

allays fear regarding First Lady's largess



News:

President Tinubu approves new CBN Governor

Sports:

Sanco fights save Man-Utd Career

Business:

AGF to drive reforms in government's financial management

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Fed Govt. to review IPPIS, GIFMIS others

Fertilizer scarcity: Farmers resort to human urine

The high cost of fertilizer which is fast going beyond the reach of an average farmer in Nigeria has forced the users to look for cheaper and environment friendly alternative source of growing their farm produce or risk being cut out of the farming business. Pages 10, 31



PLASU Senate okays PGDs, Masters, Doctorate programmes

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Gains of Nigeria's participation in G20 summit

NIGERIA'S recent participation in the G20 meeting as a guest is viewed as a positive development.

FOR a country battling to surmount its economic challenges, the presence of President Bola Tinubu at the meeting did not only create investment opportunities for the nation, but is a recognition of the country's growing influence on the global stage.

SINCE assuming office on May 29, President Tinubu has transversed many countries to build diplomatic ties, woo investors and place the country's rating in a positive light.

THEREFORE attending the G20 Summit on Financial Markets and World Economy, held from Saturday 9 - Sunday 10 September 2023 with the theme: "One Earth, One Family, One Future" in New Delhi, India was not only apt but a remarkable feat.

AT the forum, among issues tabled at the front burner were food security, climate and energy, development, health, and digitisation. Russia's aggression against Ukraine with many nations emphasising the importance of observing the United Nations Charter and achieving a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, is one vital issue also at the front burner.

FORTUNATELY, a key area of discussion which Nigeria stands to benefit immensely from is the affirmation by the G20 to respond to the aggressions increasing and adversely impacting on the world economy.

AS the giant of Africa, Nigeria's alliance with the G20 nations had clearly created a good forum for President Tinubu to project the nation's economic potentials and create new partnerships.

WITH a powerful economic team beside him, the high level-economic ties and alliances were already seen to be yielding results with over \$14bn investments attracted ahead of the summit commencement day, which is highly commendable.

APPARENTLY, one of the major benefits is that the African Union, (AU), has been admitted into the G20. Secondly, the summit will promote Nigeria's currency internationally. Likewise, the key note addresses delivered by President Tinubu at both the Nigeria-India Presidential Roundtable and the Nigeria-India Business Conference presented an opportunity for the President to highlight Nigeria's attractiveness as an economic hub and investment destination in line with the vision of Tinubu's 'Renewed Hope' agenda.

TINUBU'S bilateral meetings with a cross-section of world leaders from different continents was a plus to diplomatic development and the alliance was able to strengthen bilateral economic trade, exploration of investment opportunities and partnership for the growth of the nation.

DESPITE all the global ties, Nigeria should thread with caution and strive for the benefits of promoting trade at the regional level as an alternative to the increasing dollarisation of its vulnerable economy.

WE suggest that if there is no Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), there cannot be capital growth to strengthen the naira against other currencies like the U.S dollars or the Pound Sterling.

PRESIDENT Tinubu is on the right track. After the G20 meeting, he equally proceeded to the UAE where he was able to address the pending diplomatic row between Nigeria and Dubai, leading to the lifting of a travel ban against Nigerians to the country, and the resumption of Emirates air-flight activities to the country.

AS he continues to attract global capital and Foreign Direct Investments, these are all pluses for the nation, and more of such laudable bilateral engagements, and partnerships in the offing show that there is hope for Nigeria.

Fed Govt. to review IPPIS, GIFMIS others

The Federal Government has decided to review financial management policies like the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) and Government Integrated Financial Management System GIFMIS among others.

The Federal Government also resolved to provide timely and consistent flow of funds to the Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) as well as the three levels of government (federal, state, and local) in order to prevent any hindrance to development efforts.

These disclosures were made by the Accountant General of the Federation (AGF) Dr. Oluwatoyin Madein, in a statement issued in Abuja on Friday and signed by Mr. Bawa Mokwa, Director Press in the OAGF.

Speaking of the planned financial management reforms, the AGF said she "will take necessary steps to permanently resolve observed and potential threats to the efficient and continuous implementation of all the financial management reforms initiative of the Federal Government.

Madein said since she assumed office as the AGF, she "has undertaken in-depth review of the financial reforms and will leverage the outcome of the review to inject new ideas and strategies into the projects so that the gains so far recorded will be sustained.

Recently, the OAGF had meticulous engagements with IPPIS Service providers. I can assure you that there has been great improvement in the operations of the payment platform. The review of other financial management policies is underway.



Tinubu

"The objective is to give the necessary revitalization to these policies to make them function optimally," she explained.

Regarding the release of funds to MDAs and other tiers of government, previous administrations were known for denying MDAs funds, claiming that there were no sufficient funds available.

The current administration under Bola Ahmed Tinubu aims to rectify this situation by ensuring that funds are released promptly and continuously, thereby preventing any delays or obstacles in the development projects and initiatives of the MDAs and government entities.

According to Dr. Madein, "the Federal Government has said it will ensure prompt and continuous release of funds to the Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and the three tiers of government so that development effort will not be hampered."

To show good faith on the part of the federal government, the AGF disclosed that the Office of the Accountant General of the

Federation (OAGF) "will sustain the practice of publishing the details of the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) revenue distribution to the three tiers of government".

She noted that "publication of the revenue distribution will keep Nigerians abreast with the revenue generation and distribution effort of the Federal Government and also help them balance government performance with revenue inflows at all levels.

According to her, "a government can only thrive if the citizens are carried along in the management of public funds. Nigerians need to be aware of the inflows and expenditures. With this, they can compare revenue collected with the developments on grounds to ascertain whether the government is performing or not".

She revealed that "the 2022 revenue distribution figures were ready for publication, adding that this will be followed by the publication of the details of the revenue distribution so far made in 2023".

Madein explained that "the seeming delay in publishing the 2022 figures was due to a number of factors including the overriding determination to institute appropriate and permanent mechanisms that will guarantee continuous publication of the revenue distribution".

The AGF equally acknowledged and "appreciated the high level of interest shown by Nigerians in the revenue generation and distribution effort of the Government, assured that effort is in top gear to ensure that the revenue distribution figures are published monthly".

On revenue generation, the AGF was happy that "there has been a remarkable increase in government revenue" and expressed optimism that the trend will be sustained.

PLASU Senate okays PGDs, Masters, Doctorate programmes

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE Senate authority of Plateau State University, Boko, the nucleus of University Academic Policy of the University, has reaffirmed its readiness for the commencement of Postgraduate Diplomas, Masters and Doctorate degree programmes for 2023/2024 academic session.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the University's Public Relations Officer (PRO), John K. Agam, and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently.

Chairman of the Senate and Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Benerd Malau Matur, disclosed this during the 83rd regular meeting of the senate which took place at the Senate Chamber of the University recently.

The statement stated that the Senate also deliberated on wide ranging issues amongst which are the new academic session and resumption, the upcoming accreditation exercise, resource verification of new programmes and the implementation of the

newly introduced CCMAS approved by the National Universities Commission.

It also disclosed that the Vice Chancellor outlined the accreditation visits by various panels of the National Universities Commission which would begin in October and end in November 2023. He said saying, "we want to use this opportunity to thank Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, for approving the release of #365 million for the exercise.

"Our special focus will be on programmes in the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences. And I want to appeal to you the Deans and Heads of various departments to be realistic and timely in presenting their accreditation needs of these programmes", Professor Matur appealed.


He, however, used the occasion to appreciate staff of the university for their patience and commitment to duties despite the delay in payment of outstanding salaries. "Government is doing everything possible to offset your salaries". He announced that the Merit list for admission of students of the university will be released soon.

"In order to bequeath a conducive learning environment for


both students and staff, furniture refurbishment and renovation of hostels was ongoing and the new fees approved by the Council will come into effect from the new academic session. The university is pursuing a higher admission quota from the National Universities Commission as new faculties come into effect", he added.

He informed them that "The clean energy policy of the university has come into effect with the provision of solar plants to power water supply to some facilities in the university while the mega solar farm programme will commence with 20 kva stations and be followed by bigger ones to drive internet connectivity through an upgrade from the existing router to fibre optics network", he highlighted.

Meanwhile, the VC has promised to operate an open door policy and disclosed that the introduction of the Vice Chancellor's Award for the best research publishing staff would soon kick - start. He promised to institute faculty research grants as a stimulus for generating interest in research and to also attract best graduating students for employment and mentorship.



With
**Katdapba
Y. Gobum**
On Sunday



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"It is little wonder how prices of commodities in our markets are what they are today. Traveling from one point to another is tasking and frustrating, as everything is tied to the fuel scarcity. And as stated above, people and communities can determine the prices of goods and services and not the market forces that should enable us get those things done. To say the least, that can be frustrating."

IF you are a Nigerian and living, you must be aware of what the country is going through. Traveling in almost parts of the country is a major problem as a result of the persistent fuel scarcity.

Nothing can be more traumatic than for a country that prides itself as a major oil producer to face this horrible experience on the streets. Many Nigerians have wondered how we got to this stage; so long as no one is willing to offer any explanation to us.

There may be no state of the federation that long queues are not being experienced or rather, have become the order of the day. Motorists virtually sleep at fuel stations so that they can afford to procure the commodity that is if it is available for those who can afford to.

Those that are not lucky return home despondent and or are forced to buy from roadside vendors at very exorbitant rates. Some are forced to go to roadside fuel stations that are not sure of what they sell. So, either way, we are all at risk.

If you get the product in the last two places, you must be grateful to God if you are not buying adulterated fuel. Many car owners have stories to relate to their experiences in the last few weeks. Some motorists, as soon as they leave the fuel station, their vehicles begin to develop problems and have had to spend fortunes before they fix them.

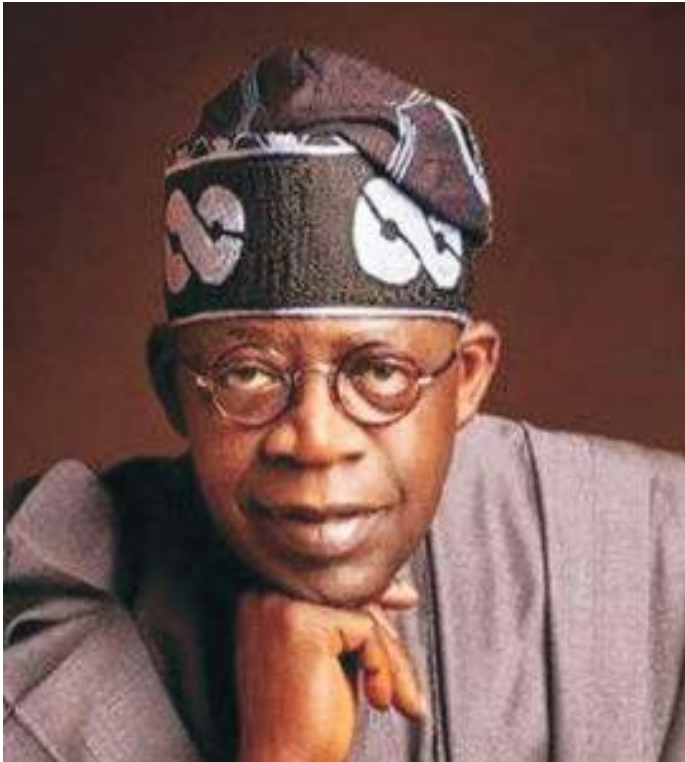
But the availability of the product should not be the problem. The major concern has always been the lack of money to buy it. The economic circumstance is telling on families, how much more of spending huge sums of money to purchase Premium Motor Spirit; however at their risk as stated above. But for how long will the country continue with this? Something has to give way, so that we can save ourselves.

Few fuel stations are operating at full capacity that sells at the regulated price. Every marketer has set sight on how much profit they would make from the sales of the product.

Nigerians are aware that the price of the product has not been increased nor is the government contemplating any change in the price regime. That being said, I am, like many are thinking, the rate of sabotage ranks to high heavens. The questions to ask are: Could the government not act even in the face of the difficulties Nigerians are going through? If it is sabotage as it is being alleged, couldn't a mechanism be activated so that filling stations across the country be free of the long queues?

Nigeria appears to be a country

Do leaders care if they suffer?



Tinubu

where the absurd is daily permitted to be witnessed. Marketers are always at liberty to fix the prices of any commodity without the thought that it will affect others in the process. And once it is fixed, it is always difficult to bring it down; knowing that what is experienced on that account is harrowing.

The case of the premium motor spirit is a typical example. Today, several fuel stations are selling a liter at 300 naira or slightly less. How annoying could that be? And since no one is saying anything about it, it has continued unabated; and affecting virtually almost all Nigerians.

In Jos, a few days ago, some officials of the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) were seen going around on a monitoring exercise. It is not clear if they are always out on the exercise. But, while their actions may be appreciated, I am tempted to think that the marketers are always steps ahead of the department. That is why it should be taken that sabotage may not be ruled out in what is happening in the industry.

The NCSDC in Plateau has gone ahead to make arrest of young men, whose stock in trade is to stand at street corners and sell the product. How they get the product in large quantity is questionable. Fuel stations which get involved and sell to them have questions to answer.

They have mapped out strategies to circumvent the

department work in sanitizing the industry to the point that whatever is being done; the ordinary man is affected the most. The brunt of the hardships is transferred from up to the ordinary man of the street. It goes on like this in several other sectors; perhaps that is the reason why a lot of things which work in other climes don't function the way they should here.

On account of our perceived passiveness, everything, whether good or bad; is allowed to go on here. It is high time; we thought how some of these things can be corrected, the better for all of us. If we continue this way, it is likely that we can wake up and find that nothing works for us again.

It is little wonder how prices of commodities in our markets are what they are today. Traveling from one point to another is tasking and frustrating, as everything is tied to the fuel scarcity. And as stated above, people and communities can determine the prices of goods and services and not the market forces that should enable us get those things done. To say the least, that can be frustrating.

Nigerians always enjoy feeding on all situations maximally. They seem not to be bothered if suffering becomes a middle name for all of us. And it does appear that those in government are fully aware that Nigerians are docile; always accepting anything happening to them, without a modicum of strength to question such things.

This sad commentary leaves us

with a lot to chew given this circumstance. Indeed it has a telling tendency to keep Nigerians weakened not to complain about the treatment meted on them. The effect is that, and it appears that whatever happens, Nigerians are persuaded to remain not bothered about certain developments going on in the country.

The painful aspect of the scarcity is that it came to many with damages to several vehicles. Many recall that the whole saga started with the importation of adulterated fuel; the source we are not aware of; and no one is willing to offer any understandable explanation for that.

Several millions of adulterated fuel was shipped into Nigeria unaware to the authorities and before we knew what has hit us, several trailer-load of the commodity found its way into some states. Since then, long fuel queues returned; this time with ferocious consistency and intensity.

Trust Nigerian fuel marketers, it was as if they were waiting for the development; they appear to know when some of these misfortunes will take place. They cashed in on it, selling the commodity to gullible Nigerians and made stupendous profit from the naivety of their countrymen and women.

Since the adulterated fuel entered the Nigerian market, some of the stations where it is dispensed have been destroyed in some states occasioned by the rowdy nature of the buyers, which resulted in fire outbreak. For many motorists, they have had their vehicles destroyed after they bought and used the commodity.

What are witnessed daily are fuel stations that have petroleum products but are kept as if nothing is available. They are waiting for an announcement for the increase in the price of the product. Secondly, they are awaiting the order from their 'union' on how the product can be exhausted at one station before they turn to another.

In some states, motorists queue for days believing that they will be given the product; and not knowing that the stations don't have it. Always after a long wait on the queue, they are appealed to go home and return the next day. Most businesses have continued to suffer as many do not make any transaction for days.

Transportation fees have continued to increase on a daily basis and pains are inflicted on several Nigerians who depend on the availability of the product for their activities.

There are stations which have remained without petroleum products for over a year, however, in the last few days they are back in business. They are back and customers are falling heels over each other buying the product at 300 hundred naira per liter. They have reason to return to business: There is money to be made if the product is sold there.

They are smiling to their banks having made so much from the sweat of Nigerians. And they even want more if left alone. However hard things turn out to be, we have to think of a way out of the situation. We must go in search of a solution which can save Nigerians from experiencing more hardships.

The capacity to change things still lies in us. I believe strongly that the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation may not have done well. We are given daily figures of what has been sent into the Nigerian market, yet, on a daily basis, they queues have remained as they started. If as they tell us, several millions of gallons have been released into the Nigerian market on a daily basis, what we expect is that by now, no queue would have been expected in any station.

This is why many suspect that sabotage is highly involved, if not, pray say what could be responsible for the development? Nigerians have heard and read in the media explanations concerning the scarcity that do not water. The explanations give us cause not to trust government about national assets that save us in our hour of need.

In the days that are ahead of us as a people, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation must have to wake up to do more. Those who monitor how the product is distributed (Department of Petroleum Resources) have a greater responsibility to ensure that the right things are done. They must monitor and punish erring fuel stations that hoard and sell at exorbitant price regimes not regulated by government.

Apart from the NNPC taking a stand, the government has a responsibility to act and save us from this embarrassment. Those who are presently profiting from the development are certainly Nigerians who desire that they gain while their country men and women suffer untold hardships.



NEWS

WICE holds workshop on writing skills

By POLYCARP ISHAYA, Pankshin.

Trading places

GOD'S plan is for parents to take care of their children, provide for them, protect, love and care for them. However, in man's quest for numerical strength, man has bitten more than he can chew.

For a typical African man, it is a pride to have a large family. In the past, one of the reasons for a big family was so that one could have so many hands on the farm. But today most parents would tell you 'so that I will have many people taking care of me when they growup.' They say it without batting an eye.

During my days in the university, it was very common to see a young girl from a humble background carrying the weight of her family. In most of the cases I came across, they were the breadwinners of their families. They provided for their families, paid the school fees of their younger ones and even elder brothers.

One case that still stands out is that of a lady who was forced into marriage at twelve to a rich farmer in a remote village at Shendam, just because her father needed her bride price. She had the sense to run off before she was deflowered by her grandfather husband. Somehow she found her footing through the help of an uncle in Mangu and she enrolled in secondary school.

By the time we became close, she was not only the breadwinner of her family but also the authority. We were then in the university. The weight of the responsibility on her shoulders made her sexually immoral. Every move she made was geared towards getting the attention of men and sleeping with them for money. Going on like that, she had countless boyfriends with whom she was intimate just so she could cater for her family.

This lady was staying in a one-room self-contained apartment, but you should see how many dependants used to come for holiday. Shamelessly, her parents, including her father who sold her off to rich farmer, were always very demanding. She used what she had to provide for her family at the expense of her reputation, notwithstanding that a good name is better than rubies (Bible).

Another scenario is that of a father whose daughter was schooling in

Kaduna and living big due to the heavyweights she was going out with. Every time the father needed luxury items like designer perfumes or money, he called his Kaduna daughter who never failed her daddy.

At this point, the father had stopped giving her financial support. She had become an authority over her life and came and went as she wanted. She had a nice apartment in the heart of Kaduna. And she dressed expensively at all times complete with gold earrings and necklace. In fact, she smelt like money and radiated money. But her lifestyle when one came close to her was nothing to write home about. It was prostitution with the high and mighty and involved strengthening herself with Babalawos, witch doctors.

As we were growing up, there was a mother who was fond of lamenting to her daughter, 'Your own na kobo fuck you dey do? Your friends dey buy car, build house even for their parents. You still dey eat my food. Na two heads dem get?'

The mother was frustrated that her daughter was not a blessing to her because she was not immoral and neither was she bringing in ill-gotten wealth to better their lives like so many girls her daughter's age were doing. Instead her daughter still depended on her for everything.

It is not only girls that carry the weight of responsibility. I was told of a man who hates to see people giving birth to more than two children especially if one is not capable of providing for the kids. He became like that because he started paying his younger siblings school fees since he was in medical school. His parents naturally transferred that responsibility to him. He was not allowed to enjoy his money like his mates. His parents made it look like it was his responsibility.

The cases are inexhaustible. Parents have forgotten that these are some of the reasons why their voices don't carry weight. And vices abound in our society because we have left our positions due to laziness or self-centredness.

The first step is for every parent to be responsible and assert our positions in our home. The future of our children is in our hands.



Dr Beatrice Oganah-Ikujenyo (Chairperson, WICE), Dr Omolola Ladele (Speaker at the symposium), Prof B.B. Lafaji-Okuneye (Provost of the College)

THE National Association of Women in Colleges of Education (WICE), North Central (Women at work enhancing qualitative teacher's education) held its central zonal workshop with the theme: "Equipping the 21st Century academia with research grant proposal writing skill". This was held at the Federal College of Education, Pankshin Auditorium Hall in Pankshin.

Delivering her welcome address, the chairperson of Women in Colleges of Education (WICE) Federal College of Education (FCE) Pankshin chapter, DR. (Mrs.) Peace Sorochi Longdet said it's an honour done to FCE Pankshin chapter by the zonal coordinator of WICE to host this year's 2023 workshop. She urged the participants at the workshop to pay more of their attention to the resource persons' paper presentations in order to achieve the goal for the workshop.

The Zonal Coordinator of WICE, North Central Nigeria, Dr. Caroline Igbo-chi in her address at the workshop sincerely appreciated the acting provost of the college, Dr. Christiana Fwenji Zumyil, the chairperson of WICE, FCE Pankshin chapter for accepting to host them.

She implored all the participants to participate actively in the workshop as a lot has been put into the planning. Igbo-chi also pointed out that the aim of the workshop is to equip the participants with skills in grant writing. And advised them to step it down in their various chapters.

She congratulates all WICE members who have bagged their doctorate degrees, appointed into higher offices and attained one feat or the other. And charged them to see the feat as a call to greater service.

The Chairman of the

occasion, Dr. Hember Emmanuel, who is a chief lecturer with the college, lauded the activities of the WICE, FCE Pankshin chapter. He said, he was proud of WICE in supporting the growth and development of education in their various colleges nationwide, and urged them to keep the flag flying for the betterment of the society.

Speaking separately during the opening ceremony of the workshop, the father and mother of the day Prof. David Wonang and Prof. Janet Diket Plang rejoiced with the North Central WICE on the occasion of her zonal workshop and considered it a rare privilege and honour to have been invited to serve as father and mother of the day.

According to them, the zonal workshop is one of those capacity building strategies that will keep the WICE members abreast academically, socially and morally to the current realities, therefore, it is indeed a deliberate effort towards equipping them for academic excellence, worthy character development and socialization in their colleges of education, families (basic unit of the society) and the society in general.

They therefore, enjoined all the members of WICE to be committed to this course in order to remain focused and up to date in their primary assignment of teaching, research and community service as well as in promoting peace, unity and positive social change in general, both in the college and at the homefront for a better society. They also urged all the participants at the workshop to take this opportunity to widen their

scope of knowledge in skills writing and also to be able to step it down in their various colleges.

The high point of the opening ceremony was the presentation of awards of excellence to four (4) deserving staff of Federal College of Education Pankshin by the college chapter of WICE. The recipients include Dr. Sunday Jacob, Dr. Ziporah Duguryil, a former national president of WICE and she is currently the Director TETFUND Centre for Excellence, FCE Pankshin.

Others include Dr. Peace Sorochi Longdet who is the current Chairperson of WICE, FCE Pankshin chapter, comrade (Prince) Hyacinth Henlong Tuamyil, a former chairman of Non-Academic Staff Union (WASU), FCE Pankshin from 2007-2015 and he is currently the chairman of Non-Academic Staff Union of Plateau State Council.

Another high point was the official induction of the Acting Provost of the college (FCE Pankshin), Dr. (Mrs.) Christiana Fwenji Zumyil as the patron of National Association of Women in Colleges of Education (WICE) by the national president represented by the national ex-officio, the zonal coordinator and the chairperson FCE Pankshin Chapter.

In her speech an acceptance speech the Acting Provost FCE Pankshin Dr. Christiana Zumyil said, she is full of gratitude to the WICE National body for finding her worthy to serve them in the capacity of a patron and she assured them of, her unflinching support, commitment and determination to take the association to a greater height.



SUNDAY POLITICS

Sen. Gyang applauds first Lady's motherly gesture

By DORCAS PANKYES

Senator I. D. Gyang has commended the motherly gesture and empathetic leadership demonstrated by the wife of the President and First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria, Her Excellency, Senator Remi Tinubu for a #500m financial support to victims of terror attacks in affected local governments of Plateau State.

Senator ID Gyang disclosed this in a statement signed by his Media ASSISTANT, Barr. Evelyn Pulle and issued to newsmen.

The Senator's commendation followed the personal visit of First Lady Tinubu to Jos on Tuesday, 12th September 2023 where she interacted with the victims and made the donation.

Senator Gyang observes that the visit was a demonstration of motherly care, concern, and love, saying it will help the displaced and surviving victims in re-starting new lives having lost homes, properties, and loved ones. Senator Gyang equally notified President Bola Tinubu that Plateau State is yet to benefit from the 500 housing



units initiated by the immediate past administration to resettlement communities affected by banditry and terrorism across the North East, North West, and North Central. Furthermore, a pledge of #10 billion by the immediate past administration of

President Buhari to affected communities in the state is yet to be redeemed. Senator Gyang believes that sincere, purposeful, and inclusive leadership that is just, fair, and humane, earns the confidence and loyalty of citizens thereby engendering peace and unity.

FORMER President, Dr Goodluck Jonathan, has called on leaders at all levels to take actions that will deepen citizens' trust and ensure more youth participation in governance.

Jonathan, who is also the Chairman of the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, made the call in a message to mark this year's International Day of Democracy and stressed that for democracy to endure, the promises of freedom, peace and justice must be felt and experienced by the population.

According to a statement signed by the Communications Officer of Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, Mr Wealth Ominabo, on Friday, Jonathan noted that democracy draws its strength from the people and flourishes when there is a great sense of ownership and inclusiveness among citizens in government.

He said this year's theme, 'Empowering the Next Generation', is a call to action on governments across nations and other stakeholders to accommodate more young people in governments and make more investments in the youth, who are critical stakeholders in our

Jonathan seeks youth inclusion in governance



Jonathan democracy.

The statement reads, "On behalf of the Goodluck Jonathan Foundation, I send my warm greetings to you as we celebrate this year's International Day of Democracy.

"Democracy has become a global culture of governance because of its inherent values and virtues of freedom, human rights, equity, justice and inclusiveness.

"Democracy is an important means towards achieving peace and national aspirations because it puts citizens at the centre of governance, entrusting them with the power to determine how their country is governed and who governs them.

"Participation of citizens in governance helps to build trust, ensure accountability, foster unity and promote good governance.

"Democracy draws its strength from the people. It flourishes when there is a great sense of ownership and inclusiveness of citizens in government.

"Democracy is experiencing a global decline. In Africa, it is challenged by shrinking civic space, weak institutions, election irregularities, poverty and unconstitutional change of government. We need to prioritise social security issues and access to justice and de-emphasise ethnic and divisive politics to ensure that democracy thrives.

"This year's theme, 'Empowering the Next Generation', is a call to action on governments across our nations and other stakeholders to accommodate more young people in governments and make more investments in the youth who are critical stakeholders in our democracy.

"The promises of freedom, peace and justice must be felt and experienced by the population for democracy to endure.

"On this occasion of International Democracy Day 2023, I call on stakeholders at all levels to take actions that will build trust and faith and guarantee the hope of citizens in their country."

Democracy must lead to development - Idris



Idris

THE Honourable Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Muhammed Idris, has called for collective unity amongst people to achieve the dividend of democracy. He said democracy is nothing if it doesn't bring progress, development, and unity among the people. The Minister stated this during a courtesy visit by the APC North-Central Zone on Thursday, September 14, 2023.

"It was for this reason that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is constantly promoting the dual concepts of unity and economic prosperity to our people; as the chief image maker of Nigeria, that is the message I am also disseminating." He said this, noting the need for Nigerians to conduct some soul-

searching. "National re-orientation is at the heart of the change and hope that we all desire for this country; each one of us has the responsibility to recover his steps and do the right thing," he said, calling on the party members to unite and engage more so that they can achieve great things for the country.

The Minister disclosed the need for the party to galvanize people towards a common understanding and shared vision for what our country should be, and this could be achieved through the party machinery across all levels.

In his speech, the National Vice Chairman of the APC North Central, Alh. Bawa Rijau, on behalf of the National Working Committee of the APC, and Zonal

Executives, congratulated the Minister on his well-deserved appointment.

He also thanked President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for appointing one of their own to this important position, noting this as a clear indication that the president appreciated the role Alhaji Idris played during the campaign.

The delegation assured the Minister of their support at all times, charging him to work with his colleagues in the cabinet to fast-track

development in the zone.

"The North Central zone did very well in the last election, and because of this, we expect you and your cabinet colleagues to work together to ensure that the interests of the North Central are protected," he stated.

Suleiman Haruna Deputy Director, Press, Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation. September 15, 2023

'Don't ignore us for being opposition party'

BAUCHI State Governor, Sen Bala Mohammed Abdulkadir, has called on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu not to ignore the State because it is governed by the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The Governor made the call recently while addressing the State Council of Traditional Rulers at the Government House on issues of insecurity in the state.

Bala Mohammed also lamented that the first railway route in the country, which started from Port Harcourt in Rivers State to Nguru in Borno State, passing through Bauchi State, had been abandoned by the Federal Government.

A visibly worried Bala Mohammed said, "Some of the infrastructures that will help us grow and develop economically have been left out."

"I want you, the Emirs, to talk to the new President about how we need the railways to be revived from Enugu to Maiduguri.

This is the first railway route, but it has been abandoned. Even our road from Kwangwa to Jos to Bauchi to Gombe is

bad," he added.

The Governor further said, "But we want to express our gratitude to His Excellency, the Vice President, Kashim Shettima, on behalf of His Excellency, the President, Bola Tinubu, who pledged to build the road between Bauchi and Gombe because the road is totally bad."

He assured me that we will make time out with you to go and thank Mr. President for that and to ask for other things."

According to him, "We cannot be left out because we are in the opposition; we have to be in the mainstream. Nothing works in Nigeria without Bauchi."

He boasted that, "We are controlling the balance of power, the balance of tradition and knowledge, and with people like you, I am calling on the Federal Government not to ignore us because we are in the PDP. We are a state, and we are ready to work with the Federal Government."

Speaking earlier, the Deputy Chairman of the Traditional Council in the

State, the Emir of Katagum, Alh. Umar Faruk II, who represented the Chairman, the Emir of Bauchi, Dr. Rilwanu Suleiman Adamu, said they were at the Government House to thank the Governor for his respect for the traditional institution in the state.

He stated, "Our purpose of coming here is to pay a courtesy visit to our brother the governor and to thank him for what he has been doing to us, the emirs, and the district heads."

According to him, "He is the first Governor who provided very good vehicles to our district heads purposely to help them in their work. Before now, you would not be surprised to see a district head asking for a lift because he doesn't have a car. In the process of trying to get a car, they may end up compromising their own positions."

The Emir added that, "In addition to that, he's in the process of renovating or building new houses for them. This is the first time that this is happening."

Umar Farouk concluded, saying, "And we, the Emirs, we have never had it this good. We thank him for looking at our remuneration and correcting what was being given to us in the past."



Mohammed

SUNDAY POLITICS

CSOs task Tinubu on sustainable growth

Some Civil Society Organisations in Nigeria have tasked President Bola Tinubu to formulate policies that would ensure inclusive sustainable economic growth in the country.

MR Adesina Oke, a member of the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) and spokesperson for the CSOs stated this at a news conference in Abuja.

Oke said that the conference tagged "the Masses and the Economic Challenges: The Way Forward", was informed by a joint communique issued at the end of a roundtable organised by the CSOs.

He said that the essence was to call on Nigerians, locally and in Diaspora, as well as well-meaning members of the international community, to lend their voices in charting an economic course for the new government because of the present economic situation.

"Nigeria has a huge debt burden. Currently, the bulk of its retained revenue is devoted to debt servicing.

"In 2021, about 90.0 per cent of Nigeria's retained revenue amounting to about N4.221 trillion out of N4.64 trillion was spent on servicing its debt.

"It is projected that this might rise further to as much as 101.5 per cent and 121 per cent of its revenue in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

"Public and publicly guaranteed debts are now more than 40 per cent of the GDP and could reach 46 per cent by the end of 2023," he said.

Oke advised the Federal Government to ensure that there were no new debts, especially foreign debts, except there were exceptional circumstances justifying them.

He also called for the restructuring of Nigeria's debt to ensure a longer period of amortisation in a bid to reduce the percentage of retained revenue that was committed to debt service.

Oke said to tackle poverty, the organised labour, private sector, professionals, women, and the public should be engaged in good faith for disclosure and negotiations with relevant information.

He said that government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) should take urgent steps toward introducing initiatives within their sectors to quickly tackle the increasing poverty across the country.

To tackle oil theft, Oke said there was need to hold accountable, public officers under whose watch industrial scale oil theft occurred in recent years as a strategy for reducing oil theft and possibly recouping lost revenue.

He said there was a need to introduce appropriate technology to ensure that all payments of Value Added Tax, especially at the retail end, were automatically swept into the



coffers of the government while reconciliations would come either monthly or quarterly.

Oke added that the tax base should be broadened without increasing the tax rate. Leakages should be blocked, and efforts made to bring in high net worth individuals into the tax net.

He said that the database of taxpayers should be harmonised and called for the removal of the power to grant tax expenditures from the Minister of Finance or the executive and only place a duty on the executive to document the recommendations among others with the approval of the legislature.

"Our applicable tax incentive frameworks should provide for relevant agencies to: carry out a cost-benefit analysis of the potential impact of incentives before granting them.

"Provide established annual milestones on tax expenditure implementation and conduct

periodic assessments, measurements and evaluation of tax expenditure milestones and impact on the economy among others.

"Annual budgets are accompanied by a tax expenditure statement that details the above analysis.

"Ensure mandatory use of a Treasury Single Account (TSA) for all Government owned enterprises' financial transactions," he said.

Oke called for the amendment of the Fiscal Responsibility Act to strengthen the Fiscal Responsibility Commission with administrative sanctions and enforcement powers.

He added that there was a need to amend the Public Procurement Act to provide for graduated penalties, well drafted and defined in accordance with best practices of legal drafting.

Oke also called for an increased productivity and local value addition leading to economic growth and increased exports to shore up the value of the naira.

He called on the President to constitute the Governing Council of the Board of National Health Insurance Authority to take policy steps to ensure that the mandatory health insurance scheme is activated.

Oke said there was a need to establish a Health Development Bank of Nigeria with a clear mandate of health infrastructure and equipment funding at single digit interest medium- and long-term funding rate.

Group commends first lady over girl, women education

THE Northern Women and Youth Empowerment Monitors (NWEYM) has commended the First Lady of Bauchi State, Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed, for her outstanding efforts in promoting girl-child and women education in the state.

The women said Mrs Mohammed has spearheaded several programmes aimed at improving the educational and economic status of women and girls in the state. This includes the provision of scholarships to indigent female students, and the training of women and girls in various vocational skills.

Mrs. Gloria Danladi, the Chairperson of NWEYM, praised the First Lady's efforts and described her as a "champion for gender equality and women's empowerment".

She urged other state governments and stakeholders to emulate the Bauchi State Government and support similar initiatives.

"Empowering women and girls in education and skill acquisition is crucial to achieving sustainable development in our communities, and we must

support and encourage leaders like Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed who are committed to this cause," Mrs. Danladi said.

She observed that Aisha Bala Mohammed has dedicated herself to improving the education of girls and women in the state and addressing the issues faced by young girls and women in Bauchi who are denied access to education due to cultural and societal norms.

The initiative, Mrs Danladi noted, aims to increase access to education for girls by advocating for policies and programs that support their education as Aisha recognizes the importance of education in empowering women and improving their lives, and she believes that every girl should have the opportunity to go to school.

"Aisha's legacy shall continue to inspire new generations of leaders who are committed to creating a better future for all Nigerians. Her story shall remind us that even in the face of adversity, one person can make a significant impact on their community and beyond.

"As we celebrate Aisha's accomplishments, let us also remember that there is still much work to be done. Women and girls continue to face challenges in many parts of Nigeria, and it is up to all of us to ensure that they have access to the resources they need to succeed. Together, we can build

a brighter future for all Nigerians," Mrs Danladi said.

NWEYM also called on the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to partner with the Bauchi State Government in sustaining these initiatives and ensuring their impact reaches every corner of the state.



First Lady of Bauchi State, Hajiya Aisha Bala Mohammed,

SUNDAY POLITICS

Former Deputy Governor joins APC ahead of polls

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

A former Deputy Governor of Kogi State, Arc Yomi Awoniyi, has officially joined the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) ahead of the November 11 governorship election in the state.

Awoniyi, who expressed his admiration for Governor Yahaya Bello's exemplary leadership, commitment to inclusivity, unity of purpose, and governance, was officially received into the APC at the party's national headquarters, in Abuja recently.

He served as Deputy Governor of Kogi State from 2011 to 2015 during Captain Idris Wada's administration.

The former PDP chieftain acknowledged the complexities and challenges of Kogi State politics and commended Governor Bello for exceeding expectations.

He said, "I served as the Deputy Governor of Kogi State between 2011 and 2015. I know the state very well, and I can tell you that the current governor has done exceptionally well in terms of leadership and good governance. His humility is unmatched, and his ability to unite the people is remarkable."

"These qualities are some of the reasons I decided to join the APC and offer my support to him and the incoming administration."

Governor Yahaya Bello,



Awoniyi

while welcoming Awoniyi, whom he described as a "big fish", said his decision to join the APC was significant.

He stressed that Awoniyi's move was a clear demonstration of the people's satisfaction with his achievements and their willingness to support his leadership for the state's success.

"I am pleased to welcome the former Deputy Governor of Kogi State, Arc Abayomi Awoniyi, into our party today. Awoniyi is a prominent figure who has just joined a significant movement. I am delighted with his decision to join our party, and I can assure you that the APC will do more for the people of our state," the governor stated.

The National Chairman of the party, Dr. Abdullahi

Ganduje, commended Awoniyi's decision to join the APC.

He highlighted the influx of defections from opposition parties to the APC in Kogi State, under Governor Yahaya Bello's leadership, as evidence of the governor's achievements and his ability to unite people for societal progress.

Ganduje assured Awoniyi and others who had joined or plan to join the APC that they would be given equal opportunities within the party.

As the governorship election in Kogi State approaches, there has been an influx of members of opposition parties to the ruling party.

Former senators, House of Representatives members, and party chairmen have joined the APC, en masse, in

THOUSANDS of supporters of the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress in Kogi State, Usman Ododo, trooped out recently to demonstrate their strength and rubbish the claim of control of Igalaland by those they described as ethnic jingoists and enemies of Kogi State.

The excited supporters held the highly successful One-Million-Man Road Walk at Ajaka, Igala Mela/Odolu Local Government of the state.

Leading the road walk, where hundreds of indigenes from the wards and Local Government declared their support for the Ododo/Oyibo ticket, were the Permanent Secretary, Ministry Of Local Government And Chieftaincy Affairs, Haiiya Habiba Jatto Rector; Kogi State Polytechnic, Lokoja, Dr. Salisu Ogbo Usman; and Igala Mela/Odolu Local Government Chairman, Hon. Onoja James omachonu (Kross), among other notable leaders.

While addressing the excited supporters of the APC, the Igala Mela/Odolu Local Government Chairman who doubles as convener IG/OF Critical Stakeholders, Omachonu, emphasised that

Massive supporters turn-out for APC candidate

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

"the only sellable candidate amongst several others jostling for the governorship seat of Kogi State is Alhaji Ododo Ahmed Usman."

He expressed confidence in the ability of Ododo and his Deputy, Joel Oyibo Salifu, to bring the much-anticipated consolidation on the gains of

his party's administration in Kogi State in the past 7 years.

He told the crowd that ethnic jingoists who were not interested in a united, peaceful and prosperous Kogi State were the enemies of the people and must be treated as such. He added that the desperate "agendaists are selfishly clothed."



Bello

Court nullifies KDSG order banishing deposed monarch

From John FWAH Kaduna

KADUNA High Court recently nullified a Kaduna State government restriction of movement order placed on the deposed paramount ruler of Piriga Chiefdom, Lere Local Government of the state, His Royal Highness, Chief Jonathan Parguwa Zamuna.

Delivering judgment on the case of breach of Fundamental Rights, Honourable Justice Nasiru U. Sadiq said the banishing order runs contrary to section 41, subsection 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) which 'states that every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen of Nigeria shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereby or exit therefrom'.

A Kaduna High Court sitting in Kafanchan, had three weeks ago, nullified a similar restriction of movement order placed on the deposed traditional ruler of Arak Chiefdom in Sanga Council area, His Royal Highness, retired Brigadier General Iliya Yammah.

The court also ordered Kaduna State Government to pay Chief Yammah, 5 million Naira damages for breach of fundamental rights.



Uba

Claimants fundamental right had been breached.

The Lead Counsel also stated further, the case the deposed Chief filed at the National Industrial Court, sitting in Kaduna, praying the court to void his deposition and reinstate him back to his throne because the action of the government in doing so was arbitrary and without regard to the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended).

"He had filed an action at the National Industrial Court sitting in Kaduna, challenging the legality of his deposition".

"Upon his deposition, he was more or less banished to his house. Initially, the government wanted to banish him to an unknown house in Unguwan Rimi, Kaduna, which he refused.

The government subsequently took him to his own house in Kaduna South and placed him literally under house arrest, by restricting his freedom of movement, with security stationed in front of his house".

He continued; "While under house arrest, his younger brother took ill and was admitted in a hospital in Abuja. The government denied him permission to visit him and he later died in July, still, he was denied permission to see his dead body. yet, his request to attend his burial was denied and until after the burial, he received a letter from the government telling him that he can now attend the burial already done.

"After the death of his brother, his nephew also died in Sanga area, yet, he could not attend the burial", he explained.

However, the Defendants were not in court for their response, as they did not appear in court throughout while the case was heard, and when judgment was delivered.

Kogi guber : SDP commended for conduct at rallies

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

AS political parties struggle to win the forthcoming Kogi State governorship election, stakeholders and supporters of Social Democratic Party, SDP, have been commended for their peaceful conduct in the ongoing rallies across the state.

Dan Adejoh, President and Chief Executive Officer of Center for Peace Democracy and Development, CPDD, gave the commendation while fielding questions from journalists in Lokoja on the impact of the ongoing consultation with the people at the wards by Alhaji Muritala Yakubu Ajaka.

Adejoh, who is also the producer of Kogi Decision 2023", a weekly programme aired on Grace Fm 95.5, said he was impressed with the supporters of Muri Ajaka, for their doggedness and free will support for the SDP standard bearer.

He said from the massive turnout of people at the tour of wards across the state, mainly, the Eastern Zone of the state, it could easily only be described as "organic and infectious."

He noted that the kind of support Alhaji Muri Muritala Ajaka is getting from the

people on "pro-bono" can only be a sign of the acceptance of God in the movement to liberate and put the state in its rightful position in the comity of states.

He said he has to embark on the radio talk show to showcase the character and capacity of Muritala Ajaka to the people of the state in order for the people to develop an informed decision to vote massively for SDP in the November 11, 2023 election.

He assured the people of his commitment to using the radio programme and other channels to draw and position Alhaji Muri in the hearts of the electorate, both at home and in the diaspora throughout the electioneering period.

He called on all lovers of Kogi State and candidates of other political parties from Kogi East to join hands with Alhaji Muri and to drop their mundane sentiments in order to collectively rescue the state from total collapse.

According to Adejoh, "I'm highly elated from what I'm seeing so far. From my Omala Local Government Area, to

Olamaboro, Ibaji, Dekina, Idah; Bassa, Ankpa Ofu, Igalamela and indeed all the local government areas across the state, the story is the same.

"It is indeed awesome for people to travel all the way from Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Port Harcourt, other major cities across Nigeria, while some from abroad to their villages just to lend their support for Alhaji Muritala Yakubu Ajaka. This is a demonstration of love and acceptance of a man known for the upliftment of his people and the development of the state.

"I must commend the candidate, his handlers and supporters for their orderliness and peaceful conduct despite seeming provocations. They held their cool, making the tour a huge success as SDP has become a reference point in campaign strategies".

While appealing to the people to remain law abiding throughout the electioneering period, he assured them of Alhaji Muri's commitment to their cause even up to the Lugard House by the grace of God.

SUNDAY PEOPLE

SENATOR BOLA TINUBU PRESENTS N500 MILLION TO IDPs

Nigeria's First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Bola Tinubu on Tuesday visited Jos, the state capital to present the sum of N500 million to victims of the attacks in Plateau State at Government House, Rayfield, Jos



First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Bola Tinubu presenting cheque of N500 million to victims of the attack in the state to Governor Caleb Mutfwang



His Majesty, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CFR, Gbong Gwom Jos, State Chief Judge, Justice David Mang and the SGS, Arc Samuel Nanchang Jatau



From left are, former military governor, Rear Admiral S. B. Atukum, former Dep. Gov., Prof. Sonni Gwanle Tyoden, Amb. Bagudu Hirse and Sen. Diket Plang



Cross section of members of PLHA



Nigeria's First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Bola Tinubu (right) putting heads together with Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Mutfwang and First Lady of the State, Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang



Sen. Prof. Nora Ladi Dadu'ut, Hon. Mrs. Esther Simi Dusu and others



Cross section of Plateau State Security Council



Sen. Oluremi Bola Tinubu, Governor Mutfwang, Barr. Mrs. Helen Mutfwang in a group photograph with beneficiaries during the presentation

Photos: JOHN LAR

PRESIDED by the Speaker Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule, last week's plenary proceedings of the Plateau State House of Assembly highlight was the call on the Senator representing Plateau North Senatorial District in the National Assembly, Dr. Simon Mwadkon to reintroduce the bill for the establishment of the North-Central Development Commission in the 10th Senate. The call was contained in a motion moved by the member representing Langtang North-Central constituency, who is also the Deputy Chief Whip, Hon. Nambol Rimvyet.

Interestingly, the North-Central geopolitical zone referred to here, comprises of Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, Plateau, Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Niger and Nasarawa States. In his submission to the motion, Hon. Rimvyet noted that the geopolitical zone has significant potentials for development but is faced with factors that impedes the development like inadequate infrastructure, banditry, kidnapping, unemployment and poverty among others.

The lawmaker recalled that the bill was presented at the floor of the House of Representatives during the 9th assembly but was denied its passage. He therefore, suggested its reintroduction while adding that if eventually passed into law, the bill will be of great advantage to the state. After due deliberations on its importance, the House unanimously adopted the motion. It however, called and requested that the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Senator George Akume who is also from the zone and the Plateau State Governor liaise with Governors from the zone to lobby the National Assembly and the President for the passage of the bill.

Also during plenary, another motion was moved by the member representing Langtang North-North constituency, Hon. Nannim Langyi calling on the Plateau State Government to urgently revive technical and vocational education in the state. Members in their various contributions frowned at the current situation of the Bukuru Technical College where they said is in a state of total decay and has turned to retirement ground for Teachers.

On his part, the Deputy Speaker Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop who is also the member representing Jos South constituency, regretted the unfortunate situation of the school. According to him, the disdainful condition of the college has pushed many youths into illegal mining while others have resorted to constituting as nuisance to society through their involvement in different societal ills.

For Speaker of the House Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule, reviving the center will go along way in addressing the issues of unemployment and youth restiveness in the state whereby making them self employed. He therefore, directed the House Committee on Science and Technology to intervene through an oversight visit and report back to the House. The visit was not only to Bukuru Technical College

but to all vocational centers in the state.

Yet in another motion, the member representing Jos North-North constituency, Hon. Adamu Aliyu has placed a call on the Plateau State Government to authorize the state Ministry of Health and other relevant agencies to check what he described as the alarming activities of quack health practitioners and unregistered medical facilities within the state.

Moving the motion, the member cited an example with the recent case of one Dr. Noah Kekere, the



On Plateau assembly's plenary proceedings



Aliyu

proprietor of Murna Clinic and Maternity, situated at Nasarawa Gwom in Jos, who allegedly removed the kidney of a woman, referred to as Mrs. Kehinde while reportedly conducting surgery on her sometimes ago.



Gwottson

Noah Kekere. Investigations further showed that the Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) Plateau State branch had in a statement confirmed that he is indeed a quack doctor. Meanwhile, the Plateau State

tenth assembly had during last Wednesday's plenary announced their first recess, which is to commence from September 14th to October 23rd, 2023. Wishing our lawmakers a fruitful recess period.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Fertilizer scarcity: Farmers resort to human urine

The high cost of fertilizer which is fast going beyond the reach of an average farmer in Nigeria has forced the users to look for cheaper and environment friendly alternative source of growing their farm produce or risk being cut out of the farming business. KENNETH DARENG, writes.

HUMAN Urine is evidently becoming an alternative solution towards complementing Nigerian government's strategic desire in ensuring adequate fertilizer to farmers for greater productivity in the country. For decades now, most of these farmers in particularly rural areas have continued to struggle by overcoming the unpalatable consequences of food insecurity in the nation. No doubt, the raising cost of fertilizer has continue to discourage some of these farmers whereas, only a few of them can successfully lay their hands on these farms input to guarantee a bumper harvest for the benefit of the citizenry. For instance, a market survey by the Nigeria standard reveals that a bag of commonly used NPK 20-10-10 fertilizer which a year ago went for between N7,000.00 and N8,000.00 is now sold at N30,000.00 per bag with other varieties going for between N15,000.00 and N25,000.00 respectively as against the previous price of less than N6,000.00, depending on the brand available in the market.

Mr Musa Maichibi, a farmer in Bassa LGA of Plateau State, expressed worry that farmers are experiencing the most difficult times in the nation's history whereby farmers apart from the fear of insecurity are being confronted by high cost of farming inputs such as hiring of tractor, pesticides, herbicide, fertilizer and costs of human labour, transportation and which when put together makes

farming a not too pleasant business at this crucial times.

Also sharing his opinion with SUNDAY STANDARD, Mallam Luka Barde, a dry season farmer in Dong, Jos North LGA, noted that; "If the cost of fertilizer does not go down, the next farming season may likely experience severe food shortage and even a further hike in prices of food stuff.

"In the olden days, our great grand parents never knew anything like chemical fertilizers, yet people lived healthy long life. I grew up farming with my parents with just cow feces and ashes and the crops produced quite well with natural taste. Unfortunately, the white men came with their so called civilization and destroyed our land. What we have today is devastation of both land and health of human beings due to the effects of chemicals in our

food." Barde added.

Another view was expressed by Haruna Garba, a resident of Narguta in Jos north who noted that; "With this latest development, Nigeria has now joined the league of nations that convert human urine as a component for making fertilizer. Then, the borne of contention was, how were they going to collect the urine and what will be the guarantee that this will not go as one of these elephant projects which never saw the light of the day.

"It is quite sad that the government is taking such a risk at the expense of its citizens especially in a country where majority of its populace eat from hand to mouth with dare consequences. Imagine the government telling the populace to take a bite at their own fists in the name of improving their farm

yield especially in view of our backwardness and the general level of poor hygiene in most of our communities and with diseases rampaging the people. What then is the guarantee that the use of human urine will not endanger the health of its citizens at any given time." Garba asked.

Although the argument appears to be gaining currency, some Nigerians like Madam Asabe Jang, expressed misgivings over the idea of using human urine as fertilizer. According to her; We as a people are not ready for that. Let the government address the challenge by subsidizing farming inputs with the collaboration of the Federal, States and Local Government Councils.

But Mr Chinge Rivie, a retired civil servant in Bassa LGA, now a farmer in a chat with SUNDAY STANDARD said; "There is no need for apprehension by some

individuals on the usage of human urine after all, most people don't even know the secret behind some of the food we all consume. Farmers in most cases have now adopted the use of human urine in place of chemical fertilizer.

"Nowadays, farmers buy human urine stored in public or residential septic tanks or soakaways then mix the substance with other chemicals to get the desired bags to cover the entire farm and the yield is always amazing and in most cases more than the chemical fertilizer yield." Rivie disclosed.

However, the reason for the soaring cost of chemical fertilizers may be associated with Federal Government's efforts of breaking the jinx and taking out the firm grip of powerful cartels behind fertilizer control by the removal of subsidy some years ago which allowed market forces to determine the procurement and sale of the product.

Although the government decision yielded positive results in terms of the stabilizing cost of the commodity, the current down turn of the economy coupled with inflationary trends and general insecurity is taking its toll on the availability of fertilizers.

Other factors associated with this scarcity and high cost has to do with Federal Government placing strict control on the product in the wake of insurgency in the north western part of the country where terrorists had taken advantage of the low cost of the product such as Urea

“It is quite sad that the government is taking such a risk at the expense of its citizens especially in a country where majority of its populace eat from hand to mouth with dare consequences. Imagine the government telling the populace to take a bite at their own fists in the name of improving their farm yield especially in view of our backwardness and the general level of poor hygiene in most of our communities and with diseases rampaging the people. What then is the guarantee that the use of human urine will not endanger the health of its citizens at any given time.”

Continued on page 31

NEWS

Gov. Mutfwang calls for cross fertilisation of ideas

By PETER TITLE

THE Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has emphasized the importance of cross fertilisation of ideas, noting that it was the only path towards propelling Africa's progress and development. Governor Mutfwang shared his thought at the conclusion of the Executive Leadership Retreat, a collaborative effort between the Nigerian Governors' Forum (NGF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), held recently in Kigali, Rwanda.

This was made known in a statement signed and made available to The Nigeria Standard by the Director of Press and Public Affairs (DOPA), to the Governor, Gyang Bere. He further said that the retreat's primary objective was aimed at fortifying the governance

framework to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in leadership within Nigeria's sub-national government.

According to the statement, Governor Mutfwang and his counterparts engaged in a fruitful dialogue with Rwanda's President, Paul Kagame which was aimed at redefining leadership as well as reshaping Nigeria for a stronger and more unified nation.

"As Africa strives for progress, the exchange of ideas and the sharing of valuable lessons are increasingly vital in making significant strides to enhance the well-being of our people", he asserted.

Recall that the the retreat drew participants from amongst Nigeria Governors and Rwanda. The theme was " Rethinking Leadership and Leading Systems " with some range



Mutfwang

of sub-themes including "Reimagining Nigeria: Exploring the Future of the Nation" among others.

The Nigeria Standard reports that Governor Mutfwang who is a staunch

advocate for value - driven governance, would replicate and bring to bear the outcome of the retreat on good governance on the Plateau and Nigeria as a

Environment commissioner task town sweepers on duties

THE Benue State Commissioner for Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change, Hon. Odoh Ugwu has charged casual staff (sweepers) of the ministry to be more committed to their duties in order to necessitate payment of their salaries.

The commissioner stated this while addressing leaders of the casual staff (sweepers) in his office in Makurdi.

"I have seen for myself the zeal and efforts some of you have put in your place of duties and I want to let you know that your efforts are not enough. I came out as early as 6am this morning and supervised some areas within Makurdi metropolis. But I was astonished by the few number of staff that I saw at their places of work, only few of you were at your places of assignment. It is unfortunate, this is unacceptable under my watch".

He said the magnitude of workers that were in his office list was overwhelming but does not consolidate the number he saw on their duty post when he went out to supervise. He lamented that if the workers that trooped into the commission the other day were the ones actually sweeping Makurdi, the state capital would have been neater and cleaner than what it is today.

He expressed unhappiness over the turnout of workers he saw

and promised that he will continue to supervise to ensure that the state capital was in good hygienic condition.

"We are going to commence screening/verification of casual staff (sweepers) because of what I saw today to ascertain the actual number of casual staff. We are going to pay but only genuine workers. This government frowns at laxity".

He assured the workers that their hard work will not go unnoticed, assuring that he will remain committed to ensure that they receive fair compensation for their services.

Hon. Odoh, who

Fulani colonies: Benue has no land for such project

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

BENUE State Government has described as false and misleading a story making headlines on the social media that Governor Hyacinth Alia has included Benue State in the list of states to get Fulani colonies.

The governor says it is a burning desire of his administration to return

the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) back to their homes as soon as possible.

However, since most of their houses have been destroyed by the gun carrying marauding herders, the federal government of Nigeria under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has agreed to sponsor the reconstruction of new homes for the Internally Displaced

Persons (IDPs). The homes are to be built in cluster formats, enabling the people to live more closely with each other to experience more stability.

Governor Alia assures that in Benue, the homes are for the people and not for any colony whatsoever.

The governor in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Tersoo Kula says Benue people should know that will undermine the goodwill he has gotten from the wonderful people of the state.

The statement adds that the governor means well for the people of the state and as such, will always put them first.



Abubakar



Palliatives: Citizens demand accountability

OVER the past four years, the three tiers of government in Nigeria Federal, State and Local have shared amongst themselves N39.22 trillion in federal allocations, even as analysts and Nigerians said that the impact of these funds is yet to be felt in the lives of the citizenry.

It was gathered that the Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC), on a monthly basis, pulls together the revenue of the Nigerian entity and shares it among the Federal government, the State governments and the Local governments in the country.

As the FAAC disbursements continue to surge year in year out, Nigerians are saying that they are yet to feel, adding that politicians at the helm of governance should expect that the citizenry would be expecting more from them in the coming months. According to data sourced from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

DSS, Prison Officials Clash Over Emezie's Re-arrest

The premises of a Federal High Court sitting in Lagos was thrown into pandemonium on Tuesday following a violent clash between the operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS) and officials of the Nigeria Correctional Service (NCoS) over who has custody over suspended Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) governor, Godwin Emezie.

The fight started after Justice Nicholas Oweibo granted Emezie bail in the sum of N20 million.

The Federal government had arraigned Emezie on a two-count charge of illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.

The government is accusing Emezie of possessing a single-barrel shotgun (JOJEFF MAGNUM 8371) without a licence, an offence contrary to section 4 of the Firearms Act Cap F28 Laws of the Federation 2004 and punishable under Section 27 (1b) of the same Act.

The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charge, and the judge granted him bail under the condition that he must produce a surety who is a level 16 officer in the Nigeria civil service.

The court further ordered that the surety must own a landed property within the court's jurisdiction and that Emezie must also deposit his passport with the court registrar.

Contrary to the request of the prosecutor from the Ministry of Justice, Mrs Nkiru Jones-Nebo, Justice Oweibo remanded the defendant in the custody of the Ikoyi Custodial Centre pending the perfection of the bail term.

Tinubu Sends 28 Ministerial Nominees to Senate

After a two-month wait, culminating in the legal deadline, President Bola Tinubu, forwarded the much-anticipated ministerial list to the Senate for consideration and confirmation.

The list, which contained 28 names, was personally delivered to Senate President Godswill Akpabio at plenary by Chief of Staff to the President, Femi Gbajabamila, the immediate past Speaker of the House of Representatives. Under a law assented to by former President Muhammadu Buhari in March, an elected president or governor must within 60 days of taking the oath of office submit the names of those nominated as ministers or commissioners (in the case of governors) to the senate or House of Assembly for confirmation. The Senate, after approving the votes and proceedings of the previous legislative day, during the plenary within the week has invoked the relevant sections of its Standing Rules to receive Gbajabamila, and have him deliver the presidential communication.

After the ministerial list, which had no portfolios attached to the names, was read by Akpabio. It included four former governors, who had just served out their constitutional eight years, and seven women that made up the list.

Niger Coup: ECOWAS Dispatches Benin President

To address the escalating crisis in the Republic of Niger, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has taken action by dispatching the president of Benin, Patrice Talon, to the country.

The situation in Niger had been causing growing concern, with reports emerging from Niamey, the capital, early Wednesday morning stating that President Mohamed Bazoum was taken into custody by his own Presidential Guards, while the Presidential Palace was cordoned off with military vehicles.

Reacting to the unfolding crisis, President Talon held a meeting with President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa in Abuja on Wednesday. After their discussions, it was decided that President Talon would lead an intervention mission to Niger without delay.

Speaking to journalists after the meeting with Talon, President Tinubu affirmed that the meeting had to do with the political unrest in Niger Republic.

Super Falcons stun World Cup cohort Australia

The nine-time African champions, the Super Falcons of Nigeria made history as they fought back gallantly to beat 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup co-host Australia 3-2 to top a World group for the first time in their history.

Caitlin Foord's pass was converted by Emily van Egmond, giving Australia the early lead but Nigeria quickly equalised with Uchenna Kanu's clinical finish in first half added time, before Osinachi Ohaile's header made it 2-1.

Despite Alanna Kennedy's late goal, Nigeria who are the only African team to have played in all editions of the FIFA Women's

World Cup held on after Asisat Oshoala scored following a mixup between Australia's Kennedy and Mackenzie Arnold. Australia faces Olympic winners Canada in Melbourne and may require a win to go to the knockout stages, while

Nigeria faces the already eliminated Republic of Ireland in Brisbane. Asisat Oshoala, set a record of becoming first African to score in three FIFA Women's World Cups said her team mates gave all their best to get the win.

Ex-Super Eagles Captain Obi appoint as Sports Adviser

Plateau State governor, Caleb Mutfwang, has appointed ex Super Eagles captain John Mikel Obi, to serve as his honorary adviser on Sports.

This news comes as part of a series of appointments, as revealed by Mr Gyang Bere, the governor's director of Press and Public Affairs, in a statement released on Thursday in Jos.

Governor Mutfwang, hailing the appointment as a significant step in bolstering the state's sporting prowess, aims to rebuild the foundation of excellence within the region.

The selection of Mikel Obi adds a touch of star power to the administration's mission.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Miracles still happen -Okolo

Here is the testimony about the miraculous hand of God at work against the bandits who attacked the priests, FRS Emmanuel Okolo and Noah Monday, serving the Parish of St Raphael, Fadan Kamanton, Catholic Diocese of Kafanchan, Nigeria, the 25 year old Seminarian, Brother Na'aman. Unfortunately, the seminarian serving in that church, Brother Na'aman Ngofe Stephen did not survive the gruesome attack. He was buried 12th September, 2023. The Funeral Mass was held in the beautiful Church beside the charred remains of the priests' residence. As the choir rehearsed for the funeral Mass inside the Church, the grave was being dug in front of the old Church building by the youths.

THE mood in the parish was mixed. There was joy for the miracle which is what the survival of FRS Emmanuel and Noah is, but sadness at the painful killing of Brother Na'aman. The initial assumption is that he got trapped and burnt to death in the fire set on the house by the bandits. But the body was discovered to bear gun shot holes at the abdomen which suggests that the bandits already shot him dead in the early stages of the attack as they forced their way into the Fathers' house. His hair and most of his body was intact despite the raging fire. I saw his knapsack bag, slippers, sandals still in his room, partially burnt laptop and wallet.

I was received by Fr Emma himself, sitting under the trees enjoying the shade. He was cheerful, brave and unfazed. Not looking at all disturbed or fearful because of their terrible experience just a few days ago. He showed me and other concerned parishioners round the charred remains of the house, recounting the vivid and bloody details of the attacks.

The beautiful Parish house and Church edifice were donated by an illustrious son of the village. The value lost at the attack includes a young life, a car, a motorcycle, four Mass boxes, and their collection of books, certificates and furniture; 3 laptops and 3 TV sets. Everything, except the boxers - underwear's on them actually. Overall, the loss stands at about N70m.

How The Miracle happened

Fr Emma did not hide nor run away from the attackers. Fr Noah hid himself somewhere within the house. The seminarian was in the bathroom where he was probably shot and left to die in the pool of his blood. Fr alone fought the 11 bandits to a standstill and caused them major casualties. They all had guns of different makes including about 7 AK-47 rifles with which they shot at him furiously and repeatedly but to no effect. He told me he thought they shot him 7 times but Fr Noah said he heard more than 30 gun shots; none did him harm. He joked to me that if he had a shirt or a singlet, underwear on him, it would have been suspected that some juju was done on the shirt or singlet.

He described the feeling of bullets on his bare skin as 'ice touching him and falling off. The Reverend Father did not even get to wear a shirt, except his boxers when the bandits barged in on him. A few among the 11 member gang did not go back as they came. They fell to the ground and did not live to tell the story. The fate they unleashed fell on them first. It was a gruesome day and God proved himself faithful.

At their frustration and bewilderment, one of the bandits, probably a member of his church, said "In the name of Jesus, we must kill you, and you must die". At this point, Fr Emma had had enough and yelled in rebuke at the bandit: "Which Jesus are you talking about,? Is it the same Jesus I worship abi the Jesus na your mate?"



Rev Pam

After some more shooting without success, the leader said in Hausa "ku zo mu tafi, wannan ba mutum ba ne ". Meaning (come let us go, this one is not a human being". They left the house hurriedly in fear and trembling, carrying their fallen comrades.

The coordination and knowledge of their way around the house could not have been coincidental. Someone who knew the Fathers and the house very well led them to the attack. They knew their ways around the house.

As the bandits left the scene in total confusion and dazed, the Fathers called out to each other in the parlor to take stock of survivors. That was when Brother Na'aman did not show up. They checked his room and did not see him. They presumed he had probably escaped. Alas, he was dead!

The bandits did not go far but came back in anger and retaliation and set the rectory ablaze before escaping to the bushes. They were hoping they might kill the priests or at least harm, since the barrel and barrage of gunfire and bullets

had failed.

The burning down of the Rectory, was therefore an afterthought from a vindictive, bruised and defeated set of bandits who used that to cut their losses.

The Fathers themselves used the same door the bandits used to run away and escape the raging fire. Fr Noah, not convinced, wanted to go back a second time for Brother Na'aman but Fr Emma stopped him because the fire was already in full swing and he would have died in it. They literally crawled out of the fire due to the heat coming from the flames.

Most of the encounter and conversation that Fr Emma had with the bandits, 11 of them right in his bedroom all by himself and his God, has been corroborated by Fr Noah who was hiding within the house on that fateful day. They spoke eye ball to eye ball like man to man with bandits.

Interestingly, this operation lasted between 8:13pm and 9:30pm. A whooping 1hr 12mins. I saw the soldiers' checkpoint that was about 500 meters away from the Church where the attack happened. The entire village was awake due to the thunderous sounds of gunfire. It is a wonder

how nobody came to help in anyway. Some neighbours confessed to having seen the bandits filing out and fleeing but had no matching or superior weapons to attempt any efforts. God alone took the glory! But why would the soldiers on security duty nearby, less than a kilometer not respond?

The good news is that the Fathers were on ground by the morning to celebrate the daily Mass with the people in thanksgiving to give God the glory and for the eternal repose of the soul of Brother Na'aman Ngofe Stephen. May his gentle soul rest in peace with the Lord. Amen.

To peter out their incompetence and irresponsibility, the Deputy Governor of Kaduna State Dr Hadiza Balarabe Usman visited the priests and parishioners, the General Officer Commanding the 3rd Armoured Division of the Army under whose watch Southern Kaduna and the not so effective security outfit Operation Safe Haven falls also visited. Indeed Nuhu Ribadu, the National Security Adviser called Fr Emma. His interest was if the Father thought the attack was religiously motivated. Of course,

there are Christians called Christians who are collaborators.

It would be encouraging if the government would equip our security operatives with superior weapons to match that of the bandits. Sanity would be restored to our communities.

Soldiers on ground are really suffering from lack and deprivation of basic needs. So, they cannot be effective.

After 26 years in the army and battle tested in theatres, including Liberia, Sierra Leone and Boko Haram and now bandits, a Sergeant I spoke with told me he earns N72,000. He earns no allowances even on special duty. He has an aged mother, a wife and four kids to look after. He said his family cannot afford rice again or tea and bread. They take care of their families with a meagre salary. And I asked, which Army would have its soldiers personally buy their own fatigue anyways? Meanwhile this man is in custody of a weapon that costs more than a million Naira in the open markets and works as a security for human beings.

Meanwhile Government promised to rebuild the house and warned Father against inflating the cost in many folds because that is standard government procedure and practice. How? Why? They threatened that if he does, he will be on his own because the money will be cut down.

Conclusion

Fr Emma told me that God prepared him for this attack before it happened and that God wrought the miracle of his survival so that He will remind us that He, 'God' still exists. Fr said "let no one deceive and cheat you by convincing you to believe with them that God does not exist." He had just returned from a weeklong travel on Monday, had his sacrament of penance (confession of his sins to another Priest) on Tuesday, he went to Kafanchan town which is the regional HQ, to get a few groceries on Thursday. The informant obviously saw him and tipped the gang of bandits who came that very fateful Thursday evening.

Going forward, we should pray and believe harder in God than we do now. His survival was a pure miracle. Like Jesus his Lord and Master, he saw death but did not die, he is alive. He said the Bishop was so worried he called to check on him throughout the night. We saw the letter of solidarity and consolation he wrote. We should also prepare both spiritually and physically for any eventualities always.

Finally after all the display of original Odeshi by the Master Jesus himself, pray for the Fathers. He told me that after everything, looking back and the reality of what happened dawning on him, trauma is setting in for him.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Preventing mother languages from extinction

RESEARCHERS observe that language is what makes people humans; a dynamic integral part of culture and a constituent part of human civilisation. ISMAIL ABDULAZIZ writes.

According to them, when language, a fabric of culture dies, the culture goes also with it to extinction.

Similarly, linguists often argue that languages become extinct due to globalisation, politics, economic influence and neocolonialism, among other reasons.

They emphasise that there might be extinction of some languages if there are no more known native speakers of the language, especially if the language has no living descendants.

According to them, a language is endangered when speakers decide that it is better for their children's future to acquire language they believe it is tied to economic success, such as English language.

With this attitude, researchers note that almost half of the languages known today could go to extinction in future.

In Nigeria, for instance, preservation of mother languages as a cultural heritage receives little attention, analysts argue.

They observe that the younger generation does not have deep knowledge of their language culture to understand the need to appreciate their mother language as a tool for deepening cultural values.

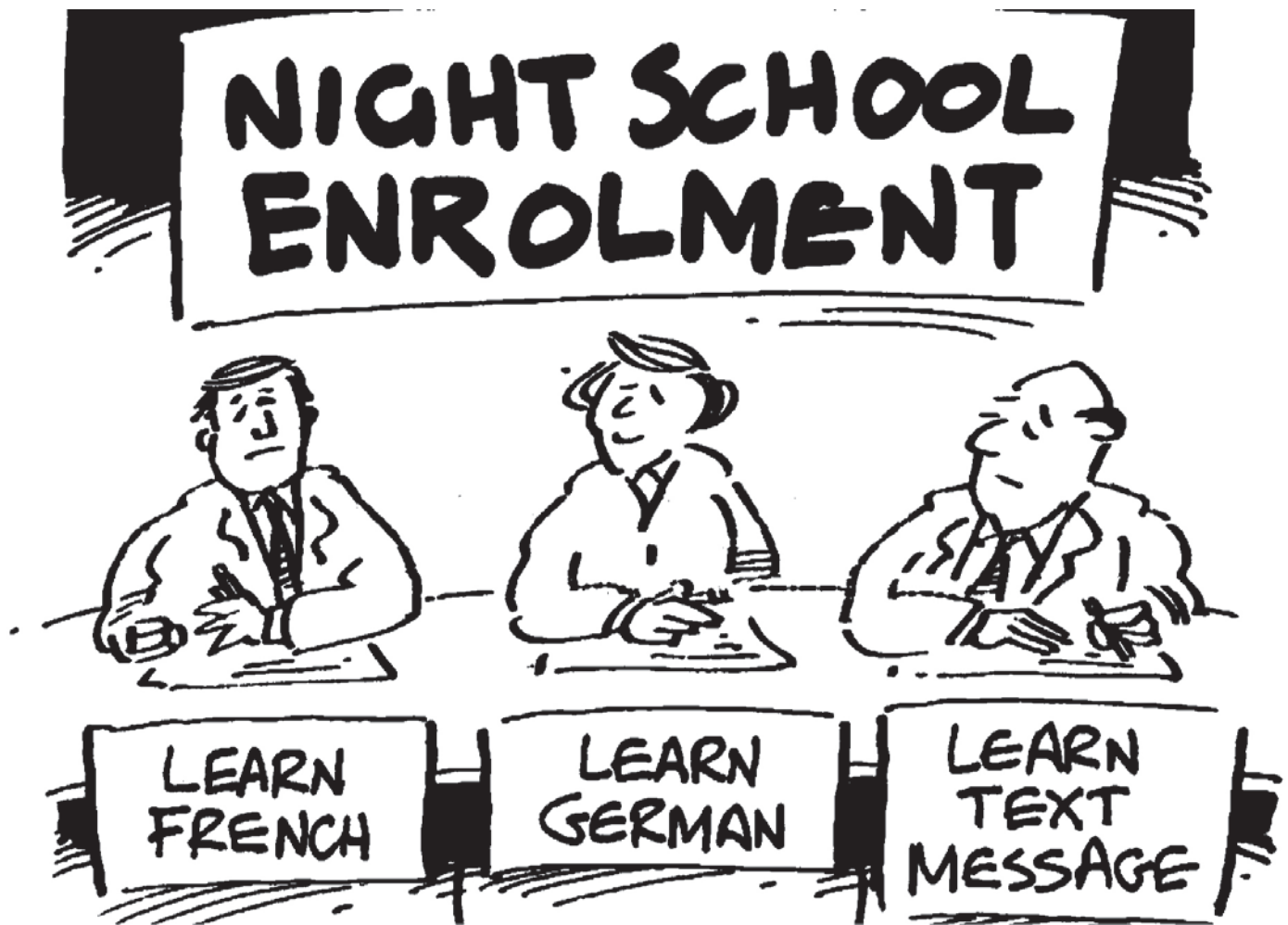
In the light of this, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), observes that 29 local languages in Nigeria are endangered and the number will increase except deliberate efforts are made to address the situation.

For the United Nations, International Mother Language Day, celebrated on every Feb. 21, recognises that languages play a vital role in development in ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

In the last edition of the day, the theme focused on: "Using technology for multilingual learning: Challenges and opportunities".

UNESCO, during the observance of the day, expressed worry that "linguistic diversity is increasingly threatened as more and more languages disappear globally".

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay therefore calls on countries to defend linguistic and cultural diversity, observing that 40 per cent of the population does



not have access to an education in a language they speak or understand.

According to her, four out of 10 children worldwide do not have access to education in the language they speak or understand best; meaning the foundation for their learning is more fragile.

"From the very first day of school, many schoolchildren have the ambivalent experience of discovering one language – and the world of ideas which comes with it – and forgetting another one: the language they have known since infancy.

"This distancing from the mother tongue affects us all, for linguistic diversity is a common good and the protection of linguistic diversity is a duty", she said.

Azoulay notes that every language has a certain rhythm, as well as a certain way of approaching things and thinking of them.

"Learning or forgetting a

language is thus not merely about acquiring or losing a means of communication. It is about seeing an entire world either appear or fade away," she observes.

Azoulay says the International Mother Language Day would begin to give new momentum to protecting indigenous languages.

Ms Andriamiseza Noro, an education programme specialist in UNESCO, also believes that technology has the power to address some of the biggest challenges in education and language acquisition.

Some stakeholders, therefore, call on parents, school systems and government to adopt approaches that will inculcate cultural values in the society, especially on children.

A linguist in Jos, Mr Audu Silas, notes mother languages in addition to the three major Nigerian languages should be included in school curriculum, especially the basic education system.

He advises that the elites in the

society ought to contribute towards developing their mother languages to salvage them from extinction.

He observes that this can be done through engaging scholars for outreaches, translating literature materials or books in their languages while using Information Communication Technologies.

He also states that stakeholders, especially the elderly, should organise campaigns to preserve cultural heritage by promoting transmission of their language to the younger generation.

Silas observes further that inferiority complex among speakers of minority languages has affected speaking some indigenous languages, insisting that no language is superior to others.

He calls on the National Orientation Agency, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, National Council for Arts and Culture and other cultural institutions, to educate the public against stereotyping people because of their languages.

A mother in Jos, Ms Fatima Adamu, cautions parents against insisting on speaking English language to their children and neglecting their mother languages even in mixed marriages.

"Some children even do not speak their mother language in spite their parents being from the same ethnic group; so, deliberate effort by parents is required to teach their children their mother language," she notes.

Also, the chairman of the Parent Teachers Association of

Nigeria in Plateau, Mr Tali Danjuma, notes that negligence by parents has been a factor affecting the learning of mother languages.

"Most parents have been making that mistake once they relocate to a particular place maybe they leave their village; they use a different language such as English language and with time, they will not be able to communicate freely with their own mother tongues.

"Please, help the future generation to understand their languages, cultural heritage to stop modern languages in the country from going to extinction," he pleads.

In her observation, Mrs Kaneng Gbadamosi, a research student with the University of Jos, says videos and audio material should be adopted in the teaching of Nigerian languages as some textbooks may not give much in their teaching.

"If there are literatures, videos and audios, it will help. You will find out that the missionaries who came to Nigeria learned local languages with learning aids and were able to speak Nigerian languages; yet some of us do not speak the languages," she observes.

Analysts hope that the society will reflect on UNESCO's directives on making deliberate efforts to salvage mother languages from extinction.

They also call on language experts and stakeholders to take advantage of the potential of technology for learning mother languages.

They believe that complying with the UNESCO's guidelines on how to save indigenous languages from extinction will underscore the importance of International Mother Language Day celebrated annually since 2000 to raise awareness on language, cultural diversity and multilingualism around the world. (NANFeatures)

"According to her, four out of 10 children worldwide do not have access to education in the language they speak or understand best; meaning the foundation for their learning is more fragile. From the very first day of school, many schoolchildren have the ambivalent experience of discovering one language – and the world of ideas which comes with it – and forgetting another one: the language they have known since infancy."

It is with a heavy heart that Bangles mourns the death of one of our own, Mrs. Osinachi Nwachukwu. It is alleged that she died as a result of domestic violence meted to her by her husband. Today's topic is the correlation between spousal killings and the stigmatization of divorce and the divorced. But before we go into the heart of it, let us look at the correlation between mental ill-health and spousal abuse in order to understand abuse.

We live in a society where divorce is seen as a taboo and a stigma and because of that, a lot of women and men stay in abusive marriages with the hope and prayer that one day, the abusive spouse will change. That is the mistake of a lifetime. Abusers do not change because of their psychological make-up. This means that prevention is the solution.

What we need to start doing as a society is to make basic psychology a part of our curriculum. A knowledge of basic psychology can tell you when someone's behaviour reflects a personality disorder or any other type of mental health. This of course, is subject to confirmation by a clinical psychologist. Let me give you an example. If your spouse takes your picture and cuts it up in anger, that is a form of violence in psychology. This is an indication of a deeper problem. If you do not know this, you will put it down to anger and think nothing of it. It could be your car or credentials or something very important to you. When a spouse starts to display this type of violence towards you, you either ask for him to get the help he or she needs or you think of how to start protecting yourself because sooner than later, the big one will happen.

First and foremost, abuse starts in the mind and as such, before we can prevent or stop abuse, we have to understand and address the mind of an abuser. Most abusers have one form of personality disorder or mental health issue that is undiagnosed. This means that if we are serious as individuals, we have to educate ourselves and our children about the possibility of these and then as a society, we have to enshrine psychological testing and profiling for intending couples and leaders, medical personnel, military and the police. The test should be part of the criteria for entry into these areas.

Psychological/psychiatric test and profiling should be critical in marriage because it is safer to end a relationship with a potential abuser than it is to die in marriage. It is also critical for our society to teach basic psychology not only in school but to young people of marriage age and married couples because there is a scientific correlation between abuse and personality disorder or mental health.

Mental ill-health is often associated with violence, and personality disorders, which closely relates to mental ill-health, are particularly sneaky because the perpetrator does not look or behave mad. He or she can live a life that seems normal and yet he or she may have a personality disorder that is violent. An understanding of personality disorders and mental health in general will help in preventing domestic violence and spousal abuse or Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), According to Forbes:

Intimate Partner Violence is defined broadly as physical, sexual, or psychological harm inflicted by a current or former romantic partner or spouse.... To better understand the risk factors associated with Intimate Partner Violence, the researchers examined 10 personality disorders defined by the DSM-5 (paranoid, schizoid, schizotypal, antisocial, borderline, histrionic, narcissistic, avoidant, dependent and obsessive-compulsive) and explored their associations with intimate partner violence. They found antisocial personalities, or people who tend to lie, break the law, act impulsively, and lack consideration for their own safety or the safety of others, and borderline personalities, or those who experience frequent feelings of instability and worthlessness and who struggle to maintain healthy relationships, were most likely to be the perpetrators or victims of intimate partner violence. "At the global IPV perpetration level, every personality disorder except for histrionic and obsessive-compulsive demonstrated significant and positive effects," say the researchers. "Perhaps unsurprisingly, the largest effect

sizes were found for antisocial and borderline, which are also the two most widely studied personality disorders in relation to IPV. To arrive at this conclusion, the researchers scoured the scientific literature for studies examining intimate partner violence and personality disorders. They identified 163 such studies with 189 individual samples.

The forgoing is from Forbes. Clearly, we can see that there is a correlation between abuse and some personality disorders. In some cases, this could be outright undiagnosed psychosis. This personality disorders and mental health disorders could stem from childhood. If an individual is suspected to have a personality disorder, it is better to convince him to see a clinical

Spousal killings and the stigmatization of divorce



psychologist. According to FHE health, in an article titled "Domestic violence and personality disorder, the eye opening link":

It's not uncommon for people diagnosed with personality disorders to have been victims of violence themselves as children. Psychiatric professionals will look for symptoms when assessing someone's condition, such as an unstable sense of self or a history of social difficulties. Often, for instance, people with a borderline personality disorder may struggle to trust others in their close interpersonal relationships and/or act impulsively, without thinking about the likely consequences of their actions.

The Forgoing is from FHE. We can see that the problem of domestic violence or Intimate Partner Violence is not as simple as it looks. It is a problem that could stem from childhood based on how parents treat their children and what experiences a child goes through generally, and only a clinical psychologist can confirm and treat this. We can suspect and report mental health disorder in our intimate partners and spouses, if we have basic understanding of personality disorders and mental health issues.

Any organization that stands against spousal abuse must understand the need and importance of attacking the problem of spousal abuse from its roots and must also empower men and women to know when a man or woman has potentials for abuse. Abusers do not change because their problem is intrinsic. It is in their psychological make-up. A spouse who is not abusive in nature, will not abuse his or her spouse even if the environment and culture provide the enabling environment to do so. An abusive partner will abuse even when the law will take its course. Question is, do we want to be victims in the name of marriage? Why are we more reactive than proactive? Why do we look so solutions when irretrievable harm has already been done?

Marriage does not only deal with human behaviour, it deals with the creation of life



rejection or abandonment, poor social skills, hostility toward a gender, high levels of dependence, controlling behaviors, heightened feelings of rage, and acts of mental and/or physical abuse.

Secondly, it is apparent that a lot of us think that physical abuse is the only type of abuse or violence. If someone is not beating up his or her spouse, he or she is not an abuser. Wrong. There are various types of behaviour that are classified as violence. The New Found Land Labrador itemizes the types of violence as follows: **Physical Violence** occurs when someone uses a part of their body or an object to control a person's actions. **Sexual Violence** occurs when a person is forced to unwillingly take part in sexual activity. **Emotional Violence** occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless. **Psychological Violence** occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control. **Spiritual Violence** (or religious) occurs when someone uses an individual's spiritual beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person. **Cultural Violence** occurs when an individual is harmed as a result of practices that are part of her or his culture, religion or tradition. **Verbal Abuse** occurs when someone uses language, whether spoken or written, to cause harm to an individual. **Financial Abuse** occurs when someone controls an individual's financial resources without the person's consent or misuses those resources and **Neglect** is when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not. The Forgoing is from the New found Land Labrador.

In my opinion, killings or maiming of wives and husband, girlfriends and boyfriend for money ritual and other purposes is a form of spiritual abuse that may not be very obvious but happens in African marriages. Health Abuse occurs when the chronic and persistent behaviour of a spouse can cause the partner to develop stress related disease such as cancer and high blood pressure. Infidelity is a form of emotional abuse that can cause high blood pressure in the one being cheated on and neglect by the cheating spouse.

Knowledge of what constitutes violence and abuse will go a long way in stemming or stopping domestic abuse before or while it is happening and this can only be done through formal or informal teaching of basic psychology. How do I know when I am being abused? when do I know when to leave? How do I avoid marrying an abuser? how do I know if my husband is an abuser? how do I raise my children to ensure that they do not become abusers? What are forms and types of abuse? Where can I find a psychologist and a psychiatrist? How do I teach my children to identify abusers? These are a few questions that our NGOs and Government through expert psychologist and psychiatrist, can answer to help prevent abuse in our society.

We have taken a look at the correlation between mental health and personality disorders on one hand, and spousal abuse on the other hand. Next week we will look at how the stigmatization of divorce has also kept women and men in their marriages with the hope and prayer of their spouses changing, until they got killed. We will look at why it has become important for the society at large to stop stigmatizing divorce and divorcees as a way of giving respite to the abused and saving their lives.

WHOSE words are you going to believe? When you believe Satan's words, his lies and intimidation, then you shut the door for God's power to operate. What does God say? He says do not be afraid. You may be tempted to, it may look hopeless and it may look like there is no way out but remember; there is nothing that earth has to offer you that heaven cannot beat a thousand times over.

So, how do we hook up to God's provision, protection, preservation and divine interventions? The basis on which we hook up to God is by believing His word. Amos 3:3 says it this way; can two walk together, except they be agreed? God's words are superior than the devil's word just as God's power is superior to the devil's power. God himself is superior to the devil and that superiority manifests itself in the fact that when God's power is at work, it cancels, neutralizes and uproots anything that the devil is doing.

There is no disease that God cannot heal, no situation God cannot rectify. There is no situation so dark or hopeless that the power of God cannot get involved in and change. The thing is understanding the spirituality of life and how that life is governed by words and as you hook up to the right words which are God's word, you open the door for that divine power to begin to flow in your circumstance and you will see before your eyes, natural human impossibilities, turned around to become divine possibilities.

Getting God to be involved in your life is not as hard as many people think it to be. Make your choice to day between trusting God and being afraid.

Isaiah 12:2 says, Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. God is my salvation, He is my deliverance, my welfare, my rescue, my safety, my protection, my preservation and the timely help that I need. Now whatever your circumstance, the scriptures say; see that God is the solution that you need.

The ord salvation is the Hebrew word, Yeshua. This is the title that Jesus occupies in his Messianic office as redeemer and saviour. So literarily the scripture is saying, look and see the salvation that God has made available to you is only found

in Yeshua; the Lord Jesus Christ. This verse goes further to say; I will trust and not be afraid. That means that the only way I can defeat the fear of whatever it is that I am faced with is to trust in the salvation made available through Yeshua, the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus came to the earth, died and was raised

I believe with the whole of my heart that Isaiah 12:2 will be your testimony as you refuse to be afraid and choose rather to channel your energies toward trusting God. When you trust God, you will see the marvelous power of God come to your rescue again and again; He will deliver you and put a testimony and



Fear not trust God



from the dead victorious, that was the only thing that broke the devil's power. There is no force on earth that can contend with the devil's and defeat him outside of the power of God. However, the good news is that once you become a believer by giving your life to the Lord Jesus Christ; that same power that raised Jesus from the dead is made available to you.

Now there is no such thing as a disease that cannot be healed, a question in your life that cannot be answered or a need that cannot be met if you factor in the power of God.

Satan has broken forth upon the earth today bringing great cause for fear. There is almost no nation on the earth that is not going through one kind of crisis or the other. Human beings are at a loss for what to do and wondering about how life would go on a national and individual scale. But the bible says that the answer to any fear is putting faith and trust in the salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ has brought to this earth through His death and resurrection. Today, refuse to be afraid and choose to trust God.

a song upon your lips.

Now, by way of quick recap, we have established certain things about the spirit of fear. First of all, we said that fear is a spirit. 2nd Timothy 1:7 says For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Fear is not just a reaction you feel but a spirit and it began to operate in this world when Adam sinned and the curse and death came into this world.

Secondly, we established that Satan can do nothing outside the operation of the spirit of fear. This is why the Bible encourages us to refuse to be afraid but trust God because as we trust him, we shut down the operation of the spirit of fear and Satan is literarily

stripped of any ability he may have to inflict harm in our lives.

Thirdly, we established that fear manifests itself in the life of a human being through thoughts, suggestions and ideas. Fear operates as we wrongly interpret our circumstance and attempt to get help for our lives without God. Proverbs 3:5-6 makes it very clear. It says; trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. If you would trust Him with all your heart; acknowledge Him or consider how mighty He is and consider how He has been your deliverance in the

past, then His power will be deployed in our circumstance to make a way for you where there seemed to be no way.

I am reminded of the children of Israel when they were delivered from Egypt and were face to face with the red sea. They cried to Moses saying you should have left us to die in the hands of the Egyptians. Sometimes, when you are faced with circumstances and there seems to be no way out, remember that God saw a path in the sea and knew exactly what He was going to do. Where the Israelites did not see a way out, God saw a way out and a path in the mighty waters.

As Moses trusted in God's direction and instructions, God's power was deployed to do something that had never been done before on the earth. That was the first time in man's recorded history that the power of God parted a massive sea and allowed the children of Israel to pass through on dry ground.

I tell you the truth; God has not forgotten how to part red seas. Just remember that only the power of God, not man's reasoning can do that. Whenever you are faced with a situation you have never been faced with, you are about to see a deliverance you have never seen before.

As you choose to trust God today, that red sea will part. You will see the marvels and the wonders of Almighty God. Not only will He deliver you, but God will promote you and put a new song of victory upon your lips. Find out today from God's word what he has said about your circumstance and believe it and chose not to fear.

“

There is no disease that God cannot heal, no situation God cannot rectify. There is no situation so dark or hopeless that the power of God cannot get involved in and change. The thing is understanding the spirituality of life and how that life is governed by words and as you hook up to the right words which are God's word, you open the door for that divine power to begin to flow in your circumstance and you will see before your eyes, natural human impossibilities, turned around to become divine possibilities.

”

INTERNATIONAL

Taliban welcomes first new Chinese ambassador since takeover

China has become the first country to name a new ambassador to Afghanistan since the Taliban retook power in 2021.

The Taliban said Zhao Xing's appointment is a sign for other nations to establish ties with its government.

No country has formally recognised the Taliban government, which has been criticised over human rights violations and crushing women's rights.

Analysts say Mr Zhao's appointment is part of China's moves to cement its influence in the region.

Afghanistan is at the centre of a region that is key to Beijing's Belt and Road infrastructure initiative. Beijing has previously said that it wants to invest in Afghanistan's natural resources, estimated to be worth \$1 trillion. These include extensive copper, lithium and gold deposits.

"By being the first to name an ambassador post-takeover, China aims to position itself as an influential actor in the region - a possible diplomatic flexing of muscles, especially when many Western countries are still hesitant to engage with the Taliban," said Farwa Aamer, Director of South Asia Initiatives at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

Key moments in the crushing of Afghan women's rights

The Taliban's broken promises

China's foreign ministry on Wednesday said it will "continue advancing dialogue and cooperation" with Afghanistan and that its policy towards the country is "clear and consistent". Mr Zhao's appointment is part of a "normal rotation" of Chinese ambassadors to Afghanistan, it added.

China is one of a handful of nations to maintain working missions in Afghanistan since the Taliban swept back to power. Beijing did not signal if the appointment was part of a wider move to recognise the Taliban government.

Taliban leaders received Mr Zhao at the presidential palace in the capital Kabul on Wednesday in a lavish ceremony that included acting prime minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund and acting foreign minister Amir Khan Muttaqi. He replaces Wang Yu, who took up the role in 2019 and completed his tenure as ambassador last



Jinping

month.

The appointment comes in the wake of condemnation from the UN and other international rights groups over the Taliban's treatment of women, and its decision to reinstate public executions and lashings.

Under Taliban rule, women are barred from working and going to school, among a swathe of other restrictions. Their suppression of women's rights is among the harshest in the world.

The Taliban has also been accused of sheltering terror groups in Afghanistan, which they have denied.

Limjaroenrat, leader of Thailand's Move Forward Party, resigns

Pita Limjaroenrat, who led his progressive party to victory in Thailand's election in May but was blocked from taking power by conservative legislators, has announced his resignation as its leader.

The 43-year-old head of the Move Forward Party (MFP) is currently suspended from his MP duties pending a court ruling on whether he violated election law. This bans him from serving as parliament's opposition leader as under the current rules, the person holding that position must be an MP.

Political analyst Thitinan Pongsudhirak said Pita's decision, following his spectacular run as leader, showed the MFP was the "real deal".

Stepping aside, he said, enabled the youth-led reformist party to move on and pursue its agenda as an effective opposition.

As Pita was seeking parliament's support in

July to be named prime minister, the Constitutional Court suspended him from holding his seat in the House of Representatives pending its ruling on whether he violated the law by running for office while holding shares in a now-defunct media company, a charge he has denied.

The violation is punishable by up to three years in prison and a fine of up to 60,000 baht (\$1,675). His party can be fined up to 100,000 baht (\$2,793).

The Constitutional Court has yet to set a ruling date for Pita's case. In late August, it allowed him a 30-day extension to prepare his defence.

The MFP won the most votes in the May 14 election but Thailand's military-drafted constitution allows an unelected 250-member Senate to participate in the vote to appoint the prime minister. The

Cavalcante was captured early on Wednesday before he could flee to Canada.

Escaped Pennsylvania killer Danelo Cavalcante was planning to flee to Canada before he was captured on Wednesday, authorities say.

The 34-year-old, who was convicted of killing his ex-girlfriend, reportedly told law enforcement he was going to carjack someone and head north.

He also reportedly said some of the 500 officers hunting for him came so close at times they almost stepped on him.

A law enforcement dog caught Cavalcante crawling through thick underbrush.

Authorities initially thought he might try to return to his home country of Brazil, where he is wanted for another murder.

But Cavalcante had other ideas, he told authorities after he was caught.

Supervisory deputy US Marshal Robert Clark told ABC News: "He stated he intended to carjack somebody in the next 24 hours and that he was

US jail fugitive planned to flee to Canada

going to head north to Canada."

Cavalcante also told authorities they had been so close to catching him that at times they nearly "stepped on him, [that] we were only five or six feet away", Mr Clark said.

Chief Chester County Detective David Sassa told CNN: "He told us at some points, the tactical teams walked past him."

Mr. Sassa said Cavalcante had told investigators at some points "he stayed still for a

day, a day and a half".

Cavalcante reportedly said he was able to stay shaven from a razor in a backpack he picked up.

He was also quoted as telling authorities he had survived by drinking stream water and eating some watermelon he found at a farm.

The manhunt came to an end thanks to the use of heat technology and a four-year-old Belgian Malinois named Yoda from a Customs and Border Protection team.



Biden

Hunter indicted on three federal gun charges

The indictment marks the first time the child of a sitting president has been criminally prosecuted

President Joe Biden's son, Hunter, has been criminally charged with three counts of lying when buying a firearm, after a

proposed plea deal collapsed.

The indictment marks the first time the child of a sitting president has been criminally prosecuted.

A planned plea bargain to resolve gun and tax-related charges he faced abruptly fell apart in July.

All three counts relate to Mr Biden allegedly lying on forms while buying a firearm when he was a drug user.

Court documents show that Mr Biden lied on the federally mandated forms as he purchased a Colt revolver at a Delaware gun store in October 2018.

At the time, Mr Biden was a heavy user of crack cocaine.

Under US federal laws, it is a crime to lie on such documentation, or possess a firearm while a drug user.

He previously acknowledged the charges during negotiations for the aborted plea deal, a two-part agreement struck

between prosecutors and Mr Biden's legal team in June.

Under the terms of the agreement, he would have been charged with two misdemeanour counts for failing to pay his taxes on time in 2017 and 2018.

Additionally, he would also have been forced to admit to illegal possession of a firearm.

The charges are the first brought by justice department special counsel Davis Weiss, who was appointed by Attorney General Merrick Garland in August.

Mr Weiss' office had previously said he was seeking to indict Mr Biden by 29 September.

The younger Mr Biden's legal woes have become a political lightning rod as his father seeks re-election.

This breaking news story is being updated and more details will be published shortly. Please refresh the page for the fullest



Hunter

INTERNATIONAL

Gabon coup: Can Gen Ngeuma change Gabon ?

Selling mobile phone accessories in a small open-air shop in Gabon's capital Libreville, Doles Gabriel sees coup leader General Brice OLIGUI NGEUMA as a Moses-like figure who has unshackled the nation from the chains of his former boss - President Ali Bongo. THOMAS NAADI writes.

MOSSES was educated in the house of Pharaoh, but God appointed him to liberate the people of Egypt from slavery. This is what is happening in the house of Bongo," the 23-year-old said.

Her comments reflected the joy - and hopes - of many people who had lived under the Bongo dynasty. With an iron fist, the family ruled oil-rich Gabon for all but seven years since it won its independence from France in 1960.

Omar Bongo became president in 1967, remaining at the helm until his death in 2009. His son, Ali Bongo, succeeded him, until Gen Ngeuma toppled him last month.

The 48-year-old general had been, as Ms Gabriel put it, "part of the house". He was born in the south-eastern province of Haut-Ogooué, a stronghold of the Bongo family. Some even say that he is the ousted president's cousin, and that he had engineered a "palace coup" to retain the power of the Bongo family.

Gen Nguema had been extremely close to Omar Bongo, and Ali Bongo - after initially sidelining him - appointed him the head of the elite Republican Guard, in charge of his own security.

But shortly after Mr Bongo was announced the winner of last month's disputed elections, Gen Nguema seized power from the man he was supposed to protect.

At the time, he said Mr Bongo should not have stood for re-election.

"Everyone talks about this but no-one takes responsibility. So the army decided to turn the page," he was quoted as saying.

Most people I spoke to on the streets of Libreville appear to have confidence in the general-turned interim president.

Many Gabonese have grown up only knowing the rule of the Bongo family

A huge crowd cheered him at his inauguration, while soldiers arranged their weapons on the ground in a show of force.

"He said he is going to conduct elections and we hope that by God's grace, if he has the fear of God, he will conduct a credible election," said Hellen Paul Mongala, who had gone to witness the general's inauguration.

However, the ceremony was boycotted by leading opposition presidential candidate Ondo Ossa, who maintained that Mr Bongo stole the election from him and he should, therefore, have been sworn in as president instead.

Some opposition members have serious doubts about the coup, but are scared to express their views freely.



Nguema

They point out that although Gen Nguema has released from prison some high-profile pro-democracy activists and trade unionists, he has not yet indicated when civilian rule will be restored.

Their greatest fear is that he plans to hang on to power - and Gabon would be back to square one.

Gen Nguema has so far taken a conciliatory approach towards the deposed president, saying he is free to go abroad.

This is in contrast with Niger further north, where President Mohamed Bazoum has been held captive - with his wife and son - by the junta that overthrew him just a month before the military takeover in Gabon.

But Mr Bongo has up to now rejected the offer to go abroad, preferring to remain at his private residence in Libreville - something that the junta's newly-appointed Prime Minister Raymond NdongSima confirmed to me when I met him at his office.

"He has no plans to leave now. I think he'll wait a bit. He's probably interested in what happens next," MrSima said, adding that there was "no restriction on his freedom".

Between them, Ali Bongo and his father, Omar Bongo, ruled Gabon for more than 40 years

Many people in Gabon have been clamouring for Gen Nguema to ensure that Mr Bongo is charged with corruption, alleging that the ousted president - and his family - have enriched

themselves at the expense of the nation during their decades in power. They deny the allegation.

MrSima gave conflicting signals on whether Mr Bongo would be charged.

"I think what is interesting for people is not to open the case. I don't think it would be viable to open a case at this moment."

When I asked him whether Mr Bongo's his former ministers would be prosecuted, he replied: "I think so. The new authorities have already announced that they will prosecute all those involved in corruption or money laundering processes. This is a strong signal. We saw people arrested."

So far the military has arrested three people close to the Bongos on different charges, including financial embezzlement, trafficking marijuana, and forging the ex-president's signature when he had suffered a stroke.

Yann Ngoulou, the chief of staff to Mr Bongo's eldest son, Nourredine Bongo, was publicly humiliated, paraded on state television, along with a stash of cash. He denied any wrongdoing, and said the money belonged to him.

MrSima said that former First Lady Sylvia Valentin Bongo - a French national - was also being investigated.

"She is being questioned for the moment and must explain herself," he said, without giving details of the allegations against her.

Gabon is an oil-rich country, but one third of its 2.4 million

people live below the poverty line, according to the United Nations.

Libreville-based financial analyst and opposition politician Jean Gaspard said the country had a lot of potential but bad policies had impoverished the nation.

"Foreign companies that extract oil in the country don't employ Gabonese experts but bring in expats. It's only the oil and timber sectors that are developed. The other sectors are not," he said.

The military displayed its power at the inauguration of Gen Nguema as interim president

Gabon has always maintained strong ties with its former colonial power, France, with its influence most visible in the coastal city of Port Gentil, the centre of the country's oil and timber industries.

A lot of French nationals live there, and even own restaurants

and bars. Anti-French feelings are strong in the city, with some French-owned businesses torched in 2009.

This led to Mr Bongo banning anti-French protests. The junta has not yet indicated whether it will lift the ban.

Unlike in Niger, another former French colony, no such protests have taken place since the coup, but a leading anti-French activist in Port Gentil, Kevin Moukadi, said he wanted "the French to get out of Gabon".

"We would like to get support from other foreign powers. We don't want the French any more. They must leave our country so that we can be free," he told me.

The military juntas that have seized power in Niger, as well as in Mali and Burkina Faso, have been hostile towards France, accusing it of continuing to pull the strings long after independence, but MrSima said that Gabon would not follow their example.

The junta will keep its close relationship with France as it was a major investor in Gabon, while it will also strengthen ties with other countries in order to boost the economy, MrSima said.

"In the past, we didn't have many relations with... Asian countries, but today the Chinese have become new partners," he added.

But MrSima made it clear that he valued relations with France the most, saying that "it is a country which has colonised ours and it is a country with which relations are much older so it makes sense that these are stronger relationships".

His comments will come as huge relief to France, which has seen its influence declining in its former African colonies in recent years.

But to retain the confidence of the population, the junta will have to improve living conditions - and fulfil its promise to hold credible elections.

MrSima is optimistic that change will take place.

"The process that is happening is calm and soothing. Everything happens peacefully. There is no mess. We want a positive outlook towards the future," he said.

Source: BBC News

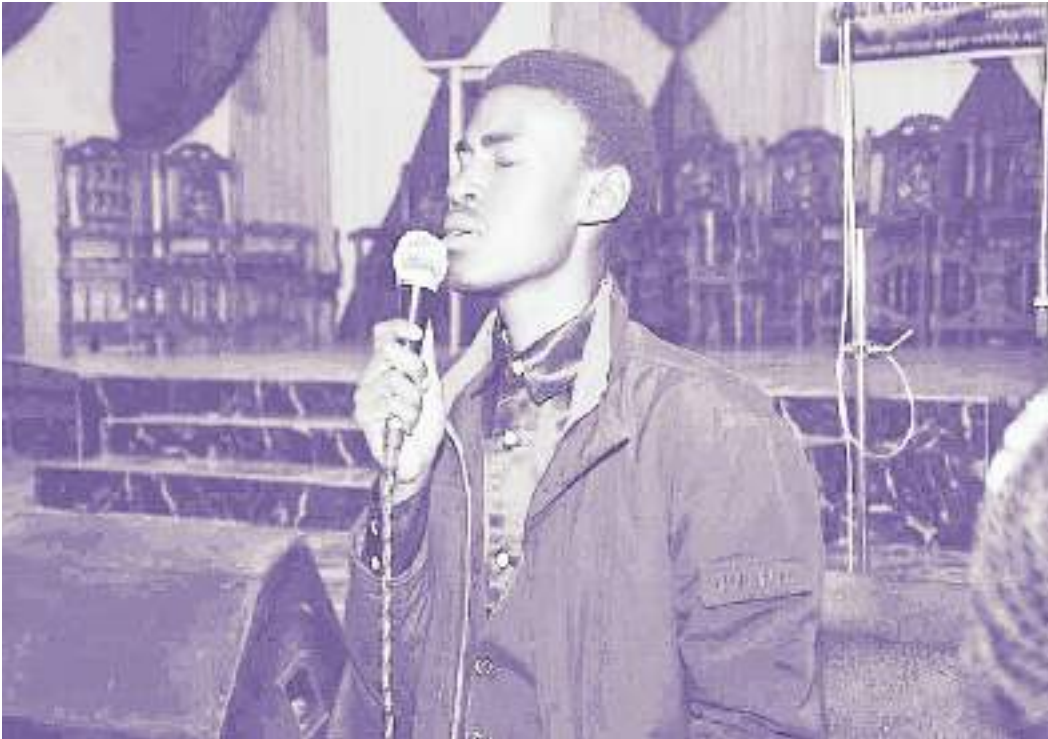
"Gen Nguema has so far taken a conciliatory approach towards the deposed president, saying he is free to go abroad. This is in contrast with Niger further north, where President Mohamed Bazoum has been held captive - with his wife and son - by the junta that overthrew him just a month before the military takeover in Gabon. But Mr Bongo has up to now rejected the offer to go abroad, preferring to remain at his private residence in Libreville - something that the junta's newly-appointed Prime Minister Raymond NdongSima confirmed to me when I met him at his office."



With **BULUS GAMBO**



'I place much value in gospel music'



Can you tell me a bit about yourself?

My name is Audu Philimon U. Joseph, a Pastor with Church of Christ in Nations, (COCIN) currently serving in COCIN Rukuba Road, RCC Kabong-Jos.

I am the fourth born out of five children and convener of the programme, Worship beyond Words.

You seem to be in love with gospel music and the great passion you exhibit praising God in church, what is this kind of music to you?

Yes am deeply in love with Gospel music, not just music but Gospel music. Gospel music is what I place much value in doing and am sure God also finds pleasure in it too. For me, this kind of music beyond it's name is a pleasure or satisfaction to God when it is done in spirit and truth.

It is also a medium to preach the gospel to others too.

When did you begin to sing as a gospel musician?

Since I was a child. I could remember on that faithful day that my uncle took me to the Church and I was singing, I felt like joining the group; but I knew that he won't allow me so I said to myself one day, I will be there and to God be the glory He has taken me there..

I know there are some challenges, mention some please?

There are some personal songs written by me but not released because of financial challenges, I could remember one of my friends heard me sang and she was like sir, people need to bless you through this songs ooh.

Sometimes, one has to combine music with other responsibilities in other to meet up with demands and most times; this effects the standard of music

Sometimes the challenge is pressure

in one's commitment.

Do you have any album to your credit and if not, how soon?

I don't have any album to my credit though I have songs written down sang by many. I hope to work on that any moment soon, may by next year if God permits me.

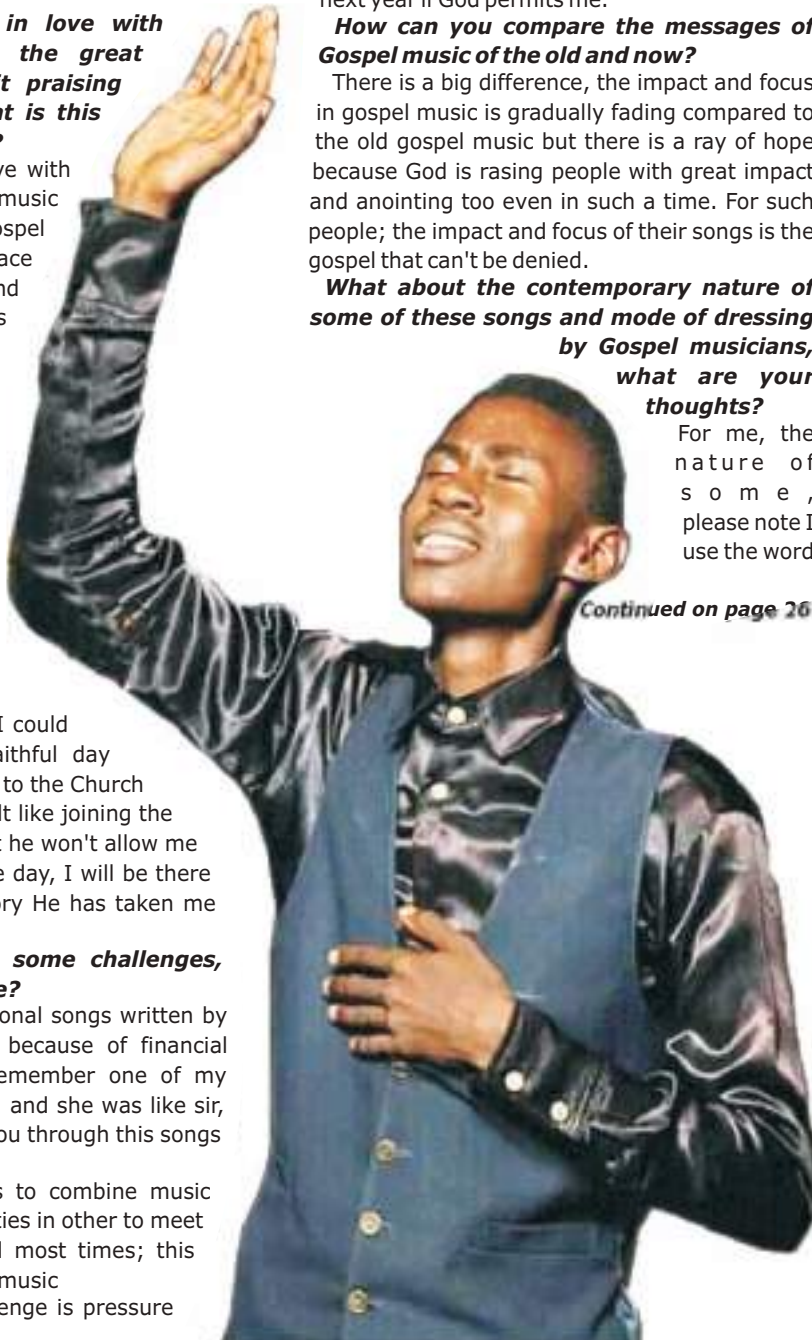
How can you compare the messages of Gospel music of the old and now?

There is a big difference, the impact and focus in gospel music is gradually fading compared to the old gospel music but there is a ray of hope because God is rasing people with great impact and anointing too even in such a time. For such people; the impact and focus of their songs is the gospel that can't be denied.

What about the contemporary nature of some of these songs and mode of dressing by Gospel musicians, what are your thoughts?

For me, the nature of some, please note I use the word

Continued on page 26



Where do richest Americans live?



L - R: Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg and Michael Bloomberg.

Have you checked the newest "Forbes 400: The Full List of The Richest People in America" yet?

Surprise, Bill Gates, with a net worth of \$81 billion, is ranked No. 1 for the 23rd year running. Meanwhile, his friend Warren Buffett fell to third place for the first time in 15 years with a net worth of \$65.5 billion.

Thanks to soaring stock prices of hot tech firms, CEOs at the helm of those companies seem to have been accumulating wealth at a much faster pace than others. Amazon.com CEO Jeff Bezos gained \$20 billion to boost his net worth to \$67 billion, making him the second-richest person in the U.S.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg jumped into fourth place, his highest rank ever, with a net worth of \$55.5 billion. However, Oracle founder Larry Ellison landed at No. 5 for the first time since 2007. His net worth is \$49.3 billion.

Standing on the No. 6 spot is former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, CEO of the eponymous firm Bloomberg L.P., who has a net worth of \$45 billion.

These six richest multi-billionaires have a combined \$363.3 billion at their withdrawal, most of which is still held as stakes in the companies they founded. However, part of their fortune is vested in real estate. Mr. Gates, for one, owns a Washington mansion worth about \$170 million, several horse ranches across the U.S. and shares in some luxury hotel chains through his private investment firm, Cascade.

Here, take a look at the residences the six richest moguls call home:



Bill GatesWorth: \$81 billion Home: Medina, Washington

Mr. Gates, 60, spends most of his time at his 66,000-square-foot Medina, Washington, mansion, nicknamed Xanadu 2.0 after the title character's estate in Citizen Kane. The mansion overlooks Lake Washington. It took Mr. Gates seven years and \$63.2 million to build this house, which is filled with lots of high-tech features. He purchased the lot for \$2 million in 1988, but it's now worth an estimated \$170 million, according to public records.



Jeff BezosWorth: \$67 billion Home: Medina, Washington

Mr. Bezos, 52, in the process of building his e-commerce empire, scooped up a vast amount of real properties over the years,

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THE SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Styles

Trendy Ankara styles for children

MOTHERS were so obsessed with getting western style dresses or casuals like jeans, tees, skirts, rompers and shorts for their kids. But today, the narrative has changed. Ankara styles for children is surprisingly on high demand.

African Print on kids are so lovely and cute, especially when sewn well with a creative design. Children can have a lot of fun and show off their fashion style with the African Print. With the Ankara fabric, one's creativity is independent and most times comes out outstanding.

Ankara is such a popular and versatile fabric that it can be used for all kinds of styles and occasions, including children's fashion. Ankara styles for kids are a great option for a photoshoot, a party, or even simply a day with the family.

The choice of Ankara style for kids is extremely wide. Even though fashion designers mostly create simple models, they look original due to bright fabrics and interesting patterns.

Your child deserves to look good and classy, don't think that it is only English or corporate wears that will give them that gorgeous look that you desire because native wears can also look great on them.

Trendy Ankara Styles for Kids dresses have become popular among children, and many parents who care about their children will take advantage of this fashion apparel design opportunities in Ankara category.

When many parents go out with their children, they are overjoyed to see their children looking good and being admired, says africanfashion.com.ng

"The undeniably beautiful Ankara designs for girls or boys are something unique. Designers have hit the market by storm with some fantastic designs for kids, and everyone is mesmerized".

"Children are adorable. They always look great no matter what they're wearing. No parent wants their child to be disheveled. When it comes to clothing, children are notoriously finicky. They have a hard time wearing certain clothing. You would want your child to be comfortable and attractive in



whatever they wear as a parent. Ankara dresses are the ideal choice. Ankara fashions are really comfortable, fashionable, and elegant, therefore you should try them out. Another option to make your children look classy is to dress them in matching outfits. For example, you might choose a patterned print that is bright and colorful. The boys' outfits should match any pattern on the girls' dresses".

designs are another amazing outfit. This design is suitable for both boys and girls. Sneakers can be worn with this ensemble. You can also make an Ankara design out of basic fabric patches. It provides your boy with a refined appearance. These clothes are ideal for occasions such as weddings or even birthday parties".

"Boys and girls look great in a variety of Trendy Ankara Styles for Kids. A basic shirt with a floral or partnered Ankara design is a great option. Sweatpants with Ankara



THEY'RE SOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Women health

4 Common reasons for late period

BEING late for your period can be scary, but there are many reasons why it could be late. Fortunately, there's usually a simple explanation. Common causes for late or missed periods can range from hormonal changes to serious medical conditions. If your period is late, it could be due to one of the reasons outlined below.

Reasons for late period

If your period is late or you've missed one, don't panic. In addition to pregnancy, there are many reasons why your period could be late. According to baptis thealth, here are the four most common causes:

1. Change in Fitness

Having a regular workout routine is a good idea for everybody, but if you've recently increased the intensity of your workouts, you can experience exercise-associated amenorrhea (the absence of menstruation). When you burn too many calories, your body lacks the energy to keep all your systems running, which can lead to a hormonal imbalance that can throw off your menstrual cycle.

2. Weight Gain or Weight Loss



If you've lost or gained a significant amount of weight,

you can experience hormonal imbalances that cause your period to come late or stop entirely. This is particularly

true when your body mass index (BMI) changes in a short period of time.

3. Stress

When your stress levels increase, your brain tells your endocrine system to release hormones that switch on your fight-or-flight mode. These hormones suppress functions that aren't necessary for escaping a threat, including those in your reproductive system. If you're under a lot of stress, your body can remain in fight or flight mode, which can make you stop ovulating and cause you to miss periods.

to take a pregnancy test. Once your body starts producing the pregnancy hormone human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG),

your periods will stop. It's recommended that you take a pregnancy test a week after your period was supposed to start. If your periods are typically irregular, it can be harder to determine the best time to take a pregnancy test. You may want to take a few tests over the course of several weeks to make sure. This is also a good time to talk with

4. Birth Control

The pill is popular because it makes periods so regular, but sometimes it can have the opposite effect, especially during the first few months of use. When you stop taking the pill, it can take a few months for your cycle to return to normal. If you're using a hormonal birth control method, such as an IUD, implant, or shot, you may stop getting your period altogether.

PREGNANCY

If there's a chance you may be pregnant, you've missed a period, and your cycle's usually normal, it may be time





Reality Bites

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As Ayuku emerges first female NUJ Chairman

HISTORY was made Thursday September 14, 2023 on the Plateau as the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Plateau Council elected a female Chairman since its almost 50 years of its existence.

The winner of the keenly contested re-run elections was Mrs Ayuku Pwaspo from the Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTVC) chapel with 121 votes. She won her opponent Mr. Ralph Madugu of the Impact Chapel who polled 114 votes. A week earlier, there was a stalemate of 114 each during the elections held on September 8, 2023 that resulted to the rerun.

Indeed, it was quite an engaging two-week long activities as members of the Pen Profession campaigned for their candidates and came out from the 10 chapels in the state to cast their votes for their candidate. Eventually, the emergence of the winner brought an end to the 6 year-tenure of the Mr. Paul Jatau led leadership which ran affairs of the NUJ, leaving behind many achievements including a new remodelled Press Center with state of the art facilities.

Other elected officials are Pam Musa as Vice Chairman, Mary Domtur as Secretary, Ezekiel D. Izang as Financial Secretary, Timothy Tyem as Assistant Secretary, Lyop Pam as Treasurer, and Celestine Attasar as Auditor.

In her acceptance speech after her swearing in, Ayuku thanked journalists on the Plateau for the confidence bestowed on her to lead members of the fourth estate of the realm in the state.

While seeking for members cooperation, and promising to deliver on her promises, she said "The Plateau State Council of the NUJ has added its name to the annals of history by electing the first female Chairman".

"I am therefore challenging every member of this council to track me up on promises made during the manifesto, for every promise will surely be fulfilled through the help of God and with cooperation".

She contested for the NUJ elections under the trust Mantra. During the presentation of her manifesto on Thursday, September 7, 2023 at the NUJ Press Center, she described leadership as the driving force to making a remarkable difference through passion, determination, commitment and faith in God.

Ayuku was optimistic that after gaining experience and preparing for leadership for years by holding different posts at the NUJ executive council, and others spheres, she is now ready to take up the mantle of leadership at the Plateau State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ).

Born in Jos, Plateau State capital, she started her educational pursuit, completing her early education in the same state. She then proceeded to the University of Maiduguri where she bagged a degree in Mass Communication in 1999, and subsequently a masters degree in Conflict Management and Peace Studies from the University of Jos. After completing the one year mandatory service to the nation in 2001, Pwaspo gained employment with the Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTVC) in 2002. In 2015, she was appointed the first female Assignment Editor in PRTVC where she works till date. She is also a member of the PRTV Junior Staff Disciplinary Committee, Member,



Ayuku Pwaspo

PRTV Revenue Committee, Secretary, and PRTV Content Committee.

Nicknamed 'Mother Hen' by her colleagues, Ayuku is best described by many as a mobilizer, deliberately assertive, focused and a goal getter. The various positions she has held in the NUJ right from the chapel level to the state Council includes: PRTV Radio Chapel Secretary, State Council's Financial Secretary and Vice Chairman in addition to being a part of various committees which have contributed immensely to the success story of the Plateau council of the NUJ.

Aside being an active member of the Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), the new NUJ Chairperson has continued to lend her voice to developmental issues, leadership, peace building, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) as well being a strong advocate for Women and Girls. Her commitment has made her to serve as the Jos Media Mentor under the NSRP programme, a Women Lead Facilitator with Equal Access International under the Securing Communities Project. She has equally facilitated and presented papers at several trainings and workshops. Besides being an entrepreneur and a farmer, Ayuku was the Vice President of Microwave Multipurpose Cooperative Society PRTVC and the pioneer President of the NUJ Plateau Multipurpose Cooperative Society.

Among key areas the new NUJ Chair promised to delve in, to make an impact in the lives of Plateau Journalists, is to enhance Professionalism, training and partnership, welfare and sustained infrastructural development.

"You will agree with me that our profession is one that attracts people from diverse fields of endeavours. In as much as that is highly enviable, on the other hand, it lowers the standard and ethics of the profession leading to quackery, fake news and hate speeches. These factors bring about the denigration of the peace and unity society looks up to us for" she had

our members with the right information to disseminate to the public. With the new constitution that came into effect February this year, there is the growing need for members to acquire a certificate in the field of Journalism".

She disclosed that in line with achieving a professional status for NUJ members, the outgoing Executive had revalidated the license for the Nigeria Institute of Journalism, Jos center. "Therefore, we will leverage on the human resources within the union to run a diploma programme that will be convenient for members, and also liaise with individuals and relevant organisations to equip the Press Center with computers and equally provide a functional Wi-fi for members' use.

We equally plan to organize annual competitions for members in order to award excellence in reportage, the NUJ in Plateau State under my leadership will sustain the quarterly colloquium's introduced by the outgoing exco. We shall strengthen our relationship with the Government of Plateau State and other stakeholders through partnerships and collaborations to project the true Plateau story to the world as well as the ideals of peaceful coexistence, socio-cultural and economic endowments of the state to attract interested persons to Plateau State".

Concerning the welfare of members, the new Chairperson did not only acknowledge the steady growth of the Council's Cooperative Society, (NUJ Plateau Multipurpose Cooperative Society) but encouraged the participation of more members to boost their economic strength. She hinted that she will explore beneficial investments that will be profitable to cooperators.

Also in her list of proposed plans for Plateau NUJ members is collaboration with Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), to organize regular checkups, and deliberate introduction of entrepreneurial skills acquisition trainings to boost the financial base of members to reduce their depending on only one source of income.

The immediate past NUJ executives

led by Mr. Jatau had in a bid to give journalists a befitting accommodation gained the support of stakeholders and the immediate past Plateau governor, Simon Bako Laing to see to the completion of the NUJ remodelled edifice, a project which stands out as a center of attraction. Therefore to continue with the good works, the new Chair disclosed that she will beautify the Press Center, ensure the conversion of all makeshift structures to permanent edifices as soon as funds are available, and ensure the 500 seater multipurpose hall and offices under construction is prioritised and completed to serve as a great source of revenue to the union. "The facility will also attract patronage to our tenants and serve as a one stop location in Jos. This we will do through massive revenue drive by capitalizing on already established relationships and exploring more opportunities".

The new Chair, Ayuku promised to operate an open door policy to accommodate great ideas and criticisms that will move this union to enviable heights.

Her victory was widely celebrated by gender advocates, in social media circles and with various congratulatory messages by key stakeholders including the Plateau State Government describing her win as a success for journalists. The immediate past NUJ Chairman, also expressed confidence in her capacity to perform having worked with her as his former vice chair. Also the National Association of women journalists in the state, led by Mrs. Nene Dung commended the new Chairperson and her team for recording victory at the polls and expressed happiness with the emergence of 3 women occupying key positions in the new leadership.

As the new executives of the Plateau NUJ settle down to work, aside spearheading professionalism to make journalists meet up emerging trends of the profession, a key driving force should be to advance the success of the Union by making it to live up to its name as one of the highly respected professions.



The new chairman taking the oath of office

EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

Living

By **MARISA COHEN**

Baby Teething Symptoms

TEETHING is a painful process for parents and their baby.

A baby's first teeth usually appear around 4 to 6 months—and these chompers help your child talk and eat solid foods, says Tanny Josen, D.D.S., a pediatric dentist at Kid Island Dental in Long Island, New York. But although teething is an important developmental milestone, it can be painful for babies (and their parents). Here, experts break down the teething process, and they share how to recognize the signs of getting those pearly whites.

Your child will grow a full set of 20 teeth between ages 1 and 3—but the process of developing them starts much earlier. Are you wondering how long teething lasts? Check out this baby teething timeline from the womb to toddlerhood.

When Do Babies Start Teething?
Second Trimester of Pregnancy: Tooth Roots. Yup, that's right: your baby's teeth actually first start developing while they're still in the womb. Around the second trimester of pregnancy, tooth buds begin to form under the gums in your baby's mouth. Eventually, the roots begin to grow, forcing the crown up. "The tooth puts pressure on the tissues above it, and they slowly begin to break down," says Michael Hanna, DDS, a spokesman for the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. "The tissue gets thinner and thinner until it breaks and the tooth pops through."

4-6 Months: Top and Bottom Teeth

The first teeth to come in are usually the two bottom front teeth (central incisors), followed by the four upper teeth (central and lateral incisors). Because these are thinner with a knifelike edge, they often slide through fairly easily.

1st Birthday: Molars

Around your baby's first birthday, the first molars will start to arrive in the back of the mouth; then come the canines (the pointed teeth between the molars and incisors); and then around age 2, the second molars, behind the first set. "Teething molars are often



much more painful because they are a big, fat, broad-surfaced tooth," says Dr. Hanna. "Those are the ones where you tend to see bulging gums." In some cases, fluid can build up, creating a bluish cyst over the unerupted molar. When the tooth breaks through and pops the cyst, your baby may wind up with a mouthful of blood, but it looks a lot worse than it is, says Dr. Hanna.

Teething Symptoms in Babies and Toddlers

So, how can you tell if your baby is actually starting to teethe? Baby teething pain is usually most severe in the days before a tooth cuts through the gums. A child's reaction to teething depends upon

many factors, including their tolerance for pain, their personality, and the density of their gum, says Dr. Hanna. That said, most children experience the following signs and symptoms of teething.

Swollen gums

If your child's gums are swollen and you can feel at least one tooth-sized lump, that means teething is in progress.

Chewing, biting, and sucking. Because your child's gums are irritated, you might see them gnawing on just about anything—toys, crib rails, even their clothes and fists.

Rubbing their gums, ears, and cheeks

Your baby might rub their gums to relieve pressure. They might also pull their ears and fidget with their cheeks—especially when their molars appear. (Note that yanking on ears can also signal an ear infection, so it's important to bring up this symptom with your pediatrician.)

How to help your baby when teething:

No one knows why teething babies produce so much saliva, says Dr. Hanna, but the theory is that the increase of muscle movement in the mouth during this teething period stimulates chewing, which activates the salivary glands. Excess drool can also cause occasional gagging or coughing.

Mouth rash:

The continual wetness from

excess drooling can cause a rash around the mouth, chin, or neck.

Irritability and nighttime fussiness:

Not surprisingly, teething makes many babies crankier and fussier than usual. "Teething babies may be edgy or hard to settle at naptime and bedtime because of throbbing gums, but it's a dull pain, so you can usually distract them during the day," says Ari Brown, M.D., a pediatrician and coauthor of *Baby 411: Clear Answers and Smart Advice for Your Baby's First Year*. Note, however, that if your baby is grumpy all day long and appears uninterested in other activities,

they might have an ear infection, so it's best to contact your pediatrician.

Decreased appetite:

Some kids lose their appetite and refuse to eat or drink. This teething symptom should be short-lived, though.

Low-grade fever:

This is characterized by a fever of less than 101 degrees Fahrenheit, taken rectally, and can be caused by gum inflammation. If low-grade fever is accompanied by a runny nose, a bout of diarrhea, or other strange symptoms, call your pediatrician to rule out an infection of some kind. Jill Lasky, D.D.S., a pediatric dentist at Lasky Pediatric Dental Group in Los Angeles, says teething doesn't cause these symptoms.

Loose stools: Babies may have loose stools from swallowing extra saliva or from changes in diet (teething babies are typically trying various solid foods for the first time). But Dr. Brown says to call the doctor "if the stools are explosive, numerous, or accompanied by blood or mucus."

When to Visit the Pediatrician: Until fairly recently, experts widely thought that teething was responsible for practically every cough, sneeze, and cry in a baby's first years. But experts now say that if your baby has worrisome symptoms, it's best to have their pediatrician examine them to rule out something more serious. That's because "the tiny open wounds in the gums that result from the teeth erupting makes it more likely for the baby to catch a little bug," explains Dr. Lasky.

Contact your pediatrician if any of the following symptoms are present: High fever, diarrhea, or vomiting

The gums are red or blue instead of pink (this usually indicates an eruption cyst, a swelling of the gums above an erupting tooth; although most cysts are benign, it's best to have them checked)

The gums have lesions or bumps

Your baby is refusing to eat and drink for more than a couple of hours. They have rashes on their body

Your child appears ill.



BUSINESS WORLD

CBN's cashless policy: The gains, the hurdles

The Central Bank of Nigeria, CBN, in 2012, disclosed its plans to begin a transition to a cashless economy as part of the country's ambition to become one of the best 20 economies before the year 2020. The objective of the scheme was to reduce the number of naira notes and coins used for business but not to eliminate cash usage in its entirety and seeks to ensure a seamless, inclusive and equitable implementation of the exercise for the overall benefit and growth of Nigerians, the financial system and the economy as a whole. DANJUMA ABDULLAHI writes.

THE apex bank said, "Our economy uses too much cash for transactions for goods and services, especially for buying and selling. This is not how it is done in other progressive countries of the world where there are other payment options like debit and credit cards, bank transfers, bank direct debits, Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), and even mobile phone money."

Consequently on December 21, 2022, the apex bank announced an upward review of its cash withdrawal policy across all payment channels by individuals and corporate organisations. Effective January 9, 2023, individuals and corporate entities can withdraw a maximum of N500,000 and N5 million respectively on weekly basis compared to N100,000 and N500,000 which was previously announced on December 6, 2022.

The bank said in compelling circumstances where cash withdrawal above the limit is required for legitimate purposes, such request shall be subject to a processing fee of 3 per cent and 5 per cent for individuals and corporate organisations respectively.

The new policy on cash-based transactions seeks to reduce the amount of physical cash circulating in the economy, and not to eliminate it – as well as to encourage more electronic-based transactions in the payments for goods, and services among others.

The bank maintained that an



efficient and modern payment system is positively correlated with economic development and is a key elixir for economic growth.

The cashless policy will cut the cost of banking services including the cost of credit and drive financial

inclusion by providing more efficient transaction options and greater reach; improve the effectiveness of monetary policy in managing inflation and driving economic

It will also provide increased convenience and more service

options for consumers and reduce the risk of cash-related crimes, particularly banditry, ransom taking and terrorism financing as well as provide cheaper access to banking services and access to credit.

Certainly, the policy has helped to control inflation, create faster access to capital, reduce revenue leakage, and cash handling costs while the government will enjoy increased tax collections, greater financial inclusion, and increased economic development. Insecurity and high profile corruption have been drastically reduced.

In a complementary gesture, the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) recently unveiled new guidelines aimed at mitigating money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation of weapons, among others.

The enforcement, guidelines, and policies for mitigation of money laundering, terrorist financing, proliferation of weapons and prevention of predicate crimes which became effective on March 1, 2023, restricts cash payments of a sum exceeding N5 million (or its equivalent) for individuals, and N10 million or its equivalent for a body corporate. Section 19 of the MLPPA, 2022 imposes a fine of at least N10 million or imprisonment for a term of at least three years (or both), in the case of individuals; and a fine of N25 million in the case of a body corporate. Section 26 of POCA, 2022 makes provision for the seizure and detention of cash over the prescribed amount under the law.

The framework allowed for the discontinuation of cash withdrawal in Naira and foreign denominations from public accounts at federal, state, and local government levels were in compliance with its statutory

responsibility under Section 3(1) a – s and Section 23 (2) a of the NFIU Act, 2018, and other provisions under the MLPPA, 2022.

According to the NFIU, "Civil servants are becoming more and more vulnerable to money laundering and its predicate offences due to their exposure to cash withdrawals from public accounts".

An analysis spanning 2015 to 2022, showed that the federal, state, and local governments withdrew N225.72 billion, N701.54 billion, and N156.76 billion respectively – all in cash. According to the NFIU chief executive, "The cash withdrawals directly contravene the provisions of the MLPPA, 2022 and the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022 (POCA, 2022) which provide the legal framework setting limitations on cash transactions and sanctions for infringement of the provisions. We support the CBN circular on cash withdrawal limit which is in harmony with the law, provided in Section 2 of MLPPA, 2022. This guideline will support the efforts of the CBN."

There is no doubt that the cashless policy remains popular with Nigerians who believe that the initiative would plug leakages in the administration of public resources and well as help to win the fight against corruption which is endemic in the country. The only obstacle to the policy is the privileged and corrupt elite who want to continue to take undue advantage of the system to enrich themselves to the detriment of vulnerable Nigerians.

The vision of a cashless society, while ambitious, does hold the potential to bring about a range of benefits for the country and its people if implemented correctly. These transformations in the financial landscape have significant effects on the government, businesses, and society at large.

As the world becomes increasingly reliant on technology, the traditional way of doing business is no longer feasible. A cashless society offers a more convenient and secure alternative to physical cash. The benefits are numerous, from faster transactions to reduced costs and risks associated with physical currency, such as theft and fraud.

Despite the challenges, the push by the CBN to modernise the country's financial system to enable individuals and businesses enhance their financial efficiency and security is commendable. This will pave the way for new innovations from digital payment providers and encourage financial inclusion. As Nigeria continues to embrace the shift towards digital payments, it is vital that all stakeholders work together to ensure a seamless transition and maximize the benefits that a cashless society can offer.

It is also imperative that the CBN's Acting Governor, Folashodun Shonubi, addresses the challenges impeding the full implementation of the cashless policy in the country. The apex bank must improve the technology which occasions incessant transaction failures as well as address the hard-to-reach areas and the nation's epileptic electricity supply.



Shonubi

BUSINESS WORLD

AGF to drive reforms in government's financial management

ACCOUNTANT General of the Federation (AGF) has promised to chase reforms that uphold and promote prudence, transparency and accountability in government financial transactions.

The AGF specifically assured to take requisite steps to permanently resolve observed and potential threats to the efficient and continuous implementation of all the financial management reform initiatives of the Federal Government.

Madein explained that since assumption of office, she has undertaken in-depth review of the financial reforms and will leverage on the outcome of the review to inject new ideas and strategies into the projects so that the gains so far recorded will be sustained.

"Recently, the OAGF had meticulous engagements with IPPIS Service providers, I can assure you that there has been great improvement in the operations of the payment platform. The review of other financial management policies is underway. The objective is to give the necessary revitalization to these policies to make them function optimally", she explained in a statement sent out Friday morning in Abuja and signed by Bawa Mokwa, AGF Director of Press.

She said the OAGF will sustain the practice of publishing FAAC revenue distribution details to the three government tiers.

She noted that publication of the revenue distribution will keep Nigerians abreast with the revenue generation and distribution effort of the Federal Government and help them balance government performance with revenue inflows at all levels.

"A government can only thrive if the citizens are carried along in managing



Madein

public funds. Nigerians need to be aware of the inflows and expenditures. With this, they can compare revenue collected with the developments on grounds to ascertain whether the government is performing or not", Madein added.

She revealed that the 2022 revenue distribution figures were ready for publication, which will be followed by the publication of the details of the revenue distribution made in 2023.

According to her, the seeming delay in publishing the 2022 figures was due to a number of factors, including the overriding determination to institute appropriate and permanent mechanism that will guarantee continuous publication of the revenue distribution

Acknowledging the high level of interest shown by Nigerians in the revenue generation and distribution effort of the Government, she assured that effort is in top gear to ensure that the revenue distribution figures are published monthly.

On revenue generation, the AGF said there has been a remarkable increase in

government revenue and expressed optimism that the trend will be sustained.

Madein further assured that her office will ensure prompt and continuous release of funds to the MDAs and the three tiers of government so that development effort will not be hampered.

Nigeria on pathway to economic prosperity – FG

THE Federal Government says Nigeria is on its pathway to economic prosperity through effective implementation of policies for sustainable growth and development.

Sen. Abubakar Bagudu, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, said this at the end of the 22nd Joint Planning Board (JPB) and National Economic Council on Development Planning (NCDP) recently in Osogbo.

The meeting has as its theme: "Imperatives for Restoring Nigeria on the Part of Sustainable Economic Growth and Development".

Bagudu said that the economic summit was significant in providing opportunities for government officials at helm of affairs to brainstorm and interrogate economic policies that would put Nigeria among the comity

of nations.

Gov. Ademola Adeleke and Sen. Abubakar Bagudu, Minister of Budget and National Planning He added that the theme of the summit was carefully crafted to restore and stabilise micro growth and economic development of the country.

According to him, the imperatives for restoring Nigeria on the pathway of sustainable economic growth and development is paramount for industrialisation and economic prosperity.

Bagudu appealed to state governors, local government representatives and the entire citizens to support the federal government in fashioning and repositioning the country on the path of economic growth and development.

The minister commended Gov. Ademola Adeleke of Osun for accepting to host the meeting.

He said he's had been briefed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning, Mr Nebeolisa Anako, that about 30 commissioners or state representatives of budget and economic planning were in Osogbo for the meeting.

Bagudu said that the attendance demonstrated the importance of joint planning and the national council on development.

According to him, examples from countries that have achieved development have shown that planning played a crucial role in their economic take-off.

"Ethiopia, for instance, demonstrated that careful

NIGERIA'S total public debt doubled within a period of one year hitting N87.4 trillion in the second quarter of 2023, a BusinessDay analysis has shown.

According to the latest data of the Debt Management Office (DMO), the country's debt rose by 102 percent to N87.4 trillion, the highest in at least 11 years from N42.8 trillion in Q2 last year. The percent increase is higher than 20.6 percent increase for the previous year.

It also increased on a quarter on quarter basis, by 75.3 percent to N49.9 trillion.

"The major addition to the public debt stock was the inclusion of the N22.7 trillion securitised FGN's Ways and Means Advances," DMO said in a statement.

The Ways and Means Advances is a loan facility through which the CBN finances the shortfalls in the government's budget.

Nigeria's total public debt stock comprises total domestic and external debts of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the thirty-six states, and the Federal Capital Territory.

The statement noted that other additions to the debt stock were new borrowings by the Federal Government

Nigeria's total debt doubles in one year



Tinubu

and the sub-nationals from local and external sources.

"The reforms already introduced by the present administration and those that may emerge from the recommendations of the Fiscal Reform and Tax Policies Committee are expected to impact debt strategy and improve debt

sustainability," it said.

CHANGE OF NAME

The DMO had earlier projected that the country's public debt burden may hit N77 trillion following the National Assembly's approval of the request by former President Muhammadu Buhari to restructure the CBN's ways and means advances.

IBANG
I formerly known and address as **IBIANG KEZIAH IBRI**, now wish to be address as **IBANG KEZIAH EBRI**. All former document remain valid concern authority and general public to please take note.

DACHAAN
I formerly known as **DACHAAN JAPANIS DIENAAN**, now wish to be address as **DACHAAN DIENAAN**. All former document remain valid concern authority and general public to please take note.

JOHN
I formerly known as **RWANG MAGDALINE JOHN**, now wish to be address as **GYANG MAGDALINE JOHN**. All former document remain valid concern authority and general public to please take note.

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DUNG
I formerly known as **GWOM HANATU ADAMU**, now wish to be address as **ADAMU HANNATU DUNG**. All former document remain valid concern authority and general public to please take note.

We have no plan to move NNPC headquarters -Kyari

NIGERIA National Petroleum Company (NNPC) has denied speculations that it plans to move its headquarters in Abuja to Lagos.

Mr Mele Kyari, the Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) NNPC made the denial at the resumed investigative hearing of the ad hoc committee on the acquisition of OVH Energy by NNPC recently.

Kyari said that contrary to the petition by petitioners, the company had no plan of moving its headquarters to Lagos, adding that this was in spite of its present status of a private company, registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission.

He said the insinuation might not be unconnected with the

fact that 70 per cent of its operations were in Lagos, adding that moving the headquarters would incur additional cost on the company.

He said the NNPC Ltd. had merged its operations and moved the right people where they were required to function.

According to him, the registered headquarters of NNPC Ltd. is in Abuja, the mere fact that the GCEO sit with the operations staff does not mean it had moved to Lagos.

According to him, those making the allegation were doing so because they don't want to move; this is the challenge of merger and acquisition all over the world. We

have given them option to resign.

"The company cannot keep them where they are not needed; this is what the petitions are all about."

He noted that in every merger and acquisition, the dominant culture must be allowed to take over such as service, adding that this was exactly what the NNPC Ltd was doing.

"Merger and acquisition comes with challenges but we are minimising the impact, we have to make the business happen.

fact that 70 per cent of its operations were in Lagos, adding that moving the headquarters would incur additional cost on the company.

He noted that in every merger and acquisition, the dominant culture must be allowed to take over such as service, adding that this was exactly what the NNPC Ltd was doing.

According to him, examples from countries that have achieved development have shown that planning played a crucial role in their economic take-off.

"Ethiopia, for instance, demonstrated that careful

planning can deliver prosperity, with a growth rate of about 80 per cent for over a decade.

"Similarly, India, Korea, and other Asian countries have achieved success through planning.

"Given that Nigeria is a federation with provisions requiring federal, state, and local governments to lead through planning and the constitutional provision for a joint planning board between the state and local governments," he said.

Bagudu, who emphasised unity, said that diversity is not a distraction but a potential benefit.

He encouraged cooperation and recognition of common goals, likening the mindset to the creation of trade unions worldwide.

"In my humble view, we are the most important link in our federal setting.

"We are the ones with constitutional responsibilities for planning in the states and coordinating such planning with the federal government," he said.

Earlier, Adeleke said the gathering showed a reflection of diverse collective dedication to finding solution to the economic challenges facing the country.

The governor said the event was timely as the country was planning to navigate through the evolving economic landscape.

He said that Osun would continue to play its path toward ensuring economic prosperity through robust economic policies.

The governor urged

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE ATTSAR

The rise of retail arbitrage in Nigeria

One thing that is not in doubt is the Nigerian entrepreneurial spirit and drive. In the struggle for daily living and alignment with the digital economy, many Nigerians now sell one thing or the other online. Go to any social media handle, from Facebook to WhatsApp to Instagram and Twitter, and you will be shocked at the stock of wares up for sale. ELVIS EROMOSELE writes.



THE number of people involved is simply unprecedented. A closer look indicates that a growing number of people are essentially taking advantage of retail arbitrage opportunities.

Today, Nigeria is witnessing a remarkable surge in retail arbitrage, a practice that involves buying products at a lower price and reselling them at a profit. This burgeoning industry is fueled by a confluence of factors, including the digital age, changing consumer behaviour, and entrepreneurial spirit.

We can say that the reasons behind the rise of retail arbitrage in Nigeria are obvious but its impact on the economy, its vast growth potential and what the Nigerian government can do to support and nurture the industry are not so clear.

The rise of retail arbitrage in Nigeria: Why now?

Experts agree that several key factors are contributing to the rise of retail arbitrage in Nigeria. The top four factors include the e-commerce boom, mobile penetration, changing consumer behaviour and the ever-present Nigerian entrepreneurial spirit.

Firstly, Nigeria is experiencing a surge in e-commerce platforms, which makes it easier for arbitrageurs to source products from various online marketplaces both domestically and globally.

Secondly, the widespread adoption of smartphones and internet access has empowered individuals to participate in online arbitrage, even from remote regions. The Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC) latest figures show connected lines have exceeded 225 million with internet usage at 159.59 million in May 2023.

In addition, as consumers seek diverse products at competitive prices, arbitrageurs can cater to these demands by sourcing a wide range of goods from different markets.

Moreover, the Nigerian entrepreneurial spirit is helping more and more people recognize the potential of retail arbitrage as a viable and profitable business opportunity, fostering its growth.

Impact on the economy

The rise of retail arbitrage in Nigeria has profound implications for the nation's economy:

Job Creation: This industry has the potential to create numerous jobs, from product sourcing and logistics to marketing and sales, contributing to reduced unemployment rates.

Income Generation: Retail arbitrage allows individuals, especially those in underserved areas, to generate additional income, alleviating poverty and

enhancing livelihoods.

Tax Revenue: As the sector grows, it can contribute significantly to tax revenue, which can be reinvested in infrastructure development and public services.

Consumer Choice: Arbitrageurs provide consumers with a wider variety of products at competitive prices, leading to improved standards of living.

Growth Potential

The growth potential of retail arbitrage in Nigeria is immense. To the discerning, with the right strategies and support, retail arbitrage can diversify into various niches, including electronics, fashion, and beauty, expanding its reach.

Nigerian arbitrageurs can also explore international markets,

importing and exporting products, and strengthening economic ties with other nations.

Leveraging emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and data analytics, arbitrageurs can optimize sourcing and pricing strategies.

Government Support

To foster the growth of retail arbitrage in Nigeria, the government can take inspiration from the United States in five major areas:

Education and Training: Develop training programs and workshops to educate aspiring arbitrageurs on best practices, marketing, and financial management.

Access to Finance: Facilitate access to affordable loans and financing options to help entrepreneurs invest in inventory and scale their operations.

A word for practitioners and

prospective – remember that success in retail arbitrage requires patience, persistence, and a willingness to learn from both successes and failures. It's also essential to keep a keen eye on your profit margins and carefully manage your finances to ensure a sustainable and profitable business.

Conclusion

The rise of retail arbitrage in Nigeria signifies a promising economic opportunity that, if nurtured and supported by the government, can drive job creation, income generation, and economic growth. By drawing lessons from the success of the United States in this field, Nigeria can unlock the full potential of retail arbitrage, paving the way for a brighter economic future.

"Secondly, the widespread adoption of smartphones and internet access has empowered individuals to participate in online arbitrage, even from remote regions. The Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC) latest figures show connected lines have exceeded 225 million with internet usage at 159.59 million in May 2023. In addition, as consumers seek diverse products at competitive prices, arbitrageurs can cater to these demands by sourcing a wide range of goods from different markets."



With **BULUS GAMBO**

'I place much value in gospel music'

Continued from page 18

some in my words. The nature of some of these songs and dressing are mostly in conformity to that of the word. I guess, for some, the reason is to gain acceptance and not look old fashioned. This has led to exposing sensitive parts of the body and singing songs that are not gospel at all. For some of our Fathers; they see the contradiction between the songs we sing, the mode of our dressing, some of them have personally confronted us and asked if we are talking to some of those people because the way they dress is different from the what they sing. As regards to this; still I can see a revival gradually happening though slowly.

Most of the Gospel songs of today lacks originality, what do you think is the problem?

That is true, for some of the gospel songs of today there is an absence of originality. You can hear someone singing a gospel song but with an infusion of worldly beating from another song.

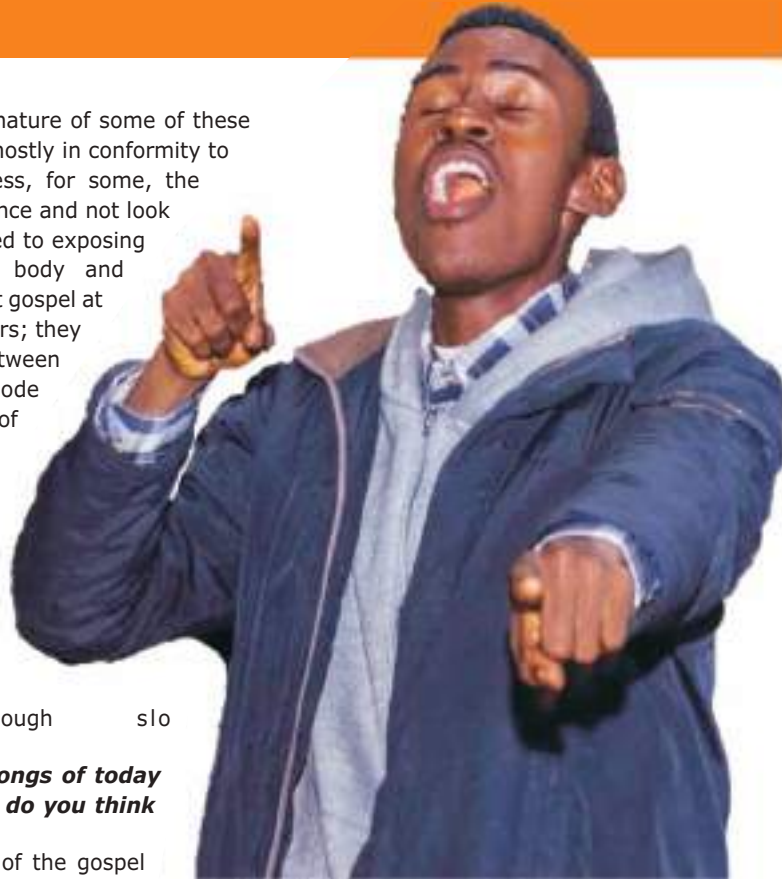
For me, the problem is because many people don't want to spend quality time with God and our goal is to please the people not God. You see, if we spend quality time with God, we will sing heavenly songs even while here on earth before we even arrive heaven. If our goal is to please people not God, then we can't have heavenly songs because to the worldly; the heavenly don't make sense.

The word original is something which others are copied, it also means something that is fresh or being first. God gives songs and when He gives a song, it comes with originality meaning it comes fresh with much power, you know when something is fresh, it carries much power and impact. For me, the absence of originality has caused the absence of impact and power when we hear songs. Some of the hymns we sing today were written hundreds of years back but they still carry the same impact, they carried then when they were first written and the secret is about originality. Most of those who wrote those songs wrote them from their experiences, circumstances while some received the songs following their encounter and or revelation.

What do we expect of you in the near future?

There is still a ray of hope. For me, without fear, I will say there is going to be a mighty revival in the aspect of Gospel music because Gods is raising men who are not willing

to settle for less and careless about the impact. We must expel any form of fear



because God is building gospel music ministers who will sing and the power of God will move beyond expectations. I have hope that the glory of the time to come will be greater than the former by the grace of God, we must keep praying and expecting that the future will be better than that of the past although it seems almost impossible but I already see it raising beyond what we see and for me; I believe that one day in no distance time, the glory of Gospel songs will return

Any advice for upcoming musicians?

Yes, there is an advice for the up coming musicians. You can't ignore spending time with God and expect to know, receive and sing the kind of songs that God finds pleasure in.

I must be emphatic here that when it comes to the issue of Gospel songs the first and most important thing is to be born again, when I say born again, am not taking about going for programmes and ministering or attending gatherings where born again people of God fellowship. Being born again has two dimensions and this has to do with giving you life in Christ and accepting His is King. This is the challenge of many ministers today, what we even sing is yet to become life to us. And also, never you compete with another minister out there, be original, If you are original then you will be exceptional.

You must invest time in your fellowship with God, when a song carries the presence of God, there is miracle.

Also I want you to know that it is God who gives songs and when He gives them, He also backup the songs and use it as a channel to glorify His name. As a minister, if your goal is not to glorify God then you won't last and your impact will be less felt.

Final word?

To be good in anything and your time must be invested.

Never be discouraged about starting small, no seed ever becomes a tree without going through a process. Ensure that you spend time with God to receive heavenly kind of music that will bring healing to our generation.

Thanks a lot.

Where do richest Americans live?

Continued from page 18

earning him the No. 26 spot on The Land Report's list of America's largest landowners last year. In terms of residences, he has a 165,000-acre ranch in West Texas, a waterfront house in Washington state, three linked apartments in Manhattan's Century Tower, and a 12,000-square-foot Beverly Hills estate that boasts Tom Cruise as a neighbor, according to Forbes.

His home at Medina, Washington, close to Amazon's headquarters, boasts 5.35 acres and about 29,000 square-foot of living space. Aside from the main home, there's also a caretaker's cottage and a 4,500-square-foot boathouse on Lake Washington.



Warren BuffettWorth: \$65.5 billion Home: Omaha, Nebraska

Although the shrewdest investor on earth holds multiple real estate investments, Mr. Buffett, 86, is known for living humbly.

His home sits on a corner in Omaha, Nebraska, which he bought in 1958 for \$31,500. Mr. Buffett has lived there ever since. The house, originally built in 1921, underwent several expansions to make it a cozy and comfortable 6,500-square-foot home for the man who has a net worth of over \$65.5 billion.



Mark ZuckerbergWorth: \$55.5 billion Home: Palo Alto, California

The youngest richest entrepreneur docks most of his wealth in schools, health and other philanthropies. His real estate portfolio include his home in Palo Alto and a 9.9-million pied-a-terre near Dolores Park in San Francisco.

Mr. Zuckerberg, 32, purchased his first Craftsman-style 5,000-square-foot home in Palo Alto in 2011 for \$7 million. He snapped up four of the houses surrounding his home in the following years for about \$43.8 million to better keep his privacy. But his plan to tear down and rebuild those four homes has been stalled.



Larry EllisonWorth: \$49.3 billion Home: Woodside, California

Oracle executive chairman Larry Ellison, 72, has an extensive real estate portfolio. He has bought up large parts of whole neighborhoods in Malibu and around Lake Tahoe. He owns a \$70-million Beechwood Mansion in Newport, Rhode Island; a garden villa in Kyoto, Japan; and 98% of the land of Lanai, Hawaii's sixth-largest island, which he purchased in 2012 for \$500 million, according to published reports.

His estate in Woodside, California, with an estimated value of \$110 million, is modeled after 16th-century Japanese architecture, complete with a man-made 2.3-acre lake.

Source: Mansion Global

SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigeria: Corruption and need for probe

CORRUPTION thrived luxuriantly during former President Jonathan's administration – the breadth confounded the nation as his successor beamed the searchlight into the dark tunnels through which it all happened. The former Minister of Petroleum, Diezani Madueke, and the National Security Adviser, Sambo Dasuki, easily became the administration's face of corruption. Huge corruption proceeds were retrieved just as prosecutions were made. Though, many other cases are still lingering in courts. Abachi Silas Ungbo writes.

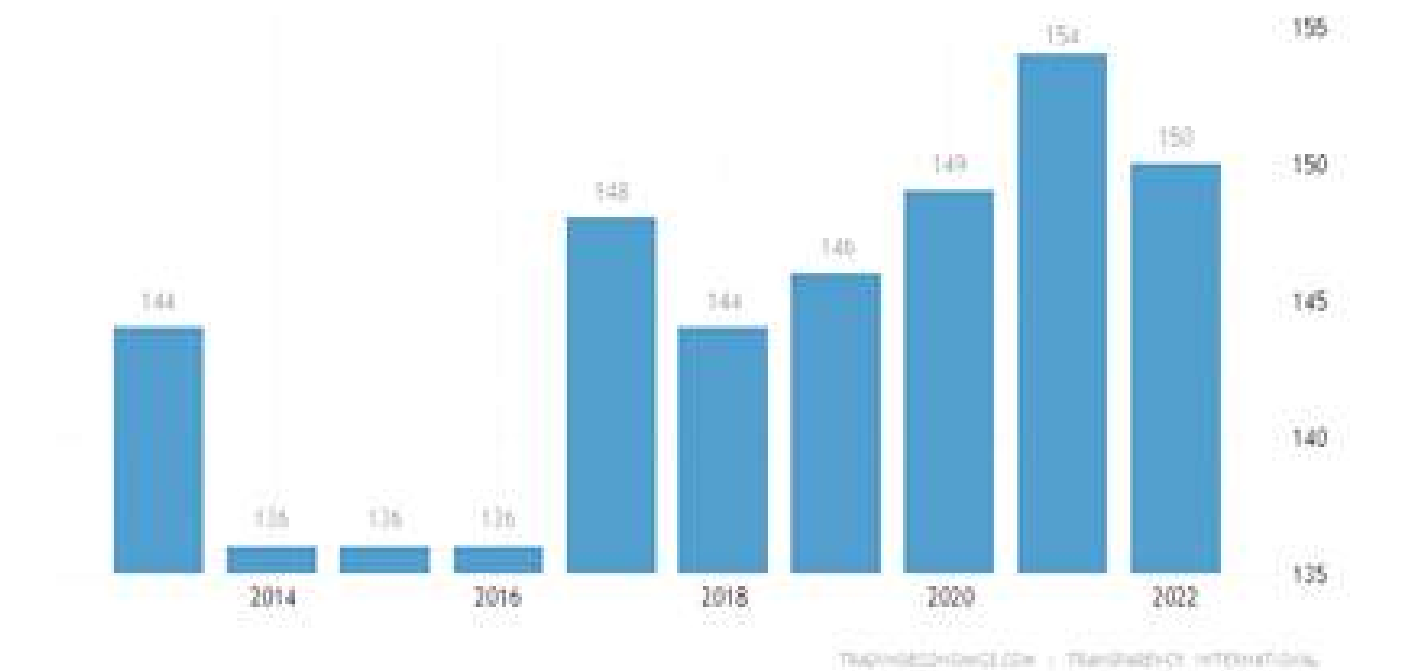
It was a huge heist as the anatomy of the corruption was laid bare. Speaking in an event organized by the Youngsters Foundation Initiative (YFI) in commemoration of the 2017 international corruption day, Debbie Palmer, head of the UK-DFID, stated that Nigeria lost \$32 billion to corruption during the six years of the Jonathan administration. It clearly exemplified the whys and wherefores for the stifled development of the country despite being awash with huge resources.

It was in the early days of the former President Muhammadu Buhari' administration and not a few cheerleaders were spurred by his action. It was a kind of an opening gambit that struck fear to the entire system. With that, it reinforced the legendary President Buhari's allergy to corruption. The courage was applauded and hope and confidence grew anew of a new era of zero tolerance to corruption. Pathetically, that fizzled out as days wore on.

The fight against corruption lost considerable steam. It became entirely rigged with rhetoric than action. The administration simply gave up on its avowed fight against corruption. In fact, corruption became braver! The reverberation of bruits of corruption and sharp practices cast aspersion on the squeaky-clean reputation of the President.

The opinion of Bishop Matthew Kukah on corruption in the last administration which he expressed in his lecture at the celebration of the 60th Anniversary to the call to bar of Aare Afe Babalola was singularly brutal. He stated that "they were not the ones who caused corruption but I think in the last administration, we saw the ugliest phase of corruption whether in moral terms, financial terms and other terms."

According to



Nigeria corruption index 2023

PricewaterhouseCooper (PwC), in its report on the Impact of Corruption on Nigeria (2016) "the loss to GDP from graft in Nigeria will climb to 37 percent by 2030 if left untamed." It will really be scandalous for the current President to just carry on as though nothing untoward happened? Truth is, the nation has lost its defenses against corruption which has placed it, in a tailspin. It is the result of atrophic leadership which has consistently rocked the nation. And that underlined why no one envied the successor of President Buhari.

Though, there have been calls for probe since President Tinubu assumed power due to the huge stench of sleaze with the attendant cost to the nation. In my estimation, what is good against Jonathan should be good also against Buhari. Call to

public service shouldn't be seen as a call to the dining table. Everyone should be made to account for their action or inactions when immunity expires. For instance, the nation needs to know more about the controversial Nigeria Air which the former Minister of Aviation, Hadi Sirika, launched 48 hours to his exit. The entire process was not only shoddy but opaque with huge shroud of secrecy. It also necessary to look into the allegation that was amplified by the Socio-economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) on the unaccounted 2.1 billion dollars and 3.1 trillion-naira oil revenue and fuel subsidy payment between 2016 and 2019. There have been so many disapprovals to the proposition of probe- which many consider

diversionary and waste of precious little time but it is just by the current administration is way of achieving the following: Firstly, restoring sanity and hope; secondly, reclaiming all that was lost to a few people and thirdly, shedding light to the situation that lacked clarity. The points are predicated on the expectation that they will institute an acute awareness on the mind of public office holders on the absence of immunity against corruption which will practically serve as a deterrent. This brings to the fore the need for effective and quick prosecution of corruption cases; the cessation of mere slap on the wrist- which the nation has witnessed umpteen times; and the plugging of holes through which corruption take place. The place of strong leadership remains an important factor. The housecleaning in the

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) by the current administration is commendable and should be extended to other areas and personalities besmirched by corruption. The fight to uncovering the rot and mindless fraud must be carried with much seriousness, commitment and courage, which the former President failed to exhibit. It also should transcend party affiliation, so the president must give the lie to the assertion made by the former APC chairman Adams Oshiomhole that "once you join APC your sins are forgiven." The president must demonstrate statesmanship and patriotism in dealing with not a few fellow party men in the last administration who are known to carry a huge badge of corruption. A selective fight will definitely smack of hypocrisy

NEWS

CAS assesses Army's scorecard

By DORCAS PANKYES

In a significant gathering of officers and soldiers at the Army Headquarters, Command Officers' Mess 1 in Asokoro, Abuja, Lieutenant General TA Lagbaja Nam, the Chief of Army Staff of Nigeria, opened the Chief of Army Staff's Combined Second and Third Quarters conference due to recent appointments and officer responsibilities.

He emphasized the conference's importance in refining strategies to adapt to the fast-changing security and strategic environments.

The CAS highlighted the Nigerian Army's achievements in various operations, including Operation HADIN Kai, curbing Boko Haram's activities in the North East, resulting in surrendered terrorists and the restoration of governance in previously deprived areas. Operation HADARIN DAJI and Operation WHIRL PUNCH effectively countered banditry and insurgency in the North West and North Central regions.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Army contained criminal activities in the South East by Indigenous People of Biafra and Eastern Security Network through Operation UDO KA, allowing law-abiding citizens to conduct their businesses without fear. In collaboration with government agencies, the army successfully thwarted attempts to disrupt economic activities in the South West and achieved positive outcomes in anti-illegal oil bunkering operations in the South South.

While acknowledging the cost and setbacks of military operations, the Chief of Army



Lagbaja

Staff commended the army for remaining resolute in their efforts to deny criminals respite and intensify operations against them. He announced the establishment of Special Forces units and praised their impressive performances through intelligence-led operations and the use of special equipment, emphasizing the importance of maintaining these resources.

Lieutenant General TA Lagbaja shared President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's directive to address all security challenges, unveiling his Command Philosophy to enhance the Nigerian Army's capabilities. He stated the critical role of sound administration and troops' welfare in operations and expressed gratitude to President Tinubu for directing the payment of pending

Group Life Assurance to the families of fallen soldiers.

The Chief of Army Staff reiterated his commitment to the defense of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Lieutenant General TA Lagbaja Nam reminded the gathering of the importance of projecting an appropriate level of force to confront any situation, stating that strength keeps enemies at bay. He officially declared the Chief of Army Staff's Combined Second and Third Quarters Conference 2023 open and wished participants successful deliberations.

The conference commenced, with officers and soldiers actively engaging in discussions, sharing insights, and devising strategies to further strengthen the Nigerian Army, ensuring the security and well-being of the nation in 2023 and beyond.

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

THE FCT Commandant of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Olusola Odumosu has paid a courtesy visit to the Acting Guards Brigade Commander, Col. Olusola Adebisi Onasanya, at the Headquarters Guards Brigade in Abuja.

During the visit, Odumosu emphasized the need for collaboration and synergy between security agencies to ensure effective security coverage of the country.

He also thanked the Nigerian Army for their support and noted that the Civil Defence Corps owed its evolution to the military, especially the Nigerian Army.

Odumosu solicited more collaboration in the areas of operations and training, and the Brigade Commander promised to consult with the Defence Headquarters to facilitate the training of NSCDC personnel.

The visit was seen as a mark of continuous synergy and

NSCDC Commandant calls for synergy with Army



Audi

interagency collaboration. Air Mshl Elson Moyo is on a week-

long visit to Nigeria, during which he will be visiting some NAF units, including the North East.

Wwang Community donates generator to Karl Kumm University

THE host community of Karl Kumm University, Vom has donated a 22 KV stand-by electric generator worth 20 million naira to the institution.

The generating power supply is intended to compliment the power generating capacity of the institution.

Speaking during the presentation ceremony, the Gwam Rwey Wwang, His Royal Highness Da Gyang Gutt Balak urged the management university to ensure proper

usage of the generator.

He explained that following the historic take-off of academic activities, desire to assist the university, the host community decided to donate the stand-by electric generator hoping that the gesture would close the gap in other to ensure smooth academic activities at the stage of learning.

In his remarks, the Pro-Chancellor of the university, Prof Ochapa Onaze thanked

the community for the kind gesture which would further help the institution attain its intended purpose of establishment.

Prof Onaze explained that work on the establishment of the Karl Kumm University started in 2006 and so far tremendous efforts have been made towards ensuring that the institution is ranked amongst the best universities in the country.

Welcoming the guests, the Vice Chancellor, Prof Naven Audu Gambo said, the university has since took-off with students receiving lectures in an accommodating environment decent for academic learning adding that admissions were still in progress.

According to him, the host community has stood behind the institution and such cooperation was beginning to yield fruitful results noting that this harmonious relationship is in the best interest of the institution.

Contributing, the COCIN Wwang RCC Chairman, Rev. Joshua Davou thanked the community for improving the power supply capacity of the institution which will go a long way in assisting the students learning ability.



Prof Gambo

Business organization organizes summer camp

RACHELE Kiddie's Business Organization situated at the Plateau Publishing Corporation Multipurpose Cooperative Society (PPC-MCs) Shopping Complex, West of Mines Jos has organized 3 weeks summer camp for 28 children

By JIDAUNA DARING

between the ages of 5 to 15 to learn different skills.

Architect, Rachel Guwom stated this while speaking with **THE NIGERIA STANDARD** at the closing ceremony of the training held

at the Great Blessings Christian School, Rayfield Jos, recently.

Guwom said that the reason for organizing the programme was because of the gap she saw in training the younger ones in other vocational skills and capacity building.

According to Guwom, her organization thought it wise to be the one to fill in the gap. "What happened in August took us several months of planning right from May. It's a really capital intensive programme."

She disclosed that the programme was not free, it is for profit. Guwom explained that even though the organization made little to no profit this time around due to government policies; it was because it was their first outing and they were trying out a lot of things to be able to gain acceptability, market share and equally build authority.

"However, we had 11 Orphans join us from fund raising organized on my social media platform," she explained.

Guwom pointed out that what they intended to achieve in the programme was no doubt to educate the children, particularly in the areas that are not being paid attention to

in Nigeria.

She maintained that the organization intends to build the children's entrepreneurial skills such as, coding, graphic, design, catering, painting among others while also having fun through other activities such as dance, skating and other fun activities.

Guwom pointed out that they had a total of 28 learners this year. She added that they are equally looking forward to having about 100 learners in 2024 now that plans are in top gear to get such number.

She remarked that this programme was the first of its kind, adding that from the look of things, they are not stopping anytime soon. According to her, Rachele Kiddies Summer has come to stay. She disclosed that aside summer camp, they intend to do other activities for children which will mostly take place during holidays.

Guwom further explained that the organization gets its support from social media platforms, especially facebook. Adding further that the idea was crowd sourced from one facebook post which led to many other developments.

She said that she was impressed with the outcome of the event, even though a



Guwom

NEWS

Nigerian first lady commended for bringing succor

By JIDAUNA DARING

NIGERIAN first lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON has been commended for bringing succor of 500,000,000.00 to the door step of 500 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) that were affected as a result of communal clashes in 6 Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Plateau State.

Wife of the Plateau State Governor, Barrister Mrs. Helen M. Mutfwang gave the commendation while speaking to journalists shortly after the presentation of 500,000,000.00, by the Nigerian first lady to Plateau State Governors, Barrister Caleb M. Mutfwang for onward disbursement to the affected persons in the state.

Our correspondent reports that the event which was irrespective of political, tribe and religions differences took place at the banquet hall Government House, Little Rayfield Jos, last Tuesday.

Barr. Mrs. Mutfwang said that the gesture was part of the objective of the "Renewed Hope Initiative" (RHI), adding that the purpose of the coming of Nigerian first lady to Plateau State was to reach out to the IDPs in the state.

The State first lady told journalists that, she is the chairperson of the project at the state chapter, adding that, she also has a role to play when it comes to the issue of collaboration with the "Renewed Hope Initiative" to reach out to Plateau people in different areas.

Barrister, Mrs. Mutfwang described the presentations of the N500,000,000.00 cheques as one of the very noble objective of the Nigerian first lady's programme to better the live of families.

She maintained that the gesture would equally go a long to improve the well being of the affected persons since it gained towards re-establish the victims again, to live a normal life.

SUNDAY STANDARD reports that the Nigerian first lady and her entourage were earlier received at the Yakubu Gowon Airport Jos to the venue of the event by the first lady of the state-amongst other dignitaries.

Also, earlier in her welcome remarks at the event, RHI Director on Social Intervention, Mrs. Ekache Unoma Akpabio who was represented by RHI secretary, Barr. Mrs. Chioma Uzodimma



Oluremi

appreciated God for making the event a reality, saying that the beneficiaries were carefully selected from the 6 LGAs.

Mrs. Akpabio pointed out that the scope of RHI

anchored on agriculture, economic empowerment, education, health and social investment. She added that, the mission statement of RHI is "... Towards a better life for families.

PLSG allays fears regarding First lady's largess

THE attention of Plateau State Government has been drawn to the public concern surrounding the list of beneficiaries selected to receive aid from the generous donation of N500 million to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and victims of attacks in Plateau State by Her Excellency, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, First Lady, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

This was disclosed in a statement by Gyang Bere, the Director of Press Affairs (DOPA) to Governor Mutfwang. The statement stated that these funds are intended to provide relief to those who have been adversely affected by the security challenges that have resulted in the loss of lives and property in several local government areas within the state.

Once again, the government and the people of Plateau State extend their heartfelt gratitude to Senator Oluremi Tinubu for her compassionate intervention. We want to clarify unequivocally that the narratives/list currently circulating on social media is marred by inaccuracies and should be dismissed. They are sponsored by individuals hell bent on discrediting government initiatives and resolve to ameliorate the plight of the victims.

We would like to reassure the public that we are actively working in close collaboration with the First Lady's office to ensure that the financial assistance reaches the most vulnerable individuals who have been directly impacted by the regrettable violence and communal attacks in our state.

It is important to note that the initial contribution, a bank draft, was presented to His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, without specifying

the name of any beneficiary.

To ensure that intervention is genuinely disbursed, the government convened a meeting on Thursday, 14th September 2023, with the Transition Committee Chairmen and traditional leaders from the affected Local Government Areas. The aim of the meeting was to reconcile the list and rectify any inaccuracies, ensuring that the funds are directed to those

truly in need.

Additionally, the government is working in collaboration with a bank, to establish accounts for beneficiaries who do not currently possess bank accounts. This will facilitate direct disbursement of the funds to the intended recipients.

We earnestly appeal to all citizens to remain calm and support the government's efforts in seeking assistance from compassionate individuals,

First lady worries over violence against women, children

From DORCAS PANKYES

WIFE of Kogi State Governor, Aminat Oiza Bello has expressed worry over the increased rate of violence against women and children in the country.

of Kogi State Governor, Aminat Oiza Bello has expressed worry over the increased rate of violence against women and children in the country.

Aminat disclosed this during the opening ceremony of the 2023 week of the Kogi State branch of International Federation of Women Lawyers, (FIDA), held in Lokoja, with the theme, "Combating violence against Women and Children: New skills and strategies"

Oyiza Bello, who doubles as the grand patroness of FIDA, said their mission is to promote and safeguard the rights of women and children in Nigeria.

According to her, the increasing crime of violating women and children rights knows no boundaries, adding that it is a global crisis that calls for global and collective action

"Women and children continue to suffer from various forms of violence which are increasingly shocking and senseless.

"The harms inflicted not only include the physical and psychological scars on victims, but also the collateral obstruction in our community and our dear nation.

"Violence against women and children often remains hidden. This means that every incident requires our attention and action. Perpetrators must face us, and we must make them face every possible deterrent," she stated.

She also called on well-meaning individuals to give back to the society in their own quota.

COAS reaffirms commitment to development

BY DORCAS PANKYE

THE Chief of Army Staff (COAS), Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja, has reiterated the dedication and capability of officers and soldiers of the Nigerian Army (NA) in creating a safe and secure environment to foster good governance and socio-economic development.

The COAS made this commitment during the closing ceremony of the Chief of Army Staff Combined Second and Third Quarters Conference 2023 at the Army Headquarters Command Officers' Mess 1 in Asokoro, Abuja.

In his address, General Lagbaja highlighted that the conference provided a valuable platform to assess and evaluate the training, operational, and administrative activities of the Nigerian Army in relation to national security.

The briefings and presentations delivered during the conference shed light on the challenges ahead and equipped the formation commanders with the necessary information to



Lagbaja

tackle the nation's adversaries effectively.

The COAS called on all formation commanders to leverage their strength and resources to decisively

defeat any threats facing the nation. He emphasized that the decisions made during the conference would facilitate the redefinition of training and operational activities to achieve desirable outcomes.

Expressing gratitude to the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria for his support in repositioning the Nigerian Army for optimal performance, General Lagbaja assured of unwavering loyalty from officers and soldiers of the NA to the Federal Government and the constitution of Nigeria. He stated that the Nigerian Army would continue to set an example for other armies around the world.

During the conference, the COAS presented life assurance cheques to ten families of fallen soldiers as part of the Nigerian Army's commitment to providing financial security and support to those who lost their loved ones in active service. This gesture serves as a token of appreciation for the sacrifices made by personnel in defense of the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The conference also witnessed the decoration of Major General Abdul Kahlifa Ibrahim, former Force Commander of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), with the National Order of Chad Medal of Honor. The Chadian Government honored General Ibrahim during his tenure of duty.

The Chief of Army Staff Combined Second and Third Quarters Conference 2023 has not only fostered unity and collaboration among the Nigerian Army, sister services, and other security agencies, but has also set the stage for the reinvigoration of the NA's training and operations to bolster national security and development.

philanthropic organizations, corporate entities, and international bodies. Together, we can alleviate the sufferings of the displaced persons within our state.

Be rest assured, the Plateau State Government is committed to upholding transparency and accountability in this endeavor. The Time Is Now to unite and build a

Also speaking, the Chief Judge of Kogi State, Justice Josiah Majebi asserted that all hands must be on deck to curb the menace. She stressed that FIDA should also look into the affairs of men that were being violated in the society.

While expressing satisfaction with the activities of FIDA in Kogi State, the CJ charged the body to devise a new strategy to address the societal menace. She also called on parents to sensitize their wards to have value for the sanctity of life.

Earlier in her remarks, Kogi State Chairperson of FIDA, Ajuma Lilian Okolo hinted that this year's theme underscores the body's commitment to addressing one of the most pressing issues that plague the Nigerian society today.

NEWS

President Tinubu approves new CBN Governor

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has approved the nomination of Dr. Olayemi Michael Cardoso to serve as the new Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), for a term of five (5) years at the first instance, pending his confirmation by the Nigerian Senate.

This was disclosed in a press release signed by Chief Ajuri Ngelale, Special Adviser to the President on Media & Publicity and was issued to press men, recently in Abuja.

The statement noted that the directive is in conformity with Section 8 (1) of the Central Bank of Nigeria Act, 2007, which vests in the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the authority to appoint the Governor and Four (4) Deputy Governors for the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), subject to confirmation by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Furthermore, President



Cardoso

Bola Tinubu has approved the nomination of four new Deputy Governors of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), for a term of five (5) years at the first instance, pending their confirmation by the Nigerian Senate, as listed below:

- (1) Mrs. Emem Nnana Usoro
- (2) Mr. Muhammad Sani Abdullahi Dattijo
- (3) Mr. Philip Ikeazor

(4) Dr. Bala M. Bello
In line with President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope agenda, the President expects the above listed nominees to successfully implement critical reforms at the Central Bank of Nigeria, which will enhance the confidence of Nigerians and international partners in the restructuring of the Nigerian economy toward sustainable growth and

BY PETER TITLE

THE Plateau State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Honourable Ephraim Usman, has applauded the present administration under Barrister Caleb Mutfwang for working tirelessly towards eradicating the shackles of retrogression for the path of progress and development.

He stated this recently when the people of Kantana Constituency in Kanam Local Government Area led by the Transition Implementation Committee Chairman, Honourable Ado Yusuf paid him a courtesy visit in his office in Jos.

According to the commissioner, the The Time Is Now administration under the present administration was focused and determined in doing the needful for the interest and common good

Commissioner pats Mutfwang on the back

of all citizens.

The Commissioner explained that this administration's efforts towards making the state great was aimed at living good legacies. He added that the ministry had keyed into the vision and mission of the government which he added has started yielding positive results. He promised to convey their request to the Governor of the state.

Earlier, the leader of the delegation, Hon. Ado Yusuf said the entire Kantana Constituency at home and in the diaspora felicitates with him over his appointment, describing it as well deserved.

The TIC Chairman further noted that looking at his pedigree, the governor

would not be disappointed, knowing that he is an upright person who always works for justice when given an assignment.

According to Mr Philemon Majam, who spoke on behalf of the youths, they were filled with joy over the philanthropic gesture of the Commissioner who gave the Constituency 100 bags of assorted grains to cushion the effects of fuel subsidy removal. He said it has gone a long way in alleviating the economic hardships being faced in the country.

He pledged their loyalty to the present administration led by Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, promising that they would continue to support it for them to achieve their mission.

Plateau ACREsAL opens 19 bidders

By **EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

PLATEAU State Agro-Climatic Rehabilitation in Semi-Arid Landscape Project (ACReSAL) has opened nineteen (19) out of twenty-four (24) purchased bid documents for the



Mutfwang

where threats originate from both state and non-state actors.

He went further to state that the constitutional role of the NAF in tackling Nigeria's security challenges in concert with other security services, demands constant generation, delivery and sustenance of a diverse range of credible air power capabilities as well as a vastly agile and resilient air force. This, he noted, is predicated on the crucial need for the NAF to have the necessary human capacity for mission accomplishment, hence the need to ensure that the NAF trains its pilots to the highest professional standards for effective air power delivery.

This Conference is the inaugural edition of the Future Air Force Conference to be held in Prague, Czech Republic, with the theme, "Challenges of Modern Air Force Training Solutions". The well attended Conference had in attendance over 100 officials from 29 countries. Representatives of aviation-related industries including Lockheed Martins, Aero Vodochody, SAAB and OMNIPOL were also in attendance to acquaint the participants with new trends in technologies in defence

reconstruction/rehabilitation of Plateau Club, Bingham University Gully Erosion Site in Jos.

This occasion took place recently, at the conference hall of the Plateau State ACREsAL Jos, the State capital where bidders from different companies, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and State Steering Committee (SSC) as well as representatives of the host communities witnessed the occasion.

Delivering his opening remarks, the Plateau State Project Coordinator of ACREsAL, Mr. Garba Gwon Gonkol, thanked Governor Caleb Mutfwang, for the show of interest to have funded the invitation of the project and promised to give all bidders a transparent opportunity because credibility was their target.

He disclosed that the agency has constituted an Evaluation Committee that would look into all documents diligently and transparently and ensure that credible and qualified bidders emerged so that the contract would be carried out according to the specification.

On his part, the Permanent Secretary, Plateau State Ministry for Environment and Minerals Development, Albert Chaimang, encouraged the bidders to accept whatever

was the outcome because in every game, there must be a winner and a loser and out of all of them, only one of them would emerge winner.

Also, the State Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Hon. Noel Nkup, described the process as transparent and a demonstration of due process. He urged whoever wins to carry - out a quality job according to the contract specification so that the benefiting communities would have every reason to celebrate.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner for Environment and Minerals Development, Hon. Peter Kanang Gwom, who is also the Chairman of the State Steering Committee (SSC), said the opening of this bid was his first contract to carry out as a Commissioner and he would ensure that he sees to the best and quality completion of the contract.

However, the Chairman of the Plateau Club, Bingham University Gully Erosion Site, the benefiting community, Arc. Ibrahim Kamndu, thanked God and the Plateau State Government for working hard to see that their community was considered for this project and ensuring that the project came to fruition. He promised to give the contractor the needed

CAS charges on partnership with other Air Forces

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

THE Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar, has stated that strengthening strategic partnership with other Air Forces provides the pathway to an enduring and comprehensive solution towards addressing the challenges encountered in pilot trainings.

The Nigerian Air Force spokesperson, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet stated this recently in Abuja. He said that the Nigerian Air Force (NAF), is poised to strengthen its strategic partnership with the Czech Air Force in the areas of technological transfer, capacity building as well as research and development.

This partnership,

according to him, will enhance the proficiency of NAF maintenance crew to be able to undertake some major maintenance works in-country, thereby reducing aircraft downtime, while improving air operations.

The CAS made this known when he met with the Commander of Czech Air Force, Major General Petr Cepelka on the sideline of the Future Air Force 2023 Conference that took place last week in Prague, Czech Republic.

Speaking further, Air Marshal Abubakar sought the cooperation and collaboration of the Czech Air Force in the areas of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency and pilot training.

While acknowledging the

support the NAF has received from the Czech Air Force, since the initial purchase of the L-39 aircraft in 1986, the CAS disclosed that the NAF has continued to maintain an active relationship with the Czech Air Force.

He recalled that the NAF has in the past collaborated with the Czech Air Force on pilot trainings on L-39Z aircraft simulator, altitude chamber and spatial disorientation training for several NAF pilots across different platforms, which have positively impacted on NAF's fighting capabilities.

Responding, the Czech Chief of Air Staff, Major General Petr Cepelka thanked Air Marshal Abubakar for sustaining the long history of mutual relationship that has existed between the NAF and the Czech Air Force. He then assured him of the Czech Air Force support in the areas of aircraft acquisition, maintenance, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Operations and training of NAF Special Forces.

In his paper delivered at the Conference titled "Pilot Training in the Nigerian Air Force - An Assessment", Air Marshal Abubakar noted that the development and employment of air power capabilities are increasingly becoming critical to the dynamic security environment



Abubakar

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Fertilizer scarcity: Farmers resort to human urine

Continued from page 10

fertilizer, where the criminals were in the habit of purchasing Urea in large quantity for the production of improvised explosives.

However, another mix bag of factors have been attributed to the Russia – Ukraine war. But then, the fertilizer availability and affordability issue has always been a vexed discourse with the government still taken the bulk of the blame especially with what some critics say are the failures and missteps by policy makers to address the main issues at stake coupled with endemic corruption in the system.

Others also lay blame at the door steps of those institutions that are supposed to take action but have either been compromised or have left the farmers at the mercy of fraudulent businessmen who are making money at the expense of

these poor farmers.

SUNDAY STANDARD also gathered, that the farming communities are at a cross road wondering where the solution will come from as average farmers appear tinged with helplessness over their sorry condition with their source of livelihood completely threatened. While the harsh economic realities bite harder, the center of their uncertainty over the continued surge in prices of fertilizer which grew up to about 30 percent at the beginning of the year after the 80 percent increase of the previous year. This has contributed in change of plans and search for alternatives such as the use of human feces and urine to boost their crops.

According to a commentator, Mr Abachi Ungbo, "Our food supply chain is activated by the production activities of small

scale farmers that are scattered across the country who hardly get appropriate reward for their bustling activities after spending unstintingly for the inputs they deploy.

"We now have a huge crisis in our hands with the soaring price of fertilizer. It means higher production cost will ultimately be transferred to all of us in the prices of food. And by implication, food prices will continue to make an exorable upward trajectory in the face of asphyxiating economic crunch."

Recent research by economic experts have also shown that, about 80 percent of household's income is spent on food which may have informed the mass appeal to farming in order to counter the proportionate expenditure.

Meanwhile, most agricultural experts have agreed that most Nigerian farmers are making use

of human urine as an organic fertilizer available for use. But they are also of the view that the potency of the human urine though not yet ascertained by empirical research, but has gained global acceptability.

The human urine is rich in nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and the minerals and nutrients also found in chemical fertilizers are also available in Urea. The organic compound in urine is considered rich and environment friendly and can be used to improve farming activities across the country.

Madam Angelina Gwom, a resident of Rantya, Jos was however not happy with the trend of using human fists for agricultural purposes saying; "I don't subscribe to such practices in our present economic challenges. The phobia of knowing that what one is eating contains some organic materials like human feces can be disturbing. Perhaps such is the reason we are having all kinds of diseases in our communities. Let the government do something about it."

Similarly, Thomas Tukop, a retired Police officer shared his views with **SUNDAY STANDARD**, wondering why the government cannot encourage the use of manure as was the old practice rather than allowing people to eat indirectly from human urine in the name of fertilizer.

But Abachi Ungbo in his comment said; "Here in Africa, I was pleased to see what an entrepreneur in Uganda is doing with urine which has attracted

global attention. Researchers in Niger Republic and their counterpart from Europe have been working on human urine to fertilize crops and the soil. So far, it has been a roaring success.

"In fact, Swedish researchers are trying techniques of drying up urine into chunks then into powder then pellets that will fit into farming equipment. The idea of human urine as far as fertilizer isn't novel. Historians have described it as a valuable commodity and used extensively by different civilizations in the past.

The Romans are known to have deployed urine for a multiplicity of uses that included fertilizer so much that it became a source of tax. The government researchers need to turn their attention towards alternative sources of cheaper and environment friendly fertilizers to our farmers bearing in mind the impact of the prohibitive cost of the input on food production, soaring food prices isn't just about food security challenges but also about national security." Ungbo noted.

However, as the nation's farmers test run the use of human urine and other cheaper means of farming, most Nigerians expect food on the table for their families and any method that can provide respite may not be a problem. Rather, what is instructive is how every opportunity can best be optimized for the benefit of national food security and survival.

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METRO-FOCUS

Importance of firewood amidst economic hardship

By JIDAUNA DARING

WITH the economic challenges presently faced in Nigeria, many people have now resorted to the use of firewood in their houses both in the urban city and rural areas as alternative means for cooking. Gone are the days when firewood was unpopular and only common in the villages or with the very poor in the urban areas. This cannot be unconnected to the high price of kerosene and cooking gas.

Firewood as the name implies, is a wooden material that has been cut into logs or pieces to be used particularly for burning fires.

In fact, firewood is mostly fetched in the bush particularly in the rural areas. It is common practice for rural dwellers to enter the interior of bushes to pick shrubs and cut stem of trees. These would be tied with rope and conveyed back home to be used for cooking.

Nigerians are reputed as people who easily adapt to any situation. The turn of events over the years, has forced everyone to strategise, except for the extremely rich. Without realizing it, most urban dwellers are living village life in the city. It is now common practice for struggling families to enter the bush to fetch firewood. This clearly indicates that no condition is permanent as long as people live on earth.

Therefore, the importance of firewood cannot be undermeasured since it performs different functions when it comes to cooking especially for those who use it for different purposes. In the past, if at all average families were using firewood, it was only to boil bathing water or cook large quantities for occasions. This was Mrs. Rita Dakas submission.

In fact, as far as life is concerned, people are supposed to imbibe the spirit of making do with what they have in their hands, rather than aiming for what is not available or what is beyond their means. People should not be shy when coming out to scout for the firewood in the bush, particularly when it comes to carrying it on their heads, if it would make it easier to convey from one point to another.

Speaking with **METRO FOCUS** on the use of firewood in some households, a resident of Jenta Adamu in Jos North Local Government Area (LGA) of Plateau State, Mrs. Sylvia Ishya said that she grew up in a community called Bankilong in Kanam LGA before coming to stay in Jos. She explained that she has done a lot when it comes to fetching of firewood in the bush to cook all kinds of things that need firewood in the family.

Ishya also said that when searching for the firewood, they sometimes have to treka long



distance to outskirts of town before getting the best firewood that is durable. Their supplies usually come from dead trees or

trees that have been fell. And since they move in group, they then use an axe to cut their find into logs or pieces.

She told **METRO FOCUS** that as a person, she prefers firewood to other means of cooking because the taste of the food

cooked on the firewood is always different from others. A white man, Mr. Johnson corroborated this. He said Jollof rice cooked on fire wood is the best.

Ishya maintained that, the price of the firewood is equally going high because the demand of the firewood is now getting high almost on a daily basis. It is now beyond the reach of a poor man. Adding that, N500 or N1,000.00 firewood is not much in quantity and will take one nowhere, particularly for those who may not be able to always afford it due to financial challenges.

Also speaking with **METRO FOCUS**, a firewood seller who is a resident of Kabong area, Mrs. Esther Isaac Ibrahim said that as a retiree, what motivated her to key into the business was because she did not want to stay idle as long as she is alive.

Ibrahim pointed out that the little gain or interest that she is getting it from the business is not a regrettable, since it puts food on the table of her family.

She noted that before the naira crunch, patronage used to be fair, but it became worse when Nigerian citizens in February this year due to cash scarcity which has dragged many people into temporary poverty.

Ibrahim maintained that Nigerians are gradually coming out of such unpleasant or unfriendly experience. She added that there is an improvement in the business now that things are becoming better.

She challenged retirees to key into different kinds of little businesses that would further help them and their families, pointing out that idleness does more harm than good as far as life is concerned.

Ibrahim advised people not to feel too big or shy when it comes to business or hand work, so as to keep them busy at all times.

She disclosed that her suppliers are within Plateau and Bauchi State. Ibrahim also explained that those using firewood to cook can still make charcoal after cooking which is a plus.



SUNDAY PEOPLE

NUJ RE-RUN

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Plateau State Council rerun for Chairmanship Election 2023 held at the NUJ Press Secretariat, Jos Thursday last week



Winner of the NUJ re-run, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo (left) receiving her certificate of return after defeating her closet contestant with 121 votes and 114 from the Vice President of NUJ Zone D, Mr. Chris Atsaka



From left are, Mr. Wulime Goyit, Director, New Media, Ministry of Information, Mr. Paul Jatau, immediate past NUJ Chairman and Mr. Chris Gyang, former NUJ Chairman



Newly elected NUJ Chairman, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo (right) taking the oath of office being administered by the Oath Commissioner



NUJ State Chairman, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo in a photograph with the Trust Campaign Council Director General, Mr. Wika Gofwen and other well-wishers



Mr. Kenneth Dareng of PPC Chapel casting his ballot



Mary Replong Domtur of NTA Chapel, newly elected NUJ Secretary casting her ballot



Cross section of eligible voters waiting patiently



Mr. Ralph Madugu of Impact Chapel, NUJ Chairmanship contestant (left) congratulating the winner, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo

Photos: DANLADI DUK



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Risk factors with reference to cyclists, motorcyclist and pedestrians

Cyclists and motorcyclists are particularly vulnerable road users, mainly because we often fail to see them. Vehicle drivers are programmed to look out for other vehicles of similar or bigger size, as such anything of lesser size is not registered. The campaign THINK ONCE, THINK TWICE, THINK BIKE was designed to help drivers overcome this peculiar challenge.

Look out for **cyclists** at road junctions especially and try to allow them as much room as possible when overtaking. If you can't give them enough room, you need to slow down. Cyclists, particularly the young or those laden with shopping and bulky objects, can wobble or swerve suddenly. Even professional looking cyclists in cycling shorts and wearing helmets will not wish to risk damaging their wheels in potholes or drain covers, so be prepared for them to avoid poor road surfaces. Many cyclists may suddenly dismount if the hill they are climbing becomes too steep. Try to anticipate the actions of a cyclists. A glance over the shoulder for instance could mean that they intend turning right or will move into your path. The same goes for motorcyclists. Remember that they are exposed to bad weather, slippery or uneven road surfaces and crosswinds. Motorcyclists have the same rights and privileges as vehicles and other road users. It is important to make allowances and give them plenty of room.

Pedestrians: all pedestrians are vulnerable road users and should be seen as such; particularly children, the elderly, the mentally retarded and people living with disability. It is dangerous to assume that every pedestrian is physically and mentally fit enough not to step out and finish up under the wheels of a car. Generally speaking, you should give way to pedestrians who are crossing the road as you turn into a junction. If they are still at the pavement as you turn into the road, make sure before continuing that they have seen you and are not going to step out. In particular, look out for elderly people crossing the road. Their hearing and eyesight might not be so good. They cannot necessarily judge traffic speed so well and do not always realize the dangers involved in crossing the road. Nor will they be able to move quickly if they have misjudged the gap, so be prepared to slow down and give them time to clear the road.

Disable people need particular consideration. It is obviously difficult to tell if someone is deaf but take care if someone fails to look your way as you get closer. In civilized world, there are guide dogs for the hard of hearing as well as the visually impaired. The guide dog for the hearing impaired usually has an orange lead and collar while that of the visually impaired pedestrian has a loop type of harness. A white stick indicates the carrier is visually impaired. If the stick has two reflective red bands around it, the bearer is hard of hearing. Again, give these people plenty of time to cross the road.

As a driver, take great care near **children**. Children can dash impulsively across the road simply because they have spotted friends on the other side. Children are particularly unpredictable and you really need to be driving slowly and with special care in residential areas, near schools, parks and ice-cream vans. Be aware of the time of day when children are going to and from schools. If there is a school-crossing traffic warden holding a lollipop stick, or Stop-Children sign, then you must of course stop.

As a driver or any other road user for that matter, you just need to recognize where the risks lie, the types of conditions vehicles and road users that can potentially increase these risks. You identify the risky situation, assess it and adjust your speed and general driving habits accordingly. It is entirely up to you to decide how to deal with things. Just remember-your



NEWS

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

Benue Govt pledges support efforts against climate change

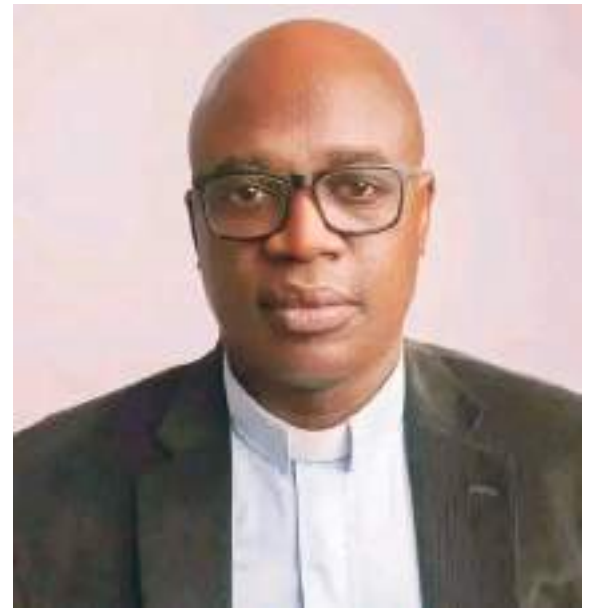
BENUE State Government says it will support any effort at mitigating negative effects of climate change on the environment in the state.

Commissioner for Water Resources, Environment and Climate Change Hon. Ugwu Odoh gave the indication recently when a delegation from Elim Christian Vocational Training Center paid him an advocacy visit as part of process for the domestication of National Climate Change Policy in Benue State in his office.

According to the commissioner, climate change was what the entire world was suffering from and commended Elim for the initiative. He assured them that the ministry will do whatever it can on its part to support the initiative.

Hon. Odoh who said he was impressed with what Elim CVTC was doing in the state to mitigate the negative impact of climate change, also promised that the ministry will liaise with Elim CVTC and other stakeholders to come out with a blueprint that will help drive the policy when it is finally domesticated.

Earlier, the Elim CVTC programme manager, Mr. Emmanuel Egbodo while commending the commissioner for granting them audience even at a short notice, said they were in his office to intimate him on some of their activities in the state.



Hycinth

Mr. Egbodo lamented that climate change was causing disasters and conflicts in Benue State leading to overpopulation in cities, deforestation and environmental pollution.

He maintained that part of CBM's mission in the state was to ensure that persons with disabilities and their representing organisations are given enablement to be actively involved in the climate change related policy process and build capacity of civil society organisations.

Mr. Egbodo told the commissioner that Elim CVTC

has long commenced in four communities in Konshisha and four in Gwer west Local Government Areas while 3, 000 economic trees have been procured for planting to improve climate conditions in the target communities.

State coordinator for ER2CC project, Mrs. Rachel Dzever said the project seeks to support domestication and adoption of the NCCP in Benue State, implementation of the domesticated policy and integration of climate change mitigation measures in relevant MDAs in the state and support for CSOs.

NUJ, NGO seek govt support to fight vices

From **JOHN FWAH KADUNA**

KADUNA State Council of Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in partnership with a non governmental organisation (NGO); 4th Angle Konsult, have concluded arrangements to sensitise the people, especially the schools against social vices in the society.

This is just as the duo sought the support and sponsorship of the Kaduna State government on how to achieve a successful event scheduled for the second week of November 2023.

The General Manager of 4th Angle, Mr. Joshua Maude while briefing the NUJ Chairman, Hajiya Asma'u Yawo Halilu on preparedness for the event, disclosed that many organisations were willing to grace the occasion.

Responding, the NUJ Chairman assured the leadership of the NGO of the union's readiness to ensure the event comes to reality, adding that building a better society is one of the primary responsibilities of journalists all over the world.

She promised to keep the state government on its toes towards the success of the programme, adding that relevant government officials have already been contacted about the programme.

Earlier, the NGO General Manager presented a copy of the sample of the book that will be launched and

distributed free of charge to schools and organisations to the NUJ Chairman.

According to Mr. Maude, "We are here to present to you copies of our campaign materials against religious intolerance, violence, hate speech, tribalism, ethnicity and drugs abuse and other social vices in Kaduna State.

"The aim of this campaign is to change the mindset of the good people of the state because before now we used to coexist irrespective of religion, tribe and political affiliations. But in the recent past, there is a big divide, to the extent that people no longer believe in themselves, no longer trust one another, there is apprehension everywhere.

"So in our bid to build a better society, we feel that there is need for us to partner with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Kaduna State Council to bring back the once peaceful coexistence in Kaduna State. NUJ as a major player in building a better society, hence our coming to partner with you to achieve this noble objective.

"We intend to print millions of this copy for free distribution to schools, religious organizations, organised labour and market places. We intend to launch this project with the support of the state government come November 11, 2023 here in

Kaduna.

"We are appealing to Kaduna State to join hands with us towards building a better Kaduna State. We intend to extend our hands of fellowship to corporate organisations and other relevant agencies of government to join us in this fight against social vices. We have gone very far in contacting organisations like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), the Interfaith organisation and other religious bodies.

"We have paid courtesy calls to some prominent organisations within Kaduna State. We are in contact with the national headquarters of Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) because all of them are major stakeholders towards building a better society".

While thanking the General Manager of the NGO and his team, the NUJ Chairman, Hajiya Asma'u Yawo Halilu assured that, "We will do everything possible within our capacity to ensure that this programme sees the light of the day. It is our collective project and more so that we as journalists will never shy away from building a better society because it is one of our responsibilities as journalists all over the world to ensure a better society for peaceful coexistence".

SUNDAY FEATURE

Inside Ribadu's fresh approach to combating oil theft

Yet, in a heartening manner, according to the June crude oil production report of the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, the country's crude oil earnings rose to over N1.68 trillion in June, following an increase in the country's output in May... The report majorly attributed the increase to concerted efforts by security officials and oil operators, which means the fight against oil theft is gaining momentum. Zakari U. Mijinyawa writes.

SINCE his appointment as National Security Adviser (NSA) by President Bola Tinubu, Malam Nuhu Ribadu has been emphasising the importance of curbing crude oil theft and losses to the country.

INCE his appointment as National Security Adviser (NSA) by President Bola Tinubu, Malam Nuhu Ribadu has been emphasising the importance of curbing crude oil theft and losses to the country.

On his official assumption of duties, he promised to look at what his predecessor, retired Major-General Babagana Monguno had done and build on it because securing the nation is a continuous process.

Judging by recent developments, it appears that in the areas of fighting crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism, Ribadu is doing exactly what he promised.

We can recall that at the tail end of the previous administration, Monguno inaugurated a Special Investigative Panel on Oil Theft/Losses in Nigeria on 6th of December, 2022.

The panel, chaired by retired Major-General Barry Ndiomu, traversed the country, especially the Niger Delta region, in search of answers to the questions posed by the incessant crude oil theft, which has characterised the exploration and marketing of Nigeria's petroleum resources.

According to a statement by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA), during the submission of the panel's report on 28 March, some initial observations were made.

For instance, the panel observed that crude oil losses arose from a lack of the proper reporting of crude oil production, illegal refining, theft from well-heads and diversion from sophisticated pipeline networks.

The panel also attributed losses to the absence of a robust industry-wide metering system and an unworkable security arrangement.

The confusing roles of regulatory agencies were also cited as one of the reasons the detection of theft/losses was difficult.

Last year, the country's crude production struggled to exceed one million barrels per day, leading to concerns over loss of revenue, environment degradation, pipeline vandalism and the general impact on the economy.

However, through a collaborative effort coordinated by ONSA, there is a positively hopeful prospect that the present administration can stem the tide of the heinous crime called oil theft.

In June, the Nigerian Navy said it had intensified its war against oil theft and related maritime crimes on the waterways in the Niger Delta.

True to that assurance, a combined team of anti-oil theft troops recently uncovered a major illegal oil refining site at Owahwa community in Ughelli South Local Government Area of Delta State.

During the raid, the troops discovered 35 modular ovens, three fabricated reservoirs, 30 dug-out reservoirs and 75 galvanised pipes.

Experts say that apart from revenue loss, the operators of illegal refineries cause environmental degradation because after stealing small quantities of crude oil from vandalised pipelines, they leave volumes to spill and pollute the environment.

Yet, in a heartening manner, according to the June crude oil production report of the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, the country's crude oil earnings rose to over N1.68 trillion in June, following an increase in the country's output in May.

The report majorly attributed the increase to concerted efforts by security officials and oil operators, which means the fight against oil theft is gaining momentum.

But NSA Ribadu is not in a cheering mood yet.

While recently leading a presidential delegation to inspect oil and gas facilities in Abia and Rivers states, Ribadu



said the country was still losing 400,000 barrels of crude oil daily to local and international thieves.

Part of the strategy the new NSA is deploying to address the issue is collaboration (he calls it a "united front"), which security experts say is key in the fight against oil theft.

The NSA said during the inspection: "We are working hard with the security forces and

those employed by the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited to secure our facilities and end this madness called oil theft."

The Minister of Defence, Baduru Abubakar; the Chief of Defence Staff, General Christopher Musa; the Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Hassan Abubakar; Minister of State for Defence, Bello Matawalle, and Minister of State (Oil),

Petroleum Resources, Heineken Lokpobiri; the Minister of State (Gas), Petroleum Resources, Ekperipe Ekpo; and Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, NNPC, Melekyari were all on the delegation.

Stakeholders say the weight of the delegation indeed signifies a "united front" against the message which poses a serious threat to overall national security.

No doubt, protecting Nigeria's critical infrastructure and safeguarding its sources of revenue are important elements of its national security.

The US National Security Strategy (2010) states that the freedom to exercise choice of policies to develop a nation's economy in the manner desired invites economic security.

It also emphasises the importance of economic security when it says: "Economic security today forms, arguably, as important a part of national security as military security."

"The creation and protection of jobs that supply defense and non-defense needs are vital to national security."

This is why the Minister of State for Petroleum (Oil), Sen. Heineken Lokpobiri was correct when he said oil theft and pipeline vandalism are an existential threat to Nigeria.



SUNDAY FEATURE

Alonso is a Madrid manager in the making



With Carlo Ancelotti set to leave the Bernabeu this summer, the Blancos' former midfielder is putting himself in the frame to step into his shoes

A video emerged from Bayer Leverkusen training earlier this month. In the minute-long clip, a disgruntled Xabi Alonso berates his team for failing to meet his expectations in a passing drill. In a moment of frustration, the manager, 41, steps in, and metronomically sprays the ball around the training pitch - all while yelling instructions to the group.

It was a microcosm of how Alonso has handled this Bayer side. Since taking over in October 2022, the Spaniard has been handed near-unchecked power to restructure the club. And he's worked wonders with his authority. In 12 months, Leverkusen have gone from the lower reaches of the table to looking like Bayern Munich's most apparent Bundesliga challengers - with a promising Europa League run in between.

This has all come about for a club experiencing immense turnover. Some stars in the making have left, replaced with well-travelled European stalwarts. Meanwhile, other players have been reinvented, and deployed in more appropriate roles. The result is a dangerous team that will likely only improve - led by a manager who, at this rate, will have a job at a far bigger club next year.

It was a loss to Bayern Munich that doomed Alonso's predecessor, Gerardo Seoane. The manager had overseen a poor start to the Bundesliga season with Leverkusen, as his side won just one of their first eight games. There was hope that a result against Bayern could rescue things - and perhaps even kickstart an unlikely turnaround. Instead, Leverkusen were battered. Bayern went 1-0 up inside five minutes, and had scored three by half-time. Seoane was let go a week later, and Alonso was announced as the new manager within 24 hours.

Expectations were admittedly low. Alonso, at that point, had only ever had one managerial job, overseeing Real Sociedad's reserve side as they achieved an unlikely promotion to the second tier of Spanish football. Here was an inexperienced but well-regarded coach, one who wasn't necessarily one expected to be an

immediate success for a club with European ambitions.

But Alonso, who played under the likes of Rafa Benitez, Pep Guardiola, Jose Mourinho and Carlo Ancelotti during his career as one of Europe's finest midfielders, quickly showed that he was more than up to the task. Leverkusen battered struggling Schalke in his first game in charge, putting four past the relegation favourites. Results were mixed for the rest of the calendar year, but wins over Union Berlin and Koln, combined with a 2-2 draw with Atletico Madrid in the Champions League, showed that Leverkusen could certainly play.

Moussa Diaby, once a bonafide wonderkid who seemed to have lost his way, returned to form, and, along with electric wing-back Jeremie Frimpong, saw Leverkusen become a dangerous team in transition.

But it was at the other end where Leverkusen's improvements were most apparent. They were bleeding goals under Seoane, conceding over two-per-game before he was sacked. Alonso drove that number down, deploying a three-man defence that saw Leverkusen become far more reliable at the back.

That was most apparent in a mesmerising second half of the 2022-23 season. After failing to get out of their Champions League group, Alonso's side established themselves as giantkillers both domestically and in European competitions. It started with an unlikely victory over heavily favoured Monaco in the Europa League, Leverkusen advancing on penalties after a thrilling 3-2 second leg win away from home.

The return from a serious knee injury of highly-rated playmaker Florian Wirtz defined that contest, the No.10, orchestrating things from the middle of the park, scoring a goal and proving crucial in the build up to two others. He had a similar influence a few weeks later, when Leverkusen put four past surging Belgian side Union Saint-Gilloise.

And although their luck ran out to a predictably dogged Jose Mourinho-led Roma in the semi-finals, Leverkusen showed that, led by Alonso, they could compete in Europe once again.

Domestically, things were even better. Bayern were in good form when they traveled to Leverkusen in

early March. They were only five days removed from knocking Paris Saint-Germain out of the Champions League, and although Borussia Dortmund were surging in the league, the defending champions appeared to be well in control of the division they had won for nine consecutive years.

What happened next almost derailed their season, though, as Leverkusen outplayed the Bavarians in the second half, turning in a counter-attacking clinic to deliver a 2-1 victory that was far more convincing than the scoreline suggested.

"I've hardly ever seen something like this", said then-Bayern Munich sporting director, Hasan Salihamidzic. "We got everything wrong and were battered by a team that played on Thursday."

The result was an arrival of sorts for Leverkusen. It was one thing to impress in Europe, but to beat the Bundesliga champions, for the first time since 2019, suggested that Alonso's Leverkusen were there to stay. They faltered towards the end of the season, failing to win in the month of May. Still, Alonso had taken a relegation-threatened side to a sixth-placed finish - all while implementing a system that was scintillating to watch.

Inevitably, the eyes of Europe turned to the team. Last summer was marked by transfer talk and the possibility that Alonso might leave. Tottenham reportedly coveted him for their vacant job, before eventually hiring Ange Postecoglu. Meanwhile, their best player was

pinched, with Aston Villa shelling out €60 million (£52m/\$64m) for Diaby. Others nearly left, too. Frimpong was linked with Manchester United. Wirtz cropped up as a target for Manchester City. Meanwhile, Liverpool, in need of a centre-back, reportedly made a push for Piero Hincapie.

Alonso, of course, would stay. So too did Wirtz, Hincapie and Frimpong. But the team undoubtedly needed restructuring. In came Granit Xhaka, Nathaniel Tella, Josip Stanisic and Victor Boniface. Jonas Hofmann and veteran left-back Alex Grimaldo were also added.

The manager, meanwhile, adjusted his system. Xhaka slotted in alongside Exequiel Palacios in midfield, while Wirtz and Hofmann were deployed as duel-No.10s to counter the loss of Diaby. With width no longer an option from his wide attackers, Alonso opted to have his best offensive players tuck inside and support a single centre-forward. Alonso's new 3-4-2-1 system perfectly complemented his squad's strengths, while retaining Leverkusen's defensive solidity and verticality in transition. The result has been three straight wins to start the season, with 11 goals scored.

But perhaps the real revelation has been the man they signed to play up front. After starring in Nigeria, Boniface spent the first two years of his European career riddled with injuries. He damaged his ACL twice, and didn't become a

regular starter for Bodo/Glimt until 2021. By the end of the 2022-23 season, Boniface had only played 100 top-flight European fixtures, a remarkably low number for a 22-year-old who moved from Nigeria at 18.

That small sample size did little to take away from his undeniable attacking quality, though. Boniface scored seven and assisted seven for Union Saint-Gilloise last season, enough for Leverkusen to pay €20m for his services. And the investment has paid off thus far.

Boniface showed promise in pre-season with a lovely half-volleyed goal against West Ham, but since then, he's exploded. The Nigerian has scored four and assisted two in three Bundesliga starts, living up to the lofty expectations that come with leading the line for a side who are now being tipped as title contenders.

"He's not just a classic striker, not just a bomber - he's complete," Alonso told *Planetsport* of his No.9. "We are happy with him, he has scored four goals so far, but we expect more."

But it of course all starts - and ends - with Alonso. The manager has seized control of this team, and utilised his near-unchecked power like few can. There have been a multitude of situations in which managers overstep their influence to the detriment of the team. Mourinho, Antonio Conte and Arsene Wenger all saw projects collapse due to their poor decision-making and varying levels of Machiavellian behaviour.

Alonso, though, seems to have found the right balance. He took a struggling team, developed a new system, and has adapted to crucial losses in a number of positions. And although the signings might not scream 'title contenders', he has invested smartly enough to ensure that Leverkusen remain competitive. That is good news for Leverkusen's on-pitch performance. More broadly, though, it presents a problem. If he continues this success, Alonso won't be Leverkusen manager for long. The Spaniard signed a new contract that will keep him at the club until 2026 over the summer, and many have pointed to the fact that Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool deal will expire that same year. It is also highly-probable that Alonso's name will crop up during Real Madrid's new manager hunt as they prepare to bid farewell to Carlo Ancelotti this summer. He has already turned down Spurs, but bigger opportunities will surely come along.

Leverkusen may not pip Bayern to



SUNDAY SPORTS

Lineker resumes normal service with Haaland quip

NIGERIAN International Odion ILineker resumes normal service with Haaland quip

Gary Lineker has been back to his mischievous best on social media in the wake of Erling Haaland's destructive performance in Manchester City's emphatic 7-0 win over RB Leipzig on Tuesday night.

The Match of the Day host landed himself in hot water with the BBC last week when he criticised the government's new Migration Bill on his Twitter account. The former England striker described the bill, which was unveiled by home secretary Suella Braverman, as "beyond awful" and said the language used was "not dissimilar to that used by Germany in the 30".

That led to the BBC removing the 62-year-old from the air ahead of last weekend's broadcast - an act that saw a raft of his BBC Sport colleagues refuse to work in solidarity with Lineker.

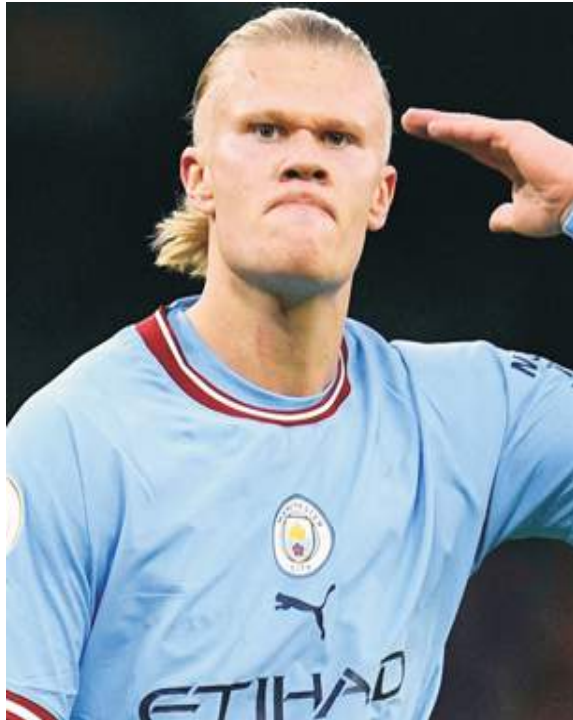
The corporation eventually backtracked amid some fierce criticism and struck an agreement for Lineker to resume his role on Monday morning. And it hasn't taken the popular presenter to get back to his best on social media.

After watching Haaland demolish Leipzig in the Champions League on Tuesday night, Lineker reacted to the Norwegian striker's remarkable five-goal haul with a tongue-in-cheek tweet, quipping: "Think this @ErlingHaaland fella's got something."

After blitzing his latest multi-goal haul, Haaland has now become the youngest player in Champions League history to bag 30 goals in the tournament - breaking the record which was previously held by Paris Saint-Germain superstar Kylian Mbappe.

Haaland's five-goal haul also broke a club record, too: the 22-year-old now has 39 goals in all competitions for City, meaning he has eclipsed the previous club record for goals in a season, which was set by Tommy Johnstone in the 1928/29 campaign with 38.

But despite all that, the Manchester City striker still wasn't satisfied after



Pep Guardiola withdrew him in the final stages of the game - which meant he was unable to complete a second hat-trick.

Speaking to BT Sport after the match, Haaland joked: "I told Pep when I went off that I would love to score a double hat-trick. But what I can do!"

Reflecting on City's victory, which earned them a spot in the tournament quarter-finals, Haaland added: "This was a big night. I am proud to play in the Champions League, I love this competition - as everyone knows. Five goals to win 7-0 at home, I am so happy!"

"We worked on pressing them for this game, especially at home but in

every game we need to put the opposition under pressure. We are so good at winning the ball high up the pitch and moving forward quickly, working the ball to Kevin De

Moshiri confirms deal with 777 Partner

FARHAD Moshiri has agreed a deal to sell Everton to American investment firm 777 Partners.

The deal was announced on Friday morning, with the billionaire businessman admitting he could no longer continue to finance the Premier League club.

Speaking about his shock decision to sell his entire 94 per cent stake in the Goodison club, he said: "The nature of ownership and financing of top football clubs has changed

immeasurably since I first invested in Everton over seven years ago.

"The days of an owner/benefactor are seemingly out of reach for most, and the biggest clubs are now typically owned by well-resourced PE firms, specialist sports investors or state backed companies and funds.

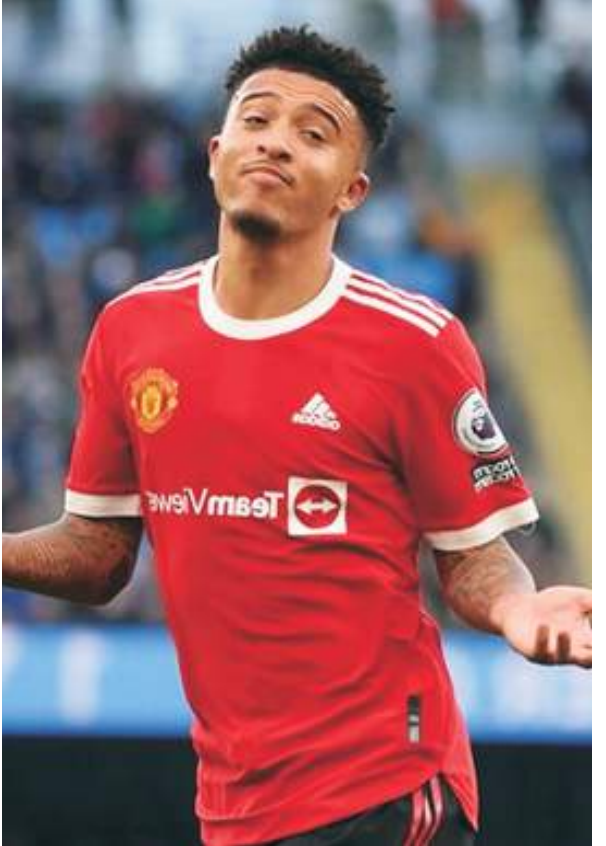
"I have been open about the need to bring in new investment and complete the financing for our iconic new

Sancho fights to save Man Utd career

JADON Sancho has been told that he'd already be "out" of Manchester United had he ever publicly challenged Sir Alex Ferguson, just like he's done with Erik ten Hag.

Sancho, 23, stunned fans following the Red Devils' bruising 3-1 defeat away to Arsenal nearly a fortnight ago by effectively claiming that his manager had been lying about the reason why he was left out of the squad. Ten Hag said that the £73million winger hadn't been performing at the standards which are expected of a United player in training, only for Sancho to quickly issue a statement on social media and urge supporters 'not to believe everything they read'.

Now, after showdown earlier talks this week failed to find a resolution, Ten Hag has ordered him to train away from the first-team squad. That decision was a show of authority from the Red Devils boss but legendary manager



Sancho Ferguson wouldn't even be contemplating his return, according to ex-United striker Dimitar Berbatov.



Everton

step in the successful stadium at Bramley-Moore Dock, on the banks of the Mersey, which I have predominantly financed to date. I have spoken to a number of parties and considered some strong potential opportunities.

"However, it is through my lengthy discussions with 777 that I believe they are the best partners to take our great Club forward, with all the benefits of their multi-club investment model.

"Today is an important next

development of Everton and I look forward to closely following as our Club goes from strength to strength."

Josh Wander, the joint founder of 777 Partners, insisted he was proud and humbled to be the new owner of Everton - if the Premier League approves the deal, which is controversial amongst the club's support base.

"We are truly humbled by the opportunity to become part of the Everton family as custodians of the Club, and consider it a privilege to be able to build on its proud heritage and values.

"Our primary objective is to work with fans and stakeholders to develop the sporting and commercial infrastructure for the men's and women's teams that will deliver results for future generations of Everton supporters.

"As part of this, we are committed to partnering with the local community over the long-term, working on important projects such as the development of Bramley-Moore Dock as a world class stadium venue, allowing thousands more Evertonians to attend our home matches and contribute to the economic and cultural regeneration of Merseyside."

While Moshiri believes the deal could be completed before the New Year, there will now be a lengthy investigation by the Premier League of the finances behind the deal, to see if 777 Partners have the money to complete the takeover.

SUNDAY SPORTS



Everton

Pogba won't just be judged on the trophies

THERE is a very well-established school of thought that suggests to leave a truly gilded legacy, a footballer needs to win trophies.

Team trophies, that is. That is why, for example, **Harry Kane's move to Bayern Munich** - whose line he will lead against **Leverkusen** in the Bundesliga tonight - has been widely applauded.

But if, by some extremely unlikely twist of fate, Kane ends his career without medals, his legacy will not be blemished. Unlike the legacy of one of his contemporaries.

Paul Pogba - only four months older than Kane - has a World Cup, four Serie A titles, two Coppa Italias, one EFL Cup and a UEFA Europa League to his name. But his career, which **could even be ended if his B-sample proves positive and he is banned for four years**, will be characterised by what could have been, rather than the medals he won.

Pogba has tested positive for testosterone and must now await the second test. But even if it is clear, this latest chapter in Pogba's career is symptomatic of the side-issues that have distracted attention away from his fine achievements and his wonderful talent.

And while some of Pogba's setbacks have been self-inflicted and some down merely to horrible misfortune, you cannot help but feel some have been down to bad advice, to poor guidance. It has always been the case but, in this modern football world, the need for help in navigating your way through an elite professional career has never been greater.

You assume Kane has had it, and Pogba hasn't. And what a shame.

Again, a fair number of the issues that have camouflaged his brilliance on the pitch have been caused by his own behaviour, not least the times when he was clearly trying to orchestrate a move away in his second spell at Manchester United. But there has been terrible physical luck.

So far, there have been three ankle injuries, three

hamstring problems, a meniscus tear, a calf injury, a groin strain, a thigh strain, and a tear in the abductor muscle. Knee surgery kept him out of Qatar 2022.

Next Wednesday will mark the 12th anniversary of Pogba's professional debut - in a 3-0 EFL Cup win for United at Elland Road - and, since then, he has missed almost

TWO AND A HALF YEARS through injury. And there have, certainly recently, been off-the-field problems, Pogba threatened by armed, masked men, demanding millions for 'protection services'.

Amid the investigation into an extortion plot, Pogba's brother, Mathias, spent three months in jail. "Money changes people," Pogba said a few days ago. "It can break up

McIlroy "absolutely despised" rival golfer even

RORY McIlroy has revealed he "absolutely despised" golf rival Billy Horschel until the pair became friends.

McIlroy rose to stardom in the golf world in 2007 when he turned professional and has since gone on to win four major championships, including two PGA Championships, one Open title, and one US Open title. During the course of his career, the Northern Irishman has formed a number of rivalries in the sport.

McIlroy took part in the Walker Cup in 2007, a tournament for amateur golfers from Great Britain and Ireland which pitted them against their counterparts from the United States. McIlroy competed against Horschel who was representing the US at the Royal County Down Golf Club in Northern Ireland.

The tournament was taking place in McIlroy's home country, and the golf star recalled why he was initially not a fan of Horschel. He was speaking about the American in comparison to Patrick Reed, whom he formed a rivalry with at the 2016 Ryder Cup during the Sunday singles matches. McIlroy was speaking on the **Subpar podcast** where he was asked who he hated more - Horschel at the 2007 Walker Cup or Reed at the 2016 Ryder Cup. McIlroy answered swiftly by saying Horschel's name, before going on to give an explanation. "And that's saying something," McIlroy said after giving his answer, while laughing.

He added: "I absolutely despised him and we've actually become really close since, which is great, but I think as well we were all probably obnoxious at the time but I think he was pretty rude

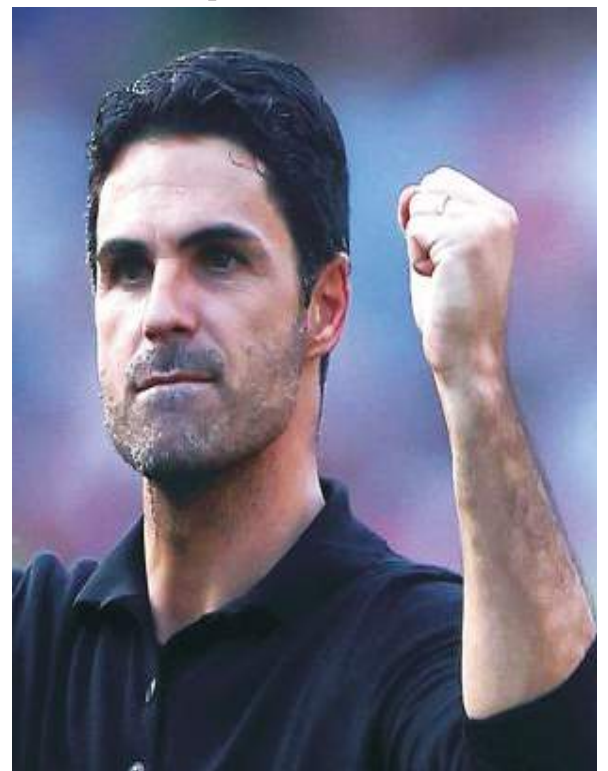
ARSENAL boss Mikel Arteta has been, however, I wouldn't say Havertz isn't a go-to number 10 or number nine."

Smith Rowe's journey under Arteta is an intriguing one, having been a standout performer during the 2021-2022 season, a campaign which came after he was given the iconic number 10. However, Emile Smith Rowe is a "better option" than the struggling Kai Havertz.

Havertz, who joined the Gunners from London rivals Chelsea in July as part of an eyebrow-raising £65million transfer deal, has failed to impress at the Emirates but retained Arteta's faith, starting all four of their Premier League fixtures. The versatile German was considered a flop during his three years with Chelsea and some have already thrown that label at him since his move to Arsenal.

While Havertz, 24, insisted during the international break that he has no concerns over his start to life in North London, former Gunner Jermaine Pennant doesn't share his opinion. Pennant, who also played for Liverpool during his globetrotting career, reckons that academy graduate Smith Rowe should

Arsenal already have "better option" available



Arteta

be given minutes in the midfield role which Havertz

has been occupying.

"I'm not seeing any evidence Havertz can turn this around," the ex-Arsenal winger and former **England** international told **OLBG**. "I wasn't totally impressed with his spell at Chelsea. I know they struggled last season, but

"I'd say Smith-Rowe, when fit, is a better player who contributes more. Is he a good squad player? Yes. No.10 shirt and rewarded with a new long-term contract. Last term, however, the 23-year-old didn't start a single Premier League match after falling down the pecking order.

Arteta has also kept him rooted to the bench so far this season, although he's well aware of his talents. When asked on **transfer deadline day** whether Smith Rowe would be leaving, the Gunners boss emphatically responded by saying: "Yes. The role [for him is] like everybody else does. To try to give his best and make the team better.

"Obviously, I had a conversation with him and it's important to understand where he is. It was always going to be tricky the first three or four weeks. Not just for us, but for all of the clubs where you see all the rumours and all the players who are not playing, they are unhappy not just in this country but in every country.

"We have just one game per week for a month. Everyone comes to the new season with huge aspirations and there are not minutes for everybody and September

Club in Italy at the end of the month.

Neither Reed nor Horschel have qualified or been selected for Team USA at this year's tournament. Reed hasn't been competing on the PGA Tour since joining breakaway league LIV Golf, while Horschel finished 90th in the FedEx Cup standings this season and 86 places behind McIlroy in fourth.

Wenger pinpoints Arsenal's "advantage" over Man City

ARSENE Wenger believes Kevin de Bruyne's injury could hand Arsenal an advantage in the battle for the Premier League title.

The Gunners squared off with Manchester City for the title last term but stumbled late on - allowing Pep Guardiola's side to lift their third Premier League trophy in succession. Arsenal look set to have another positive campaign this time around though.

They have won three out of their opening four games of the season to sit on ten points. City though have enjoyed a flawless first few weeks having won every league game and sit top of the table.

Legendary former Arsenal boss Wenger has given his view on this season's title race and claimed that De Bruyne's long-term injury - as well as Ilkay Gundogan's exit - could put the Gunners in prime position to win the Premier League. However, he believes that the fact that Mikel Arteta's side also have a Champions League campaign to navigate could see them wobble on occasion.

On David Seaman's 'Seaman Says' podcast, the Frenchman

invested serious money in the last four years, they invested a lot of money, but I must say they invested it well. They still have a young team, a talented team.

"I think they learned from what happened to them last year. They couldn't cope well with that, mentally it was very difficult. I'm sure they would've learned from that.

"I believe as well that City having lost De Bruyne for a long period and Gundogan, who was a very important player, even if they are a top team I don't disagree with that, but maybe they can take advantage of it. But we have to deal with the Champions League, so that costs points as



Wenger



SUNDAY FEATURE

Lyles, Richardson headline in Oregon



Overall Diamond League winners are crowned in the 16 men's and women's track and field events across two days of competition

World 100m champions Noah Lyles and Sha'Carri Richardson headline on home ground as the Diamond League final takes place in Oregon this weekend.

Britain's world silver medallists Keely Hodgkinson and Matthew Hudson-Smith will chase one of 32 diamond trophies at the lucrative series-ending meet.

Hodgkinson faces another 800m showdown with Mary Moraa and Athing Mu in the latest chapter of the trio's rivalry.

Laura Muir, Dina Asher-Smith and Daryll Neita are also set to compete, with Faith Kipyegon, Sherricka Jackson, Jakob Ingebrigtsen and Armand Duplantis among the global stars present.

The action starts at 19:00 BST on Saturday and 19:30 on Sunday, with live coverage on BBC Three and the BBC website and app from 20:00 on both days.

Here is everything you need to know as athletics' biggest names collide again, less than three weeks after the conclusion of a thrilling World Championships in Budapest.

What is the Diamond League final?

While the World Championships was the headline athletics competition of 2023, throughout the season the world's best have contested 13 Diamond League meets.

At those one-day events, held across the globe with stops including London, Paris, Doha and the Chinese city of Xiamen, athletes have - in addition to prize money - competed for points to qualify for the US finale.

In Eugene, 32 Diamond League champions - that's one man and one woman in each of the 16 disciplines - will be crowned over two days.

This year the final is being held

as part of the Prefontaine Classic at Hayward Field, the venue which hosted the 2022 World Championships.

There, with points irrelevant in a winner-takes-all final format, the diamond trophies will be handed out - along with \$30,000 (£24,000) prize money for the overall winners.

There is \$12,000 (£9,600) available to the runner-up, with prize money filtering down to the lower positions.

Hodgkinson and Richardson aim for statement victories

In another enthralling battle between the 'big three' of women's 800m running, it was Moraa who prevailed over Hodgkinson in Budapest as defending champion Mu finished third.

It meant Hodgkinson, claiming her third global medal aged 21, was again made to settle for silver after finishing runner-up to Mu at the Worlds and Tokyo Olympics.

Moraa, who also beat Hodgkinson to Commonwealth gold last summer, will set off as marginal favourite after triumphing in a personal best time 21 days ago.

But Hodgkinson will be keen to prove she can beat both her main rivals as attention turns to the Paris 2024 Games, and Jemma Reekie will aim to close the gap.

Hudson-Smith will also target Olympic glory next year and, in the absence of world 400m champion Antonio Watson in Eugene, will seek Diamond League success.

World Athletics Championships 2023: Sha'Carri Richardson wins gold in the 100m final

The women's 100m was among the most eagerly anticipated events at this summer's championships, and it did not fail to deliver.

American Richardson will aim to follow up her stunning breakthrough global victory by beating another stellar line-up which includes world silver medallist Jackson and two-time

Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah.

Asher-Smith will hope to show a return to form and British teammate Imani-Lara Lansiquot will be full of confidence after running under 11 seconds for the first time. Meanwhile, compatriot Neita will test herself against champion Jackson over 200m.

Among Lyles' three golds in Budapest was a first global men's 100m triumph for the 200m specialist, and he will focus on the shorter distance in Eugene.

The five-time Diamond League champion will face competition from Botswana's runner-up Letsile Tebogo and fellow American Christian Coleman, who equalled Lyles and Britain's Zharnel Hughes as the fastest runner this year with 9.83 seconds in Xiamen two weeks ago.

Elsewhere, Kipyegon will look to cap a remarkable season, in which she set three world records and completed a 1500m and 5,000m double at the Worlds, with victory over the shorter distance.

Britain's Muir, who fell short of a World Championships medal following an unsettled year away from the track, has since recorded Diamond League victories in Zurich and Brussels and is joined in the 1500m by Melissa Courtney-Bryant.

The in-form George Mills and Elliot Giles are Britain's representatives in the men's mile, where they face 5,000m world champion and 2,000m world record holder Jakob Ingebrigtsen, who is also set to contest the 3,000m a day later.

In the field events, Sawyers will seek an improved performance after missing out on the long jump world final, while Morgan Lake contests the high jump and Lawrence Okoye is in discus action.

Joint pole vault world champions

Nina Kennedy and Katie Moon are reunited after agreeing to share gold in August, while Armand Duplantis could make his latest world record attempt in the men's event after being frustrated in his pursuit of 6.23m so far in 2023.

Noah Lyles OLY (born July 18, 1997) is an American professional track and field sprinter competing in the 100 meters and 200 meters. He is the 2020 Tokyo Olympic 200 m bronze medalist and a six-time World champion, having won the 200 m and 4 x 100 m at the 2019 World Championships, the 200 m at the 2022 World Championships, and the 100 m, 200 m, and 4 x 100 m events at the 2023 World Championships, becoming the first man since Usain Bolt in 2015 to complete the sprint treble at a World Championships. At the 2022 Championships, Lyles also earned a silver medal in the 4 x 100 m relay. He holds personal bests of 9.83 seconds for the 100 m and 19.31 seconds for the 200 m, the latter being an American record making him the third fastest on the respective world all-time list.

Lyles won a gold medal in the 200



Noah Lyles will be aiming to win a sixth Diamond League crown after winning three golds at the World Championships

m during the 2014 Youth Olympic Games. He won gold medals for the 100 m and 4 x 100 m relay during the 2016 World U20 Championships. He is a five-time Diamond League champion, having secured the 100 m/200 m double in 2019.

Lyles was a gymnast as a youth and started track and field at 12 years of age. His parents Keisha Caine and Kevin Lyles competed in track and field at Seton Hall University. He attended T. C. Williams High School (now Alexandria City High School) in Alexandria, Virginia.

Lyles represented the United States at the 2014 Youth Olympic Games where he won a gold medal in the 200 m.

In January 2015, Lyles cleared 2.03 m (6 ft 7+3/4, in) in the high jump as a high school junior. In November 2015, he was named 2015 high school boys athlete of the year by Track & Field News.

In March 2016, Lyles won the 200 m at the New Balance Nationals Indoor. In April 2016, he won both the 100 m and 200 m at the 2016 Arcadia Invitational, setting new meeting records of 10.17 s and 20.48 s respectively. In June 2016, Lyles won the 100 m in 10.08 s at the USA Junior Championships.

In July 2016, Lyles went to the U.S. Olympic Trials to compete for spots on the Olympic team in the 100 m and the 200 m. He failed to advance from his first 100 m heat, but in the 200 m he won his semifinal and then placed fourth in the final with a time of 20.09 s, breaking a 31-year-old national high school record. Though he didn't qualify for the 2016 Summer Olympics, he qualified for the 2016 World U20 Championships where he was a double gold medalist, taking the 100 m and 4 x 100 m relay titles.

Lyles had committed to compete for the Florida Gators at the University of Florida, but in July 2016, Noah and his younger brother Josephus instead turned professional and signed with Adidas. In November 2016, Lyles was again named high school boys athlete of the year for 2016 by Track & Field News.

Lyles started 2017 with his first senior national title in the 300 m at the 2017 USA Indoor Championships in the thin air of Albuquerque, New Mexico, improving the indoor world record by one hundredth of a second to 31.87 s. He earned a silver medal in the 4 x 200-meter relay with team USA at the 2017 World Relays. Lyles won two meets in the 2017 IAAF Diamond League circuit, winning the final ahead of American champion Ameer Webb and world champion Ramiil Guliyev. However, injuries prevented him from competing much of the season and he missed the 2017 World Championships as a result.

3 Nigerian boxers win gold in African qualifiers



Team Nigeria enjoyed a successful final day at the just concluded Boxing African Olympic Qualifiers in Dakar, Senegal, with six medals won: three gold medals and three bronze medals.

The event, which began on September 9, came to an end on Friday, September 15, with three Nigerian boxers clinching tickets to next year's Olympic Games in Paris, France.

The trio of Omole Dolapo Joshua, Olaore Olaotan Adams, and Cynthia Ogunsemilore Temitayo all won gold medals in their respective categories to seal their participation in the Games, while Oyesiji Adeola Omowunmi, Ojo Nene Joy, and Patricia Mbata all settled for a bronze medal apiece and fell short of qualifying for sports biggest event.

Female lightweight boxer Cynthia Ogunsemilore was too hot for Algeria's Khelif Hadjila in the women's 60kg event. The Nigerian won by a unanimous decision (5-0) to become the New Champion of Africa and qualify for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

"This is the time for me to shine; this is the time for people to know me; this is the time for me to be the World Champion," a visibly emotional Ogunsemilore said.

"I've started this [boxing] since I was 12 years old, despite it not being in my original plans but my coach and my father have helped me all through the way.

"It is the time for my name to ring in people's ears, for them to know my family's name, and I'm very happy and excited," the new African champions added.

In the men's 57kg

category, featherweight fighter Omole Dolapo outboxed his Ethiopian opponent Leta Fikremariyam Yadesa to become the new African champion in the division by a 5-0 unanimous decision.

Like Cynthia, Olaore Olaotan overcame another Algerian in Houmri Mohamed with yet another unanimous decision in the men's 92kg category to become a two-time African champion in the heavyweight division.

The team's success in Senegal means Nigeria will have representatives in boxing when the Paris 2024

Games kick off next July, as opposed to the 2020 Tokyo Games, where they had no qualified fighters.

Also, the Nigerian duo of Olajide Omotayo and the legendary Funke Oshonaiké have missed out on a chance to clinch a ticket to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games following their 3-1 loss to their Egyptian counterpart on Friday.

The duo lost to the Egyptian pair of Omar Assar and Dina Meshref in the mixed doubles final at the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Africa Senior

Championship held in Tunis, Tunisia.

Meshref, who is the number one women's table tennis player on the continent, matched up with Omar, the No. 2 men's table tennis player in Africa, to overcome their Nigerian opposition 11-8, 6-11, 11-1, and 12-10 to help Egypt secure their third Paris Olympic ticket.

On Thursday, Egypt also defeated Nigeria in the final of the team event at the ongoing ITTF African Championships to pick up two tickets to next year's Games.

The North African women

Super Falcons list for Sao Tome and Principe fixture

Midfielders: Peace Efih (Sporting Club de Braga, Portugal); Esther Onyenezide (FC Robo Queens); Christy Ucheibe (SL Benfica, Portugal); Rasheedat Ajibade (Atletico Madrid FC, Spain); Toni Payne (Sevilla FC, Spain); Regina Otu (AS Saint Etienne, France)

Forwards: Flourish Sebastine (Bayelsa Queens); Ifeoma Onumonu (NY/NJ Gotham FC, USA); Asisat Oshoala (FC Barcelona Feminine, Spain); Vivian Ikechukwu (Besiktas JK, Turkey); Gift Monday (UDG Tenerife, Spain); Chiamaka

Okuchukwu (Rivers Angels); Opeyemi Ajakaye (FC Robo Queens).

The first leg will take place on September 22nd at the

Mobolaji Johnson Arena, while the second leg is scheduled for the 26th.

At the moment, the team does not have a coach

because Randy Waldrum's contract has already expired. However the NFF is currently negotiating with the American.



The Super Falcons are looking to claim a tenth African crown, and they are set to begin their journey later this month

defeated their Nigerian counterparts 3-0, and the men also won 3-1 to ensure their participation at the Games in Paris.

Meanwhile, NBA Africa and the Agence Francaise de Developpement (AFD) unveiled a newly refurbished court at the Campos Stadium in Lagos on Thursday.

The refurbishment is part of the partnership between Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience program in Lagos.

The project is in collaboration with the Lagos State Sports Commission and it will benefit youth in Lagos and surrounding communities by providing them with more opportunities to learn and play the game of basketball.

The unveiling ceremony had in attendance French Ambassador to Nigeria, Emmanuelle Blatmann; Consul General of France in Lagos, Laurent Favier; AFD Director for Nigeria, Xavier Muron; NBA Africa VP and Country Head of NBA Nigeria, Gbemisola Abudu; 2003 WNBA Champion, Astou Ndiaye; and Dream Sports Africa Founder & CEO, Chenfa Dombin.

Ambassador Blatmann described the refurbished court as a milestone project that will help in actualising the dreams of young boys and girls across Lagos State.

Following the court unveiling, NBA Africa & AFD hosted a Jr. NBA clinic for 70 boys and girls to celebrate the newly refurbished court.

Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience program is part of AFD and NBA Africa's larger collaboration to support youth development through basketball across the continent and builds on the inaugural Jr. NBA & AFD Basketball Experience launched in Zenata, Morocco in 2019.

In November 2021, AFD and NBA Africa initiated a pilot phase in Lagos implemented by international non-governmental organisation Dream Sports Africa. To date, the programme has reached more than 34,000 boys and girls ages 12-17 from 55 public and private schools in Lagos State.