

NABDA moves to boost food security in Nigeria
Page 2



News: PLSG partners FAAN to develop Yakubu Gowon Airport Page 27

Sports: What FIFA asked us to do with \$960,000 -NFF Page 37

Politics: Tribunal upholds elections of Agah, Mwadkon Page 5

Sunday Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 805

SUNDAY, August 27, 2023

N250

e-mail:nigeriastandarddailynewspaper@yahoo.com

Food scarcity, the Nigerian situation

Pages 10 & 31



Page 2

My administration is dedicated to selfless service

-Mutfwang



Tinubu



Edu



Kyari



No immediate threat of floods in Nigeria -FG



Editorial

Nigerians' expectations for new ministers

The Presidency recently confirmed designation for the ministers that will work with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Consequently, on Monday 21st August 2023, President Tinubu swore in 45 ministers to serve the country in their different assignments towards achieving the 'Renewed Hope' of the president's agenda to meet the expectations of all Nigerians.

The ministers took over at their various ministries/offices some 85 days after the administration of President Bola Tinubu assumed power. Fortunately, all claimed to understand the weight of the ministerial assignment handed them and said "we're determined to succeed".

While they largely thanked the president for considering them worthy for the task ahead, some of them have started on a tough note, saying that the work at hand demanded such a tough start.

The one common denominator however, by practically all the ministers, was that they all claimed that the president gave them specific mandates which formed the fulcrum of their agenda -selling upon, reporting at their various desks.

The assignment before the ministers entails that they must hit the ground running immediately, if they are to meet the expectations of Nigerians. And also reorienting themselves that they now serve Nigerians and not their various states or region.

Furthermore, the new cabinet members are the ones to deliver the administration, 'Renewed Home Agenda' of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Unfortunately, the country is currently battling with daunting challenges such as rising unemployment, inflation, insecurity, poverty, banditry and terrible shocks of subsidy removal which has made many Nigerians life unbearable.

Nigerians will soon begin to judge the administration by the performance of the ministers and if the change that Nigerians are expecting turns out to be a ruse. It will be largely due to the failure of the ministers in living up to the expectations of being a round peg in round holes.

The ministers however, must deploy long overdue and sustainable reforms in order to restore the country's beliefs in government and commitment to the president's renewed hope agenda.

The Nigeria Standard believes that the ministers on their own cannot deliver on the expected promise. The right skills must be put in place to map out realistic paths through which the vision of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu can be attained. This is particularly important because the critical task of social engineering requires expertise in meeting the expectations of Nigerians.

More so, Nigerian Standard opines that the task before the new cabinet of Tinubu include: the naira versus dollar exchange rate, which is affecting the standard of living of a broad spectrum of Nigerians, the death traps that our roads have become, education and epileptic nature of power supply, issue of Niger coup amongst others.

They need to hit the ground running rather than those who might need to learn on the job before being able to swing in to action within a time frame.

Our view stands out that the present cabinet of President Bola Tinubu is the largest since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in 1999. And given Nigerians' current economic situation, this is somewhat disappointing as it signals a resort to "big government" with heavy cost implication.

Nigerians want ministers who are ready to serve, not ministers that are appointed as political jobbers. They should know that Nigerians are watching and waiting as the president and his cabinet navigate and steer the Nigerian ship. Hence, they must be responsible and responsive to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians in other to do the job that they were hired to do.

Our ministers must dare to be different. This is a new epoch and time to get it right if Nigeria would achieve a sustainable economic emancipation.

NEWS

NABDA moves to boost food security in Nigeria

The National Biotechnology Development Agency (NABDA) is spearheading efforts aimed at enhancing agricultural productivity, improving crop yields, and ensuring food self-sufficiency for the nation.

This it wants to achieve through innovative approaches and cutting-edge biotechnology solutions.

The Director General/CEO of the agency, Prof. Abdullahi Mustapha while disclosing this said, "NABDA has been at the forefront of boosting food security in Nigeria under my leadership."

He said the Agency carries out well-focused research and development in biotechnology, in priority areas of agriculture, health, industry, environment, and other strategic sectors for national development and draws up programmes and policies for biotechnology utilisation, research, and development in Nigeria.

"NABDA's commitment to harnessing biotechnology solutions for sustainable national development is yielding significant fruits, particularly at the grassroots, where there is a growing appreciation of biotechnology's capabilities to enhance food security and improve livelihoods.

"NABDA has therefore become a driving force in harnessing biotechnology to improve the quality of life for Nigerians and

My administration is dedicated to selfless service -Mutfwang

By DUMAH RANDONG

Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has said that his administration is dedicated to selfless service, embodying the principles of love, compassion and empathy.

He stated this while declaring open the Seventh-day Adventist Men's Organisation Convention held in Jos, Plateau State.

Governor Mutfwang said that the convention of the Northern Nigeria Union which had the theme "Re-focussing for Missions" was apt as the region was bedeviled by security and other related problems.

"Preaching the word of God is a duty for all of us to carry and this embodies one of our missions as a government, reaching out to souls through service, Mutfwang emphasised.

"We will not relent in championing the cause of Christ while we serve the people. We will continue to collaborate with bodies such as this to ensure that while we make efforts to deliver on our mandate,



Mustapha

mitigate socioeconomic impediments to development.

Following President Bola Tinubu's recent declaration of a state of emergency on food security in Nigeria, the Director General/CEO of NABDA, reaffirms his unwavering commitment to boost food security in Nigeria through Agricultural biotechnology.

"the body of Christ also gains," he said.

According to him, it is essential for people to recognise the significance of missions in Northern Nigeria, especially as it is where the people face numerous challenges, both social and spiritual.

He added that the region has been marred by a myriad of security challenges, particularly that which affects the body of Christ.

Mutfwang said that it behooves on the people to be the beacons of hope, love, and peace. He charged the participants to utilise the platform to strengthen their resolve in carrying out Christ's mission.

He reaffirmed government readiness to always support any noble assembly aimed at generating ideas and solutions that are targeted at solving problems in Plateau and Nigeria at large.

While calling for suggestions that will elicit policies and programmes that would better the lives of people, particularly in the areas of security, he said that the government is making frantic efforts to provide

"As an agency, we are fully aligned with President Bola Tinubu's declaration of a state of emergency on food security. By harnessing the potential of biotechnology, NABDA is determined to revolutionise agriculture in Nigeria and ensure a sustainable and secure food supply. We are already collaborating with stakeholders, farmers, and researchers to tackle these challenges head-on", Prof. Mustapha said.

According to him, NABDA, together with national and international partners is already driving Nigeria's economic growth with the commercialisation of two genetically modified crops, Bt Cotton and Bt Cowpea.

He said, "Nigeria's transgenic cowpea, which is the world's first genetically modified Pod Borer Resistant (PBR) cowpea, is revolutionising the nation's food production.

For instance, farmers who have planted and harvested the improved variety of Bt. cowpea have attested to improved yields, reduction of pests, cost efficiency resulting from near-zero use of pesticides, and enhanced livelihood," he said.

"Other transgenic crops in the pipeline of commercialisation include TELA maize, HT soybean, among several others," he added.

adequate security in the state and ensure that Plateau returns to its old glorious days of the home of peace, tourism and hospitality.

The Governor urged the men to use the opportunity to pray for the state, to overcome its current security challenges and be the change they wish to see in the world, creating a society built on love, justice and peace.

The Gbong Gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba in a remark, urged participants to take advantage of the teaching of the great men who came to bless their lives.

The royal father further encouraged them to pray for peace of the state and focus on the mission for salvation of all Christians.

Earlier, President, Northern Nigeria Union Conference, Yohanna Harry appreciated all delegates and guest who attended the conference to build their spiritual life.

The event also featured special prayer for Plateau State and the presentation of gifts to personalities.

No immediate threat of floods in Nigeria -FG

Prof. Joseph Utsev, Minister of Water Resources and Sanitation, says there is no immediate threat of flooding, calling on the government at all levels to put measures in place to prevent flood emergencies.

Utsev told newsmen in Abuja on Friday that the Nigeria Hydrological Services Agency (NIHSA) had observed an increase in the volume of flow along the River Benue system, registering a flow level of 8.97 meters today.

This, he said, was insignificant, as compared to a flow level of 8.80 meters on the same date in 2022.

According to him, reports from inland dams including Kainji, Jebba, and Shiroro also showed a consistent flow regime.

"In Lokoja, the heightened flow volume along the River Benue system, the flow situation at the confluence of the Niger and

Benue rivers in Lokoja, Kogi State, remains within normal parameters.

"The flow level at the monitoring station downstream of the confluence records 7.80 meters today, compared to 8.24 meters on the same date in 2022.

"As at today, there is no threat to lives and properties, especially those states that are contiguous to Rivers Niger and Benue."

The minister called on all tiers of government to ensure preparedness and deploy appropriate measures to minimise the potential impact of flooding during the peak of the rainy season.

He called on states to increase sensitisation on the need for people living along the river banks to relocate to higher grounds during the peak period of rainfall.

"States and Local Governments should intensify efforts in clearing blocked drainages and also construct new ones where they do

not exist.

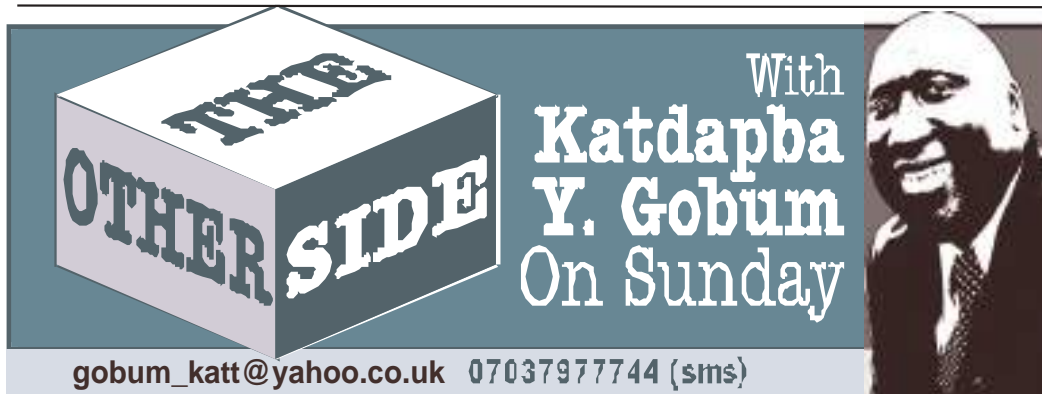
"Removal of illegal structures constructed within the floodplains, the general public, especially road users, should desist from walking or driving through any pool of water or flood".

The minister said it was important to acknowledge the period of heavy rainfall, flooding, and flood-related disasters that typically occurred during July, August, September, and October.

According to him, Dam water releases are integral to safeguarding dam integrity and mitigating flooding in adjacent communities.

Our correspondent reports that the 2023 Annual Flood Outlook showed that 178 LGAs in 32 states of the Federation, and the FCT, fall within the Highly Probable Flood Risk Areas.

224 LGAs in 35 States of the Federation, including the FCT fall within the Moderately Probable Flood Risk Areas.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday

gobum_katt@yahoo.co.uk 07037977744 (sms)

"Queuing has become common place. Nigerians had thought the currency swap would be less problematic, even as our country men and women never thought it would get to the level that we have reached. The Central Bank of Nigeria is reported to have been prepared for it, yet I thought we should have seen the preparations come to place, but not in the sufferings that were meted on all of us."

WHAT stands out as Nigeria's major characteristic is our proclivity for long queues. Whether positively or negatively inclined, it is a dark spot for the country's development, and a need to ensure that we are worried for it.

Today, everywhere one turns to in Nigeria, such a one is sadly greeted with queues that have defied all known solution. If you want fuel, one must queue for hours to get it. Go to the pharmacy store or the hospital, if you are not ready to queue, you may return with nothing in your hand.

Nigerians in all states have had a raw deal concerning long fuel queues that have lasted for almost a year, while no one has suggested the reason for it. From refineries that have refused to work, to official theft and corruption; it does appear that nothing is needed to be done to stem the tide.

It is perhaps only in Nigeria that you must wake up at three am to go and queue for money. The queues increased as soon as the currency swap began. While it is understood that the new development is a good omen, whoever designed it must have expected Nigerians to suffer, otherwise, pray, why it is difficult to get the new naira notes despite assurances.

The way and manner it is being implemented, one would have thought that the government planned to make the people suffer. Everyone is feeling the pain in the land and it has affected almost all Nigerians who need money for their economic activities. But the politicians need it most to prosecute their campaigns.

It does appear that for some time, the Nigerian people will continue to be in pains, what with the fact that a lot of things are needed to fix the development. While the government wants to settle the excessive use of money in politics, there are people who are benefitting from the pains of lack of money. The banks with their various heads are reported to be in sync with the politicians that have tried to circumvent the new policy. Whether this is true or not, nothing can be far from it as the politicians, who often use money for campaigns are finding the waters so hot to handle without available cash in hand.

Queuing has become common place. Nigerians had thought the currency swap would be less problematic, even as our country men and women never thought it would get to the level that we have reached. The Central Bank of Nigeria is reported to have been prepared for it, yet I thought we should have seen the preparations come to place, but not in the sufferings that were meted on all of us.

The education the Central Bank of Nigeria needed to carry out did not go down to the grass roots; as such the people in my village are unaware of the development. They are detached from what would happen even if new swap policy is

Nigeria: A country and its long queues



stopped. Many understand that the new policy is for the good of all, only a few Nigerians find it hard to reciprocate, and government says; the few are the ones antagonizing the policy.

No day passes without observing the preponderance of queues at banks in the local government headquarters. In the end, what came out from the experience was an eye opener, telling graphically the shape of things to come if the government did not get worried to nib it in the bud.

Characteristically of Nigerians, everything was left to chance; even government may have believed that the noise would be made for a time, and before long, it would subside and die naturally. That must have been the greatest mistake may have made, as the frustration of Nigerians soon became manifest; they lashed on that to become violent; dealing blows to people and institutions.

Many of us remember with nostalgia what happened during the End SARS protest. Government and the security agencies took the menacing frustration of Nigerians for granted. By the time it got to the point of assuring Nigerians that something would be done, it was late for the protesters to return home. However, the deed had been done by then; today, when the losses are recounted, many would have wished it didn't take place.

No doubt, it was a lesson for all. While we are saying this may not be like the SARS protest, the need to be circumspect is worth considering by all. Reports have it that many financial institutions were set ablaze in the last two weeks on account of the difficulties Nigerians are going through.

To think that government would wait until the situation got out of hand is to underestimate the tone of the problem; and the fighting power of the people. Get this clear: No government prays for crisis on its head. As such, on February 17, 2023, President Muhammadu Buhari addressed Nigerians on the

situation and appealed that government was also worried about what Nigerians were going through.

And as many had thought, an address by the President came in to douse the frustration. Whether it did or not is left to be seen in the next 60 days. Just three or more days after the presidential address, only a few understand the reason behind the new naira policy swap.

The fact that it is still difficult to get cash means that we have more harsh days ahead of us. The banks and POS are dry but with many waiting on the queues for what are not available for them. In this situation, it is expected that the banks should be given sufficient cash to dispense to their customers.

If this is not made possible, more Nigerians, in their desperation will cut the neck of the next available customer. Much has been seen done in this regard, even as it is regrettable that Nigerians have used the situation to make profits at the expense of their countrymen. While they have made more money derived from their charges, they have no regard for what their customers are made to go through.

It is true that several families do not have the new notes let alone the old. Feeding for many families has become a problem; business owners are lamenting the losses they have incurred in the last three weeks of going forth and back. The policy summersault, by all intents and purposes, should, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria meant to help fast track the economy that has been bastardized and it is hemorrhaging from all parts.

But of all known reason for the currency swap, the federal government is determined to stamp its feet on money politics in the 2023 general elections. In this part, money plays a big role in ensuring that a candidate is delivered with a mandate by all means, using money that is at the disposal, or rather in the hands of politicians, who are desperate to win elections by all means.

In the course of the weeks in which most Nigerians experienced hardships beyond measure, much was expected from government,

such that measures would have been taken to cushion the effects of the sufferings of Nigerians.

Gagdi and the new trajectory

On February 12, 2023, Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi started a tour of some of the farthest parts of the Federal Wards of Kanam LGA.

Traversing through Dugub, Dogonruwa, Munbutbo, Garga, it was easy to make out what was ahead: Driving as if in a grandprix, that must be done to beat the heavy sand on the roads, but what lay ahead became a test of who was on the wheels.

But, Na Kankwana, an old hand in handling the wheels from Ungwan Gyero in Munbutbo, can give any driver a lesson on how to drive in the sand. He was part of the entourage, and knows every pothole from point of start to finish.

The casualties became pronounced: Some vehicles fell to function and were left to be attended to the next day, just as the fatigue that came through pushing some of them that got stuck in the sand took its toll on all.

At Munbotbo, Lugur and Tunga, Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi would himself lead to push the vehicles stuck in the sand. Those who have stayed longer with him are quick to recall some of the days that he would challenge drivers who had problems and drive their vehicles to safety.

The moment night fell, the test became manifest from Ganjuwa, Birbyang, Tunga, Tukur, Yenla, Kantana, and Jom terminating at Jarmai. By the time the entourage arrived at the venues of meeting his constituents, the night was far spent.

At some point, and for a first-timer, it would appear no soul would be met at the venues. It would surprise those that doubted; they kept vigil by singing and dancing until he arrived at the venue.

But it was not the test that should make the headline: It was the sheer patience of supporters patiently waiting in the sun for

hours to receive their son. They knew he would turn up considering the terrain of their area.

They understand politics. Only the patient goes home happier. The orientation serves well to raise politically conscious actors that could be accommodated. That is the mold Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi is made of. And suave as ever, he is the man to beat.

Only recently, Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi just concluded a four-day tour of 36 Federal Wards that make up his constituency.

There are a few takeaways from the tour. The lessons are instructive, as they send signals of hope and commitment to political office seekers in the land.

To have involved a large number of constituents does not show that one is wealthy nor has the wherewithal to throw around. It shows that there is enough room for others to also participate in the process of electing their representative.

Visiting constituents constantly shows that they are valued. When one doesn't, it is an indication that they do not matter to them; but only during elections that they become relevant. They are witnesses to such treatment by different politicians in the past.

Such politicians come and go, without considering the constituents. They are treated with levity, to the extent that, there is no genuine commitment to the people they seek to represent.

Consider this: Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi, has, since 2019 been in a different class. He has shown that he makes things happen as the people mean a lot to him on the journey.

He has visited the 36 Federal Wards about 8 to 10 times minimum. It is no doubt a commitment to service, and of his responsibility to them.

Gagdi has continued to Do Good, and that is why they say, he who does well always sees good from the people. This truism is replicated in the life of Rt Hon Yusuf Adamu Gagdi.

There is genuineness in the struggle by Gagdi. Those that are involved have been bitten by the same bug.

Perhaps, for good measure, his outings are a delight. Gagdi has never been a long ranger; he travels with his arsenals fully prepared to support other candidates.

In all the ward headquarters, he would appreciate and tell the crowd why supporting Tinubu/Shettima, Nentawe, Diket, and Assembly members should be a priority.

What better sacrifice could there be by Gagdi than to get everyone involved in the struggle? Those who cherish the struggles Gagdi has been engaged in know that it is good he has down so much good to reap there from.

This can only be so, knowing that Gagdi has always trusted in God!



Quacks at work

HUMAN capital abound in Nigeria. The only bother is the quality. There's no problem with the quantity because every year our tertiary institutions churn them out in millions for professionals trained in school. Unfortunately, it would seem, some went through school but school didn't go through them.

One Business and Finance diploma graduate was honest enough to tell me that he graduated with very good grades. The problem is that he can't defend his certificate. He said money did the magic for him.

From the first day he was admitted into University of Jos, Centre for Continuing Education, located at Gangare, he never lifted a finger to write an assignment or test. He was referred to one young man who gladly wrote everything, including his examinations for a good price.

Today he is employed and earning good money with the certificate. What quality job would come out from such a person who admitted that he cannot even define banking and finance? Sadly, a job was waiting for him immediately after his National Youth Service Corps year.

Rebecca's encounter with quack made her to lose confidence in Nigeria's young doctors. She was ill and needed immediate attention. It so happened that public hospitals were on strike, so she and her sister entered the first hospital that they saw.

In their haste, they didn't notice that in spite of the fact that public hospitals were on strike, the hospital was still empty. She was immediately ushered in to see the doctor. The doctor could not hide his excitement when he noticed that Rebecca was visibly pregnant. But his hopes were dashed when she told him that she had been treated with chloroquine for malaria and the aftermath was worse than the malaria. She was there, she told him, for an alternative treatment.

The doctor excused himself for about 20 minutes. Uncomfortable with his silence, Rebecca went after him and found him hidden in a room in the rear of the hospital, engrossed in reading a medical book. Embarrassed, he apologised that he would be with her shortly. Rebecca said, she ran for her life, after getting the message that the doctor was reading his book to come and treat her sickness.

It was after they ran out and were taking a break at a shop at the vicinity that she found out that the clinic is notorious for abortion and nothing else. Unbelievable that someone will go through medical school and come out and specialise in destroying life. It does not make sense. People like this, have decided to work contrary to the vows they took before they began practicing their profession.

Sadly, there are many examples of Quacks in the medical field. A lady described how she went for malaria treatment but was asked to undress except for her pant. She said she

almost slept up the examination bed when she felt the old doctor's mouth on her breast. Fortunately for him, her eyes were closed due to embarrassment that she was almost naked before her father's friend. However, it took the grace of God not the doctors pleadings for her not to call her father's attention. He was waiting patiently at the waiting room.

The lady above said since that experience, she developed an aversion to hospitals. She became guilty of self medication until recently.

Another lady said she almost lost her life after giving birth. She discovered that the area where she was torn up after her private part would not stop itching her. It became worst when it began to stink, followed instantly by pus dripping from the area. This forced the hospital to book her for a surgery. What they discovered made heads roll. Who ever cleaned her up after the baby was removed, forgot to remove the pad and cotton wool. I leave the rest to your imagination.

The above lady suffered avoidable pain. She was placed on very strong antibiotics because of the infection that had set in. What she went through was not only painful, or waste of resources, expensive but life threatening. She suffered and so did her baby. It was a very trying time for her whole family. All of this because of somebody's carelessness.

My family would have roasted due to activities of a quack electrician. We had to pack into our house in a hurry even though it was uncompleted due to insecurity. Plateau State was embroiled in crises and we were living in an area that was unfriendly to our religion. That meant fixing electricity in a hurry. One of our masons introduced someone to us, whose job can only be described as 'trial and error. Power came everywhere and we were happy. What we didn't know was that the connection inside the roof was something else.

One day we noticed that smoke was coming from inside the roof. And one by one, different light switches were refusing to turn on. Thankfully, when we got in touch with the electrician, he was busy. We were forced to get a professional. This man exclaimed in shock when he saw the terrible job done by the first electrician. He found several fuses burnt. And explained that our whole house could have gone up in flames if things were left as they were. That was how bad it was.

One of the issues that contribute to quacks in the system is students not allowed to read what they are passionate about. This could be influenced by parents or tertiary institutions giving admissions to those who can pay them for it, while others make do with what ever they are given.

Our systems need to be restructured for us to get it right. Certificate is not enough, that can be bought. We need to plead with each other's conscience. Be your brothers' keeper.



NEWS

PLSG debunks rumours of online registration for palliatives

THE Plateau State Government has reacted to what can be described as fraudulent activities of some criminal elements who have been calling the attention of unsuspecting public to register online for palliatives.

In a letter signed by Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms, the Commissioner of Information and Communication, it said "The attention of the Plateau State Government has been drawn to a spurious link on the social media, calling on the unsuspecting public to apply on-line for palliatives.

" Apparently cashing in on the well-publicized Federal Government intervention measure arising from the consequences of subsidy removal, the link is at once patently fake.

To be sure, the use of social media to undertake a venture that targets populations that are largely cut off from social media cannot be the method of the Plateau State Government.

Government machinery for undertaking interventions such as this, take into consideration a number of



Mutfwang

factors including the complexities of the social media for large sections of the populace.

Government therefore calls on the general public to disregard any social media call or link for application for the purported ₦5 billion palliatives funds.



NTF extends clothing and cash aid to Mangu internally displaced persons (IDPs) camp.

NTF put smiles on faces of Mangu IDPs

TN fulfillment of its core mandate of improving the quality of life and reducing poverty in society, the Nnaedozie Thomas Foundation (NTF) has donated cash and clothing to internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mangu Local government area of the state.

Presenting the items to the Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA) in Mangu recently, the chairman of NTF, a Lagos based non-governmental organization (NGO), Mr Nnaedozie Christogonus Agbosonu explained that the decision to donate the items was based on reports of the humanitarian crisis that had befallen the area as a result of recent

attacks on Mwaghavul communities by the Fulani militia.

Represented by the vice chairman of NTF, Mr Omeh Onoja, the chief executive of the NGO, assured that his organization would do more to ameliorate the living conditions of the IDPs.

He stated that NTF, which also has offices in Imo and Plateau States, would explore other areas of assisting the people of Plateau State, such as skills acquisition and education.

The secretary of Mwaghavul Development Association (MDA), Dr Solomon Mangwat, while receiving the cash and

clothing, appreciated the NGO and promised that the items would be equitably distributed among the 17 IDPs camps in the LGA.

He revealed that the recent attacks in the area, which started a few months ago, consumed over 200,000 people and displaced over 30,000 others, while properties and crops worth millions of Naira were destroyed.

Dr. Mangwat said that the major challenges facing the 17 IDPs were food, clothing, and mats, adding that coming of the NGO to the camp was a source of comfort to the Mwaghavul Nation.

POLITICS

Lawmaker appoints 76 youths as aides

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

HON. Ismaila Haruna Dabo, member representing Toro Federal Constituency in the House of Representatives, has appointed and sworn in 76 people that include both men and women to serve as his political aides.

The reason according to him is to ensure an all-inclusive administration that will provide effective and efficient representation in line with the democratic dispensation.

The appointees are drawn from the 17 political wards in Toro LGA to ensure that everyone is carried along in the scheme of things.

While speaking to the aides shortly after the oath-taking held at the Musa Salma Event Centre in Magaman Gumau, the federal lawmaker tasked the appointees to work harmoniously with him in order to move Toro Federal Constituency to a greater height.

Hon. Isma'il Haruna admonished the appointees to take their duties seriously, adding that they should not hesitate to inform him about the problems facing the grassroots populace as his door will always be open to accommodate them.

He further stated that his core agenda is to transform the lives of the citizens of Toro Federal Constituency in particular and Bauchi State as a whole.

According to him, "In line with my core agenda of transforming Toro Federal Constituency, I want all of us to work harmoniously and closely with one another without hesitation to move Toro to greater heights by feeding me with the necessary information that can add value to the grassroots populace."

According to our correspondent in Bauchi, the breakdown of the 76 aides sworn-in by the Federal Lawmaker, include 9 legislative aides, Six Personal Assistants, 25 Project Monitoring Assistants, Ten Media Aides, and 25 Special Assistants.

Similarly, the event marked the closing ceremony of the first phase of the Haske Care Fertiliser Distribution, which was distributed to over 3000 farmers across the Federal Constituency.

The gesture was done to



Dabo

cushion the hardship experienced by the farmers amidst the fuel subsidy removal and the unbearable cost of living.

Some of the new appointees who separately spoke to Nigeria Standard, promised to work tirelessly and to the best of their ability by positively contributing to

formulating policies that would improve the quality of life and standard of living of Toro citizens, Bauchi State, and Nigeria in general.

While appreciating the gesture, the aides assured that they will justify the confidence repose in them by ensuring that all Campaign promises made to People of the area by

Tribunal sacks LP Reps member, declares APC winner

THE National Assembly Elections Petition Tribunal sitting in Lagos, has nullified the election of Seyi Sowunmi, the Labour Party (LP) House of Representatives member, representing Ojo Federal Constituency, Lagos.

A three-member panel of the Tribunal, led by Justice Abdullahi Ozegya, in a judgement on Thursday, declared the candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), Lanre Ogunyemi, as the duly elected candidate of the election conducted on February 25, 2023.

Ogunyemi, a former secretary of the APC in Lagos, had challenged the declaration of Sowunmi by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as the winner of the election on the grounds that the respondent was not duly sponsored and qualified to contest the elections under the candidacy of Labour Party for Ojo Federal Constituency.

In its judgement on the petition, the tribunal agreed with the petitioner that the candidate of the Labour Party was not qualified to contest the elections.

Consequently, the Tribunal declared his votes wasted and held that the second runner up, APC's

Ogunyemi, ought to have been declared winner of Ojo Federal Constituency.

NNPC's NWC suspends Aniebonam, Major

THE National Working Committee (NWC) of the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP), has announced the suspension of one of the founders of the party, Dr Boniface Aniebonam and the National Publicity Secretary, Dr Agbo Major.

The party said the duo of Aniebonam and Major are suspended, pending the determination of investigations by the Disciplinary Committee at the national level of the party.

Addressing a press conference in Abuja on Thursday, the Acting National Chairman of the party, Mallam Abba Kawu Alli, said Aniebonam and Agbo are suspended for anti-party activities.

"You will all recall that recent events regarding the repositioning of our party and the discipline or otherwise of some of our members led to the expulsion of two members of the party, the suspension of about seven former state chairmen of our party, and the dissolution of the executive committees of state chapters of the party.

"Unfortunately, Dr Boniface Aniebonam, one of the founders of our party, has arrogated to himself the right to solely reverse decisions of the National Working Committee, when those decisions are ratified and adopted by the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the party! This is a situation that as a responsible National Working Committee, we cannot permit to persist.

THE Plateau State National and House of Assembly, Election Petition Tribunal, has affirmed the election of Hon. Musa Avia Agah of the People's Democratic Party, dismissing the petition of Hon. Muhammad Adam Alkali off the People's Redemption Party (PRP).

A unanimous lead judgement by the tribunal chairman, Justice Williams Rotimi Olamide, said though the tribunal had jurisdiction to determine the matter, but the petition was lacking in merit.

Hon. Muhammad Adamu Alkali and his People's Redemption Party, had in suit no. EPT/PL/HR/2/2023, challenged INEC, Musa Agah and PDP, on the grounds of non qualification, non substantial compliance with the electoral act 2022, and over voting that returned Agah, as valid winner.

In its ruling the tribunal said it had jurisdiction to determine the suit, contrary to an earlier preliminary objection,

THEWILL reports that the three-member panel of the Tribunal, led by Justice

Abdullahi Ozegya also has Justice Ashu Ewah and

"In line with our constitution, we have today suspended Dr Boniface Okechukwu Aniebonam and the National Publicity Secretary, Dr Agbo Major, pending the determination of investigations by the Disciplinary Committee at the National Level of the Party.

"Furthermore, the men and their suspended cohorts have under Article 391 (7), been involved in anti-party activities and conduct which may likely have an adverse effect on the party or bring hatred, contempt, disrespect or ridicule to the party.

"They are in the process of intentionally factionalizing the party, together with some of the earlier suspended members, amongst other things. Naturally, the gentlemen, along with others that were earlier suspended, have access in the first



Kwankwoso

Tribunal upholds elections of Agah, Mwadkon



Agah

raised by the respondents.

However, the tribunal said it has distilled two grounds for determination; one being whether or not the PDP had valid structures to validly nominate Musa Avia Agah, or not, and the

second being whether INEC had conducted the said election in substantial compliance with the electoral act, which result was marred by over voting.

Justice Olamide, said exhibits P1 to P5 being subsisting judgements of the Plateau State High court, that of the court of appeal and of the supreme, which ordered that the PDP should conduct proper

Congresses to have legal structure, "are irrelevant to the petition."

"The responsibility of the tribunal is to determine whether or not a candidate was an independent candidate or sponsored by a political party, it is not the business of the tribunal to concern itself with whether or not the party has a structure as at the time of the nomination and sponsorship of a candidate," the judge held.

He said the matter was a pre-election issue, which the petitioners ought to have challenged within 14 days at the high court, before the election.

Justice Olamide, said the tribunal was of the view that the petitioners have not proved the case of over voting in the election, having not called their polling agents to give oral evidence.

He dismissed the petition, saying it cannot stand because it was, "incompetent."

Meanwhile, the tribunal had upheld the election of Senator Simon Mwadkon of the PDP, thereby dismissed the petition of Barr. Gyang Yaya Zi of the Labour Party, for lacking in

SUNDAY POLITICS

Personality traits and political leadership in Nigeria

The discriminating, discerning Nigerians found a lot of things improper in the academic records of one of the presidential candidates oblivious that even INEC was privy to such a sleaze. Nigerians were not surprised when Prof Mahmoud's INEC announced the winner of a presidential election when over 18,000 result sheets were blurred and some uploads were images instead of figures. OBIOTIKA WILFRED TOOCHUKWU writes.



UNDOUBTEDLY, individuals who have a strong desire for control and struggle to accommodate or tolerate others' perspectives might exhibit traits associated with a dominant or assertive temperament.

Certainly, leadership is all about service. When leadership and governance fail due to incompetence, sycophants will always amend the proposition of philosophers like John Stuart Mill on Liberty with Niccolò Machiavelli's instruction to politicians. Having high levels of dominance, low agreeableness or a need for power and control are the traits that have marred political power in Nigeria.

Among five basic personality traits, conscientiousness (discipline, responsibility, organization, dependability) is completely lacking in politicians in Nigeria. A personality style characterized by a strong desire for control, influence and leadership can benefit the masses if the individual has a good character.

Human behaviour is determined by individual differences; that is different individuals behave differently when facing similar situations.

Some individuals seek power and control as a way to protect themselves and their loved ones. Having control over a situation can provide a sense of security and reduce feelings of vulnerability. The "Emi lokans" may have seen power as a means to overcome challenges and obstacles. With power comes responsibility and accountability but every

politician in Nigeria sees himself as a demigod, hiding under constitutional immunity. It's important to acknowledge that an excessive need for power and control can have negative consequences. The desperation of one man to be the president could lead to authoritarian behaviour, disregard for others' perspectives, and manipulation

of situations for personal gain. In addition, Nigerians should remember that in these challenging times, difficulties are temporary and we possess the strength to overcome them. Focus on small positive steps and maintain hope for a New Nigeria. You're not alone, and seeking help is a sign of courage, not weakness.

To the citizens and supporters

of a New Nigeria, your vision for positive change is inspiring. Your dedication to creating a better future shows the power of unity and determination. Keep advocating for justice, equality, and progress. The structure of criminality, the old order, wants to lampoon and compromise the judiciary.

We're not looking away either from the Courts and Judgment.

Your efforts will pave the way for a brighter tomorrow, where the aspirations of all can be realized.

Stay resilient, stay united, and continue to be the driving force behind the transformation you seek. Our enemies will turn out to be helpers. Do not fear! This country is our own and you are a significant part of the country.

Culled from BusinessDay

Taraba Governor's revolutionary acts in 100 days

Since May 29, 2023, Governor Kefas had taken some practical steps covering key sectors such as education, agriculture, public service, youth employment and the economy. The first step undertaken by the governor was the declaration of a state of emergency on primary and secondary education. He also reduced by 50 percent the school fees of students of tertiary education in the state, writes VICTOR GAI.

GOVERNOR Agbu Kefas had on a visit to his hometown Wukari LGA addressed students saying, "Let me announce to you that by next academic session, the state government will take responsibility of the school fees and all of you will attend school free of charge."

The troubled state owned university also released a statement following the governor's impromptu visit to the school, that, "Following the visit of His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Taraba State, Dr. Agbu Kefas (visitor to the University) and the pronouncement of 50% downward review of school fees, the University management invites the students and the entire university community to note that the Executive Order takes effect from the academic session (2022/2023). A new schedule of fees will be communicated accordingly," the letter read.

In the agricultural sector, he had "taken a giant step towards kick-starting the revitalization of

the agricultural sector in the state by signing an agreement with the Czech republic for the supply of 750 tractors to the State," SUNDAY STANDARD quotes a government source.

In the public sector, barely a week after he was sworn in, Gov. Kefas had dissolved the 16 Local Government Council Chairmen and made fresh appointments. Also, in an attempt to overhaul the civil service, he set up a nine man committee to review the activities of boards, commissions and governing councils from 2019 to 2023.

He also banned the felling, processing and sales of the African Rosewood, popularly called Madrid in the State and also placed a ban on illegal mining across the State which is yielding great results already.

The governor had also constituted a youthful 21 member exco and 40 Special Advisers for the smooth take off of the administration. He also devised a plan to employ 10,000 youths as sanitation workers to clean the streets at N20,000

monthly allowance.

In the economic sector, Gov. Kefas reached out to the Taraba Assembly to approve a N206.776 billion supplementary budget to be sourced through loans from four banks.

He said his administration was

desirous of providing massive infrastructural development across the State as well as payment of outstanding gratuities to retirees. He also intends to meet up with his "administration's Strategic Five Finger Development Agenda".



Kefas

SUNDAY POLITICS

100 days: Gov. Kefas' revolutionary acts in Taraba

Since May 29 2023, Governor Kefas had taken some practical steps covering key sectors such as education, agriculture, public service, youth employment, security and the economy. Our Taraba Correspondent, VICTOR GAI analyses Gov. Agbu Kefas' giant strides in his first 100 days in office.

Like the soldier that he is, Dr Agbu Kefas' approach to governance after he was sworn in on May 29 was like a military commander determined to face the enemy. He faced the frontline with such vigour and determination that brought quick successes to the applause of Tarabans. Indeed, Taraba needed serious redemption due to the poor governance of the immediate past administration.

If we are to go by his May 29 inaugural speech, it would indeed be save to say Gov. Kefas has lived up to expectations. Starting from the security sector, the state has experienced a great deal of stability compared to the recent past where the state was hamstrung by bandit attacks, ethnic and communal clashes.

Kefas in that inaugural speech said: "One of the major challenges that bedevil us in this state is insecurity. A dominant objective of this government is to maintain security and protect citizens from internal and external forces. Security provides an enabling platform for the equitable distribution of resources and just living conditions for our people. We need safety and security to pursue our legitimate aspirations and goals. To ensure security, it is paramount that we work closely with local and federal security agencies".

The governor also stated that he was open to constructive criticism, social justice, welfare and equity and called on Tarabans to put their differences aside.

"I ask all to put our differences aside and come together as one to move Taraba forward. The task of governance can only be successful when it is inclusive. When it effectively serves and engages all people from all walks of life. Our success demands that we carry out wholesale reforms of our institutions, policies, processes and services.

"My administration is open to working with all of you and would always welcome constructive criticism. We will work closely with civil society, the private sector and development partners to create a platform for a mutually beneficial relationship.

"My passion for Taraba is driven by a deep commitment to social justice, welfare and equity. As such one of my key priorities will be to address the specific challenges faced by our youths, women, and people living with disabilities," Kefas stated.

Indeed, the governor has demonstrated his commitment to ensure social justice, welfare and equity going by his actions in the first 100 days in office.

The immediate payment of local government pensioners and the enrolment of new pensioners was a welcome development considering the fact that they have been abandoned throughout the immediate past administration. Primary school teachers have also found respite under the current administration.

But the first bold step undertaken by the governor was the placement of a state of emergency in primary and secondary education. He also reduced by 50 per cent the school fees of students of tertiary education in the state. Governor Kefas, in his separate visits to the Taraba University and the College of Nursing and Midwifery Jalingo, announced the reduction of school fees by 50 per cent.



Kefas

The troubled state university then released a statement following the governor's impromptu visit to the school: "Following the visit of His Excellency, The Executive Governor of Taraba State, Dr. Kefas Agbu (the visitor to the University) and his pronouncement of 50% downward review of school fees, the University management invites the students and the entire university community to note that the Executive Order takes effect from the academic session (2022/2023)".

Also, while on an assessment tour of primary and secondary schools in his hometown, Wukari local government area, Kefas declared that from the next academic session, primary and secondary education in Taraba would be free.

The governor also noted that his administration would immediately embark on massive renovation of most of the schools to make them meet the demands of modern day education.

"Let me announce to you that by next academic session, the state government will take responsibility of the school fees and all of you will attend school free of charge.

"We will continue to support you to have access to qualitative education for a brighter future for our state," he said.

In the agricultural sector, he had "taken a giant step towards kick-starting the revitalization of the agricultural sector in the state by signing an agreement with the Czech Republic for the supply of 750 tractors to the state," says the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Yusuf Sanda, in a statement.

The statement added that the agreement was reached with an international company; Knight A. S from the Czech Republic.

"The Governor said the agreement is for the supply of 750 new global multi-purpose mini tractors and 100 sets of Cabrio compact tractors, accessories, tools, and spare parts for small and

medium scale farmers in Taraba state. Dr Agbu Kefas reiterated the commitment of his administration to collaborate with foreign investors to modernize farming practices in the state so that local farmers can compete globally. The agricultural machinery and accessories are to be delivered within the first 100 days of his administration," the statement read.

In the public sector, barely a week after he was sworn in, Kefas had dissolved the 16 Local Government Council Chairmen and made fresh appointments. In order to create jobs, the governor recruited 10,000 sanitation workers to work on the streets for an monthly allowance of N20,000. Since then the state had experienced an unprecedented cleanliness, a noticeable departure from the past while widows and the young unemployed got a respite.

In an attempt to overhaul the civil service, Gov. Agbu Kefas had set up a nine man committee to review the activities of boards, commissions and governing councils from 2019 to 2023. In a letter signed by the Secretary to the Government of the State, Chief Gebon Timothy Kataps, the committee had seven-point terms of reference to work with. They include: To determine the performance of all the boards/commissions and the inflows/outflows of funds of the boards/commissions, to determine the performance of the boards/commissions in terms of service delivery as it affects such boards/commissions in the interest of the State, to determine the performance of boards/commissions and their performance indices, negative and positive as they affect the various zones and components of the State.

Others are: to suggest to the government how best to reorganize such boards/commissions in order to function optimally and achieve their set objectives in the interest of the State, to determine if necessary to improve or retain the remuneration of members of boards/commissions to achieve

maximum performance, to suggest the cost of their funding if any, and other advice to improve these boards/commissions, to investigate/review performance of the consultants in payroll management of the State (starter point) to determine whether or not their performance meets the required standard and to advise the government.

The governor had also announced a 21 man exco as Commissioners and 40 Special Advisers for the smooth take off of the administration. The youthful team had since been constituted.

As part of his public sector reforms, he created new ministries for efficiency and good delivery of his agenda. They are: Agriculture and food Security, Commerce, Trade and Industry, Digital Economy and Innovation, Education, Energy and Economic Development, Environment and Climate Change, Finance, Budget and Economic Planning, Heritage and Ecotourism, Health, Information and Re-Orientation, Justice, Cooperative and Poverty Alleviation, Rural and Urban Development, Science and Technology, Special Duties and Social Services, Social Justice and Re-Integration, Transportation Development, Women Affairs and Child Development, Water Management and Aquatic Affairs, Works and Infrastructure Development and Youth and Sport Development.

He also banned the felling, processing, and sales of the African Rosewood, popularly called Madrid in the State" and also placed a ban on illegal mining across the state which is yielding great results now.

In the economy sector, Dr Agbu Kefas had set his agenda by bringing together policy makers, experts, business leaders and Taraba youths to engage in meaningful conversations, share ideas and develop innovative solutions to the challenge they face.

At the first ever Taraba State Youths, Economic and Security Summit, the governor brought those stakeholders together with a view to empowering them to explore the economic potentials in the state. The summit which had as its theme: Harvesting the potentials in our youths, repositioning Taraba from potentials to prosperity and securing our people, also featured lectures and interactions.

"The summit was testament of our belief in the power of collaboration and brotherhood. Taraba State is blessed with vibrant and dynamic youth demography, full of creativity, energy and entrepreneurial spirit. It is our responsibility to harvest and channel these potentials for economic growth and security of our state.

"The State is confronted with a lot of challenges that are hindering our progress as a people; however, strongly believe that within every challenge lies an opportunity and we must seize this moment to chart a new course for our people. We will empower our youth, promote economic prosperity and ensure the safety and security of our state," Kefas stated in his speech.

Kefas also said his government will invest in vocational training and skill development programs, mentorship initiatives, to equip our young people with the necessary tools to prosper in the modern economy which will enable them to become job creators rather than job seekers.

He also hinted on giving attention to infrastructural development and improving critical areas such as agriculture, tourism, education and health care.

The governor added that the success of the summit will be measured not only by the quality of discussions and ideas generated during this session but by concrete actions that will follow this summit.

"I want to assure you that the outcome of the summit will not only remain on paper but a road map for actions. After the summit, they are going to establish an implementation committee composed of representatives from various sectors to oversee the execution of the recommendations that will be made after the summit," he added.

Still in the economic sector, Kefas reached out to the Taraba Assembly to approve an N206.776B supplementary budget which would be sourced through loan from four banks.

He said his administration was "desirous of providing massive infrastructural development across the State as well as payment of outstanding gratuities to the retirees". He also intends to meet up with his "administration's Strategic Five Finger Development Agenda".

The Taraba State House of Assembly had approved the sum of N206, 776, 000,000:00 for the services of the State for the year ending 31st December, 2023. The sum was captured under the Taraba State

Supplementary Appropriation Bill 2023 which was passed into Law during plenary. During the plenary session presided over by Speaker John Kizito Bonzena, the Bill was given expeditious consideration.

According to the breakdown of the loan facility, Zenith Bank Plc will provide N83.3 billion, UBA Plc- N50 billion, Fidelity Bank Plc- N50 billion and Keystone Bank Plc- N23.476 billion. A further breakdown of the budget allocation shows: Education- N50 billion, Agriculture - N30 billion, Health- N30 billion, Security- N30 billion, Infrastructural development- N40 billion, Micro-Finance bank- N5 billion, House of Assembly- N5 billion, Judiciary- N5 billion, Women Affairs- N2 billion, Digital Economy- N2 billion, Waste Management- N2 billion and other sectors- N5.476 billion.

Security of the facility would come from Zenith Bank Plc, UBA Plc, Fidelity Bank Plc and Keystone Bank which shall be through deductions from FAAC, JAAC, VAT and IGR respectively. The interest rate for the facilities shall be 18% and administrative charges at 5% deductible upfront, the tenor of the facilities is four years, the letter read.

Members of the House did not debate the loan request but were unanimous to the fact that the loan request was timely.

In conclusion, just like members of the legislature are confident of the success of the current administration, ordinary Tarabans are optimistic that if Gov. Kefas continues in his strides, the state would experience an unprecedented development. Therefore, the thoughts and prayers of Tarabans is that the current administration ends well because "the end of a thing is better than the beginning"

SUNDAY PEOPLE

GOVERNOR MUTFWANG MEETS WITH STATE ELDERS' FORUM

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang recently met with the reconstituted Plateau State Elders' Forum at the Banquet Hall, new Government House Rayfield, Jos



Governor Mutfwang addressing the well attended Plateau State Elders Forum



Cross section of Plateau State Executive Council at the meeting



From left are, Sen. Jonah David Jang, Rear Admiral Samuel Bitrus Atukum and the PDP State Chairman, represented by Hon. Simon V. Domle



Cross section of former Secretaries to the Plateau State Government



Cross section of personalities on the high table



From left are, Speaker, PLHA, Rt. Hon. Thomas Moses Sule, Sen. Jonah David Jang, Rear Admiral Samuel Bitrus Atukum and Hon. Chris Hassan PDP State Chairman, represented by Hon. Simon V. Domle



Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Chairman, Rev. Fr. Polycarp Lubo with other stakeholders at the meeting



Former Minister, Youth and Sports, Hon. Solomon Selcap Dalung, former COCIN President, Rev. Prof. Pandang Yamsat and Amb. Bagudu Hirse

Photos: DANLADI DUK

THE member representing Mangu North East constituency in the Plateau State House of Assembly, Hon. Sani Abubakar Shilak is one of the lawmakers who has brought succour to members of his constituency as he distributed relief materials to victims of attacks in Mangu Local Government Area. The items distributed included 5kg bags of rice, warm clothings and mosquito nets which were targeted at different families and households numbering over six hundred (600).

During the distribution, Hon. Sani disclosed that he was heartbroken seeing his constituents in 'this horrible condition' which was why he was moved to bring succour their way.

In his words: "I'm concerned about the suffering of my constituents occasioned by the recent breach of peace. As such, I am compelled to gather resources from my personal savings, some friends and business partners to alleviate their sufferings.

I can observe that the situation in Mangu is now calm as a result of the role played by our Governor, His Excellency, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang. As it is, the visits by the top brass of security agencies to Mangu has also helped in de-escalating the situation.

I urge our people to remain law abiding so that lasting peace will return for people to get back to their various homes". There were several dignitaries who accompanied the member on the visit. One of them was the Deputy Speaker and member representing Jos South constituency, Rt. Hon. Fom Gwottson Dalyop. He did not hold back his words as he showered praises on Hon. Sani Shilak for using his personal resources to touch the lives of those affected by the attacks.

The House Majority Leader Hon. Ishaku Maren who represents Bokkos constituency was also a part of the entourage. Maren also lauded the efforts of the lawmaker in bringing respite to his constituents.

Others who spoke during the occasion eulogised the efforts of the Hon. Member, who according to them is just few months in office but has done so much to touch the lives of victims of recent attacks in his constituency of Mangu.

Amongst them were, Hon. Dr. Bala Fwangje, the House Chief Whip and member representing Mangu South constituency, the Transition Chairman of Mangu Local Government Council, Hon. Markus Artu and representatives of both traditional and religious leaders from the local government.

Some state assembly lawmakers were also on ground

to render support to one of their own. They were Hon. Ibrahim Abalak, Deputy Majority Leader and member representing Rukuba/Irigwe constituency, the YPP Whip Hon. Gabriel Kudangbena Dewan, member representing Pankshin North constituency among others.

Meanwhile, in his quest to empower and assist his constituents for a bumper harvest this farming season, Hon. Sani Shilak who is also known as 'Golden' by his many



Sani Shilak 'Golden': Bringing succour to constituents



Shilak

admirers has donated over two hundred (200) 25kg bags of fertilizers to traditional rulers and stakeholders in his constituency. For the lawmaker, reason for the gesture and

opportunity by encouraging them to key into the peace processes already initiated by the governor and security agencies.

A member of the state assembly who was around for the occasion, Hon. Cornelius Dyok, member representing Qua'an Pan South constituency expressed gladness with what his colleague has done in touching the lives of his constituents through divers ways. Also, the District Head of Panyam Da Aminu Derwam described Hon. Sani Shilak as the proverbial golden fish that has no hiding place, as according to the traditional ruler, Shilak has distinguished himself as one who is passionate about the welfare of people devoid of tribe, party or religion.

Others who spoke showered accolades on the lawmaker and likened him to the wise among ten lepers in the Bible who returned to give thanks after their healing.

Afterwards, the member and his entourage attended a handing over of relief materials to some IDPs by Raasinspire and Servenow Nigeria. These are NGOs based in Abuja and the US.

The materials donated included bags of maize, fertilizers and sanitary pads. The Country Coordinator of Servenow Nigeria, Coach Alex Enoch said the materials donated were to alleviate the suffering of the IDPs and thanked Hon. Sani Shilak and his entourage for finding time to attend the event. While responding and commenting on the kind gesture, Shilak was full of joy and thanked the donors for their intervention in the humanitarian crisis in Mangu.

On the lawmaker's entourage were Hon. Haruna Yilson, former Deputy Chairman, Mangu local government council, Mr. Adams Maimako Mishkham Mwaghavul Enugu, PDP Chairman Mangu local government area, Elder Rafi the Director General Golden Mandate Campaign Mangu North East, and Dr. Zechariah Kuden among others.

purpose of holding the meeting was to appreciate them and also to receive their blessings. According to him, "I am here to thank you for my victory at the polls, sympathise with you over the recent killings and, to receive your blessings to enable me succeed as your representative in the Plateau State House of Assembly".

While regretting that he had no opportunity to meet with them immediately after his inauguration as a result of the unfortunate happenings that occurred in his constituency, he was quick to admonish them on the need to live in peace with one another as it was the only way to attract development.

He also disclosed to the gathering that His Excellency, the state Executive Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang was trying his best to ensure peace returned to Mangu Local Government Area and Plateau State at large. He however, seized the

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Edu



Kyari

To say food scarcity is not looming in Nigeria is akin to self-denial. As a result of several factors like Boko Haram, Banditry Kidnapping and other criminalities in the country, farmers can no longer go to their farmlands. Of course the result is obvious. VICTOR ALI writes.

IN Abraham Maslow theory of needs one of the essentials, if not the most essential need of mankind is food. The reason for this is obvious and cannot be over emphasized, Hence, From time immemorial humanity toil and till the earth to meet up with this cardinal need. Nigeria is abundantly blessed with foods of all variety and no state in the federation will claim not to have one or multiple food crops in its domain. Recently, the international Red Cross estimates that 25 million of the nation's citizens are going hungry. Do we need a soothsayer to tell our precise situation? The fact that Nigeria is in a food crisis is no longer in doubt.

Nigeria traditionally had a thriving agricultural culture with the sector contributing hugely to the country's Gross Domestic product (GDP). But today Nigeria is at threshold of witnessing its worst food scarcity ever. According to media reports (**SUNDAY TELEGRAPH,**

July 23, 2023), the unprecedented rise in insecurity has displaced farming communities and hindered cultivation. At jazera's Ahmed Idris to refer to kidnapping as "the fastest growing enterprise in Nigeria particularly in the largely ungoverned territories in the North-west of the country with reports that hundred of farmers were killed and kidnapped in 2021 alone.

The newspaper equally noted that "as a result many farmers abandoned their farmlands, fled their communities and relocated to urban areas or task shelter in internally Displaced persons (IDPs) camps. Many have become unemployed and can no longer care for their families and in some cases they have resorted to criminality leading to a vicious circle of poverty and insecurity".

It added thus: "These disruptions have hurt agricultural supply and have led to inflated prices of agricultural produce. At a

national level. Since July 2020 staples such as beans and tomatoes have seen a 250 per cent and 123 percent such in prices respectively. In July 2020, a measure of beans (called mudu) sold for 73 cents n305.48) but by July 2021, it was selling for N 2.16 (900). The prices of other commodities like bread, onions and cassava flour have also risen exponentially".

Though insecurity as epitomized in the horrendous activities of **Boko Haram**, unwarranted banditry and reckless kidnappings amongst other criminalities may be seen as man-made which resulted to the present food crisis, there are other natural factors equally responsible. The 2022 flood and 2023 Food crisis are like Siamese twins. According to government figures, (as qualed by the **SUNDAY TELEGRAPH**), THE 2022 flood disaster destroyed nearly 110000 hectares (272,000) acres of farmland in Nigeria.. The

(WFP) estimated that the total area of flooded cropland could be almost seven times higher.

Again, the paper declared that "Nigeria is particularly vulnerable to current spiking global food prices with a population of nearly 217 million people (about 15 percent of Africa's population), Nigeria is the most populous country and the largest economy in Africa. However, like most countries in Africa south of the Sahara, Nigeria has high poverty rates, with 426 percent of people living below the poverty line, unemployment at 33 percent and twin challenges of food insecurity and acute malnutrition with 35 percent of children under five stunted, according to the Nigeria Demographic and Health survey".

This serious situation in regards to food security in Nigeria requires urgent and decisive action. Little Wonder, president Ahmed Bola Tinubu quickly made an emergency declaration on the sector. According to the presidential Adviser on

Special Duties, Communication and strategy, Dele Alake, who spelt out details of the state of emergency, the initiative entails among others, all year round farming, creation of special purpose vehicles, especially the commodity board, to liberalise the food production value chain and the immediate activation of land banks across the country. **THE NATION**, Saturday July 15, 2023.

Though several stakeholders have spoken on this there is a need for a very strong, focused and consistent political will for this to come to fruition indeed the Nigeria food crisis can be traced to lack of proper and focused policy on agriculture. Since the discovery of the "black gold "(oil) in Nigeria, successive governments in the country can be said to have literally abandoned the agricultural sector which hitherto was the cynosure of all eyes in terms of the country's economy and its development stride.

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Focus on human resource in health facilities- IHP

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

AN Integrated Health Programme (IHP) USAID, has pleaded with Bauchi State Government to focus much on human resource and distribution in the 2024 health budget for a more robust and sustainable healthcare system in Bauchi State.

The call was made by Mr Khalid Kasimu, the Health Financing Advisor of the organisation during a one day Media Quarterly Meeting held recently in Bauchi. He stressed the need to address critical funding and human resource issues in the health sector of the state.

"The state government needs to consider a proper cost-effective HRH supply-chain management system and retention strategies.

He added that "The projection of the health workforce, distribution of workforce by equity and effective management and health information systems should all be strengthened."



Mohammed

Kashimu also called on the state government to also focus on family planning commodities, nutrition and as well increase infrastructure in

health facilities such as power, water and the rest more especially in rural areas.

Also speaking, Alhaji Saleh Giade, Permanent Secretary

Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning said the ministry would organize citizens' engagement on budget.

Adding that, public hearing would be conducted across the three senatorial zones that involve stakeholders, the Civil Society Organisations, media among others.

According to the PS, "the purpose is to receive inputs, to ensure critical assessment on how the budget would look like".

In her remark, the Coordinator of Journalists for Public Health Initiative and Development (J4PD), Mrs. Elizabeth Kah, informed that the purpose of the meeting was to improve understanding and accurately report progress on budget performances and financing reforms.

"It will also increase health insurance awareness among the public and develop the capacity of the media outlet on reporting health

No schools closed in Kaduna State -Commissioner

From JOHN FWAH KADUNA

THE Kaduna State Commissioner for Education, Professor Muhammad Sani Bello, has clarified that no school in the state is closed due to the activities of bandits.

He made this known recently while speaking with newsmen about the progress of his ministry since he resumed office.

Recall that last year, 13 schools were closed as a result of banditry in some parts of the state.

However, the commissioner affirmed that all schools in the state are going on with their normal academic activities,

saying, "We did not close any school because of threats by bandits.

"Even in schools that are located in high-risk areas, we have taken measures to ensure that normal school activities do not stop, he stressed.

On the downward review of tuition fees at tertiary institutions, he said it was intended to bring succour to parents and guardians because of the present situation in the country.

"His Excellency, being a listening governor, summoned all principal officers of these tertiary institutions on assumption of office and directed them to see how the

fees would be reviewed.

"We are happy the governor was able to fulfill one of his campaign promises. In addition, students pursuing courses in medicine and other health-related courses like pharmacy will be given scholarships, he stressed.

He also disclosed the establishment of a new campus of the College of Education, Gidan Waya, in the Hunkuyi Local Government Area of the state.

"A temporary place had been secured to commence academic activities without delay. New students will be offered admission to the new campus in the next session.

To this end, he said a new

deputy provost has been appointed to take care of the new campus.



Bello

From JOHN FWAH KADUNA

Work resumes at Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria road project

THE Kaduna State Government has expressed excitement with the resumption of the Abuja-Kaduna Zaria Road project, while it appealed to the Federal Ministry of Works to expedite its completion to improve motorists' security.

The Deputy Governor, Dr. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe disclosed this on Thursday, 24th August 2023, during a courtesy visit by the Minister for Works, Mr. Nweze David

Umahi, at the Sir Kashim Ibrahim House in Kaduna.

The Deputy Governor told the visiting Minister that the Government and people of Kaduna State are appealing to him during his second phase visit, to consider and ensure completion of the Eastern Bypass - which was commenced in 2002, reviewed in 2017 and had a completion deadline of 2021.

She added, "Mr Minister, that road provides an alternate

route for commuters passing through Kaduna from the Southern States and Abuja, thus reducing pressure on Kaduna township roads as well as save travel time for travelers".

"I also want to use this opportunity to extend congratulations from the Governor, Government and people of Kaduna State on your well deserved appointment by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, to oversee the Ministry of Works and Housing. This appointment is a testament of the trust and confidence the President has in you, as judged by your sterling performance in Ebonyi State, as Governor", she remarked.

Earlier, Mr. David Umahi stated that they were in Kaduna due to a presidential directive to tour all senatorial districts and assess the status of ongoing road projects.

He emphasized that their presence in Kaduna is a testament to the importance the president attaches to the region.

"President Tinubu Ahmed instructed me to personally inspect this project and report directly back to him, which is

why we are here. He issued the same directive for the Abuja-Kaduna road, where we were present on Tuesday," he said.

"Yesterday, we had a meeting with the South West contractors. Tomorrow, we will have a meeting with all the contractors working in the North West region. On Saturday, we will focus on North Central, and on Sunday, we will turn our attention to another region," Mr Umahi stated.

The Minister however commended the Kaduna State Government for its people-centered policies. He noted that despite being relatively new, the government has already made significant achievements in many sectors.

"We are very confident in Kaduna State. My big brother El-rufai has done quite a lot. I am very confident that the new governor will further improve Kaduna State based on how he has handled it so far," he asserted.



Lalong



ECOWAS rejects Niger junta's 3-year transition plan

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has rejected the three-year power transition plan of the military rulers of Niger Republic. ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Abdel-Fatau Musa, made this known during an interview with the BBC on Monday. He said that General Tchiani's proposal of a three-year transition was just a smokescreen for dialogue and diplomacy. Musa warned that the regional bloc would not accept any prolonged transition again in the region. He called on rulers to be ready to hand over in the shortest possible time.

"ECOWAS is not accepting any prolonged transition again in the region. They just have to get ready to hand over in the shortest possible time".

Benin, Niger, Togo owe Nigeria N132.2bn energy bills in 4 years

Foreign customers in Benin, Togo, and Niger have failed to pay over N132.2bn worth of electricity bills supplied to them by Nigeria from 2018 to the first quarter of 2023. Analysis of quarterly reports produced by the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) showed that the amount owed is from the N180.8 billed to the customers from which they paid N48.57bn, meaning only 26.8 percent was paid. The breakdown of the figure showed that Benin topped the debtors list with a bill to the tune of N72.1bn through its Société Beninoise d'Energie Electrique (SBEE), followed by Niger Republic with N31.3bn through its Société Nigerenne electricity (NIGELEC) and Togo with N10.03bn through its Compagnie Energie Electrique Du Togo.

Atiku, Kwankwaso, Obi May Set Up Formidable Party.

Gearing up for possibilities as the country continues its transition process, the trio of Atiku Abubakar, Rabiu Kwankwaso, and Peter Obi have begun to discuss the possibility of a merger, with the ultimate goal of setting up a formidable party that can more effectively challenge the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC).

The meeting of these three political leaders, which had been going on for a while, it was gathered, started with the one between Atiku, the presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and Kwankwaso, who was the presidential candidate during the last election in February 2023.

Defence Ministers, Service Chiefs Get One Year To End Insecurity.

There were indications that the service chiefs may be kept on their toes in the next couple of months, as the federal government has given them one year to put an end to any form of insecurity in Nigeria. Accordingly, Minister of Defence, Abubakar Badaru, has asked them to present a timeline and requirements for ending insecurity across the country.

The former Jigawa governor who assumed duties as Defence minister at the Ship House in Abuja yesterday said his job and that of his junior minister, Bello Matawalle, as well as those of the service chiefs, were at stake if they don't end insecurity in one year.

There had been growing anxiety following the recent spike in terror attacks and killings in some northern states, with most Nigerians enveloped in a mood of despondency about the capacity of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration to contain the scourge. Naira resumes free fall, depreciates to N890/\$ at the parallel market Barely a week after it started recording some gains, the naira appears to have resumed free fall, touching N900/\$ at the parallel market.

The local currency recorded some gains after President Bola Tinubu met with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) leadership last two weeks to discuss how to save the currency from debauchery. It appreciated to N820/\$ early last week. The appreciation seems to be short-lived as the naira resumed a fresh crisis at the beginning of the week. It was gathered that the currency was trading around N890 to a dollar in Abuja this week.

Nigeria's crude oil production fell to 1.29mbpd in July

The most recent data from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) reveals that Nigeria's daily production of crude oil fell to 1.29 million barrels per day (mbpd) in July from 1.48mbpd the previous month.

The figure includes condensates of almost 0.2mbpd. Excluding condensates, the nation's total crude oil output was just a little under 1.1mbpd compared with nearly 1.3mbpd on June 23.

This decrease is the sharpest since April 2023, when total crude

The Nigerian Exchange Ltd has put forth a proposal to permit dollar-denominated bond listings on its platform according to reports from Bloomberg.

This move is considered a potential solution to alleviate the foreign currency challenges faced by companies in Africa's largest economy. The Nigerian Exchange is also contemplating extending this opportunity to include dollar-denominated stock listings.

Wagner leader, 9 others die in plane crash

Yevgeny Prigozhin, leader of Wagner, a private military company, has been killed in a plane crash, according to BBC. Ten people were on board the private jet that crashed in the north of Moscow, capital of Russia. The Russian Civil Aviation Authority said seven passengers and three crew were on board the Embraer aircraft, which was en route from Moscow to St. Petersburg. A report from Russia State Agency (RIA), Novosti confirmed ten people, including Prigozhin, died.

The report cited the Russian Aviation Authority. A journalist in Moscow told Al Jazeera that "reports in the Russian media, unconfirmed so far, are saying this aircraft could have been taken down by air defense systems.

Compiled by HOSEA NYAMLONG

SUNDAY FEATURE

Coup d'etat: Proxy war

The military has been an important institution for protecting states from external threats since antiquity. In fulfilling this fundamental role, military institution have also posed security risks to their own governments, given that the ability to use coercive force, though necessary to defend the nation against threats, creates the danger that the military will turn it's weapons on the very regime that empowered it's existence. Ajiji Ajang John writes.

MILITARY personnel can fuel civil conflicts and undermine the stability of a political regime mostly in states with loose political control of the military. According to Douglas North, "societies experiencing a civil war", by definition, do not have consolidated control of the military. In Africa, military institutions have on one hand, helped to protect states from both internal and external threats, including local insurgencies. On the other hand, they have destabilize several political regimes through coup d'etats, military coup- when the military, or a section of the military turns it's coercive power against the apex of the state, establishes itself there, and the rest of the state takes its orders from the new regime.

Africa has experienced over 200 military take overs between the 1960s and 2012. Many analyst believe that coups were going out of fashion in Africa by 2015 due to the limited cases on the continent, but reverse is the case in recent years with era of coup in Africa resurfacing. Recently it has occurred in some African countries namely; Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Sudan, Niger Republic and a failed coup in Sierra Leone.

At present, coup is seen to be on the rise or dangerously back in fashion. Apart from the failed attempt to overthrow Guinea Bissau's current president, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, on 1st February, 2022, Burkina Faso most recent successful coup, in which president Roch Marc Christian Kaboré was deposed by an army led by Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Damiba on 24th January, 2022, underscores how west African states are the most burden by military coup on the continent.

Several reasons have been given for coups in Africa, including modernizations, cultural pluralism,



Tinubu

soldier's greed and grievances, poor governance, corruption, autocracy, limited economic growth, and low-income levels, among other factors. Military coups in Africa are best understood through the lens of neocolonialism. Second, it's a continuation of politics by other means.

Niger Republic is the most recent of the coup D'etat, with the usurping of the democratically elected government, president Mohammed Bazoum was ousted with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) frowning at the action. Delegations have been sent by the Chairperson of ECOWAS, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu was sent to Niger Republic to dialogue on how to return Democracy back to the people, it all fell on deaf ears, however, the ECOWAS are



Bazoum

threatening military invasion as the last resort. Obviously it's not just all about the coup, there is more that meets the eye. Resource control is seriously under contest, a proxy war is brewing in Niger. Niger is a country blessed with quality deposit of Uranium, which is an important element used in making nuclear and sophisticated weapon, world powers are scrambling to reimburse their arsenal with sophisticated gadget in other to protect it's territory and secure new allies, major critics would say it's a preparation for world war III. The battle ground have been shifted to Niger, with Russia and other European countries been the key players. The war between Ukraine and Russia is quite a dicey one, a clear case of voice of Esau, hand of Jacob, what is being portrayed is unambiguously what is happening, similar with the present situation in Niger,

Uranium is also in contention, why the deadly scramble for Uranium? Russia has successfully displaced other European world powers to access to deposit of Uranium in Ukraine, the last resort is Niger Republic, throwing all their hearts in the ring, in support of the action of ECOWAS.

President Bazoum's romance with Russia shortly after he was usurped became him albatross, Niger is a French colony, with France having a stake in what happens in Niger, people in Niger are marching in support of the military junta, showing their solidarity to the military government, alot are ignorant of the underlining tone, however, the military have suspended the Constitution in Niger Republic, now operating on decrees, how long can this be sustained? Nigeria being a big brother in Africa is at the Cross road, showing leadership is eminent, restoring democracy back to Niger is the goal, but at what expense? Military evasion or dialogue?

The contract force of Russia, The Wagner group, were present in the African countries that undertook coup D'etat, they were used to dislodge the presence of European world powers, thereby taking over control of the regions. Obviously the Russian government might employ the services of the Wagner group to help evade Niger, it might be an



Tahaidi

uphill task this time around with ECOWAS countries vehemently against the coup, the French government and that of USA and Germany have shown support to ECOWAS. In the worst case of war, the Russian government might show support to the military junta, with the Nigerean Army still the most poorly funded military in the world, with just a strength of 12,000 military force. The delegations led by Gen Abdusallam were not given access to meet the coupist, with the excuse of insecurity in the state capital, dialogue is gradually fading.

Coup is old fashion, Nigereans must borrow leaf from what happened in Libya and protect their common heritage, the west are after the deposit of Uranium, they must be stopped because of its colossal damage, life will never be the same again. Military evasion of Niger shouldn't be the last resort, Dialogue must supercede the clamour for war, you only know the beginning of war but you don't know how it will end.

Alas, a Clarion call beckons on Nigeria to do the needful while the sunshine, with the deposit of Californium only found in Borno state, the west might come for us, Californium is only found in Maiduguri, which is also an element used in making nuclear and sophisticated weapon, we are to apply caution on how we meddle into affairs of other countries without putting measures to protecting our very

"Africa has experienced over 200 military take overs between the 1960s and 2012. Many analyst believe that coups were going out of fashion in Africa by 2015 due to the limited cases on the continent, but reverse is the case in recent years with era of coup in Africa resurfacing. Recently it has occurred in some African countries namely; Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Sudan, Niger Republic and a failed coup in Sierra Leone."

SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigeria and culture of deceit

As the hardship bites harder on account of the social and economic after effects that have arisen from the implementation of the withdrawal of the most contentious economic policy (Subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit) otherwise known as petrol, there is widespread doubt about the "Renewed Hope" axiom of President Ahmed Bola Tinubu. CHINDAPBA NGOP, writes.



Tinubu

Shettima

THE President's daring actions have somewhat made some of the early cheering sound-bites he proclaimed self-contradictory. The President had remarked "Let the poor breathe, don't suffocate them" Also in his Democracy Day speech on June 12, 2023 to Nigerians, the President said "I share your pain" when the President made these comforting remarks, most Nigerians had the premonition that the new administration under his leadership would in a short period of time displays some show of empathy and he is going to turn the fortunes of the country and put smiles on the faces of Nigerians especially the poor and vulnerable keeping in mind the endured eight years of privation under the leadership of former President Muhammadu Buhari.

Unbeknownst to many Nigerians, however, who believed in the President's Maxim that his administration was coming too push the country back to its painful past days by embracing the neoliberal economic doctrines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, these organization which are the key causes of social - insecurity, economic - inequality and poverty in most of the developing countries.

Barely three months into office, President Bola Tinubu - led administration had hastily introduced the most atrocious and anti - people economic policy by withdrawing subsidy on Motor Spirit popularly called petrol not envisaging that the policy could have dire consequences on the wellbeing of most Nigerians. Quite frankly, the stringent economic policy is "suffocating" the masses. Many Nigerians are truly no longer "breathing" as the hardship is becoming unbearable, people are starving to death and most Nigerians are now languishing and groaning in object poverty.

Those who are managing to survive the removal of energy subsidy have applied some coping strategies of distress sale of assets and predacious loans but can barely afford the basic necessities of life with the global price surge in food stuff and cost of transportation as the war in Ukraine has also impacted negatively on the global food and energy systems.

In point of fact, financial experts have averred that the high cost of living have reached a crisis level and the country is recording the worse inflation ever in the history of our country.

In response to the out - cry and pressure by Nigerians, the federal Government have repeatedly been appealing to citizens to live on

with the pains unleashed on them as part of their sacrifices to their father land with assurances that the hardship is going to be a temporary measure.

The President in his recent nationwide broadcast to this fellow country men and women on July 31st, 2023 pleaded "Fellow Nigerians, this period may be hard on us and there is no doubt about it that it is tough on us. But I urge you all to look beyond the present temporary pains and aim at the larger picture. All of our good and helpful plans are in the works. More importantly, I know that they will work".

"Sadly, there was an avoidable lag between subsidy removal and these plans coming fully online. However, we are swiftly closing the time gap. I plead with you to deliver and in our concern for your well-being". "We will get out of this turbulence. And due to the measures we have taken, Nigeria will be equipped and able to take advantage of the future that awaits her".

The question is, in which of the successive administrations the President and his Ministers, Governors, Senators and Members of the National or State Assemblies were being owed salaries and their colossal allowance even for just a month in the 24 years of democracy in Nigeria. The quick and obvious answer is, they have not. But always keep a tight grip on their salaries and benefits. They have never made any sacrifices on their parts. Whereas, as last resort they call on the masses to make sacrifices.

And no matter the outcry and the excruciating pains their followers are passing through, it does not alter their usual quest from their life styles of changing Posh and Luxurious cars. There is little wonder, it was reported in Sunday Sun of July 15, 2023 that the newly elected political leaders have impetuously have approved over 40 Billion for the purchase of SUVs cars for law makers in the Red and Green Chambers of the National Assembly. Yet, they continue to splash Nigerians daily on the lamentable state of the Nation's economy, saying the nation's economy has been wrecked and ruined. Wrecked by who? Is the question.

Nigerians are brutally enslaved by their leaders in the country that is richly endowed with natural resources and opportunities.

The height of insensitivity, insincerity, lack of empathy and compassion on the parts of our political leaders is becoming frightening. Programmes for poverty reduction had in the past repeatedly failed therefore, there is a big trust deficit among Nigerians and the integrity

of our leaders are seriously being called to question.

The Federal Government had earlier on made promises to Nigerians that the money that is going to be realized from the fuel subsidy removal will be invested in some critical sectors such as; health care system, transportation, infrastructures and palliatives. Doubtlessly, for instance, the president in his campaign pledge, the President made a solemn promise that his administration would make education affordable to every Nigerian through students loan and lamented the number of out-of - school children in which is running to 'millions'.

As part of his reform on education, Tinubu said he has developed a template "that will bring terminal end to the challenges of funding and attendant perennial industrial actions." He made this assertion during his presentation at an interactive session with the Arewa joint committee (AJC) at Arewa House in Kaduna sometimes, in October 2022 but reverse is what Nigerians are witnessing in the educational sector, in just few month of the administration lifespan, Nigerians have started wailing over the sharp increase in tuition fees in all the public institutions. This is a bad signal and bitter experiences for parents and student alike.

On palliatives, the president in this recent address also promised to roll out some tall stopgap and social safety measures to ameliorate the impact of the subsidy removal but analysts were quick to say that if the government is sincere, some of these measures ought to have been in place before the removal of the subsidy and certainly, Nigerians are already getting bored with failed promises. In fact, what Nigerians are always left with at the end of the day are these their habitual phrases like, government will, government will soon, government assures etc. On the ground of this, there is still a growing discontent over the planned social intervention programmes and popported palliatives of president Tinubu. Palliatives apparently should be a matter of emergency. At worse, government supposed to have deployed the palliatives side-by - side with the withdrawal of the subsidy because of the pains Nigerians are going to pass through.

Indeed, pundits are describing the social intervention and the palliatives by the present government as a scam and another grand deceit not an altruistic act by the president. Nigerians are yet to recover from the injuries inflicted on them by COVID - 19 pandemic and the Naira redesign policy. The experiences

of COVID - 19 palliatives are still fresh in the minds of Nigerians. The corruption that was incorporated into the distribution of COVID - 19 palliatives was scary. There were situations where COVID -19 materials that were meant to be distributed to the poor and the vulnerable Nigerians were allegedly hooded warehouses, private homes of politicians who then shared it to their relatives, friends and families and some items were said to have found their ways to private shops. More worrisome, too, that humongous amount of palliatives was used in school feeding programme. The money was said to have been used in feeding the school children even the children were at home as the result of the lock - down. The corruption that perverted the distribution of COVID -19 materials could still repeat itself in the social interventions and the palliatives will not trickle - down to the poor and vulnerable.

Nevertheless, in a swift reaction of president Tinubu's National broadcast of July 31,2023, the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) in a press statement declared that the president's speech was a mere rhetoric's because it did not come close to the "reality and anomalous with hardship and suffering that most Nigerians are going through now." And it is "not the silver bullet that Nigerians expected."

The congress lamented the deceitfulness in Mr. President's speech for not harping on what precipitated the fuel subsidy crisis in the first place. The NLC statements further reads "We expected that the next line of statement will be how the present government plans to resuscitate our public refineries which has been lying comatose for so many years and is the major pain point in the whole subsidy narratives" of course, if government is sincere it should invest the over one trillion naira realized from the two months of pains and anguish of Nigerians in fixing the refineries if not the hardship we are going through has come to stay with us. The president said "in a little over two months, we have saved over a trillion naira that would have been squandered on the productive fuel subsidy which only benefitted smugglers and fraudsters. That money will be used more differently and more beneficially for you and your families."

The government has failed to released that the whole, the burden of the subsidy removal is resting diversely on the shoulder of it's citizens not even the smugglers and fraudsters as the government perceives. How else will one explain why the president is boasting that the subsidy removal has started yielding good result and he is receiving good commendations from the international community for his actions.

The governments while celebrating the over one trillion naira realized or saved in two months of the introduction of the policy that have brought pains on the people.

President Bola Tinubu had also in the course of his campaigns described the subsidy reinvestments programs SURE-P of the immediate past administration as a "Movement Fraud" He said "They offered no programme of valid compensation to the people, instead, the instigated the policy of monumental fraud known as SURE-P."

"However, the only thing sure about it was that it's architects would siphon the public's funds to fatten their own wallet. The wanted to save money (for themselves) yet expand the people for no good reason at all" on the whole, what makes the president to think that his men will not betray him? And what makes his men more trustworthy and dependable that former president Jonathan's men? Of course, president Bola Tinubu may have a good heart and intentions to implement what he has promised Nigerians but, as I have said earlier, there is a huge trust deficit hanging on his men. Talk is cheap just thinking about IBB vs Tai Solarin a perpetual lover of the poor and his defunct peoples Bank. Ditto too for the revered pioneer helps man of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), Professor Wale Sohinka.

Nearly at the same time, parts of Europe and several East Asian economies pursued an alternative strategy of export-led growth. This strategy emphasized the deliberate pursuit of foreign trade to build exporting industries and depended in part on maintaining a weak currency to make exports more attractive to foreign buyers. In general, export-led growth has outperformed import-substituting industrialization.

Socialist Industrialization: The socialist nations of the 20th century repeatedly embarked on centrally planned programs of industrialization. These include the first and second five-year plans in the Soviet Union and the Great Leap Forward in China.

While these efforts did re-orient the respective economies toward a more industrial base and an increase in output of industrial commodities, they were also accompanied by harsh government repression, deteriorating living and working conditions for workers, and even widespread starvation.

Examples of Industrialization: Industrialization is dependent on growth and innovation in at least four industries.

Manufacturing: Industrialization began with the invention of machines that greatly increased the manufacture of goods. One such invention was the cotton gin, patented by Eli Whitney in 1794. Whether hand-cranked or steam-

powered, the machine made it possible to greatly increase the speed with which cotton fluff could be separated from its seeds before being woven into cloth. Another was the spinning jenny, a contraption that could multiply the number of spindles that a single spinner could handle at the same time to weave cotton or wool. Perhaps the key invention of them all was the steam engine, an improved version of which was invented by Scottish engineer James Watt in 1763. Coal-powered steam engines drove the Industrial Revolution.

Mining: Many of the great inventions of the 19th century were developed to serve the mining industry. The first working steam engine was devised to help remove flood water from coal and tin mines, where they often disrupted production. The first use for the steam-powered locomotive was to transport ore from mines. Dynamite was patented in 1867 and was first used to blow up rocks that obstructed mining activities.

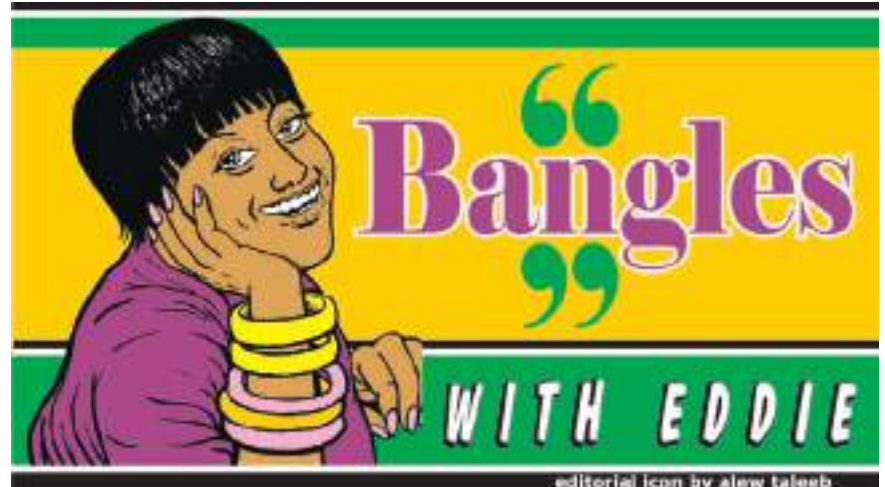
Transportation: The 19th century was a period of unparalleled innovation in ways to transport goods from and to marketplaces. Among them: The steam locomotive. The prototype, known as Stephenson's Rocket and introduced in 1829, served for the next 150 years as a template for the production of vehicles to haul raw materials and finished products. The steamboat. The transport of goods and people was greatly expanded and speeded up with the introduction of the steamboat, which adapted steam technology to river craft.

Retailing: Before contactless payments and self-service checkouts, there were innovations in retailing that were designed to appeal to 19th century shoppers. The department store. The first "store for everything" was John Wanamaker's, a six-story retail wonderland that rose in the heart of Philadelphia in 1887.

How Does Industrialization Impact Society?: Industrialization creates jobs that draw people from farms and villages to cities where manufacturing takes place. However hard those jobs were, they were often preferable to the precarious existence of a small farming family. The result is a new generation of urban consumers. Businesses of all kinds spring up to provide goods and services to

Earth that has not been affected by industrialization, and those places probably will be soon. The Industrial Revolution in Europe and the United States brought the world into the modern era. Other regions, particularly in Asia, made the transition later. The process continues into the 21st century.

The forgoing is from Invstopedia. Having read this excerpt, many things stand out such as the definition of manufacturing. "What Is Industrial Activity: Industrial activity is any business process that is necessary to create a manufactured product. The activity may be related to the sourcing, processing, assembly,



Industrialization and our unemployed youths



repair, or dismantling of a manufactured product". Let us go back to one thing and introduce another. Our professional unemployed youths who should be driving our manufacturing and production in so many sectors, but who have remained largely unemployed due to inadequate industrialization on one hand, and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) which makes the entire African continent an open market for Africans to manufacture and sell between and amongst themselves, on the other. With so many unemployed professionals and our expensive power supply. How do we intend to compete in this market? When are we going to buy our houses in other, invest in mining and manufacturing, employ our youths and start exporting and earning foreign exchange to move our economy forward? Clearly, we cannot carry out mass production like other countries that have their manufacturing sector and manpower in readiness for the market.

What Is Non-Industrial?: Non-industrial may be most often seen in zoning regulations or discussions regarding zoning regulations. This is a wide category that may include everything except manufacturing activities and manufacturing sourcing such as mining. Non-industrial land use includes retail and services businesses, entertainment and recreation sites, parking lots, and residential neighborhoods.

The Bottom Line: For better or worse, industrialization created the modern world as we know it. You would have to search far and wide to find a place on

cheaper than ours, thereby destroying our local industries and causing more unemployment. And yes, the goods will be cheaper than ours due to better energy costs and logistics and the availability of well trained manpower or human resources.

It is advised that the Government should collect data and build a data bank for its unemployed youths along the lines of their professional qualifications. While doing this, the government should reduce the cost of electricity and pms, boost mining, enhance our steel rolling mills and iron ores and other mineral resources required for the production of the required machinery for mass production. This is the only way we can add value to our raw materials and make them finished goods that can compete favourably in the international markets.

The Government can put these young professionals on unemployment benefits and post them to the correlating ministries and private companies for mentoring and capacity building. They can also be sent abroad for training. When these young professionals are fully engaged, they will not only move our economy fully into the manufacturing sector, they will also move us into the 4th industrial revolution with their IT capabilities. They will make up a pool of human resources for direct foreign investment. If a foreign company wishes to penetrate the Nigerian market, it will not need to import its human resources because we will have more qualified professionals to provide that service.

In the event that Government and private sector cannot absorb every young professional, government can create clusters of young professionals who can take on projects and create value by selling their knowledge and service to the client. A group of architects and builders can vie for a contract and build a public building for the government depending on their level of proven expertise. The Government can also give grants and loans to those of them who would like to start their own manufacturing companies.

In conclusion, Government should pay concerted and calculated attention to the young and unemployed professionals because they are our future and they are relevant to our national growth through their expertise and innovation in the areas of production and manufacturing. A society that ignores its youthful population is a society destined for decline and extinction. The Government should pay attention to our young professionals and harness their skills and expertise towards greater industrialization, without which there will be no export and no foreign exchange. We will also perform poorly in the AfCFTA if our young population is ill prepared for the job at hand. We must harness their professional skills and youthful energy and groom them and then include them in the AfCFTA blue print. Our growth and development as a nation lies in their heads and their hands.

Concluded from last week

WE are continuing our series on why Jesus came and what His presence to this earth means to the human race. Our purpose here is to focus on Jesus and His core anointing. We take our theme text from Luke 2:9-11 which reads, And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

The angel Gabriel was sent to describe Jesus as the saviour because that was his job description. The core anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ is to save and we should never out-grow this revelation. To save means to deliver, preserve and to break the dominion of the devil. The saving work of Jesus has to do with reconciling sinful man back to God; making as many that will receive Him, members of God's family that you should make heaven your eternal home and to also anoint you to live out the fullness of God's plan and purpose for your life in this world as though the devil didn't exist.

The power of God that destroys yokes and lifts burdens is on Jesus; when you become a believer in Jesus, that same anointing rests upon you and this anointing is the answer to any question in life. God has freely made available this anointing to all of mankind by inviting you into a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ starting by receiving Him as your Lord and saviour and master.

Again when you become born again that anointing on Christ rests upon you. The Bible says in 1 John 5:4-5 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

1 John 4:4 says, Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. Friends, being a Christian; a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is not just a normal thing. Col. 1:12 tell us that you are removed from the authority of Satan and brought under the authority of Jesus Christ in His kingdom. You carry His life and nature and DNA spiritually and then you carry the anointing of the Christ upon your life.

This is why we call people who are born again Christians as it means you are now united and share in that anointing and you can live your life fearlessly in the face of disease, insecurity, etc.

again, His core anointing is to save.

Ladies and gentlemen, that was the announcement that angel Gabriel, the arch angel, made to the lowly shepherds in that Judean night. He informed them that the anointed one has arrived – the only one that can deliver man totally from satanic affliction; the only one that can guarantee your destiny – the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the blessed invitation we

what this anointing upon the Christ Jesus does in the life of anyone that will believe it.

Psalm 103:1-5 says 'Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.' 'Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 'Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 'Who satisfieth



He has made us his righteousness



make to all as we charge you to give your life to the Lord Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what your background is or whether you were born into a Christian home; what matters is that you need a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter what your religious background is, you need to meet Jesus one on one. Jesus is not a religious figure – He is the Saviour and He is the Christ. There is no one like Him under heaven. The Bible says in Acts 4:12...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Now, we have previously talked about how this anointing functions and the functioning areas: first, this anointing delivers from sin; secondly, this anointing delivers from sickness and disease and infirmity of the flesh and the body. Thirdly this anointing delivers from poverty, want and lack. Fourthly, this anointing delivers from destruction.

You can go to Psalm 103:1-5 and you will find in a nutshell

thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Verse two says 'Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: So there are benefits to receiving Jesus and waking in this anointing. You can only be blessed for receiving Jesus. This is not a question of argument but a question of results.

Verse three then says 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; talking about the forgiveness of sin as well as deliverance from sickness and disease. Verse four goes on to say, 'Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; the word redeemed here means to buy you back and remove you from a place where destruction can come to pass in your life. And the word destruction here means to be delivered from a pit, danger and trap of the enemy.

Satan's intention of setting pitfall is not only to cause you to miss eternity with Christ in Heaven, but also to cut off the

power of God from your life in this earth so he can be free to feast on you and your family; God forbid! Glory to God that Christ and the anointing He carries is our refuge and this is open to every human being that will receive it.

2 Corinthians 5:21 tells us that God made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. So when Christ took our sin on the cross, He paid in hell and that means anyone that receives Him does not have to go to hell. But not only that, He has given us what we call righteousness. Righteousness can be understood as our right to stand before God without a sense of guilt or condemnation of inferiority complex.

Righteousness means we have been made right with God and our rightness with God brings rights and privileges with it. So everyone that has accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, enters into the blessedness of righteousness. God looks at you the same way He looks at Jesus. God looks at you and ticks your name and says, this one will not be condemned because Jesus has paid for them and they have received what He has done for them by accepting Him as Lord and Saviour.

The Bible says in Proverbs 12:28, In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death. Glory to God forevermore! This means that, spiritually speaking, the nature of sin has been removed from you (the nature of sin is called spiritual

“**It doesn't matter what your religious background is, you need to meet Jesus one on one. Jesus is not a religious figure – He is the Saviour and He is the Christ. There is no one like Him under heaven. The Bible says in Acts 4:12...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.**”

” death). It is that nature that condemns men to hell, but when you become born again, the nature of death is removed and the life of God is put in you and that life is called righteousness.

The second benefit is that you are removed from under the authority of darkness and Satan no longer has the right to afflict you. It is as you believe these things that they are activated in your life. Philemon 1:6 says that the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. Therefore, there is no spiritual death in righteousness, and also, in this life, Satan has no right to cut short your life. Praise the Lord.

To be continued...

"Righteousness means we have been made right with God and our rightness with God brings rights and privileges with it. So everyone that has accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour, enters into the blessedness of righteousness. God looks at you the same way He looks at Jesus. God looks at you and ticks your name and says, this one will not be condemned because Jesus has paid for them and they have received what He has done for them by accepting Him as Lord and Saviour".

INTERNATIONAL

Food crisis, fears of a 'lost generation'

Refugees observe August 25 as 'Genocide Day' to demand justice and safe and voluntary repatriation to their homes in Myanmar. FAISAL MAHMUD writes.

MOHAMMAD Jalil still has nightmares recounting the harrowing journey he took last October on a rickety boat in the Bay of Bengal.

Jalil, a 26-year-old Rohingya refugee from Bangladesh's Kutupalong camp, paid around \$1,500 to an agent who promised him a safe journey to Malaysia.

A month later, he found himself on board an overcrowded fishing trawler drifting aimlessly on a fierce sea for about a week.

"We had no food and the children were crying in hunger. The people who were in charge of the trawler beat us mercilessly. On the ninth or 10th day – I can't remember – the boat sank," Jalil told Al Jazeera.

He, along with a few others, swam for hours before being rescued by the Bangladeshi coastguard.

"Some women and children couldn't make it and drowned," he said. "All my money is gone. I have lost everything."

Jalil, however, is lucky to be alive.

The United Nations says 2022 was one of the deadliest years for the Rohingya at sea after nearly 400 refugees perished while making treacherous boat trips from Myanmar and Bangladesh across the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Jalil's close shave with death and his desperation to flee Bangladesh underscores the plight of nearly a million Rohingya, most of whom fled their native Myanmar on August 25, 2017 after its military launched what the UN described as a campaign with "genocidal intent" against the mostly-Muslim minority.

As the Myanmar military began to kill Rohingya men, rape women and burn their villages that day, more than 750,000 of them fled to neighbouring Bangladesh where they were sheltered in the southern Cox's Bazar district – now the world's largest refugee camp.

Since then, the refugees observe August 25 as "Genocide Day" to demand justice and seek safe and voluntary repatriation to their homes in Myanmar, which is facing a genocide trial at the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The risky sea ventures to Malaysia and other Southeast Asian nations are just one of many reminders that the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh lead a precarious existence, losing hope of safely returning to their now military-ruled homeland and being shunned by the rest of the world.



Nearly a million Rohingya refugees live in cramped camps in southern Bangladesh

Jalil thought he could start a new life in Bangladesh when he arrived in 2017. But in the last six years, he says he has found himself in a tight corner with no work and no way of moving outside the barbed wires of the refugee camps.

"I felt like a caged bird. I learnt that those who had made it to Malaysia were earning well. That's why I risked all my savings. Now I am back to square one," he told Al Jazeera.

Journalist Kaamil Ahmed interviewed hundreds of such refugees for his book, *I Feel No Peace*, and found that they have almost lost hope of returning safely to Myanmar.

"They also believe they can't live dignified lives in the refugee camps," Ahmed told Al Jazeera. "These refugees are utterly stateless and marginalised wherever they are."

In December 2021, Bangladesh shut down all the refugee-run schools in which Rohingya children were being taught the Myanmar curriculum up to Grade 10. Nur Kabir, who ran the largest of these schools, told Al Jazeera his students are now passing their days doing nothing.

Shamsud Douza, the Additional Refugee, Relief and Repatriation Commissioner, told Al Jazeera the refugee-run schools taught in Bangla language, which the Bangladesh government prohibits in order "to keep Rohingya from

integrating and remaining permanently in the country".

Abdur Rahim, a Rohingya community leader, told Al Jazeera they are not living a "dignified life" in the camps. "We still long for our homelands but we fear the situation there is not at all suitable for our return."

Meanwhile, the patience of the host community is thinning. A 2019 survey conducted by the UNDP revealed that two-thirds of the residents of Cox's Bazar believe they are suffering due to the Rohingya influx.

"Four years later, things have gotten even worse," Saikat Rafi, an NGO worker posted in Cox's Bazar, told Al Jazeera.

Rafi, who works with both the refugees and the host community, said the latter has become more hostile as they feel the Rohingya are "getting foreign donations" and yet "stealing their jobs".

Matlub Ali, a construction worker at Cox's Bazar, alleged the refugees have cut barbed wires at nearly 150 places in the sprawling camps and sneak out to offer their labour at half the price. "We can't get jobs because of them," he told Al Jazeera.

The Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh camps rely almost entirely on food aid as they are not allowed to leave the camps or formally work. Since March this year, the World Food Programme assistance to a million refugees was cut by a

third to just \$8 per month due to a funding shortfall.

As a result, the health and well-being of more than half a million children are at risk due to recent drastic cuts in food assistance, Save the Children charity said in a statement on Thursday.

"Even before the first food ration cuts, 45 percent of Rohingya families were not eating a sufficient diet and malnutrition was widespread in the camps, with 40 percent of children experiencing stunted growth," the charity said.

"The humanitarian response is at breaking point," it said, adding that the children are "in danger of becoming a lost generation".

The Bangladesh government, however, says hosting the refugees is putting a strain on its economy. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last year said the cost of running the camps is more than \$1.2bn annually and only 48 percent of the pledged \$881m assistance from the UN was met.

Regina de la Portilla, the UNHCR spokesperson in Bangladesh, told Al Jazeera the reduction in funding will have "a direct impact on people already living with minimum services".

In a statement earlier this week, the Human Rights Watch said the UN and concerned governments should continue to underscore that conditions for the safe, sustainable and dignified return of Rohingya to Myanmar do not currently exist.

The rights group added that the UN Security Council's "inaction and government aid cutbacks are leaving Rohingya in even more desperate straits".

"Moving ahead with repatriating Rohingya now would mean sending refugees back to the control of a ruthless and repressive junta, setting the stage for the next devastating exodus," Bauchner said.

"Building conditions for the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of Rohingya will need a coordinated international response to establish rights-respecting civilian rule in Myanmar and achieve justice for past atrocities."

Dr Delwar Hossain, director of East Asia Study Center at Dhaka University, told Al Jazeera the world's attention has already moved from the Rohingya refugees and they possibly have become a "permanent fixture within the Bangladeshi territory".

Hossain said the resurgence of violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state – where most Rohingya lived before 2017 exodus – has opened a dangerous fissure in Southeast Asia that threatens to divide the two most important religious faiths in the region: Buddhism and Islam.

"Faiths that have lived peacefully in this region for millennia have never had such high tensions. If it persists, it could pose a greater threat to the social stability of the whole region," he said.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA.

INTERNATIONAL

Niger Junta gives French envoy hours to leave

Niger's coup leaders have given the French ambassador 48 hours to leave the country as bilateral ties continue to deteriorate rapidly.

The junta said Sylvain Itte had refused to respond to an invitation to meet Niger's foreign minister.

France, a former colonial power, said the "putschists have no authority" to order such an expulsion.

Paris opposes July's coup, saying that ousted President Mohammed Bazoum must be returned to office.

Friday's announcement was made by Niger's foreign minister installed by the junta.

This follows a series of statements and demonstrations hostile towards France.

The French foreign ministry responded by saying that it had "taken note of the putschists".

"The putschists do not have the authority to make this request, the ambassador's approval coming solely from the legitimate elected Nigerien authorities," the ministry added.

Gen Abdourahmane Tchiani, Niger's coup leader, last week pledged to return the West African nation to civilian rule within three years.

He made the announcement after meeting mediators from the West African regional bloc Ecowas in the capital, Niamey.

Ecowas has threatened military action to reverse last month's overthrow of President Bazoum if talks fail.

The junta head said that Niger did not want a war, but would defend itself against any foreign intervention.

"If an attack were to be undertaken against us, it will not be the walk in the park some people seem to think," he warned.

Gen Tchiani also reiterated criticism of what he called the "illegal and inhumane" sanctions imposed by Ecowas on the landlocked impoverished country.

This has included cutting electricity, resulting in blackouts in Niamey and other major cities, as well as blocking crucial imports.

Lorry drivers have been stuck for weeks waiting to bring in supplies, forcing up food prices.

Ecowas rejected the three-year timeframe after talks on Sunday.

"Ecowas is not accepting any prolonged transition again in the region. They just have to get ready to hand over in the shortest possible time," Abdel-Fatau Musah, the bloc's commissioner for political affairs, peace and



Tchiani

security, told the BBC.

He said the "military aspect is very much on".

Regional efforts to reverse the coup have been backed by the US and France, which both have military bases in Niger. These bases are part of efforts to tackle jihadist groups in the wider Sahel region.

The junta leader, who headed the presidential guard before seizing

power on 26 July, said military intervention could worsen the Islamist insurgencies linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group.

The coup mirrors similar recent takeovers in neighbouring Burkina Faso and Mali.

And the influence of Russia in the wider Sahel region is also growing through its mercenary group Wagner.

The US has condemned Israel's national security minister Itamar Ben Gvir for claiming his rights in the occupied West Bank are more important than those of Palestinians.

The state department said it strongly condemned the "inflammatory comments" and "all racist rhetoric".

His remarks on Israeli TV sparked a storm of criticism online.

Mr Ben Gvir has since called the coverage "fake news" and attacked the "radical left" for "misquoting" him.

On X, the platform previously known as Twitter, Mr Ben Gvir on Friday also launched a scathing attack on the Palestinian-American model Bella Hadid for reposting a clip of his comments, calling her an "Israel hater" who made him look "racist and dark".

Ms Hadid had reposted the video on Instagram where she has 60 million followers, adding the comment: "In no place, no time... should one life be more valuable than another's."

Mr Ben Gvir leads the ultranationalist Otzma Yehudit or "Jewish Power"

US condemns Israeli minister's 'inflammatory' Palestinian comments



Gvir

party which espouses racist, anti-Arab policies. He has previous convictions for inciting racism and supporting terrorism.

In December he was made a top minister by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who gave him a seat in his security cabinet and put him in charge of the domestic police, as well as Israel's militarised border police force that operates in occupied East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

His comments on Wednesday came amid

spiralling violence in which Palestinian gunmen killed three Israelis in separate attacks, including one close to the West Bank city of Hebron, where Mr Ben Gvir lives in a Jewish settlement.

It led to even further restrictions on movement for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians as Israeli forces searched for the gunmen.

"My right, my wife's, my children's, to roam the roads of Judea and Samaria are more important than the right of movement of the Arabs," said Mr Ben Gvir, using a biblical term for the West Bank.

He then addressed Mohammad Magadli, an Arab Israeli journalist in the studio, saying: "Sorry Mohammad, but this is the reality, that's the truth. My right for life comes before their right to movement."

A video clip of the comments went viral online and sparked a backlash, including from Palestinians and Israeli opposition figures.

The Palestinian Authority leadership condemned "in the strongest terms the racist and heinous remarks by Israel's fascist minister Itamar Ben Gvir, which only confirms Israel's apartheid regime of Jewish supremacy and racial terror against the Palestinian people".

It called for Mr Ben Gvir and other Israeli officials to be "sanctioned and held accountable".

Karine Elharrar, an Israeli MP in the opposition Yesh Atid party, described the minister as "the authentic representative of the most racist, messianic and Kahanist government we've ever had".

Mr Ben Gvir's political background lies in Kahanism - a violently racist movement that supports the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands.

Pressed by Israeli journalists for a response, a US state department spokesman on Thursday night said: "We strongly condemn Israeli minister Ben Gvir's inflammatory comments on the freedom of movement of Palestinian residents in the West Bank."

Trump to make historic Georgia mugshot



Trump

Donald Trump scowling defiantly into the camera in the Fulton County Sheriff's office will go down in history.

The mugshot, the first of a former US president, came after his fourth arrest in five months.

Mr Trump posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, for the first time since January 2021 to share the address of his website and the mugshot with an all-capital letters caption: "Election interference. Never surrender!"

Within hours, his campaign website was selling mugshot-branded mugs, t-shirts and drink coolers.

John Bolton, who served as national security advisor under

Mr Trump, said the image was likely carefully staged. "I think it's intended to be a sign of intimidation against the prosecutors and the judges,"

"He could've smiled. He could've looked benign," Mr Bolton added. "Instead he looks like a thug."

Mr Trump was charged last week with 18 alleged co-conspirators with attempting to overturn his 2020 election defeat in the state of Georgia.

At least 11 of the co-conspirators - Mr Trump, Rudy Giuliani, Sidney Powell, Jenna Ellis, Kenneth Chesebro, Cathy Latham, Harrison Floyd, Mark Meadows, Ray Smith, Harrison

Floyd and Scott Hall -

have so far been booked and processed at the local jail in Atlanta.

While the former president and his supporters are clearly pleased with his mugshot, photos of his indicted allies have been less well received.

"I thought these were all memes at first," said Jake Olson, a photographer based in Columbus, Ohio. "It's the perfect storm of bad photos, There are so many cardinal rules of photography that they are just not following."

"They have this one interrogation-style light, you can see they all have that little highlight on their foreheads," said Pittsburgh photographer and professor Ray Mantle. "They all don't look great... they all look tired."

The expressions vary widely. Lawyer Jenna Ellis is beaming down the lens, while Ray Smith, also an attorney, glares into the camera - two strikingly different choices for a photo that, unlike most other mugshots, will be published far and wide.

"For a lot of these people, this is their major public debut," Mr Mantle said. "They know that everyone's going to see these."

Pulling off a good mugshot can be tough,

said Cooper Lawrence, a journalist who has written extensively about celebrity culture. It's a difficult balance to strike, a challenge that celebrities like Justin Bieber, Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton have all had to face.

"Don't smile. A smile will make it look too arrogant," Lawrence said. "You want to smirk like Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton do. A smirk says, 'yes, this sucks, but I'm gonna be fine.'"

Hair, makeup and wardrobe - even while in the custody of Fulton County authorities - is crucial, she said. But "keep it simple", she added. "You're going to jail, not on an audition."

Mr Trump, however, is a man well aware of the power of his public image. Earlier this year he complained that producers on Fox News chose to "purposely show the absolutely worst pictures of me, especially the big 'orange' one with my chin pulled way back".

And to some the low quality of the Fulton County mugshot looks especially strange on a former president, even with its possible promotional value.



With **BULUS GAMBO**

Buju Banton - Everything was just magical

His return to the stage inside Kingston's National Stadium in March 2019 was one of the largest Reggae events in recent years. Now fans around the globe, even those who missed out on his stunning live appearances can get new music from Buju Banton. The legendary Jamaican singer and deejay is about to drop his 13th studio album this summer, a record that raises high expectations not just because of its artist but also the features revealed thus far, such as John Legend; the producers on board including Donovan Germain, Dave Kelly, and the late great Bobby Digital; and of course, the protagonist's seven year absence from the music scene. For the first time since his release and return to Jamaica, Buju Banton took the time to speak to Munchy from Reggaeville, to discuss his sound and lyrics, the current situation in the world due to Corona, his love for Jamaica, and certainly not the formula for his abundant hits.

Ten years after the release of your last album *Before The Dawn* you are about to drop your new album *Upside Down* in June. How do you feel about this next milestone in your career coming up?

First and foremost I want to say give thanks to all the good people who helped me and worked with me over the years to accomplish this



only major difference is, you have been missing my voice so much. But you know the truth shall not cease and as a bearer of the truth I shall always bring it whether I'm coming from the dungeon, whether I was buried alive or not. Did I say how I feel about this project? It's the truth serum!

Why did you name this album *Upside Down*?

Why wouldn't I name it **Upside Down**? That should be the question. In a world where good is called bad and lies are accepted as truth and the guilty can be made innocent and the innocent can be made guilty, why wouldn't I call the album **Upside Down**? (laughs)

The album starts with *Lamb Of God*, the same divine hymn you also started your first *Long Walk To Freedom* concert with in March 2019. Why did you choose this song, and these words in particular, to open both the show and the album?

We are in a very awakening dispensation. It

all that I have accomplished musically. And first I want to thank the Most High God who has been on the forefront of all my journeys. This journey is not different from all the other journeys. The



is not one of stature, nor one of social prestige. It is more one of spiritual awakening in this age. Mercy and comfort and truth are pillars of a foundation that are everlasting principles that cannot be removed. I don't care if you are rich, poor, black, or white. These are fundamental principles to stand by. Given to us by the True and Almighty God. Therefore, to call upon mercy and have mercy upon I and I as the children of men. Maybe some of us are so arrogant they refuse to do it for themselves. Well, I am not. Let me do it for me and let me do it for you. Because Our

Continued on page 26

Nigerian actresses with highest net worth

These talented celebrities have many followers on social media. In addition, some of these Nigerian female actors have increased their net worth through business endeavours and endorsement deals. Here is a list of these actresses' with their net worth.

Genevieve Nnaji - \$10 million

Who is the richest female actress in Nigeria in 2021? Genevieve Nnaji tops the list of the richest actress with a net worth of \$10 million. Nnaji is a talented actress who has starred in many movies. Besides acting, she is also a producer. In 2019, she produced *Lionheart*, the first Netflix original film produced in Nigeria. The talented actress is also the owner of the St Genevieve clothing line. She has sponsorship deals with Etisalat, Amstel, Malta, and Jumia, among others.



Ibinabo Fiberesima - \$8 million



Ibinabo Fiberesima, one of the wealthiest Nollywood actresses, was born in Port Harcourt on January 13, 1970. Fiberesima debuted as an actress in the film *Most Wanted* in 1998. Read also Most beautiful Hausa actresses in Kannywood She was the winner of the Miss Wonderland pageant in 1999 and the first runner-up in the Miss NUGA competition at the University of Calabar. In 2014, the actress

married her college sweetheart, Uche Benjamin Ugbuka. Her net worth is \$8 million as of 2021.

Funke Akindele - \$7.6 million

Funke Akindele is one of the most influential Nollywood stars, having a large fan base on Instagram. Akindele's performance has earned her both national and continental recognition. With a net worth of \$7.6 million, she is one of the top three richest Nigerian celebrities.



Omotola Jalade Ekeinde - \$7.2 million



Omotola Jalade is one of Nigeria's most influential actresses. The majority of her fans refer to her as Omosexy. Since joining Nollywood in 1995, she has starred in over 250 films. In addition to acting, the Nigerian actress is a well-known musician and activist. Time Magazine named her one of the top 100 influential persons in the world in 2013.

Her net worth is estimated to be \$7.2 million.

Rita Dominic - \$6 million

The Nollywood actress was born in Mbaize, Imo State, on July 12, 1975. Rita Dominic has received numerous notable cinema awards, including the Africa Movie Academy Award. In addition, she is a co-founder of The Audrey Silva Company (TASC). Rita's net worth is estimated to be \$6 million.



Continued on page 26

THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Low learners: Characteristics and tips to improve

By **CAROLINE EDWARD**

PARENTS tend to get overly stressed about their children being slow learners – so much so that they tend to let out their frustration on them. While this is completely understandable, especially for parents dealing with this condition the first time, this makes it harder for the child who is probably upset already about not being able to read and write as his peers do.

I understand what you may be going through because I realised my third child, Aaron, has a learning disability when he was in primary school. Most of us see low grades as the child's neglect for studies or lack of effort. It is only when we talk to them, notice how much effort they are actually putting in and study their answer sheets that we will be able to understand where their weakness lies. I took him to a friend's psychiatry clinic to get a few assessments done and found out that his reading and writing abilities were delayed by about 2 to 3 years while his intelligence score was above average.

A boy working on an assignment. Here, I will briefly describe the definition and characteristics of a slow learning child so that you can identify the weaknesses your child may have to help your little one out. Once we've done that, you can go through some of the tips I've mentioned that can streamline the efforts you might already be following instinctively. Who is a slow learner?



A child can be described as a slow learner if his or her thinking skills develop at a notably slower rate than that of his or her peers. The child will carry on through the exact same developmental stages as his or her peers but at a comparatively slow rate. Also, the child typically has below-average intelligence. The typical characteristics of a slow learner are found to be as follows:

Learning issues
A child unable to learn as fast as his peers.
Slow learners tend to learn slower and are, in most cases, unable to retain what they learn. They also have a very short attention span. Learning does not happen incidentally for slow learners and they have to be directly taught. And they cannot link one learning to another

unless specifically told. They are also unable to apply certain learning or concept in different situations without help – which is why they require rigorous concrete teaching and cannot make do with abstract teaching. Slow learners, due to these reasons, are mostly "underachievers".

Social issues
A child looking disinterested in a group.
The social behavioural pattern of slow learning children is mostly immature and unstable. They lack judgement and can sometimes get aggressive about petty issues. They are self-conscious, tend to daydream a lot and love to spend time in solitude or in the company of younger children. They may not be verbally appropriate while

working in a group and their mood can change in a split second. Slow learners often portray antisocial characteristics.
Auditory issues
Identification of sounds is

reading something silently is easier than reading out loud for them.

Tips to assist a slow learner
Give him/her a quiet study table: Slow learners get distracted easily so find your child a spot to study where there are zero distractions.

Ask questions: Ask your child questions like, "What do you make of this?", "Can you tell me how this is different from this?", "What do you think this word means?" and so on.

Be easily accessible: Don't make your child feel he or she is eating up your time. Help him or her in every way possible – not by completing his or her given assignments but by guiding him through the process.

Give small tasks: The short attention span is a consistent issue so only gives short assignments.

Don't let them give up: Slow learners need more time than their peers to understand a



difficult for slow learners and thus, provide irrelevant answers when a question is asked. They find it hard to write from dictation and prefer visual presentation of materials over oral presentation.

Visual-motor issues
Slow learners with visual-motor issues prefer oral learning over visual learning. They find it difficult to differentiate between objects of different sizes, colour, and shape. They cannot make sense of similar-looking objects and have difficulty recalling them. They often have poor handwriting and like to take up part learning instead of whole learning. Slow learners may complain about various physical problems and may have awkward physical movements.

Language issues
Children who are slow learners find it hard to express themselves verbally and cannot articulate easily. They cannot fully make us understand what they intend to tell us. Also,

concept or finish a task – which can leave them pretty exhausted. Don't overwork them to the extent that they give up. Give them a break if need be.

Don't label them: Don't keep mentioning the fact that your child is a slow learner and that he or she can't achieve as much as his or her peers. Be supportive all the way.

Be patient: Be as patient as you possibly can and be their advocate. Make sure your child is keeping up with the school curriculum or is at least trying his best to do this.

Every child is special and has talents of their own. More often than not, it has been noticed that slow learners, children with ADD/ADHD, autism or other learning disabilities show immense potential in the creative and performing arts. So, do not lose hope. With your effort, your child will shine and make you proud!



THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Relationship

Signs he's your soulmate

If you are here, it means you are on the lookout for signs he's your soulmate before you plunge in deep. In these times when relationships and even mere friendships are hard to pull off, it is like striking gold when you find a person with whom you feel a certain kinship. Many people would not go into anything long-term unless they are very sure their partner will remain so for a lifetime.

They also want to be sure that what they feel for each other is rock-solid and won't fade with time. This is why people want to know if a person is their soulmate before they get serious with them. The signs are not always glaring, and with a thing like this, one should be sure before making any commitments.

Finding your soulmate is beautiful and usually signals the beginning of a lifetime of laughter, happiness, and a healthy relationship with your partner. Here are the clear signs that he's your soulmate. You can never go wrong with these signs in mind:

You Just Know It

One of the most prominent signs that he's your soulmate happens in your heart. It's like this intuitive feeling that you both were meant to last.

It's not a fickle or uncertain feeling that you're still weighing on your mind. Instead, it's a certain, peaceful, and firm conviction that a person is your soulmate.

Several other signs accompany this one that sort of confirms what you're feeling on the inside. In the first instance, you click the first time you meet. It's like you just continued a conversation that you started in a past life as you've always known each other. You are amazed at how perfectly your discussions and replies sync. Because of this, you genuinely enjoy talking to each other because there's a person who gets you without even trying.

Then the next thing is that they start to feel like family. It seems like in your heart, they've qualified to be on that high pedestal of closeness to you that only your family has ever ascended to. Yet they did it so seamlessly that you probably didn't notice it was happening. Another thing is that you both develop a bond between you two that is so strong and so special that people can't even define it.

The connection is tangible and there for people to see, but it's something that cannot be described, not even by you. Things like these help to reinforce that feeling of knowing you were meant to be soulmates.

He Knows You Too Well

This is also a big one. Absolutely no one knows you as he does, and it's not even because you've spilled all your guts to him. He just knows you so well. This is one of the signs he's your soulmate.

The thing about being soulmates with a person is that it forms such a bond that the person forever has their sights on you. Anything you are interested in, even in the slightest, piques their interest. They naturally want to know what you are about and what makes you tick. It's not creepy or anything like that, but a show of genuine curiosity on their part.

This extensively explains why they'd know you as they do. They know you because their sense often fixates on you, picking on subtle signals and processing the information. This shows why they'd often know what you want to say next, how you'd react to particular circumstances, how your mood and emotions work, and the kind of environment where you thrive better.

It also explains why they'd know a lot about things that interest you. They



would observe that thing through the lens of who they know you to be and therefore get a close-to-correct idea of how important that thing is to you and how much you'd put into it.

You Are Your Authentic Self Around Him
You rarely need to pretend or be anything other than yourself in the presence of your soulmate. You are your authentic self around him. This is one of the strongest signs that he's your soulmate.

When you are comfortable around a person, you don't need to hide the odd quirks or weird things about you from them. You don't need to impress them or obsess over how they feel concerning your appearance. This only happens when you feel secure in that person's feelings about you. They must have communicated it so profoundly that you are left in no doubt how they feel towards you.

This is also the bedrock of trust and intimacy. One cannot build genuine, lasting intimacy when they are not comfortable around their partner. It is simply impossible. A soulmate is one with whom you feel no pressure to perform and with whom you can be yourself.

Your comfort around your partner also expresses itself in the quality of your communication. If you can comfortably sit together in companionable silence without feeling like there is a rift or that you need to constantly fill the silence with words, then your soulmates are top-notch. Also, when you have conversations, do you pick on your words and try not to hurry them so that you can sound intelligent and coordinated? You should not exactly worry about how you sound when you talk with your soulmate.

This is a common sign of nervousness. He cannot possibly be your soulmate if you feel the need to be inauthentic about anything in his presence.

There Is A Strong Chemistry

When the sparks fly and are powerful, he is your man. One of the most tangible signs he's your soulmate is when you both have strong chemistry going on

especially when that chemistry has stood the test of time. For some people, it does not take much time for the adrenaline and hot thrill of a new chase to die down. And when this happens, the person you used to find exciting and fun suddenly becomes boring, and you can't wait to leave their company. Sometimes, it is so bad that you wonder how you ever thought they were fun to be in the first place.

Genuine chemistry never dies or fizzles out. It stays firm even when you have spent years together, and one would almost expect you to grow weary of each other's company. But it doesn't happen. You still make him smile, and he still makes you laugh, and the changes that time has wrought in you both haven't dented the chemistry one bit. You still have the hots for one another, and you never see an end to what you have going on. It almost dawns on some people like a hunch that their relationship is nearing its end. But the thing about soulmates is that the connection rarely dies off, and even if a fallout occurs, it is hard to forget that person.

He's Supportive

One of the key signs he's your soulmate is that he is supportive. A soulmate connects with you deeper than everyone else, and it is only trite that he knows what you are about and fully supports you. Your soulmate won't just support you on the surface or base level as everyone else would, but he will be actively interested in what you do and get involved the best he can. He is your greatest cheerleader and is always there to encourage you to go on and chase your dreams.

When you've lost out or experiencing failure regarding your interests, he will offer his shoulder for you to cry on. Then he'll encourage you to get back on your feet.

In circumstances when you want to give up on your dreams, he becomes your voice of reason, reminding you why you are doing what you are doing in the first place. He reminds you of the vision and progress you have made so far, anything

to keep you going on that path you've always set your eyes on. Whether in business, career, academics, or championing a cause, your soulmate will always be there when no one else is and in such a way that no one else can. They keep you on your toes with your goals and ensure you get to where you aim to be.

Your soulmate would treat your business like it's his and put as much effort as he would into his career. Your soulmate is your best support system.

You Both Have The Same Core Values

There is absolutely no way a person can be your soulmate without having the same core values as you. So one of the signs he's your soulmate is when you share the same value system.

Your core value is consist of your belief system, the things on which you hinge your purpose, morals, standards, limits, and experiences that have shaped your view of life. Many don't believe that people in an intimate or close relationship ought to share the same core values. However, the reality is that people with different value systems won't be able to settle well in a close relationship.

A person's value system is so fundamental that it defines how that person, over their life, reacts to circumstances and what they consider virtues and vices. Therefore, it would undoubtedly impact day-to-day interactions and create a strain if the people involved in a relationship cannot agree on most things, no matter how civil they try to be.

At the same time, finding people who absolutely or almost totally share the same core values is hard. When you do see people like these, they are usually keepers. They either end up as your close friends or in an intimate and often long-term relationship with you. Because they believe in the same values, it is easier to slip into a deeper connection, and it is as though they understand you entirely even before you say a word. This is one of the core characteristics of a soulmate.

You Understand Him Better Than Anyone Else

A person being your soulmate is not just about him understanding you. The connection is mutual and reciprocated. It is not forced or practiced; instead, the connection is seamless. This is one of the signs he's your soulmate.

Sometimes, people make the mistake of tagging someone as their soulmate just because the said person understands them well enough. Well, it's a journey in probable progress, but that's only a part of it. The understanding and connection have to go both ways and to the same degree for a person to be called a soulmate.

Just as he does for you, you already know what's on his mind before he says it. You can read his mood and emotions and accurately decipher what's up with him. You know what will cheer him up and are eager to provide it. You always want to see him happy, and you do your best to make that happen.

You have meaningful and long conversations with him, and the more you learn about him, the more you feel a kinship towards him, like you've known each other forever. Soon enough, you can almost finish his sentences and predict what he would and wouldn't like. It is like a strong bond between you both. No one gets him as you do, so naturally, you are the first person he runs to when he needs to talk. He feels comfortable around you and doesn't feel the need to pretend or act up.

You Both Are Always Excited In Each Other's Company.

It is beautiful to see people who are

soulmates spend time with each other. It is always a sight to behold.

They are genuinely excited to see each other and are happy enough to be around each other. If you thoroughly enjoy his company and he feels the same way with you, then it's fair game. That is one of the signs that he's your soulmate. Some people just click within seconds of meeting each other; for others, it may take months of friendship and earned trust to get there.

It takes even lesser time for a solid friendship where the parties involved were totally into each other to disintegrate. But with soulmates, that is hardly the case. First off, you genuinely enjoy his company, and there is no doubt about that. You're not also afraid to express how much you love his company, and you don't feel that prevalent fear of losing a valued friendship even after months of closeness.

But unfortunately, so many people are scared of being deeply connected to another person because, sadly, it is common for friends to grow apart after what seems like a lifetime of true kinship. But with a soulmate, there is no such fear. It's like you are convicted, and you just know that the other person feels the same way about you and that what you have going is a lasting one.

You wouldn't trade it for anything, and you wouldn't let any doubts get in the way. You'd freely express your feelings about each other, and this even strengthens the bond more than ever.

It Feels Like You've Always Known Him

You may not have known each other for a while before you realize that you don't even feel like you're strangers.

It seems like you've always known him. You both probably hit it off the first time you met, which was a huge sign on its own. Now, it seems like you have known him for ages, and you can practically predict what he's going to do or what he's going to say, and it's like there's a lifetime behind and ahead of you both. Feeling like you've been friends longer than you've actually met is one of the signs that he's your soulmate. It wouldn't feel that way if he wasn't.

This feeling usually makes the friendship a lot more fluid. It is easier to feel safe and secure with someone you've known for a long time. When you feel that way about someone, trust comes naturally. You can freely share your experiences, be vulnerable around this person, and grow comfortable around them because of that long-time kinship feeling towards them.

It helps that you also would know what they can and can't do. That's one of the perks of being soulmates. When you feel like you've known someone for a long time, you're drawn to them and will strive to fill that gap of what you think you know about them with solid, tangible information.

It is in this sharing of your lives with each other that you establish a measure of their character, and their actions become somewhat predictable to you.

Everything Feels Easy With Him
Love is indeed about intentionality, and it is equally valid that relationships require effort to work. But some people make an effort put in essentially worth it.

Source: Relationship culture.com



Reality Bites

with Palang Kasmi
peekembo@yahoo.com
08036417305, 08095322786

How culture impairs widowed small-scale farmers in conflict-impacted communities of Plateau

By MARTHA AGAS

TALATU Yohanna 40, (not real name), a widow from Zanwra village of Plateau's Bassa Local Government Area has resorted to doing menial jobs to survive after her husband John, was killed in an attack by suspected herdsmen in 2020.

She works on peoples' farms as a labourer with a daily wage of N700 to take care of her six children after her in-laws dispossessed her of the farmlands she jointly cultivated with her husband in their 22 years of marriage.

She was harassed to leave the family house which she succumbed to after so much pressure as marriages in the community are mostly patrilineal. Her in-laws demanded she hands over a sale agreement, the only claim of farmland ownership in her possession.

Her neighbour Josephine who witnessed the series of discriminations say that only family and community leaders can intervene in addressing the harrowing family affair.

Aware of her predicament, the community leader of Zanwra, Mr John Wah, said that information he got was that the farmlands were collected from her because she wanted to return to her father's house and it was against their customs to do that and still possess her late husband's farmlands.

The community in Irigwe chiefdom located in Miango district does not recognise women in farmland inheritance like many rural communities in Nigeria. An elder in the chiefdom, Baba Chayi said that their tradition do not have provisions for females inheriting landed properties but the males have such rights.

According to the paramount ruler of Irigwe Chiefdom, retired Rev. Ronku Aka, it is practised to preserve the family's wealth as women usually get married and by default take the asset to their husband's family thereby reducing their family's possession.

But even in her father's house Talatu still continues to struggle for survival as women are faced with the challenge of disinheritance whether in their birth families or marital families.

She says "there are 25 children here (her father's house) who are still struggling to get a portion of land to farm, moreover I am a woman who does not have such rights to access land."

When her husband was alive they cultivated grains consisting of maize, millet and guinea corn and also vegetables for home and commercial uses. It catered for their needs and their extended family.

For the commercial use she says "In a year, when we sell our produce, we make within N200,000 to N300,000."

Unfortunately, Talatu's present reality is that of economic hardship. Her first son, 16 dropped out of school in 2022. In distraught, she says that she couldn't provide N11,500 for his Junior Secondary School Certificate exam fees which she would have done if she was allowed to cultivate their farm.

"Now he is a drop out, life is funny. Who would have thought N11,500 will be a challenge for me but look at me now," she said.

She managed to pay school fees for two of her children in public schools while two are beneficiaries of scholarship in a school which has special consideration for children affected by conflicts in Miango. The local school is currently helping 25 widows with the education of their 37 children.

In another instance, Janet Rike (not real name), 35, a mother of four faced a similar situation, she is back to her father's house too. She lived with her husband David, 40, in Kpacha and cultivated guinea corn and maize with him in a portion of the family's farmland in Tagwaye along Jebbu Miango road until he died of ill health in November 2019.

Asides the takeover of the farm, about 8 pm on a Friday in October 2020, a month to the first anniversary of his death, her in-laws asked her to leave the family house with her children. Her



reluctance because she wanted to at least complete the one-year mourning period led to physical assault by her most senior sister in-law who held her at the neck till her dress tore.

The youngest of the sisters confirmed the incident occurred but explained her sister only beat Janet up because she was disrespectful to their mother and accused her family of initiating one of her daughters to witchcraft which led to their brother's death.

She got relief when her two daughters were adopted by two good samaritans residing in Abuja and Jos. Some villagers in hush tones say they don't trust such assistance because of past events of exploitation of their plight.

Traffickers have posed as NGOs to traffic their children for child labour and other crimes. The community leader of Jebbu Miango, Chief John Dawa said that an NGO that claimed to be on a mission for intervention in education for children in conflict communities visited their community in 2021 and left with some children but was later discovered to engage them in hard labour.

Mr Juventus Yitnoe, the current Head of Investigations at the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons in Plateau, says such interventions should always be interrogated because conflicts in Bassa has made it one of the most endemic local government in child trafficking and its people vulnerable to be tricked. The agency has recorded 85 cases and 146 victims within March 2021 to October 2022 in Plateau.

For Alice Gabriel (not real name), 22, from Ancha community, who dropped out from secondary school for marriage, when she lost her husband in an attack on January 2021, aside from being prevented from using the farmland, she was harassed by her in-laws for trying to create a bad image for them when she was given farmland by a neighbour to cultivate. Moreover, she was interrogated for desiring money a lot when she didn't have a child in their five years of marriage.

She is back to her father's house and have returned to continue her secondary education at Government Secondary School Te'egbe through a scholarship scheme. Alice is currently in JSS2.

Investigations reveal that these are some of the challenges concerning customary practices that disinherit widows and sustain their unjust treatment in some rural communities of Irigwe Chiefdom in Miango district of Bassa LGA.

Since 2015 Irigwe land has been hit with more than 73 episodes of crisis resulting mostly from disagreement and disputes between farmers and herdsmen. This has led to the rising number of widows in the area put as 422 between 2016 till date according to the Relief Distribution Committee in the chiefdom. It is projected to have one of the highest number of widows in the state.

The continuous crisis in the area, other parts of the north and in the country in general, has contributed to Nigeria being among the 20 countries in the world with more than 3 million widows according to World Widows Report.

This figure contributes to the estimated

38 million widows living in extreme poverty globally; and Sub-Saharan Africa is worst hit.

A United Nation report says that African widows irrespective of ethnic groups, are among the most vulnerable and destitute in which their customs are likely to be used to oppress and exploit them.

This is the case of the widows in Irigwe Chiefdom, who are still struggling with the loss of their husbands and the aftermath of the crisis and further burdened with the oppression of their customs. The situation has contributed to the prevalence of discrimination on their access to farmlands, a major source of livelihood in the agrarian area in spite of various legislations against it.

These discriminations are part of the harmful widowhood practices which the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act passed into law in 2015 prohibits. The law passed in Plateau on May 19, 2022 addresses cultural practices and beliefs that are discriminatory against women.

It states "Any person who subjects a widow to harmful traditional practices commits an offence and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not less than two years or to a fine not less than N500,000 or to both such fine and imprisonment."

These legislations such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; Nigeria's 1999 Constitution and the land Use Act of 1978 provide for punitive measures against women discrimination.

The existence of statutes to protect the right of a widow to inherit her late husband's estate is recognised by the Supreme Court. In 2014 in the judgement of Ukeje Vs Ukeje, it condemned the Igbo custom of excluding women from inheriting their father's estate declaring it as null and void. This takes precedence to lower courts even though rural communities are still patrilineal and traditions still prevail.

Widows rarely have land documents in rural areas. Many widows in rural areas do not have legal documents except in some instances where they could be lucky to have letter of agreement for sale of land.

This is recognised in their communities and can be admissible in courts. They are usually handwritten in Hausa language by members of their communities reverred to be educated.

The community leader of Dan-Tanko in Irigwe land, Mr Ancha Jatau, says the agreement shows evidence of payment and description of the land.

Legal practitioners say the document is important and should be kept well by the widows. A human rights lawyer, Ms Priscilla Akau says when something is penned down, it gives the case some semblance of being valid.

Also, Mr Audu Daspan describes it as a simple agreement of transfer of customary land and by its nature not a registrable instrument under the land instrument registration law but is admissible in the court to show evidence of payment.

He however said proper foundation must be established for the argument.

When presented with the sale agreement with Talatu for her late husband's land which has no signature, he says there are circumstances in an

agreement in a contract that even an unsigned document could still be admitted as long as the intention of the parties is very clear from the evidence.

Evidence of agreement on farmland purchased by John, Talatu's husband in 2007, still in her possession.

Under Age marriage is the norm

Under-age marriage is a norm in rural communities of Irigwe land which obstructs their education and limits their courage to report disinheritance. Investigations reveal that the widows marry before the completion of their Junior Secondary school.

A Community Based Organisation, Rural Youth Integral Support Initiative which operates in the area affirms to the practice. The Founder, Mr Gastor Barrie, who run intervention programmes for widows says they mostly get married at the age of 15 to 17 years and less than 5 per cent of them completed their Junior secondary school.

The marriages even contravene to the Child Rights Law in the state which prohibits child marriage to a minor described as under 18 years, a situation still unreported.

According to the Litigation Officer of the family court in Jos, Mrs Eunice Aaron, no case has been reported to the court since the law was passed in 2005.

Why the Silence?

Many of the widows have accepted their travails as fate while some are ignorant of relevant legislations protecting women against discrimination.

For instance Asabe Ishaya 31, says she didn't complain when she was not permitted to cultivate the family's farmland in Tafi-gana after her husband was killed in 2018 in an attack. She says that it is the culture they met many years ago which would live after them.

Moreover, she narrated that her father apportioned farmland for his daughters before he died but her uncles collected it back from them after his demise.

Mrs Caroline Gwedu, the National President of the Irigwe Women Development Association says many women in the land are ignorant of their rights and have never reported any maltreatment to them. She, however, admitted their failure in sensitising the women on their rights.

Also, Ms Akau says patriarchy especially in Nigeria's northern region have made widows afraid of the persecution they will get from in-laws when they report them to the authorities.

The customs have been noted to be one of the reasons they rarely report disinheritance to courts. A Registrar at an Area Court in Bukuru, Mr Sunday Chohi says that those who even have the courage to do that mostly hide under the guise of their sons or male relations to seek for justice.ports of land matters by women in so

In Miango where the nearest Area court to these communities is located, it was found to be locked during official hours during this investigation, an anonymous source says it has been locked for over a month because they hardly get cases and even if they do, it is hardly a female reporting on any issue on farmland inheritance.

For the few cases reported within 2022 to June 2023 in some Area courts in Jos, most of them are pending except of one in the Area Court of Bukuru, where the plaintiff reported her siblings on land ownership and was given writ of possession on March 9.

Mrs Jennifer Mallo, 54, from Mbar village in Bokkos who lost her husband in 1995 was also lucky to get justice at the Area Court in Bokkos.

On May 30, 2018, the court ruled for her to be given the farmland inheritance of her husband from his family.

What is ministry of women affairs doing?

The state ministry of Women Affairs and social development is saddled with the responsibility of handling the welfare of women which includes protection of their rights and empowerment through their various units.

But the ministry says there are social welfare officers at the state's 17 LGAs who are assigned to such duties in rural communities.

However, findings reveal that in Bassa, there is no budgetary provisions for the welfare officer to visit rural communities except the widows visit the secretariat to report which they hardly do.

The ministry however has a Widowhood Vocational Training Centre located in Mangu Local Government Area (LGA)

established in 1993 to empower widows with vocational skills.

Each of the LGAs in the state are expected to sponsor widows from their areas while the ministry provides them with starter packs at the end of the programme.

The centre's runs the biannual programme of six months even though its last graduation was in 2020. Also, most of its structures are in disrepair except for a building donated in 2020 by some petrol station operators in Mangu.

The Ministry's Director of Women Affairs, Mrs Mary Chuwang during the 2023 international Widows Day celebration said that the centre need more budgetary provision to achieve its mandate; access counterpart funding from donor agencies; implement existing gender laws and revisit the establishment of Gender Equal Opportunities Commission.

For that, there is a ray of hope for its establishment as the new governor of the state, Caleb Muftwang on July 27 gave approval of some appointments which included Mrs Olivia Dazyem, as the Chairperson Implementation Committee of Gender and Equal Opportunities Commission.

Changing the tides

Civil Society Organisations(CSOs) have charged traditional rulers, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), indigenous women groups and other stakeholders on enlightening women in rural communities on their rights.

One of the constitutional duties of NHRC is public enlightenment on human rights and assisting victims of infringements.

In Plateau, its State Coordinator, Mrs Veronica Abe, says that they organise Village Square meetings to sensitise women of their rights and the need to report discrimination for justice.

However, more efforts are required from them, Gad Shamaki, the Chairman of CSOs in Plateau charged them to organise more outreaches for women in rural communities through partnership with the National Orientation Agency and also social welfare departments in the LGAs.

According to a Human Rights Lawyer, Mr Frank Tie Tie, NHRC is constrained by funding to carry out its statutory duties as it receives over one million complaints annually and cannot carry out sufficient human rights education.

To address that situation, the senate passed the National Human Rights Commission Bill, 2022 on April 5 to strengthen its capacity.

Complaints made to the NHRC Plateau State

Gad also challenged worship centres particularly churches on educating widows of their rights while also advocating for engaging traditional leaders to ensure inclusiveness of women in land inheritance.

Enactment of bye laws by traditional rulers as prescribed by an elder, Baba Chayi, is crucial to ensure punitive measures for defaulters and to serve as deterrent to others.

He added that safe spaces should be created by women for widows to report their grievances without being tagged as "sell outs".

For an activist, Mrs Grace Solomon, rural women should be educated on the provisions of the VAPP law by the Ministry of women affairs and other stakeholders.

She added that the ministry should be repositioned to discharge its duties of protecting women from discrimination especially in marginalised communities where they are most abandoned to their plight.

Mr Thomas Ajitse, a Judge of an Area Court in Jos says the judiciary can only adjudicate on reported cases so widows should report discrimination and not concede to defeat.

Even though no case has been reported to the Paramount Ruler of Irigwe land on maltreatment of widows on farmlands, he says his cabinet is billed to have a meeting within July and August to consider enacting bye laws to guide the affairs of the chiefdom and would incorporate the subject matter in their deliberations.

This report was supported by the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ) under its Female Reporters' Leadership Programme (FRLP) 'Report Women'.

EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

Tips to stop you from waking up at night

By **ANGELICA BALINGIT**
and **RORY STOBO**

SLEEP is pretty amazing. The joy of drifting off in crisp sheets, dreaming about pancakes or puppies... until something interrupts your peaceful slumber. If you keep waking up in the middle of the night, it can wreck your REM and leave you feeling grumpy and groggy in the morning.

But don't worry. We're here to open your eyes on how to get the best shut-eye.

There are tips to stop waking up in the middle of the night. Before you drift off again, peep these top tips to get an elite snooze.

Set a consistent sleep schedule. Make sure your sleep space is cool and dark. Don't force yourself to sleep if you're not tired. If you can't sleep, get up and read a book for 10-15 minutes. Do something gentle and relaxing before bed, like meditating. Limit screen time before you sleep. Exercise during the day, not right before bed. Limit caffeine to mornings. Don't eat right before bed. Limit drinking late in the evening and if you smoke, try to quit.

There are lifestyle factors that can affect your sleep. If you're waking up throughout the night, check your environment. There could be lifestyle factors affecting the quality of your sleep.

Technology overload: Chances are, you use your smartphone a lot. All day, every day. In fact, you're likely reading this article on a phone right now. That's great for keeping up with the latest TikTok trends, but looking at screens before you go to bed can cause problems with your circadian rhythm.

Your circadian rhythm is like an internal clock your body has that helps regulate sleep. The blue light frequency from your phone's screen messes with your sleep pattern, and can even wake you up in the middle of the night. It can also make you less alert in the morning. How to fix it: Avoid using your phone for at least an hour before bed, or try a blue light filter if it's simply unavoidable.

Overheating: Your core body temperature drops when you're asleep. In earlier stages of your sleep cycle, you're particularly sensitive to the temperature of your environment. This means you'll often wake up before you get to the deeper, more beneficial stages of each cycle. If you can, set your bedroom temperature so it's nice and cool. Simply setting a fan on your nightstand can do wonders for nighttime heat. It also produces low, consistent white noise which can drown out distractions.

Indigestion: Eating large, rich meals too near your bedtime can agitate your gut and cause you to wake up in the middle of the night. While you're trying to sleep, your body is busy digesting all that grub and it's not shy about how it happens.

Simple gas can be enough to wake lighter sleepers while things like indigestion and acid reflux can be more disruptive to your sleep. Therefore, avoid heavy meals an



hour or 2 before bed. If you simply can't resist that midnight meat feast pizza, prop yourself up with some pillows so you're sleeping in a more elevated position. That'll help food slide down rather than up.

Alcohol consumption: You might feel like booze can help you drop off to sleep, but does it help you stay there? Not according to studies that link the sauce with all sorts of sleep-related woes. It can mess up your circadian rhythm, shorten your sleep cycles, and cause breathing issues like snoring or poor oxygen intake.

By drinking alcohol before bed, you're trading a good night's rest for reduced sleep quality overall. In the long run, it's a solid idea to limit the amount you drink for the few hours before bedtime.

What medical conditions make you wake up at night?

If you've ruled out environmental factors and you're still wondering why you keep waking up at night, the answer could be medical. **Thyroid problems**

Studies link issues with the thyroid gland in your neck to a number of different sleep conditions. **Hyperthyroidism**, when your thyroid is overactive, seems to be the main culprit. However, **hypothyroidism** (an under-active gland) can be just as impactful.

Researchers don't understand the exact mechanics of how the thyroid can interfere with sleep yet, so if you're experiencing long-term issues with waking up in the middle of the night, asking your doc to check your thyroid function could help.

Sleep apnea: Sleep apnea is when someone has trouble breathing during the night or intermittently stops breathing altogether. Since this can be serious, it's important to look for the signs. If you sleep with a spouse or partner, they might report irregular breathing or heavy snoring. If you sleep alone, you might find yourself waking up in the night gasping for air. During the day, those with sleep apnea may experience drowsiness and morning headaches, which are also signs you should speak with your doctor.

The condition has been linked to heart problems and is often underdiagnosed in older people. A medical professional will often refer you for a night in a sleep clinic if they suspect you might have sleep apnea. Treatment may involve wearing a special mask when you

we're living in a time when this condition can be diagnosed and treated more effectively. New therapies are entering clinical trials all the time.

Anxiety, depression, or bipolar disorder

As with insomnia, a lot of folks will deal with mental health challenges. Anxiety, depression, stress, and bipolar disorder are among the most common mental health issues which cut into sleep. A medical professional will help you identify any changes which might address underlying issues and help you get a restful night's sleep.

Frequent need to pee: In most cases, waking up to pee in the middle of the night isn't a big deal. But if it's happening regularly enough to impact your sleep schedule, there might be a medical reason, like: pregnancy, diabetes, enlarged prostate, overactive or prolapsed bladder, complications with medication.

These tips will make you to stay asleep all night long, and help you to net yourself a solid sleep pattern and stop waking up in the middle of the night.

1. Set a consistent sleep schedule
It's called your circadian rhythm for a reason. Your body will thank you for sticking to roughly the same bedtime every night, and for setting your alarm to go off at the same time each morning.

2. Make sure your sleep space is ready

Your environment is a key factor in getting to sleep and staying there. Make sure it's cool and dark, with soft white noise to block out any distractions.

3. Sleep when you're tired
Don't force yourself to sleep if you don't need to. That risks messing up your sleep pattern and rarely results in good quality rest anyway. Let your body set the pace and gently guide it.

4. Learn to do a sleep reset
If you can't go to sleep, get out of bed for 15 minutes and do something relaxing. Read, meditate, anything that doesn't involve a screen. Then try sleeping again once you've reset.

5. Create yourself a bedtime ritual

Before you go to bed, get into the habit of doing something which soothes you. We've mentioned reading and meditation already, you might also want to listen to soft music.

6. Limit screen time
As mentioned, playing around on your phone before you sleep can mess with your body's natural patterns. Try to avoid your phone for 2 hours before bed.

7. Exercise during the day
Exercise is good for tiring you out and promoting healthy sleep, but don't do it right before you go to bed. The endorphin rush might keep you awake.

8. Limit caffeine to mornings
Drinking coffee or energy drinks too late in the day can make you jittery and stop you from drifting off to dreamland. If you enjoy them, try to stick to morning treats.

9. Don't eat right before bed
Give your body time to digest food before you try and sleep. Ideally, leave 3 hours between dinnertime and bedtime.

10. Ease up on the booze
Alcohol isn't a long-term solution to sleep problems. Try not to drink before you sleep, and look into other solutions to help you drift off.

11. Ditch the cigarettes
It's no secret: smoking is bad for you. Not much of a controversial statement, but if you're having sleep troubles it could help to cut down or quit altogether.

When should you see a doctor about waking up at night?

There are some scenarios that signal you should consult a medical professional.

You keep waking up in the night over a period of weeks. You're getting enough hours of sleep but still feel fatigued during the day. A partner or spouse observes symptoms of sleep apnea. A child experiences serious night terrors over a sustained period.

There's a whole host of lifestyle, environmental, or medical reasons why you might be waking up in the middle of the night. For that very reason, it's good to be proactive and find out what's up ASAP. The sooner you know, the sooner you can get back to sleep.



ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Positioning Nigeria for trade development and investment

Growing the economy through trade is a critical imperative to repositioning Nigeria for the next phase of economic progress with the focus being on the core necessities of improving local production and enhancing the inter-regional movement of goods within the African continent by taking full advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), the pan African trade agreement that is set as a framework to bolster trade relationships among the 55 countries of Africa, and essentially providing access for easy movement of goods and services within the continent. VICTOR IKEM writes.

THE AfCFTA was conceived to expand trade within the African continent, ensuring that the over 1.2 billion market with a combined GDP of over 3.1 trillion US Dollars according to 2023 estimates is a tremendous rise from the 2010 figures, which put the total GDP number for the continent at around 2.1 trillion USD, is able to increase trade amongst its member countries.

The AfCFTA provides a critical basis to understand the potential and size of the African market which has assets and resources to compete based on the continent's core comparative advantages to the rest of the world, and a GDP estimated to reach 4.2 trillion USD by the year 2027. In fact, by its share size of untapped wealth, Africa does not need to depend on financial or material (especially food) aid from the rest of the world if Africa's resources can be better deployed and managed.

For Nigeria, with a population size of over 220 million and representing around 12 per cent of Africa's population size, there is an urgent need to galvanize the various aspects of the economy into a fulcrum of productive engagements and local outputs of goods that are exportable within the continent and internationally through deliberate government trade policies and improvement of the ease of manufacturing within the country. If the productive sector is encouraged to come into full capacity, Nigeria has the best chance to, as the country with the largest population and with the high population size of young productive people in Africa, Nigeria can lead the African market and determine the direction of the flow of trade in terms of volume and value.

Nigeria's trade policy has often emphasized the need to diversify the country's export beyond crude oil with strategic interest being to expand non-oil exports such as cocoa, rubber, palm produce and others with limited



emphasis on finished goods export, especially in the food sector. On the other hand, Nigeria has pursued an import liberalization policy much to the detriment of critical sectors of the economy resulting in a steady fall in the value of the naira. It is my hope that there will be serious attention paid to our over-dependence on imported commodities which has destroyed many important sectors and has made Nigeria vulnerable in international trade with the rest of the world. Just like China, Nigeria has all it takes to become the production epicentre and manufacturing hub for the rest of Africa given our resources and human capital advantages

With over 133 million multidimensional poor Nigerians and an unemployment rate above 33%, mostly among the active young population, Nigeria needs emergency action in trade development and ensuring that Nigerians are pulled out of poverty. This will demand reducing dependency on crude oil and moving away from the mono-economy structure we currently have to expand the space in agriculture production and other sectors such as textiles, garments and clothing which have enormous potential to galvanise trade. Nigeria needs to move from a consumption-driven and import-dependent economy to a production-based economy with improved exports to enable the country to earn enough foreign exchange to withstand the fall in

the value of the naira, a steady fall which has been as a result of our over-dependency on the receipts from crude oil sales with the many attendant volatilities in the international oil market. Given our current economic situation, it is imperative to reverse our import dependency and ensure that the government consistently provides support and increase the pool of support to the Small and Medium scale business to help them increase productivity and to ensure more exports from Nigeria year on year. Part of the solution to improving trade receipts for Nigeria will be to take steps to ensure improved customs regulations and operations to enhance the free flow of goods. Nigeria needs improved port operations, demanding the revaluation of the operational frameworks of the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) to ease the process of export.

The Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) which was established through Decree 16 of 1995 to promote trade and investment must be reenergized to attract critical investments into all sectors and to ensure support for local production. To enhance export, existing export incentive schemes which includes duty draw-back scheme, export expansion grant and manufacture in-bond schemes should be engaged to deliver real value to the economy. The newly sworn-in minister of

Trade and Investment, Mrs. Doris Uzoka-Anite already has her work cut out with regard to ensuring that Nigeria's participation in global trade is greatly improved. What she has is a very strategic portfolio which she no doubt has the capacity to administer effectively. It is imperative that the new minister attacks the issues from two key perspectives by firstly, addressing internal trade opportunities as it has to do with trade within Nigeria and among the various states and regions and ensuring that each state or region expands its production activities based on comparative production advantage.

On the other hand, it is the issue with the demands of external or international trade with respect to the ease of ensuring that Nigerian-produced goods have access to key international markets and destinations. Interestingly, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala who is a Nigerian and has a very deep understanding of Nigeria's economy is in charge at the World Trade Organization. It will be expected that with her presence in that very position, many interactions that will be helpful to Nigeria will be encouraged and the minister of trade and investment will be at the top of leading that engagement from the get-go.

.Ikem, PhD, is a public policy consultant and media executive based in Lagos.

"With over 133 million multidimensional poor Nigerians and an unemployment rate above 33%, mostly among the active young population, Nigeria needs emergency action in trade development and ensuring that Nigerians are pulled out of poverty. This will demand reducing dependency on crude oil and moving away from the mono-economy structure we currently have to expand the space in agriculture production and other sectors such as textiles, garments and clothing which have enormous potential to galvanise trade. Nigeria needs to move from a consumption-driven and import-dependent economy to a production-based economy with improved exports to enable the country to earn enough foreign exchange to withstand the fall in the value of the naira, a steady fall which has been as a result of our over-dependency on the receipts from crude oil sales with the many attendant volatilities in the international oil market".

BUSINESS WORLD

In six months, banks lose N6bn to fraud - Report

MOBILE fraud, computer/web fraud, and Point of Sale fraud cases made Nigerian banks to record 24,232 fraud cases in the first six months of 2023, a report by FITC has disclosed.

The report was titled, "Reports of Fraud and Forgeries in Nigerian Banks (Quarter 2, 2023.)"

This is as the total amount involved hit N12.33bn in the period under review. FITC disclosed that in the second quarter of 2023, it received a total of 71 returns on cases of fraud and forgery from 24 deposit money institutions.

It said, "A closer analysis shows that 24 returns were received in April, while 23 returns were received in May, and 24 returns were received in June."

In the first quarter of 2023, a total of 12,553 fraud cases were recorded, by the second quarter of 2023, it dropped to 11,679. Data for Q1 indicted that mobile fraud, computer/web fraud, and POS related fraud were the three most prevalent types of fraud, and this trend persisted in Q2 2023, the firm noted.

Commenting on the amount involved, it stated, "The data reveals a significant 276.98 per cent increase in the total amount involved in fraud cases during Q2 2023 compared to the previous quarter."

"The sum increased from N2.58bn to N9.75bn. Likewise, for amount lost there was a substantial increase of 1125.03 per cent from N472m in Q1 2023 to N5.79bn in Q2 2023."

Twenty six appointments have been terminated because of fraudulent activities in the first half of the year, and more money was lost to fraudulent loans (N6.03bn) in Q2 2023.

It added, "It was followed by the Computer/Web fraud category at N1.47bn (15.10 per cent). Mobile Fraud came next at N751m (7.7 per cent), and fraudulent withdrawals amounted to N663m (6.79 per cent)."

ATMs, online platforms such as web and mobile banking, bank branches, and point-of-sale terminals were the channels for fraudulent activities in Q2 2023.

Commenting on the actual amount lost, FITC said, "Additionally, the amount lost also saw a substantial rise, increasing from N472m in Q1 2023 to N5.79bn in Q2 2023, which corresponds to a 1125.03 per cent increase. This



Shonubi

increase might be attributed to the fact that banks were liable for the losses incurred and had to make refunds to

customers." It added that Nigerian banks should strengthen their security protocols and systems to prevent unauthorised access to

Nigeria's unemployment rate drops by 4.1%

NIGERIA'S unemployment rate dropped to 4.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2023 from 5.3 per cent in the fourth of 2022.

Mr. Adeniran Adeyemi, the Statistician General of the Federation and Chief Executive Officer of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), said this on Thursday during the inauguration of the New Nigeria Labour force Survey (NLFS) in Abuja

Adeniran said that the drop in NLFS from 33.3 per cent in the fourth quarter 2020 to its present rate was based on change in methodology adopted and not government performance.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the new NLFS unveils a set of labour force indicators designed to provide unparalleled insights into the dynamics of the workforce in Nigeria.

The NLFS was conducted by the NBS in collaboration

with the World Bank (WB) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in response to the labour market dynamics

Adeniran said, "let me at this point clearly state that this methodology review has nothing to do with whitewashing the image of any government or political party."

According to Adeniran, the new method which indicates that not less than 73 per cent of Nigerians are engaged in one form of work, recognises all forms of engagements from which individuals earn income.

He said using the new ILO definition, the survey showed that the unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2022 stood at 5.3 per cent and 4.1 per cent for the first quarter of 2023.

According to him, the results indicates a scarcity of wage-employment, as the share of those employed in wage-employment during the



Adeniran

FOLLOWING the growth in proceeds from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) to the three tiers of government, money supply or M2 surged to an unprecedented N64.36 trillion last month, marking a significant 31.62 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase from its previous value of N48.9 trillion in June 2022.

Economic Confidential analysis of numbers released by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) revealed that M2 has gained 21.81 per cent Year-till-Date (YtD) from when the CBN announced N52.84 trillion in January 2023.

From the beginning of 2023, the money supply, encompassing quasi-money, currency outside banks, and demand deposits, has maintained a consistent upward trend.

A breakdown of the Money and Credit Statistics data from the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) published on its website showed that

FG spending: Money supply rise to N64.36trn



Tinubu

the money supply from the quasi-money assets that are highly liquid and can easily be converted to cash went up by 24.87 per cent YtD to N39.86 trillion in June 2023 compared to N31.92 trillion in January this year.

While currency outside banks increased significantly by 185.67 per cent YtD from N792.18 billion in January 2023 to N2.26 trillion in June 2023.

Further analysis of the CBN data showed that a substantial amount of naira notes, totalling N2.73 trillion, is being hoarded by the public outside the commercial banks' vaults, indicating a persistent trend.

Additionally, demand deposits, which are funds held in bank accounts that can be withdrawn on demand without prior notice, saw a remarkable 11 per cent Year-to-Date (YtD) increase, reaching N22.23 trillion in June 2023 compared to N20.12 trillion in January.

Analysts believe the federal government spending has contributed to increasing M2 in the economy.

The Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) in May disbursed the sum of N786.161 billion as Federation Account revenue to FG, States, Local governments (LGs) and in June 2023, FAAC shared N907 billion

The money shared in May 2023, is an increase of N130.230 billion over the N655.93 billion shared in the April 2023.

The N907 billion disbursed is the second highest since January when a sum of N1.14 trillion was shared.

reference quarters was 13.4 per cent in Q4 2022 and 11.8 per cent in Q1 2023.

Adeniran said that the working age population which was defined previously as persons aged 15-64, is now defined as persons aged 15 and above.

He said this was a very important change particularly in the Nigerian context as it recognises the labour contributions of persons above the age of 64 which was not done previously.

The NBS boss said the unemployed appeared to be the most controversial amongst the changes announced under the review.

According to him, the new standard defines the unemployed as persons within the labour force, who did not work for pay or profit for a minimum of one hour.

The survey revealed that about three quarters of Nigerians in the working age population, 73.6 per cent in Q4 2022 and 76.7 per cent in Q1 2023 were engaged in some form of work for pay or profit in the quarters under review.

Earlier, the World Bank's Country Director, Shubham Chaudhuri pledged the continued support of the bank to ensure a robust, regular national LFS data for the country.

Chaudhuri said a reliable data provided the

BUSINESS WORLD

Impact of clutter on household finances

In today's fast-paced world, managing household finances has become an essential skill for maintaining a stable and secure life, TOBENNA NNABEZE writes.

IN today's fast-paced world, managing household finances has become an essential skill for maintaining a stable and secure life.

While factors like budgeting, saving, and investing are often discussed, one aspect that is frequently overlooked is the impact of clutter on household finances.

Clutter, both physical and digital, can have a significant effect on your financial well-being, affecting everything from spending habits to mental health.

So today, we'll explore the various ways clutter can impact your financial state. We'll also provide insights into how decluttering can lead to improved financial and mental health.

The hidden costs of clutter

News continues after this ad

Clutter isn't just an eyesore; it comes with hidden costs that can add up over time.

Physical clutter can lead to disorganization, making it difficult to find items you need when you need them. This can result in duplicate purchases – buying something you already own but can't locate.

Additionally, clutter can obstruct regular cleaning and maintenance, potentially leading to higher repair costs for items that deteriorate due to neglect.

Psychological impact on spending

Numerous studies have shown a correlation between clutter and increased stress levels. When living in a cluttered environment, individuals often experience heightened levels of anxiety, making them more prone to impulse buying.

Retail therapy becomes a tempting escape from the chaos, leading to unplanned purchases that can strain the budget.

Furthermore, clutter can influence decision-making processes. A cluttered space can overload our cognitive abilities, impairing our capacity to make thoughtful and considerate choices.

This can lead to poor financial decisions, like signing up for unnecessary subscriptions or falling for sales tactics that exploit our overwhelmed state of mind.

Financial opportunity cost

Clutter not only affects the present but can also hinder future financial growth. Unused or forgotten items represent financial resources that could be better allocated elsewhere, such as investments or savings. Clearing out clutter can help you identify these unused resources and redirect them toward financial goals that truly matter.

Digital Clutter and financial Security

In our digital age, clutter has extended beyond physical spaces to our digital lives. Overloaded inboxes, unused apps, and disorganized digital files can



compromise our financial security.

Important financial documents might get lost among the virtual clutter, leading to missed payment deadlines or overlooked opportunities.

Moreover, digital clutter can also have a negative impact on our time management.

Spending excessive time online, whether aimlessly browsing or engaging in social media, can detract from more productive activities like researching investment opportunities or improving financial literacy.

The financial benefits of decluttering

Now that we have briefly addressed the few ways that clutter can weigh on your finances and your mental health, let's take a look at what you can do to remedy the situation, thus, decluttering.

Decluttering isn't just about tidying up; it's a strategic step toward financial well-being. By tackling clutter, you can achieve the following benefits:

§ **Cost Savings:** Clearing physical clutter reduces the likelihood of unnecessary duplicate purchases and can lower maintenance and repair costs.

§ **Reduced Stress:** A clutter-free environment can reduce stress levels and decrease the impulse to engage in emotional spending.

§ **Improved Decision-Making:** Decluttering creates mental space, enabling better decision-making, including

financial choices.

§ **Enhanced Productivity:** A tidy space, both physical and digital, can lead to increased productivity, which can be harnessed for activities that improve financial health.

§ **Identifying Financial Opportunities:** Decluttering reveals underutilized resources that can be redirected toward savings, investments, or paying off debt.

§ **Enhanced Security:** Organizing digital clutter ensures that important financial documents are readily accessible and reduces the risk of security breaches or other unfortunate events.

Getting started with decluttering

Embarking on a decluttering

journey requires commitment and persistence. Here are some steps to help you get started:

1. Set clear goals: Define your decluttering objectives, whether it's creating a more organized home, improving financial security, or reducing stress.

2. Take small steps: Tackle clutter one area at a time, starting with a manageable space. This prevents overwhelm and provides a sense of accomplishment.

3. Sort and categorize: Divide items into categories like "keep," "donate/sell," and "discard." This process helps you evaluate what truly adds value to your life.

4. Digital detox: Organize your digital life by unsubscribing from unnecessary emails, deleting unused apps, and

organizing digital files.

5. Mindful consumption: Going forward, adopt a mindful approach to consumption. Before making a purchase, assess whether the item aligns with your values and needs.

Summary

The impact of clutter on household finances is more significant than meets the eye. From increased stress levels to impulsive spending, clutter can have far-reaching effects on financial well-being.

Taking the time to declutter, both physically and digitally, can lead to cost savings, improved decision-making, and enhanced financial security.

By recognizing the connection between clutter and financial health, you can pave the way to a more organized, stress-free, and financially stable life.

"Now that we have briefly addressed the few ways that clutter can weigh on your finances and your mental health, let's take a look at what you can do to remedy the situation, thus, decluttering.

Decluttering isn't just about tidying up; it's a strategic step toward financial well-being. By tackling clutter, you can achieve the following benefits: Cost Savings: Clearing physical clutter reduces the likelihood of unnecessary duplicate purchases and can lower maintenance and repair costs".



Buju Banton - Everything was just magical

Continued from page 18

Father is merciful and there is an abundance of mercy. The world needs to know this. Which man lights a candle and puts it under his bed? Is he trying to burn down his own house? So, what if he puts this candle on a window? Wouldn't the world see that this house is lit? Then someone can light their candle from this candle. Have mercy on us, oh Jah, oh Lamb Of God. The world right now needs healing, even in our



part. That's all we doing! How do you recall the first time you performed Lamb Of God in the National Stadium in Kingston on March 16, 2019? Was the concert and the return to the stage how you expected it to be? Are you a person who puts a lot of pressure on himself or did it feel like effortlessly coming home?

First, I don't believe in putting pressure on myself, none at all. I don't believe in fighting music, neither the production nor the creation because music is supposed to flow. If all frequencies are in synchronicity the music flows. Such was the same principle as it concerns the concert **Long Walk To Freedom**. It must flow. The right people must fall in place. Everything must be seamless to give a flawless presentation. That was a long-anticipated time. I can't speak of this in terms the English language would allow. It is something you have to feel. You have to be present in the moment. You understand, sister?

Yes, totally! So, it was more like coming home?

I have always been home. It was more like seeing friends and seeing ones who I haven't seen in a long time, and having a re-unification and a re-dedication of ourselves unto the true purpose why we are here which is to continue learn and continue to find out about the mysteries of who we are as a people. It was a brief pause in transmission for ten years and then we reconnect again. So that to me is greater than anything that one might perceive in them own perception but everyone is entitled to that. But I see it as a re-connection and a re-establishment of a spiritual groundation.

Was that similar to the feeling you had when you reached the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston and returned to Jamaica in 2018?

When I sat in the jet plane entering the island I was overwhelmed with a feeling of nostalgia because long time I didn't see my home town, long time I haven't seen my people. But all of that is just a moment in space, a moment in time. A man did have to return, a man did have to enter through the court of entry. So, I don't place too much thought and emphasis on my return because in reality I should have never left. You sight?

Source: Reggaeville.com



Nigerian actresses with highest net worth

Continued from page 18

Chioma Chukwuka - \$5.7 million



Chioma Chukwuka is another actress who enjoys portraying an "innocent" lady in romance films. She was born in Lagos, Nigeria, on March 12, 1980. On My Wedding Day, Wives on Strike, Heart of Gold, and The Rain of Hope are a few of the films she has played a role in. Chukwuka has a net worth of \$5.7 million.

Mercy Johnson - \$5 million

Mercy Johnson has worked in the Nigerian film industry for almost a decade. She has established herself as one of the most admired stars in the industry as a result of her talent and hard work. Hollandia Evap Milk and Pennek Nigeria Limited are among the brands she has endorsed. Her net worth is \$5 million, making her the one of richest female star in Nollywood.



Uche Jombo - \$4 million



Uche Jombo is an actress, screenwriter, film producer, and director who has had a lot of success. Her first film, Visa to Hell, was released in 1999, and it was her first foray into the film industry. Uche has written and co-authored several Nollywood films, including Girls in the Hood, Games Men Play, and The Celebrity. She has also been

nominated and won several awards like Female Viewers Choice during the 2015 Golden Icons Academy Movie Awards. Jombo's net worth is around \$4 million.

Ini Edo - \$3.9 million

Ini Edo was born in the city of Uyo in the state of Akwa Ibom. She began her acting career in 2000 and has since appeared in over 200 films. Read also How much is Chinedu Ikedieze's net worth in 2019? Ini Edo is also a brand ambassador for Beauty Secrets of April, a skincare line. She has also won awards such as the Nafca Award and Golden



Icons Academy Movie. With a net worth of almost \$3.9 million, Ini is one of Nigeria's most well-paid and sought-after actresses.

Oge Okoye - \$3 million



Ini Edo was born in the city of Uyo in the state of Akwa Ibom. She began her acting career in 2000 and has since appeared in over 200 films. Read also How much is Chinedu Ikedieze's net worth in 2019? Ini Edo is also a brand ambassador for Beauty Secrets of April, a skincare line. She has also won awards such as the Nafca Award and Golden

Icons Academy Movie. With a net worth of almost \$3.9 million, Ini is one of Nigeria's most well-paid and sought-after actresses.

Source: Legit

INTERNATIONAL

Family threatens to sue I-G over breadwinner's killing

From AMEDU JOSEPH,
Lokoja

The Ekata Ogbeide family of Uromi in Edo State has threatened to sue the Inspector-General of Police over alleged extra-judicial killing of their son, Fidelis Ekata, by police operatives on March 2, 2022.

In the petition issued in Lokoja, the family also demanded N200 million as compensation for the loss and trauma being suffered by its members, claiming that Ekata was their breadwinner.

Police had told a news conference in Benin in March 2022 that their operatives shot Ekata to death at Okkenken Road, Uromi, as a wanted notorious armed robber and jailbird.

Police alleged at the news conference that Ekata escaped from the Benin Correctional Facility during the October 2020 "#End SARS" protest.

In the petition to the I-G dated Aug. 8, 2023, the family's Kogi based lawyer, Mr C.M. Uche-Enwere refuted all the allegations levelled against Ekata by the police and called for retract of the (police's) claim or face court action.

The police had since acknowledged receipt of the Akata's family's petition on August 15.

The family claimed that Ekata was neither an armed robber nor a prison escapee.

The family described the



Egbetekun

murder of Ekata as extrajudicial killing by the police and demanded a retraction of all allegations made against the deceased as published.

The petition read: "Consequent to the unlawful killing of Fidelis Ekata, the family has suffered setbacks, severe loss and trauma due to the fact that he was the breadwinner of the family.

"It is premised on the said loss and unanticipated death of Fidelis Ekata, that we write that his family be indemnified by way of compensation to the tune of N200 million.

"This is for the wrongful killing, loss and trauma being suffered by his dependants.

"The family implores the police to delete all libelous publication that indicated

that Fidelis Ekata was an armed robber as the allegation is founded on falsehood.

"It is injurious to the family, particularly to his children, who may grow up with such false and deleterious blemishes placed on their deceased father.

"Should you fail, refuse or neglect to compensate our client to the tune of N200 million, we shall institute legal action to enforce the rights of the deceased and the family members."

Meanwhile, a letter signed by one Idemudia P., a Superintendent of Correction at the Benin Correctional Centre stated that Ekata was neither remanded at the custodial centre nor escaped from custody.

jealously because he was a promising young man who was not just useful to his immediate community but to Benue State at large.

Represented by his Chief of Staff, Mr. Paul Biam, Governor Alia also appealed to members of the Benue State House of Assembly to always put interest of the state first and shun all other temptations and support Governor Alia who, he maintained was already doing his best to return

By DUMAH RANDONG

The Plateau State Government has indicated willingness to put modalities in place to fast track the infrastructural development of the Yakubu Gowon Airport Jos in order to meet the requirement for the airlift of cargo goods from the state.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang stated this when the Chief Executive Officer of the Federal Airport Authority, FAAN, Kabir Mohammed and his team of Avia Cargo Implementation Committee, paid him a courtesy call at Old Government House, Rayfield, during their finding visit to the state.

The governor who was represented by his deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, said for many years, Plateau State has called for the upgrading of the airport to an international status but for whatever reason, this has not come to fruition.

Plateau State, according to Governor Mutfwang, has comparative advantage because of the massive agricultural products the state has, but regrettably, most of these foods are wasted because of their perishable nature and lack of exportation.

It was in the light of this, that the governor has renewed the call for the upgrade of the airport to an international cargo in view of the economic benefits the state could gain. And stressed that the launch of the Value-jet Airline recently was an indication that government was willing to develop and make airport busy being the engine of economic development.

Governor Mutfwang further stated that apart from agriculture, the state is also rich in tourism which could attract inflow of tourists.

Managing Director and

PLSG partners FAAN to develop Yakubu Gowon Airport



Chief Executive Officer, Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria, Kabir Mohammed who was represented by Hyacinth Ngwu had explained that they were in the state for workable partnership with the Plateau State Government in order to enhance the capacity of the Yakubu Gowon Airport, Jos and create a sustainable wealth and increase the per capita income of citizens and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the state.

He said it has been proven empirically by the Council of International Airport that an injection of 1 percent of state's budget into the development of an airport facility will translate to 18.5 percent increase in the state's GDP.

The FAAN boss disclosed that already, the airport and Plateau State Government have developed a roadmap for the development of the airport with a view to airlifting of cargo because it has the potential of exporting massive agro products.

He said the easiest way to

get these perishable produce transported across the shores of country where they will command a high revenue in terms of foreign exchange, is to develop the airport.

He directed the management of the airport to forward the development plan to the state government for the partnership for the development of critical infrastructure for mutual benefit.

According to him the implementation committee is made up of seasoned technocrats who are private people with passion and zeal to do the job.

The Chief Executive Officer of FAAN said Plateau State was the first to be visited by the Committee because they believe in the capacity to champion development, noting that they also trust the ability of the governor and his team leader for the infrastructure development.

Coordinator of the Avia Cargo Roadmap Implementation Committee, Ikechi Uko said they were in the state to have firsthand information as to why things have gone bad in the airport in order to find solutions to the problems.

These problems according to the committee findings, he said had to do with lack of facilities like the expansion of the runway, cold chain facility, warehouses among others and stressed that these could not be achieved without collaboration with the state.

He also said they will be meeting with stakeholders and a visit to some farms while in the state. And assured that they have the best hands for the job, all they needed was for the state government to step forward and lead Nigeria in the push for agro products.

Benue Speaker promises to intervene in rural electrification

From TERESE TUHWA,
Makurdi

The speaker of the Benue State House of Assembly, Mr. Aondona Dajoh has promised that he will attract government presence to the people of Mbasur in the areas of rural electrification, education, health, portable water and roads.

The Speaker who was speaking recently at a thanksgiving mass and reception organized in his honour by Mbasur Community Development Association at the Church of Twelve Apostles Rectory, Pika Mbativ in Gboko Local Government Area, pledged that he will serve his people with every resources that God will give him.

He promised to complete the Pika Police Station. It was initiated by a former House of Assembly member who represented the constituency, Mr. Terhemba Chabo.

The Gboko West state representative while recounting events that led to his emergence as Speaker said "to people, Mbanuku is made up of the most

uneducated and poorest people, who are very backward".

He added that "Gbemacha people in the sight of others were equally regarded as naive in politics and so by every standard humanly possible, nobody thought they could produce the Speaker but God Almighty made it possible."

Also speaking, the State Governor, Rev Fr. Dr. Hyacinth Alia, called on people of Mbativ to guard the Speaker

A joint task force (JTF) code named Operations Zenda has rescued the resident doctor in charge of Ukum General Hospital, Zaki Biam, Dr. Asema Msuega from kidnappers den.

Commander of the JTF, CSP Justin Gberindyer who briefed newsmen at

JTF rescues kidnapped medic

From TERESE TUHWA,
Makurdi

the scene of the rescue operation explained that Dr. Msuega was abandoned by his captors in the bush around Ayati village in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

CSP Gberindyer said after pressure of

the state to its lost glory.

Chairman of the occasion, Mr. Tersoo Orgudwem while thanking Mbasur community for the honour done to the Speaker and his younger brother, called on Mbativ people to close ranks and support the speaker in order to bring development to the community.

Earlier, President of Mbasur Community Development Association, Mr. Peter Akumbur said the thanksgiving mass was

pursued from combined security team of Operations Zenda/JTF tactical team, Ukum Division and Operation Whirl Stroke who were closing in on their hide outs around Ayati/Imade Adamu Shitile border axis, the victim was abandoned in the bush.

Dr. Msuega has been

organized to appreciate God for uplifting their son, Mr. Dajoh to the position of speaker and also seek his support for the church building project.

He added that the occasion also afforded them the opportunity to draw government's attention to the many challenges confronting the community.

The speaker was accompanied on the event by other members of the state Assembly as well as

rescued unhurt and was immediately reunited with his family and loved ones.

Gberindyer who assured residents of absolute peace with a promise that crime must be reduced to its barest minimum, vowed that operations Zenda JTF tactical team will never rest on its role

of protecting lives and properties of the Benue populace.

It could be recalled that Dr. Asema Msuega was whisked away on the 23 July, 2023 by unknown gunmen between Zaki Biam and Ayati axis in Ukum Local Government Area on his way for a 3-day medical outreach.

NEWS

FRSC commended for reducing accidents in Plateau State

By DUMAH RANDONG

Governor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has commended the Federal Road Safety Commission, FRSC for the role played over the years in reducing the number of road accidents and curtailing the excesses of road users in the state.

The governor gave the accolade when the Plateau State Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Commission, Corps Commander, and Godwin Alphonsus paid him a visit at the Old Government House, Rayfield in Jos, recently.

Represented by his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, Mutfwang maintained that without the FRSC, having to be on the road, "there would have been no sanity on our roads."

The governor emphasised that the services being rendered by the FRSC to the public could not be overemphasized as this has helped in reducing road crashes to the barest minimum. He pledged his readiness to partner with FRSC for effective performance.

The Sector Commander, Plateau State Command, Godwin Alphonsus had said FRSC has a huge representation in the state and that their mandate is to among others, prevent and minimize road crashes, educate drivers and the public on the proper use of the road as well as designing of driving license.

The Sector Commander disclosed that the Command has seven Units Commands in the state and also Headquarters in Abuja.

Adding that the Sector Command has four ambulances stationed in different locations in the state to attend to emergencies, in addition to clinics which provide medical services to accident victims.

He said the Command has constituted a council to be headed by the State Deputy Governor as the Chairman with the Sector Commander as Secretary. And noted that the Command would continue to contribute its quota to the peace efforts in the state.

Meantime, Governor Caleb Mutfwang has described the Nursing Profession as a noble profession that is committed to the



Mutfwang

healthcare of Nigerians. The governor stated this when the Fellowship of Christian Nurses of Nigeria led by their National President, Abalis Dasat paid a solidarity visit at Old Government, House, Rayfield, Jos, recently.

Governor Mutfwang who was represented by his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo said he holds the Nursing profession in high esteem and assured of government's commitment to revamp the health sector for the benefit of the citizens of the state.

Piyo who is also a nurse by profession, however, assured them that as an ambassador, she would not disappoint them and promised to convey their request concerning the construction of an access road leading to their office in Jos South Local Government Area to the governor.

Earlier, the National President said as a professional fellowship, they were committed to representing Christ by caring for the sick and reaching them with the gospel even at the point of death.

Kogi to release N1bn for state University takeoff.

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

The Kogi State Government has concluded plans for release of one billion naira this month for project execution at the newly established Kogi State University, Kabba.

Governor Yahaya Bello disclosed this at the Government House, Lokoja while addressing Executives and members of

the Kabba Development Union who paid him a courtesy visit.

Governor Bello reassured the people that measures were being put in place to commence academic activities in the institution soon.

He emphasized that the establishment of the



Ballo

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

The Kogi State Police Commissioner, CP Bethrand Onuoha has said that Kogi State is safe as he urged the people to disregard false claims of a social media report.

In a statement issued recently by the Command's Public Relations Officer, SP William Aya, the Command said people should disregard fake and misleading report trending against Kogi State's security.

The Commissioner of Police noted that the Command is committed to ensuring the safety of lives and property in the state.

The statement read as follows: "Our attention of the Nigeria Police, Kogi State Police Command has been drawn to a very mischievous and misleading report making the rounds on social media to the effect that, "Kogi State is hot for now. For those visiting Kogi State to see family and friends, please avoid this areas; Jimgbe, Elete, Emoro, Geregu, down to Ajaokuta".

It went further to say, "These Fulani people are

Kogi is safe, disregard false claims.-Kogi CP

really causing problems. The local vigilantes are engaging them seriously. From Itobe down to Idah, Ayingba is safe for now. For those coming from Lagos, please avoid Obajana old Dangote road. Even if you are stuck in traffic due to the new bridge construction, please avoid the old Dangote road, it's very dangerous. Have a wonderful evening and stay safe."

In response to that, "The Command wishes to state categorically and unequivocally that the report is not only the figment of the imagination of the author, but totally fake, misleading and highly pretentious, mischievous and preposterous. The report is a deliberate distortion of facts and twisting of narratives in order to sway public perception against the prevailing peaceful atmosphere the state is currently enjoying. This report is the handiwork of mischievous elements and agents provocateurs who are

benched on giving the state a bad name for reasons known to them.

The Commissioner of Police therefore enjoins the general public and the good people of Kogi State to discountenance and disregard such misguided and mischievous distortion of information and false claims which do not in any way reflect the true security situation in Kogi State.

He further urges the media, particularly social media handlers to always verify facts of incidents from the police to ascertain their veracity before publishing their stories to guard against misinforming the general public.

To this end, the Commissioner of Police, urges all law abiding citizens of the state and innocent travelers to go about their lawful businesses and endeavors, while the renewed commitment and steadfastness of the Command to guarantee protection of lives and property in the state remains unwavering.

NSCDC shuts down Illegal private security companies

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

The Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Bauchi State has confirmed that it sealed four private security organisations for allegedly operating illegally in the state. It also arrested 7 operators of the illegal act.

The Nigeria Standard reports that the affected private security companies that were sealed include



Bala

Garu Security Hunters and Patrol, Danga Security Hunters and Patrol, Baushe Security Hunters and Patrol as well as Unity Security Hunters and Patrol, all operating in Bauchi metropolis.

This revelation was made recently by the state Commandant of NSCDC, Mr Ilesabayo Olajide, while speaking with journalists in Bauchi recently.

He said the operatives of the Command will continue to monitor illegal private security guards in the state with a view to correcting and sanitizing the system.

According to Olajide, "The operatives sealed four companies because they did not fulfill the criteria required by law.

"The operatives will intensify monitoring and supervision of all beats manned by private guard companies to ensure that they are doing the right thing," he said.

The Commandant explained that registration of a security company and obtaining a license to operate were two different things.

"You are just following the process, you must register your company and also obtain a license for operating private security guards

"Therefore, the private guards' companies were sealed for two reasons, either for illegal operation or failure to renew occupational license", the boss explained.

NEWS

Stepmother kills days old step son

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

THE Public Relations Officer of the Bauchi State Police Command, SP Ahmed Wakil, has confirmed the arrest of a 24 year old housewife named Furera Abubakar of Bantu village in Ningi LGA of Bauchi State for culpable homicide.

The confirmation which was made through a signed press statement by the Command's spokesperson, stated that "The incident was reported to the Ningi Divisional Police Headquarters on the 19th of August, 2023 which revealed that the four-day-old baby was born on the 15th of August, 2023 and was murdered by the suspect, Furera Abubakar on the 19th of August, 2023 before the naming ceremony.

According to Wakil, "Preliminary investigation revealed that the suspect is a co-wife to the nursing mother (victim's mother).

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Kogi State Government has concluded plans for release of one billion naira this month for project execution at the newly established Kogi State University, Kabba.

Governor Yahaya Bello disclosed this at the Government House,



Egbetokun

The suspect entered the co-wife's room with insecticide liquid (Gremlin) and applied it to the unhealed baby's umbilical cord.

The liquid which was suspected to be corrosive,

had led to the deterioration of the baby's health which eventually led to his death".

SP Wakil said that "investigation is discreetly ongoing, after which the suspect will be profiled and charged to court accordingly"

Kogi to release N1bn for state University takeoff.

Lokoja while addressing Executives and members of the Kabba Development Union who paid him a courtesy visit.

Governor Bello reassured the people that measures were being put in place to commence academic activities in the

institution soon.

He emphasized that the establishment of the university was in response to aspirations of people of Okunland.

The Kogi State Governor also announced that the site for the relocation of College Of Education,

Dangote commences health awareness campaign

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Dangote Cement Plc has commenced an awareness campaign to support the government's efforts in preventing the spread of all diseases including anthrax.

The awareness campaign was kick-started in the four catchment communities of the Dangote Cement Plc. They are: Oyo, Iwaa, Apata and Obajana.

Early in July, the Federal Government confirmed the first case of anthrax in Nigeria, stating that the disease was detected in a farm in Niger State.

Similarly, in June, the Federal

Government had alerted the public to the outbreak of anthrax disease in some neighboring countries within the West Africa sub-region, and advised Nigerians to desist from the consumption of hides (ponmo).

Since then, some states have opted for vaccination of their livestock against the disease.

Welcoming participants to the event at Obajana, the General Manager, Community Affairs/Special Duties of Dangote Cement Plc, Obajana Plant, Mr. Ademola Adeyemi, noted that this singular event demonstrate the concept of good neighborliness and information sharing for the

betterment of all.

He enjoined the attendees to endeavour to share the information until it gets to everybody in the community.

Speaking during the sensitization programme at Obajana in Kogi State, Representative of the Dangote Cement Plc, Dr. Akinola Adewale said anthrax is caused by spore-forming bacterium-Bacillus anthracis, which primarily affect animals such as cattle, sheep and goat.

Dr. Adewale said the disease can also infect human beings who come in direct contact with infected animals, or contaminated animal products such as hides, wool and meat.

He said one of the ways for identifying infected animals is that upon death, blood continues to gush forth from the animals' anus, ears and mouth.

Speaking, a member of the medical team, Dr Olufemi Adebayo, advised that sick animals be quarantined, and called on livestock owners to report suspicious illness or death.

Responding, the Bajana of Obajana, Oba (Dr.) Idowu Isenibi, urged the meat sellers and butchers to take the warning seriously to save the lives of their livestock and that of humans.

The programme was well attended by representatives of butchers and meat sellers, as well as different ethnic groups within and around Obajana communities.

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

THE Nigerian Navy Headquarters has issued a warning regarding fraudulent online advertisement and sales of admission forms for the Nigerian Navy College of Health Sciences and Technology Offa in Kwara State.

The scam targets unsuspecting members of the public, promising admission into the college.

This was said in a statement signed by Commodore AO Ayo-Vaughan. According to him, the cost of obtaining admission forms is fifteen thousand Naira (N15,000.00), with an additional one hundred and eighty six thousand eight hundred and fifty Naira (N186,850.00) as school fees.

The criminals behind the scam instructed all payments to be made into a First Bank of Nigeria account number 3162014359, under the name Lieutenant Inusa

Fraudulent sales of Navy College admission form uncovered



Abubakar

Endurance, with the associated phone number 09134510613.

Moreover, the advertisement includes contact information for a self-proclaimed Public

Relations Officer, with phone contacts 09134483230 and 09134510613. The scammers have also set a scheduled date for interviews and tests, which is stated to be held from 4th to 15th September 2023.

It is important to note that the Nigerian Navy College of Health Sciences (NNCHS) Offa, Kwara State, is exclusively for Nigerian Navy medical personnel and does not admit civilians. Therefore, the college has no basis for advertising admission forms to the public. The names, phone numbers, and bank account provided in the fraudulent advertisement are all part of the scam and have no affiliation with the Nigerian Navy or the NNCHS.

The public, especially prospective applicants, are strongly advised to verify information from credible sources such as www.nigeriannavy.mil.ng before making any financial commitments. It is crucial to stay vigilant and avoid falling victim to such fraudulent schemes.



Bello

Technical in Mopa would be renovated.

Governor Bello stated that he had continuously demonstrated political will in making impactful decisions and initiated transformational projects that have put the state on the front burner of development.

In his remarks, National President, Kabba Development Union, Emmanuel Ajibero explained that the group, comprising various socio-cultural groups, is committed towards ensuring that the university takes off.

He acknowledged that some committees had been set to work with the state government in kick starting the institution.

The KDU President appealed to the governor

to also consider sons and daughters of the catchment areas for employment.

New NIPR leadership emerges

From **ISRAEL LAR and FWENJI GO'AR, Abuja**

A new president and chairman governing council of Nigeri institute of public relation NIPR has emerged, he is Dr. Ike Neliaku, a fellow of the institute.

Other members who emerged as members of the government council are Professor Mrs Sarah Benjamin Law from Plateau chapter including Adaramola Olajumu, Akin Aribejule, Bashir Adamu, Dr Adeqale Oyekanni, Dr. Sule Ya'u Sule, Ini Emmomobong, Kabir Ali Kobi, Okoh Thelma Chika amongst others.

Speaking during the opening ceremony immediate past of the institute, Muthtar Zirajo while thanking members for supporting his administration, said, as an institute they have critically on issues that reflect the country especially the coup in Niger which they are against, called for amicable settle instead of force.

According to him with support from its partners, they were able to achieve a lot including the citizen's summit for National integration, peace and security.

He further said, subsidy removal might have been best intention of government, but it brought untold hardship to the citizens and advised government in it so as reduced the sufferings of its people.

He also called on the federal government to find solution to the incessant insecurity deviling the country.

Speaking during the occasion, the new minister of information and communication Alhaji Mohammed Idris believed NIPR as a profession gave birth to professionalism.

The minister advised members of NIPR to que into new development of networking profession so as top in the global environment and assures NIPR of support at all timed.

According to him, his tenure as minister of information would provide credible and truthful information about the workings of president Bola Ahmed Tinubu's government, stressing that his doors are always open.



Dangote

NEWS

Bello grants scholarship to Cambridge exams best student

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has granted a scholarship to Miss Oluwabukolami Adeyemi, the recipient of the British Council Outstanding Cambridge Learner's Award.

This award is in recognition of her remarkable performance in the 2022 Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge AS Level Examinations.

The governor received Oluwabukolami and her parents at his office in Lugard House, Lokoja, recently. He expressed his satisfaction with her outstanding performance, which has positioned her as a distinguished representative of the state, country and the world in general.

Oluwabukolami, who has already secured admission to a university in the United Kingdom to study law, shared her aspiration of becoming a successful lawyer.

She also aims to excel in her profession internationally, with cross-border access to legal practice.

Furthermore, Oluwabukolami expressed her ambition to play a significant role in government, either by holding leadership positions in Nigeria or contributing to policy-making and legislative processes.



Bello

She requested prayers for her parents, who were facing the financial burden of funding her education abroad.

Governor Bello commended Oluwabukolami's exceptional performance and encouraged parents to follow the example set by Mr. and Mrs. Adeyemi in nurturing their children for success through dedication to education.

He emphasised that Oluwabukolami achieved global recognition due to her intellectual prowess rather than any inappropriate means.

Continuing his tradition of generosity, the governor, who has previously awarded multiple scholarships to outstanding students and

supported medical expenses locally and internationally for indigent patients, announced that Oluwabukolami had been granted a scholarship in his name.

Engr. Adeyemi, Oluwabukolami's father, expressed deep gratitude to the governor. He described the scholarship offer as unbelievable and offered prayers for the well-being of the governor and his family.

Oluwabukolami Adeyemi shattered the glass ceiling by achieving the highest scores in the examination, which was conducted across 146 countries worldwide.

By DORCAS PANKYES

THE Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar was in Port Harcourt during the week to commiserate with the families of the deceased crew members of the ill-fated MI-171E Helicopter that crashed in Niger State on 14 August 2023.

Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet, the Director of Public Relations and Information, Nigerian Air Force made this known to journalists in a statement.

The statement said while condoling the families for the painful loss, Air Marshal Abubakar stated that the loss was a major setback for the NAF, which would take the Service some time to get over. He went on to assure the families that the NAF would however, never abandon the families but would always stand by them till the end.

The statement quoted the Chief of the Air Staff as saying, "The NAF will always stand with you and support you till the end". He also assured them that their sacrifices would not be in vain, as the NAF family, as well as all Nigerians, would forever remember them for giving their lives for the survival of the nation.

Air Marshal Abubakar further used the opportunity of the visit to interact with the officers and personnel of the unit. During the interactive session, the CAS expressed his condolence to the unit and appreciated them for their commitment and efforts in the ongoing joint military operations in the Niger Delta.

He also assured that the sacrifices of these fallen

NAF commiserates with families of crash victims

heroes would not be in vain and that the Nigerian Air Force would do everything possible to forestall such occurrences in the future.

Recall that a NAF MI-171E Helicopter on casualty evacuation mission crashed in Niger State on 14 August 2023, killing the entire passengers and 4 NAF crew members on board. The deceased crew members include Flight Lieutenant Adamu Ibrahim, Flight Lieutenant Anthony

Duryumus, Lance Corporal Alaribe Daniel and Lance Corporal Briggs Stephen Peter.

It is important to also mention that 2 NAF Regiment personnel, Corporal Jauro Amos and Lance Corporal Abdulrahman Abubakar, also lost their lives as part of the Nigerian Army personnel who were recently ambushed and killed by terrorists in Niger State.



Abubakar

FG inaugurates primary animal health centre

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan

THE Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has inaugurated a primary animal health centre in a bid to tackle animal diseases such as Anthrax and Lassa Fever.

The centre which was inaugurated at the Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology, Moor Plantation, Ibadan, was constructed in order to provide quality care services for animals and guide against infectious diseases.

The centre was handed over to the college on Tuesday in Ibadan by the ministry.

The Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Dr Ernest Umakhihe, while speaking during the inauguration said the centre was constructed to complement and boost capacity of the college and the state in order to effectively provide quality animal health care services for the populace.

Umakhihe, who spoke through the ministry's Coordinator in Oyo State, Dr Kakulu Omonole, said the centre would also provide a leveling ground for graduates of the college to be able to compete effectively in their chosen career.

He said that the handover of the facility to the college was to enhance proper management and utilisation and to ensure its sustainability.

He added that the ministry

will continue to support the college in order to achieve its aims.

Umakhihe said, "Please ensure that all proper management procedures are put in place and documented appropriately."

"FMARD is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring an enabling learning and working environment for both the students of the college and workers as well."

"The Federal College of Animal Health and Production Technology Ibadan, Nigeria as one of the colleges under the coverage of the ministry has benefited from various infrastructural facilities like other institutions in Nigeria."

"Dear beneficiaries, sustainability of this infrastructure facility should be a collective effort by ensuring that proper management is upheld."

Provost of the college, Dr Adekoya Owosinbo, in his remarks appreciated the ministry for the construction. He added that the facility would assist the college in effective training of the students in areas of animal health and technology.

Owosinbo said that the facility would also impact on the immediate community in mitigating against diseases affecting animals and other livestock in the state.

He maintained that it will also be beneficial to the lecturers of the college in the area of research.

"As Commissioners, you

carry a big burden. The formulation and effective implementation of policies and programmes of government rests on your

shoulders. You must adopt the inclusive approach to leadership. You must build a team. Everybody is important. Don't be a lone ranger."

NCC to improve network readiness index

THE Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) recently organized the Emerging Technology Forum for the telecommunications industry, with a particular emphasis on Nigeria's Network Readiness Index (NRI).

During the forum, Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta, the

Executive Vice Chairman of NCC, highlighted the remarkable growth of Nigeria's telecommunications industry and its impact on the country's economy. However, Nigeria's ranking in the NRI for 2022 was comparatively low, necessitating efforts to bridge the digital divide and create a more inclusive and sustainable economy.



Danbatta

The forum provided a platform for discussions on reskilling opportunities, informed policymaking, and enhancing network readiness to improve Nigeria's NRI ranking and maximize the benefits of the digital era.

Renowned professionals in the technology landscape presented on the foundational pillars of the NRI, stimulating thought-provoking discussions and fostering collaboration among industry stakeholders. The forum aimed to guide the telecommunications industry towards transformation and advancement, encouraging innovation and cooperation.

In his concluding remarks, Prof. Danbatta expressed appreciation for the commitment and progress demonstrated by participants and urged them to continue embracing innovation and working together to create a prosperous digital future for Nigeria.

Through a continued focus on innovation and collaboration, the Nigerian telecommunications industry aims to position itself as a leader in the digital landscape, driving economic growth and prosperity for the nation.

In his opening remarks, Engr. Chidi Diugwu, Head of the New Media and Information Security Department, highlighted Nigeria's

ICT sector's significant contribution to the country's GDP and emphasized the progress made in ICT infrastructure.

The NRI aims to assess and address areas of improvement in affordability, digital skills, and adoption of digital services.

Engr. Diugwu stressed the importance of utilizing NRI insights to guide policies and investments, fostering innovation and bridging the digital divide for a prosperous and inclusive digital future. He further explained that the NRI aimed to generate actionable outcomes in harnessing emerging technologies for Nigeria's advancement.

Also Engr. Ubale A. Maska, the Executive Commissioner - Technical Services of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), in his remarks at the Emerging Technology Forum for the Telecommunications Industry said that the forum aimed to shed light on the Network Readiness Index (NRI) within the Nigerian telecommunications sector, offering guidelines and best practices for evaluating the impact of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and promoting the adoption of new technologies.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

Food scarcity and the Nigerian situation

Continued from page 10

Interestingly, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. Nigerian Vice President, Kashim Shettima recently told a United Nations summit that his principal, president Bola Tinubu, withdrew the subsidy on petroleum from "day one" and embarked on the release of grains and fertilizers to reduce the effect of the removal. Shettima added that the Tinubu-led government had also mobilized over half a trillion dollars for sustainable food systems transformation initiatives. The Vice President disclosed this while chairing a high-level meeting on the first day of the UN Food Systems Summit declared upon in Rome, Italy by the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Gutierrez.

A Statement by the State House quoted the Vice President to have told the session that the funds were mobilized "through domestic resource,

multilateral Development Banks, international Financial institutions, climate fund leading agro-businesses "and would be used for "Inonu Finance and food systems transformation; development of Nigeria's agro value chain and Special Agro industrial processing zones programmes.

THE NIGERIA STANDARD, Wednesday, July 26, 2023). According to the statement, Shettima further explained that, "in this event, the Government of Nigeria will be showcasing its Value Chain Development Programme (VCDP) as a unique example of a successful partnership between produces, the public sector and private operators. The VCDP which is Co-funded by Nigeria and IFAD had empowered vulnerable farmers and youths to engage in commercial partnerships with some of

the biggest food processing and marketing firms in the world such as OLAM a world leading agri-business company operating in over 80 countries with an annual revenue of about N39.8 billion."

Nigerians are eagerly waiting to see to the full realization of these lofty policies because the bone of contention has always been the disruption of farming activities by bandits, terrorist, kidnapers and other criminal elements. Are these elements not still around with us? Nonetheless, there seems to be some glimmer of

hope. In his Random Muslings.

(THE NIGERIA STANDARD, Wednesday, July 29, 2023) Paul Jatau did opine that, "Thankfully, some good news has been filtering in from the interviews so far granted by the new defence helmsman) They have been quoted to say there will be no negotiation with bandits. That would serve to dissuade those who think that they can indulge in crime and criminality and turn around to arm-twist the state into negotiating with them. Besides if the fight is taken to the insurgents, the message

that it would not be business as usual would have been sent to them. And ensuring that the displaced are returned to their ancestral homes".

While Nigerians wait positive action from the defense Chief, Nigerians in the mists of the country's abundance of foods should not be allowed to die because of hunger and starvation. And it becomes obvious and natural that farmers know fully well the danger of the present security would not take the risk of embarking on farming in the face of uncertainty.

A Statement by the State House quoted the Vice President to have told the session that the funds were mobilized "through domestic resource, multilateral Development Banks, international Financial institutions, climate fund leading agro-businesses "and would be used for "Inonu Finance and food systems transformation; development of Nigeria's agro value chain and Special Agro industrial processing zones programmes.

METRO-FOCUS

Fuel subsidy removal and trickle effect on masses

BY Hosea Nyamlong, Longdiem
Callista Shinnaan and Jessica Silas Jatau.

Mixed reactions continue to trail the removal of petrol subsidy by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Till date, many Nigerian citizens are criticising the policy and its timing.

Following the announcement during President Bola Tinubu's inaugural address on May 29, 2023, it has redefined the dynamics of petroleum marketing in Nigeria, largely benefitting the petroleum products dealers and traders but hurting the citizens. This used to be the narrative.

One of the phrases that stood out in President Bola Tinubu's inaugural speech, is that "subsidy is gone", he announced to the dismay of Nigerians. The nation was just recovering from the devastating blows of cash crunch. President Bola Tinubu, made hearts sink when he announced that the President Muhammadu Buhari's government did not make any provision for subsidy in the budget he inherited.

It was on this premise that Metro Focus correspondents went round the city centre and environs to sample the opinions of citizens on the effect of the fuel subsidy removal.

Among citizens interviewed were Magdalene Samuel Mafulul, a hairstylist, and a resident of Jos South. She narrated her ordeal thus: The fuel increment has caused a lot of setback to my business. I'm losing customers day by day as a result of the hike in the fuel price. Many of my customers that used to come from far places, no longer come to patronize my business again, due to the increase in transportation fare.

"Again, the hike has also affected the goods I use in my business like relaxer, shampoo, wigs and hair attachments. They have increased without a stable price. Customers can no longer bear the price of our services and most of the time, I run at a loss".

Also, Dorcas Emeka, a petty trader within the Jos South Local Government Area that sells perishable goods like onions, tomatoes, pepper and spinach etc, barred her mind on the recent fuel hike. Her story is not different from the one above. She said business is no longer what it used to be. Customers don't buy goods like before and the more the goods stay, the more they spoil.

"Currently, I am running business at a loss due to the increase of the transportation fare," she stated.

A commercial bus driver by name Haruna Muhammad, plying Jos and Bukuru Express Way, lamented that commuters don't agree with the new transport fare. They constantly argue with them as if it is their making.

"The commuters don't care about our plight. All they want is a reduction in transport fare. The fuel hike has also affected other services in maintaining our vehicles", he revealed.

Going by the current situation in



the country, he doesn't make reasonable profit at the end of the day, because the increase has affected other goods and services, making life unbearable to the citizens.

Mrs Ejike Nwanfor, a fashion designer, has lamented the cost of living after the subsidy was removed.

She said "The harsh economic situation has affected my business". In the sense that she experiences very low patronage from her customers. They don't think of dressing well, rather they are thinking about how to survive.

When you charge a customer, he or she would not be able to pay because of the high cost of the material and the services when using a generator to sew the clothes.

A "keke" NAPEP operator,

Cornelius Pius shared his bitter experience on the recent fuel increase.

He added that citizens prefer to trek rather than use "keke" to reach their destination. We experience more people trekking than before. So many of my fellow operators have parked their "keke" due to no passengers.

In the past, in spite of the removal of the subsidy, I used to make some reasonable profit from the business. But now, the situation has changed. It seems we are now only working for the oil marketers.

At the moment, I don't know how I'm going to pay my children's school fees in September, because the business is not flowing like it used to.

METRO FOCUS gathered that

the Executive Secretary of the Major Oil Marketers Association of Nigeria (MOMAN), Mr. Clement Isong said that with the new petrol marketing regime, MOMAN members would be selling their products based on their cost of purchase.

However, since the pronouncement, petrol marketers have gone into a frenzy, hoarding petrol they have in stock, which they bought at a subsidized rate. They hike the pump prices to as high above 500 naira and the price is on the increase.

He urged Nigerians to embrace the new petrol marketing regime and reduce their fuel consumption. He advised that the government should put in place appropriate palliatives to cushion the effect on the most vulnerable citizens.

It is on record that the Labour Union and other organizations in the country have called on the present government to reverse the fuel pump price back to its normal price, because the citizens cannot bear the hardship of the economy.

Despite the palliative measures by the government to reach out to its citizens, the process and manner in which the palliative would be shared, would not be able to reach the common citizens and many citizens have frowned at the process.

Government needs to look into the process by thuggish and ensure that the common man gets the palliative and also better the economy.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

FIDELITY BANK PLC DONATES ITEMS TO PLSG

The Fidelity Bank PLC donated relief materials to Plateau State Government through the office of the Deputy Governor, Her Excellency, Ngo Josephine Piyo at the new Government House Rayfield, Jos. The relief materials is meant for victims of attacks in Mangu and other Local Government Areas of the State.



Regional Bank Head, North Central, Mr. Sadi Zawiya (right) reading the list of materials brought to the Deputy Governor, Ngo Josephine Piyo



Mr. Zawiya (with mic) making remarks before handing the relief materials to Her Excellency, Hon. Piyo



Plateau State Governor, represented by his Deputy, Ngo Josephine Piyo (left) responding



Deputy Governor, Ngo Piyo (left) receiving the materials from the Regional Bank Head of Fidelity Bank PLC, Mr. Zawiya



Secretary to the Plateau State Government, Arc Samuel Nanchang Jatau (right) in a handshake with the Fidelity Bank PLC, North Central Regional Officer, Mr. Sadi Zawiya



Mr. Zawiya (middle) in a group photograph with the Bank's Management and Staff



Executive Secretary, Plateau State Emergency Management Agency, Hon. Sunday Abdu (middle) flanked by the Fidelity Bank PLC in a group photograph



Bags of rice being off loaded at the State Government Store

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK



Risk factors associated with vulnerable road users

THE level of risk that road users face depends on the particular situation.

Imagine the following scenarios:

- ◆ You are approaching a zebra crossing ahead of you and knowing it to be a risky situation you look very closely all around you. There is no one to be seen and in this particular instance this is virtually no risk.
- ◆ This time you approach a crossing while talking to a passenger in the car and not really paying attention, you have no idea if someone might want to use the crossing or indeed is actually on it, you are increasing the level of risk.
- ◆ Imagine that something is obstructing your view of crossing. This could be a car that is parked illegally on the zigzag lines or simply a queue of traffic on the other side of the road, making it impossible to see whether anyone is waiting to cross. The risk is far greater in this situation.

The risk can be reduced as long as you take appropriate action, usually slowing down. Even in the first scenario, where the crossing is clear, it would be wise to slow down in order to assure yourself that on one will suddenly appear. You do have a choice when it comes to reducing the risk element both to yourself and to other road users, regardless of how anyone else is behaving. There is nothing to be gained from compounding somebody else's mistakes. So even if somebody is illegally parked in the zigzag lines, blocking your view of the crossing, you can still take actions to reduce the level of risk, proving you are paying attention. Who are these vulnerable road users and what safety practices can we observe to keep both them and us from harm?

They fall into two categories:

I. Vehicle users: by vehicle users, we mean new and old drivers, cyclists and motorcyclists.

A new driver is anyone with less than two years' driving experience. Research shows that you are statistically far more likely to have a crash within the first two years of passing your driving test than later. Studies investigating the behaviour of novice drivers tend to concentrate on the control skills involved in vehicle handling, rather than on hazard recognition and decision making.

Statistics also show that this has nothing to do with age but everything to do with inexperience. Drivers who dither around, brake at the last moment and change lanes suddenly are a danger because they are such an unknown quantity and they put other drivers at risk. Inexperience is often the cause of this sort of erratic behaviour.

It has been discovered that inexperienced drivers have more crashes because they fail to look as far down the road as experience drivers. New drivers often look in the wrong place for information and fail to anticipate distant hazards. They tend not to see lights change to red as early as experienced drivers do; hence they slam their brakes on at the last minute, nor are they so quick to see a bus pull up in front of them and so they swerve out to avoid it. Sometimes they see things so late that it is impossible to rectify the situation, thereby resulting in a crash.

As a driver, you need to make allowances for inexperienced drivers; don't forget you were one yourself. Consider that the driver in front of you displaying L-plates, might have just passed driving test only the day before. Allow cyclists as much room as possible when overtaking them.



NEWS

Group kicks against university accommodation fee increment

From Musliudeen Adebayo, Ibadan

EDUCATION Rights Campaign (ERC) has kicked against increment of accommodation fee at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan in Oyo State.

The group called for reversal of the fee.

According to the circular, new students of University of Ibadan are to pay a sum of N60,000 while returning students are to pay a sum of N45,000.

New students and occupants of ABH in UCH are directed to pay N60,000 as the new fee for the accommodation according to the circular. This is against the N30,000 paid in the previous academic session.

Education Rights Campaign (ERC), University of Ibadan branch while reacting, condemned the decision of the university's management over the increment.

ERC Coordinator, University of Ibadan chapter, Ben Taftee, in a statement made available to journalists, urged both fresh and returning students to reject any form of fee hike in the institution.

ERC, while welcoming both the new and returning students, insisted that there is no basis for a hike in the accommodation fee.

The group, while speaking further said that all halls of residence remain in the same dilapidated condition as they were before students were asked to proceed on the end of the session break a few weeks ago.

"At the same, we urge both the fresh and returning students to reject any form of fee hike and disregard the directive for the immediate payment of the hiked accommodation fees as published in a document titled 'the procedure for the payment of the undergraduate accommodation fee for 2022/2023 academic session' which has been in circulation for a few days now

"As far as we are concerned in the ERC, there is no basis for hike in the accommodation fee. All halls of residence remain in the same despicable condition as they were before students were asked to proceed at the end of the session break a few weeks ago. There is neither



Seyi Makinde -

improvement in the internal university administration. facilities nor facial renovation. Therefore, if this is not defeated it will encourage the implementation of other planned anti-student policies like the proposed school fee hike.

"We of the ERC equally observed that the document where the hiked accommodation fee was published was never signed by any of the designated officers and living condition of the university students within the halls of residence. This is the same way the earlier document tagged 'proposed school fees' published a few days ago, was never signed by any officer of the university administration who later came out to deny any knowledge of it.

"This is also one of the reasons we call on students to disregard the document and suspend the payment of the hiked accommodation fee stipulated in the unsigned document.

"Finally, ERC calls on Tobiloba-led Students Union to stop shying away from its responsibility and commence the process of mobilising the mass of students on campus towards building a resistance against any form of attack on both their living and learning condition in the university. This must also include an appeal to all the workers unions on campus such as ASUU, NASU, SSANU, and NAAT for a support and solidarity".

"We believe the present hike in the accommodation fee is being used to test water by the

Palliatives: Governor Sani unveils support for Kaduna's vulnerables

From John FWAH

KADUNA State Governor Senator Uba Sani recently unveiled a comprehensive palliative support programme at the Government House, Kaduna, aimed at assisting the most vulnerable and impoverished residents of Kaduna.

The initiative, mainly focused on providing foodstuff, aims to benefit 210,000 households, reaching a total of 1,050,000 individuals.

The primary beneficiaries of this programme are people

living with disabilities, widows, orphanage homes, the elderly, and internally displaced persons.

Governor Uba Sani expressed his commitment to ensuring that those who are most in need receive the necessary support during these challenging times.

To ensure effective distribution, the committee responsible for developing the modalities for the programme is chaired by the Deputy Governor, Dr. Hadiza Sabuwa Balarabe. The committee comprises leaders from labour

and trade union congress, market women associations, traders association, and religious leaders.

Their collective expertise and diverse perspectives will help ensure the equitable allocation of resources.

Governor Uba Sani also revealed that in the programme's second phase, the Kaduna State Government plans to provide additional support such as free transportation, grants to small traders and businesses, fertilizers to smallholder farmers, and free train services from Zaria to Kaduna, Sabon Tasha, and Kafanchan.

It is worth noting that the state has allocated 2 billion naira from the 5 billion naira grant offered by the federal government specifically for food items in this initial phase of the palliative support programme.

Governor Uba Sani stressed the importance of this initiative in mitigating the impact of the removal of petroleum subsidies implemented by the current administration. Notably, leaders from various labor and trade unions have expressed their support for these measures aimed at cushioning the effects of the policy change.



sani

SUNDAY FEATURE

Skills acquisition and youths for a transformative future

In a world where two-thirds of youth in developing countries are not fulfilling their economic potential, and 70% of an estimated 200 million Nigerians are in the youth category, the issue of skills development cannot and must not be taken lightly. EJIRO GRAY writes.

BEFORE the advent of social media, skills acquisition took on various forms both informal and formal.

In this regard, we are all familiar with formal education as a veritable platform. But formal education went beyond the traditional, primary, secondary, and university education. There were technical schools which offered an alternative means of skills acquisition for artisanal services such as plumbing, electrical work, etc. These technical schools were accredited and certified, but over time their popularity started to dwindle.

However, we also had other means of skills transfer, such as the apprenticeship system adopted for various artisanal services such as tailoring, auto mechanics, etc., and of course, entrepreneurship such as the Igbo apprenticeship system, to mention a few. Whilst these still exist, not much effort has gone into institutionalizing them as additional sources of skills development. Furthermore, the brain drains and mass exodus for greener pastures has also seen a depletion in the number of teachers, educators and trainers available to develop Africa's growing population.

But it's not all gloom and doom. Technology has stepped in as a knight in shining armor to save the day and help bridge a gap that could degenerate into a near insurmountable gulf if not addressed speedily. Take a virtual stroll down the streets of social media and you will find it replete with business enterprises of all kinds, entertainment skit makers, thought leaders and various subject matter experts.

These apps provide a platform for unleashing creative potential with minimal start-up costs; marketplaces largely driven by youth. Social media has redefined convenience as a service and marketing as a core skill. Computer programmers and Tech start-ups are also offering skills acquisition through coding and programming, preparing the next generation of software developers.

Through these avenues, people are developing relevant skills for today's world and a transformative future, keeping many up to date and providing access to global technological advancements and tools. African youths have demonstrated that they possess the primary ingredient for a transformative future – inquisitive minds. And with



technology aiding the interconnectivity between worlds that hitherto had little basis for interaction, therein lies an opportunity for Africa to become the 'greener pastures' its young people so desperately seek after.

To achieve that successfully, we must give them hope, and that hope must bear the capacity to open their minds to Africa's possibilities beyond the horizon. This is where Education in its various forms comes into play. But you cannot give what you do not have. This means the education sector must be intentionally and holistically designed to include those entrusted with the task of transferring knowledge and skills.

How then do we equip teachers and trainers for this critical role? It will take a multi-sectoral approach to build hope. The education sector must be prioritized with the welfare of teachers as a key incentive for attracting the right calibre of persons into the profession. School curricula must incorporate entrepreneurship as a core module in formal education from a young age as a preparatory tool. Digital technology and access to it must be provided and incorporated as primary learning tools for both public and private education.

However, beyond direct investment in education, the Government must also bear in mind the sociological and psychological impact of development on the youth population, and as such,

continue to place infrastructure and socio-economic empowerment at the forefront of the growth agenda. There must also be policies that enable the proliferation of small businesses to signal the endorsement of the entrepreneurship model and mindset.

The private sector also has a key role to play in driving positive change. One of the key roles being to create opportunities for mentorship, platforms for cross-pollination of ideas between theory and real-world application.

The Sahara Group recognizes its role as a bridge and catalyst for development and sustainability. Beyond recruitment through a renowned Graduate Trainee Programme specifically designed to reposition African Youths on the global stage, several programmes and initiatives have been specifically targeted at different levels of educational development, to achieve this end-to-end goal.

Mindset transformation is key to preparation, and this is achieved through creative writing competitions and debates on climate change and Africa's sustainability challenges, for greater awareness and consciousness. The Sahara STEAMERS programme which was birthed as a tool for building creative confidence in Africa's young adolescents of secondary school age, through ideation, self-directed learning, and collaborative development of

practical solutions to real life problems in emerging economies is another example of such developmental initiatives.

Higher up the rungs of the education ladder, the Extrapreneurship Model adopted by the Sahara Group, was born out of the need to inspire collaboration between the private sector and young entrepreneurs, with the understanding that the latter can achieve more by leveraging the experience of the former in capacity building.

This led to the launch of the "Sahara School of Innovation and Extrapreneurship" (SSIE), as a means of creating a platform for a dedicated focus on Sustainable Energy for the future. The SSIE, the first of which is being established at the University of Lagos, will serve as a platform for promoting innovative solutions by university students aimed at facilitating sustainable development and global competitiveness in Africa.

Beyond skills development through tertiary education, the Sahara Impact Fund was birthed as a solution to nurturing the social entrepreneurial spirit inherent in African youth from different walks of life, by equipping them with the skills and funding required to scale their enterprises to the next level.

Read also: China, Africa partner on innovation, entrepreneurship to drive youth development

Sahara Group has also focused on those entrusted with

the arduous task of nurturing young minds by creating "The Sahara Group MAD Grant" (MAD = Making A Difference), an annual award grant which currently offers outstanding lecturers' sponsorships for research programs within Africa.

Whilst the Sahara Group sits at the vanguard of such transformational partnerships for a transformative future, it is just one of many organizations that can drive private sector involvement in boosting skills acquisition for the youth. Africa will struggle to play catch up with the rest of the world if we continue to neglect the population demographic that will be primarily responsible for harnessing the opportunities and facilitating a permanent seat at the table where global decisions and policies are being engineered.

The transformation we desire to see will require collective effort, to ensure it is just, inclusive and leaves no one behind. We need more organizations like Sahara to have some skin in the game. Empowering Youths for a transformative future is not just a global imperative, but it is also critical to Africa's continued relevance and sustainability.

Gray, a lawyer and Director of Governance and Sustainability at Sahara Group. She is also a Trustee of the Sahara Group Foundation, the Sahara Group's vehicle for social sustainability, with a focus on promoting access to energy and sustainable environments, ultimately helping to build sustainable societies.

SUNDAY SPORTS

Djokovic, Gauff to challenge each other in US Open

By JONATHAN JUREJKO

THE prospect of the fascinating rivalry between Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz continuing in another Grand Slam final will be one of the key themes when the US Open begins in New York on Monday.

Serbia's Djokovic, 36, and Spain's Alcaraz, 20, might be at the opposite ends of their careers but the pair are side-by-side as the world's two best men's players.

Few are looking beyond the joint favourites to win the men's singles at Flushing Meadows, where Djokovic is aiming for a record-equalling 24th major singles title and Alcaraz tries to defend the crown he won last year.

Poland's **Iga Swiatek** remains the woman to beat as the world number one tries to repeat her first-time victory at the hard-court major.

Over the 22-year-old's shoulder in the rankings are a host of proven and in-form talents, led by Australian Open champion **Aryna Sabalenka** and home players **Coco Gauff** and **Jessica Pegula**.

From a British perspective, **Andy Murray** is expected to be fit enough to participate but **Emma Raducanu** is missing as she continues her comeback from injury.

Going into the final Grand Slam tournament of the year, BBC Sport runs through the major talking points in New York.

Such has been the quality of Alcaraz and Djokovic over the past 12 months, few pre-tournament predictions are veering away from these two players contesting the men's final in New York.

The pair hold all four major titles, helping to create a gulf between them and the rest in the ATP rankings.

Djokovic, back at the US Open after missing last year's tournament because he was not vaccinated against Covid-19, will wrestle back the world number one ranking from Alcaraz if he wins his opening match.

Alcaraz landed his first major title at Flushing Meadows in the absence of Djokovic and claimed another at Wimbledon last month, beating the Serb in a thrilling final.



Gauff (right) beat Swiatek for the first time in their eight meetings on her way to the Cincinnati title

Their developing rivalry had been a slow burner.

It was bubbling at the start of the season but without both present at key tournaments there was little chance for the pair to go toe-to-toe on the court.

Now the match-up has ignited over the past few months following three compelling contests in the French Open semi-finals, the Wimbledon showpiece and last week's Cincinnati final.

Alcaraz and Djokovic cannot meet at the US Open until the final as a result of being the top two seeds.

Players such as 2021 champion **Daniil Medvedev**, last year's beaten finalist **Casper Ruud**, emerging force **Holger Rune** or recent Toronto champion **Jannik Sinner** - who have all suffered chastening losses to Alcaraz or Djokovic at majors this year - appear best placed to challenge them.

Rafael Nadal, Djokovic's long-time rival who plans to retire next year, is missing as he continues to recover from the hip surgery that

has kept him out of almost the whole season.

Is this Gauff's time and will Swiatek's stranglehold end?

Expectation has surrounded Gauff ever since she arrived on the scene as a 15-year-old phenomenon in 2019.

The American's progress since then has been significant but steady, becoming a fixture in the world's top 10 over the past 12 months without yet winning a major singles title.

After a humbling first-round defeat at Wimbledon, the 19-year-old did some soul searching and her work with new coach Pere Riba, plus input from experienced consultant Brad Gilbert, has helped iron out the inconsistencies in her game.

The results have been clear. Gauff has won the biggest titles of her career in Washington and Cincinnati this month, pitching her among the leading contenders at the US Open.

No American player has won the singles title since Sloane Stephens in 2017 but third seed Pegula

provides another genuine hope of a home champion.

Pegula, 29, triumphed at the Canadian Open in Montreal - the other biggest tournament in the pre-US Open swing - and is hoping to turn her tour-level consistency into a first major success.

Just as she was a year ago when she won her maiden US Open title, Swiatek is still the frontrunner - despite coming under increasing pressure from her nearest rivals.

She leads the rankings after another impressive year on the WTA Tour, winning 53 of her 62 matches and claiming four titles.

But Swiatek lost to Gauff and Pegula in her exits in Cincinnati and Montreal, while her stranglehold on the world number one ranking is again under threat from second seed Sabalenka.

The 25-year-old Belarusian will top the rankings for the first time if she matches Swiatek's performance in New York.

Pegula's consistency has helped her break apart from the so-called 'big three' of Swiatek, Sabalenka and Kazakhstan's **Elena Rybakina**, who is hoping to overcome the physical issues that have troubled her in recent months.

Wimbledon champion **Marketa Vondrousova** plays in the first major since she became a Grand Slam winner, while Tunisia's **Ons Jabeur** - beaten by the Czech in the All England Club final and runner-up at Flushing Meadows last year - hopes to finally land a major title.

Two-time champion **Venus Williams**, 43, is set to play in a 24th US Open - an Open era record for singles appearances - after being given a wildcard.

Denmark's former world number one **Caroline Wozniacki** also received a wildcard after the 33-year-old mother-of-two announced she was coming back from retirement.

Murray, 36, has been dealing with an abdominal injury during the build-up, withdrawing from tournaments in Toronto and Cincinnati as a result.

While the problem left him unable

to serve, the former world number one - who won the first of his three major titles at the US Open in 2012 - has been able to train over the past week.

Murray is one of six Britons to have earned direct entry into the main draw at Flushing Meadows and is joined by **Cameron Norrie**, **Dan Evans**, **Katie Boulter**, **Jodie Burrage** and **Jack Draper**.

Raducanu, however, is absent as she recovers from wrist and ankle surgeries.

The 20-year-old, who memorably created history by winning the 2021 title as a teenage qualifier - had the operations in May and is hoping to make a competitive return to the court before the end of the season.

Technology has been a key part of the sport for many years but will be used for a new purpose at the US Open.

The tournament has introduced a video-assist review system for chair umpires to be able to immediately check incidents - double bounces, hindrance and a player touching the ball or the net - if challenged by a player.

"We haven't had it before where the chair umpires will have the review at their fingertips," said US Open tournament director Stacey Allaster.

One thing that remains the same, though, is the tournament's night schedule.

Finishing matches in the early hours has been a regular source of concern for players, but organisers have resisted calls to change its scheduling to avoid potential late conclusions.

US Open night sessions start at 19:00 in New York and feature two matches, meaning finishes in the early hours of the morning are common.

"At the moment, we are staying the course with two night matches. We will continue to evaluate it," Allaster said.



SUNDAY SPORTS

What fifa asked us to do with \$960,000 - nff

THE Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) has said the \$960,000 released by FIFA to it was meant for preparation for the World Cup and not to pay players' salaries for qualifier matches.

The President of the NFF, Ibrahim Gusau, while appearing before an ad hoc committee of the House of Representatives investigating non-payment of allowances to members of the Super Falcon, said the federation used the money for camping of players and friendly matches.



Gusau

Premium Times said that, he said FIFA's auditors would have flagged it if NFF had used the money to pay allowances for qualifier matches.

"All the 32 nations that qualified for the World Cup were given \$960,000 each for preparation for the World Cup.

"In January, we organised a training tournament of four nations -- Mexico, Colombia, Costa Rica and Nigeria. Every team used FIFA preparation money. The team was camped in Mexico and they were there for 13 days. In March, they were in Turkey for another training camp.

"The money was not given for the welfare of players but for preparing the team. We paid them allowances as per the tournament they participated in. We cannot use the preparation money to pay outstanding of qualifier matches.

"If the auditors of FIFA should see it, they will query us for that. The money was

specific. We cannot use the money for a qualifier that was played in 2019," he said.

Mr Gusau also informed the committee that the federation has not been getting enough subvention from the federal government, hence its inability to meet its obligations to the national teams.

He said the federal government did not give the federation money to execute the [2019 Women's World Cup](#) in France but had to rely on the money from FIFA.

For the 2023 World Cup, Mr Gusau said the federal government approved \$1.7 million to the NFF, however, only half of the money was released to the federation.

"It is a budget we presented to the government requesting for intervention from the government, that was what cumulatively came around \$1.7 million and the government approved it.

And when it got to the federal ministry of finance--they don't pay us in dollars. The Ministry converted the money into dollars using the official exchange rate. Only half of the money was paid," he said.

The NFF boss also claimed that the owed allowances of the Falcon Coach, Coach Randy Waldrum, have been paid and his contract has been terminated.

He also said the NFF has paid all outstanding allowances to members of the Super Falcon team except the allowance for a qualifier game against Ivory Coast.

After about two hours of grilling Mr Gusau, the committee ruled that NFF should provide all evidence of payment of allowances. Also, the committee requested details of all revenue of the NFF.

The Chairman of the Committee, Blessing Onuh, subsequently adjourned the sitting of the Committee till Wednesday next week.

Boxing Federation prepares for 2024 qualifier

THE Nigeria Boxing Federation (NBF) has taken its athletes to a camp to prepare for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games African Qualification Tournament next month. Newsnow said that, the qualifying event is due to take place in the Senegalese capital of Dakar from September 6 to 16.

boxers from seven weight categories are set to prepare for the tournament at the National Stadium in Lagos.

The NBF is determined to succeed at the event after failing to qualify a single fighter for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic boxing tournaments.

"We have a mandate to ensure that we are in the

Olympics this time around after we missed out on the 2020 Summer Olympics in Japan," said the governing body's secretary general Dapo Akinyele.

"We have gathered our best athletes for this camp and we expect results from them, this time around we must put all machinery in place to ensure qualification.

"Nigeria is not lacking in terms of talents, we have them in abundance; not forgetting that we have history in boxing with medals in boxing events at the Olympics.

"We will do all it takes to ensure that we succeed this time, but first thing is that we want to qualify for the Olympics first."

The NBF's training camp is set to take place at the National Stadium in Nigeria's largest city Lagos ©Getty Images

Nigeria finished seventh overall at the most recent Africa Boxing Championships in Cameroon with one gold, one silver, and two bronze medals.

Coach Anthony



Nigeria Boxing

RETIRED Nigerian midfielder John Mikel Obi is set to represent London side Chelsea again seven years after he left the club, [Soccernet.ng](#) reports.

The 36-year-old moved to England after a stellar performance for Nigeria at the 2005 U-20 World Cup in the Netherlands, where his country lost in the final to Argentina, and also finished as the tournament's second-best player behind Lionel Messi.

His impressive performance at the tournament caught the attention of English giants Manchester United and Chelsea, with the former claiming they had already completed his signing before a twist in the transfer saw him join Chelsea for £16m in June 2006.

The then 19-year-old teenager would go on to spend over a decade with the Blues, winning the Premier League twice, the FA Cup four times, the League Cup twice, and the Champions League and Europa League, too, before departing the club in November 2016.

However, Mikel is set to put on the West London side's jersey again after the club [announced](#) him among the players from their

Mikel makes return to Chelsea



Mikel

maiden Champions League victory in 2012 to be taking part in the Chelsea Legends vs Bayern Munich Legends match at Stamford Bridge in September.

Mikel was arguably the standout player for the Blues on that historic night in Munich and will join fellow 2012 heroes John Terry, Florent Malouda, Salomon Kalou, and Michael Essien, as well as manager Robert Di Matteo for the game in honor of

Gianluca Vialli.

The former Italian striker Vialli died from pancreatic cancer in January this year at the age of 58 after representing Chelsea as both a player and a manager.

Mikel was part of the squad that won Nigeria the third Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) trophy in 2013, and the Bronze medal at the 2016 Olympics in Rio.

Eagles to camp in Uyo ahead game

THE Super Eagles of Nigeria will open camp for their 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers against Sao Tome and Principe on September 4th in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, [Soccernet](#) reports.

Nigeria already qualified for the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations after they defeated Sierra Leone 3-2 in the last game of the qualifiers at the SKD

Stadium in Monrovia. They have 12 points from five games and are closely followed by Guinea-Bissau, who have ten. Sierra Leone have five, while Sao Tome and Principe have just one.

The three-time African champions would be looking to end the qualifiers on a high and ensure they finish on top of Group A. But they would have to defeat Sao Tome and Principe.

The two teams meet at the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo on September 10th. Ahead of the game, the [Guardian reports](#) that Nigeria will open their camp on the 4th of September.

The Super Eagles put ten past Sao Tome and Principe when both teams met in the first leg last year, and a similar result is expected this time, considering the kind of firepower at coach Jose Peseiro's disposal.

Meanwhile, **Luis Rubiales** has refused to step down as president of the Spanish football federation following his behavior at the Women's World Cup final.

BBC SPORT said that, He had earlier grabbed his crotch as he celebrated at the final whistle.

"I will not resign, I will not resign," he told an extraordinary general assembly called by the

federation. "A social assassination is taking place."

Rubiales apologised for the kiss on Monday before Fifa, world football's governing body, [opened](#) disciplinary proceedings against him on Thursday.

On Friday he apologised for grabbing his crotch while celebrating in the VIP area of Stadium Australia, with Queen Letizia of Spain and her 16-year-old daughter stood nearby.

"I'm ready to be vilified to defend my ideals," added Rubiales.

"I apologise unreservedly but I don't deserve this manhunt I have been suffering."

Rubiales was repeatedly applauded as he addressed the assembly, which the federation called "as a matter of urgency".

He defended his actions, saying he tried to console Hermoso after she had a late penalty saved by Mary Earps.

"Jenni was the one who lifted me up," he said. "I told her to 'forget about the penalty' and I said to her 'a little peck?' and she said 'OK'."

"It was a spontaneous kiss. Mutual, euphoric and consensual. That's the key."

"A consensual 'peck' is enough to get me out of here? I will fight until the end."

Commonwealth Games:

'Salah is '100% committed' despite interest from Saudi

MOHAMED Salah will stay at Liverpool despite fresh speculation linking him with a move to the Saudi Pro League, says manager Jurgen Klopp.

Al-Ittihad are reported to be interested in the Egypt forward, 31, who joined the Reds from Roma in 2017.

Speaking before Liverpool's Premier League game with Newcastle on Sunday, Klopp said Salah is "100% committed" to the club.

"There is nothing to talk about, he is a Liverpool player," said Klopp.

"He is essential and will be. There is nothing there. My life philosophy [is] I think about a problem when I have it."

It is believed Liverpool do not want to sell a player who only signed a new three-year deal last summer and with the transfer window closing on 1 September.

Salah's agent has also previously played down talk of a move to Saudi Arabia.

"Mohamed remains committed to Liverpool," said Salah's agent Remy Abbas Issa in a social media post on 7 August.

"If we considered leaving Liverpool this year, we wouldn't have renewed the contract last summer."

Salah has started both of Liverpool's games this season, although he showed frustration at being substituted in the draw at Chelsea before knocking in the rebound from his saved penalty in the win against Bournemouth.

He has scored 187 goals in



Mohamed Salah has scored one goal in two Premier League games so far this season

307 games for Liverpool and has won the Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup, League Cup, FIFA Club World Cup and Uefa Super Cup during his time at Anfield.

'Konate a doubt for Newcastle'

Klopp says Ibrahima Konate is a doubt for the trip to Newcastle after picking up a muscle injury, but fellow defender Trent Alexander-Arnold and midfielder Curtis Jones are fit.

The Liverpool boss also described his relief at Alexis Mac Allister's red card being overturned after the Argentina midfielder was sent off in the 3-1 win over Bournemouth last week.

"Very good news on Alexis Mac Allister, massive [relief]," said Klopp.

"I was pretty sure it wasn't a

red card, but that does not mean our people were going to be successful.

"The picture was pretty clear it should not have been a red card, harsh tackles should always be punished but it was not a harsh tackle in a situation, it was fast."

Klopp praised the job Eddie Howe has done at Newcastle since taking over in 2021. Last season the club finished fourth to secure Champions League football for the first time in 20 years.

"Incredibly strong team, it's super development under Eddie Howe and smart business," said Klopp.

"[New signings] Sandro Tonali and Harvey Barnes are really good business; they have a super intense style and massive atmosphere there so this is a tough one for sure."

FORMER Premier League referee Mike Dean failed to correct a mistake in a match to save his friend and fellow official Anthony Taylor from extra "grief".

Dean was the video assistant referee (VAR) for Chelsea's 2-2 draw with Tottenham in August 2022.

Just before a late Harry Kane equaliser Chelsea felt they should have had a penalty after Cristian Romero pulled Marc Cucurella's hair.

Dean acknowledged a "really bad call" not sending Taylor to review it.

"I missed the stupid hair pull at Chelsea versus Tottenham which was pathetic from my point of view," Dean told Simon Jordan's Up Front podcast.

"It's one of them where if I had my time again, what would I do? I'd send Anthony [Taylor] to the screen. I think I knew if I did send him to the screen... he's cautioned both managers, he's had a hell of a game, it's been such a tough game end to end."

"I said to Anthony afterwards: 'I just didn't want to send you to the screen after what has gone on in the game'."

"I didn't want to send him up because he is a mate as well as

FIFA rankings: Sweden go top for first time

SWEDEN have climbed two places to go top of Fifa's women's world rankings for the first time, replacing the United States in the number one spot.

It is the first time the US have not been ranked as the world's best women's national team since June 2017.

The US are now third while

Dean declined to use VAR to save referee



Mike Dean retired from refereeing at the end of last season after a 28-year career

a referee and I think I didn't want to send him up because I didn't want any more grief than he already had."

Dean became a dedicated Premier League VAR last season after hanging up his whistle at the end of the 2021-22 campaign after referring over 550 matches in the top flight.

He was stood down from VAR duty for two months after the Stamford Bridge incident.

Wirral-born Dean subsequently brought an end to his 28-year career as a professional official because

being in the VAR hot seat was something he ended up "dreading".

Dean added: "That was a major error. If they don't score from the corner it is not as big an issue."

"But I knew full well then I would be stood down the week after. I asked to take a bit of time off because it wasn't for me."

"I used to get in the car on a Friday and was dreading Saturday. I was thinking, 'I hope nothing happens'. I used to be petrified sitting in the chair."



Spain have climbed four places to second after claiming their maiden Women's World Cup win earlier this month.

Runners-up and European champions England remain in fourth place.

Sweden beat the US on penalties in the last 16 but were knocked out in the semi-finals as they lost 2-1 to Spain.

Peter Gerhardsson's side then beat joint hosts Australia 2-0 in the third-place play-

off.

The Matildas have slipped one place to 11th and are replaced in the top 10 by quarter-finalists Japan, who have climbed three places to eighth.

Germany, who the US replaced in top spot in June 2017, were ranked second going into the World Cup but have dropped to sixth after the two-time winners failed to get past the group stage for the first time.

Murray to play Moutet in New York

BITAIN'S Andy Murray will play France's Corentin Moutet in the US Open first round as he starts his latest bid to go deep at a Grand Slam.

Murray, 36, has not reached the last 16 of a major since 2017.

The former world number one has been drawn in the same quarter as fellow Britons Cameron Norrie and Dan Evans, who play Alexander Shevchenko and Daniel Elahi Galan respectively.

Katie Boulter faces Diane Parry, while Jodie Burrage plays Anna Blinkova.

Jack Draper, who retired from his second-round match at the Winston-Salem Open two days ago, has been drawn against Moldova's Radu Albot.

They are the only six British players who qualified directly

for the main draw in New York as a result of their ranking.

Liam Broady, Harriet Dart and Lily Miyazaki hope to join them by coming through three rounds of qualifying, while Emma Raducanu is missing as she continues her recovery from wrist and ankle surgeries.

The main draw of the US Open, which is the final Grand Slam event of the year, starts at Flushing Meadows on Monday.

Murray has been nursing an abdominal injury which forced him to pull out of recent events in Toronto and Cincinnati.

However, the 2012 champion has continued to train and practised in New York on Thursday.

Murray, who is ranked 37th in the world, narrowly missed out on a seeding for the US

Open, leaving him open to a tough draw against a seeded player.

Instead, the Scot was pitted against Moutet, who is ranked 71st and reached the fourth round in New York last year.

If Murray beats the Frenchman, he could play Bulgarian 19th seed Grigor Dimitrov in the second round - who he practised with on Thursday.

What other eye-catching draws are there?

Evans, 33, could potentially play world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the third round.

The 20-year-old Spaniard starts his title defence against Germany's Dominik Koepfer, while second seed Novak Djokovic - who returns to Flushing Meadows after missing last year's event because he was not vaccinated against Covid-19 - faces France's Alexandre Muller.

The pair are widely considered the joint favourites to win the title and cannot face each other until the final.

Poland's world number one Iga Swiatek, 22, starts the defence of her women's crown - and a bid for a fifth major title - against Sweden's Rebecca Peterson.

Belarusian second seed Aryna Sabalenka starts

against Belgium's Maryna Zanevska and could face Britain's Burrage, who is making her US Open debut, in the second round.

Boulter, 27, could also face a tricky test if she reaches the second round. French seventh seed Caroline Garcia, who narrowly beat the British number one at the Billie Jean King Cup in April, is a potential opponent.

American two-time champion Venus Williams, 43, starts her Open era record 24th singles appearance against Spain's Paula Badosa.

Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki, 33, has returned to the sport after retiring in 2020 and the mother-of-two will face a qualifier in the first round.

McIlroy in contention despite back issue

RORY McIlroy overcame back issues to fire a level-par 70 and put himself in contention after the first round of the Tour Championship in Atlanta.

The Northern Irishman failed to hit a birdie on the outward nine while dropping two shots.

But four birdies and two bogeys on the back nine put him within three shots of the lead on seven under overall.

Collin Morikawa, Keegan Bradley and Viktor Hovland are in a three-way tie for the lead at 10 under par.

Morikawa, Open champion in 2021, had seven birdies and an eagle in a bogey-free nine-

under-par 61 to shoot to the top of the leaderboard.

He was joined by Bradley, who was also bogey-free as he carded a 63, while Hovland, who won last week, shot a two-under 68.

Scheffler carded a one-over 71 to drop to one shot off the lead at East Lake Golf Club.

England's Matt Fitzpatrick holed an eagle putt on the 18th to ensure he signed for a three-under 67 to lift him level with McIlroy on seven under overall.

McIlroy, who has already qualified for the European team for next month's Ryder Cup, suffered his back injury while exercising at home on Tuesday

and had not practised this week.

"My whole lower back spasmed, seized up. I couldn't move," said the world number two. "I honestly couldn't address the ball this time yesterday. So to get to where I am today is good."

The PGA Tour's season-ending tournament uses a stroke-based bonus system, which gives golfers different scores to start their opening round.

The starting strokes range from 10 under - given to FedEx Cup points leader Scottie Scheffler - to level par, given to the last five golfers to qualify for the 30-man event.



SUNDAY SPORTS

The Challenges Before Sports Minister, John Enoch

THE English Premier League is not only the most lucrative league in the world, but also the most unpredictable, the hardest to win and depending on the divide you belong to, it's the best league in the world.

As the most lucrative, it has annual revenues as high as £1.8 billion. This figure is the fourth highest of any sports league in the world. Only the NFL, MLB, and NBA can boast higher revenues. Its contribution to the British economy is in billions. The league, its clubs and players paid £3.3bn in tax during the 2016/17 season, a 50 per cent increase on the last calculation in 2013/14, according to a report by EY. The tax specialist also reported that English football's topflight supports close to 100,000 jobs and contributes £7.6bn to the United Kingdom's economy.

The league's global appeal is next to nothing. In the 80's there were only a few foreign players. In 1992 there were only 11 non-English or Irish players, but now there are enough players from abroad to form 22 teams. The success of the Premier League is good not just for football but also for the British economy.

It's not only football that has attained this level of economic advancement; other sports are also not left out. It should also be noted that it's not only in England that sport has attained such an unprecedented level of development, but also the rest of Europe alongside and the Americas. The implication of this is that sports have been professionalised and consequently provides employment to millions of youths and other professional bodies such as coaches, nutritionist, physiotherapist, sports medicine practitioners, referees among others in Europe and America.

But this is not the case in Nigeria where sport is regarded as recreational event, hence not given the desired attention for it to grow. It has, therefore remained in amateur stage.

In those climes where sport has been professionalised, the private sector plays a major role with government's role limited to providing enabling environment for it to thrive. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria, as government overbearing influence has done more harm than good having hindered the private sector from playing its expected role to the fullest.

Because of government overbearing influence, the sector has suffered hugely from paucity of funds, as government alone cannot wholly fund the sector for it to thrive. The paucity of funds has led to the total neglect of the sector, leading to inhibiting growth currently being witnessed. The lack of legal framework for sports development is another factor inhibiting its growth.

Corruption and lack of accountability in the sector by government officials have also not helped matters as the private sector has treaded softly in their sponsorship out of fear and trepidation.

The ongoing World Athletics Championships in Budapest are a



Enoh

testimony to the decadence in sports to due to corruption in Nigeria. No Nigerian has mounted the podium after six days with Tobi Amusan failing to successfully defend her 100m hurdles title after she placed sixth in the final.

Consequently, our sports federations have failed woefully and will need a strong re-awakening to key into the Sports Minister's move to see that sports do not always take from government but actually contribute to the Gross Domestic Product; provide employment opportunities and consequently alleviate poverty.

We have been made to believe the success of any sport federation is in the number of medals won at international competitions, but this is not so. While winning at international competitions may boost the visibility and marketability of the sport, it is pertinent to note that we have not even been achieving that because we have failed to develop the sports at home. In short, we've neglected grassroots sports, which should serve as the conveyor belt in churning out talents.

Apart from football that has fulfilled these objectives of contributing to our GDP, not as obtained in Europe; (after all our football is not contributing to the GDP) providing employment opportunities for players, coaches, referees, administrators and those in the medics, other sports have contributed next to nothing. Let's look at the ongoing World Athletics Championships in Budapest, Hungary. Nigeria is struggling to get a medal simply because the sport has not been developed at home. How many athletes have been employed through the sport? The ones employed belong to the military and paramilitary agencies as well as states.

If we have a proper development plan where the sport is run

professionally and there are competitions paying good prize monies in as many competitions, athletes can concentrate on the sport to earn a living and pay taxes from these earnings as is the case in Europe and America.

Sadly, this is the story in most of the other sports. The sports minister needs to ensure sports federations are run like corporate organisations and they should be agents of job creation.

Diaspora remittances are also another way of contributing to our GDP, provide employment and alleviate poverty. Apart from football that has helped significantly in this area through Nigerian players playing all over the world, other sports have not contributed up to their potentials.

Kenya has over 150 athletes competing all over the world in athletics events, especially road races and if, on the average, they bring in \$25,000 a year, you can imagine the implication of such remittances to the economy. In Nigeria in 2023, only two track and field athletes, Ese Brume and Tobi Amusan can boast of remitting \$50,000 to the economy. Imagine if you have at least 10 of them that will be \$500,000 a year on the average. And assuming other sports contribute like that, that will be \$5,000,000 a year from other sports. And by the time you add football that brings not less than \$5,000,000 every year that will be \$10,000,000m every year assuming the development is stagnant.

Run professionally, athletes/players alone can generate up to \$100,000,000 annually in diaspora remittances in 10 years time.

This is just one from the value chain. And this of course will spark a revolution that will see a lot of our young ones wanting to do one sport or the other like the craze we have for football now. The Sports Minister first of all needs to cleanse the Sports Ministry officials from aiding and abetting the sports federations from frittering away federal governments money and made them depend only on the national cake as it has become. Let each sport be run professionally with the direct supervision by the Sports Minister.

The Secretary Generals position should be advertised and mandate given by the Sports Minister to the federations on performance expectations and have a periodic evaluation of each federation.

The challenges before this farmer are huge, but not insurmountable, if the political will is there.

The English Premier League is not only the most lucrative league in the world, but also the most unpredictable, the hardest to win and depending on the divide you belong to, it's the best league in the world.

As the most lucrative, it has annual revenues as high as £1.8 billion. This figure is the fourth highest of any sports league in the world. Only the NFL, MLB, and NBA can boast higher revenues. Its contribution to the British economy is in billions. The league, its clubs and players paid £3.3bn in tax during the 2016/17 season, a 50 per cent increase on the last calculation in 2013/14, according to a report by EY. The tax specialist also reported that English football's topflight supports close to 100,000 jobs and contributes £7.6bn to the United Kingdom's economy.

The league's global appeal is next to nothing. In the 80's there were only a few foreign players. In 1992 there were only 11 non-English or Irish players, but now there are

enough players from abroad to form 22 teams. The success of the Premier League is good not just for football but also for the British economy.

It's not only football that has attained this level of economic advancement; other sports are also not left out. It should also be noted that it's not only in England that sport has attained such an unprecedented level of development, but also the rest of Europe alongside and the Americas. The implication of this is that sports have been professionalised and consequently provides employment to millions of youths and other professional bodies such as coaches, nutritionist, physiotherapist, sports medicine practitioners, referees among others in Europe and America.

But this is not the case in Nigeria where sport is regarded as recreational event, hence not given the desired attention for it to grow. It has, therefore remained in amateur stage.

In those climes where sport has been professionalised, the private sector plays a major role with government's role limited to providing enabling environment for it to thrive. But the reverse is the case in Nigeria, as government overbearing influence has done more harm than good having hindered the private sector from playing its expected role to the fullest.

Sentor John Enoch, on Friday, hosted Nigeria's contingent that participated at the Malta Gymstars International Championship in Malta in Abuja.

According to a statement by the Media Aide to the Minister, Kola Daniels, the team of young gymnasts represented Nigeria in the 15 nation championship in Cottonera, Malta.

He said the Nigerian TIG team of seven young gymnasts, led by Coach Tony Asuquo, clinched 23 medals in total.

He said the minister congratulated the contingent on the behalf of His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, for making Nigeria proud.

The statement said Enoch thanked the TIG Gymnastics club for promoting gymnastics in Nigeria, urging them to keep staying true to their mission.

"On behalf of His Excellency, the President of Nigeria, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, I congratulate you all for the enormous feat. I regard this as a tremendous effort.

"Your private efforts have benefited our country a great deal. It's amazing what you all have done in faraway Malta.

"I am here to encourage the efforts you're making as youngsters. We will ensure that no sports suffers neglect, as our attention will spread across all sports, with special attention for the grassroots.

"While education is important, we also want to help budding stars grow their talents and fulfil their potential," he said.

Enoh added: "We want kids to grow up knowing that, even as a gymnasts, they can get to the world stage and do great things.

"As minister of sports, I will remain very interested and committed to the growth of our youngsters," he said.



Waldrum disagrees with Nigeria's position

THE Super Falcons achieved a historic feat by reaching the knockout round of the World Cup for only the third time in their history.

Their journey ended in a nail-biting penalty shootout against eventual finalists England.

Remarkably, Nigeria remained unbeaten in regulation time throughout the tournament, securing notable draws against Canada, Ireland, and England.

Their crowning moment came in a thrilling encounter against co-hosts Australia, where they triumphed 3-2 in a match that will be remembered for years to come.

FIFA, evidently impressed by Nigeria's performance, maintained their status as the number one team on the African continent.

However, Coach Waldrum, who also holds the position of head coach for Pitt women's soccer, expressed his dissatisfaction with this ranking.

He took to Twitter to voice his concerns, stating, "Must say I am a little surprised at this to say the least...not in a positive way!"

Randy Waldrum, renowned for his steadfast support of his team, made a name for himself on the global stage as the manager of Nigeria during the Women's World Cup this summer.

Prior to the event, he had engaged in a public dispute with the Nigeria Football Federation, highlighting issues such as delayed payments and subpar training conditions for his team.

Despite these off-field challenges, Waldrum's unwavering support created a

strong bond of trust within the Super Falcons squad, while his tactical prowess inspired the team to perform at their best in front of millions of fans.

His willingness to confront the Nigeria Football Federation for improved working conditions made it clear that he would not shy away from challenging FIFA and their global rankings.

Meanwhile, the Super Falcons have moved eight places to become 32nd in the world and first in Africa in the latest FIFA Women's ranking released on Friday.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Super Falcons previously ranked 40th in the rankings released in June before the World Cup.

The Super Falcons had the second highest point increase of 94.14 to move from 1554.94 to 1649.08.

They were only second behind Morocco, who had a point increase of 104.22 to move from 1334.08 to 1438.3 and are ranked 58th in the world.

Nigeria had a good campaign at the 2023 Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, finishing second in the group without losing a game.

That was before eventually bowing out to the Lionesses of England after a 4-2 loss on penalties in the round of 16.

Sweden, which earned a third-place finish at the World Cup, is now ranked number one in the world.

Similarly, World Cup winners Spain are now ranked second in the world, with the USA, England, and France completing the top 5 in the latest rankings.

Also, the semi-final opponent of Nigeria Women's Football



The American gaffer has questioned the latest FIFA women's world rankings as concerned the former African champions

League champions Delta Queens has been confirmed, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The semi-final place of Delta Queens was confirmed after their opening group game following the draw game between USFA of Burkina Faso and Sam Nelly of Benin Republic.

The Nigerian side confirmed their superiority in the group with a comfortable 2-0 victory over Sam Nelly on Friday and topped the group by 6 points.

The semi-final fixture of the competition was announced on Friday and Delta Queens will face Atletico FC of Ivory

Coast in the second semi-final.

The first semi-final will see Ampem Darkoa of Ghana clashing with Sam Nelly and both games are scheduled for Monday.

In another Champions League news, Remo Stars head coach, Daniel Ogunmodede has expressed his confidence in a victory against Medema SC, in the second leg encounter of the CAF Champions League preliminary round, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The Sky Blue Star lost narrowly to the Ghana

Premier League champions last week in the first leg.

Despite the defeat, the Nigerian club showed a glimpse of their quality in that encounter.

While speaking with Remo Stars Media, ahead of the important clash on Sunday, Ogunmodede revealed they will do everything within their power to qualify.

"We are working towards qualifying for the next round of the competition," said Ogunmodede.

"We'll do everything humanly possible to be in the next round of the CAF

Champions League."

Remo Stars are required to score 2 unreplied goals to ensure qualification for the second round of the Champions League game will be played on Sunday, at the Remo Stars stadium, Ikenne.

Meanwhile, the federal government has appointed former Super Eagles captain, John Mikel Obi, as Youth Ambassador.

This was confirmed on Friday, at an event held at the National Stadium, Lagos, which was attended by the Minister of Youth and Sports Development, Sunday Dare.

According to the Special Adviser to Dare on Media, John Joshua-Akanji, Mikel Obi was described by the Minister as a "role model whose lasting legacies in football development has continued to have a positive impact on youths in the country."

Mikel Obi was assured of Federal Government support whenever he chooses to invest in the country.

"Time will not permit me to say much about Mikel's success as a footballer. He is our legend and a role model who has continued to impact the lives of youth positively.

"It is my pleasure to appoint you as Nigeria Youth Ambassador. It's a new portfolio and your role as youth ambassador will be made known to Nigerians," Dare said.

In his response, Mikel Obi said: "I feel highly honoured to be appointed as Youth Ambassador of this country, it is a great feeling.

"I am happy with this partnership and I promise to do my best to encourage and inspire the youths towards national development, not just in football but in other sports like Basketball, Boxing among others."

SFF threatens to sue Hermoso over kiss 'lies'

THE Spanish football federation has threatened to sue Jenni Hermoso, the player at the centre of a row over its president's conduct, for lying and defamation.

It has also threatened to sue the 79 women's football players who signed a letter in which they refused to play for their country as long as Luis Rubiales remained in his post.

In a statement, the federation said it would take the "necessary legal action" and told the players that "playing for the national team is an obligation on any member of the federation called upon to do so".

The move is the latest chapter in a fast-moving story after Rubiales kissed Hermoso after their World Cup victory a week ago, a kiss Hermoso said was not consensual and made her feel "vulnerable and the victim of an aggression".

'I felt the victim of aggression, a sexist act' - Jenni Hermoso's statement in full

"At no time did I consent to the kiss," Hermoso said in a statement. "I won't tolerate having my word doubted,

much less have people inventing things that I didn't say."

Shortly after the incident, the federation issued a statement in which Hermoso purportedly said the kiss was consensual and that she and Rubiales enjoyed a close relationship.

A report by the Madrid-based sports website Relevo said the federation had coerced her into making the statement. The federation denied this to the Associated Press.

In a written statement, Hermoso said: "I don't want to interfere in the legal process but I feel obliged to report that the words used by Sr Luis Rubiales to explain what happened are categorically untrue and are part of the manipulative culture that he himself has created. I have not been respected."

The federation reproduced a series of still photographs of the incident that it claimed showed that Hermoso lifted Rubiales off his feet and was not only willing but an instigator of the kiss.

No topic is too small or too big for us to cover as we deliver



'Ego above dignity': Luis Rubiales' defiance over kiss shocks Spain

a weekly roundup of the wonderful world of women's football

Both Rubiales' rambling speech on Friday, in which he said he was a victim of a witch-hunt and "fake feminism", and the federation's defence of him are increasingly seen as a battle that goes far beyond football, in a struggle between an entrenched, entitled male hierarchy and a more modern, feminist Spain.

In an interview with El País,

Miquel Iceta, the sports and culture minister, said: "I regret that for Spain, a country admired around the world as a champion of rights and freedoms, this episode has taken us back to an image of machista Spain in which women's rights are not respected. It's a backward step."

Iceta added that as the federation had stood by Rubiales, the government

would now take the necessary measures to remove him from his post.

Yolanda Díaz, Spain's acting vice-president, said: "Señor Rubiales doesn't understand what he's done. He's not up to the job. He should resign and save us the embarrassment. The days of impunity for macho behaviour are over."

Hermoso and her colleagues have received support from several male players, among them the Real Betis striker Borja Iglesias, who has also refused to play for Spain under the federation's current leadership. Sergi Roberto, the Barcelona captain, tweeted: "We're all with you @jennihermoso."

The England women's football team, who lost to Spain in the World Cup final, also offered their support with a message on social media that read: "The behaviour of those who think they are invincible must not be tolerated and people shouldn't need convincing to take action against any form of harassment. We all stand with you, @jennihermoso and all players of the Spanish team."