

The Executive

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NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM

SUMMARY



GOVERNORS' FORUM

Triumphs Over Emefiele
And The Central Bank Of Nigeria

Also Inside

NBA sides with Govs, people against monetary policy



Governors, CBN Governor resolve battle of the pronouns

It's the economy. Only the brainbox of a country understands it, and the correlation between it and every action a nation takes. As Governors the socio-economy of their states, read: the well-being of their peoples, is even more paramount. On the Nigeria Governors' Forum platform, Governors deployed every method, fair and foul, to get the CBN Governor to take another look at his policy on the redesign of the Naira, to no avail. They resorted to litigation. The difference between the Governors was that there are Governors and there are Governors who must go by some pronoun. Finally, Governors had their way. Kaduna Governor Mallam Nasiru el-Rufai celebrated this victory with pomp when he said Governors have finally subdued Emefiele. Zamfara Governor Mutawalle said it is victory for the Nigerian people. The two Governors were among the first to head to the Supreme Court on the matter. It is why we are, yet again, revisiting the Naira redesign subject. It seemed the dramatis personae have resolved the matter at their level but it is in reality, not yet celebration time. While one section of the community is asking that the CBN makes more money, old or new, available, the traders in the country are still skeptical and refusing to, in many places to accept the old notes. On the whole we have experienced firsthand how the economy permeates every sector. As you would have seen, the Naira redesign influenced the final outlook of the 2023 elections. There were surprises and disappointments everywhere in a spirit where politics had dominated things and relegated statecraft to the backbenches. Worst hit is the health sector, except for the critically ill. At the NGF Dr Ahmed

the NGF's Health Advisor and his team are running low-key on policy implementation because Governors are either politicking or helping their party. Whenever they mention the sector, it is only to narrate their successes. One of the most elaborate is Lagos state and its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Professor Akin Abayomi, who by now needs no introduction to Nigerians was on TVC to explain how Lagos did it. It is a lesson that many states would benefit from. We serve it here verbatim. As is becoming customary, we review the positive activities of our partners. The Nigeria Bar Association had sided with the NGF throughout its conversation with the Central Bank of Nigeria on the Naira redesign subject. We obtained its position, and its entire theory is presented in this edition. Still on the war on pronouns between the Governors and the Governor of the CBN. Economic experts have weighed-in on the matter and one compelling analysis emerged from a comparative analysis on the policy in India. It depicted how deeply the CBN had thrown the country into an economic mess. It is in series and served here hot. Finally, on pictorials. We can't always win. In our last edition we told the story of the new CEO at GAVI, the vaccine giant. But we didn't file photos due to circumstances beyond our control. This week we present a photo speak of the party for Pate as an apology. Please watch. This edition provides its own variety that is worth reading. Enjoy it.

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Profile:

Claudiana Ibijoke Carrena

Claudiana Ibijoke Carrena was born on January 8, 1967 in the Lagos Island neighborhood of Popo-Aguda. Her father was Paulinus Olusegun Carrena. Like most residents of the historic neighborhood, the Carrena family are Brazilian descendants.

Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu graduated from the University of Lagos Akoka, with an MBBS and went on to earn a Post-graduate diploma in Hospital and Health Management (PGDHM) as well as a Diploma in Anesthesia (DA). She also has a Masters Degree in Public Health (MPH) and a Masters Degree in Business Administration (MBA).

Ibijoke Sanwo-Olu worked for the Lagos State Government for 25 years rising through the ranks of Medicine to become the Chief Medical Director and Chief Executive Officer at Harvey Road Comprehensive Health Centre in Yaba, before being transferred to the General Hospital in Somolu.

She is also a women and children advocate.

Injecting bacteria into tumours may trigger the immune system to attack cancer – Study

Introducing bacteria to a Tumour MicroEnvironment (TME) creates a state of acute inflammation that triggers the immune system's primary responder cells to attack the tumour.

This was according to a study led by Australia's Garvan Institute of Medical Research.

The research team said that injecting inactivated *Staphylococcus aureus* microbes into a tumour could stimulate the first-responder cells, neutrophils, to destroy the tumour in a range of animal cancer models.

This includes Lewis lung carcinoma, triple-negative breast cancer, melanoma and pancreatic cancer.

Published in the *Cancer Research* journal in February, the study indicated that most solid tumours generate a sub-acute inflammatory response, which favours a TME that stimulates tumour growth and suppresses anti-tumour immunity.

The study, however, shows that certain microbial preparations can shift the TME towards an acute inflammatory response, which inhibits cancer growth.

The researchers noted that neutrophils generally defend against diseases, but they can also promote tumour growth, partly because they produce molecules that protect the tumour and suppress other parts of the immune system.

"Since attacking bacteria is the reason for neutrophils' existence, we had a good inkling that introducing bacteria would bring neutrophils to the site and activate them,"

Tatyana Chtanova, co-author of the study and head of the Innate and Tumour Immunology Lab at the Garvan institute, said.



"We discovered that it's very effective in getting them to kill the tumours, chewing up their matrix," Chtanova added.

The study found that neutrophils also change at the gene expression level, as they begin to secrete molecules that attract fighter T cells as reinforcements.

"We've shown that microbial therapy is an effective booster for checkpoint inhibitor therapy, another type of cancer immunotherapy.

"We hope this synergistic effect will ultimately lead to better treatments to improve outcomes for patients with advanced or previously untreatable cancers," said Andrew Yam, first author and Ph.D. student at the Garvan Institute.

The team is planning to develop the therapy over the next three to five years to fight metastasis and the spread of cancer to other areas of the body, with clinical trials to follow. (Xinhua/NAN)

Covid tested the competence of our government – Akin Abayomi



FREE EYE SURGERY PROGRAMME

Health is wealth, which is why the Lagos state is massively investing in the sector. From the way and manner, the deadly Ebola disease was contained in Lagos, preventing the spread to other parts of the country, the state indeed, saved the nation from calamity. As a gateway to Nigeria, Lagos receives visitors from all over the world who come into the country. This has made the state vulnerable to communicable diseases. However, with the resilient health policies of the State government, it has always contained the spread of such. Covid 19 was another deadly disease the state handled with dexterity. The appointment of Professor Akin Abayomi as Commissioner for Health by Governor Sanwo-Olu has placed a round peg in a round hole. Under his watch, the state government has spread Primary Health Centres across the nooks and crannies of the state. Through brilliant and inclusive health policies, coupled with the establishment of various health centres with State of the Art equipment, Lagos is not just a HUB for the health sector, but a pace setter in delivery of quality health services! This explains why patients from across the country and beyond seek medical services in the Eko city. Given the importance of health to human existence as emphasized by the United Nations, Lagos has really placed the sector on a higher pedestal. The call for the sustenance is loud from the people who directly benefit from the services, writes Maryam Okesanjo in Abuja.



PEOPLE RECEIVING DRUGS AT THE SANWO-OLU FREE MEDICAL OUTREACH SERVICES



PROF. AKIN ABAYOMI BAGGED A SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD AT THE 4TH PHYSICIAN OF THE YEAR AWARDS (POTY)



A PATIENT GETTING TESTED AT THE FREE EYE SURGERY PROGRAMME

◀ Here with us is the Lagos State commissioner for health, professor Akin Abayomi.

We're looking at the review of Lagos State and we can't help but remember the work that was done during COVID, and many have said that COVID did not overwhelm the nation. Could you give us some excerpts of what happened during that time the challenges you had to face and how you triumphed over COVID?

Yes, we all recognize that Lagos is one of those mega cities. It's a coastal city, it's low lying, it's rapidly expanding, it has a very vibrant airport, it has multiple seaports, it has an international border, and it has connections to the rest of Nigeria. To feed 20 to 30 million Lagosians you need to bring in a large volume of livestock so when you put all that together it's low lying heavily populated coastal megacity. It adds up in Bio Security parlance to high levels of vulnerability so as you know in government, you look at what's happened before, you look at what's happening around the world,

We learnt a lot of lessons from Ebola and so for us it was time to be aggressive and offensive and make sure that we diminish the opportunity for the virus to get into the Lagos community

and you look at what the projections are. And we've been experienced in the past with Ebola, with Lassa fever, with Cholera, with Flu and we know how fast things can get out of hand. So, in Lagos, we have this offensive approach to pandemic or biological shocks. We know our vulnerabilities and we know that we need to intervene very quickly to make sure that whatever comes our way we can get on top of it so after Ebola we were very worried about what could have happened in Lagos.

We were able to get on top of Ebola but many of us travelled to Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea and saw what devastation Ebola rendered onto the economies, so we came back to Lagos and with the then commissioner for health, Dr. Jide Idris, were able to build on the past infrastructure to develop what's called the Lagos State Bio Security Road Map.

WHO was telling the world to expect a global pandemic within five years of that Ebola outbreak, which meant somewhere around 2019-2020, we were to expect something big. And indeed, they were right. We were listening to them, and we were preparing, most people didn't know what we were doing.

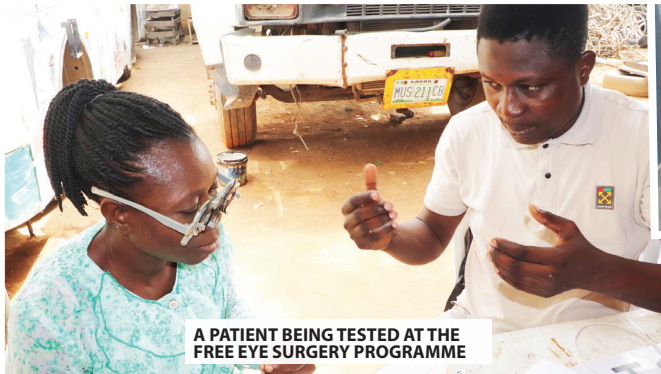
You know, why are you preparing for something so big? What's the deal? But luckily, we were able to be ready and the day we heard about Wuhan, it was almost a couple of weeks after we commissioned our Lagos State Bio Security Infrastructure. And



A PATIENT UNDERGOING A VISUREF MACHINE EYES TEST AT THE FREE EYE SURGERY PROGRAMME



A PATIENT UNDERGOING CATARACT SURGERY AT THE FREE EYE SURGERY PROGRAMME



A PATIENT BEING TESTED AT THE FREE EYE SURGERY PROGRAMME



FREE EYE SURGERY PROGRAMME

but let's talk about the primary health care centers, what was the situation that this current administration met and how has it upgraded so far?

We inherited several primary healthcare facilities. We have over 320. A lot of them were just repurposed buildings, so a local government check Identify an old office or a school and say OK we're going to convert this into PHC and that's one. Very few of them were purpose built and many of them are very old going back 20-30 years so many of them have some degree of wear and tear. The other thing is that according to the national rollout plan for PHC's we're supposed to have at least one PHC per ward. Now the way Lagos is designed, we find that sometimes we have two or three PHC's in a ward and some wards don't have any. So, we're looking now at two things, Mr. governor has put in motion, what we call the blueprint for medical transformation which is looking at infrastructure and designing infrastructure fit for purpose at all three levels primary, secondary and tertiary, which are the general hospitals and our specialist hospitals. So we got a group of international designers working with local designers who are experts in medical design and we've developed what we call the blueprint for our transformation and the first role of the blueprint was three prototypes of our PHC's and these are beautifully designed, taking into consideration the movement of the sun, ventilation, the soil, the heat, infection, prevention control, cultural practices and we've come up with this beautiful design and we're now beginning to roll them out in Lagos State especially where we don't have a PHC in a ward.

so, we just ramped things up and in cabinet we identified that Lagos was at some point not gonna be able to avoid COVID-19 because of our movement between Nigeria and China, movement between Nigeria and Europe, we started to see COVID spreading around the world and it was just a matter of time, so when we got our index case we were actually fairly well prepared. We had the infrastructure, we had the human resources, we had the equipment, we learnt a lot of lessons from Ebola and so for us, it was time to be aggressive and offensive and make sure that we diminish the opportunity for the virus to get into the Lagos community. Once it got into the Lagos community, we were able to put in place all our standard operating procedures to make sure that community transmission was minimized.

But as a government, when you heard that The Economist voted Lagos and Nigeria the 4th best covid management environment what they said was not how many people were saved, or how many people didn't die. What they said was these are the countries that were able to keep the economy open, despite a pandemic. At the end of the day, we call it the tripod of bio security. You can be too heavy-handed with your public health response and at the same time cause economic hardship which leads to breakdown in law and order and loss of security and then you lose more people from economic hardship and your breakdown in law and order then you would lose from the pandemic itself, so government must find that balance and Mr. governor really was fast to respond. He sat up the incident command structure which means that the management of COVID was elevated through the Cabinet, the highest level of authority which made it easy for us to make quick decisions and get on top of things.

I know that when you compare Lagos to most of the states it's nothing to compare really. We have a lot of people coming into Lagos for medical care, what they can't access in their states

How many have been built so far?

Well, we've just started the first four. The blueprint came out two months ago. It took us about two or three years. During COVID we're working on this blueprint, so we've just got permission and approval to start. We're doing 4 this month we're starting and then another 10 throughout this year. Going back to the established PHC's, all those ones that we have identified that need refurbishment, we have approval to start working on those, which we've started. We've started going out to all the places where we've identified these PHC's. And the Primary Healthcare Platform you see is the foundation of the PHC and Governor Sanwo-Olu has said look, we need to decongest the general hospitals and the specialist hospitals because we need to manage most of our patients at the PHC level.

I would like to also talk about infrastructure, but we need to talk about affordability of healthcare, and I would like to know what this present administration and Governor Sanwo-Olu is doing with Lagos State Health Management Agency?

That is the agency that's in charge of insurance for Lagos residents for health coverage.

Every state in Nigeria has what is called the Social Health Insurance Scheme, but for us in Lagos it is called the ILERA EKO. Ilera Eko is your health insurance and up until late last year, insurance was voluntary. Now the new National Health Insurance Authority signed a new bill. Mr. president signed the NHIA bill which had a major change in the law which said that State Health Insurance is now mandatory.

Which means that if you're Nigerian or if you're a Lagosian and you're living in Lagos, you're doing business in Lagos, you're breathing Lagos air, just like if you are driving a car in Lagos, you must have insurance to live in Lagos. So, every citizen needs to buy an insurance. We've done a lot of actuarial work on it. It's very modest. It's only 8500 naira per person for an entire year. That insurance affords you access to a bouquet of services. Basic services like hypertension, diabetes, birth control, immunization, management of pregnancy, birth or delivery of a child, caesarean sections minor surgical procedures, the bread and butter of what all our citizens go to doctors for. For 80% of patients, their conditions can be managed at the Primary Healthcare level. Complications get referred to the general hospitals and if the general hospitals with all their specialists cannot manage it, maybe it's a super complicated case then that goes to LASUTH or to LUTH. Of course, we have private sector that are doing incredible work as well. So, we have this hierarchy of referrals, but we want the bread and butter to remain at the primary healthcare and the insurance that we're talking about everybody with that insurance you take your card you go to your PHC or your private sector wherever you're enrolled and once you hand in your card you don't get charged until you exceed the bouquet of services and then there's a fee for service after that - COVID was a case in question that really tested the competence of this government.

I wanted to talk about COVID. I had COVID. I went to the centre I had to do the test and I went back and forth. How did you get the doctors to stay? What exactly did they do to get the doctors motivated enough to stay and fight with you guys?

For the covid response, the medical personnel were divided into two - we have our Bio Security team who are concentrated around the Infectious Diseases Hospital. They are accustomed to dealing with very dangerous pathogens. So we've been training them for about four years before covid. We had extensive training as if we knew that we



needed other medical personnel. In case we needed to recruit them, but what we did during COVID was to separate COVID management from normal medical care.

So, we only managed COVID in about three or four of our hospitals and left the rest to deal with normal healthcare requirements of our citizens. And that was a deliberate strategy on Mr. Governor's part, because we didn't want collateral damage. So, if every hospital is designated a COVID hospital then people will not go to the hospitals because they will be scared to catch COVID so people going for hypertension, diabetes, surgery, birth and everything, in fact we dropped the tariffs completely during that COVID period. And we saw increased surge of people going to the rest of our hospitals for normal medical care whilst we maintained COVID in designated centres.

Was that insurance package something to motivate those doctors to stay? Because this is part of their duty, they had this call but was there any special package?

Yes, we had a hazard allowance. A special hazard allowance and lots of overtime because they were working 24/7 they couldn't even go home. We kept them in hotels because we were worried at the beginning that they would infect their families. We fed them, gave them special hazard allowance, so they were prepared for the outbreak.

Yes, I just wanted to mention when you talked about insurance you talked about the 8500 that Lagos residents must pay, but is there anything that has been done by this administration for those who cannot afford to pay that amount?

Yeah, we have what's called the Equity Fund, where the

government has a register of less privileged citizens who might even find 8500 a bit too much to pay for the year of insurance. So, through that Equity Fund and through a lot of donors we are able to pay for citizens who feel that that fee or that tariff is too much for them and so we pay, so they can access the ILERA EKO.

Let me come to the issue of research, because during COVID, one of the things we saw was the fact that many universities were seeing what they can do, how the vaccines that were provided was research based on university work and we were really worried that in Nigeria we didn't have any kind of proper Research Institute that was providing solutions. So, I heard somewhere, I don't know if it was right or not, but Lagos State was also getting involved in research. Is that correct? Can you verify?

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, from the word go because you could have done a cut and paste as in UK? in Brazil? Or what they doing in China? And just apply the same to Lagos but from the very first index case, and then the subsequent cases we already put together a very strong research team from University of Lagos and from Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, and there was a team of about 40 researchers that were looking at every case of COVID and observing the Natural History of COVID in Lagos and we found that there was significant differences between COVID here and COVID In different parts of the world and indeed other parts of the world found that COVID behaves differently in different ethnic groups so we were able to adjust our response based on our indigenous understanding of what COVID does to our citizens and that made a very large difference to how we're able to respond to the outbreak.

We know that we have a pandemic of brain drain across Nigeria and doctors just feel they're not getting enough commensurate to the work that they're putting in, so they opt for other countries. What has Lagos State done, so far, to keep their doctors here and what's the plan going forward?

So, we're looking at several things. First, talk about medical brain drain, it cuts across all cadres you know, doctors, nurses allied medical professionals. So, we're looking at the environment and going through this blueprint I mentioned before, which is transforming the infrastructure landscape of Lagos State. Where you work, like I'm looking in this studio this is a nice studio you want to come to work, so our infrastructure is very important for the mental welfare of our staff so we're going through a massive transformation.

We're building new hospitals, the masi street Ojo general, the psychiatric unit, Infectious Disease Research Centre etc. These are all beautifully designed hospitals that take into consideration the welfare of our staff and our patients and look at climatic factors as well. We're looking at their welfare packages they have a lot of issues around their packages which we've being addressed consistently with them. We're looking at medical tourism, so we want to make the Lagos State development plan for the next 30 years. Lagos needs to be the medical destination for medical tourism. For us to do that we need to look at why our doctors are leaving Lagos and going to seek health in India, Dubai, South Africa and we found that there are about five top reasons for that so we're concentrating on that, one of them is cancer, the other one is heart and kidney and orthopaedics. So, we're developing these centres here.

People talk about japa, so its brain drain and brain gain. Our doctors



LAGOS STATE COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH, PROF. AKIN ABAYOMI (M) WITH OTHER LAGOS STATE MINISTRY OF HEALTH OFFICIALS, DISPLAYING A CODE OF CONDUCT HAND BOOK FOR TRADITIONAL MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS

from Nigeria in the diaspora they want to come home. But what are they coming home to?

So, we need to now develop those specialist facilities for them. They've gone away and spent ten, fifteen, twenty years excelling in specialties, subspecialties of medicine and then you ask them come back home. Come back home to do what? A brain surgeon needs a place to come home and do brain surgery, a heart specialist needs a place to come back and do specialist heart investigations and procedures, a kidney specialist needs a place to come and do transplant, a cancer specialist needs a place where he can offer modern cancer therapies. So we are developing these facilities so we're trying to reduce the push factor by improving the conditions of our doctors and medical personnel at home and we're reversing it so that even if they do go and there's nothing wrong with doctors going abroad. Doctors go abroad to develop themselves; they go abroad to get a broader experience of what's going on in the international environment. We want that, but what we do want is we want them to come back and that's the brain drain strategy that Lagos is using, and it has started working because our facilities are already attracting medical specialties from the diaspora. You know these specialists that work in the diaspora, they're very mobile. You know they can even carry out a consultation on zoom, they fly in they do what they want to do, they fly out they go to another part of the world.

The world is changing. Digital technology is changing the way we deliver healthcare and I think we're taking advantage of that. Well, we just wanted to know what packages you have for other members of the health team- the nurses, the lab scientists all of the other people? We're working on every cadre. We're engaged with all of them. Is it the allowances, the salaries, the accommodation, we're looking at accommodation for medical personnel in all our hospitals now so that we can make life more comfortable for them, we're looking at hazard allowance, we're looking at better pay packages, we're looking at more comfortable working environment, we're looking at just elevating their respect and the whole atmosphere of the medical ecosystem.



Gov Bagudu launches distribution of free drugs to pregnant women, children

Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu has launched the distribution of free drugs to pregnant women and children under the age of five procured by his administration at the cost of two hundred million naira.

The drugs are being distributed to all General Hospitals and Primary Health Centres throughout Kebbi state in furtherance of efforts to improve maternal and child healthcare.

Performing the ceremony in Birnin Kebbi, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu acknowledged that the state government has achieved a lot, in the health sector in healthcare delivery services in both rural areas and urban centres.

The Governor commended his wife, a Medical Doctor, Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu for her immense support, determination and mentorship towards improving the health status of the populace, specifically identifying her giant leap in

cancer control and treatment.

He was glad that Kebbi state was in the forefront of introducing indigent cancer fund to help cancer patients.

Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu also recalled medical outreaches conducted in the state by the government, informing his audience that a nurse confessed to him that she appreciated such exercise tremendously because she was opportuned to work with medical professionals from around the world.

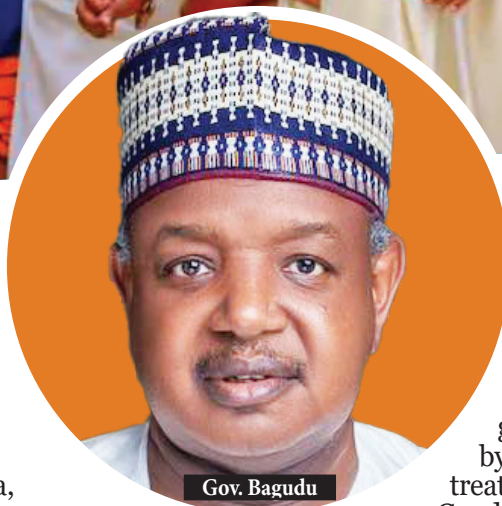
The governor was similarly full of commendation for the entire staff in the health sector, development partners and other stakeholders who made it possible to attain the remarkable health indices in Kebbi state.

Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu announced that his administration has also released two hundred million naira to be shared among all the General Hospitals and Primary Health Centres in the state, to cushion the hardship of health workers and patients arising from the naira redesign policy.

In a remark, the Wife of the Governor, Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu, said the free distribution of drugs to pregnant women and children this Thursday was not the first time of such intervention by incumbent administration to improve the health of women and children.

Dr. Zainab explained that the support fund of two hundred million naira to hospitals approved by her husband to mitigate difficulty brought about by present

The drugs are being distributed to all General Hospitals and Primary Health Centres throughout Kebbi state in furtherance of efforts to improve maternal and child healthcare



Gov. Bagudu

cash crunch was in the spirit of good governance from a responsive good government.

The wife of the governor indicated that the pioneer health institution in the state would receive five million naira, all general hospitals four million naira each while primary health centres and other categories would enjoy proportionate amount.

Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu thanked Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu for his immeasurable support and encouragement to the health sector and also commended the entire health team which enhanced healthcare services and paved the way for making cancer control in Kebbi state second to none nationwide.

The Commissioner for Health, Rt. Hon. Ja'afar Muhammad announced that the drugs for pregnant women and children were procured at the cost of Two Hundred Million Naira following the approval of Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu while the Chief Executive of the State also approved the release of another two hundred million naira to be shared among hospitals as relief from the effect of the cashless policy.

The commissioner thanked the Governor for alleviating the health needs of women and children as well as the elderly, saying that the gesture was highly benevolent because most patients could not afford to buy drugs.

Rt. Hon. Ja'afar Muhammad mentioned energetics, antibiotics, anti malarials, nutrition supplements, surgical materials for C/S, consumables, cancer treatment consumables, cancer treatment consumables, antidiaroeolics,

anti hypertensives ANC supplements, infusion/ other intravenous fluids, general consumables, syringes, cotton wool and gloves as materials provided by the government for relevant treatment.

Goodwill message were delivered by Babatunde Lawal from Nutritional Internationalist, Micheal Abdu from Global Health Supply Chain, Chief Samu Kola from Breakthrough Nigeria, Dr. Abdurrashid Bello from International Health Programme, Dr. Sule Mele from the World Health Organization, and Sheikh Suhaib from UNICEF.

They unanimously identified with the improvement recorded in the health sector in Kebbi state under incumbent administration, reaffirming their resolve to maintaining active partnership in health care services.

Special recognition and commendation were made to Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu and his wife, Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu for uplifting the health status of the citizenry in all fields of health services.

In votes of thank, the acting Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health Dr. Shehu Nuhu Koko thanked Governor Abubakar Atiku Bagudu for graciously approving the procurement of the drugs being distributed and also approving support fund to hospitals to alleviate suffering brought about by naira redesign policy.

Dr. Shehu Nuhu Koko extended similar appreciation to the wife of the Governor Dr. Zainab Shinkafi Bagudu for her contribution to the health sector and providing necessary support to the care and treatment for cancer patients.

LASSA FEVER: 22 STATES RECORDED 109 DEATHS IN JANUARY – NCDC

The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) said 22 states of the federation recorded 109 deaths from Lassa Fever in January 2023.

The NCDC via its official website said the infections were recorded in 89 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

The NCDC said that the 22 states include Ondo, Edo, Bauchi, Taraba, Ebonyi, Kano, Benue, Niger, FCT, Cross River, Adamawa, Gombe, Delta, Bayelsa, Kogi, Nasarawa, Oyo, Plateau, Enugu, Imo, Anambra and Jigawa.

According to the agency, the country also registered 676 cases of Lassa fever in nine weeks.

“Between Feb. 27 and March 5, 40 cases and five deaths were recorded in five states and 16 LGAs.

“The states are: Ondo -11, Edo -16, Bauchi has five, Taraba – five and Ebonyi -three,” it said.

The agency further said that five deaths were recorded; two in Ondo, one in Bauchi, and two in Ebonyi.

It noted that 72 percent of Lassa fever cases in Nigeria were reported from Ondo, Edo, and Bauchi, while 28 percent from two states.

“Out of the 72 percent, Ondo has 33, Edo 29, and Bauchi 10,” the NCDC said.

The agency further said that cumulatively, from week one to nine, 109 deaths were reported with a case fatality rate (CFR) of 16.1 percent, lower than the CFR for the same period in 2022 (18.6).

It stated that the predominant age group affected was between 21 and 30 years (Range: one to 93 years, Median Age: 32 years) while the male-to-female ratio for cases was 1:0.8.

“The number of suspected cases increased compared



to the same period reporter in 2022. One new healthcare worker was affected in the reporting week nine,” it said

The NCDC added that the national Lassa fever multi-partner, multi-sectoral Emergency Operations Centre had been activated to coordinate response activities.

Other rodents can also be carriers of the virus.

The virus spreads through direct contact with the urine, feces, saliva or blood of infected rats, and contact with objects, household items, and surfaces contaminated with the urine, feces, saliva, or blood of infected rats.

It can also be spread by consuming food or water contaminated with the urine, feces, saliva, or blood of infected rats.

Person-to-person transmission can also occur through contact with blood, urine, feces, vomitus, and other body fluids of an infected person.

Tuberculosis: Breakthrough Action Appeals Govts To Increase Health Sector Funding

Breakthrough Action Nigeria is urging the three tiers of government to increase its financial investments in the health sector in order to win the fight against tuberculosis in Rivers State, in particular, and Nigeria in general.

Senior Programme Officer II, Breakthrough Action, Nigeria, Dr. Edo Joseph Paul, made the call while speaking at a one-day training on tuberculosis (TB) and tuberculosis related-reporting for journalists, organised by the Rivers State Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Breakthrough Action for Social and Behaviour Change in Port Harcourt.

Paul disclosed that recent statistics indicate that the rate of tuberculosis infection in Nigeria has reduced, saying that a total of 6,361 persons were diagnosed with the ailment in Rivers State in December 2022.

He noted that the essence of the training was to bring media personnel in Rivers State together to understand the challenge of TB in the state which he said included poor funding and lack of access to some communities and to collectively have a conversation on how to improve awareness around TB generally.

He stressed the need for improved awareness and sensitisation of the public on TB disease.

“Basically, if you look at the Rivers State statistics on tuberculosis presented today, you will find out that the state made significant improvement in the discovery of more tuberculosis cases from over 2,000 cases to over 6,000 cases over the last one year.

“We also know that media coverage for TB activities is also a challenge because we need more funding to be able to put more jingles out regularly. We also need more funding for media persons to be able to collect human-angle stories that present the real challenge that people face in the communities and present to everyone across the state.

“Maybe, here in Rivers State we think that the reach of the media activity needs to improve and at this level, a lot of efforts are being done but more is needed for everyone in the villages to get these messages,” Paul said.

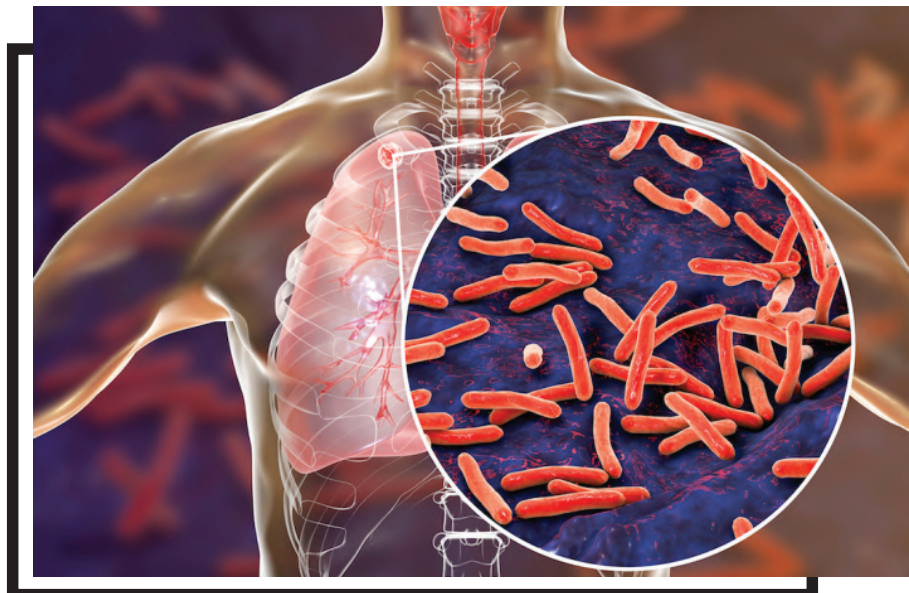
Focal Person, Rivers State TB Unit and Representatives of Advocacy Community and Social Mobilisation, Tina Oghani, Senior Programmes Manager of KNC, Dr. Nera Khadiri-Ene and Mrs Nkoyo Umoh, in their separate presentations, said the fight to eradicate tuberculosis must not be left to health workers alone, saying that all hands must be on deck to achieve the goal.

They disclosed that all government/public and some private facilities (medical centres, including chemists) in the state had been engaged for free testing and treatment of tuberculosis.

They urged that anybody with obvious tuberculosis symptoms such as sustained cough for two weeks or more, excessive sweat at night, chest pains, fever, and loss of weight, among others, should visit the nearest health facility for testing to establish whether the case is a TB infection and also warned against discrimination and stigmatisation of those infected or treated of TB.

“

Basically, if you look at the Rivers State statistics on tuberculosis presented today, you will find out that the state made significant improvement in the discovery of more tuberculosis cases from over 2,000 cases to over 6,000 cases over the last one year



WHO: 55 COUNTRIES FACE HEALTH WORKERS SHORTAGE



According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), 37 African countries are currently facing health worker shortages and no fewer than 55 countries are struggling with serious health worker shortages as they continue to seek better-paid opportunities in wealthier nations that have stepped up efforts to recruit them amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Health workers shortage have threatened their chances of achieving universal health care by 2030 – a key Sustainable Development Goals pledge.”

The actions of wealthy countries that belong to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) come under scrutiny in the WHO alert, among other regions.

“Within Africa, it’s a very vibrant economy that is creating new opportunities,” Dr. Jim Campbell, the Director responsible for health worker policy at WHO, said in a statement on Tuesday.

“The Gulf States have traditionally been reliant on international personnel and then some of the OECD high-income countries have really accelerated their recruitment and employment to respond to the pandemic and respond to the loss of lives, the infections, the absences of workers during the pandemic”.

To help countries protect their vulnerable healthcare systems, WHO has issued an updated health workforce support and safeguards list, which highlights nations with low numbers of qualified healthcare staff.

“These countries require priority support for health workforce development and health system strengthening, along with additional safeguards that limit active international recruitment,” the WHO insisted.

Supporting the call for universal healthcare for all countries in line with the SDGs, WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, called on all countries to respect the provisions in the WHO health workforce support and safeguards list.

“Health workers are the backbone of every health system, and yet 55 countries with some of the world’s most fragile health systems, do not have enough, and many are losing their health workers to international migration,” he added.

Although many countries do respect existing WHO guidelines on the recruitment of health care workers, the principle is not accepted wholesale, WHO warned.

“What we are seeing is that the majority of countries are respecting those provisions (by) not actively recruiting from these (vulnerable) countries,” Campbell said.

“But there is also a private recruitment market that does exist and we’re looking to them to also reach some of the global standards that are anticipated in terms of their practice and behaviour.”

Mechanisms also exist for governments or other individuals to notify WHO if they are “worried” about the behaviour of recruiters, the WHO official said.

International recruitment is not prohibited by the WHO health workforce support and safeguard list, however, it is recommended that governments involved in such programmes are informed about the impact on the health system in countries where they source qualified health professionals.



GO-CARES

Governor Inuwa's Effective Apparatus For Human Capital Development In Gombe State

It is about two years after the whole world was thrown into pandemonium as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global health emergency that has wreaked havoc and inflicted far-reaching consequences on the economy, basic services, food security and overall social prosperity and livelihood of the people; the effects that we are yet to fully recover from.

As the governor worriedly noted, "We saw global economies enter recessions, livelihoods disrupted and millions of jobs lost in an unprecedented manner with recovery just beginning, this makes the GO-CARES programme not only timely but essential. The Challenges of Covid-19 and the global economic meltdown have certainly made us

more strategic and focused in our development drive".

In Gombe State, like in other states of Nigeria, the pandemic led to the closure of many MSEs, loss of jobs, and stalled provision of basic services in poor communities thereby increasing the population of those living below the poverty line.

In his efforts to cushion these adverse effects in the Jewel state, the governor has leveraged the available opportunities, upturning the fortune of Gombe State by improving its human capital base, thereby taking the state back on track for economic recovery and development.

As an accountant and a fulfilled businessman with enormous experience in the private sector, Governor Inuwa happened to be among the few state governors

that subscribed to the Federal Government's Economic Sustainability Plan, the Nigeria COVID-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus, NG-CARES and domesticated the programme to support his people in responding to the COVID 19 crisis by restoring the livelihoods and food security of poor and vulnerable households and promoting recovery of Medium and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the state.

In line with the provision of the good policies of the APC-led Administration, as encapsulated in the 10-Year Development Plan of Gombe State which is in consonance with the Sustainable Development Goals No.1 of the United Nations aimed at eradicating poverty by the year 2030, Governor Inuwa formally



launched Gombe State Covid-19 Action Recovery and Economic Stimulus, GO-CARES project in July 2022.

More than 8.5 billion Naira was budgeted to support 288,700 households, farmers, small scale businesses across the nooks and crannies of the state, and since the formal flag-off, the beneficiaries of different packages of the programme have been receiving their interventions through livelihood grants, social transfers among others.

From this amount, N3.4 billion was allotted to supporting poor and vulnerable households with grants and basic services to improve their living standard and reduce the effects of COVID-19 on them.

Another N3.4 billion was allocated to support farmers with farm inputs to increase food production and enhance the performance of the food supply value chain thereby strengthening food security in the state. Under this category, hundreds of farmers have collected bags of fertilizer, herbicides, insecticides, hybrid seeds, and other farm inputs free of charge.

More so, the sum of N1.7 billion was disbursed as grants to MSMEs to support their operational activities and help them recover from the huge losses suffered during the pandemic.

To ensure equitable distribution of the beneficiaries across all regions of the state, In each of the 2988 polling

“

The launch and implementation of the Gombe GO-CARES by Governor Inuwa is just a consolidation of the long list of social and economic interventions already embarked upon by the Gombe State Government

units of the state, a good number of men and women received 30,000 and 20,000 Naira respectively; totaling about 24,820 beneficiaries.

Another set of 1000 youths comprising young men and women also benefited from GO-CARES facilities relating to their vocations. Facilities that include Laptop computer systems, P.O.S Devices, and Solar facilities among others.

In another sub-programme, GO-CARES assisted about 62,876 people with 10,000 Naira each every month for 2 years uninterruptedly under Labour Intensive Public Work (LIPW) package to improve resilience and

mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the livelihood of the especially common man.

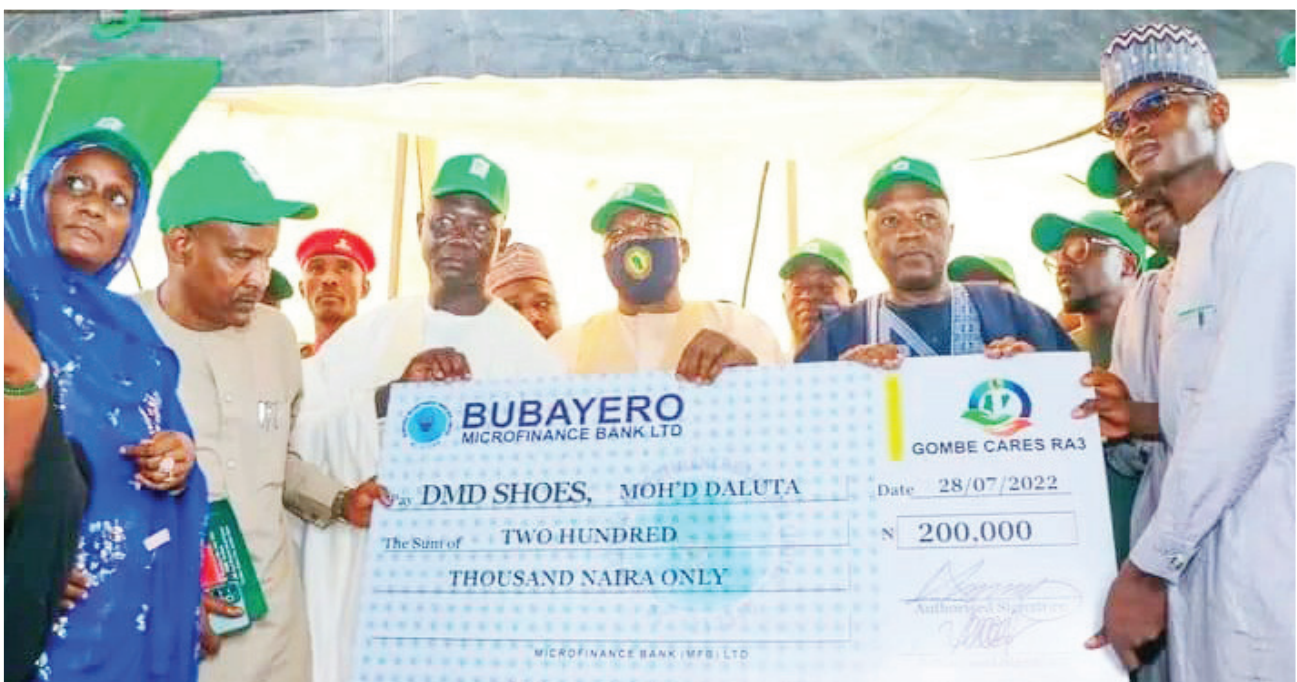
Recently, Governor Inuwa Yahaya approved the disbursement of the sum of 450 million Naira for Go-Cares, where 9,000 beneficiaries cashed out 50 thousand naira each across all the wards of the 11 LGAs of Gombe State.

These huge interventions are meant to improve access to basic services to support economic recovery, boost food production and enhance the livelihood of the people in the post-COVID era.

The launch and implementation of the Gombe GO-CARES by Governor Inuwa is just a consolidation of the long list of social and economic interventions already embarked upon by the Gombe State Government. The Inuwa-led Administration has consistently placed a premium on human capital development; perhaps with a clear understanding that people without a financial opportunity for economic growth may just be a perfect recipe for catastrophe and disaster.

But, with GO-CARES, among other good policies and programs, Gombe State has become a model in human capital development accelerating more and better investment in people for greater equity, economic growth, and prosperity.

– Written by Safiyanu Danladi Mairiga from Gombe state.



Gov. Ganduje Donates N250m to Victims of Kano Markets Fire Outbreak

Governor Abdullahi Umar Ganduje of Kano State has, on behalf of the government of the state, donated the sum of Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira (N250m) to the victims of fire outbreak that engulfed Kurmi, Singa and Rimi markets.

At a special briefing with the marketers, at Africa House, Government House, Kano, a day after the governor paid a sympathy visits to the markets, he disclosed the contribution.

In the presence of renown marketers, the governor sympathised with all the victims and prayed for Allah's Blessing and Divine replacement from Allah of what they lost at the outbreak.

"A Committee was raised to screen the magnitude of their tragic involvement. Some lost their properties more than others. This committee will look into that and see how individual victims should be assisted," reveals.

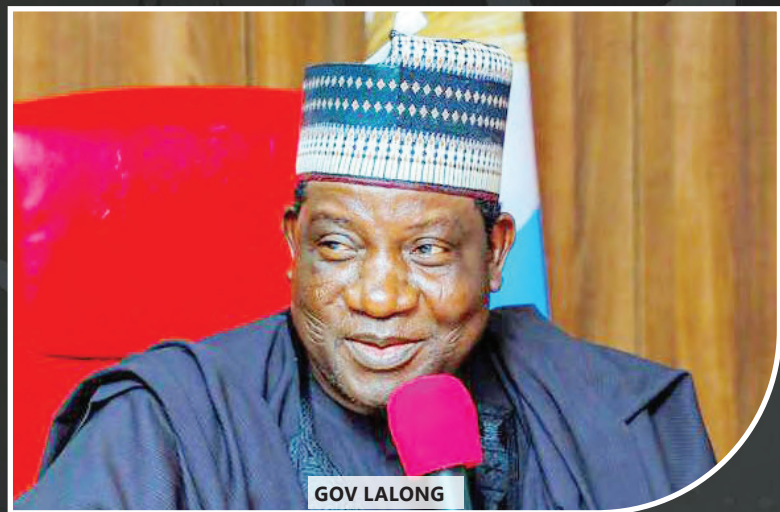
He reiterated that, what is given to them was not to compensate what they lost, "...but just as donation to you marketers. May Allah protect you and your properties," he prayed.

Governor Ganduje assured that the sum was already handed over to the committee for onward distribution to the affected victims.



GOV. GANDUJE

Lalong signs bill for remuneration for traditional leaders in Plateau



GOV LALONG

Gov. Simon Lalong of Plateau has signed the Plateau Traditional Rulers Renumeration bill 2020, into law.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at Government House Jos, the governor, said that law would encourage traditional leaders in the discharge of their duties.

He described the leaders as the custodians of culture, who are critical in maintaining peace and security in their various domains, crucial in shoring up development.

He assured them of prompt implementation of the law before he leaves office, saying that Plateau has set an example by the action for other states to emulate.

Lalong said that as the chairman of the Northern Governors Forum, he would encourage his members on the formulation of such law in their various states.

"I am going to circulate this bill to all the northern

governors," he said.

He thanked the state assembly for their cooperation and contributions in making the law a reality, saying that its interpretation in to indigenous languages was necessary to ensure understanding its content.

Speaking earlier, the commissioner for Justice, Mr Chrysanthus Ahmadu gave the synopsis of the law, saying it has 17 clauses and two schedules bothering on appointments of traditional leaders, their salaries and other administrative matters.

He said that the law provides for the appointment of traditional rulers to be in accordance to their various native laws and customs.

He explained that the sources of their salaries shall be from the consolidated revenue fund of the state.

He said that the law provides that death benefits of traditional rulers which is to be 50 per cent of their annual basic salary, should be given to their families in such circumstances.

The commissioner explained that law stipulates that the use of sirens and flags should be only for first class traditional rulers, while the second and third would use only flags.

He said that the law highlights the autonomy of each chiefdom quoting that "Each chiefdom is autonomous and therefore no graded traditional ruler shall interfere with the affairs of another chiefdom,".(NAN)



Maiduguri Market

Zulum lauds pace of reconstruction work

...Says donations well documented



Gov. Zulum

Borno State Governor, Babagana Umara Zulum, has expressed satisfaction with the progress of ongoing rehabilitation works at the Maiduguri Monday market which was engulfed by fire on Sunday, February 26, 2023.

Zulum made this known today (Tuesday) when he paid an assessment visit to the market, the repairs of which is being accelerated to hasten return of trading activities.

The governor was received and conducted round the market by the Monday Market Committee chairman, Engr Zarami Dungus.

"I am satisfied with the level of work done. This committee is doing a very great job and we have to support you. Most importantly we should beef up the security here to ensure the absolute safety of people's property", Zulum said.

Governor Zulum had in response to the fire disaster, approved the release of N2 billion with one billion meant as emergency palliative to victims and another one billion naira for the start of reconstruction of the market.

The governor supervised the commencement of work last week.

.. All donations well documented, Governor assures

Meanwhile, Governor Babagana Zulum has explained that donations so far received in respect to the Maiduguri Monday Market fire incident have been properly documented and urged mischief makers to stop spreading misleading information on the social media.

Giving the breakdown, Zulum said, a donation of N300m was made by the Zenith Bank Ltd, N100m each by the Vice President-Elect, Kashim Shettima, the Yobe State Government, All Progressive Congress (APC) and the Chairman of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND), Alhaji Kashim Imam.

Others, he said, are the donation of N50m by Martix Nigeria Ltd, N20m by Al-Ansar Foundation and N10m by the Senator representing Southern Borno, Mohammed Ali Ndume.

"I heard some information going round on social media, we have to be very careful. Some people are posting ghost donations which we know nothing about. There was even a social media report that one person has donated N500m, but we did not receive such an amount, people should take note of that", the governor said.

"At least after every two weeks, the committee as the custodian of the special account meant for the market fire incident should inform the public of the amount of money received", Zulum noted.





GAVI:
Pictures from Dr Pate's party



1 Prof. Pate cuts his cake

2 Guests surround Prof. Pate for a group photograph

3 Pate and Traditional rulers at the party

4 Prof Pate and Ace broadcaster Moji Makanjuola

5 Prof Pate welcomes a guest to the party

6 Group photograph of the guests and Prof Pate

Scenes from a Party for Pate



1 Dr Pate in a chat with World Banks Country Director, Dr Shubhan Chaudhuri at the party

2 Friends of Dr Pate

3 Friends and countrymen: Moji Makanjuola (Extreme left), Dr Faisal Shuaib of NHPEDA (Extreme right) and Dr Pate (C)

4 Dr Pate in a group picture with his guests

5 Good friends of Pate at the function

6 Moji Makanjuola and a friend

7 Pate's friends at the party

8 Prof Pate welcomes a to the party



Cashless Economy : Between India And Nigeria

By Bassey Ubong

Has it been all bad news in India following the 'demonetization' policy which had a cashless economy as a goal? A verdict of no can be returned for two reasons. First, independent payment platforms, such as PayTM and Google-Pay, among several others came on board to make small and bigger transactions easier than what commercial banks offered.

With high level of reliability, millions of people latched on and the digital or financial technology (fintech) business blossomed to reduce the need for physical cash.

The RBI matched the moves by way of the establishment of a Unified Payment Interface (UPI) system. Along with related actions the system witnessed smooth operations and propelled India towards the top of the cashless economy.

Well, the second reason came by way of a concept in Greek drama theory. The heavens intervened via "deux ex machina" to bring resolution to a cul de sac or closed end. COVID-19 flew in from China without invitation, forced people indoors, and made cash unattractive, because the viruses were feared had the capacity to spread through raw

cash.

Cashless tools witnessed a spike from 2020 and life no longer remained the same, as folks in religious circles say.

In Nigeria we are told the CBN tested the cashless policy waters way back in 2012, with Lagos as the guinea pig.

Given the success recorded at Lagos, the apex bank went further afield, but pulled back when it met resistance, because of the high level of under banking with the rural sector as the key.

But in 2022, the Bank, maybe with a political backdrop, tested a fast flowing stream with two feet. The result has gone into history books, which show Nigeria at the 2016 status of India. CBN had learned nothing from the Indian experience beyond the scramble to control an octopus out of control.

A key issue if the private platforms will play a sizable part in the CBN drive for cashless economy will be the cost of android phones as well as ability of the populace to manipulate them as expected. The phones are at present out of the reach of majority of Nigerians. Can the government get cheaper phones with same capabilities?

Nigerians should expect reliability given approval and registration of the platforms by CBN. At this stage, CBN should go on a publicity blitz to give confidence to potential users of the apps. The platforms may take the cashless policy to the expected plateau faster than forced moves such as cash lock up.

To leave public education to the operators will fail, because CBN has kept quiet to date about the destructive online loan platforms which circled the country for the past three or more years. The current platforms offer loans, which, for me, generates goose bumps.

One thing begs the question: does the Central Bank of Nigeria have a Research Department? If it does, did the management of the bank task it with a pre-policy review to prepare for the launch?

Or the Department advised, but management played God? We may ask further, does CBN run an interface facility to promote inter-platform transactions?

At present, it takes hours to days to execute transfers. Has CBN assisted banks to upgrade their network capabilities? These are the horses which should have been ready and placed before the cart known as cashless policy.

Currency will continue for decades to be at the centre of commerce worldwide. Coins are no longer used in Nigeria, but in developed countries they have their niche. As quoted in the first part of this post, in Britain an official campaign exists to sustain the existence of cash in the economy.

Public policy requires considerable time for preparation with analyses of the several implications and ramifications at the point of commencement.

In manufacturing, market survey takes time and money and may determine the question of whether to proceed or to avoid.

When practical, technical, and professional issues are placed in the political domain and worse, regarded as a vindictive tool, negative outcomes must be expected. Change of currency must be seen as an economic activity first and foremost.

In India research shows that near

100% return of the cash in circulation. It will happen in Nigeria given Governor El-Rufai's announcement to the people of his state, which the Supreme Court has affirmed.

Citizens of all persuasions may be unable to reuse the old notes, but they will receive full value for their holdings. What would we have achieved after the loss of lives and businesses?

For the future, all agencies of government as well as private businesses should make research a critical arm of their operations. Some agencies see staff of the Research Departments as part of archives where stubborn or lazy people are consigned.

If CBN had listened to its Research Department, Nigerians would have been saved the disaster of the currency change episode. Developed countries as a routine change currency in terms of denominations and looks, but these take place over periods and in ways which generate near zero dislocations in the system.

Nigeria has no reason to suffer for three years like India or wait for *deux ex machina* which came in 2020 anyway. We just need to learn from the mistake of others the way Japan does in technology development.

We hope CBN will escape the brand of being the Central Bank which ran the worst currency change exercise in world history and be recorded as such in the Guinness Book of World Records.

In the immediate future, the Bank can catalyse and fast forward the cashless scheme by publicity and actions to strengthen private payment platforms along with injection of some liquid cash into the economy – after March 11th of course.

Permit a post-script by way of breaking news. Few banks paid upwards of N20,000 to individuals in old N1,000 denominations in some cities, but traders and service outlets rejected the money because CBN has kept mum.

This may be as a result of embarrassment, because it signals apparent failure of the principal flank of the offensive – need to disable corrupt and counterfeit currency.

By December 31, 2023 as directed by the Supreme Court, 101% plus of the old Naira would be back in the banking system!

The one way out would be to make enough new notes available, but CBN says the country lacks the capacity to print enough. India fared better with a statistic of 99.3%. So much for demonetization or currency change by two developing countries, one in Asia, one in Africa.

Nigeria's Cashless Economy

Lessons from India

By Bassey Ubong

Would it have been possible to reduce or eliminate the pain of the 2023 currency redesign policy in Nigeria with the benefit of related experience? American philosopher, Professor George Santayana left words on marble, when he said: "Those who forget the lessons of history are bound to repeat it."

Align this with the old cliché, no one in the present age needs to reinvent the wheel. One can say the sad consequences of the Naira redesign policy were avoidable if the key staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) had reviewed the case of India and guided the Federal Government as appropriate.

On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India made a televised broadcast to the people of India to announce the immediate withdrawal of two denominations of the Indian rupee. Following the night of the announcement, the 500 and 1,000 denominations of the currency ceased to be legal tender from that day.

As expected, crises erupted in a country where no less than 190 million people had no bank accounts, and by extension were strangers to digital financial transactions.

Daily living and business transactions relied on cash at most levels. Why did the government embark on such unprecedented action with little preparedness?

The government indicated its intentions to include the need to trap 'black money' held by money laundering syndicates, counterfeit rings, insurgents, kidnappers, and corrupt persons in the public and private sectors.

Long-term goals included a cashless economy and an increase in tax collections. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) believed the drive for more tax revenues stood at the forefront.

The fallouts were many and painful



to citizens and the national economy was made worse by what the Financial Express of September 21, 2017, described as "Shifting the goalposts" as the game went on.

The CBN has experienced this problem of movement of goalposts as it scrambles to cope with the unintended consequences of a policy that went wrong by day one.

Within a short period, India witnessed strikes, litigations, protests, many human pains, and loss of lives.

These have played out in Nigeria, and with the Supreme Court declaration, citizens continue to watch for further developments.

Given the documented outcomes, how did the Indian 'demonetization' project fare? The Guardian of August 30, 2018, indicated the return of about 99.3% of the withdrawn currency into the banking system.

Of the 15.41 trillion rupees before November 8, 2016, 15.3 trillion rupees found their way back to the vaults of banks. Several corrupt and criminal persons kept their ill-gotten wealth in gold, real estate, and foreign bank accounts.

Those who held cash followed the

several changes introduced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and used poor people, relations, and employees to meet deposit limits.

In a fairly funny move, the RBI introduced a new 2,000-rupee denomination, which somehow worked in favour of large cash holdings and the cashless policy.

In Nigeria, we have heard of kidnappers who give out free old notes, and we are aware of state governments that rushed to pay salary arrears with the old notes.

Reviews of the Indian exercise indicate a marginal increase in tax revenues to the government after the demonetization of 2016. Persons who dodge tax know how to circumvent whatever policy government arranges. Nigerians know little about private tax, which means the currency change had no such policy in mind.

The RBI had to print the lower denomination notes to meet regular use. This placed considerable strain on government resources to the point the RBI paid fewer dividends to the government a year after.

Market fire:

Sanwo-Olu donates N100m to Akere traders, begins reconstruction

Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu on Wednesday, March 15, donated N100 million to traders in the burnt Akere Motor Parts and Allied Dealers Association (AMPADA) market in the Ajegunle area of Lagos State.

The governor also laid the foundation for a new market building.

Speaking during his visit to the burnt site of the Akere market on Wednesday, Sanwo-Olu said the efforts by the Lagos State Government were to help alleviate the plight of the traders who lost goods and cash in the fire when the market got burnt last week.

He said: "A week or less ago we promised to come back here to give immediate support to the people who were affected by the unfortunate incident. This is not politics; it is just a coincidence that it is a political season.

"I am happy to be here to lay the foundation for the new market building. Now it is a storey building and a small compensation that will alleviate the suffering and loss of our traders here. It is for us to make a clear stand that we are not about ethnic or religious division. We are a government that is people-centred and working to make things better for them, no matter what party or where they come from.

"As long as they are law-abiding, keep to laws guiding the environment, and respect the heritage of where they do business, they will always be accommodated.

"This will also send a clear message to people who want to divide us that we won't let a small number disunite a large number of people. We won't give them a space in Lagos and our government."

Sanwo-Olu also urged Lagos residents

to come out and vote massively for him on Saturday, noting that the 18 per cent vote cast during the presidential election is not a good representation of the Lagos population.

Speaking earlier, the Chairman of Ajeromi-Ifelodun Local Government Area, Hon. Fatai Ayoola thanked Governor Sanwo-Olu for keeping to his promise of helping the people.

He promised that the people in the council would reciprocate the good gesture by voting for Governor Sanwo-Olu during Saturday's governorship poll.

Also speaking, the Market Chairman, Mr. Izuchukwu Uba, assured Governor Sanwo-Olu of the trader's support in Saturday's gubernatorial election.

Traders at the market thanked Sanwo-Olu for the good gesture promising to come out enmasse on Saturday to vote for him and all APC candidates.





Governors' Forum

Triumphs Over Emefiele And The Central Bank Of Nigeria

By Dele Olowu
Additional story by Gambo Umar

Godwin Emefiele is spending his eighth year as Governor of Nigeria's Central Bank. Most tenures of this kind enjoy a brand-type limelight. However, Emefiele has instead been more copiously served by controversies, the harvest of the last two years, being particularly internecine and professionally disappointing.

In particular, his deployment of the monetary policy committee has been a signature failure as Emefiele has been entirely unable to control and account for the volume of Naira in circulation. One of the depressing features of his tenure and that of our current economy, is the phenomenal escalation of the Naira in circulation without a commensurate increase either in infrastructure or in manufacture, in salaries or in employment, not to talk of youth empowerment.

Under his watch, the Naira in circulation has increased from 1.46 trillion Naira in 2015 to 3.2 trillion Naira in 2022. Spectacularly, of the 3.2 trillion Naira in circulation, a whopping 2.73 trillion naira or 84% has been outside the banking system. This, grotesquely, has for years now, made Emefiele and the Central bank helpless onlookers of fiscal proceedings in Nigeria. This is the reason he has lashed about, experts posit, adopting one device or the other to bring sense to our disorderly economy. The NAIRA redesign policy, given its unpleasant outcome, may have been produced,

more by deep frustration than by deep thinking. The Central Bank of Nigeria, last year announced the redesign of 200, 500 and 1000 NAIRA notes and plans to end the use of the old notes by 31st January 2023. The notes were in short supply and seeing the hordes which besieged banks and financial institutions, the legal tender status of the old notes was extended to February 10. The pain in the land was huge and widespread. Banking halls came under attack and sometimes physical harm for Nigerians, as several Governors had described, was real.

Trading, transportation, health education and more, went down by as much as 60%. On the 3rd of February, when hardship became even more palpable, three state governors, standing for their government and people, Kaduna, Kogi and Zamfara, sued the federal government at the Supreme Court for a reversal of the policy.

The Governors cited the continued scarcity of Naira notes and the hardship it brought to the citizens. Five days later, the court issued an interim order suspending the implementation of the deadline set by the federal government and directed that the old and new notes should continue to circulate parallelly pending the resolution of the case.

The challenge thrown by the Governors was of great consequence. It was in a sense, a class action waged on behalf of the common people against a bumbling authoritarianism. Furthermore, the aggregation of governors against a President from the same party was also interesting. It meant that idealism may have triumphed over partisan solidarity. Our Governors, long calumniated for being anti-people, are now seen in the ranks of those who seek to advance the public good.

The Central Bank and its bedraggled Governor mounted a rear-guard action. Unmoved by the court's pronouncement, the CBN insisted that the old notes had ceased to be legal tender after February 8. On the 16 Of February, President Buhari restored the validity of the 200 Naira notes and insisted that the 500 Naira and 1000 Naira notes had seized to be legal



tender.

The Governors' Forum party responded adopting a hint of populism as the number of plaintiffs rose to 16 after 6 new states were added during the hearing of 22nd February, a mere three days before the election. Naturally, the elections, mimicked the economy in its near cashless outlook. It affected minions and leaders alike, incumbents and aspirants, the employed and the unemployed. No exceptions. The court adjourned its final judgement until February 3rd.

Nigeria's 36 Governors enjoy unanimity on this issue. Under the platform of the Nigeria Governors' Forum, they appealed to President Buhari to extend the timeframe for the implementation of the currency policy. Their sense of solidarity on this matter has remained solid, and using their numbers, have accused the apex bank of "currency confiscation". They have also called for the halting of the CBN's plan to deny the old currency notes its value. This matter has gone back and forth, producing surprising cohesion and sometimes breaking up old partnerships. One example is when Kaduna's Governor Nasiru el Rufai's broadcast of 17th February seemed to countermand



President Buhari on the currency issue. Now, nerves seemed to have been calmed and a new national resolution is in place.

The Governor's Forum has doubtlessly done a yeoman's job and Emefiele may have been forced to eat humble pie. According to Governor el-Rufai, "we finally won the battle against Emefiele and those elements using him, now that the CBN has said the new and old notes should co-exist."

The central bank of Nigeria has directed commercial banks to dispense and receive old naira notes as legal tender across the country. This has come hours after a Presidency directive said the CBN had no reason not to comply with the ruling of the Supreme court on the Naira redesign policy. (CBN Memo)

The directive follows Buhari's administrations obedience to court orders. Buhari's view that he does not need to prompt the CBN before it complies with court judgement is neither here nor there. If there is non compliance, a presidential push can help matters. An environment of non compliance can only create a growing sense of impunity. Whichever way it is looked at, this resolution is a victory for the new diligent populism

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The Governor's Forum has doubtlessly done a yeoman's job and Emefiele may have been forced to eat humble pie

promoted by the Governors' Forum. It is also a victory for the rule of law. The Speaker of the House of Representatives Femi Gbajabamila, was surely on firm ground when he spoke glowingly of the initiatives of the NGF. In his remarks on the Governors, Gbajabamila reasoned that "this was the right thing to do," adding that "It showed their (Governors') collective adherence to the rule of law and their determination to take bold steps that will serve the best interests of the Nigerian people. "This golden handshake from the legislature to the executive is an uncommon gesture indeed.

Furthermore, emboldened by this sweet victory over the CBN, several Governors have been threatening fire and brimstone against banks that run foul of the judgement. The Supreme Court had described Emefiele's Naira redesign policy as a breach of the 1999 constitution. Before the CBN succumbed to the vagaries of the judgement, ten states had proceeded to file contempt charges against the Federal Government and its Central Bank. (Ten States File Contempt Charges)

Finally, this policy has left monumental consequences in its trail but even the Governors themselves are not oblivious of some of its salient advantages, many of which remain to be seen but the few that have quickly surfaced to the benefit of the Nigerian people include, for example, the monumental reduction in corruption, penny pinching at public functions etc. It has, by implication, forced Nigerians to live within their means as not many have cash to throw around as before. Most transactions can be traced thus making accounting processes less cumbersome. There are others too numerous to mention that Governors are willing to address at the appropriate time, according to notes from their last meeting.



Anambra State Governor, Chukwuma Soludo, has told the residents of the state to report any bank that refuses to accept old N200, N500, and N1,000 notes.

Soludo, who said commercial banks have been directed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to dispense and accept old naira notes from customers, vowed to shut down any defaulting bank in Anambra State.

The governor said this via a statement.

He disclosed that the CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele, confirmed to him that commercial banks have been directed to dispense and accept old denominations from customers.

Governor Soludo stated: "Commercial banks have been directed by the Central Bank to dispense old currency notes and to also receive same as deposits from customers.

"Tellers at the commercial banks are to generate the codes for deposits and there is no limit to the number of times an individual or company can make deposits.

"The Governor of the CBN gave the directive at a Bankers' Committee meeting held on Sunday, 12th March, 2023. The Governor, Dr Godwin Emefiele, personally confirmed the above to me during a phone conversation.

"Residents of Anambra are therefore advised to freely accept and transact their businesses with the old currency notes (N200; N500; and N1,000) as well as the new notes.

"Residents should report any bank that refuses to accept deposits of the old notes. Anambra State Government will not only report such a bank to the CBN, but will also immediately shut down the defaulting branch," Soludo said.

Soludo: I'll shut banks rejecting old naira notes in Anambra



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Tellers at the commercial banks are to generate the codes for deposits and there is no limit to the number of times an individual or company can make deposits

Kogi governor Threatens to arrest, prosecute those rejecting old Naira notes



Gov. Bello

The Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello has threatened to arrest and prosecute those rejecting the old Naira notes. The Governor stated this in a statement issued by the state's Commissioner for Information and Communications, Mr. Kingsley Fanwo in Lokoja.

The governor described as “unacceptable” and “demeaning” the continuous rejection of the old Naira notes in spite of the supreme court ruling.

“This administration will not stand and watch some persons and businesses continue to reject the use of the old naira notes, even after the court judgment validating their use.

“To us, rejecting the old naira notes is a clear disobedience of the Supreme Court ruling, which shall be vehemently resisted.

“Anyone who rejects the old naira notes should be reported to the security and government authorities for immediate arrest and prosecution.

“Also, banks that refuse to accept old naira deposits shall be sealed up as the state government will not accommodate financial institutions that willfully disobey court orders,

moreso, the orders of the highest court in Nigeria,” Bello said.

The governor implored all residents of Kogi to endeavor to accept the old notes since the commercial banks have started issuing them (old naira notes) for day-to-day business transactions.

“As patriots, the people of Kogi are bound to also receive it, because we cannot continue to kill our economy after the Supreme Court has granted us freedom.”

“Consequently, the state government has set up a high-powered Committee to ensure full adherence and compliance to the ruling of the Supreme Court as regards the use of the old notes,” Bello said.

He said the committee members include: the state Commissioner for Finance, Budget, and Economic Planning and; Commissioner for Information and Communications.

Others are Commissioner for Commerce and Industry; the State Security Adviser and the Managing Director, of Kogi Enterprise Development Agency (KEDA).

The governor said that the Committee was to ensure that residents take full benefits of the Supreme Court ruling on the old naira notes.

The governor, however, congratulated Nigerians on the historic ruling of the Supreme Court, the highest court in Nigeria.

He explained that it was for that reason that the Kogi Government joined other State Governments in the country to pursue the case, and were victorious.



Emeifele

CBN FINALLY ADDRESSES SUPREME COURT ORDER PUBLICLY, SUCCUMBS TO PRESSURE ON OLD NAIRA

The Godwin Emeifele-led Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has succumbed to the Supreme Court order which states that old N500 and N1,000 remains legal for 10 months.

In a statement released by the central bank's Director of Communication, Isa Abdulmumin, it was officially disclosed to the public that the Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria have been directed to comply with the Supreme Court ruling of March 3, 2023.

The Supreme Court ruled the old Naira notes have not lost their validity after the apex bank phased them out following the deadline of 10 February 2023.

The Supreme Court also ruled that the old currencies remain legal tender until 31 December 2023, as it ruled that the central bank's Naira redesign policy was a breach of the 1999 constitution.

Since the apex court made the judgement on 3 March 2023, both the financial regulator and the Federal Government have refused to address the judgement publicly.

This has made most Nigerians and businesses, including cash-driven trades and the filling stations, to reject the old banknotes, as many are unsure if the CBN and the government would adhere to the Supreme Court order or give different directives as they have done in the past.

However, on Monday evening, 13 March 2023, the central bank announced that it will obey the Supreme Court order, adding that CBN has directed the bankers' committee (a group of bank chief executive officers) to accept old Naira notes.

"In compliance with the established tradition of obedience to court orders and sustenance of the Rule of Law Principle that characterized the government of President Muhammadu Buhari, and by extension, the operations of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) as a regulator, Deposit Money Banks operating in Nigeria have been directed to comply with the Supreme Court ruling of March 3, 2023.

"Accordingly, the CBN met with the Bankers' Committee and has directed that the old N200, N500, and N1000 banknotes remain legal tender alongside the redesigned banknotes till December 31, 2023.

"Consequently, all concerned are directed to conform accordingly," the statement by the central bank reads.

Obituary: Ex-Ekiti deputy governor, Bisi Egbeyemi, is dead



Late Bisi Egbeyemi

The immediate past deputy governor of Ekiti State, Bisi Egbeyemi, is dead.

It was gathered that Egbeyemi died in the hours of Saturday at a private hospital in Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital.

The former deputy governor died at the age of 79.

Egbeyemi, who was born on May 8, 1944, was a lawyer and politician.

He served as deputy governor of Ekiti State from 2018 to 2022.

CBN old Naira directive: Traders still skeptical on collection

Some traders in various markets in the satellite towns of the FCT are still skeptical about collecting the old Naira notes in spite of Central Bank Nigeria's (CBN) directive

Some of the traders who spoke to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at Karu, Nyanya, and Mararaba Markets, said they would not accept the notes for any transaction until further notice.

Mrs Beatrice Ibe, a tomatoes dealer at Nyanya Market, said she was yet to collect or accept the old notes from her customers.

"I am scared of collecting

the old notes, because I feel it will be rejected by the people I buy my goods from.

"Yes, I heard that the CBN has directed that we should start to spend and accept the old notes but what about the people in the villages?"

"Have they also heard about it? I doubt it.

"I am waiting for other traders in the market to start collecting or accepting the old notes before I will collect from my customers," she said.

Mr Alphonsus Iguru, another trader at the Mararaba Market, said he had some of the old N500 and N1,000 notes but yet to spend them.

Iguru appealed to the CBN to improve their sensitisation to the directive; saying that many people were yet to come to terms with the news.

"I have some of the old notes before but nobody agreed to collect them from me.

"We do not know what the CBN will say again tomorrow, so so, I don't want to collect from people now and tomorrow, it will be another story," he said.

Another trader at Nyanya Market, Mrs Philomena Joseph, said she was hearing about the directive for the first time.

"I am hearing this for the first time today because before you came, my husband called me and said he was given

N3,000 of the old notes in his bank today.

"I even pleaded with him not to collect because he will not spend it," she said.

NAN reports that the CBN recently directed commercial banks to dispense and receive old naira notes as legal tender across the country to their customers.

The CBN gave the directive at a Bankers' Committee meeting, according to a statement by its acting Director, Corporate Communications, Isa Abdulmumin.

NAN also reports that the Supreme Court had on March 3 in its judgment, extended the legal tender status of the old N200, N500, and N1,000 notes to until Dec. 31. **(NAN)**

SFTAS

Buni's financial probity earns Yobe N20bn World Bank grant – Aide

The fiscal transparency and accountability of Gov. Mai Mala Buni-led administration has earned Yobe over N20 billion World Bank grant from 2020 to 2022.

This is contained in a statement by Buni's Senior Special Assistant (SSA), Digital & Communications, Mr Yusuf Ali, in Damaturu on Wednesday.

Ali quoted the state's Commissioner for Finance, Alhaji Musa Mustapha as saying that the grant followed the state's impressive performances under the State Fiscal Transparency Accountability and Sustainability (SFTAS) programme.

He said the fund had been utilised for infrastructure development and social services with direct bearing on the lives of the people of the state.

"The SFTAS is a programme by the World Bank and Federal Government of Nigeria to deepen transparency in budgeting processes for qualified states.

"The SFTAS consists of different requirements in form of Disbursement Link In-

dicators (DLIs), which are assigned tasks that the World Bank designed for institutions, as well as states that are qualified to participate in Budgeting and Budgetary Performance Indicators.

"The second component is Disbursement Linked Results, which World Bank's Independent Verification Assessors use as yardsticks to assess institutions and states' performance compliance in relation to DLI's performance evaluation.

"The synopsis of the SFTAS is predicated on Performance for Results. This means that states can earn financial grant reward after performance in all indicators of budgetary requirements; then World Bank rewards the state based on results of its efforts," he said.

The Commissioner said that consistent budget cycle of the state, entrenchment of due process and inclusiveness by the administration played a crucial role in achieving the feat.

"The state earned the grant based on the DLIs that are successfully achieved within the budget cycle and due process.





Fintiri empowers 10,000 women with N50,000 each

Gov. Ahmadu Fintiri of Adamawa has on Tuesday empowered 10,000 women selected from the 21 LGAs of the state with N50,000 each.

Speaking at the occasion in Yola, Fintiri said that a total of 23,000 vulnerable people had also been empowered in the last three years.

He explained that the beneficiaries were placed on a monthly stipends of between N10,000 to N50,000 under the administration's Social Support Programme.

"Notwithstanding these efforts we realized there is still a gap of funding the business take-off which have dampened the inertia of the willing and those committed to earning a living from what they have been trained.

"We also realized that the bulk of our women who run small businesses would have been better with a little support to boost their capital base.

"Today, with this launch, we are opening a new corridor in our commitment to wrestle poverty and signal the triumph of prosperity", he said.

Fintiri said that the corridor was expected to empower at least 20,000 women petty traders and another 30,000 youths annually with cash as a support or start up capital.

"What this means by the UN definition of a household, meaning a woman and four other persons

eating from the same pot, we shall be empowering about 10,000 households, sheltering about 250,000 persons annually", he said.

He urged the electorate in the state to support his reelection bid by voting him for the second term in office to enable him consolidate on the earlier gains recorded.

Also speaking, the Speaker of Adamawa House of Assembly, Alhaji Iya Abbas, commended the governor for measures that have direct bearing on the people and assured him of sustain support.

Abbas also urged the people of Adamawa to give Fintiri a second chance to consolidate on his achievements.

In her address, Mrs Lami Gan'anda, Commissioner Ministry of Women Affairs, commanded Fintiri for all his support for his sustain support to the women in the state.

She called on the women to reward the Governor with their votes on Saturday to continue the good work.

Aishatu Bello, Head of Adamawa Poverty Alleviation and Wealth Creation Agency (PAWECA), said Fintiri administration has remain committed to empowerment and had approved the sum of N2.5 billion for 2023 empowerment programmes.

Bello also urged for massive votes for Fintiri. (NAN)

NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION**Statement of the NBA President,
Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN**

on the naira Redesign Policy: demand for compliance with the judgement of the Supreme Court in suit no.: SC/CV/162/2023 between Attorney General of Kaduna State & 9 ORS. VS. Attorney General of the federation & 2 ORS. Delivered on 3 march 2023.

1. At the wake of the Naira redesign policy embarked upon by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), on the directive of the President, the NBA engaged in wide consultations with critical stakeholders in the country in order to assess the possible impact of the policy on the economy and the people of Nigeria. The NBA in a letter addressed to the CBN Governor dated 23 January 2023 articulated its position on the Naira Design Policy. The NBA commended the policy as it was expected to help stem corruption, make for easy detection of the funding of terrorism/other criminal activities and limit/allay fears of politicians' using large sums of cash to buy votes in the elections.

2. We wrote another letter dated 1 February 2023 to the CBN Governor where we requested to meet with him and clearly indicated that:

"We intend at this visit to discuss urgent legal and practical matters pertaining to the Naira Redesign and other fiscal policies with a view to working collaboratively to continue to serve the financial and economic aspirations of Nigerians. While we support the objective of the policy and offer the platform of the NBA to do whatever is within our remit in the fight to curb corruption, counterfeiting, vote buying and other criminal activities and stand with you wholly in that regard, we are concerned about the apparent hardship currently experienced by Nigerians and it is absolutely necessary to look into that without compromising the laudable objective of the policy."

3. In our earlier letter, we noted with concern the possibility that the implementation of the policy in the manner it was being

carried out will bring more loss, stifle economic activities, cause panic and generally result in more hardship for the same Nigerians the policy is meant to serve. The NBA, after a review of the experiences of other countries, particularly India, Australia, EU and the United Kingdom on similar endeavours, presented our perspectives and recommendations to the CBN Governor on the implementation of the policy. We stated that:

"Without any intention of challenging the policy which we have admitted at the onset to be laudable, we have considered the provisions of the relevant laws vis-a-vis the available logistical, infrastructural and manpower support required for the implementation of the policy, we are of the humble opinion that, there is a need for an urgent review. In our view, the necessary logistical, infrastructural and manpower support, required for the successful implementation of the policy are in short supply and should be greatly improved upon if they are to be leveraged for full implementation of the policy with minimal loss or economic hardship."

4. After making reference to the provisions of section 20(3) of the CBN Act 2007, we further observed as follows:

"a) The power of the CBN to call in any of its notes or coins otherwise described as demonetisation, can only become operational upon the directive of the President after giving reasonable notice for the recall. From the clear wording of the section, these two conditions must coexist before the power to call any of the notes or coins by the CBN can crystallise. The questions that have trailed this policy from our consultations include; "was there a directive of the President? And where there was one, could it be said that the notice, given the



Gov. Tambuwal

◀ prevailing circumstances was reasonable? The questions seek to interrogate the process leading to the policy and justify the need for extension of the timelines for its implementation.

(b) There seems not to be any information in the public domain as to what would happen to the old currency in the possession of Nigerians, by or after the 13 January 2023. Section 20 (3) quoted above requires that:

...any note or coin with respect to which a notice has been given under this Sub-section, shall, on the expiration of the notice, cease to be legal tender, but, subject to section 22 of this Act, shall be redeemed by the Bank upon demand. [underlined for emphasis]

The "Bank" indicated above being the CBN, we wish to note at this point that there is no sensitization, or if there is, it is not widespread, as to what Nigerians can do with the old bank notes after the 13 January 2023 even though the law has made clear provisions for what shall be done by the CBN upon demand. Any person who shall be in possession of the old notes which have ceased to be legal tender by 31 January 2023 is at liberty to approach the CBN and make a demand for the redemption of the notes and the CBN is under statutory obligation to "redeem" the notes.

Our recommendation, on this issue therefore, is that in addition to educating Nigerians on demonetisation itself, a campaign on what happens to old bank notes after 31 January should be launched so as to adequately inform the public on what to do and prevent or reverse the rising panic or agitations caused by concerns about the inability of Nigerians to swap out their old notes for the new notes by 31 January. This may be achieved, in line with the CBN's power in Section 1(3) of the Banks and Financial Institution Act (BOFIA) 2020, to delegate any of its functions, by utilising the 36 branches of the CBN across the country as currency processing centres after 31 January and using those centres to coordinate designated DMBs and the centres in each local government area, per the CBN's recently introduces (sic) cash swap program. This would expand coverage and improve the success of the program. Section 1(3) of BOFIA states thus:

"(3) The Bank may, either generally or in any particular case,

appoint any person who is not an officer or employee of the Bank to render such assistance as it may specify in the exercise of its powers, the performance of its functions or the discharge of its duties under this Act or the Central Bank of Nigeria Act or to exercise, perform or discharge the functions and duties on behalf of, and in the name of, the Bank."

Incidentally, the CBN's cash swap program which took effect on 23 January 2023 has not addressed the concerns of Nigerians post- 31 January 2023. While appreciating the actions of the CBN which are based on the enabling law, it is important to adhere strictly to the spirit and intent of the law as we must not deploy the laws made to serve the course of Nigerians to become an instrument to inflict harm, loss, injury and stifle economic activities. This would go against the spirit of the policy and penalise Nigerians who have legitimate reasons to transact in cash without affording them the education, infrastructure or opportunity to do otherwise.

Similarly, Nigerians must be offered the opportunity to demand the CBN to redeem any cash in their possession post 31 January 2023.

Our considered view is, after 31 January 2023, Nigerians can still swap their old notes to new ones at any CBN branch or designated locations as provided for in both the CBN Act and BOFIA. By the CBN acknowledging that the swap can continue, circulation of old notes (which Nigerians are already beginning to reject) can continue. Also, as it regards the implementation of the cash swap, to avoid chaos in the branches/designated locations and to forestall a complete shutdown of the rural economy, the CBN must sensitise citizens on these legal provisions and make adequate arrangements for the swaps to continue at their branches. By this, Nigerians will be put in a comfortable place to participate in the process and fully migrate to digital payment platforms and continued use of the new bank notes without any panic or agitation whatsoever" (Underlining mine for emphasis)

5. As the hardship and difficulties encountered by Nigerians on this policy bite harder, we witnessed some feeble attempts at ameliorating the situation but as it is with every policy which fails to properly reckon with the law upon which it is meant to operate, the outcome will hardly be beneficial. The manner in which the CBN proceeded with the implementation almost without regard for the apparent sufferings of the people as could be seen across the country began to raise questions as to the true motive of the cash redesign policy. Nigerians did not have to die and neither should there be any loss of properties on account of the implementation of a Naira redesign policy if properly undertaken. Unfortunately, and sadly so, that was our experience; Nigerians died, properties were destroyed and lost; there is hunger in many homes as people are unable to use their hard-earned funds which they deposited in the banks because of the apparent high handedness of the policy. The rural economy was stifled. Economic activities have dwindled, many farmers engaged in dry season farming have not been able to cultivate their farmlands – only about one out of every ten hectares of rice fields have been cultivated in most parts of North-western States. Food security has come under threat as the cash crunch has affected ability of rural farmers to engage in farming activities. Simply put, the implementation of the policy appears not to have a human face.

6. It is the negative impact of the policy that led to the institution of the action before the Supreme Court by some States against the Federal Government in Suit No.: SC/ ▶

CV/162/2023 Between Attorney General of Kaduna State & 9 Ors. Vs. Attorney General of the Federation & 2 Ors. In the Judgment delivered on 3 March 2023, dealing with the rights of the Plaintiffs, the Supreme Court noted at page 35 of the judgement in no unclear terms that:

“The rights they assert in this suit are the right to be first consulted by the President as constituents of the Federation and the right to reasonable notice as such constituents before the President gave the directive or approval to the CBN to implement the change of currency notes, the right to protection of their states' governance, economic and social order against massive disruptions and hardships that has resulted from the hasty and not well thought through and organized implementation of the change and the right to the establishment of adequate infrastructure and measures to prevent the said disruptions and hardships. It is obvious that the directive has been carried out. The fact is common knowledge, is not reasonably open to question and does not require proof, that the implementation of the directive has continued to deprive all persons and the plaintiffs access to a substantial part of their funds in banks, thereby forcefully and illegally depriving them their rights of ownership and use of the said funds for state functions. The President's national broadcast of 16-2-2023 confirms this.”

7. On the need for wide consultations before embarking on this policy given the democratic nature of our nation, the apex court at pages 41 – 42 of the judgement said:

“The identifying character of democratic constitutional governance is the wide consultations and broad consensus behind the exercise of executive powers through bodies established for that purpose by the Constitution. Such bodies include the Federal Executive Council that is required by the Constitution to have at least one indigene of each of the 36 State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory and the National Economic Council which consists of 36 States Governors elected by their people and the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, an appointee of the President, as members, with Vice President as Chairman of the Council who is also a member of the Federal Executive Council and the National Council of State. Good governance and economic prosperity cannot thrive in a plural society like ours if executive power of the Federation with far-reaching impact is exercised without inputs from the constituent states on how it affects them.”

8. The Supreme Court, held that there was no compliance with the requirement of notice under section 20(3) of the CBN Act 2007. The Court thereafter proceeded to hold the directive of the President and the implementation of the policy as invalid and in its wisdom, and considering the necessity created by the actions of the Federal Government, went on to say:

“Even though the directive and its implementation is invalid, since the new naira notes have already been introduced and the old ones massively withdrawn, for practical purposes, in the face of the situation as it is, the President should direct the recirculation of the withdrawn old 200, 500 and 1000 naira notes and the two versions should continue as legal tender till 31-12-2023, by which time the redesigned ones would have been printed enough to completely replace all the old notes.”

9. The court did not mince words on the negative impact of the President's directives which deprived owners of the withdrawn old Naira notes their right to the ownership and use of the funds without an enabling law. This brought hardship to Nigerians and the situation has not abated. The Supreme Court found at page 45 of the Judgement that:

“The President in his 16th February 2023 national broadcast

reproduced in pages 27 to 31 of this judgment admitted that the policy is fraught with several difficulties such as lack of enough new naira notes to meet public demand and the resulting lack of cash to meet daily needs that require cash transactions that has continued to persist. The plaintiffs herein contend that the implementation of the President's directive has brought untold hardship to their governments and people. Their states are struggling to run the operations of governance smoothly as it need cash to do certain things. The Banks in the urban areas are not dispensing the new notes in the required amount, while they have mopped up most of the old notes in the states. This pales in comparison with what the people in the rural areas are going through, as a lot of them have not even seen the new notes and this has led to some people trading by barter in this modern age and time. As a matter of fact, there are hardly any banks in the rural areas.”

The Court concluded by saying at page 48 of the judgement that:

“I agree with the views expressed by the Learned writer, Anthonia Ochei (Naira Redesign- the Law and Global best practices, Business Day, Nov.18,2022) that successful currency redesign projects are actualized with the partnership of the public, not handed down. This involves an educational and informational campaign on the steps to be taken both by the issuing authority and the stakeholders as well as the expected outcomes of such a project. It also includes strategies to mitigate and maneuver any temporary hardships that may be occasioned by the exercise. None of these practices to the knowledge of the public, has been calculated into the pace of this naira redesign and withdrawal of existing naira notes. Nigeria's economy continues to be informal even after various redesigns of the currency with the dependence on cash for many transactions. Holding cash is still very popular amongst traders and farmers in rural areas.”

“

The court did not mince words on the negative impact of the President's directives which deprived owners of the withdrawn old Naira notes their right to the ownership and use of the funds without an enabling law

10. Rather than comply with the directives of the Supreme Court, the Federal government stuck to its position despite clear findings that the actions were illegal and unlawful. In the words of the Supreme Court at pages 50 – 51 of the judgement:

“The imposition of withdrawable cash limits after collection of the old notes, amount to a scheme to entrap and not allow much of such funds come out of the banking system. My attention has not been drawn to any law that permits a bank not to pay cash to a customer on demand on the ground that the 1st defendant has not been able to print enough new naira notes or that permits the 1st defendant to direct the imposition of limits on the cash to be paid from a customer's account after deposit of the old naira notes. To the extent that the directive has continued to deprive all persons and the plaintiffs access to a substantial part of their funds in banks in form of cash, it forcefully and illegally interferes with their rights of ownership and use of their said funds. Such restriction on an owner's right to freely use his or her property is illegal unless provided for by a law.”

11. It is sad and disheartening that the Federal Government and its agency, the CBN, will remain so

adamant about the plight of Nigerians as a direct consequence of the implementation of the Naira Redesign Policy, in spite of several interventions for review thereof in order to ameliorate the sufferings of Nigerians, leading to the damning remarks and orders by the Supreme Court as quoted above.

12. Regrettably, not even the clear findings by the Supreme Court as to the unfair and deceptive nature of the policy could make the Federal Government retrace its steps. The Supreme Court went to the extent of not only condemning the actions of the President as contemptuous of the Court, but also held that the actions constitute a threat to the Rule of Law and the existence of our democracy. On this, at pages 51 – 52 of the judgement, the Supreme Court made the following findings:

“Let me consider the issue of the President's disobedience of the 8- 2-2023 interim order that the new and old versions of naira notes continue to circulate as legal tender until the determination of the pending application for interlocutory injunction. It is not in dispute that the 1st defendant refused to obey the said order. The President's 16-2-2023 national broadcast reproduced here in pages 27-31 demonstrates this disobedience. In disobedience of the order, he directed that only the old N200 naira notes be recirculated. Interestingly, there is nothing to show the implementation of even that directive. I agree with the 9th plaintiff, that the 1st defendant should not have been heard by this court when it has refused to respect the authority of this court and the authority of law from which the authority of the President and the Government of Nigeria derives. The rule of law upon which our democratic governance is founded becomes illusory if the President of the country or any authority or person refuses to obey the orders of courts. The disobedience of orders of courts by the President in a constitutional democracy as ours is a sign of the failure of the constitution and that democratic governance has become a mere pretension and is now replaced by autocracy or dictatorship.”

13. I commend the judgement of the apex court in this matter as it not only spoke to the responsibility of the Court to the people but also its bounden duty to protect the Rule of Law and the



integrity of the Court. The Supreme Court has by this judgment proven to be the Supreme Court of the people of Nigeria.

14. Whenever public confidence in the other arms of government begins to wane, the legal profession, in particular the judiciary, must rise to the occasion by delivering justice with such courage and precision to provide succour to the people. This is what the Supreme Court has done so boldly and courageously in this instance. Honourable Justice A. M. Ahmadi, the former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, on the role of the Court in such a situation as the one confronted by our Supreme Court had this to say:

“...in recent years, as the incumbent of Parliament have become less representative of the will of the people, there has been a growing sense of public frustration with the democratic process. This is the reason why the (Supreme) court had to expand its jurisdiction by, at times,

issuing novel directions to the executive”.

15. The Supreme Court has issued directives to the Federal Government for the benefit of the people and there is no option other than to comply. The President is under constitutional obligation to comply and enforce the decision of the Supreme Court.

Section 287 (1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) provides that:

“The decisions of the Supreme Court shall be enforced in any part of the Federation by all authorities and persons, and by Court with subordinate jurisdiction to that of the Supreme Court.”

16. Nigerians may not be too enchanted with our Judiciary, and this may have arisen from unsubstantiated and spurious allegations of judicial misconduct, the fact however remains that we still must look to the Judiciary as the only and final resort, to protect our rights as a people and secure probity in public life. The Supreme Court has spoken for the people of this nation and has appropriately issued ORDERS to the Executive and the orders of the Court must be complied with.

17. We cannot under any guise or pretence accept or tolerate any appearance of autocracy or dictatorship. Our system of democratic governance has come to stay, it must not only be respected by all and sundry but must also be jealously guarded and protected. This is the greatest test or challenge to our constitutional democracy and the Executive cannot afford to disregard the ORDERS of the Supreme Court made for the benefit of the people that elected it to power.

18. I therefore on behalf of all Nigerians, call on the President to immediately direct compliance with the terms of the orders made by the Supreme Court in its judgement delivered on 3 March 2023.

19. The Nigerian Bar Association remains committed to the promotion, entrenchment and respect for the Rule of Law, integrity of the Court and the independence of the judiciary. The NBA shall stand up against any action that seeks to undermine the Rule of Law, the integrity of the Court and the independence of the judiciary.

Long live the NBA!
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!
God Bless you all.



Osun Residents Decry Inability To Spend Old N500, N1000 Notes



Residents of Osogbo in Osun have decried their inability to spend the old N500 and N1,000 denominations in spite of the Supreme Court's pronouncement that they remain legal tender until Dec. 31.

Residents, who spoke with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), said they were happy with the Supreme Court's judgment, but were disappointed when traders refused to accept the money.

Mr Adejare Agunloye, a civil servant, said he withdrew N10,000 old notes through the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) with the belief that it would solve the cash crunch he was facing.

Agunloye said he was, however, disappointed when traders refused to collect the money from him.

According to him, the traders say the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) Governor, Mr Godwin Emefiele, and President Muhammadu Buhari, had not spoken or directed the public to start collecting it.

"The situation is really messed up.

"Imagine the situation where the Supreme Court would give a judgment and people still have to wait for the President to give such court order power of authenticity.

"I have been cash strapped since the new currency issue started and imagine my joy (like many others) when the judgment that banks should circulate the old N500 and N1,000 notes was given.

"Now see, after rushing to withdraw the old money from the bank, there is no where to spend it as traders continue to reject it because the President and CBN governor have not said it should be spent.

"At the moment, I have money I cannot spend and the worst part is, banks are not collecting the old notes from customers who want to deposit them, instead they are asking us to take the money directly to the CBN office for deposit.

"I don't understand why things in Nigeria are always made difficult by the authorities," he said.

Another resident, Mrs Ayoade Usman, said she withdrew N5,000 old notes from the ATM with the intention of buying food items from the market.

Usman said she almost got into a fight with some traders when they refused to collect the money from her, saying they don't accept the old notes.

"I was angry after I wanted to buy pepper and meat and

other food items, and these people said they are not collecting the old notes.

"This is the money that the Supreme Court said remains a legal tender till December and this is the same money these traders are refusing to collect.

"So, what is the essence of collecting the old Naira notes from the banks, if business operators and traders will not collect them?

"I hope CBN governor or Mr president would speak or issue an official statement to address this matter because the banks are still paying out the old notes to customers while business owners are rejecting them," she said.

Mr Ajayi Ogunsola, a resident and a commercial transport operator, said he was collecting the old notes from passengers, but stopped when he discovered filling stations and traders were not collecting them from him.

"I was collecting the old N500 and N1,000 when the court said we should continue to spend them, but to my surprise, when I wanted to buy fuel, the fuel attendant said she was not collecting the old notes.

"I thought she was joking and told her the Supreme Court has directed that the old notes should remain a legal tender till December 31, but she insisted that the management has directed her and her colleagues not to collect the old notes.

"At this point, I do not know what to do with the old notes with me because I heard banks are also not collecting them, and people are saying I have to take it to the CBN office," he said.

Mrs Lydia Yussuf, a fish seller in Osogbo, said she was not collecting the old notes because Emefiele and Buhari had not directed that the money should remain in use.

"I only collect the old N200 notes that the President directed us to be spending and most of my customers that don't have cash pay me through bank money transfers.

"It would be dangerous for me and other sellers to collect the old N500 and N1,000 notes when we will not be able to spend them.

"Until the President or CBN Governor give the directive that we should be collecting the old notes, no market woman or trader will collect them." she said. (NAN)



Naira Redesign Implementation Failure & Its Consequences

By Kingsley Moghalu

The terrible suffering and economic loss Nigerians and Nigeria have experienced as a result of the faulty implementation of the Central Bank of Nigeria's Naira redesign policy, and the entry of the judiciary into central banking functions, all show clearly how our institutions— and Nigeria — fail when institutions that are meant to be operationally independent become politicized.

Currency functions are a core part of any central bank's mandate. To that extent, I had no problem with the policy. Except for two vital issues. First, the 90-day deadline, which I warned was too short to be effectively executed. Second, the timing — so close to the elections.

But, as later became clear, there was a haphazard and incoherent communication of the purposes of the policy. In one breath, it was said to reduce the money supply and help tame inflation (after the Bank had created and lent N23 trillion to the federal government (!), illegally because that was way beyond approved limits under the CBN Act of 2007). Next, it was promoted as a national security measure to halt kidnapping, Naira hoarding, and sundry crimes.

Then, next, it became about “free and fair elections “ to stop vote-buying. This last reason became the most important — and controversial — reason as the tempo of the 2023 presidential contest rose to boiling point.

Expectedly, politicians who felt the policy was targeted at them complained loudly and wanted the deadline extended, while those who believed it helped their own polit-

ical agendas hailed the tight and impractical deadline and did not want it moved. Nigerians were trapped between the devil and the deep blue sea of a desire to curb the menace of vote-buying and the effective confiscation of their own money by the implementation failure of the policy.

While increasing digital payments, another purported goal of the policy was a good one, that thinking failed to consider the reality that the payment infrastructure was still not robust in many rural areas of our country, that cash remains king, and, as I said on an interview with journalist Ladi Akeredolu-Ale on Channels Television, we were carrying on as if it had now become a crime to use cash in Nigeria.

Most important, as I raised the question in that same interview, what exactly is the mandate of the CBN? Had it now become to end vote buying in elections? Surely, we have anti-corruption institutions vested with such mandates, and to use the CBN for that primary purpose was to politicize the institution. But many Nigerians, as usual, did not think deeply about the implications of this line of thinking and action because of their political passions against presumably corrupt politicians.

Today, whatever may have been the benefits of the Naira redesign policy have been canceled out by the economic and social waste and gridlock it has created. We are still suffering from it after the “almighty” presidential election has come and gone.

There are several lessons here. One such lesson is the importance of effective risk management which was evidently absent in the conception and execution of the policy. I had highlighted this in a previous intervention. But there is the fundamental lesson of whether our institutions in Nigeria have been hijacked and subverted from serving the Nigerian people and our economy to serving personal and political agendas, including a dishonest use of a “war against corruption” as an attractive shiny object.

One day, we will count the losses, to the Nigerian economy, the legitimacy and effectiveness of a once-prestigious institution, and to the legitimacy of the Nigerian state itself, of the partisan politicization and de-professionalization of the leadership of the CBN.

Our apex bank, along with the judiciary, is one of the key institutional prisms through which foreign countries and investors abroad and at home assess the functioning or otherwise of the Nigerian state. Turning it into a political football was, and is a big mistake, and a strong indicator of state failure.

— Moghalu is a former deputy Governor of the CBN in charge of Financial Systems Stability





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