



The Explainer

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY (NOA)



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NIGERIA WINNING WAR AGAINST INSECURITY

Omololu Ogunmade

With the rescue of 137 pupils of LEA Primary and Secondary School in Kuriga village in Kaduna State on March 24, 2024, the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is living up to its promise to rid the country of varying security crises preceding its advent.

While taking oath of office on May 29, 2023, the President made a definite pronouncement, assuring citizens that his administration would decisively combat the misdemeanor of insecurity by adequately equipping security forces with the apparatus to fight the menace.

“Security shall be the top priority of our administration because neither prosperity nor justice can prevail amidst insecurity and violence. To effectively tackle this menace, we shall reform both our security doctrine and its architecture. We shall invest more in our security personnel, and this means more than an increase in number. We shall provide better training, equipment, pay, and firepower,” the President assured.

Although insecurity has remained a challenge

in the country, the new administration has not relented in its commitment to bringing perpetrators of these heinous crimes to their knees. Thus, at various times, President Tinubu had read riot acts to service chiefs, warning them to do nothing else but live up to their callings as defenders of the lives and properties of citizens.

In recent times, criminal elements have been on rampage, killing and kidnapping young and old, particularly in Northwestern and North Central Nigeria, sparing not even school pupils. The most disturbing recently, was the kidnap of over 100 pupils in Kaduna on March 7, this year and 15 other Almajiri children in Tsangaya School along with a woman in Gidan Bakuso village in Sokoto State on March 12, 2024.

On the other hand, security forces have been revolutionary, not only proving that they are up to the task but rather gaining upper hands, proving by empirical evidences that they have the capacity to redress the security situation plaguing the country.

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Highlights:

FEC Meeting of March 25, 2024

1 The Federal Executive Council (FEC) on Monday approved N1.2 trillion for the construction of 28 roads and bridges in different parts of the country.

Minister of Works, Senator Dave Umahi, said the projects were approved by FEC after passing through the Bureau of Public Procurement and Certificates of No Objection secured.

2 FEC approved N83.7 billion for the construction of Buruku bridge across Katsina Ala River in Benue State. Senator Umahi added that the Council approved another N144 billion for the construction of a road at Saki in Oyo State.

3 The Council resolved to step down the construction of Biu-Kanga-Gaya road to the border of Niger Republic, costing N158 billion.

4 Most remarkable of FEC approvals on March 25, 2024, however, was the unanimous endorsement of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund (RHIDF).

The new fund is expected to drive at a faster rate of economic growth via road, rail construction, investment in agriculture, aviation, education, health, energy and technology.

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Things are Looking Up

Last week, we published the first edition of The Explainer. As the name implies, the weekly e-newsletter provides incisive analysis of government policies and programmes. The Explainer serves as a medium to showcase the administration's commitment to the fulfilment of the Renewed Hope agenda. It provides regular updates on policy decisions, legislation, and development projects, ensuring that the public is not only always aware of the government's actions but is also educated. By disseminating accurate and timely reports, NOA would foster trust and confidence among citizens, promoting an environment of accountable governance.

The Explainer is another engagement platform that NOA has implemented in the last four months. We understand the need for modern platforms that can assist us in interacting with Nigerians. Towards realising this need, on Wednesday, March 20, the Hon. Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, launched the NOA mobile app, Mobiliser, in Kano. The Mobiliser has many crucial features for engaging with Nigerians, particularly the Nigerian youths.

In a few weeks, the new NOA television and radio studios will be unveiled. The studios will enhance our capacity to produce news, features, analysis, and sectoral programmes on government policies. We are excited about what is coming. NOA's enormous infrastructure across the country is being revived in anticipation of the unveiling of our well-thought-out structures, platforms, and ideas.

Our focus in all of these is to institute a direct line of communication between the government and the citizens. NOA recognises the need to bridge the gap and establish an open dialogue with the public. Through some other initiatives that NOA has recently taken, we seek to foster an interactive approach that allows citizens to voice their concerns, provide feedback, and actively participate in the decision-making process.

Transparent governance is the cornerstone of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration. NOA is committed to supporting the President's commitment to this principle.

One of NOA's noteworthy actions regarding The Explainer e-newsletter is presenting the reports in lucid yet simple language with infographics and illustrations. We are working to ensure it reaches a wide range of readers, including those without access to the internet. Soon, by producing physical copies of the newsletter and distributing them across various communities, NOA will ensure that all segments of society can remain informed.

The Explainer tackles diverse issues impacting different sectors, ensuring inclusivity by addressing the concerns and aspirations of a wide range of citizens. In the first edition, we explained the government's various agricultural policies. The Renewed Hope agenda on agriculture is ambitious and unprecedented. We explained the impressive efforts taken so far to ensure food security, including Mr. Bayo Onanuga's Column on efforts to ramp up food supply, the new executive orders to boost investments and create jobs in the oil and gas sector, the \$617.7m I-Dice programme aimed at creating 9.2 million jobs, and President Tinubu's cost-cutting directive barring government officials from foreign trips. We gave highlights of the March 11 Federal Executive Council meeting.

Our main report in this edition is on security. The Explainer provides evidence that Tinubu's administration is winning the war against insecurity. You will read about the impressive fightback of the naira following the Central Bank's Governor Yemi Cardoso's exemplary reforms. We have the report on the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris. He continued his countrywide engagement with Nigerians in different sectors through town hall meetings and a tour



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of major farms in Kano and Jigawa states. He led a team of government communication officials, including the Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Mr. Bayo Onanuga; Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media, Mr. Tunde Rahman; the Director General of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Alhaji Salihu Abdulhamid Dembos, Director General of the Voice of Nigeria (VON), Alhaji Jibrin Baba Ndace, Managing Director of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Alhaji Ali Muhammed Ali, and myself. The back page column is on the transformative Lagos-Calabar Coastal Superhighway, written by Mr. Tope Ajayi, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Media and Publicity. You will enjoy it!

NOA's objective in publishing The Explainer is to explain often complex government policies clearly and concisely for average citizens to understand. In an era of fake news and misinformation, a reliable and official source of information is crucial.

Read. Understand. Enjoy.


Lanre Issa-Onilu
Editor-in-Chief

Nigeria Winning War against Insecurity

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While it was initially rumoured that the number of kidnapped Kiruga school pupils were 287, the number was later put at 137, when the well mobilised members of the armed forces rescued the children on March 24. Three days earlier, Almajiri children in Sokoto had been rescued by troops under the auspices of Hadarin Daji.

Whereas hope of bringing back the pupils to reunite with their families initially seemed like asking for the moon, more so that their abductors demanded for a humongous ransom which by all standards, was beyond what even the nation could afford. But from the blue, an air of relief blew across the country on Sunday, March 24, when the news broke that military men had rescued all the pupils and sundry.

This looked incredible to many, in view of the seeming irredeemable ransom demand, particularly as bandits are not only recalcitrant but also usually unrepentant in their quest to collect demanded ransom. Specifically, the assailants had demanded for N40 trillion, 11 Hilux vehicles and 150 motor bikes. This list of demands had further dampened hope of the return of the pupils, with their parents absolutely devastated as a result of the gory picture of hopelessness orchestrated by the mountain of ransom demanded.

Unfazed, however, President Tinubu dismissed the demand with a wave of his hands, vowing not to pay a dime to any bandit, proceeding instead, to give marching orders to security forces to ensure the pupils were rescued unhurt.

With President Tinubu ruling out the possibility of ransom payment to bandits and recalling previous administrations' inability to rescue all the Chibok



girls kidnapped in April 2014, and Leah Sharibu, one of the Dapchi school girls kidnapped in early 2018, the fate of abducted pupils looked sealed.

The military, nevertheless, proved cynics wrong, rescuing the pupils alive and handing them to the Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Uba Sani, to champion the process of rehabilitation, and eventually reuniting them with their anxious parents. This was no mean feat, given common knowledge of obdurate bandits in the country, thus underscoring the reality of the maxim, where there is a will, there is always a way.

The rescue of these kidnap victims has only one central message - the Federal Government of Nigeria is leaving no stone unturned in its preparedness to nip the myriad of security challenges plaguing the country in the bud. The government is also living up to its promise to make security of citizens its priorities, deliberately mobilising security forces with adequate provision of equipment, improved welfare, training and retraining with a view to fostering intelligence gathering and guaranteeing effective results.

Conscious of his constitutional mandate as prescribed in Section 14(2) of the constitution that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government," President Tinubu on June 1, 2024, barely four days after assuming office, held a meeting with service chiefs where he harped on the pivotal role of information and intelligence sharing in the effort to combat terrorism.

Furthermore, the president told the operatives the adverse effects of insecurity on the progress and economic advancement of any nation, reiterating without mincing words, that achieving economic revival, prosperity and development in the country

could only be predicated on provision of effective security which he said rested on their shoulders. Hence, he stated without ambiguity that they had the responsibility to live up to their national assignments.

Aside the rescue of abducted pupils and other victims, the months of February and March were characterised with volumes of successes recorded by security agents in their combat against criminality.

According to Nigeria Update, a military initiative, troops recently rescued 96 kidnap victims, neutralised 102 terrorists and arrested 103 violent extremists/insurgents and as well recovered 2,633 arms and ammunition.

February 2024 Security Score Points

- 974 terrorists killed, 621 others arrested and 466 kidnapped victims freed from February 1 to February 28, 2024, Defence headquarters reported.
- Furthermore, Director, Defence Media Operations, Major General Edward Buba, said a total of 1,157 Boko Haram terrorists and members of their families surrendered to troops during the period.

Breakdown of successes recorded during various operations in February

- Operation Safe Haven and Operation Whirl Stroke in Benue, Nasarrawa, Taraba and



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Nigeria Winning War against Insecurity

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Zamfara States killed 131 terrorists, arrested 254 suspects and rescued 72 kidnap victims.

- Troops also recovered 113 rifles, 205 fabricated and assorted weapons as well as 5, 619 ammunition.
- Operation HADARIN DAJI and Operation While Punch wiped out 495 terrorists, arrested 241 others, and rescued 333 kidnap victims.
- Operation DELTA SAFE in South-South wiped out 10 terrorists and suspected violent extremists and arrested 359 oil thieves.
- Operation UDO KA in South EAST killed 106 terrorists, arrested 69 suspects, and rescued 19 kidnap victims in February.
- Troops also recovered 19 AK47 rifles, 46 pump action guns, 1,717 rounds of 7.62mm NATO, 864 live cartridges, 263 assorted ammunition, and 60

Oil theft

- Troops, according to Buba, arrested 104 and rescued 73 kidnap victims, recovered 378 assorted weapons



Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Taorid Lagbaja

and 4,705 assorted ammunition.

Breakdown of recovered weapons, according to defence spokesman, said:

- 131 AK-47 rifles, two FN rifles, two G3 rifle, three SMGs, 69 locally fabricated guns, 57 pump action guns, seven pistols, 14 locally fabricated pistols, five revolver rifles, four revolver pistols, 45 dane guns, four locally made single barrel, two hand grenades, seven RPG Launchers, one RPG bomb, one locally made

double barrel gun, 17 dane gun double barrel and IEDs.

- Also recovered were 2,444 rounds of 7.62mm special ammo, 1,712 rounds of 7.62mm NATO, 80 rounds of 9mm ammo, 61 rounds of 5.45 x 39mm ammo, six rounds of 0.44-inch ammo, 415 live cartridges, 10 empty cases of cartridges, 11 magazines, 18 vehicles, 40 motorcycles, 74 mobile phones, 4 baofeng radios and the sum of N748,430 among other items.

March Score Points

The rescue of Kiruga girls and Almajiri school pupils were not the only high points of military operations in March, several other successes, according to Gen. Buba, were recorded.

Giving updates on March operations, he said:

- Troops killed 213 terrorists, arrested 283, apprehended 67 oil thieves and rescued 26 kidnapped hostages during several operations across the country.
- Recovery of 189 assorted weapons, 4,003 assorted ammunition, comprising 111 AK47 rifles, G3 rifle, 31 locally fabricated guns, five pump action guns, automatic pump action guns, 26 dane guns, among others.
- Other weapons recovered included 2,766 rounds of 7.62mm special ammo; 982 rounds of 7.62mm NATO; 240 live cartridges, 2 shotgun cartridges, 13 rounds of 9mm ammo, and 36 empty cases of 7.62mm ammo.



Kidnappers Must Face Capital Punishment, President Tinubu Vows

Like terrorists, kidnappers must face capital punishment, President Bola Tinubu vowed on Tuesday.

Speaking at a Ramadan dinner with members of the federal judiciary led by the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Olukayode Ariwoola. in the Presidential Villa, President Tinubu condemned the brazen activities of kidnappers across the country, insisting that criminals caught in this dastardly act must be treated as terrorists.

A statement by the President's Media Adviser, Chief Ajuri Ngelale, said two former Chief Justices of Nigeria, Justice Mahmud Mohammed and Justice Walter Onnoghen were also present at the dinner.

The President, according to the statement, vowed his government's determination to defeat banditry, describing abductors of children as cowards who lacked the courage to dare the gallantry of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

"We must treat kidnappers as terrorists. They are cowardly. They have been degraded. They look for soft targets. They go to schools and kidnap children and cause disaffection. We must treat them equally as terrorists in order to get rid of them, and I promise you, we will get rid of them," the President assured.

The President also reiterated his administration's commitment to the implementation of necessary reforms aimed at improving judges' welfare and conditions of service.

"I recognise that the judiciary has one of the most unrewarded responsibilities. They are yet to modernise equipment and record keeping, and their progress towards improvement is slow.

"When you look at the career path of a judicial officer, they cannot practise the vocation for which they were trained after retirement. While the framers of the law may have their reasons, I perceive this differently and see this from a fair compensation angle that should benefit all," the President noted.



President Tinubu with the team leader, Sir Clegg

We 'll Make Nigeria Bastion of Digital Technology, Says President Tinubu

Sustaining investments in digital technology to shape the sustainability of small businesses and expand opportunities across different sectors with a view to making Nigeria a bastion of information and communications technology in Africa is our priority, President Bola Tinubu has assured.

The President made this assertion while receiving a delegation of Meta Platforms Incorporated, owners of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram, in the State House, Abuja on March 21, 2024.

According to a statement by Special Adviser to the President on Media and Publicity, Chief Ajuri Ngelale, the President told leader of the delegation, Sir Nick Clegg, a former United Kingdom's Deputy Prime Minister and Meta's President of Global Affairs, that Nigeria could not afford to lag behind in this age of technological advancements.

Against this background, the statement added that the administration of President Tinubu is opening up channels of opportunities in information and communications technology, deepening capacity, and fostering partnerships.

The statement harped on the administration's 3MTT programme, that is training three million Nigerian youths in digital technology as well

as essential skills before their subsequent deployment to innovation hubs across the nation.

Ngelale said the President described Nigerian youths as the most critical assets "in Nigeria's arsenal as it moves to achieve digital economic expansion."

The President was further quoted as saying, "For us in Nigeria, we have a vibrant, gifted and resourceful youth population. Recognising that the future is most likely to be AI-enabled, we have to prepare our youths and make them ready to compete and participate in the global economy.

"I can assure you that Nigeria is open for business. We want to lead the African continent in digital technology. Data is valuable to our development. We are ready to cooperate on technological advancements. It is the only way to go. We need a collaboration that will be a win-win for all."

The President, according to the statement, further highlighted the importance of technology in driving small businesses, restating his commitment to the deployment of technology, its adaptation and enhancement, noting that they are impetus to "growth across a vast majority of micro businesses, spurring mass prosperity down the line."

Naira Gains as CBN's Economic Policies Thrive

The Central Bank of Nigeria's monetary policies have been yielding increasing results in recent times

as naira has continued to appreciate, closing on March 21, 2024 at N1,382.85 to \$1.



The development signals hope of economic recovery, bearing in mind that naira had depreciated to as low as N1,800 to \$1 towards the end of February this year, thus generating concerns in the Nigerian economy.

This recent appreciation to N1,382.85 and subsequent crash to N1,350 to \$1 followed the clearing of foreign exchange backlogs of \$7 billion by the CBN as well as increased inflows at the Nigerian Autonomous Foreign Exchange Market (NAFEM).

On March, 20, 2024, the CBN Governor, Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, said the apex bank had cleared all forex backlogs it inherited from the last administration of Godwin Emefiele.

Consequently, naira gained significantly, rising from N1,536.38 to \$1 on March 20, 2024 to N1,382.85 on March 21; N1,350 on March 26 and N1,300 on March 28.

This latest development marked 10 per cent improvement in the value of the local currency within 24 hours while foreign exchange inflows at the market have also risen to \$288.47 million.

Also in its determination to curb inflation and ensure exchange rate stability, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of CBN on March 26, this year, took far reaching decisions as follows:

- MPR raised by 200 basis points to 24.75 per cent from 22.75 per cent.
- Adjustment of the asymmetric corridor around the MPR to +100/-300 basis points
- Retention of the cash reserve ratio of Deposit Money Banks at 45.0 per cent.

Worthwhile and Fruitful Ministerial Engagements

Paul Odenyi

For three days, a strong delegation of Federal Government officials, led by the Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, was in Kano and Jigawa States to engage with stakeholders and ordinary citizens on programmes and policies of the government.

The first group the team interacted with consisted of media professionals, communication managers, social media activists and influencers in Kano and its environs, many of whom shaped the narrative in the core Northern part of the country.

Tagged Iftar meeting with the Minister, the event was an assembly



The Minister, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, handing the Governor of Kano State, Alhaji Abba Yusuf a sample of the National flag in its correct size and colour for indoor use in the office of the governor.



The Minister addressing a gathering of farmers at the Auyo Irrigation site.

of journalists in public service, private sector communication players, producers and citizen journalists, asking questions and seeking clarifications on policies and programmes of Federal Government.

The Minister took time to reel out the programmes of government especially in the agricultural sector, infrastructural delivery, war on insecurity and the effort to revamp the economy.

On insecurity, the Minister disclosed Federal Government's

commitment to safe return of all victims of kidnapping especially the Kaduna school children, Almajiri Sokoto school children and indeed, others who were recently abducted by insurgent groups operating in some parts of the North. The Minister appeared like a soothsayer of sort as within 48 hours after giving this assurance, abducted Kaduna school children were rescued by members of the armed forces.

The Minister also explained that one reason President Bola Ahmed Tinubu had been committed to ending insecurity was the necessity to clear the coast for farmers to go to their farms without fear especially as one of the features of the Renewed Hope programme is food security.

On agricultural programme of the government, the Minister explained that the government was eager to see dry season food production in many parts of the country as part of the efforts to ensure adequate food supply in Nigeria. He said dry season farming under the Azare/Hadejia irrigation project was targeted at wheat and rice production.

The event presented the Minister with the platform to outline his five pillars in the Ministry of Information and National Orientation. These include restoration of trust in public sector communication; upgrading of facilities in all government media platforms; value reorientation and attitudinal change and ensuring conducive environment for media practice in Nigeria.



The Minister presenting a book to the Emir of Dutse, Alhaji Hameen Nuhu Sanusi, when he led his team on a courtesy visit to the palace at Dutse.

Advertorial



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STATE HOUSE EXPLAINER

What Renewed Hope Infrastructure Fund Means

Bayo Onanuga

Background

Nigeria needs \$35 billion yearly, up till 2040, to cover its infrastructure expenditure.

President Muhammadu Buhari, realising that the government could not meet this huge cost, established the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF), with National Sovereign Wealth Authority, playing a vital role.

The PIDF helped in the realisation of critical projects, such as the Second Niger Bridge and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway.

But the PIDF faced funding constraints, delays in project execution, leading to rising costs of materials, bureaucratic and institutional challenges.

Enter the RHIDF

These challenges are what President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's Renewed Hope Infrastructure Development Fund (RHIDF) seeks to overcome.

It was unanimously approved on Monday 25 March by the Federal Executive Council.

As conceived, it is a game-changing, innovative and transformative Fund that will drive economic growth in road, rail construction, agriculture, aviation, education, health, energy and technology.

It will provide the elixir for critical national projects that will accelerate infrastructure and economic development in all parts of the country.

With eyes on raising N20 trillion, about \$14 billion take-off capital, the Fund will support projects that will promote growth, "enhance local value-addition through backward, forward and parallel linkages."

Employment opportunities also will be created and exports promoted. For instance, a core focus of the Fund will be to enhance agricultural value chain to boost food security.

By fortifying agricultural infrastructure, the Fund will ensure that post-harvest losses are reduced and food supply chains strengthened.

Among the projects being targeted are major road networks, such as the Lagos-Calabar Coastal highway, Sokoto-Badagry Expressway, Lagos-Kano and Eastern Rail Lines. Ports and aviation facilities will be modernised.

The Fund will cast its net for investment capital wider than the PIDF.

It targets Pension Funds, Concessionary Loans, Insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds, private

sector arms of multilateral development institutions, bilateral private sector investors.

Other financing sources are individual investors, including the Diaspora Nigerians, endowments and equity funds.

At the Federal Executive Council meeting on Monday, where the Fund was first tabled before members prior to its approval, President Bola Tinubu explained the rationale for its conception.

He said the Fund, which will be managed by a Director-General, will be domiciled in the Presidency. It will cut through bureaucratic bottlenecks that usually delay implementation of good projects.

President Tinubu cited the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA),

which he conceived during his tenure as Lagos governor. In 2004, and how the agency midwived two rail lines and executed some of the important road networks in the metropolis.

Many members of the Council applauded the initiative after it was presented by the Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Zacch Adedeji.

President Tinubu is desirous of bequeathing a legacy of socially and economically impactful policies, such as student loans, social security for the unemployed and consumer credit.

Onanuga is Special Adviser to the President on Information & Strategy.

The infographic 'STUDENT LOAN AT A GLANCE' is divided into six panels:

- DUTY:** Provide loans to qualified Nigerians for tuition, fees, charges, and stipend during their studies in approved tertiary education institutions. Build, operate, and maintain a diversified pool of funds to provide loans to qualified applicants.
- FUNDING:** Establishes the General Reserve Fund - into which shall be paid 1% of all taxes, levies and duties collected by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS). Funds to be used as loans to qualified applicants as well as the operational expenses and expenditures of RHIDF.
- KEY INFORMATION:** The Student Loan Decree to Higher Education Act 2023 was signed into law by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on 10th June 2023. Access to Higher Education (Repeal and Re-Enactment) Bill 2023 was presented to the National Assembly by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on 20th June 2023. How to be known as: Student Loans Decree to Higher Education (Repeal and Re-Enactment) Bill 2023.
- KEY ELEMENTS:** Establishes the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND) as a programme body that can be used to fund loans for the purpose of acquiring, holding, and disposing of immovable and movable property for the purpose of the activities. Establishes a Board of Directors with a Chairman and members. Appoints a management team led by the Managing Director as a Executive Director. All acts to be regulated by the President.
- REPAYMENT OF LOANS BY BENEFICIARIES:** Beneficiaries of the Fund shall begin to repay as soon as the beneficiary becomes employed in any capacity. The Fund shall not initiate loan recovery efforts until two years after the completion of the National Youth Service programme. A beneficiary may request an extension of enforcement action by the Fund by providing a sworn affidavit indicating that he is not employed in any capacity and is not receiving any income. Only a person who provides a false statement to the Fund is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for three years. Makes provision for loan forgiveness in the event of death.
- APPLICATION:** 1. Students applying for the loan can not be disqualified based on their parent's loan history. 2. Removes the family income threshold to Nigerian students who apply for these loans and accept responsibility for repayment according to the Fund's guidelines. 3. Removes the guarantor requirement so that students can apply for and receive loans. 4. Ensures a minimum national spread of loans approved and disbursed in each financial year. 5. Loans to cover tuition and other fees payable to the school and maintenance allowance payable to the student.



Temitope Ajayi

Senior Special Assistant
to President Tinubu on
Media & Publicity



When completed, the 700km long coastal highway will also enter the world record books among iconic coastal routes like the Wild Atlantic Highway in Ireland and the Pacific Coastal Highway in the United States.

The transformative Power of Lagos-Calabar Coastal Super Highway

Barely a month after the Federal Executive Council approved the construction of Lagos-Calabar Coastal super highway, the contractor has moved to site to build what will be a monumental civil engineering project that Nigeria has ever seen.

Since the construction of the iconic Third Mainland Bridge that stretched over 11 kilometres across the Lagoon, the Lagos-Calabar Coastal road will usher in a new era of ambitious road infrastructural development projects in Nigeria.

The Third Mainland Bridge, one of the longest bridges in the world, started during the administration of President Shehu Shagari in 1980. It was completed 10 years after, in 1990, by the military administration of President Ibrahim Babangida.

When completed, the 700km long coastal highway will also enter the world record books among iconic coastal routes like the Wild Atlantic Highway in Ireland and the Pacific Coastal Highway in the United States.

The first phase of the new 700km highway will run through the nine coastal states is the 47.47km section beginning from Victoria Island. It has five lanes on each side of the dual carriage way and a train track in the middle.

The superhighway is being built by Hitech Construction Company. Part of the funding will be sourced by Hitech, the contractors.

Starting from Ahmadu Bello Way, Victoria Island in Lagos, the Coastal road will pass through Lekki Deep Seaport, Ogun, Ondo, Delta, Bayelsa, Cross River and Akwa-Ibom States. At a recent press briefing, Minister of Works, Senator David Umahi, said the Coastal road would have two spurs that will link up with Northern Nigeria to further integrate the North and South in terms of movement of the people, goods and services.

Economic analysts have revealed that the completion of the first phase of the project alone could increase the size of Lagos State economy by 50 per cent

because of the connection to Lekki Deep Seaport and the Lekki economic corridor where Dangote Refinery and Petrochemical Complex is situated alongside other multinational industries.

One of the fascinating and interesting features of the coastal road is how it will compress the distance between Lagos and Ondo States. For instance, the distance from Ibeju-Lekki in Lagos to Araromi in Ondo State is about 50 kilometres along the coast. This distance translates to about an hour journey. From Araromi to Ore, a major connecting hub in Ondo State is about another 50 kilometres, whereas the existing route from Ibeju-Lekki to Ore currently in use by motorists is 150 kilometres.

Speaking on the game-changing effect of the coastal road and how it will transform the economy of Cross River State, the Commissioner of Information, Erasmus Ekpang, in a press statement, said the state government was overwhelmingly grateful to President Bola Tinubu for embarking on the project decades after the necessity for the coastal road had been muted.

The highway, according to the commissioner, "will serve as a catalyst to transform the economy of Cross River State for optimum impact. I want to applaud President Tinubu for the political will to translate this lofty dream into concrete reality.

"This coastal highway is going to be a game changer for the socio-economic status of Cross River. It is bound to add value to our rich agricultural produce while enhancing the profit base of local farmers. The benefits in the value chain is unimaginable."

