, which is about import substitution and

backward integration, with critical drivers such as Deep Sea Port, Airport, highway, etc is a catalyst for development. The opportunities are brighter with AfCFTA particularly for Lagos as most of the businesses will be in Lagos and the Free Zone. It is here the battle for the benefits of the continental agreement will be lost or won", he stated.

Managing Director, Lekki Free Zone Development Company, Zhang Bin described the zone as a strong platform for economic development while noting that it is working to attract investors from China, Britain and other countries with the hope that Nigeria will become a leading industrial nation in the world. He expressed great confidence and faith in Nigeria and Lagos and believes that the future is indeed very great.

Managing Director, Lekki Deep Sea Port, Du Ruogang acknowledged the support of the State since the port began operation about a year ago and called for the provision of more infrastructure like roads, warehouses, logistics, etc, to aid the operation of the facility.

Land Grabbing: Lagos Govt Prohibits Illegal Entry of Landed Properties

In a bid to curb and tackle the unscrupulous activities of land grabbers in the State, the Lagos State Government, through the Lagos State Special Taskforce on Land Grabbers under the State Ministry of Justice, on Tuesday organised stakeholders meeting with the theme: "Safeguarding Possessory Rights in Lands: The Role of Lagos State Special Taskforce on Land Grabbers", at Leawood Hotel, Sangotedo, Eti-Osa. The Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Lawal Pedro, SAN, in his address at the event, noted that the rise in cases of Land grabbing is an issue of great concern to the State Government.

According to the Attorney General, the purpose of organising the Stakeholders Meeting is to foster open dialogue, share information, experiences, and



collectively identify solutions to the problems inherent in the activities of land grabbers.

"As part of the effort to address the issue of land grabbing in the state, the Lagos State Government enacted a law to prohibit forceful entry and illegal occupation of landed properties, as well as violent and fraudulent conducts in relation to landed properties in the State", Pedro stated.

Pointing out that resolving land-grabbing issues is of great importance to the Sanwo-Olu Administration, Pedro stated that the menace of Land grabbers has led to conflicts on lands in the State which has resulted in the

destruction of properties and even loss of lives.

"It is a fact that property transactions in Lagos State have been greatly hindered by the activities of the Omo-Onile and Ajagunbales", he said.

Furthermore, the Attorney-General emphasised that the law on land grabbing that was enacted in 2016 still stands regardless of one's status in society.

He explained some of the provisions of the Lagos State Property Protection Law, 2016 and in particular, Section 2(1) of the Law, which prohibits the use of force or self-help by anyone to take over any landed property or engaging in any act inconsistent with the proprietary rights of the owner of any landed property in Lagos.

Speaking earlier, the Solicitor-General and

Permanent Secretary, Mrs. Titilayo Shitta-bey Jeje expressed delight towards participants and key stakeholders present for honouring the invitations provided for the event.

She noted that the gathering is of utmost importance which is to explore the role of the Taskforce in Safeguarding Possessory Rights in land within the State, saying "The issue of land grabbing has been a persistent challenge in various parts of our state, causing unrest, stifling commercial activities, and disrupting the lives of Lagos residents".

Shitta-bey-Jeje stated that all hands must be on deck in shaping the policies and strategies that will curb land-grabbing activities in the State.

While urging participants and key stakeholders to work together in ensuring the safety of landed

properties in the State, she wished everyone to present, a fruitful and engaging discussion towards eradicating illegal acts of land grabbing in the State.

Also speaking, Director of Public Prosecutions and Guest speaker of the occasion, Dr. Babajide Martins stated that since its inception, the Task Force has been actively engaged in addressing this menace, receiving and resolving numerous petitions.

"The Taskforce has received 7500 petitions out of which 1251 are frivolous, 4283 disputes have been resolved, 205 land grabbers have been arrested, 60 cases are being prosecuted in various courts while 1566 petitions are currently pending before the Task Force. However, our work is far from over. Challenges persist, and we must come together as a

community to find sustainable solutions", he said.

The Elejigbo of Langbasa, HRM Oba Hafeez Olakunle Badiru, said that Land grabbers for decades have constituted a threat to property acquisition in Lagos, noting that there have been alarming reports of land grabbing across the State.

While acknowledging the State Government efforts in curbing Land grabbing in Lagos, Oba Hafeez Badiru, implored the State Government and the Police to ensure immediate prosecution of identified land grabbers and their sponsors to serve as a deterrent to other individuals in the State.

Delivering the vote of thanks, the Coordinator, Lagos State Special Taskforce on Land Grabbers, Ms. Rukayat Shomade expressed gratitude to the State Government and the Ministry of Justice for their immense support towards the agency and looked forward to future collaborations.

Lagos, BMOs Parley on Surviving Economic Challenges

In a significant step to encourage local production and strengthen the economy, the Lagos State Government has assured businesses operating in the State of its continuous commitment to providing platforms to navigate the current economic challenges confronting the State and nation.



Commissioner for Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade & Investment, MCCTI, Mrs. Folashade Ambrose-Medebem gave the assurance at a meeting with leaders and representatives of Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) held recently at the State Secretariat, Alausa, Ikeja.

Speaking further at the event, Ambrose-Medebem stated that the meeting was borne out of the necessity to feel the plight of businesses and to put heads together to generate solutions to tackle the current global economic challenges.

She said: "Together, we need to discuss what we can do to promote economic diversification among indigenous small

businesses by focusing more on achieving hundred percent local content in production, and growing the foreign exchange earnings of our nation as we strengthen our currency.

This season calls for the need to diversify our economy through networking, collaborations and value addition more than ever before. Businesses must adapt to various economic variables, as they must build internal mechanisms to face economic challenges while leveraging Government support programmes for survival and prosperity".

Enumerating the contributions of the

MSMEs at a meeting that was attended physically and virtually by MSMEs from various sectors, the Commissioner averred that concerted efforts have been made to resolve various issues confronting businesses in the State and the government is still working on others in line with the T.H.E.M.E.S Plus Development Agenda of the Sanwo-Olu's administration.

His words, "We have continued to improve the State's security architecture to deal with various security challenges and protect lives and property, formulate enterprise-friendly policies and develop infrastructure that will collectively foster a positive business environment. These would enhance the

competitiveness of the creative and productive private enterprises, as well as sustain an innovation-driven economy.

"We will also sustain the organisation of Lagos MSMEs Exclusive Trade Fair, support for members of various BMOs to stage their fairs, provide increased market access, capacity building, soft loans through Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) and other support mechanisms that will assist MSMEs to survive these turbulent times".

Permanent Secretary, MCCTI, Dr. Olugbemiga Aina charged the MSMEs to

be creative in terms of the production and marketing of their goods and services. He further expressed gratitude to all attendees for their role in shaping policy direction for the economic prosperity of Lagos State and Nigeria at large and tasked them to continue the support and collaboration to overcome the economic challenges and ensure a thriving business environment in Lagos State.

Director-General, Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), Dr. Chinyere Almona called for stronger government support for businesses to rescue them from dying as the economic challenges have taken a huge toll on many. She further reiterated the need for financial intervention to cushion the impact of the falling exchange rate on businesses.

National Vice President, Nigerian Association of Small-Scale Industrialists (NASSI), Mr. Kuti George commended the State Government for coming up with such an initiative and reiterated the need for the State to consider the provision of captive power plants to ease the burden associated with the

cost of energy by MSMEs. He also suggested the need to deploy digital marketing technology to expand market access for MSMEs.

Chairman, Association of Small Business Owners of Nigeria (ASBON), Lagos State Chapter, Dr. Femi Egbesola stressed the need to strengthen the Business Membership Organisations (BMOs) so that they can become virile platforms for effectively galvanising support and empowerment for the MSMEs.

Chairman, NASSI, Lagos State Chapter, Mrs. Gertrude Aikhimien also commended Governor Sanwo-Olu for coming up with the special hub where foodstuffs can be purchased at rebate and canvassed the same for MSMEs to increase their sales and earnings.

Chairman, Suco Industries, Chief Duro Kuteyi affirmed that MSMEs in the State are looking up to the State Government to provide financial support to shore up their operational capital already eroded by the fall in the value of the national currency.

The meeting was concluded with the resolve to convene the same quarterly to review the issues and the extent to which they have been resolved to the benefit of MSMEs.

Lagos, Niger Partner For Agric Commodities Supplies

Lagos State Government, on Wednesday, brokered a strategic partnership with Niger State — a sub national entity with the largest agricultural farmland in the country — towards enhancing food production and security.

Governors of the two States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Lagos for a cooperation geared towards exploring their comparative advantages in order to facilitate constant supply of agricultural commodities for the end consumers.

The agreement tagged "Produce for Lagos Initiative" is part of the efforts of the two parties to key into the Emergency Food Security Initiative declared by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to cultivate thousands of hectares of land to sustain food production and supply chain.



● Sanwo-Olu, Bago sign mou for Produce for Lagos Initiative

This arrangement is a long term strategic partnership between the two States in building competencies around their areas of strength. While Lagos is positioned as a ready organised food market for consumers, Niger has its core strength in arable land for agriculture and food production.

The signing of the agreement will be followed by massive supply of fresh farm produce to the Lagos

Food Logistics hubs for storage and distribution.

Gov. Babajide Sanwo-Olu and his Niger State counterpart, Mallam Umar Mohammed Bago, signed the contract on behalf of the parties.

Sanwo-Olu said: "We have just put the pen to paper and signed the Government-to-Government agreement between Lagos and Niger states for agricultural production. Lagos,

being the smallest State in terms of landmass, and Niger, being the largest State, is no coincidence that the biggest and the smallest are looking for at opportunities to citizens of our both states to be the beneficiaries of this historic partnership."

Gov. Bago described the partnership as "a landmark" for both parties, noting that the North Central state was willing to leverage organised market in Lagos to boost economic activities in his State.

He said: "This is a landmark agreement that has been made today. Lagos is the largest consumer of agricultural resources in the country based on its population, while Niger State has the largest agricultural land. So, this Memorandum of Understanding came on the heels of exploring the strength of each state to promote food security and safety.

"Niger State is to produce agricultural commodities for Lagos State, and also process staple food items. Lagos State is to leverage the organised market and supply chain to meet consumers' demands. This is basically the simple explanation of the Memorandum of Understanding, which is in tandem with Mr. President's food security agenda."

Lagos Commissioner for Agriculture, Ms. Abisola Olusanya, noted that the arrangement would help in price stability, as the MoU accommodated pre-production contracts in the value chain to enable farmers cut costs and improve output.

She said the first phase of the Food Security Systems and Central Logistics Park being built in Ketu-Ereyun, Epe would be commissioned in

December to warehouse the large supplies from Niger State. In the meantime, she said the existing middle level hubs would be used as distribution points for the supplied commodities.

"This is a marriage made in heaven for our two States. This is a function of production meeting markets. Once there is an off-take market, it would catalyse the production end of the market. Then, this will lead to price stability and food availability.

"Farmers' profit will also be guaranteed, just as consumers will be happy for timely supplies. We will also have middle men who will have regular sources of income by acting as a bridge between both ends of the market."

Some of the agricultural commodities to be produced and shipped to Lagos markets include staple foods, rice paddies, tubers, beans, legumes, maize and grains.

SGBV: Lagos Trains paramilitary Officers

The Lagos State Domestic Violence Agency (DSVA) has organised a one-day training programme with the theme: "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence, Existing State Laws and Policies and Exploring Existing State Structures", for over 100 operatives of the Lagos Neighbourhood and Safety Corps (LNSC), Kick Against Indiscipline (KAI), Peace Corps and Nigeria Security and Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC).

In her address at the opening ceremony of the programme held recently at the LCCI Hall, Ikeja, Executive Secretary of DSVA, Mrs. Titilola Vivour-Adeniyi



said the training aims to equip the officers with

the right tools and knowledge to act as first

responders of SGBV in the State.

She said, "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

is a globally pervasive human rights violation which the Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu has declared zero tolerance for all forms of the menace".

Mrs. Ronke Oyelakin, a facilitator at the training and Coordinator of Child Protection Network, Lagos Chapter, explained the various forms of abuse, preventive measures and the techniques of psychological first aid. She exemplified this by engaging the participants in a role-play to further propagate the message.

Representatives of the different security outfits expressed their appreciation to the State Government and the DSVA for the training programme

Promotion Exercise: Prepare For More Responsibilities, Fabanwo Tells Civil Servants

... As Civil Service Commission Holds Revised Structured Training Programme For Y2024 Promotion Exercise

Lagos State Government has urged eligible officers in the ongoing Year 2024 promotion exercise to be prepared for more responsibilities that are expected to come with their anticipated promotion positions.

The Chairman, Civil Service Commission (CSC), Mrs. Olubunmi Fabamwo advised at the opening ceremony of the physical sessions of the Year 2024 Promotion Exercise, tagged: "Revised Structured Training Programme" organised by the Civil Service Commission for Eligible Officers at the Adeyemi-Bero Auditorium, Alausa Ikeja.

Emphasising that promotions to higher Grade Levels come with a proportionate increase



in responsibilities, the Chairman urged the officers not to only aspire for career progression but also to take cognizance of the added duties and obligations that accompany such advancement

She encouraged participants to utilise the training sessions as opportunities to hone their skills and acquire the necessary knowledge to excel in their prospective roles after promotion.

The Chairman reiterated the commitment of the Lagos State Civil Service Commission to fostering a conducive environment for career development and advancement within the State Civil Service, assuring the Officers of the Commission's support in their journey towards a higher level of competence and effectiveness.

Speaking on the theme of the Year 2024 Promotion Exercise: "Promoting Excellence

and Professionalism", Fabamwo charged the Officers to imbibe professionalism in their respective duty posts, stressing that the excellence of Lagos must reflect in all they do.

She further averred that the THEMES Plus Agenda of the current administration in Lagos State has become a reality, adding that Civil Servants, being the vehicle needed to actualise the vision, must display a high level of professionalism and excellence.

Earlier in his remarks, the Permanent Secretary, Civil Service Commission, Mr. Akinbode Obadina said that the annual Promotion Exercise shows that the State Government cares

about the welfare and career progression of its workforce that have diligently contributed their quota in their respective MDAs.

He enumerated some of the required criteria which are mandatory for Officers to earn Promotion including a satisfactory assessment of Staff Performance and Development Evaluation (SPADEV) and active participation in the two components of the Revised Structured Training Programme (RSTP), which are the Cross-Cutting Knowledge Training Sessions and the Job-Specific Training Sessions among others.

One of the participants at the RSTP, Itunu-

Oluwa Juliana, a Senior Fire Officer with Lagos State Fire and Rescue Service, described the RSTP as an eye-opener on what the expectations of their next level will be.

She said: "We have learnt what is expected of us in our present grade level and what is expected of us in our next grade level, the facilitators have been amazing for making the sessions interactive and engaging".

Other dignitaries at the opening ceremony of the RSTP for the Year 2024 Promotion Exercise include Commissioner II, Civil Service Commission (CSC), Hon. Kamal Olorunjoje; Commissioner III, CSC, Mr. Babatunde Seriki and Commissioner IV, CSC, Hon. Hodewu Suru-Avoseh.

Ministry of Establishment Hosts Medical Guild, Resident Doctors

The management team of the Ministry of Establishments and Training recently hosted the executives of the Nigerian Medical Guild and Association of Resident Doctors who were on a courtesy visit to the ministry. In his welcome remark, the Honourable Commissioner for Establishments and Training, Mr. Afolabi Ayantayo expressed appreciation to the executives of the two bodies for deeming it fit to visit the ministry after their election. Describing the two bodies as pillars in the healthcare system of the State, he said the visit underscored the long standing



relationship between the bodies and the Government. Ayantayo averred that the recent election of new executives for the two unions marked an exciting chapter for the

Medical Guild and congratulated the visitors for assuming leadership positions. According to him, "We recognise and value the cooperation between

the Government and the Medical Guild as well as the Association of Resident Doctors and we remain committed to working together to address challenges to

elevate the healthcare standards in the State". He assured them of the Government's commitment to supporting initiatives that promote the

welfare and professional development of the two medical bodies. Earlier in his address, the Chairman of the Nigerian Medical Guild, Lagos Chapter, Dr. Moruf Abdulsalam thanked the management for the warm reception accorded them and expressed appreciation to the ministry for their support. He specially congratulated the Permanent Secretary for her deployment to the ministry. The two bodies used the opportunity to seek the assistance of the ministry to address some personnel issues affecting their members.

Food Crisis: Lagos To Leverage Technology

... Charges Agric Startups to Proffer Solutions

Lagos State Commissioner for Agriculture, Ms. Abisola Olusanya has charged Agric Startups to leverage technology to provide solutions to the economic challenges and rising cost of food items in the country.



Olusanya, who gave this charge during the 'Agrinnovation Tribe Hang Out' held at the Impact Hub, Ikoyi, Lagos, urged the members of the group to see themselves as part of the solution.

Olusanya said that findings had shown that the dearth of bad roads, lack of power, absence of good storage facilities and illegal multiple tax payments by farmers, among others, are responsible for the high

cost of food items, stressing that Nigeria is more than capable of feeding its people with the available Agricultural resources across the country.

The Commissioner averred that the Agrinnovation Club must take up the responsibility and lead by example, have faith in the country, project and bring about positive changes needed to develop the country.

She, however, advised that they should also inspire young Nigerians to value what they do to ensure sustainability, stressing that the state government will provide them with financial support where necessary and also engage experts to provide solutions to their peculiar challenges at little or no cost.

In his remark, the Chief Executive Officer of Eko Innovation Centre, Mr.

Victor Afolabi said the current food crisis is not peculiar to Nigeria as other parts of the world have experienced such challenges, but were surmounted through the involvement of young minds.

Afolabi encouraged the participants to find opportunities in the Agricultural space while closing gaps in the supply value chains to reduce the escalating prices of food items in the country.

He said the biggest problem for new businesses and startups in the county is not access to finance but to the markets, calling for the adoption of technology and a holistic approach to

transform the country's economy.

While making a presentation on insights for business legal structure, a Legal and Financial expert, Mr. Omoruyi Edoigiawerie advised club members to imbibe the idea of starting a business small and nurture it to grow.

He challenged them to equip themselves with knowledge and skill sets that will upgrade their businesses to thrive in this fragile global economy and ensure they seek expert advice whenever legal issues arise.

Hakeem Onasanya of Lagos Innovate took the participants through the process of pitching before

potential investors and sponsors which can enhance their chances when making a pitch.

Members of the Agrinnovation tribe in attendance include Admiralty Farmers Market, Ecotutu, Farm2u, Fisherwoman, Pricepally.com, Agristi.com, Soilless Farm Lab, Corporate Farmers International and Ofada Boy amongst others.

Agrinnovation Club is an initiative of the Lagos State Ministry of Agriculture aimed at harmonising and solving common problems associated with startups in the Agric sector. It also aimed at providing room for genuine partnership and networking among the experts to grow their various businesses.

Lagos To Collaborate With NITP On Staff Training

The Lagos State Government has expressed its desire to partner with the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (NITP) on the capacity development of Town Planning Officers in its service.

Commissioner for Physical Planning and Urban Development, Dr. Oluyinka Olumide made this known recently in Alausa during a courtesy visit by the National President of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners, Tpl. Nathaniel Atebije.

The Commissioner said that one of the ways to enhance the performance of staff is through training and retraining and that the collaboration with NITP would be quite instructive in this regard.

He emphasised that investing in human



capital would enhance employees' exposure and propel the development of the state, adding that the 21st-century Lagos required dexterity with modern planning tools. His words: "For us to

be relevant, we must be ready for change, and this is best done through adequate capacity enhancement. We must challenge ourselves to do the same thing in different

ways that will produce the desired best results". The Permanent Secretary, Office of Physical Planning, Engr. Oluwole Sotire said that the visit of NITP was

timely as it came at the time when the Office was in the process of completing the review of the Alimosho Model City Plan, which is currently at the public display stage while the

preparation of the Lagos Island Model City Plan would soon reach the final stakeholders meeting stage.

The National President, Nigeria Institute of Town Planners, Tpl. Nathaniel Atebije said that the institute was aware of the efforts of the State Government towards the sustainability of the built environment, particularly the engagement of Town Planners and other professionals in recent times,

While calling on the State Government to recruit more Town Planners and other related professionals to enhance the implementation of development plans, Atebije disclosed that the Institute was very much ready to support the training needs of the Ministry, saying that its rich training manual was quite instructive.

Information Management : Ministry, House of Assembly Strategise

... Call For Revamp of State-Owned Media Agencies

The Honourable Commissioner for Information and Strategy, Mr. Gbenga Omotoso has said that there is a need to strengthen the collaboration between the Lagos House of Assembly and the Ministry towards enhancing information management in the State.

The Commissioner, who stated this when members of the Lagos State House of Assembly Committee on Information, as part of its oversight function, visited the Ministry on Friday, noted that the Ministry will continue to efficiently deliver on its mandate.

He explained that the Ministry would continue to work assiduously to implement the THEMES Plus Agenda of the State Government under the able leadership of Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu through its Agencies. He, however, informed of the urgent



need to upgrade and provide new broadcast equipment for the agencies.

In his words, "I am making concerted efforts to ensure that the needs of our agencies are met to enhance their capacity and delivery going forward".

On the issue of social media management, he further explained that the Ministry has always been proactive in making extensive use of the various Online platforms to reach out to the people of the State, while, admitting

that there is always room for better performance.

The Chairman, House Committee on Information, Hon. Stephen Olukayode Ogundipe remarked that the Ministry is strategic to developmental progress in Lagos, imploring the management to engage with relevant stakeholders to initiate a robust engagement with Lagosians.

"We need to talk and feel the pulse of the people in this regard. As a Ministry, you must work hand-in-hand with

Lagos State-owned information agencies and lead by example", he said.

Ogundipe further charged the Honourable Commissioner to ensure the cordial relationship the Ministry has with the House of Assembly, is sustained and improved on. While thanking the Management of the Ministry for the support and cooperation they have given to the Commissioner.

Also speaking, Hon. Ajayi, Chairman, House Committee on Establishment, noted that there is an urgent need to upgrade the equipment at all state-owned broadcast stations; EKO FM, Lagos Television (LTV), Lagos Traffic Radio and Radio Lagos, for them to function optimally.

Similarly, Hon. Temitope Adewale commended the

Ministry for its efforts, calling for better work synergy among stakeholders to solve challenges concerning budgetary allocations, adding that funding is important and the House of Assembly remains committed to delivering quality service to Lagosians.

On his part, Chairman, House Committee on Public Procurement, Hon. Ajomale Ladipo said that the Ministry of Information and Strategy is the image maker of the State Government and members of the Assembly are ready to collaborate and support its efforts.

"As members of the House of Assembly, one of our responsibilities, apart from law-making, is quality representation. The Ministry should engage Lagosians more on social media and project programmes and policies of the State

Government positively, especially towards the youths, who are always clamouring for good governance", he said.

The Permanent Secretary, Mr. Olumide Sogunle, while thanking the House of Assembly members for the visit, assured that the Ministry will work with them to achieve the set goals and objectives of the Lagos State Government.

In attendance at the event were top management staff of the Ministry including the Director, Public Affairs, Mr. Adesegun Ogundeji; Director, Strategy Centre Mr. Kayode Oyekanmi; Director, Public Enlightenment and Community Relations, Mr. Goke Folayan; Director, Social Media, Dr. Jide Atansuyi; Director, Procurement Mr. Moruf Balogun; Director, Administration and Human Resource, Mrs. Oriola and Director, Finance and Accounts, Mr. Akeem Shonibare, among others.

Build A Justice System That Fosters Trust, Sanwo-Olu Tells FMJ

Lagos State Govt has set the pace in provision of innovative access to justice services –Fagbemi

Lagos State Governor, Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu has charged the Federal Ministry of Justice to build a justice system that not only dispenses justice but fosters a sense of trust and confidence in the citizens, noting that the success of the Ministry would be measured by the positive impact felt by the ordinary Nigerians seeking justice.

Speaking on Thursday during the three-day retreat of the Top Management of the Federal Ministry of Justice held at Sheraton Hotels, Ikeja, Lagos, Governor Sanwo-Olu advised the Ministry to adopt a holistic approach that addresses not only legal processes but also the social and economic factors influencing the administration of justice in Nigeria.

Governor Sanwo-Olu, who commended the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), for his steadfast commitment to advancing justice in



Nigeria, said the theme of the retreat, 'Enhancing Systems and Structures in the Federal Ministry of Justice for Effective Justice Sector Service Delivery,' underscores the pivotal role that the justice system plays in the well-being of our society, noting that "a robust and efficient justice system forms the bedrock of a just and equitable society."

He said: "The challenges we face in our justice sector demand a collective and strategic response. Our duty as stewards of justice is to ensure that the structures in place are not only resilient but also adaptable to the evolving needs of our society. This requires a careful examination of our existing systems, identification of gaps, and a commitment to

implementing reforms that will enhance the delivery of justice services to the Nigerian people.

"Our justice system is not an isolated entity; it is intricately linked to the broader societal fabric. As we enhance systems and structures within the Federal Ministry of Justice, let us adopt a holistic approach that addresses not only legal processes but also the social and economic factors influencing the administration of justice.

"In our pursuit of enhanced systems and structures, let us be cognizant of the need for continuous evaluation and adaptation. The dynamic nature of our society demands that

our justice system evolve to meet emerging challenges. Regular assessments, feedback loops, and a commitment to continuous improvement will ensure the relevance and effectiveness of our reforms over time.

"Therefore, I invite every one of us to navigate the complexities of justice sector reform with a shared vision of a Nigeria where the rule of law is a beacon of hope and where justice is not an abstract concept but a tangible reality for every citizen. I am confident that our collective efforts will lay the foundation for a more just, equitable, and prosperous nation."

Speaking earlier, the Attorney-General of the

Federation and Minister of Justice, Prince Lateef Fagbemi (SAN), said the Lagos State Government, for many years has continued to set the pace in the provision of innovative access to justice services, as well as the development of creative reforms aimed at improving the system of administration of justice, generally.

"Governor Sanwo-Olu's presence here, not only attests to his interest in supporting measures to enhance the administration of justice but further exemplifies that state of preparedness, readiness and disciplined work culture, all of which have made Lagos State the Centre of Excellence in our nation.

"The choice of Lagos State for this Retreat was one that is both deliberate and strategic. It has been resilient and strategic in tackling contemporary justice sector challenges and successful in developing effective access to justice programmes over the years. It was therefore important for us to come here to learn and share experience on challenges and best practices for enhancing systems and structures to support the justice sector," he said.

Fagbemi said the Ministry of Justice is critical to the agenda of the government to build

a strong economy and combat corruption and insecurity.

"You are all well aware that the Federal Ministry of Justice plays a very critical role in the overall developmental agenda of the country, as it offers services that impact all areas of national development.

"The role of the Ministry is critical to the agenda of the Government to build a strong economy and combat corruption and insecurity. Our duties are an amalgamation of law and policy; it is therefore critical that we continually review our operational strategies to enable us to meet the yearnings of our people for an effective and people-oriented justice system.

"We need to strive further to achieve improvement in all areas of our mandate. We need to take all necessary steps to surmount all the challenges associated with coordinating justice sector institutions. This retreat, therefore, affords us the opportunity and the platform to strategise and align our activities in a way that would make the Ministry and its agencies deliver on the justice sector priorities and deliverables," Fagbemi told top management of the Federal Ministry of Justice.

Law Firm Initiates Artificial Intelligence To Access Justice

By Felix Kuyinu

A non-governmental law organization identified as Citizens Gavel has instituted a Legal Artificial Intelligence, AI, in Nigeria to enhance easy and fast access to justice.

Citizens Gavel launched the technological tool at an event in Lagos tagged "AI for justice: Highlighting the innovative use of AI in the legal sector and its potential to revolutionise access to justice."

Operations lead of Citizen Gavel, Oluwafemi Ajibade, said the legal AI was initiated to assist the most

vulnerable in getting access to justice and ensuring proper solutions to their legal problems.

Ajibade, a Lagos base lawyer, stated that the AI, named 'PODUS,' is trained to point litigants and that its priorities cases of emergency nature, police extortion, brutality, fundamental rights issues, illegal arrest, and illegal detention.

He further explained that the motive behind the idea of the AI was not to hinder lawyers from practicing their profession but to complement and ease their work.

"Every professional atmosphere in Nigeria is being shut down by technology," Ajibade told the event attendees.

"For example, we don't have enough lawyers, and we don't have enough doctors to cater to everybody. For legal problems, the AI tool we are deploying is to help lawyers reduce their workload.

"I want them to see it from the perspective that it helps reduce the workload. It helps to tailor their work to that very professional aspect that they have always rendered by taking away the need for maybe all

this legal advice and small issues that might occur that someone can maybe fix on their own or something like that," Ajibade said.

He revealed that the new measure is for everybody as Citizens Gavel has documented and trained the AI with all the laws that govern the country which will in turn help people in the remotest part of Nigeria based on the law that applies to where citizen's locality.

When asked about how many cases that have been resolved using the AI platform, he said using PODUS AI, that over 2,000 cases have

been received from members of the public, 60 per cent of these cases resolved.

Tech lead at Citizens Gavel, Oluwadamilare Ayankoya, told the guests that the PODUS AI platform is very much accessible, as they were intentional about accessibility, so they decided to go with WhatsApp.

He said, "Because we have billions of users via WhatsApp, and we know Nigerians and most people are glued to their WhatsApp, we made it accessible via WhatsApp.

"It is, of course, accessible in other

platforms, like using websites, the internet, as I said earlier, pushing out mobile apps to also help with the adoption, and it's for free, you don't have to pay for using the tool."

Team lead of Citizens Gavel, Nelson Olanipekun, said, "People are now empowered to write well-crafted petitions or letters to file complaints against injustices leveraging various complaints centres of government such as Human Rights Commission, Ombudsman, FCCPC, States' Mediation Centres, etc."

Man Arraigned For Breaching Peace in Ikorodu

By Mohammed Adekola

On Thursday, 7th March 2024, Samuel Olanrewaju, 24, appeared before the Ikorodu Magistrates' Court for conducting himself in a manner likely to breach peace in the town.

Mr Olanrewaju is facing a four-count charge of causing unlawful grievous harm, assault and unlawful possession of dangerous weapons. The prosecutor, Christian Okonofua, told the court that the defendant committed the offence on March 3 in the Eyita area of Ikorodu.

Mr Okonofua alleged that the defendant conducted himself in a manner likely to cause a breach of peace by possessing weeds suspected to



be banned substances in the area.

The prosecutor told the court that the defendant allegedly

unlawfully assaulted the complainant, Olanrewaju Taiwo, with a cutlass causing him permanent body injury.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The magistrate, A.O. Onalaja, granted the defendant bail of

N500,000 with two sureties in like sum.

Ms Onalaja held that one of the sureties must be a clergyman or a respected

community leader with evidence of tax payment.

He adjourned the case until March 28 for mention.

Men Arraigned for Allegedly Stealing N662,000 From POS Operator

By Felix Kuyinu

Two men alleged to have stolen the sum of N662,000 from Point of Sales, POS, operators in Mile-12, Lagos have been arrested and arraigned at the Yaba Magistrate Court.

The duo, James Akomolafe and Olaoluwa Ogbere were charged on three counts of stealing, conspiracy and fraudulent acts preferred against them by the Lagos State Police Command.

The Magistrate, Patrick Nwaka, was informed by the Prosecuting Counsel, DSP, Thomas

Nurudeen that the defendants, on February 9, 2024, went to Mile 12 market, Ketu to check their account balance from one POS operator, one Jubril Danjuma under the pretence. Nurudeen also stated that the accused distracted the attention of the operator, swapped the machines with their's, and left for an unknown location, stealing the sum of N662,000 from the account. It was discovered that the defendants had stolen multiple Moniepoint PoS machines and had

stolen about N1,022m from different PoS operators.

The Prosecutor told the court that Akomolafe and Ogbere committed the offences between January and February 2024 at the Mile 12 Market, Ketu, Lagos adding that the alleged offences contravened Sections 411, 314(3), and 287 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State 2015.

The charge read, "That you James Akomolafe, Olaoluwa Ogbere and others now at large between January 3, 2024, and February 5, 2024, at about 1030hrs at Mile 12

Market Ketu Lagos State, in the Lagos Magisterial District, did conspire amongst yourselves to commit felony to wit stealing and thereby committed an offense punishable under Section 411 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria 2015".

The second count read, "That you James Akomolafe and Olaoluwa Ogbere between January 3, 2024, and February 5, 2024, at about 1030hrs at Mile 12 Market, Ketu, Lagos State, in the Lagos Magisterial District,

did by false pretence with intent to defraud by distracting the attention of the PoS operators and swapped three Moniepoint after viewing their secret password and withdrew the sum of N1,022,000 only and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 314 (3) of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria 2015.

The third count charge read, "That you, James Akomolafe and Olaoluwa Ogbere, between January 3, 2024, and February 5, 2024, at about 1030hrs at the Mile 12

Market, Ketu, Lagos State, in the Lagos Magisterial District, did steal the sum of N1,020m property of Jubril Danjuma 'm', Samsideen Ishaku 'm', and Buhari Umar 'm', and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 287 of the Criminal Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria 2015.

The defendants pleaded not guilty to the three counts preferred against them.

Following the plea, the magistrate granted them bail in the sum of N300,000 each and three sureties each.

Further hearing on the matter is billed for April 3

Sahara STEAMers 2.0: Oshodi High School Emerges Second Runner-up

Kehinde Adeleye

The second runner-up in the Sahara STEAMers Grand Demo Competition 2.0 is Team Young Genius from Oshodi High School in Lagos, Nigeria, for their innovative demonstration.

In partnership with STEM Cafe, the Sahara Group Foundation—the social sustainability arm of Sahara Group Limited—organizes the tournament, which is in its second year.

Over 200 kids across the continent benefited directly from this year's initiative, which aims to promote innovation, creativity, and quality in STEAM education among secondary school students in Africa.

The program gave participating students access to deep-dive classroom instruction and gave them the practical information and abilities needed to come up with creative solutions for challenges in the real world.

Consequently, supporting the development of a pool of youthful, self-assured social innovators throughout Africa.

The Grand Demo Day Competition in 2023 saw the top three teams from each of the national demo competitions represent their respective nations.



In front of a panel of judges, all 12 teams showcased their creative prototype ideas for solutions covering a range of industries, including waste management, energy, transportation, health, and agriculture.

There was a lot of competition between teams from Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania during the Grand Demo Competition.

Team Imperial Tech from Rise and Shine Secondary School in Uganda won this year's regional competition thanks to their creative invention of a Soil Moisture Detector, a practical farm tool that helps maintain healthy soil and boost productivity.

Team Smart Blind Walking Stick, from St Georges Girls Secondary School in Nairobi, Kenya, came in second place.

They created a novel way to help people with vision impairments move about.

Team Young Genius from Oshodi High School in Lagos, Nigeria, which included Francis Kingdavid, Njima Chibuike, Adewale Fathia, Chibuisi Goodluck, and Ukoh Success, placed third in the competition.

The team's groundbreaking project, a creative Domestic Drainage System painstakingly crafted to solve the ubiquitous problem of drainage blockage in our society, is credited with their extraordinary accomplishment.

Their creative idea not only shows their dedication to maintaining a clean environment, but it also establishes them as critical thinkers capable of coming up with workable, significant answers to the problems that our communities confront.

The Sahara Group Foundation's Director, Ejiro Gray, spoke during the Grand Demo Competition and expressed his enormous satisfaction with the students' dedication and perseverance throughout the course of the program.

In her reflections on the nine-month program, she emphasized how well it had stimulated students' critical

thinking and creative thinking abilities, producing a new generation of African problem solvers.

Gray congratulated the winning teams and exhorted all attendees to use the knowledge and abilities they had gained from the program for the good of their local communities and society at large.

She expressed her appreciation to the educators, school administrators, and students who took part in the program, as well as to STEM Cafe, the program's implementing partner, and other stakeholders, for their vital contributions.

Chinyelu Akpa, Business Development Manager of STEM Cafe, also spoke at the occasion and emphasized the program's enormous value to our society as part of the Sahara STEAMers initiative.

She emphasized the vital role that the sponsorship partnership with the Sahara Group Foundation played, saying that it is partnerships such as these that contribute to making a big difference in the lives of these children.

She also mentioned that

“programmes like this offer young minds a

gateway to a world of possibilities and inspires them to envision a future where their creativity and innovation can make a transformative difference”.

As the Sahara STEAMers Grand Demo Competition 2.0 comes to an end, the influence of this ground-breaking project is felt outside of the competition space.

This event's remarkable inventiveness highlights the program's critical role in developing a generation capable of addressing Africa's problems with creativity and resiliency.

This achievement is significant not only because it shows the potential of our young people, but also because it points the way toward a time when innovation will flourish and benefit both local communities and the continent as a whole.

The Sahara Group Foundation and Asharami Synergy, Kenya, are unwavering in their dedication to promoting initiatives that lead Africa into a future marked by creativity, ecology, and diversity.

Through collaborative efforts and strategic initiatives like Sahara STEAMers, we will continue to help pave the way for a brighter tomorrow, where the brilliance of African youth shines as a driving force for positive change and progress.

Isolo Council Boss Frowns at Environmental Negligence

Kehinde Adeleye

The Chairman of Isolo Local Council Development Area, Mr. Olasoju Adebayo has tasked residents and road users of the newly-constructed Aremu Street, Okota to take ownership of the road. He also frown at shop extension of gutter channel.

Olasoju reiterated this plea today during an early morning visit to the street. The council leader, along with his cabinet members led by the Local Government secretary, Mr. Sikiru



Adeshina, commended the quality of the interlocked-road.

He urged residents and road users to take responsibility and maintain the facility properly. He also warned against completely closing

gates and blocking thoroughfare, especially during working hours.

His words: “This infrastructure is yet another testament to our sworn commitment to fulfilling our campaign promises as

contained in our IsoloOfOurDreams agenda. Road construction plays a leading developmental role in any given society and we are proud to have expended substantial efforts on putting our roads in better shape. We will not stop at this as we are committed to ensuring that every area feels our magical wand and enjoy even dividends of democracy,” Olasoju said.

Continuing his address, Olasoju emphasized the importance of residents

maintaining the road properly to justify the project's efforts. He also expressed disapproval of shop extensions over drainage channels and negligence towards the environment.

“My appeal to the CDA, the entire residents and road users of this road is to ensure its sustained maintenance. Having shops extended over drainage channel and to the road does not speak well. The drainage channel needs to be adequately

taken care of to ensure free flow of drains and proactively prevent flooding. We call on you justify and encourage our efforts,” Olasoju added.

The council leader was accompanied by Mr. Idris Amusa, the council representative for Akinbaya Ward, and Mr. Adesegun Olatunde, the Chairman of the Community Development Committee (CDC).

Mr. Olatunde promised that the committee would collaborate with the Community Development Association (CDA) to maintain the road effectively.

Somolu LG Boss Affirms Confidence In Palliative Committee

By Saheed Afolabi



The Chairman of Somolu Local Government, Hamed Salawu reaffirms his confidence in the credibility of the recently inaugurated Somolu Palliative Committee. He urges residents and

stakeholders to educational level, tribe, collaborate with the or disability. Comrade Isiak Buna- The council boss led committee to emphasizes the identify vulnerable continuous nature of individuals, the exercise, emphasizing inclusivity emphasizing its regardless of political importance for all affiliation, religion, members of the marital status, community.

Drawing from past experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown and support for the elderly, Salawu sees the palliative measure as a critical step towards alleviating suffering and poverty in Somolu. He reassures residents

that his administration remains committed to rolling out additional programs aimed at mitigating the effects of the present economic hardship. Additionally, Salawu encourages Somolu's youth to seize the opportunity presented

by the ongoing free ICT/Tech skills acquisition program. Recognizing the transformative potential of technology, he emphasizes the importance of empowering youth with essential skills for the modern world.

Dada Distributes Food To Residents of Ikorodu West

By Mohammed Adekola



Hon. Gabriel Olusesan Dada, Former Vice Chairman Ikorodu West LCDA distributed foodstuff as palliatives to the residents of Ikorodu West LCDA. Recognizing the hardships faced by the people in the country, Sesan Dada expressed his commitment to assisting his community during these challenging times. Hon. Sesan Dada in his speech expressed

his deep empathy for the economic hardships faced by the people of Ikorodu West LCDA. He emphasized that the distribution of the 700 food palliatives was his way of providing some relief and support to his fellow community members. Hon. Sesan Dada passionately stated, "This is my own little way of assisting my people in this economy hardship in the country. I want to show my solidarity with the palliative

measures put in place by President Tinubu and Governor Sanwo-Olu. Together, we can overcome these challenges." He went on to encourage the people, saying, "I want to plead with our people that this economic hardship is temporary. We are resilient, and I believe that things will be better soon. Let us stay strong and united as a community, supporting and uplifting one another during these trying times."

Three-Day-Work Week: LASUSTECH Students Rejoice

By Nurudeen Adebayo

Students of Lagos State University of Science and Technology (LASUSTECH) rejoice as the management implements the directive from the Lagos State Government for a 3-day work week in the education and working sectors. The directive states that all institutions and working sectors should operate only from Monday to Wednesday to save costs on transportation and

other expenses. LASUSTECH, as an institution, also follows this order, providing students with the privilege of Thursday and Friday for self-study and preparation for their next classes. The announcement was made at LASUSTECH's Isolo campus leaving Ikorodu students in anticipation before the information is disseminated to all Heads of Departments (HODs) and Heads of Colleges (HOCs) in



their respective departments.

LASUSTECH management plans to attend to 100-level

students from Monday to Wednesday, while they utilize Thursday and Friday for self-study. Additionally, 200-level students are given the privilege to study at home on Mondays and Fridays, using Tuesday to Thursday as their workdays. Shakiru Oluwagbafunmi from Mass Communication identifies a challenge in classes moved to the 3 days, with 8-hour lectures without breaks. She plans to spend free days in the library and questions the potential impact of the directive on LASUSTECH's goals. In conclusion, many students are delighted with this order directed by the Lagos State Government under the regime of Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu. Despite stress due to rushed lectures. Despite concerns, he plans to

cope and use the library during free days for self-study. Ejalonibu Morenikeji from Mass communication identifies a challenge in classes moved to the 3 days, with 8-hour lectures without breaks. She plans to spend free days in the library and questions the potential impact of the directive on LASUSTECH's goals. In conclusion, many students are delighted with this order directed by the Lagos State Government under the regime of Mr. Babajide Sanwo-Olu.

Federal Lawmaker Calls For Road Rehabilitation of Shagari Estate

Kehinde Adeleye



A motion for the rehabilitation of the crumbling roads in the Gowon Estate and Federal Low-Cost Housing Estate, also known as Shagari Estate, in the Alimosho Federal Constituency, Lagos State, was made by Mr. Ganiyu Adele Ayuba, the member of the House of Representatives representing Alimosho Federal Constituency. While speaking on the floor of the green chamber, Ayuba stated that "Alimosho Federal Constituency is the most populated in the nation, but ironically the most neglected." He voiced grievances on the deteriorating state of the estate roads as a result of the entities in charge of their upkeep

abandoning them and the detrimental impact on the lives of the constituents.

"The deplorable state of the roads has caused pain and agony to residents, particularly during emergencies, resulting in the loss of productive times, avoidable expenses on vehicle maintenance, and depreciation of the value of properties within the estates."

He urged for necessary actions to be taken to avoid further damage.

"Unless urgent steps are taken to rehabilitate the roads in the affected estates, the situation could worsen, thus resulting in devastating consequences."

The House of Representatives instructed the Committee on Housing and Habitat in a resolution to visit the Gowon and Shagari Estates in the Alimosho Federal Constituency in order to evaluate the state of the road network's degradation and allocate funds for repairs.

Additionally, they urged the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA), the Federal Housing Authority, and the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development to start repairing and rebuilding the crumbling roads in Gowon Estate and the Federal Low-Cost Housing Estate in the Lagos State federal constituency of Alimosho.

Mosan-Okunola Council Distributes Free JAMB Forms

Kehinde Adeleye

About 100 qualifying students who performed well in their WASSCE were given free Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination Forms by Princess Olabisi Adebajo, the Chairman of the Mosan-Okunola LCDA.

The goal of the distribution is not only to lessen the financial load on their parents but also to make it clear that the Executive Chairman is committed to promoting universal access to education.

Adebajo reiterated her dedication and pledge to change not just people's lives but the community as a whole.. This is a yearly commitment by this administration improve the quality of education

in our community, this is not just an act of benevolence; it is a strategic investment in the future of Mosan-Okunola LCD by proving these form stoour deserving students.

The Council Boss pleaded with the students to grasp this chance and use it to serve as a driving force for them to achieve their goals.

Two APC Mosan-Okunola Chieftains,

Mr. O Balaja and Alhaji Adetola, Vice Chairman Mr. Dayo Osinowo, Council Manager, Chief Mrs. Fola Hamzat, Secretary to the Local Council, Mr. Ayo Orimolade, Supervisors for Education, Health, and WAPA, Mrs. Modupe Adellaku, Mr. Yusuf Gbolahun, Special Adviser on Boundary Adjustment, and Head of Education, Mrs. Agbagwu Florence, are among the attendees gracing the occasion.



Orelope Inspects Drainages and Canals in Mosan-Okunola

Kehinde Adeleye

A member of the Lagos State House of Assembly representing Alimosho constituency and member of the House Committee on Environment, Mr. Luqman Orelope, conducted an inspection of drainages and canals in Mosan-Okunola Local Council Development Area.

In his efforts to address flooding in Alimosho and Lagos, dredging, channelization, and evacuation of the Gowon - Shagari estates - Alabede canal have finally begun.

Residents and property owners in the area were excited to see contractors starting the

project under the supervision of the Office of Drainage Services at the Lagos State Ministry of Environment.

The contractor quickly got to work and demolished a faulty bridge at Jimoh street, Abule-Oki - Raji Rasaki - Alabede area of Agbado-Okeodo LCDA to make way for a new bridge for better waste water flow.

The contractor mentioned that work will soon commence on the Gowon - Shagari estate section once equipment is moved to the site, starting with the Alabede area where defective bridges need to be demolished as a

priority.

During the inspection, it was observed that individuals in Gowon estate were dumping garbage into a main drainage that leads to the canal, resulting in blockages.

In response, Orelope has decided to meet with community leaders in the vicinity to educate them on the consequences of disposing of waste in drainages and canals.

In his words, "Dumping of refuse is a grave offence in Lagos state. I will find ways and means to meet with our community leaders to appeal to our people through them to stop dumping refuse into drainages and canals."

Orile Agege Holds First Thanksgiving Service

Kehinde Adeleye



The Orile Agege L C D A Secretariat was filled with excitement at the weekend as the council hosted its first quarter Staff Forum and Thanksgiving ceremony.

The special event was organized by the Administrative & Human Resources Department/NULGE of the Local Council

Development Area to show appreciation to the staff who work diligently.

During the event, Mr. J.S. Babatunde, the Chairman of Orile-Agege Lcda, encouraged all staff to be efficient in their roles to help the Council progress.

He emphasized his commitment to providing adequate

staff welfare. Additionally, two staff members, Rufai Adekunle Ayoade and Adebayo Adejare, were presented with a special cash award of one hundred thousand naira each for their hard work.

The Chairman announced that this would be a new tradition for his chairman's award at every staff forum, in addition to the regular

awards given out.

Outstanding staff members from various departments were also recognized and awarded with plaques for their dedicated work ethic. Furthermore, former NULGE officials of Orile Agege Lcda were honored with a merit award for their selfless leadership during their tenure.

Comrade Sewanu, the NULGE President, expressed gratitude to all the staff in attendance and appreciated the Chairman and Management team for their dedication to staff welfare.

He assured that his administration will continue to bring positive developments and

support to all NULGE members in Lagos State.

Also present at the event were the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Leader of the House, Secretary to the Local Government, Executive Committee members, Council Manager, Council Treasurer, HR Officer, and other management staff.

Babatunde Opens Oshinkalu Estate Road

Kehinde Adeleye

Chairman of the Orile Agege Local Council Development Area, Mr. Johnson Babatunde has reopened the recently

rehabilitated roads at Sholabunmi Williams Crescent and Oshinkalu Estate.

The Council Boss started repairing the

crumbling road, installing interlocking stones, and building drainage. A few months ago.

The head of the council

claims that Sholabunmi Crescent will also act as a detour to ease highway traffic congestion and discourage drivers from traveling against the

flow of traffic.

Present at the dedication site were the Vice Chairman, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Kafilat Akanni-Pedro, SLG Mr. James Agboola, Super

for Works; Mr. Kasim Abatan Super for Agric; Super for Health; Chief OluBisi Adedokun, Super for Chieftaincy Matters

Ayra Starr Sparks Online Gender Debate

By Nurudeen Adebayo

Nigerian singer Ayra Starr has ignited a lively gender debate online after sharing her vision for women if she were to serve as president for a day, highlighting her unwavering support for the feminism movement. In a recent interview, the artist expressed her response upon learning that former U.S. President Barack Obama included her song 'Rush' in his playlist. When asked about her hypothetical actions as president for a day, Ayra Starr stated, "If I was president for a day, I will make sure women don't have to pay for anything. No woman has to pay for anything, everything free. All the bags, all the jewelry, food. Women and children won't have to pay for anything." While her statement

resonated positively with some, it faced backlash from male fans who expressed their displeasure in the comments section. One user, @gani_jonathan, humorously remarked, "But women still dey pay to enter your concert lead by example." Another user, @kayzywizzy, suggested, "She's taking feminist too serious, very soon na only women go dey stream her song." Critics, such as @Ogbon_Sodiiki, argued, "Free things don spoil all of una life," while @_unofficial001 claimed, "They said they want equality. But all they want is dominance." @mikeoriv questioned, "Eh eh, so men came to this life only to sufferrr??" Meanwhile, @MhezQuing asserted, "Biologically, women are already paying way too much. We deserve this one abeg!"



Media Personality, Do2dtun, Calls for Men's Self-Investment

By Nurudeen Adebayo

Amidst Custody Battle Media personality Oladotun Kayode, popularly known as Do2dtun, has offered insights into the importance of men investing in themselves, even within the context of marriage. The on-air personality, currently navigating a custody battle with his estranged wife, Taiwo

Oyebanjo, emphasized the need for men to consider their well-being alongside the responsibilities they bear for their spouses and children. Do2dtun acknowledged the unfortunate reality that men are often the least considered on the societal food chain. Despite their roles as providers, he stressed

the importance of self-care and encouraged men to think about their own needs. In light of his personal experiences, Do2dtun urged men to manage their relationships wisely, suggesting that they should lower their standards when necessary and avoid overextending themselves beyond what they can

maintain. His advice reflects a broader perspective on the challenges men face in maintaining their mental and emotional well-being. Online reactions to Do2dtun's advice were mixed, with users sharing their own experiences and perspectives on balancing self-care and family responsibilities. One user, ogu30, expressed, "Bro I learnt the hard way too.. I

love myself and enjoy myself the more. One day we will all die ." bolajisparks shared, "I learnt the hard way. Now I know my worth and living life. May God grant us all the best of partners and family that will be filled with love no matter what." Sharing a personal anecdote, realsam09

wrote, "My ex-wife took my kids away for two years, after much effort I lock up. Now, they see the results on me, now them dey use the kids as a point of contact to get access to me . This life just keeps building yourself ." funnyboneofficial quoted, "Don't give what you can't sustain" emphasizing the importance of managing one's commitments.

Rotary Club Donates Delivery Aids to Health Center in Epe

By Mohammed Adekola



The President of the Rotary Club of Gbagada South, District 9110, echoed a passionate call for government collaboration and partnership to foster the growth and development of communities. His remarks came amidst the donation of delivery aids to Papa Primary Health Center during an interview in Epe, marking one of several events lined up for a 3-day retreat held in Epe.

Rotarian Ola Balogun emphasized that while the government plays a pivotal role in community development, it cannot

fulfill every need alone. He urged all tiers of government to create an enabling environment for clubs like Rotary to carry out their humanitarian aims, advocating for strategic partnerships to overcome financial challenges and maximize impact.

"We realized that the government cannot do everything. You can imagine that the military guys built the health center, and we have come to provide equipment. Our advice to all tiers of government is to create a platform for clubs like Rotary to carry out their aims. We appeal

that they partner with us to make impacts despite our financial challenges," he stated.

Highlighting the global reach of Rotary clubs, Rotarian Ola Balogun stressed that their humanitarian efforts transcend geographical boundaries. He explained the significance of choosing Epe for the donation exercise, citing the ancestral ties of a significant number of club members from Gbagada South with the Epe community. The decision to support expectant mothers with delivery aids was deemed essential, reflecting the club's commitment to promoting safe childbirth

practices.

Having conducted a thorough needs assessment before the donation, Rotarian Ola Balogun underscored the importance of addressing the identified gaps in healthcare infrastructure. In alignment with the Rotary Year's theme for 2024, "Create Hope in the World," he expressed the club's aspiration to make a meaningful difference by filling crucial gaps in healthcare provision.

During the donation ceremony, which was well attended by community stakeholders,

including the representative of Oloja of Epe Land, High Chief Dada, the wife of Olu-Epe, Olori Aribike Adewale; the representative of Epe LG Chairman and Ward A5 Councilor, Mr. Rasheed Oluwo, and the Epe LG Supervisor for Education, the Rotary club's Charter President, Rotarian Okunola, emphasized the importance of proper utilization and maintenance of the delivery aids by the health center management. He reiterated the club's commitment to supporting community intervention projects

despite financial constraints, stressing the need for accountability and sustainability in healthcare initiatives.

Rotarian Richard Afolabi, along with Rotarian Niyi Adegbite and other club members, demonstrated solidarity with the community by participating in the donation exercise. The delivery aids, valued at over a million naira, included essential medical equipment such as an electrophoresis machine, a baby weighing scale, and oxygen delivery connectors, among others.

Ibeju-Lekki Trains Revenue Staff On Digital Applications

By Mohammed Adekola

Ibeju-Lekki Local Government under the leadership of its Chairman, Engr. Abdullahi Sesan Olowa organised a one-Day Training on Digital Application to revenue generation for Area Officers, Revenue Staff and newly engaged Revenue Agents.

The training which was



supervised by Members of the Ibeju-Lekki Revenue Board (ILRB) in conjunction with Centrifly Platform Limited was aimed at training Revenue Officers of the Council and Revenue Agents on Digital mode of revenue collection through E-ticketing Applications to simplify the collection of revenue and

enhance the Enumeration process while clearly stating the Supervisory role of Area Officers in charge of the four Area Offices of the Council.

The process is one of the Hon. Abdullahi Sesan Olowa Administration's way of reforming the system to increase internally generated revenue in order for the Local Government to

adequately provide basic amenities for the people from levies and rate generated.

At the programme were the Revenue Vice - Chairman, Hon. Shafari Saheed, the Head of Finance and Accounts Department, Mr. Sunday Onabanjo, the Internal Auditor, Mr. Oyegunle Oluwakayode John, the Head of ICT, Mr. Ogunkoya Ololade and Area Officers among others.

Opajobi Urges Gas Retailers to Imbibe Safety Precautions

Kehinde Adeleye



Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government is increasingly experiencing gas explosions due to the frequent fire accidents caused by poor professional conduct of gas business operators. To address this issue, the CDC leadership led by Pastor Samuel Olu Opajobi held a special meeting with all gas operators in the local government at the CDC Multipurpose hall on Felix Crescent in Ifako-Ijaiye. During the meeting, Pastor Opajobi welcomed CDA Chairmen and gas retailers, emphasizing that while everyone has the right to engage

in legitimate businesses, it should not endanger others' lives. He expressed concern over the frequent gas explosions in the local government, stating that this poses a serious threat to residents' lives and property. He highlighted the need to maintain the peace and harmony in the local government, commending Prince Usman Akanbi Hamzat's peaceful administration. He stressed the importance of collaboration between the local government, law enforcement agencies, and the

community to address gas explosions by regulating gas operators' adherence to safety precautions. Moving forward, the activities of gas retailers will be closely monitored to reduce the occurrence of infernos in the community, with a commitment to taking decisive action. Thereafter, the Chairman of the Association of Gas Retailers in Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government, Comr. Emeka commended the gesture of the community leaders and assured them of the association's cooperation with them in ensuring the safety and security of the citizenry. He stated that safety is a core priority in their

business and they do not take it for granted but the issues lie with the bad eggs in the business who do not join the association and as a result jettison the standard operating practices which may eventually lead to catastrophe. He mentioned that the state government, through the Ministry of Special Duties and Inter-Governmental Relations, has been providing training and licensing for gas operators to enhance their professionalism and reduce risks. He urged the CDC to collaborate in purging the industry of unethical

practitioners. Hon. Ibrahim Aronjure, the Special Adviser on Security and Special Duties to the Executive Chairman of Ifako-Ijaiye Local Government, commended the CDC for their efforts in creating a safe and thriving community. He stressed the importance of gas operators being proactive and prioritizing safety to foster peace. As a result, it was unanimously agreed upon to establish operational guidelines, which will include:

- I. Ensuring all gas retailers are dully registered with their association.
 - II. All Gas retailers must possess the fire safety certificate (being issued by the state)
 - III. Acquiring standard fire extinguishers
 - IV. Location of the business should be considered fit before operation.
 - V. Opening and closing time should be agreed upon
- The meeting was an extraordinary meeting as it was attended by security agencies; LNSC, NSCDC, the national and state officers of the retail gas operators alongside members of the association.

Nigeria Amputee Football Federation President Aims High



By Saheed Afolabi

The President of the Nigeria Amputee Football Federation (NAFF), Paul Maduagwu said he's aiming for the top prize in the 2024 Amputee Africa Cup Of Nations (AAFCON) holding in Cairo, Egypt in April. The NAFF are however seeking for funds to participate at the continental showpiece which will serve as qualification for the 2026 Amputee Football World Cup. Maduagwu said the NAFF are battling with lack of funds for the

AAFCON which includes flights fees, accommodations and other logistics. He said the tournament is important for Nigeria as it will serve to be the qualifying stage for the Amputee Football World Cup. "Lack of funds is a major issue to us which includes Flights fees, accomodations and other logistics," he said. "The Cairo 2024 AFCON is really important for us to attend as it will serve as a qualifying stage for the Amputee World Cup in Morocco."

Maduagwu stated the NAFF have done everything within their reach at the ministry level but they have to seek for funds elsewhere since reaching the World Cup is the main target. "We have done all it's necessary to do at the ministry level to go for the Nations Cup. "There's no fund have been their response but we can't fold our hands and not seek for funds elsewhere. "Our target is that we are aiming high and why it's important to say that the world cup ticket is our aim is because we want to make the country proud."

Passion Drives Amputee Footballers - Nnanna Nwakpa

By Saheed Afolabi

Nigeria international, Nnanna Nwakpa says the passion for the game is what drives the Nigeria Amputee Footballers also known as the Special Eagles.

The Special Eagles are set to take part in the 2024 Amputee Football Africa Cup Of Nations (AAFCON) in Cairo.

Nnanna said the love of the game as being the burning fire that's pushing the players.

He described football as the only thing that gave them the second chance to life and how he lost his limb four years ago but football gave him hopes on not giving up on life.

"One thing we the player have in common is the love of football and we have our stories including those who got amputated as a result of injury," he said.

"What keeps the players together is the love of football, it's like a second



chance to life.

"I lost my limb four years ago and football has given me hope and so many of us have been part of the game. We have people like John Michael who got injured while playing football and he's back playing football and this is the chance for him to represent his country globally.

"I couldn't make it to the team that went to the last nations cup in

Tazania because I was trying to get my balance but I went back to work on myself and worked my way to the team. "Most of the players are playing for passion and the game is what we are there for.

"We have left the financial aspect for the management to handle. We are here to fight for the shirt."

Nigeria have won three bronze medals and one silver at the AAFCON.

Sports Betting: Nigerian Man Hits Jackpot, Becomes Multi-Millionaire

By Nurudeen Adebayo

A Nigerian man, identified as Kenny Blaze, has become a multi-millionaire overnight after recounting his astounding success in sports betting on the platform Bet9ja. Taking to social media platform X, Kenny Blaze shared his incredible journey of turning a N4.5 million stake into an impressive N102 million win, surpassing his previous record of N100 million achieved in 2023.

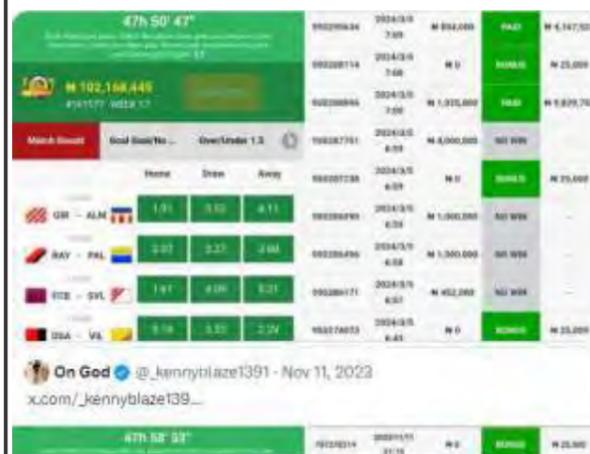
Accompanying his announcement, Kenny Blaze posted a

screenshot showcasing his dashboard and the substantial amount he had won. In his statement, he proudly declared, "Four months later I decided to beat my own record winning on virtual... N102 million win overnight with an initial N4.5 million deposit." The news of Kenny Blaze's extraordinary win garnered various reactions from social media users. @Ekitipikin offered congratulations but expressed caution, saying, "Congratulations, you found your way around it and it's tempting but

olorunmake." Meanwhile, @Mrbankstips acknowledged Kenny Blaze's prowess in virtual betting, stating, "When it comes to virtual, you're in a league of your own."

Others like @Emakingtips and @Sont_mano marveled at the substantial return on investment, with the former suggesting, "Give me the 2 million at the back and more funds go land you in folds... Make I drop aza," and the latter expressing amazement, "Wow 4.5m deposit chop 102m for virtual. Omo na only you dey run am."

In a more personal appeal, @DaaaVid_ congratulated Kenny Blaze on his success and hinted at potential philanthropy, saying, "Waking up to see how splendid your night went. More of God's blessings upon you. I have this feeling you would want to bless the street, and to be fair please sir, I have this problem that has been causing me sleepless nights."





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