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# Sunday Standard

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### Attention on public primary schools needed

FOR several months, public primary schools in some local government areas of Plateau State have been shut down as a result of industrial action embarked upon by teachers over non-payment of salaries. This lingering crisis in our lower education sector has continued to hinder quality education provision and causing untold hardship on these vulnerable teachers in the state. This sad development also indicates that for almost an entire academic session, primary have stayed out of class largely due to no fault of theirs.

THOUGH not all public primary schools are shut down but in eight local governments out of the seventeen, there are strong indication that all is not well with the sector. It is therefore becoming great concern that educational foundation of these children particularly at the cradle is likely interrupted if not adequately motivated. This is because giving a child the basic education is a great start to ensure the cultivation of promising future leaders.

OBVIOUSLY, the quality of education in public primary schools in Nigeria is deplorable especially when compared to what is obtainable in private schools. Majority of our students clearly lack the foundational knowledge to advance to higher classes and when promoted to higher classes. Data released by Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) in 2022 showed that from 2005 to 2021, the Federal Government has disbursed a total of N564, 607,995, 011 to 36 states and FCT under the initiative. Also, a report released by UNICEF has estimated that seventy-five percent of children aged 7 to 14 years in Nigeria cannot read simple sentence or solve basic mathematics. This is happening despite the UBEC Act of 2004 which provides for compulsory, free universal basic education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age in the country.

WE note with keen interest that going to school should be a delight for every new pupil and not a disgusting situation where most pupils in public schools sit on bare floor to learn as their classrooms have no furniture. From narratives of defaced walls to sagging and leaking roofs, the facilities of most primary schools are terrible.

THEREFORE, primary and junior secondary education should be the prime responsibility of both local and state governments knowing too well that a good number of state governments do not appear enthusiastic about funding basic education.

NONETHELESS, we wish to make a strong appeal that states should show more commitment to basic primary education by providing the needed counterpart funds to access UBEC funds and establish monitoring and accountability mechanisms to make sure that funds accessed are judiciously used to implement projects that improve education. Possibly, lack of financial resources on the part of states to provide these counterpart funds might have been a huge challenging hampering the smooth sailing of primary education.

MORE than ever before, there is a need for an intervention to help improve the quality of education in public primary schools. Budgetary allocations for education needs to be increased to ensure that public primary schools have the necessary facilities and conducive environment for learning.

THERE should also be quality investments on teachers to ensure that only qualified and passionate ones are employed and that these teachers engage in continuous development in their profession.

TEACHERS' entitlements need to be looked into so as to boost their moral and not to live in the illusion that their reward is in heaven which might hinder them from putting in their best.

### Tribunal affirms Gov Mutfwang's victory, APC to appeal

**T**he All Progressives Congress in Plateau state has rejected the judgment of the Governorship Elections Petitions Tribunal, which on Friday affirmed Caleb Mutfwang as the duly elected governor of Plateau State.

In a statement on Friday shortly after the judgment, the state Publicity Secretary of the APC, Sylvanus Namang, said the party had instructed its team of lawyers to appeal the judgment describing it as a temporary setback.

It partly read, "Though the tribunal judgment did not turn out in our favour, as true democrats, we still believe and have strong faith in the judiciary. We are, through our very capable team of lawyers, just as they have already indicated, going to test the strength and veracity of today's judgment at the Appeal Court, and we believe we shall emerge victorious given the severity of the loopholes contained therein."

Meanwhile, the three-member



Mutfwang

panel of the tribunal, led by Justice Sunday Olorundahunsi, dismissed the petition filed by the APC and its governorship candidate, Nentawe Yiltwatda, delivered the judgment on Friday morning.

The Independent National Electoral Commission declared Mutfwang of the Peoples Democratic Party as the winner

of the March 18 governorship election with 525,299 votes defeating 17 other candidates, including Yiltwatda, who polled 481,370 votes.

Yiltwatda and his party had approached the tribunal to disqualify Mutfwang and declare him the winner of the election, while claiming to have polled the highest valid votes cast.

### FG approves salary increments for tertiary institutions

**T**he Federal Government has approved the implementation of 35% and 23% salary increments for Staff of all Federal Tertiary Institutions in the country

The approval was conveyed in a circular issued by the Office of the Auditor General of The Federation.

Dated September 21, 2023, the memo signed by Ajanaku F. O, for Director (Human Resource Management), says the implementation takes effect from January 1st, 2023.

Directed to the Directors of Audit Heads of Departments

and Heads of Units, the circular reads: "I am directed to inform you that the Presidential Committee on Salaries at its 13th meeting having taken into consideration the different stages of collective bargaining in various sectors and specifically engagements between the Federal Ministry of Education and Tertiary Institutions-based Unions and consequently the Federal Government's approval is hereby conveyed as revised for the following:-

i. Consolidated Polytechnics and Colleges of Education Salary Structure (CONPCASS) for Academic Staff of Federal

Polytechnics and Colleges of Education with effect from 1 January, 2023.

ii. Consolidated Tertiary Institutions Salary Structure II (CONTISS II) for non-Academic Staff of Federal Universities, with effect from 1 January, 2023.

iii. Consolidated Tertiary Education Institutions Salary Structure (CONTEDISS) for non-Academic Staff of Federal Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, with effect from 1st January, 2023.

iv. Consolidated University Academic Salary Structure II (CONUASS II) for Academic Staff of Federal University with effect from 1st January, 2023

### Fuel stations altering pump to face sanction-**FG**

**T**he Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority said it will penalise fuel station operators who tamper with petroleum pumps.

The NMDPRA Chief Executive, Farouk Ahmed on Friday, during an interactive session with commissioners of the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission in Abuja, raised concerns over the alteration of fuel pumps by filling station operators, saying it is a major concern to the oil regulatory bodies and the Federal Government.

Ahmed said petrol stations caught dispensing fuel with altered pumps would face sanctions.

The sanctions, he said will include revocation of operating licenses, suspension, or shutdown depending on the severity of the offence.

What we are doing now is that we have some of our staff going round to take on-the-spot checks of some of the petrol

stations.

"If you drive into a station, drive out, you will not know if you have been cheated until you do a measurement.

"Sometimes we do a physical measurement where we go to some stations and buy one litre, look at that environment to see whether that one litre is really one litre.

Then we will know whether or not they have tampered with the pump," he said.

The NMDPRA boss said that the authority would continue to collaborate with the RMAFC to generate more revenue for the federation.

We have started the engagement but this is just a formal collaboration on areas where we can improve the revenue generation for the federation.

"There are two areas we have to look at which are either to generate revenue or cut costs," he said.

He called on citizens to invest in the midstream sector of the

economy.

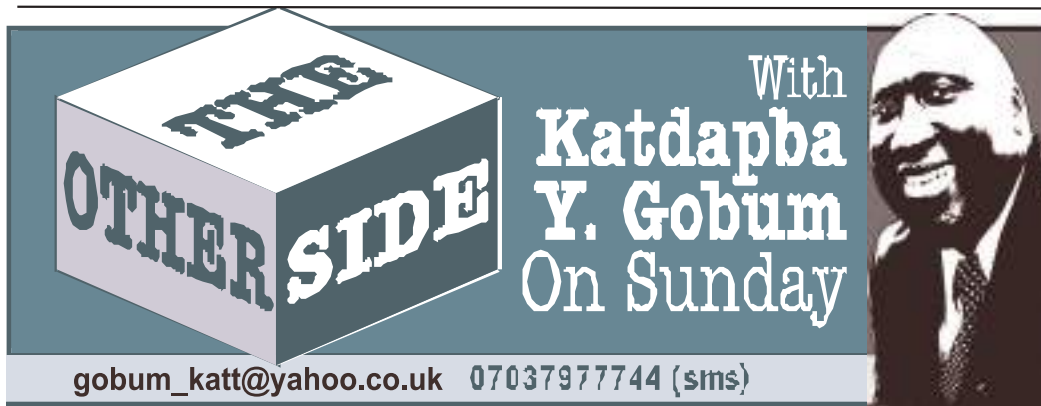
"For example, if you want to build a gas plant, come to us, we will give you the guidelines, and the policies, and you will come and invest.

"The area you want to invest in will determine the cost of investment; the investment opportunities are there," he said.

The RMAFC Chairman, Bello Shehu, stressed that the engagement between both organisations was intended to strengthen their partnership and enhance revenue generation for the country.

"We are here in order for them to enlighten us on what they do and what we can do as a commission to assist them to better boost revenue generation for Nigeria.

"We are interested in what the authority does to enable us to monitor better and know the right questions to ask which will enable us to give appropriate information," he said.



***If Nigerians felt the pains of the fuel subsidy, it is the second increase of 617 naira per liter that raised their adrenalin level to incredible heights. Hardly were Nigerians 'about to adjust' to the increase on the day of inauguration than they were greeted with another huge lift in price of the commodity again.***

**I**T is already a fact that the National Assembly in the second week of July 2023 approved a whopping sum of 500 billion as palliative to assuage the Nigerian people on account of the removal of petroleum subsidy by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu as soon as he was inaugurated on May 29.

From all intent and purposes, this huge amount cannot solve the problem it is intended to counter. If the package is meant to be shared out to Nigerians, most of them are of the view that it should have been invested in critical areas that may touch their lives as they will be impactful in more ways than share it.

Nigerians believe that some of the sad experiences of Sure-P, Public Works Programme and N-Power are too nuanced to be forgotten easily. While the social interventions were deservedly enunciated, their execution was poor, and at best selective. They lost their steam as soon as they came on board; while the economy hemorrhaged on many fronts as a result of the sleaze that accompanied them.

The House of Representatives has gone ahead to approve of the package, but not without the National Assembly and the Judiciary getting a large chunk of the palliative. While Nigerians think otherwise, the National Assembly has gone ahead to defend what they have been allocated.

Nigerians seem to know better where all is leading to. They (Nigerians) have repeatedly alleged that it was another way of softening the ground for the Presidency for support. Whether that is the case or not, the frustrations of Nigerians are understandable, and should be appreciated on its merit.

The removal of fuel subsidy has led to massive increase in the prices of goods and services, but more worrisome, the cost of living is cause to be disturbed about. Unlike in the past where only the poor feel the pinch of various government policies, the new development cannot be said to be the same. The pain is being felt by all and sundry; and that makes it the more worthy of study.

If Nigerians felt the pains of the fuel subsidy, it is the second increase of 617 naira per liter that raised their adrenalin level to incredible heights. Hardly were Nigerians 'about to adjust' to the increase on the day of inauguration than they were greeted with another huge lift in price of the commodity again.

Since then, there have been intemperate comments about the administration of President Bola Tinubu. Little wonder, the N500 billion palliative promised by him and approved by the National Assembly is being reworked, on account of the harsh time being experienced.

Indeed, more Nigerians have joined the bandwagon of asking government to rescind the decision and plow the humongous amount into areas that will benefit more people in the future. There is nothing that should take away what the people want. Many people do not

## Is it bad to give Nigerians palliatives?



**Akpabio**

believe that such palliatives could get into the hands of those who genuinely deserve to be given. In the current situation in Nigeria, who is not poor?

No doubt, most Nigerians are the hard hit for it. The commentaries many have read about the new government of President Bola Ahmed on different platforms are not palatable. They tell of many things that are yet to come. By and large, it is a warning to gird our loins for good or bad. We are headed for more of the hard times. These are meant to tell us to accept that the mistake of yester years are back to haunt us.

There is no doubt we are in for austere times ahead. Had we but taken this 'rejected' path since 2012, when President Goodluck Jonathan's government was on the verge of removing subsidy, perhaps we would have since gotten things right. Those who opposed him then have since become team members on the saddle and who are taking a walk down the same path. They say, whatever goes around, always comes around.

As things stand, an emergency has been declared on food security instead of insecurity, given what has happened in several states. Most members of such communities that are traditionally known to produce food cannot access their farms this year. For this reason, it is a known fact that there will be hunger in the land; therefore, government should have known better what to do.

While the subsidy issue remains one of the most sensitive items Nigerians have had to grapple with lately, the 800 million dollars from the World Bank during the Buhari regime and how it will be used as directed must be handled with tact. The template should be renegotiated

by government so long it knows what they want to spend the money on. Market forces may not solve all economic problems, and that is why we need to define boundaries; redistribute income in such a manner that people's confidence in the economy will be boosted.

This is doable, so long as the government can get stakeholders to prepare the road map on how to get all working for Nigeria using an acceptable template. It is possible to build the capacity of Nigeria's economy to be productive; while we localize policies that can suit our environment. What may work in the United Kingdom, Rwanda or Canada and elsewhere may not work in Nigeria.

Nothing is absolute in these policies. Nigerians have just been promised palliatives, which have not yet been implemented, but some DISCOS are already talking of reviewing their tariffs and taxes for their despondent consumers. As you read this, I want you to know that 11 of them have already applied for a review for the cost of services that are non-existent or at best given at their whims and caprices.

Government policies need to have a tinge of fiscal policies that are able to cushion effects of hardships: Taxes on health, education etc, and also what could be done to reduce effect on investors. Taxes are not about profit but should be directed to all segments in order to survive and make life meaningful for all.

All the steps taken by government means there will be increase in revenue. It is possible to publish the amount gotten through such, so that citizens will appreciate what it is being used for. If the states don't work for their development through revenue generation, the federal may be suffocated.

Government can focus on critical areas that would improve the quality of lives of the people. Almost all states are involved in road projects, but there are no improved investments in health, education and other critical sectors to make the lives of Nigerians better.

To cushion the effects of the subsidy removal, it is advisable for government to release grains to Nigerians and other farm inputs such as fertilizers to farmers. Currently, the cost of procuring it is beyond the reach of most farmers. These are the critical inputs but they are procured under stringent conditions that are stringent.

Therefore, to get a lot of these sorted out by government, the right policies must be taken. Often times, the implementation of the policies have been the bane of their successes. Agriculture needs to have the right policies put in place that might give Nigeria the expected frame for the development of this sector.

There is no doubt that human capital development has not taken a center stage in aggregating its benefits in our quest to compete with nations in other civilized climes. More is needed, and frankly speaking, there are Nigerians whose desire to be utilized is central to their training.

About the Tinubu administration has already passed the half mark into its first hundred days. Some people have said that he comes as someone who may not have been prepared to lead. He may have been touted as been prepared to lead Nigeria. More is being expected of him particularly in dealing with the malfeasance left by the last administration of Muhammadu Buhari.

If anyone has taken a walk to the market lately, Nigerians are in for a hard time. The markets are at best

chaotic, un mindful of no one except their profits. Therefore, the question to ask is what is the road map towards solving it? Government believes that the best that can come out of the quagmire is to dole out money to the poor of the poorest Nigerians.

The governments over the years have distributed money under different guises, but it is also safe to also ask: Who benefitted from it? What is the social register that Nigeria has generated like? There has been controversy attached to those who generated the template. Perhaps due to our population and lack of planning, the desire by government to give out different palliatives has been hampered.

Whether it is Sure-P, Trader Moni or any of those initiatives executed in the past, can any government over the past 23 years say with certainty if the money got to those who meant to receive it? Even if it did, could it be said that those put in place of the initiative were fair enough?

Have Nigerians not been told by two ministers of the former administration, that of Finance and Humanitarian Development, Aisha Ahmed and Sadiya Faruk respectively that Nigerians benefited immensely from the school feeding programme and other initiatives by government to cushion the effects of the hardships on Nigerians.

One of the most vexatious issues coming out from the money meant to cushion the sufferings Nigerians are going through is the several billions meant to be given to the NASS and the Judiciary. The question has been asked: Why are the two arms of government getting such huge amount of money, even while it has been established that they are better off?

Clearly, Nigerians may not be satisfied with the reason that has been provided by the leadership of the NASS. For them, they deserve it for what it may be used for; but Nigerians know better why such humongous amounts are being doled out. Nigerians are of the view that these policies can be reviewed to allow for the space for which they can urgently address the mass of the people, and not the politicians, and the rich that benefit more than the poor.

Social investment by its name is not bad, what has often beclouded such initiatives is how the implementation is made. Truth is that the implementation has been bastardized over time by those put in place to manage them. No one is sure how much was spent by the last administration or where the receivers are from. The social register must be reviewed and those that deserve to get palliatives should be accordingly given.

Some states have started to increase the minimum wage to be paid to their workers. Imo State has promised to give 40000 naira only to its civil servants, and other investment palliatives to marketers. In Kwara and Bayelsa States for instance, free transportation and a few days to come to work has been approved for its workers. Let us hope that other states may follow suit.



## Like politicians, like us

**A** group of people that intrigue one, are the politicians. They are very good with words and can easily sway one with words especially when canvassing for votes during electioneering campaigns.

It is usually at such times that they will tell you something like this: 'I'm a Christian but my maternal grandmother is a Moslem. So, you see, my family is made up of Christians and Muslims. I can't discriminate against any religion because of that.'

Unfortunately, such claims prove to be lies the moment they are elected. There are so many instances that the politician will do away with the ladder that he used to climb up the exalted position. They get themselves new friends, new domestic staff and discard their old numbers for new ones that they will give only to their new circle of friends.

Some 'used and dumped' electorate said they were shocked when barely 2 days after voting a lawmaker, they went to his house to congratulate him and met unfriendly faces who impolitely told them that the lawmaker said he would not see anybody. Nothing changed the new guard's face as he rudely showed them out.

These ill treated masses left promising themselves that they would in no circumstances vote for the lawmaker come next election. They recounted what they went through to vote for him and his promise to operate an open door policy. They knew that they had been scammed.

In one of the areas here in Jos, where the masses abound, those of them that threw their weight behind the party that won, said they lived to regret it. No promise made was fulfilled. Their road, which they promised to give a facelift when elected, is worse off. And to think that even their very lives were threatened. One of their leaders said, the politicians didn't even show up in the area after their win, for a thank you visit. Not until almost the end of their first tenure in office. That was when they were going for a second term in office, when they needed their votes.

The embittered residents told them they wanted nothing to do with them. That was how they lost out there. Uptil today, the area is much worse than what it was before politicians began their deception. Unfortunately, they became the laughing stock to those in the opposition party.

A lady shared her experience as a politician going out with others for campaigns in Abuja. The man they were campaigning for claimed to be a Muslim but would never join the Muslim brothers to pray when it was time to pray. At such times, he would go and sit with the Christian women and be smoking. The man became victorious at the polls, and that was the end of the story. The next thing she heard was that he relocated

abroad with his whole family.

Apparently, all he needed was strong evidence that he was honourably engaged to enable him and his whole family to relocate abroad. And they left without turning back. He didn't care that people had given him their mandate. To this politician, the electorate were a means to an end.

It would appear that it is not only the electorate that suffer. In most cases, the immediate family of the politician suffers too. The wives to some of the politicians suffer neglect. A friend told us that when she accused her friend of flying high since her husband became a legislator, she asked her when was the last time she saw him? She replied that it was about a month ago. And the lady told her that the last time she saw her husband was about 3 months ago. The only thing that was constant was the money he was always sending. My heart bled for the politician's wife.

Apart from their lives of double standard, backstabbing is a constant. This usually comes to play when it is time for appointments. Slander, dragging one's name in the mud, accusations of anti-party etc become the order of the day. The word of God says "A good name is better than rubies". Quite a number of them suffer any one of these and end up with only a bad name announcing them wherever they go.

Politics is indeed a dirty game. It takes nothing to assassinate one's character in this game. During Governor Lalong's first outing, we were told that he was not from Plateau. They claimed he was from Taraba. Tapgun was said to be an ibo, a card he maximized to the fullest.

Women politicians are the worst hit. There is no woman that participates actively in politics that is not called a prostitute and several terrible names. Anything she does is looked at, along gender lines. She is never good enough! The hours chosen for meetings are usually very unfriendly to women, especially the married ones. In Nigeria even to be part of the game is expensive. Imagine coughing out a hundred million to buy a form for the presidency. Only a man is that financially empowered.

That apart, traversing the length and breadth of Nigeria canvassing for votes along with one's campaign crew, is capital intensive for most women. It is a man's world, they would say.

They play dirty, we play dirty as supporters as we blindly follow because of stomach infrastructure. They play dirty, by making sure they assassinate their opponent's character, and we play along like puppets.

The politicians know that money can do wonders, so they dangle it before us, and we follow like a dog after a bone. No doubt, money is the root of all evil, as the word of God says. We become blind to everything as long as money speaks. We silence the voice of reason at this point.

What a game! After everything, a new crisis begins. Some people are treated better than others. Animal farm comes to play. What a vicious cycle. It is not easy to be a politician.

## NEWS

### WAEC to introduce CBT for WASSCE -HNO

**T**HE West African Examinations Council (WAEC) says plans to introduce the Computer Based Test (CBT) mode in the administration of its examinations are at advanced stage.

The Head of National Office (HNO), Mr Patrick Areghan, gave the hint in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) on Saturday in Lagos.

Areghan was speaking against the backdrop of notable achievements and advancements of the council under his watch, as he prepared to bow out of office on Oct. 1.

He would be bowing out after completing his three-year tenure.

Areghan said that introducing the CBT mode of administrating some of the council's examination had been part of his vision for the body in the near future.

"We have already started something in terms of CBT examination. We have gone far with our planning and all of that, even in the sub region, the registrar to council is also doing something.

"But this is not as easy as some people will think. This is because we ask ourselves, how do we conduct CBT for practicals and essay papers?"

"We can only readily do that in the case of objective questions. But so many people will not see it from that angle. They argue that some others are doing it, why can't WAEC do same.

"Now, no one even talks about energy; how many schools are exposed to computer literacy? How many have computer facilities and how many have electricity to run these things?"

"Even where you have all these things on ground, how do you handle the issue of theory and practical papers? So, these are the issues, but that is what I want the council to do in the very near future.

"We should be able to conduct CBT examinations, even if it means starting with the objective



(HNO), Mr Patrick Areghan,

questions," he said.

The outgoing WAEC boss noted that already, the council had concluded on introducing the administration of its examination using the CBT platform under his watch, in no distant time, starting with the objective questions and later theory and practicals.

"But you can still be sure that not all schools will be ready. Maybe we can have a segregated market. Those who cannot afford the CBT will go for the pencil and paper mode.

"So, I will like to see WAEC in that light," he said.

Areghan said asides the introduction of the CBT, he would also like to see all the operations of the council fully digitalised in the near future.

"I will live to see more

massive deployment of technology so that the vision of council can change from just being a world class examination body to a technology-driven examination body.

"I also want WAEC to be more visible in the international stage. I want to see, through the cooperation of the sub region,

how we can take WAEC overseas, that is, how Nigerian children in the diaspora can sit for WASSCE overseas.

"That, again, is what I want the pencil and paper mode. Future. That is one thing I wanted to do under my watch,

but, again like I said, it needs the cooperation of the sub region, not just Nigeria, to take WASSCE overseas.

"I also want to see its digital certificate that we have successfully launched in Nigeria replicated in the entire sub region, so that any candidate that has taken WASSCE, can be in any part of the world to access the digital certificate; that is a legacy.

### Military neutralises 52 terrorists, apprehends 60 -DHQ

**D**EFENCE Headquarters says troops of the Nigerian armed forces have eliminated 52 terrorists, apprehended 60 and rescued 61 kidnapped hostages in different operations between Sept. 15 and Sept. 22.

The Director, Defence Media Operations, Maj.-Gen. Edward Buba, made this known in a statement on Friday in Abuja.

Buba said a total of seven terrorists comprising of five adult males and two adult females surrendered to troops within the period under review.

He said the troops recovered a total number of 77 weapons and 658 different types of ammunition.

"The breakdown is as follows: 53 AK47 rifles, two AK47 rifles loaded with 8 rounds of 7.62mm special ammo, 18 locally fabricated rifles, one beretta pistol, three pump action guns.

"650 rounds of 7.62mm special ammo, 50 AK47 magazines, two rounds of 9mm ammo, six rounds of 7.62 NATO and five fragmentation jackets.

"Furthermore, troops recovered 15 vehicles, 12 motorcycles, 12 Bicycles, five mobile phones, 12 cutlasses, two generator sets, two gas cylinders, 133 livestock and a sum of N602,000 and Airtel airtime worth N8,000," he said.

Buba said the troops of Operation Delta Safe denied oil thieves of an estimated N946.38 million being value of seizures in the South-South region.

He stated that the troops recovered 496,250 litres of stolen crude oil, 83,400 litres of illegally

refined AGO, 1,200 litres of PMS, four pumping machines, five speed boats, 34 dugout pits, 57 storage tanks, 16 wooden boats, 85 ovens and three outboard engines.

According to him, the mission of the military against terrorist and other violent extremist groups in the country remains unchanged.

"The military will continue with aggressive operations to force these groups to submission," he added.

The defence spokesman said the troops of Operation Hadin Kai were engaged in ambushes, raids, rescue operations, fighting patrols, attacks as well as cordon and search activities in the North East theatre.

He added that troops of Operations Hadarun Daji, Safe Haven, Whirl Punch and Whirl Stroke had also sustained aggressive postures against bandits and other criminals in North West and North Central.

According to him, troops of

Operation Whirl Stroke conducted 22 operations, 13 fighting patrols, six confidence building patrols and one raid operation within the period under review.

He said that the areas covered included Mbaayande, Mbamazu and Mbaagudu villages of Konshiga Local Government Area of Benue.

"Troops of Joint Task Force Operations UDO KA and Operation Search and Flush in the South East region sustained momentum in the fight against insecurity in the region.

"Troops apprehended five suspected IPOB/ESN terrorists in Ikwo and Ihiala Local Government Areas of Ebonyi and Anambra, respectively.

"The military will through its operations continue to make improvements towards ensuring safety of citizens and restoring security across the country.

"Citizens are encouraged to know something, say something and let the military do something about it," Buba said.

## CHANGE OF NAMES

### EMMANUEL

I, formerly known as **GODFREY BERTU NANFWANG**, now wish to be known and addressed as **EMMANUEL NANFWANG**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

### USMAN

I, formerly known as **MOHAMMED NAJIB**, now wish to be known and addressed as **USMAN NAJIB USAINI**. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public please take note.

## SUNDAY POLITICS

## House committee seeks MDA's cooperation

By PAULINE DALLONG

**T**HE Plateau State House of Assembly Committee on Works and Transport has sought the support and cooperation of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) under its purview to boost infrastructural development in the state.

Chairman of the committee and member representing Langtang South constituency, Hon. Nimchak Rims made this known while on a familiarization visit to the MDAs.

While at the state Ministry of Works, Hon. Rims explained that the visit became necessary in order to further strengthen the existing working relationship between the two, especially since it is a newly constituted committee.

Earlier, the Permanent Secretary Engr. Beedee Bot while highlighting how critical the ministry is, said it oversees the planning, maintenance and infrastructural development in the state, pointing out that lack of funds, high cost of materials, coupled with the recent subsidy removal was affecting ongoing road projects.

On his part, the Commissioner for Works, Engr. Adams Bulus Legshak who noted that the visit was timely, appreciated the committee members for it. He added that even though newly appointed, he is still learning and observing a lot, assuring that they are partners in progress.

At the Plateau Express Services, it was a call for help as the General Manager, Mr. Samuel Gwott, represented by the Company Secretary,



Hon. Nimchak Rims

Engr. Binchen Jantur reeled out some of the challenges bedeviling the company.

According to him, the building housing the company is no longer conducive due to its dilapidated condition, adding that many of the vehicles plying the roads are no longer motorable as they always break down while on the road.

The general manager appealed to the state government to come to the rescue of the company by providing it with a new structure, stating that the current building cannot be renovated having been built a long time ago.

The committee was also at the Plateau State Road Maintenance Agency (PSRMA) and was received by the General Manager, Engr.

Davou Luka who reiterated the role of good roads in the society, saying that the present administration was concerned about the condition of roads and is already addressing it.

Responding earlier, Chairman of the committee, Nimchak Rims having noted most of the challenges highlighted, assured that the House as part of its legislative duty will look into them with a view to proffering solutions.

Other members of the committee who were part of the visit include Hon. Ishaku Maren, the House Majority Leader and member representing Bokkos Constituency, Hon. Joe Bukar, Minority Leader and member representing Shendam Constituency and Hon. Paul Datugun, member representing Qua'an Pan

## Bauchi Governor commends tribunal for upholding mandate

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

**I**N an exciting mood, expressing gratitude to Almighty Allah, Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State has commended the tribunal sitting in Bauchi for upholding his re-election by the good people of Bauchi State in spite of the indiscriminate demonization of the country's judicial system.

The victorious governor made the expression and commendation during his thanksgiving speech at the Ramat House, Bauchi, shortly after the tribunal affirmed his election as

governor of Bauchi State recently. He called on his opponents to sheath their swords and join him to harness the enormous resources of the state to create a modern economy that would benefit everyone within Bauchi State, Nigeria's pearl of tourism.

"Today, the Governorship Elections Petition Tribunal sitting in Bauchi revalidated the mandate that you gave to me last March. It was a profound judgment that will

continue to resonate within multiple circles as a demonstration of judicial rigour and common sense and an affirmation of the sovereign will of the people over political brinkmanship and an entitlement mentality.

"Our victory today is by the grace of Allah who gives power to whom he wishes and takes it without consulting the holder. We are once again reminded that all power is held in trust on behalf of God.

It is an unambiguous statement that despite the mischief of political merchants who arrogate to themselves kingmaker status and deceive some of our unsuspecting compatriots into believing that they can determine the destiny of others, God still reigns in the affairs of all his creations.

"In the nature of things, many of our supporters would expect me to jubilate over the verdict that has just confirmed the overwhelming mandate that they freely gave to me at the last governorship election in the state. Naturally, I am relieved and happy that this distraction has been put aside.

"However, how I wish that we got to this point devoid of

By DUMAH RANDONG

**P**LATEAU State Deputy Governor, Mrs Josephine Piyo, has congratulated the First Lady of Nigeria, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, on the celebration of her birthday anniversary.

Piyo described the nation's number one woman as a virtuous woman who has positively impacted the lives of many.

The Deputy Governor, in a congratulatory message issued and signed by her Press Secretary, Mrs Martha Nyam and made available to news men in Jos, said the First Lady has demonstrated a high sense of commitment and passion for the welfare of the downtrodden and less privileged in the society.

This, she said, was demonstrated when she personally visited Plateau State and donated N500

## Piyo celebrates Nigeria's First Lady at 63

million to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) who were sacked from their homes as a result of violent attacks in some Local Government Areas in the state.

While appreciating Nigeria's First Lady, Piyo prayed for many more years of celebration for the First Lady. She further described her commitment to the welfare of the vulnerable in the society especially women and children as second to none.

She also praised the First Lady for being a strong pillar of support to her husband, President Ahmed Tinubu, as he steers the affairs of the nation, adding that her support has greatly impacted in his achievements so far as President.

The Deputy Governor



Oluremi

wished her a joyful birthday celebration, long life, good health and prosperous years ahead.

## EPT: Counsel to present video against Plang's victory

**C**OUNSEL to Hon. Golkuna Y. Gotom, of the People's Democratic

Party (PDP), Benson Igbeno, Esq, has promised to present

before the Election Petition Tribunal, a video evidence of the irregularities during February 25 Senatorial Election of Plateau Central Zone that declared Senator Diket Plang, of All Progressive Congress (APC) as winner.

He made the promise recently, after presenting one Useni Audi, of Tutung Ward in Kukenya District and Useni Ali, of Tips Garage Polling Unit of Dengi, all in Kanam Local Government Area as witnesses to testify before the National Assembly Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

Counsel appealed that two out of the six witnesses to appear before the tribunal could not be reached through phone calls except for one of the witnesses who was to tender the video evidence of the irregularities during the election.

Igbeno disclosed that they were supposed to be in court today, but the video disappointed them that morning because it was said to be corrupted and needed to be worked on by the ICT expert, who promised to rectify it within 24 hours, hence the appeal for an adjournment to enable them rectify the problem and file to other counsels ahead of the next hearing.

However, leading Judge and Chairman of the National Assembly Election Petition Tribunal sitting in Court 4, Honourable MD Tukur, said, they have very limited time to round up the tribunal and may not have the comfort of extending after October 1, 2023 any longer.

He, therefore, gave up to September 25, 2023 for both Counsels to the Petitioner, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Respondents to do the necessary and needed arrangement that would enable them conclude the proceedings and rule on the petition. The case was adjourned to 25/9/2023 for the next hearing.



Diket

the acrimony, the bitterness, the resource hemorrhage, the bickering, the time wasted. How I wish that rather than dissipate energy through avoidable litigation, we had all resolved what is a disagreement among brothers through discussion, consultation and unity of purpose. How I wish all of us had submitted to the Supreme will of Allah than succumb to our ego and personal fantasies.

"As a constitutionalist who has stood with the law at critical moments in our country's history, I will be the first to admit that the framers of our constitution did not err by co-opting judicial intervention as part and parcel of the electoral process. It is the epitome of our Doctrine of Separation of Powers that gives confidence to the aggrieved not to resort to self-help. It ensures constitutional and social harmony.

"However, I wish to state, with every sense of responsibility, that unbridled litigation continues to wreak incalculable havoc on our body politics, social consciousness and economic progress. More importantly,

it gives a segment of the populace a false sense of indignation just as it unnecessarily polarizes society. In all sincerity, I do not think it pays to continue this way.

"Suffocated by the pain of loss, we tend to ignore the fact that we are members of the same family, that our strength lies in our unity; that our progress is defined not much by how well we are able to take care of our personal interests but by the lives we touch; that our wealth is defined not by how much we have added to our possessions but by how many people we are able to lift from poverty to prosperity; that our authority and influence are not defined by the position of power we occupy but by the degree of respect the people are prepared to accord us and that our security is defined not by how much power we wield but by the collective goodwill of the people through the grace of God.

"Now that the tribunal has ruled, it is my candid opinion that it is time to set aside whatever misgivings", he concluded.



Bala

## SUNDAY POLITICS

### Kano tribunal verdict: Other matters arising

Amidst tension, the Kano Governorship Election Petition Tribunal delivered its judgement on Wednesday, 20th September, 2023, in favour of Dr. Nasiru Gawuna of the All Progressives Congress (APC) as the rightful winner of the March 18 governorship election. In this reports, BODE OLAGOKE takes a look at reactions trailing the Kano Governorship Election Petition Tribunal judgement nullifying the victory of the New Nigeria People's Party (NNPP)-led government.

**B**EFORE the judgement came, markets were closed, security deployed and nobody could boldly say where the pendulum would swing.

The reading of the judgment at the Kano High Court complex, Miller road was transmitted virtually via zoom as the panel members were not physically in the Courtroom.

The tribunal, however, declared Dr. Nasiru Gawuna of the All Progressives Congress as the rightful winner of the March 18 governorship election.

On the reasons why the Kano governor was sacked, the panel said the margin of votes scored by NNPP was invalid and not in compliance with the 2022 Electoral act. The judges deducted 165,663 votes from the NNPP, adding that the ballot papers of the 165,663 were not stamped or signed, and therefore, declared invalid.

Reacting to the development, Kano state Governor, Abba Yusuf has, however, rejected the ruling of the Governorship Election Petition Tribunal that voided his election and declared his opponent the winner.

Yusuf described the tribunal's verdict as "unfair" and "a miscarriage of justice" and vowed to appeal against the judgement, and urged his supporters to remain calm.

"I call on our people to remain calm. We will appeal the judgement and we are sure justice will be done.

"Let our people be reassured that we will do everything possible to retain this widely acclaimed mandate", he added.

On their part, it was jubilation galore in the camp of the APC and the governorship candidate, Gawuna.

Reacting to the judgement, National Chairman the APC, DrAbdullahiGanduje described the judgement as historic, adding that under APC government in Kano, businesses would flourish.



Yusuf

Ganduje said: "Today is a historic day. We thank Allah for providing an enabling environment for the judiciary to deliver fair, transparent judgement in our favour and judgement that is true (reflection of the wishes of the people).

"We thank the judiciary, our party leaders in our state, we thank the business community, the various support groups. We have to commend everybody in Kano state for being patient and continuously fervent in prayers for Allah to give us victory.

"We urge them to continue to be peaceful, to continue to conduct themselves in a peaceful manner. We assure the business community that our new government if we come in, In Sha Allah, under our able Governor, Dr Yusuf Gawuna that business will flourish in Kano."

The APC national chairman also thanked President Bola Ahmed Tinubu "for creating an enabling environment for judiciary to flourish in Nigeria.

We thank members for the press for giving coverage to enlighten, educating the people."

On his own, the APC governorship candidate, Nasir Yusuf Gawuna, promised to continue from where the former governor finished, adding that his government would be fair to all in Kano.

"Insha Allah we will continue the good work of His Excellency (Ganduje). We are going to be fair to everybody. Kano state is a commercial state, and commerce and education, health are areas we have highlighted in our blueprint during our campaign and Insha Allah we will continue with what we have said. We will make sure Kano is free from insecurity and other vices. We appreciate the support from the state and beyond."

For Nasir Yusuf Gawuna, "It is a day that Allah has made it fruitful for us to emerge victorious based on the judgement of today and Alhamdulillah we have thank the



Gawuna

judiciary for being fair. We know Allah is the one that has done. He is the one that has done it for us before, He is the one that has done now and In Sha Allah He will do it for us in the coming time. We pray that Allah will give us the health and life to be able to deliver to the people on the right path."

Gawuna seized the moment to recall former governor Ganduje's act of kindness to him.

He said: "I want to express my appreciation to my mentor, H.E DrAbdullahi Umar Ganduje, CON for being there for me. I have said it several times for the confidence he has bestowed in me.

"For those who have not known my history with Ganduje, during the merger between parties and the APC came into being and I happened to be part of the merger from the defunct ANPP while they were in PDP and he was the deputy governor then and I had the opportunity for being a commissioner and I have served under them. Then he was the deputy governor and Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso was the governor of Kano State. I have very good relationship with DrAbdullahiGanduje.

"In 2015 Allah destined him to be the governor of Kano state. We were 19 that served in the government of H.E. DrKwankwaso. Ganduje found me worthy and capable and he selected only me to be in his cabinet. I remain grateful to His Excellency and I am not going to take that for granted. After that, people don't know while we were in government, there was an opportunity for people to be chosen from Kano and Lagos states as Ministers, H.E. DrGanduje choose me but then it did not happen. And Alhamdulillah, an opportunity came in 2018 when the former deputy governor resigned and

without lobbying, H.E Ganduje found me worthy and chose me as his deputy.

"The day he swore me in, he made a statement. He said in his speech that "he is my deputy governor today and he going to be my running mate in 2019" which later happened. From that time there was no door for anybody to say I want to be deputy governor.

We ran in 2019 and everybody knew what happened but Allah made us victorious. In 2023, many people have shown interest but we did not have any discussion. There was only one time he asked me, a lot of people are forming structure, he counted seven people which I know of. He asked me if I have structure or not. And I told him the structure that you formed that brought us here is what I would follow whether I am the candidate or not.

"Then that came when he called me that I have found you worthy, loyal and faithful enough as the deputy governor you have done very well to me and I think you are the best candidate. This was between me and him, if he wanted he could have called me and say all of that and support another person but he never did that. And I told him that that confidence he bestowed upon me is better than the seat of the governorship."

The victorious Gawuna concluded his speech by reassuring the people of Kano that he would fulfil all his election manifesto.

"By the time Allah will finalize it for us because it is Allah that gives power, if he so wish and give it to us. We will continue the good work of his Excellency for everybody. We will set Kano state on track as the state of commerce. All the things we have said in our campaigns will deliver. We will rid Kano state of drug abuse, and all other vices."

**"On the reasons why the Kano governor was sacked, the panel said the margin of votes scored by NNPP was invalid and not in compliance with the 2022 Electoral act. The judges deducted 165,663 votes from the NNPP, adding that the ballot papers of the 165,663 were not stamped or signed, and therefore, declared invalid. Reacting to the development, Kano state Governor, Abba Yusuf has, however, rejected the ruling of the Governorship Election Petition Tribunal that voided his election and declared his opponent the winner."**

## SUNDAY POLITICS

## Under Alake, solid minerals sector to get makeover

**The minister for solid minerals Hon. Alake said his mandate is to improve on the formulation and regulation guiding prospecting, quarrying, and mining; improve data gathering; monitor and organize more efficiently the sale and consumption of minerals and increase revenue accruable to the Federal Government from the issuance of permits, licenses, leases and the collection of rents, fees, and royalties. ISAAC ANYAOGU writes.**

**T**O this end, he unveiled the policy priorities as: Nigerian Solid Minerals Corporation, Joint Ventures with Mining Multinationals, Big Data on specific seven priority minerals and their deposits, and 30-day grace for illegal miners to join artisanal cooperatives. Others are: Mines Surveillance Task Force and Mine Police and 6 Mineral Processing Centres to focus on Value-Added products.

The paradigm shift in the strategy is re-positioning the sector in terms of the human and capital factors that can drive its transformation. This enables capital formation based on investment activity powered by precise geo-scientific data that is transparent and accessible.

Alake's strategy is to elevate solid minerals to the prestige enjoyed by oil and he is setting up a corporate body that plays in this field.

Consequently, the Ministry shall work towards the incorporation of the Nigerian Solid Minerals Corporation. This is a corporate body that will have subsidiaries doing business in the seven priority areas that require immediate intervention and focus: Gold, Coal, Limestone, Bitumen, Lead, Iron-ore and Baryte. Existing enterprises such as the National Iron-Ore Company and ongoing arrangements such as the Bitumen Concessioning Programme will be reviewed to fit into the new system, the minister said.

The proposed corporation will seek and secure partnership investment agreements with big multinational companies worldwide to leverage the attractive investment-friendly regime operating in the country to secure massive Foreign Direct Investment for the mining sector. The positioning of the national corporation as a guarantor and protector of the partnership agreements is expected to assure partners of our seriousness and fidelity.

It will support Nigerian businesses seeking funding abroad and help to authenticate their investment proposals to speed up the commitment of their partners to invest.

Locally, the corporation will engage the Nigerian financial system, which has demonstrated palpable reluctance to support mineral prospecting and mining because of the long-term gestation of value generation by developing a Fund to facilitate investments in mining at interest rates that will be mutually agreed.

He said the Ministry of Solid Minerals shall soon propose to the Federal Executive Council a precise investigation of selected deposits of the seven priority minerals – Gold, Coal,



**Alake**

Limestone, Iron-ore, Bitumen, Baryte, and Lead/Zinc – to scale this hurdle. Other minerals will feature in subsequent investigations under the National Integrated Mineral Exploration Project, NIMEP.

Investment drive  
"We shall organize country visits and tours, exhibitions, conferences, advertisement campaigns, and presentations to tell significant stakeholders in the global industry that Nigeria is

the next profitable destination for investment.

Further actions envisaged by the minister includes reviewing the draft Nigerian Mining Act to unlock Foreign Direct Investment in Mining by

introducing international best practices.

The ministry is exploring how to secure local content in the emerging industry to ensure a fair deal for Nigerians by reviewing the reports of the Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative on the Solid Minerals Sector.

A regular source of conflict and insecurity is the management of community relations by mining licensees. While the Mining Act recognizes minerals under the ground as the exclusive property of the Federal Government, it also elaborates on the need to engage communities whose hitherto peaceful and orderly environment may be disrupted by investors about to activate a mining license.

A review of similar strategies by mining countries showed that Nigeria's solid minerals strategy mirrors what is obtainable globally. In comparison with Australia's new mining strategy unveiled in June, Nigeria lacked a research and innovation component. Mining nations are keen to drive private sector participation as seen in Chile, where the government has unveiled a new PPP project with heavy incentives for the private sector.

The race for who will harness the minerals of the future has started in earnest with other countries having a head start. Nigeria has to play catch up, but it's better than refusing to start at all.

## Defend Nigeria's democracy - NNPP

**GIVEN** the Kano state governorship tribunal judgement recently which ruled in favour of the All Progressives Congress (APC) governorship candidate, Nasiru Gawuna, the New Nigeria Peoples Party (NNPP) has alerted the media to save the country's democratic governance.

The governorship candidate of NNPP, Dr. Abba Kabir Yusuf, was declared winner of the governorship election in March this year. However, the election petition tribunal in its ruling on Wednesday gave the victory to the APC governorship candidate.

The NNPP Acting Deputy National Chairman, Prince Nwaeze Onu, while briefing journalists on Thursday said, "We at NNPP consider you media practitioners as partners in the efforts to enthrone an enduring democracy in our dear country.

"It is now very clear that our democracy is under serious threat, and there is the need for urgent concerted effort to save it from total annihilation.

"Without being immodest, our party can pride itself as a party that is not desperate for power. That is why in spite of the

shortcomings of the last general elections, especially, with regard to the disenfranchisement of millions of our voters across the country, we decided not to approach the tribunal, in view of the tense situation in the country then. Instead, we decided to focus on building our party for future electoral engagements, hoping the future is bright for the growth of democracy in Nigeria.

"Unfortunately, the judgement by the Kano State Election Petition Tribunal on the March 18, 2023, Governorship election is capable of eroding whatever

confidence one has in the judiciary of this great country. The reported judgement nullified the free, credible and globally acclaimed fair election of our Governorship Candidate, Engr Abba Kabir Yusuf and brazenly awarded the election to the APC candidate, Nasiru Gawuna.

"The tribunal arrived at this unjust judgement by unfairly subtracting 165,663 votes from the Governor's tally in order to enable it unfairly award the election result to the candidate of the ruling APC. In doing so the

Tribunal obviously affirms its belief that the vote tally of the APC Candidate was sacrosanct. The Supreme Court in many cases has stated its position on this matter in earlier judgements.

"For the sake of emphasis, the NNPP presidential candidate, His Excellency Senator Rabi'u Musa Kwankwaso, defeated the candidate of the All Progressives Congress, APC, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu with a wide margin. In the same vein, NNPP won two Senatorial seats as against APC's one seat."

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# SUNDAY PEOPLE

## BISHOP KWASHI HOLDS VALEDICTORY SERVICE

*Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang yesterday attended the Valedictory Service in honour of His Lordship, Most Rev. Dr. Benjamin Argak Kwashi, CON, Bishop of Jos Diocese and Archbishop of the Ecclesiastical Province of Jos Anglican Communion*



*Governor Mutfwang (left) congratulating the celebrant, Bishop Kwashi*



*Primate of Anglican Communion, Nigeria, the Most Reverend Henry Chukwudum Ndukuba represented by the Secretary General, Church of Nigeria, Rev. Gershinen Paul Dajur with other Anglican Bishops*



*Wife of the celebrant, Mrs. Gloria Benjamin Kwashi (left) with other wives of Bishops at the service*



*Rev. Prof. Soja Bewarang, former COCIN President, Sum Pyem of Gindiri, HRH Charles Mato Dakat and others at the service*



*Amb. James Dimka with other dignitaries*



*Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang, SGS, Arc Samuel Nanchang Jatau, HoS, Barr. Rautha Dakok and Attorney General, Barr. Philemon Dafi*



*The celebrant, His Lordship, Bishop Kwashi leading other members of his family*



*Bishop Benjamin Kwashi (left) in a warm embrace with the representative of the Primate of the Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion, Rev. Gershinen Paul Dajur, Secretary General, Church of Nigeria Anglican Communion*

Photos: DANLADI DUK



**T**HE Plateau State House of Assembly recently came up with two bills that are considered to be important to not only the people of Plateau, but the state at large. The executive bills include, 'A Bill for the Law to Establish the Plateau State Law Reform Commission, 2023 and the second is 'A Bill for a Law to Establish the Plateau State Citizens Mediation Centre', 2023

Having passed through second reading, an adhoc committee was set up to look into these bills, headed by the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop.

The Law Reform Commission Bill is to be saddled with the responsibility which among other things, is to generally research, take and keep under review all state laws, and local government bye laws, with a view to ensuring their systematic and progressive development and reform in consonance with the prevailing norms in the state, nation and international community including, in particular, the codification of such laws and bye laws which will be beneficial to all. In a nutshell, when passed into law it would serve as a coordinating center for all state laws and local government bye laws.

On the other hand, the Citizens Mediation Centre Bill seeks to establish a center that will be saddled with the responsibility of mediating between parties on disputes such as landlord and tenant matters, contracts of employment, family matters, debt related matters etc. The center shall also help in reducing the huge legal fees paid by citizens to access the services of lawyers over minor disputes. We cannot deny the fact that these are issues people deal with on a daily basis.

To set the ball rolling, the bill was subjected to the committee stage for proper scrutiny and study. It was thereafter, arrived at the decision to conduct a public hearing as is customary. The purpose of the public hearing is to get stakeholders inputs and contributions with a view to carrying everyone along, from where observations and recommendations on the proposed legislation will be deduced. The following stakeholders were invited as part of the hearing: Nigeria Law Reform Commission, Plateau State chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association ( NBA), Nigerian

Public Complaint Commission, Plateau State Local Government Service Commission and Plateau State High Court of Justice. Others are Plateau State Judicial Service Commission, the state Attorney General and state Auditor General.

Speaking on what the people stand to gain from this legislation, the Deputy Speaker of the House, who also doubles as the adhoc committee chairman, Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop while enumerating the benefits said they were quite enormous. For instance when fully operational, the commission will be like a library where all the state laws



## On law reform and mediation center bills



and bye laws will be kept. To him, accessibility of laws will no longer be an issue because whoever wants any law on the Plateau can easily get them once he or she goes to the commission.

According to the lawmaker, there are laws that have been said to be obsolete, for example there are situations where some people have described certain punishments as common. Therefore, in order to make reforms on some of these obsolete laws, there needs to be put in place an agency of government that will harness the laws, bring them together and see how the House can come up with amendments to those laws.

At the public hearing, participants applauded the initiative by the tenth state assembly and for involving them in what they described as an epoch making event. One of the highlights was the unanimous agreement by stakeholders that the proposed legislation when passed, will improve the state legal system, revive the lingering dearth of obsolete legislations and enhance periodic reviews. However, The NBA speaking through Barr. Demon Dashe was quick to caution on the use of proper terminologies to dissuade any ambiguity.

On the part of the state Attorney General Barr. Philemon Daffi, he

defined law as an instrument of social engineering, adding that the mantra of the present administration which is 'the time is now', is not frivolous nor flippant but deliberate. To him, the importance of the Plateau State Law Reform Commission cannot be overemphasized, while giving his reasons that as attorney general, he has had cause to go around MDAs picking pieces of legislations concerning the state, which ought not to be so. Still wondering on why the state does not have its own reform commission, the attorney general said something went wrong because when the then northern Nigeria established her law reform commission, it was the then Benue/Plateau that became the warehouse of that legislation.

Barr. Daffi on behalf of the state government expressed desire to keep all laws in a single place for easy accessibility. As for the mediation center, he posited that there was need for the state to tap from global funds through the establishment of a center that will cater for mainly the needs of indigent members of the society. Even though government is aware of the existence of other organs that deals on alternative dispute resolution, the center which is about to be established has a

clear mandate in addressing needs of vulnerable members of our society.

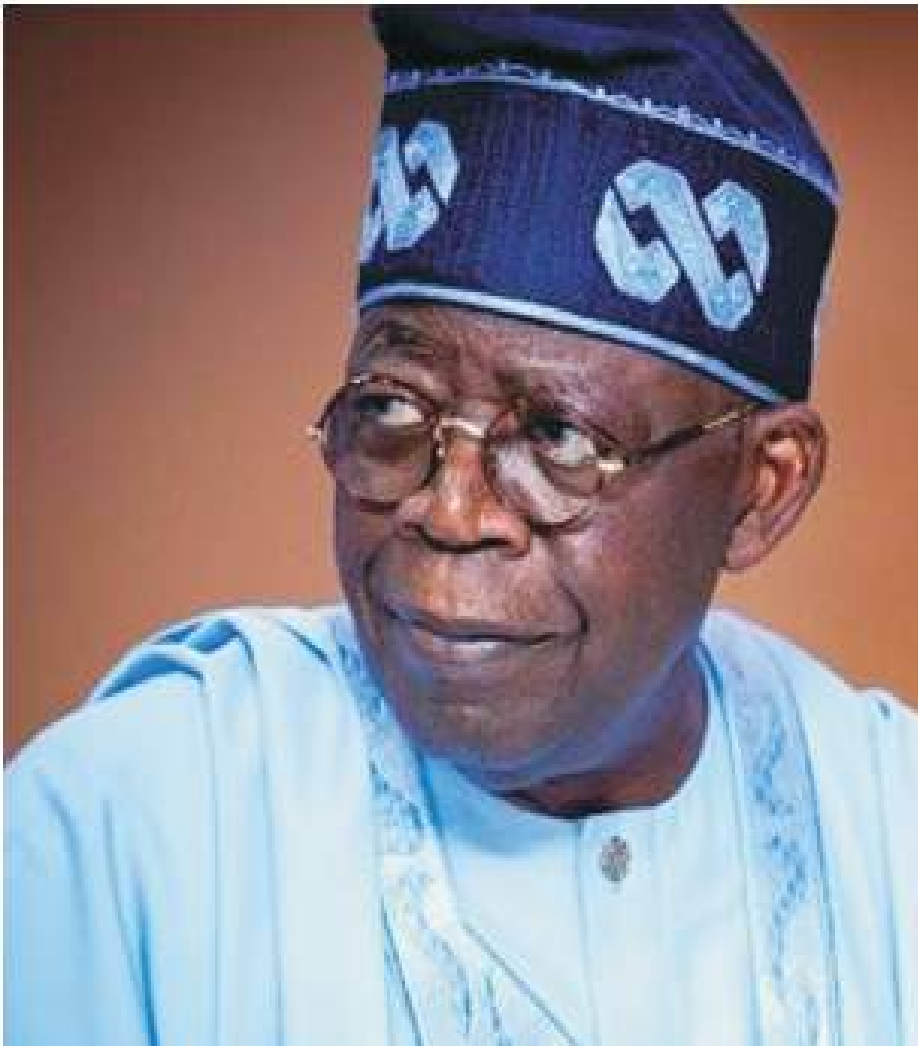
The Plateau State Peace Building Agency and the Multi Door Court House on the other hand, allayed fears of duplication of responsibilities given the establishment of the citizens mediation center. Both bodies however, understood the yet to be established commission as a complimentary body that focuses on the need of indigent members of the society. They called for closer collaboration in order to address the many societal ills bedeviling the state.

For Prof. Jummai Audi, Chairman of the Nigerian Law Reform Commission who could not hold back her excitement, The Plateau State House of Assembly has done quite well in coming up with this bill even though in her opinion, it ought to have been enacted long before now. She highlighted some of the benefits to include strengthening legislative processes in the state, simplifying and modernizing the law etc.

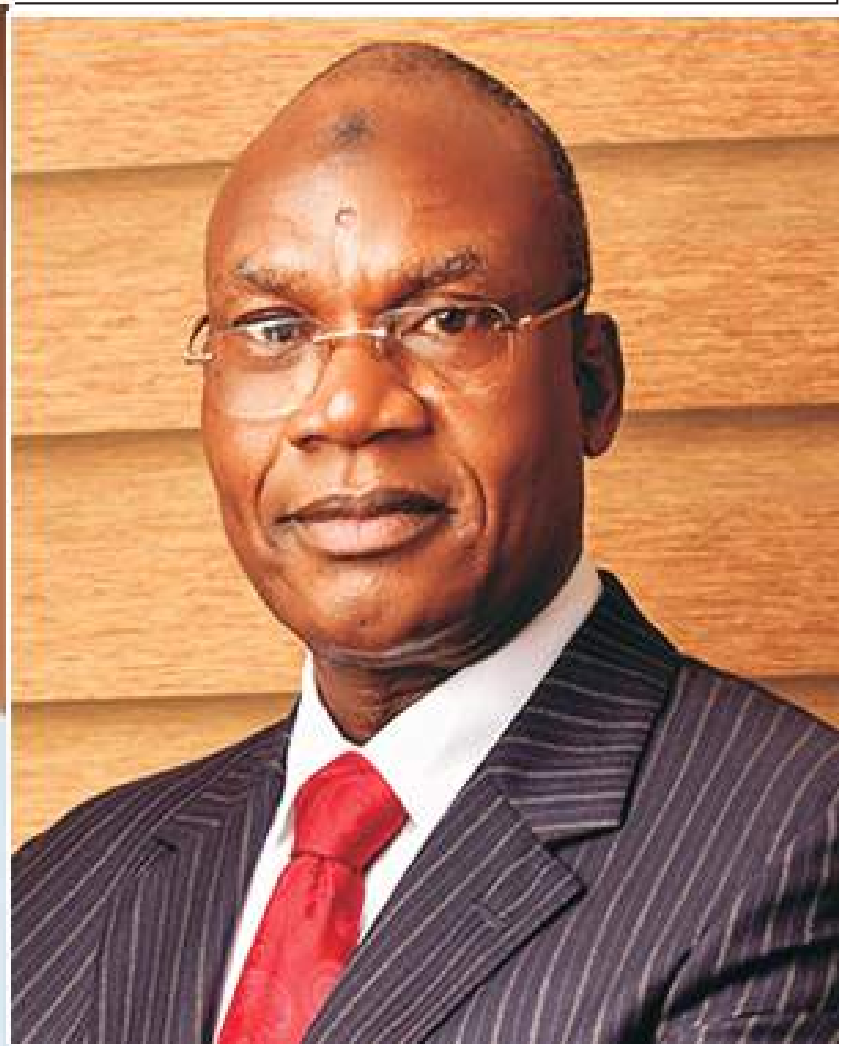
Other stakeholders who made inputs through their contributions and suggestions include Plateau Peace Practitioners Network, represented by the Chairman Mr. Pwajim Pwajok, the representative of Human Rights Commission in the person of Mrs. Veronica Abe amongst others.

***"To set the ball rolling, the bill was subjected to the committee stage for proper scrutiny and study. It was thereafter, arrived at the decision to conduct a public hearing as is customary. The purpose of the public hearing is to get stakeholders inputs and contributions with a view to carrying everyone along, from where observations and recommendations on the proposed legislation will be deduced. The following stakeholders were invited as part of the hearing: Nigeria Law Reform Commission, Plateau State chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association ( NBA), Nigerian Public Complaint Commission, Plateau State Local Government Service Commission and Plateau State High Court of Justice. Others are Plateau State Judicial Service Commission, the state Attorney General and state Auditor General. Speaking on what the people stand to gain from this legislation, the Deputy Speaker of the House, who also doubles as the adhoc committee chairman, Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop while enumerating the benefits said they were quite enormous. For instance when fully operational, the commission will be like a library where all the state laws and bye laws will be kept. To him, accessibility of laws will no longer be an issue because whoever wants any law on the Plateau can easily get them once he or she goes to the commission."***

## SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Mamman

## Nigeria: Shutting education doors through fees hike

**Now that most institutions of learning have resumed for the new academic year, there are concerns in some quarters that a good number of new and returning students are not sure of completing the session for reasons mostly connected to the economic realities occasioned, partly by the higher cost of living, and, in some instances, hikes in educational fees. FWENJI GOAR writes.**

**T**HESSE concerns about students facing challenges related to the economic realities of higher living costs and increased educational fees are valid and important issues. The timeline for seeing improvement in this situation can vary significantly depending on various factors, including government policies, economic conditions, and the specific circumstances of each educational institution.

Government policies play a crucial role in addressing these concerns. If governments at various levels (local, state, or national) implement measures to reduce the economic burden on students and their families, such as providing financial aid, scholarships, or subsidies for education, this can lead to immediate relief.

Economic conditions can greatly affect the affordability of education. Improvements in the overall economy, including job opportunities and income levels, can alleviate financial stress for families. However, economic recoveries can take time and may not happen immediately.

Educational institutions themselves can take steps to address affordability issues. They may explore options like flexible payment plans, cost-cutting measures, or finding alternative revenue sources to limit tuition fee increases.

Nonprofit organisations, community foundations, and private entities often offer scholarships and financial assistance to students in need. Increasing awareness of these resources and expanding their availability can have a positive

impact.

Advocacy efforts by students, parents, educators, and concerned citizens can raise awareness about the challenges students face and push for policy changes and financial support.

Sustainable improvements may take time and require long-term planning. This may seem like a herculean task, but, governments and institutions can work together to develop comprehensive strategies for making education more affordable and accessible in the long run.

It's essential to recognise that improving the economic realities facing students is a complex and multifaceted issue. The timeline for seeing significant improvement can vary from place to place and may depend on a combination of the factors mentioned above.

Tertiary institutions across the country have begun a new session. We have seen protests from the Academic Staff Union of Universities, parents and students as more universities continue to hike their fees amidst the worsening economy. ASUU as well as the associations of parents and students have warned about the likelihood of mass dropouts of students following the hikes in fees by the universities across the country. Parents expressed concerns over the implication of the fee hike for their children and wards in public tertiary institutions.

Prof. Emmanuel Osodeke, ASUU President was not happy about the fee increases, noting that the university is not a profit-making commercial centre. An instance is that if the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State

where the Senate took the decision to hike fees at an emergency meeting. In their own case, fresh students in the Faculties of Arts, Law and Humanities would pay N151,200, while returning students of the same faculties would pay N89,200, as against the N20,100 paid last session. As for new students being admitted into the College of Health Sciences and the Faculty of Pharmacy, a sum of N190,200 is to be paid, while returning students, who paid N28,100 in the last academic session, will have to pay N128,200.

Ordinarily, these hikes in fees should not pose so much of a threat, but the fact that there is no commensurate increase in the income of most parents and guardians, thereby making it a heavy burden to bear. In these kind of situations, the choices available are minimal.

When these kind of circumstances present themselves, and the probability of carrying on with studies seem unattainable, the purpose for education would be defeated. But then, what is the purpose of education? Why is it that we are doing all we can to flee illiteracy?

The ultimate purpose of education is a subject of debate and can vary depending on cultural, societal, and individual perspectives. Different stakeholders, such as educators, policymakers, parents, and students, may have varying goals for education. But that is not to say there are no purposes associated with education.

Amongst these purposes are the fact that education helps individuals develop their intellectual, emotional, and social capacities.

Education fosters personal growth, self-awareness, and gives you the chance to have the ability to lead a fulfilling life. Education is a means to acquire knowledge, skills, and information across various subjects and fields, enabling individuals to better understand the world around them. Education encourages critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enabling individuals to analyse information, make informed decisions, and adapt to new situations.

One other importance of education is that it equips individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to pursue careers and contribute to the economy. It prepares them for various professions and job opportunities. Education plays a vital role in creating informed and responsible citizens who can actively participate in the democratic process, engage in their communities, and promote social and political awareness. It helps individuals understand their own culture and heritage while also fostering an appreciation for the diversity of other cultures. It promotes social cohesion and inclusivity.

Education can serve as a means to reduce socioeconomic disparities by providing individuals with opportunities for upward mobility and improving their quality of life. It is essential for driving innovation, scientific advancements, and technological progress, which benefits society as a whole.

There are arguments that education should also emphasise ethical and moral values, helping individuals become responsible and ethical members of society. Education can empower individuals to pursue their passions and

interests, leading to a sense of personal fulfilment and happiness.

So then, it can be said that the ultimate purpose of education can vary from person to person and society to society. It often reflects the values and goals of a particular culture or community. Many educational systems aim to address multiple aspects of these purposes, recognizing that education is a multifaceted tool for personal and societal development. Additionally, the purpose of education may evolve over time to adapt to changing social, economic, and technological contexts.

That, to me is the reason why every human on earth that has a purpose needs to be given the fare chance of getting an education, to whatever level he or she aspires to reach. Ultimately, the goal should be to create a more inclusive and affordable educational system that ensures that all students have the opportunity to complete their academic sessions without undue financial constraints.

It's important to note that improving the economic conditions of families and addressing educational affordability are complex challenges that may not have quick solutions. It often requires the collective efforts of government, civil society, educational institutions, and the private sector. Progress may vary from one region or country to another, depending on local circumstances and priorities.

To see significant and lasting improvement in the ability of students to complete their academic years despite economic challenges, it will likely require sustained efforts and a commitment to making

**Continued on page 31**

## NEWS

## Bauchi fights brain drain in healthcare sector

From  
**ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

**I**N its determination to mitigate the effect of brain drain in the healthcare sector in Bauchi State, the state government has assured that it will soon start the payment of new salary structure and other entitlements due to doctors and other medical professionals.

Dr Adamu Umar Sambo, Commissioner in charge of Ministry of Health in the state made this known at the 2023 non-election Annual General Meeting of the Nigeria Medical Association (NMA) titled 'Healthcare Delivery Services in Bauchi State: Challenges and Way Forward', held at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Teaching Hospital, Bauchi.

The Commissioner emphasized that all health and medical workers will enjoy one incentive or the other to motivate them to put in their professional best in saving lives and promote effective and efficient healthcare service delivery. He reassured them of

government's commitment to providing conducive working environment for medical doctors in the state in its resolve to achieve the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) objectives.

He said salaries and other emoluments of the health and medical workers will be paid as at when due to encourage them for improved productivity.

The commissioner declared that housing for medical doctors, car loans will be provided to the doctors to make them comfortable and happy as it obtains in other states.

"The facilities will be improved upon to have an environment that will aid effective and efficient healthcare service delivery in line with the world healthcare service practice.

"Bauchi State has enjoyed the presence of many federal health institutions, a development which has opened up opportunities for medical health workers from the state to work there," Sambo said.

The commissioner called on the Nigeria Medical Association to support the



government as it strives to make the health sector one of the best in the country.

The chairman of the medical Association, Dr Muhammad Bashir Faruk, said the AGM was designed to focus on the issues militating against effective and efficient healthcare service delivery. He lamented that the situation

has become so pathetic that the government must quickly intervene to arrest the situation before it gets out of hand.

The NMA chairman assured that members will continue to discharge their professional duties diligently and in line with the ethics and practice of the medical profession.

## Lawmaker worries over health facilities shortage of manpower

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

**H**ONOURABLE Engr. Sa'idu Suleiman Darazo, member representing Darazo State Constituency in Bauchi State, has moved a motion calling on the state government to address challenges facing general hospitals and Primary Healthcare Centres in the state, in the interest of those who voted them into office.

The lawmaker, who moved the motion at the plenary of the House, stated that despite concerted efforts made by the State Government to overcome the challenges confronting the health sector in the state, the situation is getting worse.

Engr. Sa'idu, noted that the decay of infrastructure in health facilities and inadequate human resources to cater for the health needs of the people, continued to be a challenge in the state.

He said that Bauchi was grappling with pressing issues that posed a significant threat to the delivery of quality healthcare, including

depleting health workforce and shortage of skilled healthcare professionals, as well as mal-distribution of serving health workers.

He added that apart from the shortage, there was high concentration of health workers in urban areas while rural areas were understaffed, thereby threatening quality delivery of health services to the people living in rural areas who were often less educated, poor and with a high disease burden.

He said, "Several factors contribute to the depletion of the health workforce in Bauchi State. There is a significant brain drain phenomenon, where trained healthcare professionals seek better opportunities in neighbouring states due to factors such as inadequate remuneration, limited career advancement

prospects and challenging working conditions.

"This brain drain deprives Bauchi State of valuable expertise and leaves healthcare facilities struggling to meet the needs of their patients.

"Improving the working conditions and remuneration of healthcare professionals is paramount. Competitive salaries, career development opportunities and supportive work environment will motivate Bauchi State healthcare workers to remain in the state, fostering a sustainable healthcare workforce."

He, therefore, urged the House to request the executive arm of government to rehabilitate the dilapidated infrastructure at the general hospitals and PHCs for optimal healthcare service delivery.

## TIRS seals First Bank over N350M tax default

From **VICTOR GAI, Jalingo**

**T**HE Taraba Inland Revenue Service

(TIRS), has sealed all branches of First Bank in Taraba State over default in payment of tax worth N350 million.

The Director, Road Tax Administration, Mr Felix Manti had confirmed that the action was taken after the bank failed to meet an agreement to pay the accumulation of taxes accruing over the years worth N350 million.

Also, the Secretary/Legal Adviser of the Taraba Internal Revenue Service, Barr Nierus Johnson, stated that the Service was compelled to carry out the action pursuant to Section 104 of the

He enjoined the government to address the manpower problem by recruiting medical doctors, nurses and midwives and equally improving the working conditions and remuneration of healthcare professionals.

In his input on the issues raised, the Majority Leader in the State House of Assembly, Hon Saleh HodiJibir (Disina Constituency), agreed that there were numerous problems in the health sector, but noted that recruitment of manpower was ongoing. He pointed out that the government would only be advised to sustain the recruitment and improve the working conditions of health and medical workers in the

Personal Income Tax Act which empowers the Service to carry out distraintment on any tax defaulter.

He stated further that it is no longer business as usual and called on other corporate organisations to step forward and pay their proper taxes to the State Government or face same sanctions.

Officials of the organization in company of security personnel then stormed two of the branches of the bank in Jalingo, the Taraba State capital and sealed it, leaving staff and customers stranded.



## Tribunal upholds Plateau Gov Mutfwang's election

**T**HE Plateau State Governorship Election Petition Tribunal, sitting in Jos, the state capital, on Thursday, upheld the election of Caleb Mutfwang of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the Governor of Plateau State.

### Tinubu's Nasdaq closing ring bell: Presidency withdraws claim

The presidency has withdrawn its earlier claim on President Bola Tinubu's activities at the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) in the United States.

### NLC confirms release of NURTW leaders from police custody

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), has confirmed the release of the four leaders of the Nigeria Union Road Transport Workers (NURTW) by the Nigeria Police.

### Tribunal verdict: Kano govt lifts 24-hour curfew

The Kano State government has lifted the 24-hour curfew imposed on the state following the ruling of the governorship election petition tribunal.

### Troops rescue six abducted Gusau varsity students, others still with bandits

Troops of Operation Hadarin-Daji have rescued six abducted female students of Federal University, Gusau, Zamfara

### Cardoso resumes as CBN's acting governor, still awaits Senate approval

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), on Friday, said its newly appointed governor, Olayemi Cardoso, has subscribed to relevant oaths required to resume to his position despite him not receiving approval from the Senate.

### NBS report shows petrol price rose by 230.78% in August

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said on Friday the average price of petrol per litre rose by 230.78 percent in August.

### Repentant Boko Haram insurgent arrested for killing ex-wife in Borno

Police operatives in Borno have arrested a repentant Boko Haram insurgent, Musa Dauda, for allegedly killing his ex-wife in the state.

### Team Nigeria was majority Paralympic Games tickets

Team Nigeria won the majority of the tickets to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games at the ITTF African Para Championships taking place in Giza, Egypt.

**COMPLIED BY LOIS DADUUT**



## SUNDAY FEATURE

# Wave of cyberattacks threatens media freedom

**...in recent months DDoS attacks have become yet another threat to be on the lookout for. This is not a new issue as from way back as 2010, research was done by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, supported by Open Society Foundations, on distributed denial of service attacks against independent media and human rights sites, writes NOMPILO SIMANJE.**

**T**HREATS to media freedom have been evolving and increasing over the years and while efforts to address impunity for crimes against journalists continue, stakeholders are battling even more forms of attacks. The 2022 theme for World Press Freedom Day, "Journalism under digital siege," continues to be a precise and timely reflection of what is happening. While surveillance has been the most common form of digital attack on journalists and media freedom through enabling legislation and various government apparatus, in recent months DDoS attacks have become yet another threat to be on the lookout for. This is not a new issue as from way back as 2010, research was done by the Berkman Center for Internet and Society, supported by Open Society Foundations, on distributed denial of service attacks against independent media and human rights sites.

According to Cloudflare, a distributed denial of service attack (DDoS) is a malicious attempt to disrupt the regular traffic of a targeted server, service, or network by overwhelming it or its surrounding infrastructure with massive Internet traffic.

In August, a South African media outlet, *Daily Maverick*, reported that it faced DDoS attacks following its report on Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's arrival in Johannesburg for the BRICS Summit. To restore access to its website, *Daily Maverick* had to block the Indian domain.

Somali Journalists Syndicate, an organisation that promotes media freedom and the safety of journalists in Somalia also faced massive DDoS attacks in August. SJS received technical support from Qurium, an organisation that provides proactive and



reactive digital security services to a community of journalists, activists, and human rights defenders that often face digital threats against their communication channels.

*The International Press Institute recently reported on the targeting of over 40 media outlets in Hungary, with independent media that is critical of the government experiencing DDoS attacks multiple times since April. Stemming from that report, IPI's website was also attacked in September.*

Media reports highlight that media outlets from at least six countries, including Somalia and Nigeria, have experienced DDoS attacks in

the past two years, alleged to have originated from cyber attackers that used the services of a United States company, RayoByte. This is the same company whose services are also reported to have been used for the attacks on SJS. In a 2019 research paper on freedom of expression and elections in the digital age, the UN Special Rapporteur highlighted that in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and as part of their mandate to promote free expression, companies should invest resources in security measures and improvements to infrastructure that prevents or mitigates the effects of DDoS attacks done through their services or products.

This is not peculiar to Africa, as media outlets in other regions have also been fighting off DDoS attacks. The International Press Institute recently reported on the targeting of over 40 media outlets in Hungary, with independent media that is critical of the government experiencing DDoS attacks multiple times since April. Stemming from that report, IPI's website was also attacked in September. Media outlets in Poland, the Philippines, and Brazil have also faced similar attacks in the past.

*Going forward, training, engagements, and policy development focused on DDoS attacks on media outlets are worth placing on stakeholders' agendas. Generally, cyber capacity-building is critical in Africa, and this should include introducing or revising national cybersecurity strategies...*

The nature of these attacks requires adequate technical support, which several media outlets cannot afford. Collaboration with organisations such as Qurium, Cloudflare and Digital Society Africa is necessary to address these challenges, especially through the existing rapid response mechanisms. It is however also important for media outlets to prioritise IT

experts as part of their human resources to mitigate such attacks.

DDoS attacks have serious consequences for the media as they prevent the public from accessing information. The efforts to defend against DDoS attacks also require the media to devote time, money, and resources that could be alternatively used for reporting and investigative journalism. As noted in the case of the *Daily Maverick*, the defence mechanisms against these attacks, like blocking traffic from certain countries, also ends up making it more difficult for readers to access content in some cases.

Going forward, training, engagements, and policy development focused on DDoS attacks on media outlets are worth placing on stakeholders' agendas. Generally, cyber capacity-building is critical in Africa, and this should include introducing or revising national cybersecurity strategies, capacitating law enforcement, and establishing cybersecurity response teams to address these challenges.

Nompilo Simanje is a lawyer by profession and is passionate about promoting media freedom, freedom of expression, and access to information. She works as the Africa Advocacy and Partnerships Lead at the International Press Institute.

**DDoS attacks have serious consequences for the media as they prevent the public from accessing information. The efforts to defend against DDoS attacks also require the media to devote time, money, and resources that could be alternatively used for reporting and investigative journalism. As noted in the case of the *Daily Maverick*, the defence mechanisms against these attacks, like blocking traffic from certain countries, also ends up making it more difficult for readers to access content in some cases.**

## SUNDAY FEATURE

# Religion, politics and Nigeria's development

*The incursion of religion into Nigerian politics is without doubt one of the greatest tragedies to afflict the country in all its processes of growth as a democratic country. Indeed, there is no gainsaying that the ills brought about by the mixture of religion and politics continue to manifest themselves in various aspects of national life. At the receiving end of this unfortunate development are the ordinary people who are often made to believe that religion has a place in political decisions. That is why over the years, religion has been used as weapon of mass mobilization for the pursuit of political goals. This method has been very effective on the many impressionable followers of these politicians. The real issues are unfortunately relegated to the background. TIMOTHY JOSEPH writes.*

**R**ECENTLY, in a video that went viral on the social media, former Governor of Kaduna State, Nasir El-Rufai was seen addressing some Islamic clerics, telling them that the idea of nominating a Muslim-Muslim ticket to take over from him and his deputy, was deliberate. According to him, he lied to the Christian communities when they expressed concern about the Muslim-Muslim ticket as his succession plan. He had told the Christian communities that his reason was not religious, but competence. Whereas, in the video, El-Rufai could be seen affirming to the gathering that he presented the Muslim-Muslim ticket basically because they were both Muslims. He went further to add that "Muslims will rule Kaduna State for the next twenty years and beyond." He claimed that they had succeeded in replicating the Muslim dominance at the federal level by working for the emergence of Muslims, Bola Tinubu and Kashim Shetima, as President and Vice President respectively.

Reacting to the viral video, Chairman, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kaduna State, Rev. Joseph Hayab, called on Nigerians to disregard the alleged Islamization claims made by El-Rufai. Hayab maintained that those remarks by the former Governor about a Muslim-Muslim ticket in Kaduna State and at the federal level were merely tactics aimed at advancing his alleged Presidential ambition and to promote division among Christians and Muslims in the country.

Another clear example of how politicians use religion to mask their real motives is in the election of the Senate President in the 10th Assembly. Senator Orji Uzor Kalu initially advocated that since the President and his Vice are both Muslims, the Senate President's position should go to a southern Christian. But when his party, the APC decided to zone the Senate President's position to a Christian from the South-South, which turned out to be Godswill Akpabio, Orji blatantly refused to support the party's candidate because of his personal interest. Rather, he decided to team up with Senator Yari, a Muslim from the North West, because Yari who was angling for the Senate presidency, offered him the chance for the deputy Senate President's position.

There is also the case of Senator Elisha Abbo, from Adamawa State. When Tinubu picked Shetima as running mate, he rose against it, saying, he was not going to support a Muslim-Muslim ticket. But when a chance came for a Christian Senate President, he kicked against it and even became the campaign Director-General of Senator Abdullazeez Yari, the Muslim candidate obviously because he personally stood to benefit more from Yari than Akpabio. That religion has shaped political decisions and outcomes in Nigeria is not in doubt. And this has come with both positive and negative consequences. One of the positive consequences of involving religion in politics is the promotion of moral values. Religion teaches moral values such as honesty, integrity and justice, which are crucial for a stable and just society. Religious leaders can use their platforms to advocate for these values and hold



politicians accountable for their actions. Additionally, religion can inspire people to participate in politics and contribute to the development of their communities. On the other hand, involvement of religion in politics has led to negative consequences, and one of the most significant negative consequences is the proliferation of religious extremism and intolerance.

The politicization of religion has fueled religious conflicts and violence, leading to loss of lives and properties. The intermittent Kaduna and Jos ethno-religious crises displaced many people who had settled in the northern part of the country for many years as it became necessary for them to relocate. The 2008 and 2010 Jos crisis started as political tussles but later snowballed into ethno-religious battles which resulted in loss of many lives and properties. There is also the Boko Haram insurgency that started in 2009, which is also one of the consequences of religious extremism in Nigeria. Furthermore, another negative effect of religion on politics is the erosion of the country's secularism. Nigeria is a secular state, but the involvement of religion in politics has led to the blurring of lines between religion and the state. This has resulted in the adoption of policies that tend to favour one religion over the other and the exclusion of minorities from the political process.

Furthermore, the involvement of religion in politics has also resulted in the emergence of religious leaders often using their positions to secure Political favours and contracts for their congregation. As a result of the foregoing, many Nigerians rightly see the mixing of religion and politics as an impediment to progress and development. But some studies have however shown that the relationship between religion and politics is not always unproductive, because religion embeds some virtues such as love and obedience which support secular authority and the development process. And religious authorities and followers have the capacity to be tolerant. Still, the experience in multi religious societies where religious communities vie for resources and power does point to some

dangers for peace, development and democracy. This was apparent in the build-up to the 2023 Presidential election where, for instance, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) cautioned against the nomination of a Muslim vice presidential candidate by the All progressives congress (APC).

Religion became one of the biggest issues that generated great concern among Nigerians as the 2023 Presidential elections approached as there was hue and cry in many quarters due to the fact that the APC presented a Muslim-Muslim ticket for the president and vice. The last time this happened was in 1993. In that poll, Nigerians overwhelmingly voted for Moshod Abiola and Babagana Kingibe possibly because Abiola broke through the religious divide through his philanthropy and business investments. Today, having a similar ticket is risky, as it fuels extremism in those who claim superiority of their faith and suspicion in people of other faiths. Nigeria has experienced deadly terrorist attacks by Boko Haram in the North East, bandits in the North West and North Central. Although both Christians and Muslims have been victims, there is always a religious strand that makes a criminal matter difficult to deal with.

Since the return to democratic governance in Nigeria, religion has influenced how state power is captured. This can be seen in political statements of religious institutions and some politicians calling out their supporters to turn to their religious communities for support. Religion is currently being deployed by the elite to gain unmerited advantage. The danger here is that a religious community could insist on voting one of their own member even though the candidate is generally considered to be a misfit. The earlier we stop this dangerous and divisive campaign, the better it will be for everyone. Any action designed to establish the supremacy of a faith over the other can only end in disaster. The manipulation of religion by politicians for their advantage will only aggravate an already bad situation. Religious and political practices must be reconciled to guarantee the institutionalization of an

enduring democratic order in a multi ethnic society as Nigeria.

The solution to the challenges faced in Nigeria will not be found in the faith of individuals. A person's religious persuasion is based on personal conviction, which is essentially private. The public space must remain secular. The current agitations for a faith-based political representation are anchored on certain misappropriation of the requirements for leadership in multi religious Nigeria. It borders on mischief to set the people against themselves to attain political power. Any religious leader who ignores knowledge, integrity and competence as criteria for leadership is an apostate. Beyond the agitations for power shift is the quest for economic independence of the states. The clamour for the restructuring of the polity is a more profitable advocacy than the noises made for representation based on religion. Those who over heat the polity for personal aggrandizement should lend their voices to the issue of resource generation and control by the Federating units. Sacrificing merit on the altar of religion cannot be beneficial. Both Christian and Muslim politicians have failed Nigerians since they cannot blend politics with religious values. The role religion could play in Nigerian Politics is limited by the individuals orientation and the nature of the society. This suggests that religion and politics could relate effectively in Nigeria. The benefits that could be derived from such relationship depend solely on the sincerity of those who are engaged in the practice of this phenomenon.

An average Nigerian who is hungry is not interested in religion or tribe. They are simply concerned about how to make ends meet. For anyone privileged to have held or is holding positions of influence in a diversified community, being mindful of what they say is as important as weighing the consequences of their utterances on the people and unity of the country.

**TIMOTHY JOSEPH is of the Plateau State Ministry of Information and Communication.**

**C**ONTACT your doctor or healthcare professional immediately or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away if you have an allergic reaction. It can be life-threatening- Moderna(now Spivax) Covid-19 patient information leaflet.

"Two studies published by JAMA Cardiology today discuss adverse effects associated with COVID-19 vaccines. The first describes vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia with cerebral venous sinus thrombosis (VITT with CVST) linked to the AstraZeneca/Oxford and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. The second is a case series looking at 15 adolescents who experienced myocarditis after receiving the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine"- University of Minnesota carditis-tied-covid-19-vaccines

Lately, the rate of deaths from cardiac arrests or heart attacks has tripled. This is more common with young men. This increase started about two years ago. I had started researching about the vaccines during the lockdowns. Now, I wonder what could be new and what the common denominator for all these people is. I urge you to read the following excerpt from the vaccine information leaflets and the full documents in the link and also reflect. I am talking to especially our journalists, doctors, pharmacists, and laboratory scientists, our representatives in Government and our technocrats who should know better.

I read the Covid-19 patient information leaflets for some of the vaccines during the lockdown. I had to search for them on the internet for a long time and I realize that the vaccinated were not given these leaflets before being vaccinated. We were put in danger. Secondly, I noticed that the manufacturers expected the side effects to be reported to them to help them improve their products, through a Covid-19 vaccine yellow card which sounds like an ongoing experiment without our consent. Thirdly, I noticed that most of them had lipid nano particle and more. I also researched human hacking using nano technology and electromagnetism in the vaccines. I also took note of the fact that the European Parliament is researching the presence of graphene in the Covid-19 vaccines.

I had found that the manufacturers of the Covid-19 vaccine had warned that their products could cause capillary leakage and low blood pressure, blood clots and thrombosis, pericarditis and myocarditis, paralysis, facial drooping, neurological side effects such as "serious nerve inflammation, which may cause paralysis and difficulty breathing( Guillain-Barré syndrome [GBS])", swollen spinal cord and a whole range of side effects they warned could be fatal or life threatening. They said that these were "rare" side effects. However, some said that their lists of side effects were not exhaustive.

The Nigerian government indemnified the vaccine suppliers and manufacturers by signing an indemnification form when the vaccines were delivered. Nigerians were not well informed about the consequences or the side effects of these vaccines by our technocrats who were advising the government. Nigerians were also not given the choice of taking or rejecting the Covid-19 vaccines which were mandatory. The same happened globally. They were also not told that the vaccines were undergoing experimentation and they were expected to report their side effects for the improvement of the vaccine. A

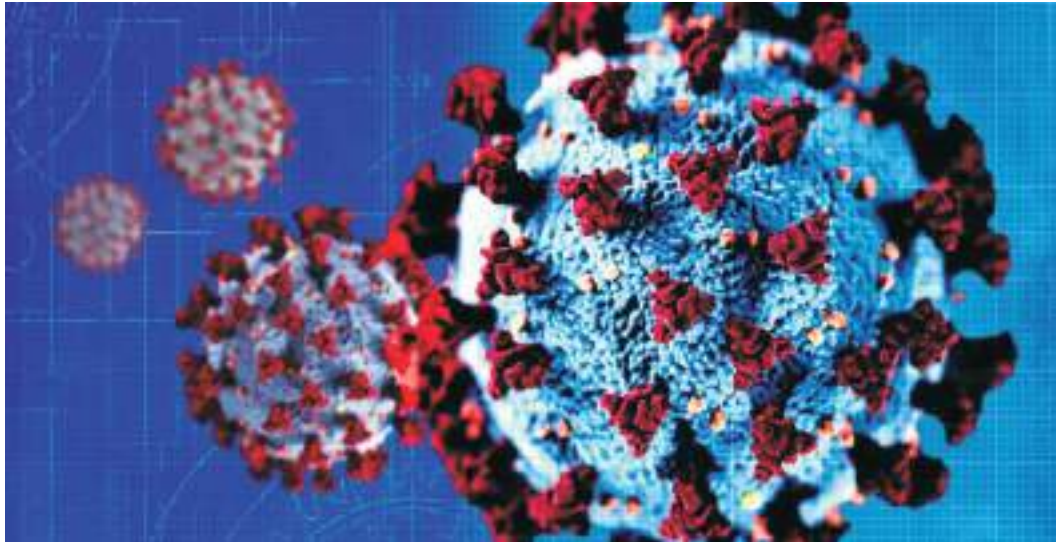
site was made available for this by each Covid-19 vaccine manufacturer.

Note that the vaccine manufacturer indicated in their patient information leaflets, that the vaccines could cause pericarditis and myocarditis. It could also cause neurological side effects. Manufacturers are expected by law to write this in the user information leaflets and they did. The only problem is that Nigerians were not given these possibilities and were not requested to agree or to refuse that it was mandatory for everyone. For some, a condition for gaining access to their work

lining outside the heart) after vaccination with Spikevax (see section 4). These conditions can develop within just a few days after vaccination and have primarily occurred within 14 days. They have been observed more often after the second dose compared to the first dose, and more often in younger males.

Following vaccination, you should be alert to signs of myocarditis and pericarditis, such as breathlessness, palpitations and chest pain, and seek immediate medical attention should these occur. If any of the above apply to you (or you are not sure), talk to your

## Covid-19 vaccines, thrombosis, and heart attacks



environment.

There is a need for all of us to research what we eat, breathe, and inject into our bodies. These include the Covid-19 vaccines. This is because a new strain has been found and we may soon be required to take vaccine...again. Considering that many of the side effects that the manufacturer claim was rare without the data, are now rampant, such as cases of pericarditis and myocarditis, we need to read and research and advise our representatives correctly.

The following excerpts are from the patient information leaflets for Moderna Covid-19 vaccines, which is now called Spivax, Biontech Pfizer Covid-19 vaccines, which is now called Comirnaty, and AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines which is now called Vaxzevria:

Moderna (Spivax) : What Spikevax contains: polyethylene glycol/macrogol (PEG) as part of PEG2000-DMG. This is a multidose vial that contains 5 doses of 0.5 mL or a maximum of 10 doses of 0.25 mL each. One dose (0.5 mL) contains 50 micrograms of elastomeric, a COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine (embedded in SM-102 lipid nanoparticles). One dose (0.25 mL) contains 25 micrograms of elastomeric, a COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine (embedded in SM-102 lipid nanoparticles). Elastomeric is a single-stranded, 5'-capped messenger RNA (mRNA) produced using a cell-free invitro transcription from the corresponding DNA templates, encoding the viral spike (S) protein of SARS-CoV-2 (Original). The other ingredients are SM-102 (heptadecane-9-yl 8-((2-hydroxyethyl)[6-oxo-6-(undecyloxy)hexyl]amino)octanoate), cholesterol, 1,2-distearoyl-sn-glycero-3-phosphocholine (DSPC), 1,2-Dimyristoyl-rac-glycero-3-methoxypolyethylene glycol-2000 (PEG 2000 -DMG), trometamol, trometamol hydrochloride, acetic acid, sodium acetate trihydrate, sucrose, water for injections.

There is an increased risk of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the

doctor, pharmacist or nurse before you are given Spikevax.

Capillary leak syndrome (CLS) flare-ups: A few cases of capillary leak syndrome flare-ups (causing fluid leakage from small blood vessels (capillaries) resulting in rapid swelling of the arms and legs, sudden weight gain and feeling faint, low blood pressure) have been reported following vaccination with Spikevax. If you have previously had episodes of CLS, talk to a doctor before you are given Spikevax.

**Duration of protection:** As with any vaccine, the primary 2-dose vaccination course of Spikevax may not fully protect all those who receive it and it is not known how long you will be protected.

**Reporting of side effects:** If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet. If you are concerned about a side effects, it can be reported directly via the Coronavirus Yellow Card reporting site or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store and include the vaccine brand and batch/Lot number if available. By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this vaccine.

There is an increased risk of myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of the lining outside the heart) after vaccination with COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 (see section 4).

These conditions can develop within just a few days after vaccination and have primarily occurred within 14 days. They have been observed more often after the second vaccination, and more often in younger males. Following vaccination, you should be alert to signs of myocarditis and pericarditis, such as breathlessness, palpitations and chest pain, and seek immediate medical attention should these occur. As with any vaccine, COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 may not fully protect all those who receive it.

No data are currently available



by a rise in temperature, possibly with sweating, headache (including migraine-like headaches), nausea, muscle aches and feeling unwell, starting within a day of having the vaccine and usually lasting for a day or two. If your fever is high and lasts longer than three days, or you have other persistent symptoms, this might not be due to side effects of the vaccine, and you should seek appropriate medical advice according to your symptoms.

**Reporting of side effects** If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. **This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet.** If you are concerned about a side-effect, it can be reported directly via the Coronavirus Yellow Card reporting site <https://coronavirus-yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk/> or search for MHRA Yellow Card in the Google Play or Apple App Store. When completing a report please include the vaccine brand and batch/Lot number if available. Alternatively, side-effects of concern in association with Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 mRNA vaccine BNT162b2 can be reported to Pfizer Medical Information on 01304 616161 or [www.pfizersafetyreporting.com](http://www.pfizersafetyreporting.com). Please do not report the same side-effect(s) to both systems as all reports will be shared between Pfizer and MHRA (in an anonymized form) and dual reporting will create unnecessary duplicates. **By reporting side effects, you can help provide more information on the safety of this vaccine.**

**Suspension for injection.** The suspension is colourless to slightly brown, clear to slightly opaque. Pack sizes (not all pack sizes may be marketed):

10 dose multidose vial (5 mL) with rubber stopper and aluminium overseal in packs of 10 vials. Each vial contains 10 doses of 0.5 mL. 8 dose multidose vial (4 mL) with rubber stopper and aluminium overseal in packs of 10 vials. Each vial contains 8 doses of 0.5 mL.

What you need to know before you are given Vaxzevria: Do not have the vaccine:

If you are allergic to any of the active substances or any of the other ingredients listed in section 6. If you have had a blood clot occurring at the same time as having low levels of blood platelets (thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome, TTS) after receiving the vaccine. If you have a previous diagnosis of capillary leak syndrome (a condition causing fluid leakage from small blood vessels). If you are not sure, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse, affecting the heart, lungs, and other organs—potentially shutting them down. The results can be deadly. Thrombosis affects up to 900,000 people in the United States per year and kills up to 100,000.

in individuals with a weakened immune system or who are taking chronic treatment that suppresses or prevents immune responses. If you are immunocompromised and receive an additional dose of mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2, it may still not provide full immunity to COVID-19 and you should continue to maintain physical precautions to help prevent COVID-19. COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 is not recommended for children under 12 years. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are using, have recently used or might use any other medicines or have recently received any other vaccine.

**Pregnancy and breast-feeding:** If you are pregnant or breast-feeding, think you may be pregnant or are planning to have a baby, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before you receive this vaccine.

**Driving and using machines**

COVID-19 mRNA Vaccine BNT162b2 contains sodium and potassium: This vaccine contains potassium, less than 1 mmol (39 mg) per dose, i.e. essentially 'potassium-free'. This vaccine contains less than 1 mmol sodium (23 mg) per dose, that is to say essentially 'sodium free'.

**Rare side effects:** may affect up to 1 in 1,000 people : temporary one sided facial drooping, allergic reactions such as hives or swelling of the face. Very rare side effects: may affect up to 1 in 10,000 people- inflammation of the heart muscle (myocarditis) or inflammation of the lining outside the heart (pericarditis) which can result in breathlessness, palpitations or chest pain. Not known: (cannot be estimated from the available data): severe allergic reaction, extensive swelling of the vaccinated limb, swelling of the face (swelling of the face may occur in patients who have had facial dermatological fillers), a skin reaction that causes red spots or patches on the skin, that may look like a target or "bull's-eye" with a dark red Centre surrounded by paler red rings (erythema multiforme).

Some people have reported a sudden feeling of cold with shivering/shaking accompanied

**I SHALL NOT WANT (2)**

I am happy to continue our discussion this week on the topic, **I Shall Not Want**. In our last series, we established that they that shall not want are believers who make themselves the sheep of His sheepfold.

Now, if the Lord is your shepherd you shall not want. In the Hebrew, 'to want' means 'to lack', 'to fail'. That means when the Lord is your shepherd you will not lack, you will not fail. It may appear that you are failing but you are actually on the path of success. To want also means 'to lessen', 'to decrease' or 'to go lower' or 'to go without'. It means 'to have or suffer needs'. It means 'to be in want of something', 'to be deficient or to suffer deficiency'- just different adjectives to describe it. It means 'to be void', 'empty', 'to be destitute', or 'to suffer poverty'.

That's what the Hebrew says. It says, **"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."** It is not a thing of negotiation; it is settled that when the Lord is your shepherd, you shall not want, you shall not lack, you shall not suffer needs or be desolate, rather He will make you **to lie down in green pastures** and will lead you **beside the still waters** (Psalm 23:2). Praise the name of the Lord!

Beloved, if you want to come to a place where you don't want, where you don't decrease or lessen, then you have to be a sheep in His hands, because He now said that this is how He is going to begin to make it- He will "make" you to begin to lie down- not force you to lie down- "in green pastures." A pasture means a dwelling, a home, a pleasant place, a habitation. So green pastures are the benefits of being a sheep. And you know what? The Lord is bringing you into green pastures. God has green pastures for you. It does not matter how rough life has been. God has green pastures for you, and the function of that is His Shepherd Ministry. He said, **"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters."** The phrase still waters here means waters of quietness. **"He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake,"** (Psalm 23:3).

Friends, just calm yourself down! If you want to be in contact with this shepherd, you must calm yourself down. There may be trouble and turmoil around your life but calm yourself down! In the midst of that God has green pastures for you. God has a place for you- a place of flourishing for you. Praise the name of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Verse 4 says: **"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."** Now this is all the picture of the believer's walk on this earth.

Let's look at verse 5 of Psalm 23. It says: **"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies..."** Remember, the

place exists, and then not generally, don't just believe that generally, but believe that such a place exists for you! Do you believe that such a place exists for you? This place I am talking about is a place of 'no want', not a place of 'no desire' or a place of 'no need', it is a place of 'no want!' Psalm 34:9 says: **"O, fear the LORD ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him."** I have said



## The Benefits of Being a sheep of His Sheepfold



table is not just for anybody but for the sheep. That means no matter what is going on in your life, nothing that is going on around you can affect your destiny. What God has said about you, you will come into it. But you must follow the ministry of the shepherd.

Another benefit for the sheep is in verse 5 and 6, thus: **"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."** That anointing is reserved for the sheep. Praise the name of the Lord! There are green pastures for you my dear friends, and there is oil on your head. Then it says in verse 6: **"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever."** That is the ministry of the shepherd.

Now, it is God's desire- the Shepherd's ultimate desire to bring you to a place in your life where you shall not want. But the first thing about it is that you must believe that there is such a place. You must believe that such as

several times that the fear of the Lord is determined by submission and subjection to Him. My dear friend, I want you to get out of the crowd of 'they that don't fear him' and get into the crowd of 'they that fear him, they that are submitted to him; they that put their lives under his reign and control'.

Let's go to Luke 6:46. It says: **"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"** So that means when you do the things which He says, you may not be physically calling Him Lord but you are calling Him Lord by your life. How do you submit yourself to the Lord? How do you willingly submit yourself to the fear of the Lord? The fear of the Lord is walking in His way. His way is described by His Word. So when you do the things which He says, and you subject yourself to His yoke, you are operating in the fear of the Lord, you activate Him as your Lord and then He can start making some things happen for you.

Verse 47 and 48 of Luke 4

says tells us that: **"Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock."** The Bible uses the word "when," not "if". That is because the flood and the stream of life will definitely come whether the foundation is on a rock or on sand. However, if your foundation is on a rock, which is Christ, when the flood and the stream come, they cannot shake you.

I am telling you the truth, there is something that will come upon your life and the economy will not affect your rising. There's something that will come upon your life that people cannot sit down and say they don't like you but there saying 'they don't like you' will work for your good. Go and ask Daniel. Go

and ask Shedrach, Meshach and Abednego. Go and ask Joseph. When you have the Lord as your shepherd, you shall not want! In that place, people, places and things are simply working for your good, as long as you stay under His Lordship. The flood will arise, all other things will come but as long as you are under His Lordship, all you are destined for is to rise.

The last verse of Luke 4, which is verse 49 says: **"But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."** I pray that is not your portion in Jesus' name.

Some few weeks ago, the Lord said to me that, "Your praise will bring you to a place of personal overflow". What this means is that the place that God has prepared for me- a place where I shall not want- is the place same place He has prepared for you, and you shall not want in the name of Jesus. It is an appointed place.

**To be continued...**

## INTERNATIONAL

# Rupert Murdoch's succession drama reaches its finale

*Four months after the finale of acclaimed TV series Succession, it seems the show's real-life inspirations have reached the conclusion of their own succession drama, writes Ian Youngs.*

**W**HEN *Succession* writer Jesse Armstrong appeared at the Edinburgh TV Festival last month, he confirmed what most people already knew - the Murdoch dynasty was the original inspiration for his story of brutal power struggles and backstabbing within the family of a media mogul.

Armstrong said he changed his characters significantly and also drew on other major families like those headed by Sumner Redstone and Robert Maxwell.

But the fundamental similarities between the *Succession* characters and the Murdochs remain too tasty to dismiss.

A formidable, decisive and ageing patriarch. Three adult children vying for position in the family business. A media empire struggling to adapt and survive in the digital age.

From the 1960s, Rupert Murdoch built up News Corporation into a globe-spanning behemoth with mighty political and public influence. It included papers like the Sun and the Times in the UK, the Wall Street Journal and Fox News in the US, and Hollywood film studio 20th Century Fox.

Murdoch himself was courted by potential prime ministers and presidents who believed his blessing could make or break their electoral chances.

Following in his footsteps were children Elisabeth, Lachlan and James.

Their father groomed the two boys for the top job, according to former Sunday Times editor Andrew Neil.

"Family has always been very important to Rupert Murdoch, particularly from the point of view of forming a dynasty," he told 2020 BBC documentary *The Rise of the Murdoch Dynasty*.

Neil recalled having dinner with Rupert one Saturday night in the mid-80s after sending the Sunday Times to the printers. Lachlan and James, in their



*Lachlan Murdoch (left) suspected brother James of feeding stories to Succession's scriptwriters*

teens, were there too.

"The talk was all then about how he was building a company for them," he said. "And he used to like to play them off against each other to see how they would survive."

"He always wanted at least one of his children to take over from him."

Elisabeth wasn't included in this succession planning at that time. "He didn't really think women could do that sort of thing," Neil told the Spectator's *Americano* podcast earlier this year. "I think over time he may have changed his mind."

For her part, Elisabeth said in 2012 she had "absolutely no ambition" to succeed her father. She had been managing director

of Sky Networks, part owned by News Corp, but left to set up her own successful TV production company, Shine, in 2000. That was bought by News Corp in 2011.

James was for many years the heir apparent. He held a number of senior positions in his father's empire including head of the London-based newspaper arm and chairman of satellite broadcaster BSkyB.

But after the phone hacking scandal engulfed the company in 2011, leading Rupert to close the News of the World newspaper, James resigned from News International and BSkyB.

He took over from his father as chief executive of the renamed

21st Century Fox in 2015. But that studio was bought by Disney in 2019, and the following year James resigned from the board of News Corp over editorial "differences".

In particular, he made no secret of his displeasure with the right-wing direction of Fox News and of coverage of climate change by his father's outlets.

That cleared the path for Lachlan, who had been the first of the trio to join the board of the family firm when he became executive director in 1996, having earlier worked at Murdoch papers and TV stations in Australia.

But he abruptly left in 2005 and moved back to Australia. He returned to the family fold a decade later, however, and became executive chairman of 21st Century Fox and chairman of News Corp, alongside his father.

"It's been pretty clear for about a decade now that Lachlan was the chosen son," *Vanity Fair* special correspondent Brian Stelter told BBC News after Thursday's announcement.

"James Murdoch is disgusted by what airs on Fox News in the US. He has moved away from the companies. So Lachlan has been in line for a while, but he's always been sharing power with his father."

In April, *Vanity Fair* published an expose of the family infighting, which claimed that the ageing and ailing mogul was "consumed with the question of his succession".

"Murdoch believed a Darwinian struggle would produce the most capable heir," Gabriel Sherman wrote in the magazine. he added: "The central fault line remains the rift between James and Lachlan."

The article even claimed Lachlan suspected James of feeding stories to *Succession's* scriptwriters, and that the divorce settlement between Rupert and Jerry included a stipulation that she couldn't give story ideas to the show's writers.

Earlier this year, Jesse Armstrong said people questioning the inspiration for his storylines had asked "did the Murdochs whisper in your ear?"

He replied: "No, we read *Vanity Fair* - they're slagging each other off in the pages... You don't need to go for lunch with those people."

Like in *Succession*, there is another sibling - Prudence - who has been less involved in the media. (Unlike Logan Roy, Murdoch also has two more offspring who are much younger, in their early 20s.)

*Vanity Fair* also quoted two sources as saying James was bidding his time until he and his sisters could wrest control from Lachlan after Rupert is gone. "James, Liz and Prudence will join forces and take over the company," one former Fox executive told the magazine.

As with a hit TV show that could come back for a spin-off or sequel in future years, the Murdoch drama may not be over.

Source: BBC News



*Lachlan and James when they were young*



## INTERNATIONAL

## World leaders commit to universal health

UNITED Nations (UN) General Assembly High-Level Meeting, world leaders have approved a new Political Declaration on "Universal Health Coverage (UHC): expanding our ambition for health and well-being in a post-COVID world".

The declaration is hailed as a vital catalyst for the international community to take big and bold actions and mobilize the necessary political commitments and financial investments to attain the UHC target of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The UHC target measures the ability of countries to ensure that everyone receives the health care they need, when and where they need it, without facing financial hardship. It covers the full continuum of key services from health promotion to prevention, protection, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care. Alarming, global progress towards UHC has been largely stagnating since 2015, before stalling in 2019.

The urgency of the declaration is evident in the staggering statistics. At least 4.5 billion people—more than half of the world's population—were not fully covered by essential health services in 2021. Two billion people experienced financial hardship, with over 1.3 billion being pushed or further pushed into poverty just trying to access basic health care – a stark reality of widening health inequities.

In the Political Declaration, Heads of State and world leaders committed to take key national actions, make essential investments, strengthen international cooperation and global solidarity at the highest political level to accelerate progress towards UHC by 2030, using a primary health care (PHC) approach.

For health care to be truly universal, it requires a shift from health systems designed around diseases to systems designed for people. PHC, an approach to strengthening health systems centred on people's needs, is one of the most effective areas for investment to accelerate progress towards UHC.

Countries that have taken a PHC approach have better ability to rapidly build stronger, more resilient health systems to reach the most vulnerable and achieve a higher return on health investments. Most importantly, they ensure that more people are covered with essential health services and are empowered to participate in making the decisions that affect their health and well-being.

It is estimated that an additional US\$ 200–328 billion investment per year is needed to scale-up a PHC approach in low- and middle-income countries (e.g. up to approximately 3.3% of national gross domestic product). This could help health systems deliver up to 90% of essential health services, save at least 60 million lives and increase average life expectancy by 3.7 years by 2030.

WHO, through its network of more than 150 country offices and six regional offices, provides technical support to accelerate the radical reorientation of health systems through PHC focused approaches, and ensures robust normative guidance to track progress for accountability and impact.

WHO commends Member States for approving the second UN High-Level Meeting Political Declaration on UHC, which was developed through a broad consultative process. WHO is fully committed to working with



Guterres

Member States and partners to ramp up policy actions for UHC to expand service coverage, ensure financial protection and shape the financing architecture to invest more and better in health.

Once adopted by the UN General Assembly, the Political Declaration will be regularly monitored for implementation to identify gaps and solutions to accelerate progress, and discussed at the next dedicated

## Qatar sends aid to flood-stricken Libya

TWO aid flights arrived in Benghazi from Doha on Thursday along with a team from the Qatar Red Crescent, which stayed behind to help with search and recovery operations.

medical [supplies]. It's a huge amount. We're trying to cover the needs as much as we can," Abdul Aziz from the Qatar Red Crescent told Al Jazeera.

"You can see even today that bodies have come out from the sea due to the floods. There are still bodies under the sea."

The Qatari aid shipments, which include everything from tents to medicine, will soon make their way to Derna via alternative routes as the main roads to the city remain cut off because of flood damage, Al Jazeera's Osama Javaid reported from Benghazi.

"Now the question is how this aid is going to help the people who remain in dire need to rebuild themselves after a tsunami-like flood," he said.

International aid continues to arrive in Libya after Storm Daniel wreaked havoc on Derna and nearby coastal cities in eastern Libya on the night of September 10 and after two ageing, neglected dams broke.

Officials have given widely varying death tolls. The World Health Organization has confirmed 3,922 deaths while others have estimated the number of dead at more than 11,300. Thousands more people remain missing and are feared dead.

The Libyan Red Crescent said there is still a need for specialised teams and equipment as a large part of Derna reeks of death.

"We do need some more technical things and mapping for how to collect the bodies. ... Some equipment you cannot find inside Libya," Ziad Uthman from the Libyan Red Crescent's disaster management team told Al Jazeera.

Authorities have cordoned off certain areas of the city over

fears of contamination and the spread of disease.

Riad Qandeel from the Qatar Red Crescent said the team is prepared for the situation.

The deadly floods have united Libya's two rival governments to a certain extent in a country that has remained fractured since the 2011 uprising that toppled

## Sudan army chief warns UN war could spill

SUDAN'S army chief warned the United Nations that months of war in his country could spill over into the region, and he called for international pressure to be placed on the paramilitary forces he is fighting, including their designation as "terrorists".

Army leader Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, speaking at the UN following a string of foreign trips, called on the international community on Thursday to designate the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) as a terrorist organisation and to target its sponsors outside Sudan's borders – an allusion to ties with Russia's Wagner mercenaries.

"The danger of this war is now a threat to regional and international peace and security as those rebels have sought the support of outlaws and terrorist groups from different countries in the region and the world," Burhan said.

"Regional and international interference to support these groups is crystal clear by now. This means that this is the first spark that will burn the region, and will have a direct impact on regional and international peace and security," he added. Video Duration 01 minutes 49 01:49

Sudan's military chief accuses paramilitary of committing war crimes

Fighting broke out in Sudan on April 15 after the collapse of a plan to integrate the army and the RSF, led by Burhan's former deputy, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, who is known as Hemedti.

Both sides blamed the other for starting the war that erupted in the capital Khartoum and has

IT is Mr Zelensky's first trip to Canada since Russia's invasion in February 2022.

Mr Zelensky arrived from Washington, where he had been meeting with US President Joe Biden and other politicians.

Ukraine's president was in Washington hoping to secure further funding to help his country fight off invading Russian forces. Earlier in the week, he urged world leaders to continue to support Ukraine at the United Nations in New York.

But diplomatic tensions are on the rise, after Mr Zelensky criticised Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, for banning imports of Ukrainian grain

Support for Ukraine's war effort is also becoming contentious in some countries, with many running thin on resources to give.

In the US, Republican scepticism about funding the war is growing despite pleas from the president not to turn its back on Ukraine.

"Russia believes that the

## Zelensky makes unannounced visit to Canada



Zelensky

world will grow weary and allow it to brutalise Ukraine without consequence," Mr Biden said.

The US Congress has now authorised more than \$110bn (£89bn) in aid to Ukraine, but polls suggest support among Americans for further spending has

declined. Many Republicans argue the money would be better spent on domestic issues, but during Mr Zelensky's visit, President Biden approved further funding for Kyiv valued at £265m (\$325m). It includes upgrades to air defences - but not the long-range missiles that President Zelensky has been requesting.

Poland also announced on Wednesday it would no longer be sending new weapons to Ukraine and would instead be focussing on defending itself with more modern weapons.

Poland also announced on Wednesday it would no longer be sending new weapons to Ukraine and would instead be focussing on defending itself with more modern weapons.

mayor's house on fire as they accused authorities of failing to maintain the dams that burst and not evacuating residents before the powerful storm.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) said on Thursday that at least 43,059 people have been displaced by the floods.

ceasefires by both sides, have failed to stop the bloodshed and the deepening of a humanitarian crisis in Sudan. 10 minutes 09 seconds 10:09

What's happening in Sudan after three months of war? | Start Here

The United States earlier this month imposed sanctions on RSF leaders, including senior commander Abdelrahim Hamdan Dagalo, the brother of the group's leader, over alleged abuses including the killing of the governor of West Darfur.

The US and other Western powers have also been strongly critical of Burhan.

Alongside RSF leader Dagalo, Burhan in 2021 sidelined the civilian leadership that had been part of a transitional power-sharing deal following mass protests that brought down longtime leader Omar al-Bashir.

Burhan said on Thursday that he was "committed to our previous pledges to transfer power to the people of Sudan with great national consensus and consent".

"The armed forces would leave politics once and for all," he said.

Saudi Arabia and the US have tried to secure a lasting ceasefire in Sudan, but the process stalled amid parallel international initiatives in Africa and the Middle East.

SOURCE: NEWS AGENCIES



Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan

Sudan food shortage: Nearly half of population facing hunger, UN says

In a video message released on Thursday, shortly before Burhan spoke at the UN, RSF leader Hemedti said his forces were fully prepared for a ceasefire and comprehensive political talks to end the conflict.

"Today, we renew our commitment to the peaceful process to put a halt to this war," Hemedti said.

"The RSF are fully prepared for a ceasefire throughout Sudan to allow the passage of humanitarian aid ... and to start serious and comprehensive political talks," he said.

Previous assertions by the army and the RSF that they are seeking a solution to the conflict, as well as announcements of



## Who Killed Mohbad?



By Ferdinand Ekechukwu

**T**HAT seems to be the question bugging the minds of many concerned citizens as the Nigerian Police swings into investigation following the death of singer Ilerioluwa Oladimeji Aloba, popularly known as Mohbad. The force in a statement promised to carry out diligent investigation following outcry over the death of the afrobeats artiste.

The promising singer, songwriter sadly passed on Tuesday September 12, 2023, aged 27. In the statement signed by the Force Public Relations Officer, it averred that the force is committed to a comprehensive investigation into the matter as the Lagos State Commissioner of Police has been tasked to unravel the circumstance surrounding his death.

The force stated that it understands the concerns regarding his untimely demise. "Rest assured, updates will be provided as investigations unfold," the statement partly reads, "while encouraging members or close associates with valuable information to approach the Lagos State Commissioner of Police to assist in the process."

"In the meantime, we kindly request that individuals refrain from making statements or engaging in activities that could jeopardize the ongoing investigation," it added. The Lagos

State Police command in a separate forum said the corpse of the late singer would be exhumed for autopsy to aid investigation into the cause of his death, if it is necessary.

The cause of his death has been a subject of controversy since the tragic incident. Speaking during an Instagram live session on Thursday night, the State Police Public Relations Officer, SP Benjamin Hundeyin, said the police would probe to know the cause of Mohbad's death. A couple of names had allegedly been mentioned relating to the death of the Ikorodu born Mohbad.

Among whom are his estranged record label lead, Afeez Fashola, aka Naira Marly and a music promoter, Samson Balogun, popular as Sam Larry.

Meanwhile, amid the controversies surrounding the death of Mohbad, the Elegushi Royal Family of Eti-Osa, Lagos State, distanced their family from the embattled Sam Larry.

The Elegushi family last Thursday made their stance known in a statement released by the Palace, in which the Royal Family denounced any alliance with the music promoter. "The Elegushi Royal Family of Eti-Osa wishes to put on record the misinformation on the media space

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## I Was Bullied As A Child

- Kizz Daniel Reveals



**S**inger, Oluwatobiloba Anidugbe, aka Kizz Daniel, has opened up about the childhood struggles that affected his social skills.

He said he was mocked and bullied as a child for being overweight and was called 'orobo,' a term

used to describe a chubby person.

The singer said he stayed indoors for a while to avoid bullies.

Daniel added that he lost all forms of social skills upon reintroducing himself to the world after he lost weight.

"I have built a world of my own in my head since I was little. Because growing up, I was a fat kid. I was chubby. So, I do not go out because the kids in the area make fun of me. They called me 'orobo.' And they bullied me. So I always stay indoors," he said.

"During that time that I always stayed indoors, I had already built this fantasy world in my head. In the world that I have built in my head, I am very comfortable in that space.

"So, I reintroduced myself to the world after I lost weight; I lost all forms of social skills. I do not know how to communicate. I do not know how to socialise with people."

Daniel rose to prominence in 2015 with the release of his single titled 'Woju'.

He signed a record deal with G-Worldwide Entertainment in 2013 but left the label following a contract dispute and court case.

Daniel later established Flyboy Inc, his record label, in November 2017, but recently stepped down as the CEO and signed Emperor Geezy, his ex-label boss, as Flyboy Inc's head honcho.

## Why I keep dreadlocks

- PST Jimmy Odukoya

**H**e asserts that people's personal opinions are different from what the Bible sees as sinful.

Pastor Jimmy Odukoya, actor and head pastor of the Fountain of Life Church Ilupeju, has responded to the criticisms about his physical appearance.

During a recent interview with he noted that his appearance has nothing to do with his calling as a minister. He went on to stress that everything he does has a spiritual backing to it and nothing is done on a whim.

Odukoya said, "God called me the way I am, just as I am. As for my dreads, the story behind it is long but the thing is everything I do is backed up by scriptures. If you tell me something, I'd tell you 'Let's check the scriptures'. If someone says that long hair is wrong, I'd tell you to check the Bible where the Lord told Samson not to cut his hair."

Speaking about his facial hair, he backed up his appearance by stressing that Jesus himself had a beard which was pulled when he was being crucified, therefore his beard cannot possibly be sinful.

He said, "When people say, 'Oh he's a pastor and he has a beard,' remember the Bible said that when Jesus was tortured his beard was pulled from his face. If he didn't have a beard, what hair did they pull from his face, was it fresh skin?"

Odukoya charged people to distinguish personal preferences and opinions from 'sin' because they are not always mutually exclusive.

"Personal opinion is different from sin, If you like short hair or long hair no problem, but if you tell me that I can't have long hair because, 'It's a sin,' my brother that's where we won't agree," he said.



Continued on page 26

# THE SLOW WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

## Women health

# Habits that can hurt your sex life

BY RACHEL REIFF ELLIS

**I**N CASE you are not aware, there are certain bad habits that can affect your sex life, therefore before you blame it on other causes, look inward and check yourself as you answer these questions:

You binge on bad foods? If you're a junk-food junkie, you're filling your body with lots of refined carbs, simple sugars, and saturated and trans fat. This can slow your blood flow and affect how well you can perform during sex. Cut out the junk and go for plenty of fruits, veggies, and plant-based protein (nuts, beans, and tofu). Bonus: A healthy eating plan will give you more energy for sex. Or you eat too much salt? When salty foods are a regular part of your diet, you're more likely to have high blood pressure, which can lower your libido. Steer clear of prepackaged foods, which often have lots of sodium, and watch how much you add at the table. Instead, add flavor with herbs and spices.

### You stay stressed?

Constant strain and worry wears you out -- everywhere. When you flood your body with stress hormones for a long periods of time, it hijacks your health and also tanks your desire to have sex. Try to figure out what's stressing you so you can think about the best ways to handle it. It's also a good idea to make time for regular stress-relief -- a walk in a park, a yoga class, or laughing at your favorite comedy. Or you skip foreplay?

Science backs it up: Building up to sex can make it better. In one



survey of almost 8,700 people, both men and women said sex lasted longer when they included more types of stimulation beforehand. The real engine revivers? Oral sex and masturbation. Or you're too

busy? When life gets hectic, sex can sometimes be the first thing kicked off your "to-do" list. But intimacy in your relationship should be a priority. Scheduling sex may sound like a buzzkill, but it can help you make sure

you don't keep putting it off. So mark time on your calendars, and stick to it. You'll feel more connected, which will lead to better bouts in bed.

### You stick to the same old, same old?

Sometimes a stale sex spell is just a matter of being stuck in a rut. You might have a routine and not even realize it. Mix it up: try new positions or have sex in a place or at a time you don't usually do it. Or try adding new alternatives like massage or sex toys to your routine. Or you don't speak up?

If there's something about your sex life that's bothering you, or you have ideas about new things you'd like to try, talk about it. Worried about how your partner might handle the conversation? Try to frame it around your feelings and reactions, not your partner's. It helps to start your sentences with "I" instead of "you." Or you Diss your body? The messages you tell yourself -- or hear from others -- about your body make a big difference in how confident you feel. When those messages are negative, your self-image takes a hit, and so does your sex drive. If your default mode is to put yourself down, break the habit and try to focus on what you like about yourself. Take

care of yourself, and spend time with people who make you feel good.

### You drink too much?

One glass of wine or a beer might help you relax, but a booze binge can make you crash and burn in the bedroom. Men in particular can struggle with performance issues when they have too much alcohol in their system. Keep your drinking in moderation -- no more than one drink a day for women and two for men. Or you skimp on shut-eye? If you don't snooze, you could lose your libido. One study found that women who got more sleep tended to have more (and better) sex.

**You don't watch your waistline?** Is your scale showing a higher number than usual these days? Shedding a few pounds could boost your performance in the bedroom -- especially if you're a guy. One study found that men with a waist over 40 inches were more likely to have erectile dysfunction than those with slimmer stomachs. Or you light up? There's a long list of ways smoking harms your health, and slashing sexual desire is on it. Chemicals in tobacco can mess with blood flow, which can cause sexual problems, especially for men. Talk to your doctor about how you can kick the habit.



# EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With *Henrietta Gonzuk*

## Devices that can help with low vision

BY WHITNEY SELTMAN

**A**RE you battling with low vision? These devices can be helpful to you and you could find them handy.

**Magnifying Devices.**

Low vision makes it harder to read tiny print on menus, mail, or clothing labels and tags. Use a magnifying device to enlarge the print, so it's easier to read. These devices come in different weights and sizes, and some have stands or lights attached.

**Video magnifiers.** They are devices that are mounted, worn over your eyes, or held by hand can magnify images at different distances. For easier viewing, these electronic devices can: Make images brighter, sharpen contrast, clarify the background and foreground.

**Text-to-Speech Devices.** Low vision can make you feel less independent, especially in a world where you need to use smartphones or computers for so many tasks. Text-to-speech devices read copy on screens out loud, so you don't have to use your eyes. You can also use voice commands with some devices if you find it hard to type. Smart Clocks and Watches are also useful. If you can't read your smartwatch or clock, you may feel less independent. Clocks with high-contrast screens can help. So can watches and clocks with bolder, bigger numbers and letters. Talking watches can give you step-by-step walking directions when you're out.

**Supplemental Lighting.** Low vision means you may need three times as much light to read or see household objects. You can position a flexible-arm lamps to beam extra light right where you need it. Twist the neck so light shines on the text you want to see, not into your eyes. Buy Better Bulbs. Not all light bulbs are the same. Halogen, incandescent, or LED bulbs all emit different types and brightness levels of light. Find the style that works for your vision needs. Ultraviolet (UV) and blue light-emitting bulbs could worsen vision if you have macular degeneration. Bulbs with less than 5,000 Kelvin ratings don't emit blue or UV light.

**Large Print and Easier Fonts.** You'll find large-print books, puzzles, or magazines at your local library or bookstores. E-reader devices or apps also let you make print bigger, widen space between lines, or change fonts. Sans-serif fonts have block letters without extra strokes at the ends of lines so they're typically easier to read. Mobility Aids too. You can walk easier with an electronic mobility aid. These devices send out ultrasound waves that bounce off obstacles almost 10 feet away, then alert you with a sound. To be even safer, use a smart cane with a built-in ultrasonic sensor. It will let you know if there are any objects at ground level or higher.

**Telescopic Eyeglasses.**

Biopic telescopes are mounted on eyeglass lenses just above your pupils. Tilt your head up and down to bring objects into the magnified or regular view. They may look a little funny, but they work. Some states even allow you to use these high-powered eyeglasses while you drive, if you're trained and can properly pass a driving test using the device. Sewing Aids are helpful too.

Do you love to sew, but can't see well enough to thread the needle? Use a needle threader device called a

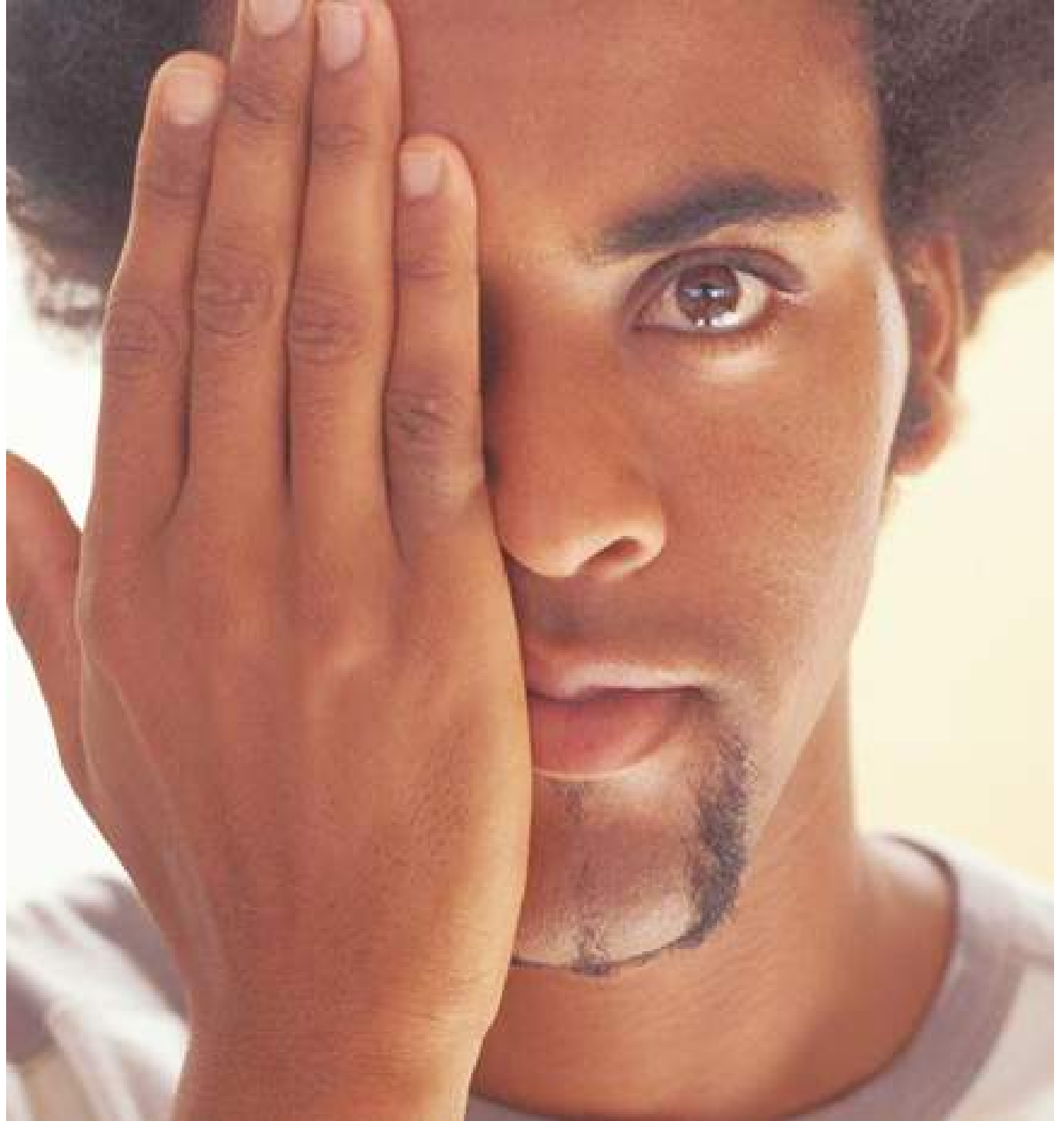
hexe or witch. These devices hold the needle upright and steady, then push thread through the eye. You can also buy pre-threaded needles at your local sewing supply store.

**Mobile Apps.** Phone apps can help you manage your tasks. New mobile apps can do things like scan currency and tell you the denomination or snap photos of objects to tell you what they are. They can even let you play video games that use sounds more than visual images. Likewise Health Monitors. Don't let your low vision keep you from your important health checks. There are blood glucose monitors, blood pressure cuff devices, and weight scales that speak your results aloud, so you don't have to read little screens.

**Camera Technology**

Your smartphone's camera can do more than magnify images, change fonts, and contrast colors for reading. The camera and speech engine function can be set to allow you to hear the content of a book or website. You can also download camera apps that describe your surroundings and point out things

like exits and bathroom signs. Smart glasses with internet-connected cameras put all these functions in front of your eyes for





# Reality Bites

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## Styles

### A first Lady's show of love to Plateau IDP's

**P**LUNGED by pockets of isolated attacks in recent times, Plateau State is among states in the country affected by insecurity, a situation that has created over 500 Internally displaced Persons (IDP's) who find shelter in camps.

Among Local Governments worst hit are Mangu, Barking Ladi, Bokkos, Bassa, Jos Soujth and and Riyom. No wonder, Wife of Nigeria's President, Hon. Oluremi Tinubu visited the state recently to sympathise with families that lost their loved ones in the orchestrated and isolated killings. She also donated N500 million Naira relief/resettlement package to 500 displaced victims of the attacks in Plateau state.

The first lady, who was received by Governor Caleb Mutfwang and members of his cabinet including Plateau Stakeholders converged at Government House irrespective of Party and other affiliations said the donation which is born out of her husbands Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI) is a modest step towards helping affected families to recover from their wounds, rebuild their lives and resettle in their communities.

The First Lady noted that the Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration is committed to foster lasting peace and security for every community in Nigeria. Governor Caleb Mutfwang while delivering a goodwill message noted that he was fortunate enough to be the first Nigerian governor to hold a meeting with



Sen. Oluremi Tinubu

the wife of the president, during which he was able to share with her, the concerns of Plateau

state. It is against the backdrop of these concerns that she decided to visit the state to

identify with affected victims of attacks and help relieve them of their ordeals

Mutfwang applauded the First Lady for her timely response to the attacks victims in plateau state.

"We are quite fortunate on the Plateau; that the wife of the president chose to visit Plateau state, a state governed by a party in opposition to the ruling party at the national level tells the story that after politics, comes the business of governance", the governor said.

The governor noted that as a result of the meeting he had with the first lady, she had directed that the affected victims should be shortlisted, and the state government was able to come up with the list from the six local governments of Mangu, Bokkos, Riyom, Barkin Ladi, Jos South and Bassa.

"Fortunately, the money is going into bank accounts directly. Ours is to supervise and monitor to ensure that the money gets to those it was meant for. We will give a report of how the money is put into use", the governor added.

A symbolic presentation was done by the first lady to the governor who in turn presents to

the beneficiaries, each going home with the sum of one million naira (N1m).

A vote of thanks was then given by the Gbong gwom Jos, Da Jacob Gyang Buba. The paramount ruler on behalf of the government of the state, the traditional council and the entire citizens of Plateau state thanked the first lady for the visit, and also for the wonderful love extended to the state. "We cannot thank you enough. God in his infinite mercy will bless you and strengthen you to continue to reach out to people in need always. We wish you a safe journey back and we look forward to having you spend a weekend in Plateau state subsequently", the traditional ruler noted.

In the first lady's entourage were the wife of the executive governor of Imo state and secretary Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI), Her Excellency, Barr. Chioma Hope Uzodimma, wife of the national chairman of the All Progressives Congress and secretary/Director Education Renewed Hope Initiative, Prof. Hafsat Ganduje and other distinguished personalities.

On hand to receive her excellency, the distinguished guest to Plateau state were the executive governor of Plateau state, \*His Excellency Barrister Caleb Mutfwang, the wife of the governor, her excellency Barrister Helen Mutfwang, the Gbong gwom Jos, HRH, Da Jacob Gyang Buba, CFR, former deputy governor Prof. Sonny Gwanle Tyoden, Plateau state chairman of the People's Democratic Party, Chris Hassan, Plateau state chairman of the All Progressives Congress, Rufus Bature, Senator Diket Plang, Senator Nora Daduut, Amb Bagudu Hirse, Sarah Reng Ochekepe, Rear admiral S B Atukum, commissioners and members of the Plateau state house of assembly.

The First Lady's kindhearted gesture is not only a display of affection and compassion but is viewed by many as a motherly show of love to humanity, irrespective of any affiliation, and must be imbibed by all.

Many analysts describe her personality as the type that does not only build bridges but one that is capable of bringing succor to the vulnerable and needy.

The expectation is that the package reaches the right hands, to enable the homeless IDP's return back to their ancestral homes.



# EVER'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

## Living

# Key symptoms of dementia

BY CHRISTOPHER MELIOSKY

**D**EMENTIA is a term for a group of diseases with similar symptoms that affects your ability to think, socialize, and remember. It causes memory loss, confusion, and severe deficiency in problem-solving and language skills. Generally, people with dementia have symptoms severe enough to impact their daily life.

Dementia mainly affects people over age 65. People with a close relative who had dementia are more likely to get it than those with no family history of it.

If you think that a loved one has dementia, talk to them about it, and make a plan to see a doctor who specializes in treating patients with dementia.

**Types of Dementia**  
Common types of dementia include:

Alzheimer's disease (wasting away of brain cells over time)

Vascular dementia (blood vessels to the brain are blocked)

Lewy body dementia (buildup of proteins in the brain)

**Recommended**

Frontotemporal dementia (loss of brain cells in front and sides of the brain)

Mixed dementia (different dementia types combined)

The following conditions can also cause dementia symptoms:

Huntington's disease (brain nerve cells break down over time)

Parkinson's disease (affects the brain's ability to control movements)

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (a condition that destroys brain



cells), Traumatic brain injury (TBI)

The types of dementia previously mentioned are not reversible. They are progressive (happen slowly but steadily) and get worse over time. However, some types of dementia may be reversible, such as those caused by: Infections, lack of vitamins, medications, brain tumors, lack of oxygen to the brain, poisoning.

**Signs of Dementia**  
There are different signs depending on the type of dementia a person has.

However, generally, they involve the following.

**Memory Loss**

Memory loss is a common symptom of dementia. At first, it may be minor, but once it disrupts your daily life, it may be a sign of dementia. In the early stages, it is called mild cognitive impairment. As symptoms worsen, you may find yourself relying more on sticky notes to remember, or forgetting more things.

However, occasionally forgetting things is normal and usually not something to worry about.

**Mood Changes**

People with dementia may experience mood swings anytime, but especially when they are out of a familiar environment. They may become irritable, fearful, suspicious, or confused at times. As you age, you may develop comfortable routines. It's normal to feel a little upset if your typical routine is disrupted. This is not a concern for dementia. Dementia-caused mood swings generally seem out of character for the person with symptoms.

**Problems Speaking and Writing**

It's normal to occasionally have trouble finding the right word for something, but if it happens frequently, it may be a sign of dementia. People with dementia may also struggle to follow conversations or forget the topic of a chat.

**Difficulty Doing Familiar Things**

People with dementia may forget how to do things they used to do frequently. They may

get lost going to familiar places, forget how to use a stove or cell phone, or get confused while grocery shopping. Occasional confusion while doing a familiar task is normal and may not be a sign of dementia, but if it becomes a problem, it may be time to get a doctor's advice.

**Problems With Visual and Spatial Perception**

Dementia can affect spatial visualization (seeing the world around you). Dropping or spilling things more often, or tripping over objects more frequently can be a sign of dementia. However, as you age, there are other conditions that may affect your vision, like cataracts. So it's important to rule those out, especially if this is your main symptom.

**Living With Dementia**

**Create a Regular Routine**

Create a daily schedule and write it down. By doing this, you may spend less time trying to figure out what you wanted to do on any given day. Plus, routine and predictability are helpful for some people with dementia.

**Keep Up Your Social Life:**

Consider joining a group for people with dementia, or attending dementia-friendly activities. These activities have safety measures in place so you can socialize safely. It may also be helpful for you to share stories with others who have dementia. Keeping in touch with your friends and loved ones is also good for your overall mental health.

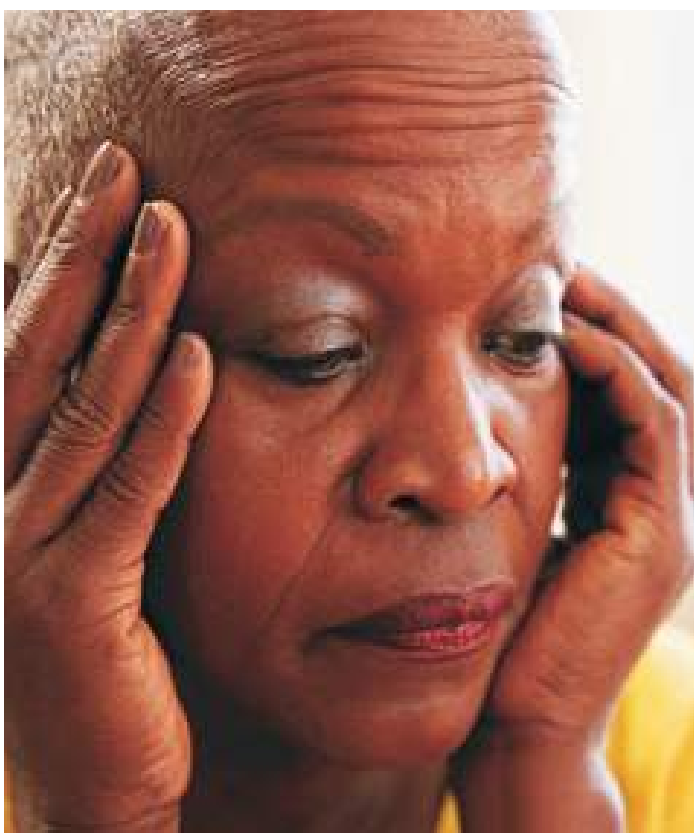
**Tell People You Are Close To:**  
Some people with dementia hesitate to tell people because

they do not want their friends and family to treat them differently. However, letting people know about your dementia is good for your safety. It will let people know that you may act differently when you are around them. It can also let them know that you may need their help in the future for things like driving or running errands.

**Write Things Down and Keep Them Handy:** Write down important numbers and post them in an obvious place like by the phone or on the fridge. Write down your schedule and place it somewhere you will see it. You may find using sticky notes and putting them on the door or other places you look frequently will help you remember important things.

**Put Bills on Autopay:** Setting up your bills to directly debit (be removed) from your bank account means one less thing you have to remember. If you need help to set this up, you can ask a tech-savvy relative or call the service for which you need to set up autopay.

**Use a Pill Organizer to Remember Medications:** People with dementia may take prescription medication to help with the symptoms. They may also take vitamins or medications for other conditions. It can be hard to remember whether you took your medications and vitamins each day. There are specialized pill containers that have sections for each day to help. You can get one that has multiple spaces per day for medications that you have to take at different times of the day.



## BUSINESS WORLD

# Funding zero hunger policies

**With more than 130 million Nigerians within the hunger index in Nigeria, Nigeria ranking 103rd out of 121 countries and a score of 27.3, Nigeria has a serious and acute hunger challenge. However, these data do not exactly reflect the extreme level of hunger in many communities, writes EMMANUEL OSADEBAY**

**T**O see the terrifying level of hunger in our local communities, we need only visit the vast ungoverned spaces with the familiar features of hunger, dirty environment, poverty and lack of basic social infrastructures. To solve this compelling challenge, Nigeria needs a structured, sustainable and suitable strategy for funding zero hunger. By funding zero hunger, I do not mean giving free meals or money to millions of Nigerians who are multidimensionally poor. We need a systematic approach to financing real investments that contribute to bridging the gaps within the food value-chain in Nigeria.

To tackle the scourge of hunger, governments have a responsibility to go beyond designing zero hunger policies, they must have strategic objectives for supporting multifaceted efforts to eradicate hunger. This requires governments to closely collaborate with the private sector, international partners and non-profit sector in harnessing available resources to ensure that each individual is able to access food, nutritious and sufficient food relative to their caloric requirements. But this work goes beyond the benevolence of charitable organizations in providing food to persons in need of food, ending hunger requires more than the provision of food to those affected by hunger, it involves empowering citizens so that they can, as far as practically possible, provide that food for themselves.

After ten months of providing humanitarian assistance in ensuring that no one is left hungry in vulnerable communities, particularly in communities with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), we are happy that we have touched nineteen thousand Nigerians directly through the Feed the Hungry Programme of



T200 Foundation. But as we reviewed the cost of funding for feeding poor people in Nigeria, we have realized that more needs to be done. Governments have either allocated too little to solving hunger crises in the past or the billions allocated are wrongly channelled to the insatiable pockets of the rich.

For private companies, both their corporate social responsibilities and for-profit investments must prioritize

mechanized agriculture and food systems. In Nigeria for instance, the private sector should be creative enough to look beyond investment in the energy sector, to harness the enormous economic potential of the food security sector. With the Russian-Ukraine war, which contributes more to the global food crisis, every nation, particularly those that are naturally endowed and situated for agricultural productivity,

must see the endless business opportunities that the agricultural sector provides. More than investments, private companies must go beyond profit to ensure that ordinary people have access to nutritious food.

The government, in designing and implementing food security strategies must consider the enabling factors for food productivity and food security, such as social infrastructure, provision of agricultural produce support like fertilizer, transform planting processes and ensure quality in harvest and storage systems. More importantly, governments must strive to achieve inclusive development and equitable economic growth that help raise the purchasing power of the poor, which in turn will create incremental demand, and generate new jobs. Hunger and malnutrition stem from a variety of economic, environmental and political issues, governments must adopt an integrated and cross-policy approach and promote synergies between social protection, sustainable agriculture, nutrition, health and education policies.

Given the fabric of Nigeria's federalism, the federal government, in working together to achieve zero hunger, must empower local authorities. Local and sub-national authorities have direct access to the individuals, communities and businesses whose involvement is essential in actualizing the Zero Hunger goal. Notwithstanding that agriculture is both under the concurrent and residual legislative lists, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture should design and provide the 774 local governments in Nigeria with the tools and support they need to assist, work alongside and constantly engage them as key stakeholders in ending hunger in Nigeria. Local governments in Nigeria

must understand the critical situations of their people and provide sincere and bold leadership that will empower their people. This is not the time for "chop I chop" politics, this time is for people-driven politics and people must be the central political consideration in governance.

The ambition and depth of zero hunger require a coordinated commitment of every stakeholder and the non-profit sector has a defining role of ensuring accountability in government policy proposals, government spending and equal opportunities for everyone. How exactly do we ensure that policies and investments aimed at reducing inequality, addressing the gender gap, and providing food for everyone, achieve the desired purposes? The answer lies in responsible leadership, but good leadership can only be achieved when public officials are held accountable for their actions and inactions. Non-profit organizations must go beyond statements and financial reports, to ensure that the people are truly the beneficiaries of public policies for zero hunger.

Everyone should be involved. No is too small nor too big to get involved, because it is about safeguarding humanity. As we talk about the trio responsibility of government, private sector and non-profit sectors, we must also turn to the academia – our university communities must become incubators of knowledge and innovations that create and coordinate channels of efforts to achieve zero hunger in Nigeria. As for us at the T200 Foundation and T200 Integrated Farms, we will continue to invest in a food value chain that sustainably contributes to reducing hunger in every community in Nigeria.

**Osadebay, is the Executive Director, T200 Foundation**



# BUSINESS WORLD

## Naira in record freefall

**T**HE naira continued its free-fall recently, depreciating to a record low of 1,050 per dollar at the parallel market amid concerns over the postponement of the Monetary Policy Committee meeting.

The naira, which traded at 980/\$ on Wednesday, fell further as dollar demand outweighed supply.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), recently, postponed a rate-setting meeting scheduled for Sept 25-26. Its new governor, ex-Citigroup executive Olayemi Cardoso, is yet to be confirmed in his role, while the acting governor and four deputy governors have resigned, effectively leaving a policy-making vacuum at the top.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) chaired by the governor of the CBN, meets bimonthly to take a decision on the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR), also known as the benchmark interest rate.

The MPC is the highest policymaking committee of the CBN with the mandate to review economic and financial conditions in the economy, determine appropriate stance of policy in the short to medium term and review regularly the CBN monetary policy framework and adopt changes when necessary.

It also communicates monetary/financial policy decisions effectively to the public and ensures the credibility of the model of transmission mechanism of monetary policy.

The MPC meets bi-monthly, except otherwise, in the event of an emergency.

The CBN has maintained a hawkish monetary policy stance since May 2022 to rein in inflation.

In its last meeting in July, the CBN raised its benchmark interest rate for the eight consecutive time to 18.75 percent from 11.50 percent in May 2022, data from the CBN indicated.

In a notice, signed by Isa AbdulMumin, director of corporate communications, and posted on its website, the CBN said a new date would be communicated in due course.

"There is no implication. A meeting was deferred probably till new management can come in," Yemi Kale, partner and chief economist, KPMG Nigeria, said on Thursday.

Charlie Robertson, head of macro strategy at FIM Partners UK Ltd, said: "I suspect the new CBN governor wants more time to build a consensus ahead of an interest rate decision. Any policy shift will require good communication, so it makes sense for the CBN to align research, and the MPC, around a common view."

Kalu Aja, a financial planning expert, said he could not remember "a nation not at war or crisis not holding an MPC, much less the largest



**Cardoso**

economy in Africa".

"The 'team' should be supporting the 'CEO's' hustle," he said on X (formerly Twitter).

The continued naira depreciation followed strong demand for dollars by individuals traveling abroad for business, school, medical or tourism.

Stears Africa FX Monitor, a data and intelligence company, has predicted a continued naira volatility.

The company highlighted fiscal policies, external trade, and global market trends, including inflation rates, interest rates, policy events, and geopolitical factors as key factors affecting the naira's performance.

Fadekemi Abiru, head of Insights at Stears, expressed concerns about the naira volatility. "The continued unpredictability of the naira underscores the importance of

timely and informed decision-making for businesses and investors in Nigeria," she said.

The naira extended its slide and hurtled towards the 1,000/\$ mark in street trading, as the central bank held back from supplying dollars to a panic-stricken market.

Meanwhile, companies seeking hard currency to pay for imports have been joined in dollar buying by ordinary citizens who are fearful of further depreciation in the naira.

"There is a total reform going on now at CBN, there won't be any continuity of policies as the previous governor and his deputies were removed and not retired, if retired there would have been continuity. So we are looking forward to see a new policy," Onoja Usman, managing director/CEO, Lovonus Microfinance Bank Limited, said.

## FG dangles tax rebate before solid mineral investors

**T**HE federal government has promised potential investors into Nigeria's solid mineral sector a number of incentives including: 95 percent capital allowances of qualifying capital expenditure, up to 3-5 years tax holidays, possible capitalisation of expenditure on exploration and survey, among others.

Dele Alake, minister of solid minerals development disclosed this at the sidelines of the ongoing United Nations General Assembly in New York.

According to Alake, Nigeria — despite lagging behind other African countries in mining activities — has mineral deposits valued at over \$700 billion with potential to increase.

"It is clear that Nigeria is important to the world and we are ready for investment, collaboration and partnerships in our solid mineral sector," Alake said.

"Our new president, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has made the solid mineral development sector vital in his administration and we are committed to making it a key contributor to our national GDP.

"A lot of work has been done in the sector under former administrations and we plan to take it further. Nigeria is prime to becoming a mining destination on the continent



**Alake**

and it will happen in our time."

He noted that minerals are a major focus globally and rightly so.

"Nigeria is well positioned to play an important role in our new world. Our Solid mineral sector is valued at over \$700 billion and we know there is more to be discovered. Endowed with critical minerals, Nigeria should not and dare I say, cannot be ignored," he said.

Alake also assured investors of free transferability of foreign currency through the Central Bank of Nigeria for servicing of foreign loans and remittances of foreign capital.

For him, Nigeria occupies a special position in global energy discourse, with a vital role as a key oil exporter during the era of hydrocarbons and became a top 10 exporter

**T**HE National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), says the average retail price of a litre of Petrol increased from N189.46 in Aug. 2022 to N626.70 in Aug. 2023.

It made the declaration in its Petrol Price Watch for Aug. 2023 released in Abuja on Friday.

It stated that the Aug. 2023 price of N626.70 represented a 230.78 per cent increase over the price of N189.46 recorded in Aug. 2022.

"Comparing the average price value with the previous month of July 2023, the average retail price increased by 4.39 per cent from N600.35.

"On state profiles analysis, Taraba paid the highest average retail price of N680 per litre, followed by Borno and Benue at N657.27 and N649, respectively.

"Conversely, Adamawa paid the lowest average retail prices of N594.81 per litre, followed by Rivers at N596.80 and Delta at N604.63," it stated.

Analysis by zone showed that the North-East recorded the highest average retail price in Aug. 2023 at N636.93 per litre, while the South-South recorded the lowest at N616.95 per litre.

The NBS also stated in its

## Petrol increase to N626.70 in August - NBS



**Adeniran**

Diesel Price Watch Report for August 2023 that the average retail price was N854.32 per litre.

It explained further that the Aug. 2023 price of N854.32 per litre amounted to a 8.57 per cent increase over the N786.88 per litre paid in August 2022.

"On a month-on-month basis, the price increased by 7.53 per cent from the N794.48 per litre recorded in July 2023," it added.

On state profiles analysis, the report said the highest average price of diesel in Aug.

2023 was recorded in Abia at N970 per litre, followed by Niger at N960.14 per litre and Abuja at N950.22 per litre.

On the other hand, the lowest price was recorded in Bayelsa at N700 per litre, followed by Katsina State at N771.43 per litre and Kaduna State at N775.42 per litre.

In addition, the analysis by zone showed that the North-Central had the highest price at N907.86 per litre, while the South-South recorded the lowest price at N820.02 per litre.

## National quality policy will unlock benefits of AfCFTA

— NQC

**T**HE Nigeria National Quality Policy will unlock the benefits of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) for Nigeria.

The Chairman/Chief Executive Officer of the National Quality Council (NQC), Mr Osita Aboloma, made this known while addressing newsmen in Abuja.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that the Federal Government established NQC to enhance development, harmonisation and rationalisation of Nigeria's quality infrastructure.

The council was created to implement the approved Nigerian National Quality Policy document which provides for efficient and effective management of regulatory responsibilities.

It aims to achieve protection of society and the environment as well as transparent and reliable state-regulatory systems, devoid of bureaucratic vagaries.

According to Aboloma, the agency will assist in providing a supportive national quality infrastructure for the country.

He said this consists of Standards and Metrology, Accreditation and Conformity Assessment Services that must be acceptable globally to enhance the competitiveness of products and services made in Nigeria.

He said without adhering to international standards, Nigeria might not enjoy the benefits of AfCFTA as products from Nigeria would continue to suffer rejection due to non-conformity with standards.

According to Aboloma, AfCFTA is a bloc of over 1.3 billion people, ratified in 2021 by over 47 African nations as of

August 2022. He said in the short-to-medium term, the agency would convene a stakeholders' summit on the implementation of the national quality policy and how it affected every facets of the Nigerian economy.

"We will have a national discourse across the country where we will discuss details of the national quality policy, how it affects various sector of the economy and how it will improve our economy.

"We will also be doing gap analysis that will look at gathering data for every laboratory that exist in Nigeria whether government or privately owned.

According to him, this will ensure that trade and commerce within Nigeria, with our neighbouring countries and the rest of Africa and internationally will benefit Nigeria.

Aboloma said these activities would generate jobs for the country, boost economic growth and increase exports for Nigeria.

"So, it is the working of the national quality infrastructure that will guarantee businesses to function well and the products they are producing are giving people value for their money," he added. (NAN



**Aboloma**



# ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

## Investing in rice production, processing

**The Federal Government plans to make Nigeria self-sufficient in rice production. From research, it has been proven that Nigeria rice is one of the best as the taste and quality is far better than imported ones from other parts of the world. UBA GODWIN writes.**

**I**N Nigeria today, some states produce paddy rice in abundance. Some of these states are Enugu, Anambra, Abia, Kebbi, Imo, Kwara, Edo, Ogun, Ondo, Cross River State, and Sokoto, to mention but few. Therefore with serious efforts not only by the government but private companies and individuals, the self-sufficiency policy is achievable.

Rice is consumed in great quantities every day. So, the demand is very high. Of the total projected population figure of 200million, over 70% feed on rice. Because of the high demand, most of what is consumed is imported. This situation should not be allowed to continue forever. These importers must channel their huge resources to establish modern milling plants in Nigeria instead of helping the growth of some foreign countries.

From publications made by the Bureau of Statistics and the Federal Ministry of Finance, the importation figures of rice amounted to about N1tr (One trillion Naira) at the end of 2012. This figure increased to over N2tr (two trillion naira in 2016) and about three N3tr (three trillion naira in 2018). The figure has always been on the increase. Rice takes about 60% of the total import figures.

After the government decided to close the land borders it became clear that large quantities of foreign rice come into the country through the neighbouring ports. It became clear that there was a huge importation of rice through illegal means.

As a result, it became imperative that Nigerians can actually produce enough rice to sustain itself. Nigerians had survived and are gradually adapted to eating of local rice. Farmers were happier, local processors of rice came back to life and they all make more money with less competition with imported products. However, the prices of rice, the staple food in the country rose on top of the roof.



A common man can no longer afford the commodity, both locally produced and imported. Currently, a bag of imported rice is as high as between N28, 000 and N30, 000 for a bag of 50kg; while the locally made rice is between N18, 000 and N20, 000. Government must, therefore, sustain the tempo of not allowing massive importation of rice into the country, but have a relaxed but well-controlled system of importation. It is not advisable to impose a total ban on importation of rice without first assessing and establishing exactly what the country can afford to

produce; ensure that the country can produce at least 70% of what is needed in this country. There must be a full record of what the country can produce internally with a projection of what farmers can produce at full capacity.

Generally, encouraging local production or adding value to agricultural produce and processing is one of the good things that can happen to this country because the policy will generate more employment opportunities and put more food on the tables.

The Federal Government has also

concluded arrangements to roll out a new policy to make loans available at single digit interest rate to farmers with effect from this year.

Corporate organisations such as Coscharis Group have gone into production, processing, and bagging of rice. More individuals are being encouraged to invest in this sector.

Here is how you can venture into the rice processing and packaging business.

Investors can go into rice farming and rice processing or rice milling plant. Rice milling projects will best be sited in these areas where rice is grown in order to reduce the cost of transportation of the paddy. To set up this project, a minimum space of a plot of land is required to dry paddy rice after harvesting.

The components of machines required to set up this project are cleaning facilities, Dehuller, Boiling tank, Polisher, Bagger and other miscellaneous equipment such as wheel barrows, weighing scales.

These machines can be fabricated locally. They can also be imported from Europe and some known Asian companies. Prospective investors would be given details on these machines.

Also, project vehicles and generating sets are essential for the smooth running of this project.

Rice milling could be done on the cottage, small, medium and large-scale, depending on availability of capital and the raw materials – paddy rice. Output could be from 2MT to 150MT per day. Generally, one metric tonne of paddy rice yields about 60kg-70kg of milled rice, depending on milling efficiency, company management practice and the variety of paddy.

In the process of milling well-parboiled rice free of sand, stones, unpleasant odour, with fewer breakages, whole rice, broken rice, and bran are obtained. Whole rice is packed and sold for human

consumption. Broken rice is further milled into "Tuwo Shinkafa" (a flour meal) while bran is very important input for manufacturing dietary products like rice bran bread, which has been acclaimed for reduction of blood cholesterol, rice bran oil and livestock feeds.

From rice, you can also obtain puffed rice, rice cakes, rice pudding etc.

The husks are used for the production of potassium Hydroxide solution or as fuel for milling plants. It can be seen that virtually all parts of paddy rice are useful.

The likely cost of the total project will not actually be stated safely unless one knows the scope (whether cottage, small, medium or large scale) proposed investor would like to embark upon.

However, the cost ranges from N550, 000 – N10.2million from cottage level to N57million for medium size plant and over N500million for large scale. Basic factors to consider in determining the initial cost include the capacity to produce, the source(s) of the machinery, whether to construct or rent, the location, etc.

Therefore to embark on this project, one needs a business plan (feasibility studies), with detailed costing for all the aspects of inputs, before arriving at a likely total estimate.

In conclusion, rice milling; an agro-based business is very profitable (45-55% return on investment) and sustainable. It has a low capital requirement and the technical know-how is not complicated. The machinery and equipment can be sourced locally. The project has a short pay-back period.

It is highly recommended for serious and aggressive promoters, local and state governments and private investors particularly those that are thinking good for this country.





## Who Killed Mohbad?

Continued from page 18

involving Samson Erinfolami Balogun (AKA Sam Larry). Samson Balogun is not a member of the royal family and does not work for the royal family or king in any capacity.

Like other celebrities, politicians, religious and community leaders, he visits the palace to pay homage to the king and seek royal blessings just like other members of the public. While expressing our condolences to the family and friends of late Ilerioluwa Aloba (known as MohBad) we would like to add our voices to the calls for a thorough investigation into circumstances surrounding his death, with a view to unravel any foul play.

We ask our friends in the media to be mindful of the sensitivity of the issue and desist from spreading falsehood that may jeopardise the investigation. "This is coming after a petition by the late singer surfaced online, where the deceased alleged threat to life, malicious damage, assault, and oppression, among others, against Sam Larry and others, in a petition to the FCID Annex, Alagbon, Lagos State.

Also in a video circulating online, Mohbad, whose remains were hurriedly laid to rest last Wednesday, was seen being assaulted by some people allegedly led by Sam Larry during a video shoot. In the video, Mohbad and another afrobeats artiste, Omoniyi Temidayo aka Zlatan Ibile, were on set of a music video when the said Sam Larry stormed the scene with some boys targeting the late singer who was heard talking. The video left many Nigerians on social media furious as they stormed Larry's Instagram page to attack him for bullying and threatening the late singer.

However, in the petition, dated June 27, 2023, the late singer had urged the Nigeria Police Force to protect him from Sam Larry and his team, comprising 15 others. The petition, titled, 'Petition of threat to life, malicious damage of properties valued at the sum of Five Million Naira, assault occasioning harm, oppression and conduct likely to cause a breach of peace against Sam Larry Elegushi, Elele, Obele and others', was addressed to the Assistant Inspector General of Police, Force Criminal Investigation Department Annex, Alagbon in Ikoyi, Lagos.

In the petition, Mohbad alleged that Sam Larry and others all armed stormed the venue of a video shoot where him and Zlatan Ibile, were working; and threatened to wreak havoc. He added that they eventually destroyed equipment worth over N5 million at the scene, and assaulted him (Mohbad) before he narrowly escaped after sustaining injuries.

The outpouring of emotion since his death was confirmed has been overwhelming. A dream cut short. Allegedly bullied by his former label mates, Naira Marley, Zinoleski and others, and attacked a number of times. That was enough to make him depressed. But the afro-pop star always responded the only way he knew with music, troubled at many turns. He waxed lyrically about his challenge. One can tell he had premonition of his death.

Contrary to speculations in the music industry, Mohbad's wife Wunmi had opened up on the late singer's lifestyle as she revealed he lived in fear till the end.

Wunmi, who has a baby boy with Mohbad, said upon the birth of their son, the singer was constantly worried for their lives and wanted them to leave the country. The late 27 years old singer's wife revealed he wanted to face his

fight alone as she suggested some individuals were behind Mohbad's death. "He struggled till death, too many pains, threatening, he has always lived with fear, continuous fights everywhere he goes too, he has never been happy for a whole day," she revealed in a post.

She also debunked the reports of him battling mental issues. "He was called a junkie, a mad person, mental issue so the public would have another view about him. He's dead at least you all won, take your trophy. Y'all made me a widow at 24 years," Mohbad's wife sadly wrote. The death of the famous Nigerian singer continues to stir emotions and reactions online as more details about his passing emerge. Good the Nigerian Police Force has commenced investigation.

As someone rightly noted, "The public outpouring of grief in reaction to his passing speaks to the recognizable beam of light that the singer and rapper projected to the world during a memorable 27-year stint on earth. For the last five years, street-pop, a sub-genre of Afropop defined by its existential lyricism and hard-knock tales of beating the odds has been on a propulsive rise. Mohbad was at the very center of that wave.

"Thanks to a recognizable baritone-tinged voice, his raspy delivery style, and a stellar grasp of language, Mohbad was among a group of Ikorodu-born stars who constituted street-pop's second generation and brought the angst and insecurities of inner-city kids to the wider world via music. What truly set Mohbad apart from his peers, even at the beginning was an utter conviction that he had a message to share with the world.

In between dropping street hits like 'Ronaldo' and 'Mi O Foh' in 2019, he released 'Imole,' a soul-tinged rap-sung declaration of intent that contained the line, "Imole ni mi/ mo de fe tan kari aye" which translates to 'I'm the light and I want to shine all over the world.' A deal signed with Naira Marley's Marlian Records later same year was supposed to facilitate those global



## Davido, Zlatan, and others join Mohbad's candlelight procession

Continued from page 18

**M**OHBAD, who died on Sept. 12 and was buried the next day, was exhumed by the Police on Thursday for further investigation.

Nigerian musicians, Davido, Zlatan and Falz, were among the celebrities who joined the candlelight procession in honour of late singer, "Mohbad", on Thursday in Lekki, Lagos.

Also at the event was the Lagos State Commissioner for Youths and Social Development, Mobolaji Ogunlende.

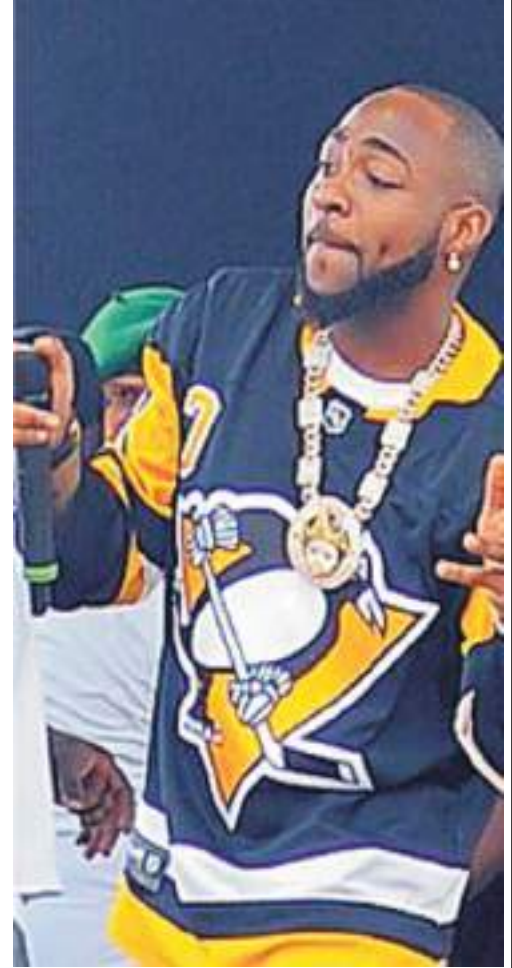
It was reported that fans in their numbers echoed, "Justice for Mohbad", as Falz and on-air-personality,

Oladotun Kayode, coordinated the crowd.

Some fans held placards with different inscriptions seeking justice for Mohbad.

It was reported that the peaceful procession kicked off from Lekki Phase 1 Gate, and terminated at the Muri Okunola Park, Victoria Island.

Mohbad, who died on Sept. 12 and was buried the next day, was exhumed by the Police on Thursday for further investigation.



## I'm single but don't know why — Whitemoney

**E**VICTED Big Brother Naija All-Stars housemate, Hazel Oyeze Onou, a.k.a Whitemoney, has revealed his relationship status.

WhiteMoney made several revelations about himself in a post- eviction interview with Osi and Bibi Raii on The Beat FM's 'The Morning Rush' show in Lagos.

He said, "I've been single for the longest time. I've tried to ask myself why. I don't know. There's no logical reason to it. I think it's not just time for me to be in a relationship. But after going to this show, I think I wanna be in one."

When asked if he could have a romantic relationship with BBNaija female housemate Mercy Eke, he said: "She [Mercy] told me she has a boyfriend. I don't know about her but for me, everything was real."

Whitemoney, who admitted to being a loner, said Mercy Eke "resurrected" a side of him.

Speaking further, Whitemoney disclosed that he has business plans for "WhiteLambo". He also revealed that he did not go to the All-stars edition show to win but rather to "sell and show the world I have other skills."



# SUNDAY FEATURE

## Nigeria's plastic waste management policies shouldn't be trashed

**A 10 percent green tax on single-use plastics, introduced by outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari in May 2023 as a part of his swan song from office was suspended by incoming President Tinubu in July 2023 almost as swiftly as it was introduced. Femi Idowu-Adegoke & Natalie Beinisch writes.**

**T**HE suspension was received with distress by environmental groups. We too were initially disappointed by the government's policy reversal and the explanation behind the decision: to protect business growth. Representing the interests of an emerging recovery and recycling sector in Lagos, this explanation seemed double-handed, as green taxes are a key tool to support the growth of the recycling industry.

However, when it comes to waste management policy, the track record of the Federal Government has been mixed. On the one hand, the government has been both receptive and progressive when it comes to embracing policy approaches that intend to reduce waste generation and improve collection and recycling rates. On the other hand, the enthusiasm to meet these goals is not always matched with the administrative grit to drive policy forward in a meaningful way.

An example is Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). EPR is a regulation that requires producers of plastic packaging to pay for collection and recycling infrastructure, often through industry-run Producer Responsibility Organizations (PRO). EPR guidelines were introduced by the Nigerian Environmental Standards and Regulatory Enforcement Agency (NESREA) in 2014.

This immediately led well-known brands including Coca-Cola, Nigerian Breweries and Unilever to set up a PRO, called the Food and Beverage Recycling Association (FBRA). However, to this day the



plastics EPR regime in Nigeria does not have statutory characteristics, so of more than 1000 plastic producers in Nigeria, only 31 companies have registered with and pay into FBRA.

This is devastating for the environment as the fewer contributors to FBRA, the less resources are available to invest in collection and recycling capacity. The fact that the guidelines are not enforced across all plastics companies also acts as a deterrent for deeper private sector investment into recycling.

The Federal Plastics Management Policy, which was published in 2020,

is another example where the government introduced an ambitious agenda to address the monumental challenge of plastic waste in Nigeria. The policy has set targets to eliminate single-use plastic bags and Styrofoam by 2028 and to ensure that all plastic packaging in the market is recyclable or biodegradable by 2030.

We are extremely supportive of these goals; however, we are not aware of steps the government has taken to assure that regulators and the market are ready to meet targets, leading us to wonder how

these objectives can be constructively met on time.

The green tax follows similar patterns to its predecessors. We believe it is laudable and necessary to use fiscal policy to incentivize investment into recycling and alternative packaging materials. However, the speed at which the green tax was introduced and the lack of public information about the types of plastic that are subject to taxation indicate that the necessary footwork to determine the impact of the tax on vulnerable communities, the types of alternatives available to manufacturers and retailers, and

not been fully carried out at the time the tax was introduced.

In this respect, we are aligned with the view of the Federal Government that the green tax as it was introduced could be potentially damaging for the waste management sector and the economy more broadly. Nevertheless, we believe firmly that waste management policy should not be trashed. In other words, it is critical that the green tax is treated as a suspension, not a cancellation. Likewise, both the EPR and the Plastics Management policy deserve to be nurtured, rather than dismissed.

## World Peace Day and global conflicts

**Every 21st day of September has been declared by the United Nations General Assembly to commemorate peace by the Resolution 55/282 in September 2002. It is devoted to strengthen the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples, and thus urges member states to ensure its observance. Nigeria is joining other countries to mark the day. OLALEKAN A. BABATUNDE writes.**

**T**HIS year's theme is Action for Peace: Our Ambition for the #GlobalGoals, which is a call to action that our individual and collective efforts to foster peace should be accelerated to realise global goals including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is also a push for us to recognize how our individual and collective actions can affect and foster global peace.

But while we are celebrating peace and reminding ourselves of the need to promote peace in places where conflict and violence are common, it is important to underscore the fact that there is no way there will not be conflict or dispute in our world. Putting it succinctly, conflict must exist in our everyday lives. Brad Pitt aptly describes it as, "happiness is overrated. There has to be conflict in life." We live in the world of conflict. We must experience conflict or disagreement individually and collectively. Within our system (body, soul and spirit), there are times we feel conflict personally. Collectively, there are conflicts over beliefs, views and positions.

Thus, conflict is bound to happen. It is a common saying that conflict is natural. Without conflict, there will be no development. That is what the father of peace studies, Johan Galtung, describes as "positive conflict". Positive conflict is constructive in nature such as restoration of relationships and the

creation of social systems that serve the need of the whole population and the constructive resolution of conflict. It produces ideas, solves problems, provides an opportunity for people to expand their knowledge, skills and fosters creativity. It is when opposing ideas explored that a breakthrough in thinking can occur. There is no story if there is not some conflict. Thomas Paine says "the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. The Chinese see conflict as an opportunity.

So as we celebrate the day, it is necessary to always remember Ronald Reagan's saying that "peace is not absence of conflict, it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means." Since conflict will occur, we should handle or resolve it peacefully. We should avoid being physical or violent. That is, we should never let the conflict lead us to killing, destruction, displacement, violate people's rights and casting aspersion on other people, and so on.

Unfortunately, Nigeria has grappled with this ugly side of conflict. Individuals, groups and communities have resorted to violence because of competition over scarce resources, or seeming irreconcilable differences. Their use of force has destroyed

millions of lives, livelihoods and property over conflict that should have been prevented, managed or resolved amicably. We have allowed our mindsets, emotions, and behaviours to work against us, and national interest. Our conflict habits have got us into trouble and therefore distorted Nigeria's growth and development. The escalation of violence has made Nigeria infamous from terrorism; communal, ethnic and religious conflict; secessionism and cultism.

Therefore, as we celebrate this year's International Day of Peace, let us eschew violence as we experience conflict in our day-to-day activities. Conflict is inevitable even in the best of relationships and work environments. Rather than giving up and make things worse, we can adopt a set of skills that produce better outcome for every party involved in the conflict. Our emotions can work against us sometimes, but remember to be calm, feel the inner peace and be peaceful to others. Negotiation, mediation and other forms of dialogue and conflict management strategies can be embraced to peacefully resolve conflict, and prevent bloodshed. Let us avoid politicization of conflict but instead develop a win-win situation to conflict resolution.

From today on, let us pledge

we shall be kind to ourselves by avoiding speaking angrily to one another or undermining others. If we stay in an empathetic frame of mind with others; we too will have peace of mind. This means that we should see conflict through our eyes. Nigerians should be sensitive to others' position and perspective. Communication plays a critical role in these processes and forging mutual agreements. In all this, let us use today to remember that since there is no

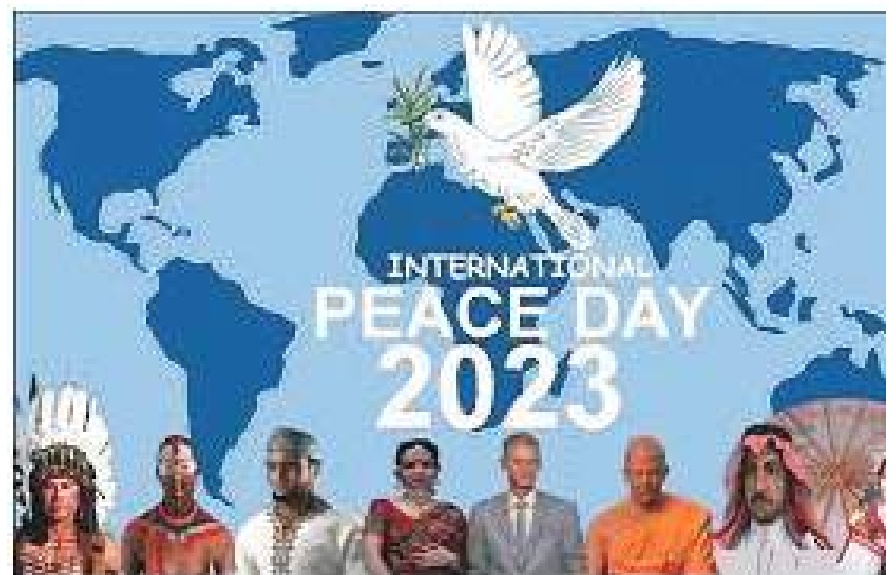
way there will not be conflict, it is our humanity's obligation to promote peaceful resolution to conflict. One can say peace is a well-managed social conflict.

Let us avoid killing or destroying one another over what seems "an irreconcilable conflict". Once our conflict is well managed, all our individual and collective actions for peace and ambitions for the global goals including the SDGs and Nigerian government's policies and programmes will be realized. The legitimate needs

and interests of all would be responded to if we give peace a chance. The citizens and non-citizens alike will be better for it.

I congratulate every Nigerian and other residents, and to say "Happy Peace Day".

Babatunde is a part-time professor @ the Zhejiang Normal University, China, and a Peacebuilder @ the Nigeria's Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja; writes via [austinebabatunde@yahoo.com](mailto:austinebabatunde@yahoo.com)



## NEWS

## International Peace Day: Alia assures of rights protection

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

**B**ENUE State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has expressed his commitment to the peaceful coexistence, protection of human rights and hope for the future of Benue and Nigeria.

Governor Alia stated this recently at the new Banquet Hall, Government House, Makurdi, on the occasion marking the 2023 International Day of Peace.

The governor who described peace as not just absence of conflict but presence of harmony, understanding and justice, explained that his administration has institutionalised a framework to support peace building and enforcement initiatives in the state.

He stated that he has been interfacing with a plethora of local and international organizations, including agencies of the UN, with a view to establishing a robust foundation for peace in the state.

Governor Alia further disclosed that his administration has equally strengthened the state's Commission for Peace and Reconciliation to serve as the main instrument for the actualisation of the peace framework.

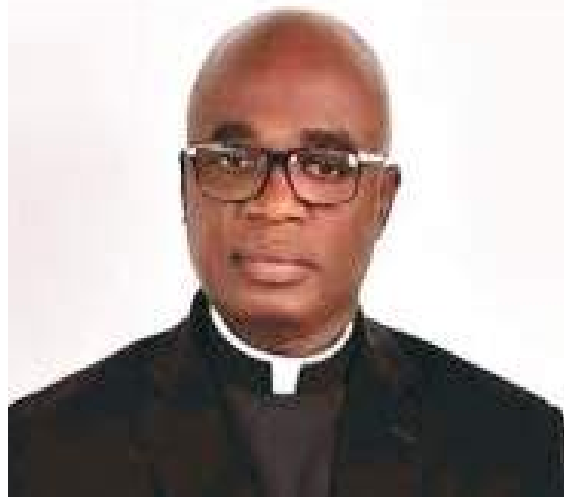
He added that several peace initiatives, including that of creating the right atmosphere for the return and resettlement of the internally displaced persons in the state as well as ways of reducing violent conflicts are being considered.

Governor Alia maintained that traditional rulers and community based organisations, and other critical stakeholders in peace building have been carried along in the efforts to foster peace in the state, explaining that keen attention has been given to conflict hotspots in Ukum, Oju, Konshisha and Gwer as well as border areas such as Ebonyi and Cross River in order to create an environment conducive for growth and development.

While commending President Bola Ahmed Tinubu for working assiduously with relevant partners and stakeholders with the aim of ensuring peace in Nigeria, the governor called on international communities to lend their invaluable support to the state through technical expertise, financial contributions as well as sharing best practices that would not only resolve conflicts in the state and country but would also prevent their recurrence.

Earlier in her address, leader of the 2023 International Day of Peace and pioneer Director General of the Benue State Peace and Reconciliation Commission, Mrs. Josephine Kpadoo Haba, appreciated Governor Alia for making himself available for the 2023 International Day of Peace. She said the day has never had the presence of a governor during its celebration.

According to her, the Benue Peace and Reconciliation Commission, an initiative of the governor, was working closely with government and other international partners to ensure that the governor's desire to resettle the state's IDPs to their ancestral homes



**Alia**

was achieved.

She called on the governor and Commissioner for Education in the state to ensure the reintroduction of Peace Clubs in all schools in the state.

In their separate goodwill messages, the Benue State Network of Non Governmental Organisations (BENGONET),

Benue Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (BECCIMA), Benue State Community of Practice for Peace and Security all made cases for the IDPs, farmers and the vulnerable in the society. The theme for this year's celebration was "Action for Peace: our Ambition for the Global Goals".

## Kogi wins Fiscal Transparency, Accountability Award

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

**K**OGI State has again won the 2022 Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Award in a survey conducted across the states in North Central Nigeria.

The first position award was presented to the state recently in Lokoja during the launch of the 2022 North Central State Budget Transparency Survey Report carried out by the Social Economic Research and Development Centre (SERDEC).

The National Coordinator, State and National Budget Transparency Survey for the agency, Mr. Tijani Abdulkareem, who presented the report and the award, said the objective of the budget Transparency and Accountability Programme was to promote focus and attention of Nigerian states towards the improvement of their budget performance in providing good governance to the people.

"Good governance starts from budgeting. This report and award are aimed at strengthening fiscal transparency to help build trust in government, facilitate accountability in public resource management and ensure sustainability in the participating states," he said.

He added, "It is evident from the 2022 SNBTS on the public availability of budget

documents and transparency that there are positive changes. Most of the North Central states now publish their budget documents in 2022 compared to 2020.

"Nevertheless, in terms of state by state performance, none of the states provided extensive budget information to the public in 2022. Only Kogi State can be said to be significantly transparent and provide adequate amount of budget information to the public, as they score more than 60 per cent."

Tijani explained that the reports were collated across the six states of the North Central zone between 2021 and 2022. He added that the states were judged based on parameters such as public participation, availability of budget, oversight functions of the state legislators and level of transparency of the procurement process.

He noted, "The survey was set up as a model to improve budget transparency amongst North Central states towards a better fiscal outcome."

"As in previous surveys, the SNBTS 2022 survey report employed a questionnaire approach like the International Budget Partnership, and Open Budget Survey questionnaires,



**Bello**

By **PETER TITLE**

**P**LATEAU State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Honourable Ephraim Usman has said for any meaningful development to take place, the government must know its population for it to adequately plan for its citizens.

According to him, the state government would partner with the National Population Commission (NPC), to achieve its desired goal in the forthcoming exercise.

Hon.Usman made this known when the state commissioner of the Commission, Mrs Cecilia Dapoet paid him a visit in his office recently. The visit was aimed to also brief him on the level of preparedness of the commission for the forthcoming head count in the state.

According to the commissioner, the NPC should ensure they move to the rural areas for adequate sensitization and training so that when the exercise commences, it would be a success in all ramifications because he said the bulk of the people reside in the rural areas.

He described the Ministry for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs as a grassroot based Ministry, as he assured them of support as well

## 'Population census is necessary for meaningful development'



**Usman**

as extending their request to the Governor of Plateau State for the exercise to be hitch-free.

He further added that the

state government, Yahaya Bello, placed on providing good governance.

Asiru said, "The success of the state in the areas of fiscal transparency and accountability can be linked to self-discipline, as well as the institution of a transparent and accountable governance system by Governor Yahaya Bello from the inception of his administration.

"Kogi State is blessed with a Governor who provides leadership from all fronts, a professional to the core that has surrounded himself only with persons that have the capacity to deliver.

"The governor believes that governance is about the people and whatever you do must be open and transparent to the people.

"The philosophy of the Governor of the state is making every single kobo available work for the entity of the state, hence he has instituted self-discipline, as well as a transparent and accountable governance system from day one.

## PSC gets briefing on assessment of public servants

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

**T**HE Police Service Commission has received a team from the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation and the World Bank for extended briefing and evaluation of the government's new policy on assessment of public servants.

This was contained in a statement issued by Ikechukwu Ani, Head, Press and Public Relations recently.

The new assessment policy named the Performance Management

System has received the approval of the Federal Government to replace the former assessment technique called APER.

The Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Commission, Dr. Ifeoma Adaora Anyanwutaku who welcomed the team to the Commission, assured them that the Commission will be ready for the implementation of the new policy.

Dr. Anyanwutaku said the commission would key into the new system and use it effectively to drive the commission's workforce.

state government was focused and E- governance would help accelerate development. The Commissioner explained that they have keyed into effective governance for the benefit of all.

Hon. Ephraim Usman thanked them for the visit, describing it as enlightening and wished them success assuring them of support at every time.

The State Commissioner of NPC, Mrs Cecilia Dapoet, who was represented by Felicia James Mwolpun posited that they were in his office to brief him the next census preparedness which she added was postponed earlier.

According to her, they had gone far with the level of preparedness which include adequate demographic conduct, electronic device test and train the trainers done to achieve the desired results. She added that with the earlier postponement, it afforded them the opportunity to plan more for the exercise.

She said, she Commission has constituted committees and sub-committees for the forthcoming exercise and gladly informed Hon.Usman that he was one amongst them.

In a vote of thanks, the permanent secretary in the ministry, Mr Sunday Davou, commended them for the visit. He informed them that what they never knew was brought to bear and wished them success in

NEWS

# UNICEF to remodel Plateau Central Medical Store



BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

**P**lateau State Central Medical Store is set to receive a total facelift among the selected twenty-two (22) State Warehouses in Nigeria from UNICEF ongoing modern upgrade of facilities across the country for the storage of health commodities towards a better health service delivery.

The UNICEF Aid Officer, Nigeria, Bauchi Field Office, Oluseyi Olasode, disclosed this when the Plateau State Government handed over the facility to them for onward delivery to the contractor to immediately carry out remodeling exercise of this facility within four (4) months.

Speaking to journalists shortly after handing over the facility to the contractor, the Aid Officer, UNICEF Nigeria, said, "Plateau State is one of the five (5) states under Bauchi Field Office, UNICEF Nigeria.

UNICEF in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Health with Financial support from Global Funds, is upgrading twenty-two (22) warehouses across the country.

"Out of these states, one is Plateau State and this is why we are here today. We have had the design for the place and have engaged the contractor to upgrade this property to a modern warehouse. We are going to have Code Room, adequate facility that befits a modern warehouse for storage of health commodities.

"Health Commodity is the major when it comes to service delivery and that is why we are here today working with Plateau State Government to make sure that there is adequate health commodities across the country.

"For our Bauchi Field Office, we have done three; Plateau, Adamawa and Gombe States and this is the third one we are doing", he highlighted.

Olasode, however, disclosed that there were Supervisory Films that would

ensure that materials used would be of standard and in compliance to project design and the work was expected to be completed within four (4) months and be delivered where the Executive Governor of Plateau State would commission the project.

On his part, Representative of the Contracting Film, Beacon Creative Ideas Limited, Dubem Okereke, said, "we will deliver before the end of January 2024 and by that period, the facility should be in full operation. For quality, we went through the eye of a needle before we came out successfully for this project. So, the issue of quality is not a problem, but timing".

Meanwhile, the Plateau State Commissioner of Health, Dr. Cletus Bako Shurkuk, represented by the Director of Pharmaceutical Services, Pharm. Haruna

Yaret, thanked God for this great privilege and it was a dream come true.

"So, we are grateful to UNICEF for finding Plateau State worthy among the 22 states to benefit from this exercise. It may interest you to know that this place was built in 1976 and ever since, it has not received any facelift. I want to appeal to the contractor to work according to the timeline and handover by December 2023", he appealed.

However, the Executive Secretary, Plateau State Drugs & Medical Commodities Management Agency, Pharm. Fabian Agoh, assured of a secured space at the JIB to keep or house the commodities they were transferring to enable the contractor to carry out his job within the timeframe to ensure the integrity of the commodities.

# CAS promises to live up to expectations

By DORCAS PANKYES

**T**he Chief of Air Staff (CAS), Air Marshal Hasan Abubakar has stated that his command philosophy which is, "To transform the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) into an agile and resilient force that effectively meets the airpower demands of national security in all operational environments" is critical towards building the capabilities of the NAF for future air warfare.

The Chief of Air Staff made this known in a statement issued to newsmen in Abuja by The Nigerian Air Force Director of Public Relations and Information, Air Commodore Edward Gabkwet.

He also noted that any armed forces that fails to prepare for the probable future will always be reactive rather than proactive in its approach to national security issues.

The CAS made these statements recently, during his paper presentation as a

guest lecturer at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College, Jaji, Kaduna State.

Speaking on the topic, "The Future of Air Warfare in the Nigerian Air Force – My Command Philosophy," Air Marshal Abubakar went on to note that the nature of future air warfare would be determined by a number of factors, including internal and external threats to national security, the national economic fortune, and the air power capabilities of the service.

The CAS reeled out the key enablers of his philosophy and how they would impact on the service. In his first key enabler which focuses on "Optimizing force structure and establishment for enhanced operational effectiveness," Air Marshal Abubakar stated that the NAF under his administration is acquiring more platforms including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles for real time Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance and

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

# Experts extol Dangote Cement

**T**he Dangote Cement Plc has been commended for its sponsorship of the 5th Kogi Built Environment and Building Materials Exhibition (BEBME).

The exhibition, with the theme: Advantages of Made in Nigeria Housing Development Option and Materials, held between September 19 and 21, 2023.

Speaking at the Dangote Special Day, the Chief Convener of the Exhibition, Hon. Oladipo Makakese Bayode commended the Dangote Cement Plc for the sponsorship, adding that the company is strategically placed to support the government in its drive to provide shelter for Nigerians.

While bemoaning the high cost of production, which negatively impacts on profitability, he said there was the need for a collaboration between the government and the organized private sector, as the cost of importation of cement additives and equipment replacement are very high given the exchange rate.

In his remark, the chairman, Block Moulders Association of Kogi State, Mr. Kunle Raiyemo, extolled the company for producing quality cement.

According to him, the Dangote Cement has provided Nigerians with opportunities to provide shelter for its people, adding that his association has been partnering with the company to ensure that block makers keep to standard in the application of the product.

In his remarks, General Manager Social Performance/Special Duties, Mr. Ademola Adeyemi, who represented the Director, Dangote Cement Obajana, Plant, Mr. JV Gungune, said the

company has been partnering with BEBME and other stakeholders to support the development of Kogi State.

Mr. Gungune, who was earlier bestowed with the "Shelter Development Icon of the Decade" award by BEBME, urged participants to leverage on the ideas that will be generated from the exhibition in moving the state and the country forward.

The Plant Director said the company has also contributed massively to the areas of corporate philanthropy in the state, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) around its catchment areas.

In his remark, Deputy Regional Director, Dangote

Cement Plc, Mr. Dayo Laniyan, said Kogi State is central to Dangote Cement operation in Nigeria, even as he commended the organizers for supporting the company in its enlightenment drive.

Speaking, Regional Trade and Marketing Manager, Ahmed Tijani, told the audience that Dangote Cement confers three advantages on its users, which are: Extra Yield, Rapid Setting, and Extra Strength.

He also urged participants and block molders to maximize on the advantages from the ongoing Dangote Cement's Next Level Retailers Offer to win consolation prizes.



Bello

precision strikes, as well replacing its medium and heavy airlift capabilities for more effective and rapid mobility. Additionally, he continued, efforts were in the final stages to conduct the first-ever capabilities-based assessment of the NAF, which would enhance the operational effectiveness of the Service in current and future air warfare.

In analyzing the significance of the second key enabler which is on "Deliberate training and mission-oriented force development", the CAS stated that human capacity development in the NAF under his watch, is consciously tailored towards achieving assigned tasks and bridging current and future gaps in NAF capabilities.

He also noted that in order to address NAF's present and future air combat needs, about 1,476 personnel are currently enrolled in several training programmes, both domestically and internationally. He was also emphatic when he noted that, "All selections for the courses will be merit-based to ensure that only the most qualified are selected to give the NAF value for money."

While discussing the relevance of the third key enabler on, "Proactive logistics support and strong maintenance culture", the CAS stated that the NAF is implementing a holistic aircraft maintenance planning system which entails that all the spares and consumables requirements for future aircraft inspections for the next 4 quarters are compiled in advance and processed with immediate effect. This, according to him, would invariably ensure that aircraft were available for quick combat against enemies in order to meet national security objectives.

Speaking on the fourth key enabler which focuses on "prioritizing research and development, leveraging cutting-edge

technology, strategic partnerships and lessons learnt," the CAS stated that the NAF was making significant gains toward domestic manufacturing of required capabilities through research and development activities in addition to utilizing cutting-edge technologies.

According to him, "The NAF has been manufacturing various military equipment to support counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations through the Air Force Research and Development Center."

Regarding the last key enabler that entails "Maintaining a highly motivated Force by enhancing welfare and infrastructural renewal," the CAS maintained that to ensure that NAF personnel accomplish personal and organizational goals, the Service, he said, has a role to play in providing the enabling environment.

This thinking, according to him, led to his decision to

## NEWS

## PLASU VC assures Visitation Panel of maximum cooperation

BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA

**T**HE Vice Chancellor, Plateau State University Boko, Professor Matur Malau Bernard, has assured the 7-Man Visitation Panel constituted by Governor Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, of the University's commitment to give them maximum cooperation to enable them to accomplish their assignment.

This came in a press statement signed by the university's Public Relations Officer (PRO), John K. Agam, and made available to THE NIGERIA STANDARD in Jos, the State capital recently, shortly after the Panel visit's to the institution.

Professor Matur promised to accord them the necessary support needed for a successful fact finding mission to the university and hoped that this would help in shaping and upgrading the educational standard of the state.

Earlier, the Chairperson of the Visitation Panel, Professor Mrs. Angela Miri, who is the former Vice Chancellor of Federal University Lokoja, expressed satisfaction with the maturity exhibited by the Vice Chancellor in managing an intended crisis which was aimed at truncating the resumption of students of the university.

She said, "Such managerial skills of the Vice Chancellor deserves commendation and applause. I would like to assure the university that



**Bernard**

our mission is not in any way intended to witch hunt, molest or target individuals, but it is geared towards repositioning Plateau State University, Boko in attaining its required greatness".

She, however, outlined their terms of reference to include: Examination of the law establishing the Plateau State University, Boko and its execution; management of resources that accrue to the institution and the relationship between staff, students and the host community.

Prof. Miri also added that the mission of the Visitation Panel included interaction with staff, students and the host community towards creating better understanding as well as a tour of the university's infrastructure and facilities.

However, the team solicited for the following; certified documents from the university management, history of PLASU among others. They also suggested the review of the law which states the renaming of the university which was once remodeled as "Solomon Lar University, Boko" in remembrance of the legacies of the first civilian Governor of Plateau State, Chief Solomon D. Lar.

The panel sought for collaboration from the university community towards a successful mission.

It would be recalled that the Plateau State Governor, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, Monday, inaugurated Visitation Panels to under- study the state of affairs of all tertiary institutions in the state within a duration of four weeks to complete their assignment.

From AMEDU JOSEPH,  
Lokoja

**T**HE Nigeria Labour Congress, (NLC) in Kogi State has called on civil societies to collaborate with the union to put an end to bad policies of the government against workers in the country.

The Kogi State NLC Chairman, Comrade Gabriel Amari made the call recently at a one day retreat on "Building foundation for strong and vibrant labour movement in the state" organized by the union in collaboration with Rajans Global Ventures limited.

While describing workers as the engine room of Nigeria economy, Amari noted that Kogi State Government is being faced with challenges of getting its policies right for economic activities and social development that will address the needs and aspirations of the people.

He opined that the absence of enabling policies that will lead to the growth and development of Kogi State has put pressure on NLC to come up with this retreat for engagement with government with the aim of making recommendations and input for formulations of policies by the government.

"Given the increase in policy failure as a result of economic competition in a global environment, hundreds of thousands of jobs have been lost, thus worsening the condition of the working class.

"The NLC Kogi State Council has seen the need

## Kogi NLC seeks synergy with CSOs



**Amari**

to defend civil rights, job and living conditions of the people, hence, the reason for NLC to form a coalition with Civil Society Organizations in order to come up with a formidable team that will be action packed", the NLC leader pointed.

Speaking on issues currently affecting workers in the country, the Kogi NLC Chairman called on the government to urgently look at measures aside from providing palliatives to cushion the effect of fuel subsidy removal.

While commending workers for participating in the two days warning strike, the labour leader

Lamented that some workers in Kogi State deliberately sabotaged the efforts of the union by going to work which was against the directive of the labour leaders.

This, he said, is totally uncalled for and does not speak well for workers who are seeking better welfare from the government to earn a living.

"How do you want the government to know we are suffering when you are doing something contrary to labour directive? Is it not through collective efforts that we achieve our goals? But when we are divided, we won't achieve any result", he said.

He, however, lamented that the government recently came out with deceit and are not willing to look at the five point demands of Nigeria's workers across the federation.

Amari also identified failures from union leaders as some of the reasons

why the plight of workers had failed to materialize, just as he admonished them to rise up and defend themselves against perpetual slavery.

Continuing, Amari said, "The 'renewed hope' they promised us is dashed. From a reliable source, there is no work going on in the refinery. We must stand up, work together to achieve our dream in Nigeria. This can only be achieved through synergy".

Amari told the gathering that workers have lost confidence in political office holders, adding that they should come out plain and tell workers their plans if they are elected to serve in Kogi State.

"It is high time we put aside sentiments. Let those vying for political office swear with Amadioha, Shango or any other traditional means. If they can do this, when they fail to meet the promise they made to the electorate, thunder will strike them immediately. But when we continue with this old system of oath taking, they always believe that even though they fail us, nothing will happen to them".

In his paper presentation on "Labour movement and the political system of society, imperative for building synergies between the trade unions and Civil Society in Nigeria," the CEO of Rajans Global Ventures limited, Comrade Rajan Suleiman said CSOs have through their advocacy engaged the state by articulating the interest of members, molding public opinions and holding state or those in power to account.

## NHS moves to reposition hydrography profession

By DORCAS PANKYES

**T**HE President of the Nigerian Hydrographic Society (NHS) and Hydrographer of the Navy, Rear Admiral Ayò Olugbode has conferred with members of the society in a seminal gathering aimed at advancing the hydrography profession in the country recently at Apapa Boat Club, Lagos.

In a statement issued by Commodore AO AYO-VAUGHAN, Director of Information, he stated that part of the interactions were centered on ways and means to deepen multidimensional collaboration within hydrography professional clusters and cohorts towards enabling the full optimization of the blue

economy potentials of the country.

The gathering provided a platform to rekindle the commitment and enthusiasm of NHS members and concerned stakeholders in the development of the functional and operational knowledge of hydrography in the country. This is pertinently so due to the enabling role hydrographers must play in enhancing Nigeria's maritime aspirations, particularly with the recent establishment of the Federal Ministry of Marine Resources and Blue Economy.

According to the statement, the key issues at the event revolved around the need to restructure and rebrand NHS for enhanced

hydrographic service delivery in Nigeria. It was also agreed that there's the need to improve NHS' visibility on social media platforms with a view for NHS to become more proactive in hydrographic advocacy in Nigeria and within the wider Gulf of Guinea sub-Region.

The statement further said, proposals were made for NHS' 2024 fiscal year, making it imperative for members to resolve all outstanding issues before the end of December 2023. In view of this, plans were also concluded on the need to hold an NHS Annual General Meeting sometime in 2024.

Different responsibilities were given to members towards building collective approaches on how to move the society forward,

with clearly defined expected timelines and deliverables.

On his part, the President and Hydrographer of the Navy assured members of his unwavering dedication to move NHS to greater heights and affirmed the unflinching support of the Chief of the Naval Staff towards improving Nigeria's hydrographic capacity for improved maritime safety and security towards enhancing Nigeria's national economic growth and prosperity.

The meeting ended with participants agreeing that the event would become a significant turning point for NHS, as robust plans had been articulated to usher in a new era of dedication and commitment to quality hydrographic service delivery in Nigeria to forge a resilient, progressive.

## SUNDAY MAGAZINE



## Nigeria: Shutting education doors through fees hike

**Now that most institutions of learning have resumed for the new academic year, there are concerns in some quarters that a good number of new and returning students are not sure of completing the session for reasons mostly connected to the economic realities occasioned, partly by the higher cost of living, and, in some instances, hikes in educational fees. FWENJI GOAR writes.**

**Continued from page 10**

education more accessible and affordable for all.

At the inception of the Tinubu administration, and precisely on the day of his inauguration, Nigerians got the wind that tougher times are ahead, consequent upon the fact that fuel subsidy was removed, and other economic hard-knocks were thrown at populace. For sure, we knew from day 1 that we had to brace up for whatever was to come. And in this case, it was not at all expected to be easy, or to be a light burden for the masses.

On the flip side of the coin, there is this assertion that the government is not helping matters at all by the evident neglect of our tertiary education sector. The strikes by ASUU and other unions to press for improved conditions of service, facility upgrades, and the like have in a way exposed the governments' seeming lack of interest, or backup action in meeting some of those basic requirements for the growth of education. These are some of the reasons that we are where we are today.

The funding requirements of education in our tertiary institutions is humongous, and revenue sources are not in abundance. We cannot deny that education is capital intensive. Many of our institutions are underfunded. This is to say the glory days of education in the country are, sadly, over.

There are insinuations in some quarters that there's an unwritten plan to "kill" education in Nigeria by neglecting government owned tertiary institutions, and by starving them of funds so that they are forced to increase fees and the like in order to stay afloat.

This scenario, if left unchecked would mean those who can't afford to go to private institutions would have no option but to drop out of school.

The increasing expenses of living and activities are restricting admittance to training and past the span of many guardians. While many are now considering the choice of selecting their wards in state funded schools, others will add to the out-of-school bunch. There are fears that numerous students may not return to schools in the foreseeable future.

As of now, a few parents/guardians are thinking about the choice they may be forced to make if they eventually are not able to meet up with the increase in tuition fees and the like. Parents choice of selecting state funded schools since they are not charging such extravagant expenses, is raising worries of all kinds as people have other living costs to grapple with.

A huge expansion in educational cost, taking care of transportation and other costs, coupled with different charges have been reported by school leaderships. The declaration somewhere in the range of 200 and 300 percent increment, while others are wanting to do as such is not unconnected with the impacts of the new petroleum pump price.

Impacted generally are schools running a boarding framework with the difficulties of significant expense of food, transportation and different utilities that have eaten profoundly into the increases they made at first.

There are guardians who say the increment was with the assent of partners who likewise recognised the predominant financial circumstance occasioned by rising inflation and breaking down worth

of the Naira.

However most tuition based schools, especially the high flying ones, are yet to make an authority declaration of the increment. Such increments, they say, are unavoidable. School charges for the 2023/2024 school year have increased in some cases, and it is claimed that expense of things and current financial circumstance are reasons for this.

These are for sure exceptionally testing times, however we stay confidently that there will be reason to have some hope. Sadly, because of the ongoing financial circumstance in the country, we are compelled to reluctantly accept an increase in school charges for this school year.

The higher institutions cannot say the tensions that the overarching real factors have placed on families and as of now and have arrived at this choice with an intense feeling of obligation and an outlook for supporting their wards in their studies would not exempt them from looking out for the rest of their families as well.

Many of the school authorities have assured that there will not be any compromise in the quality of education. This is a pact that has to be kept in order for us to witness any development, and scholastic greatness.

Parents and guardians in Nigeria are very concerned about the high cost of education in the country. This concern, as already discussed, is driven by various factors, including tuition fees, the cost of textbooks and educational materials, transportation, and the general cost of living.

So, what is it that parents and guardians really want the government to do about the high

cost of education in Nigeria?

Most of us would agree that subsidising education will be a welcome idea. We want government to provide subsidies or grants to reduce the cost of tuition fees at all levels of education, from primary to tertiary. This would make education more affordable for families and enable more children to access quality education.

Parents and guardians are already frustrated with the state of public education in Nigeria. They believe government should invest more in public schools, including infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development, to ensure that quality education is available to all, regardless of socioeconomic status. By doing this, public education will surely improve.

Another thing is for us to see a reduction in the cost of educational materials. Textbooks and educational materials can be quite expensive. That is why parents and guardians desire to see more in terms of government's intervention by way of subsidising the cost of textbooks or providing them for free in public schools.

An increase in the amount of scholarships and grants is prayer begging for answers. The government should be seen to doing more in terms of supporting many more students through scholarships and grants to help cover tuition and other educational expenses. Parents and guardians believe that more scholarship opportunities should be made available to reduce the financial burden on families.

High inflation rates in Nigeria contribute to rising living costs, which indirectly affect the cost of education. Parents and guardians are desirous that government takes more people-friendly measures to stabilise the economy and reduce inflation to make education more

affordable, and life in general more meaningful. Government has to address inflation.

One other far-reaching alternate solution to this is by diversifying educational options through the provision of alternative pathways for students who cannot afford, or do not want to pursue traditional academic degrees. There is need to promote vocational and technical education.

Corruption in the educational system has seriously contributed to higher costs and lower quality. Parents and guardians want the government to take strong measures to root out corruption, especially in educational institutions and ensure that resources are used efficiently.

Increase Investment in Higher Education: The cost of tertiary education in Nigeria is particularly high. Parents and guardians want the government to increase funding for universities and other higher education institutions to reduce tuition fees and improve the quality of education. For us to make headway, there has to be a crackdown on corruption in Nigeria.

As for whether there is hope for addressing the high cost of education in Nigeria, it is no doubt a complex issue. While there have been efforts by the Nigerian government to address some of these concerns, progress has been slow, and challenges persist. The hope lies in continued advocacy by parents, civil society organisations, and the international community to push for reforms in the education sector. Additionally, economic stability and effective governance are critical factors in addressing the high cost of education. It will require a concerted effort from multiple stakeholders to make education more affordable and accessible to all Nigerians.

## METRO-FOCUS

## Is summer school necessary?

By HOSEA NYAMLONG and LONGDIEM CALLISTA

**E** DUCATION plays a pivotal role in all of our lives and paves the way for all of us to reach our highest potential. It is extremely important to understand what education is. Education is an essential process in human development. It is different from schooling. Schooling is just one aspect of education or how education is provided. On the other hand, education deals with the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted.

According to Late Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

In the Nigeria system of government today, education is overseen by the Federal Ministry of Education. The local authorities take responsibility for implementing state-controlled policies regarding public education. And the state schools education system is divided into Kindergarten, Primary education, Secondary education, and Tertiary education.

Until recently, summer schools in the past were meant to prepare exit pupils in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. However, this has helped students to cover many topics that were not covered during school sessions.

Again, there are many reasons why primary and secondary schools have made summer school more important to parents or guidance by offering free or cheap extra lessons fees, in order to attract more students or pupils in the new academic session, calling for more patronage.

However, some schools have projected it to be a preparatory class for the next class. Yet, to some people, it serves as an additional income to the school and teachers that participate during the summer school lesson.

METRO FOCUS in their usual way, went round the city centre to sample the opinions of parents and guidance to the effect that, "is summer school necessary?"

Mrs. Kangmut Stephen, a mother of three said that "Summer School is generally good in my own opinion. I see it as one of the best ways for a child to develop quickly in academics, because it reduces unnecessary activities for the children. For instance, watching cartoons, playing games and always using other gadgets. At least, if children would spend an hour or more in summer school, it would reduce plenty of time spent idly".

She added that being a mother and with her experience with her children, it has helped their grades a lot. Because whenever they return from school, she checks their grades and the subjects to know where they have challenges. "When it is a long vacation, I enroll them in summer school and specifically on the subjects they have challenges with."

In this mother's submission, summer school is important for the children. If you can afford to pay, it is very good.

Mrs. Stephen believes some parents have reservations about summer school because it is an avenue for the children to meet friends from the opposite sex and nothing else. "I believe that some parents are against it because they feel it is just a waste of resources. Sometimes at the end of the summer school, some children may not even pick up to remedy his or her deficiency in certain areas of studies.

Stephen said a worst case scenario is



the case of children who are enrolled in summer school but never attend. They would use the time to visit their friends. In that case, it behooves parents to be alert and check the activities of their wards.

A secondary school teacher and a parent, Mrs. Philomina Christopher said that in her own opinion as a teacher and a parent, summer lesson is very helpful. "Because if a child is having challenges concerning his/her academics, I think summer lessons are the best way to help that child. They help the students or pupils to build a solid academic foundation, develop new skills for their future and keep their minds sharp, alert."

Mrs. Christopher said the benefits are numerous. They also include boosting their confidence and preparing them for the next class.

One of the reasons parents find summer school attractive, Mrs. Christopher added, is that they keep children busy and away from trouble during the holiday. For example, they keep them away from bad friends and bad company as they engage in summer lessons and that will improve them greatly in their academics. I think as a parent and as a teacher, summer schools or lessons are necessary", she concluded.

A parent who didn't want his name to be in print suggested that Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) and all other regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Education should step in. Parents need to be educated. Parenting is a responsibility for the parent, not the school. It is one of the reasons some

parents never ever get to truly know and understand their kids. A child who did not play while growing up would miss childhood because energy is channeled towards academics only. Some parents don't ever allow their children to play. They forget that all work and no play, makes Jack a dull boy.

"Adults need to play sometimes, much less children. My dear parent, please let that kid just enjoy the holiday playing and maybe learning a few things by the side. A holiday should be a holiday!"

Engr. Dan Finbong, a parent said "summer school is not a bad idea for one to enroll their child. But a disadvantage to summer school is when you have your children overstressed by engaging them in all those kinds of activities, they might

not have the kind of parental guides that they need at home. So, when they are on holiday, I believe they need all the parental guides that will guide them through their own upbringing.

He added that he would prefer to have his children/ward at home with him during the holiday for him to be able to put them through other activities like providing them with other skills that they might not really get in school.

He maintained that enrolling your children in summer school is not a bad idea, but depending on the situation, they can utilize that time to gain more knowledge in other skills like baking of bread, fashion design, carpentry work, leather work etc. Children can combine both during the holidays, but parents should ensure that they choose the best skills or the summer school for their children.

Some parents enroll their children in summer schools because of their busy schedule at their work place. So for such parents, summer school is the best for them.

METRO FOCUS gathered that some parents suggested that a child that grows with skills would be in a better position to add value to themselves and the society. And if the child knows how well to use his or her skills in sports, it would be a great advantage along with education.

In today's world, there are many opportunities before our Children. We only need to guide children into their future. It is not just about buying them the best of toys, clothes and pizza. It is also about helping to bring them to the point where they see the possibilities that are there for those who have the necessary skills to become self-reliant and possibly, job and wealth creators too.



# SUNDAY PEOPLE

## NUJ CHAIR RECEIVES NIGERIA GIRLS GUIDES

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) Plateau State Council, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo recently received on a courtesy call at the NUJ Press Centre, Jos the Coordinator, Trepoil Guild Zone C Plateau State, Mrs. Grace Ojobo



NUJ State Chairman, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo (left) responding. Right is the Coordinator, Mrs. Grace Ojobo



From left are, NUJ Chief Scribe, Mary Replong Domtur, Timothy Sunday Tyem, Assistant Secretary and Lyop Pam, Treasurer



Plateau State Commissioner, Nigeria Girl Guides, Mrs. Judith Tsernel Fidelis (left) with other members applauding the NUJ Chairman



From left are, Namu Sanusi, PPC Chapel, Anna Paul Gindiri, PRTV Chapel and Grace Akwe Gotip, NTA Chapel

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

## PLSG SIGNS MOU WITH UNICEF

The Plateau State Government recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNICEF Bauchi Field Office at the State Central Medical Store, Murtala Mohammed Way, Jos



Commissioner, Health, Dr. Cletus Shurkuk (right) signing the MoU while UNICEF Bauchi Field Health Officer, Oluseyi Olusunde, Beacon Creative Ideas Ltd., Dubem Okereke and other state government officials watches on



Dr. Cletus Shurkuk, Commissioner of Health (right) presenting the signed MoU to the UNICEF Bauchi Field Office, Health Officer, Oluseyi Olosunde and Beacon Creative Ideas Ltd. and others



From left are, Perm-Sec Ministry of Health, Mr. Kenneth Homong, Commissioner of Health, Dr. Cletus Shurkuk, and Mr. Lenka Nenman Musa, DPRS, DMCA, Jos



Commissioner of Health, Plateau State, UNICEF Bauchi Field Officer, Health Officer, Contractor, Beacon Creative Ideas Ltd in a group photograph with Ministry of Health, Plateau State

PHOTOS: JOHN LAR



**QUA'AN PAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL  
PLATEAU STATE**

**INVITATION TO TENDER BID**

We hereby invite any reputable and competent contractor to submit bid for the under listed projects in Qua'an Pan Local Government Council.

1. Installation of solar panels in the Local Government Guest House Local Government Old Secretariat and chairman's Official Residence
2. Construction of 13km Namu Shindai Road
3. Construction of Shindai Bridge
4. Repairs of Culvert along Local Government Secretariat Ba'ap
5. Construction of 2 culvert along Namu Shindai Road
6. Construction 3 cells Box Culvert along Turniang Kwande Road
7. Renovation/Extension of PHC Pandam
8. Construction of PHC Kwa-Ga'ar in Kwang
9. Construction of PHC Monday in Bwall
10. Rehabilitation of water project in Doemak
11. Renovation/Fencing and Furnishing of Kwalla District Head Office
12. Renovation of Local Government Guest House in Ba'ap
13. Furnishing of Local Government Guest House in Ba'ap
14. Furnishing of Local government Old Secretariat Complex
15. 15Construction of PHC Namu

**Note:**  
Details of all construction works can be obtain in the works department of the council.

**REQUIREMENT**  
**Any contractor willing to bid for the above projects must:**

1. Evidence of Registration with corporate Affairs Commission
2. A Registered contractor with Qua'an Pan Local Government Council
3. Must have the last 3 years company tax clearance certificate
4. Must pay a non-refundable and registration fee of N30,000
5. Must pay non-refundable tender fee as follows:

1. CATEGORY a: From N501,000 - N30,000,000 @ N35,000
2. CATEGORY b: From N31,000,000 - N50,000,000 @ N50,000
3. CATEGORY c: From N51,000,000 - N100,000,000 @ N100,000
4. CATEGORY d: From N101,000,000 and above @ N150,000

**Upon payment of the above is a non-refundable fee, into this account**

- **2010651331**
- **First Bank**
- **QUA'AN PAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL**

**SUBMISSION OF TENDER BID**

Fully completed tender bid document financial/technical duplicate copies with complete profile to the secretary of **QUA'AN PAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT** Tender Board, drop in the Chairman's office within One week of this advertisement.

**NB:**  
QUA'AN PAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL is neither committed nor obliged to reply company or person non-refundable fee unsuitable.

**VINCENT PAM NYAM**  
*Secretary*  
**Qua'an Pan Local Government Tender Board**  
**For Transition Committee Chairman**

**NEWS**

**Don suggests engagement of experts to revamp economy**

From **AMEDU JOSEPH,**  
Lokoja

**P**ROFESSOR Benjamin Dauda

Worried over the dwindling economy in Nigeria, a Professor of Industrial Chemistry at the Federal University, Lokoja in Kogi State, Professor Benjamin Dauda has stressed the need for engagement of professors and economic experts to revamp the tren

Professor Dauda made the call while delivering his Inaugural Lecture titled, **Polymer: Material Driving Technological Advancement** held at the University's Auditorium in Lokoja recently.

The Chief Lecturer said that Professors and economic experts have the potential to contribute immensely towards effective industrialization of any given nation.

He expressed concern over under utilisation of professors in making their Impacts towards nation building, advocating that they must be seriously engaged in uplifting Nigeria's economy and development in other sectors of human endeavours.

He called on captains of industry in Nigeria to synergize with the academics and establish a thriving research and development unit that



**Prof. Dauda**

would engage researchers in solving Nigeria's socio economic woes.

Professor Daudu also called on industrialists such as Dangote Group of Company and others to engage as many professors as possible who could help in proffering solutions to the nation's economic predicament.

Professor Daudu who specialised in Polymer, noted that research has shown that Polymer is of great asset and value in propelling the growth of the industrial sector.

According to him, "Polymer is of great value in production of plastics, rubbers and rubber bags

etc. It has also aided material driving technological advancement of nations across the globe"

The Vice Chancellor of the university, Professor Olayemi Akinwumi while declaring the ceremony open, commended the outstanding achievements of Professor Benjamin Dauda in his academic discipline which he rated as worthy of emulation.

Akinwumi gave an assurance that the management of the university would sustain the enabling conditions that necessitated sound academics and learning in

**NAF strikes terrorist gun truck, kills 8**

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

**T**HE Nigerian Air Force (NAF), as part of its ongoing operations against terrorists in the Northeast, conducted a successful air strike on a gun truck carrying approximately 8 terrorists in Baranga Village, Marte Local Government Area of Borno State.

The operation took place earlier in the week under Operation Hakin Kai.

During an armed reconnaissance mission, NAF aircraft spotted 2 armed terrorists on a motorcycle along an active track. Tracking them, the aircraft discovered the terrorists taking cover under dense vegetation. As the aircraft engaged the vegetation, a gun truck carrying 8 terrorists suddenly emerged and attempted to escape the attack.

However, the NAF engaged and destroyed the

gun truck, effectively eliminating the terrorists.

The remnants of terrorists in the Northeast continue to utilize thick forests and vegetation to avoid detection by the Armed Forces of Nigeria

and other security agencies. This successful strike reaffirms the commitment of the AFN in preventing terrorists from freely attacking law-abiding Nigerians.



**Abubakar**

## SUNDAY FEATURE

## Addressing medicines over use in Nigeria

**Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) continues to be a pressing global health concern, with the misuse and overuse of antimicrobial agents playing a significant role in fuelling this growing crisis. The phenomenon of AMR, where bacteria and other microbes become resistant to the drugs designed to kill them, poses a grave threat to human health, rendering once-treatable infections potentially deadly. This resistance emerges due to selective pressure caused by the inappropriate use of antimicrobials, including irrational prescribing and dispensing practices. [Victor Okeke](#) writes.**



**N**IGERIA stands at a crossroads, facing the critical challenge of irrational prescribing and dispensing practices that fuel the growth of drug-resistant pathogens. The indiscriminate use of antimicrobials, driven by a variety of factors, poses a significant threat to public health and the effectiveness of medical treatments. The nation must confront this issue head-on to safeguard its citizens' health and secure a future where antibiotics remain effective.

Antimicrobial resistance is not a new phenomenon, but the scale of its consequences has reached alarming heights. The root cause lies in selective pressure – the phenomenon where microbes evolve to survive the onslaught of antimicrobial agents, rendering these drugs increasingly ineffective over time. Two major contributors to selective pressure are irrational prescribing and dispensing of antimicrobials. Nigeria, like many other countries, grapples with these challenges, which intensify the global threat of AMR.

The misuse and overuse of antimicrobials arise from a multitude of sources. Examples of irrational prescribing include administering antimicrobials when they are unnecessary, using incorrect drugs or doses, or employing broad-spectrum medications when more targeted

options are available. On the dispensing end, giving incomplete courses of medication, inadequate patient counselling, and selling antimicrobials without prescriptions for personal gains further exacerbate the problem.

These practices are distressingly common, with estimates suggesting that over half of all medicines worldwide are prescribed, dispensed, or sold inappropriately. In the case of antibiotics, up to 50% of prescriptions are unnecessary or not optimally effective, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

A significant challenge in curbing irrational antimicrobial use in Nigeria is the pervasive influence of informal medicine providers. In low- and middle-income countries, many people rely on street vendors and unregulated drug shops for their medical needs. This uncontrolled environment is a breeding ground for misuse and poor quality control, with antibiotics often sold without prescriptions, and doses tailored to customer demand rather than medical necessity.

The link between knowledge and practice is a pivotal one. While inadequate training, limited access to information, and a lack of standard guidelines contribute to improper prescribing and dispensing,

other factors transcend mere knowledge.

Healthcare providers may possess the correct information but not necessarily translate that into proper practice. Fears of clinical outcomes, litigation, and patient dissatisfaction, as well as peer pressure, economic incentives, and patient demands, play a substantial role in shaping their decisions. Profit-driven motives sometimes overshadow optimal medical judgment, leading to overprescribing and dispensing of antimicrobials.

Education emerges as a powerful tool in battling AMR. Educational interventions, particularly when introduced early in a provider's career, are crucial for shaping behaviour. Integrating rational medicine use and AMR topics into both

pre-service and in-service training programs can drive lasting change. These efforts should encompass a range of strategies, from behaviour change communication to regulatory enforcement, peer interactions, outreach, and incentives.

Managerial interventions also hold potential. Implementing standardized treatment guidelines, supervising clinical practices, and conducting medicine use evaluations can help guide appropriate prescribing and dispensing decisions.

A robust regulatory framework is vital to achieving rational prescribing and dispensing practices. Regulations must limit over-the-counter availability of antimicrobials, control drug seller practices,

and eradicate unhealthy financial incentives for prescribers and dispensers. Effective enforcement is essential to ensure compliance with these regulations and thus drive positive change.

As Nigeria grapples with its own unique challenges in the battle against AMR, a multifaceted approach is essential. Improved education, robust regulation, and strategic managerial interventions are critical to breaking the cycle of irrational prescribing and dispensing. Only by addressing these underlying issues can Nigeria hope to safeguard the effectiveness of antimicrobial treatments, protect public health, and secure a healthier future for its citizens.

Okeke writes from the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) Nigeria

**"Healthcare providers may possess the correct information but not necessarily translate that into proper practice. Fears of clinical outcomes, litigation, and patient dissatisfaction, as well as peer pressure, economic incentives, and patient demands, play a substantial role in shaping their decisions. Profit-driven motives sometimes overshadow optimal medical judgment, leading to overprescribing and dispensing of antimicrobials. Education emerges as a powerful tool in battling AMR. Educational interventions, particularly when introduced early in a provider's career, are crucial for shaping behaviour. Integrating rational medicine use and AMR topics into both pre-service and in-service training programs can drive lasting change. These efforts should encompass a range of strategies, from behaviour change communication to regulatory enforcement, peer interactions, outreach, and incentives."**

## SUNDAY FEATURE

## Up close and personal at the trail race

Continued on page 38

By JUSTIN

A place to savour the tranquillity of nature, inhale the fresh mountain air and marvel at a sky dotted with more stars than you could even begin to count.

Not tonight.

House music is pumping, the air is thick with red flare smoke and a man who may well have auditioned for Nightmare on Elm Street is revving a chainsaw to within an inch of its life.

Eyes bulging, face glistening with sweat and a maniacal grin across his face as petrol leaks to the ground and fumes fill the nostrils, he is among the thousands of people lining the track at Notre Dame de la Gorge just outside the small town of Les Contamines-Montjoie.

Hundreds rattle cow bells like toddlers with a new toy. Others rely simply on the power of applause. Everyone is roaring encouragement. Fortunately, Monsieur Chainsaw has had the good grace to leave the blade at home.

Through this tunnel of noise strides a grinning Courtney Dauwalter, the greatest female ultra-runner in the world and 20 miles into the biggest, most famous and wildest trail race on the planet.

Welcome to Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc, a race so epic it has been described as the World Cup, Tour de France and Super Bowl of running. None of those does it justice.

UTMB covers 106 miles, starting and finishing in Chamonix and passing through three countries - France, Italy and Switzerland - as it circumnavigates Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Europe.

The distance is only half the story. Runners must tackle 10,000m of elevation gain - comfortably more than the height of Everest - cope with temperatures ranging from below zero to 30C, and handle any conditions thrown at them by mountains which are normally the preserve of skiers. Helicopter search-and-rescue insurance is compulsory.

The race follows a popular hiking route that usually takes 10 days. The elite runners at UTMB charge round in under 20 hours. Mere mortals have two days to 'complete the loop'.

Earlier this month, 2,689 athletes from 81 countries set off on one of the toughest challenges of their lives. More than a third didn't manage it, and many of those who did were a physical and mental wreck by the time they staggered over one of the most iconic finish lines in sport.

Jez Bragg, the only male British winner of UTMB, in 2010, describes it as "the perfect journey - I love it to bits". Four-time winner and trail-running legend Francois d'Haene says: "What is magical is the winner and the finisher can have the same feeling - 'wow, we made it'."

There are so many aspects of UTMB that are special in their own right.

Let's start with the scenery. Chamonix, nestled in a slim valley and flanked by towering peaks and awesome glaciers that rise steeply from the end of people's back gardens, is breathtakingly dramatic. And it only gets better during the race, with stunning views of the snow-capped dome of Mont Blanc. "The beauty is insane," says Bragg. "There's nowhere else like it."

Then there's the scale. The second most prestigious 100-mile trail race in the world, Western States in California, caps entry at fewer than 400 runners, a fraction of UTMB. Over the course of a week in Chamonix, 10,000 people take part in a series of races that culminate in UTMB, with the help of 2,500 volunteers from all over France and beyond.

The atmosphere is the stuff of legend. Crowds five deep line the



Trail running, but not as you know it - UTMB is an assault on the senses in every way. It is just past 9pm on a cool summer evening at the foot of a steep hiking path in the French Alps.

streets of Chamonix; the riotous scenes from Notre Dame de la Gorge are repeated in countless other villages; and fans camp out at even the most remote parts of the UTMB course in the middle of the night to cheer on what amount to little more than moving headlamps. Britain's Tom Evans, who finished third in 2022 and is among the favourites this year, describes it as "completely bonkers".

The quality of the field is also beyond compare. "It's the most competitive race of the whole year and they're all in the shape of their life," according to American Dylan Bowman, who finished seventh in 2017 and now hosts the **Freerail podcast**. "It definitely is the one to win," says Evans, despite his stunning triumph at Western States in June. Katie Schide, women's UTMB champion in 2022, says simply: "You don't use UTMB as a training race."

Throw in the fact this year is the 20th anniversary of the event, mixed with huge dollops of drama courtesy of the organisers' slick promotional and marketing machine, and it is clear why Bowman says UTMB is "orders of magnitude bigger than anything else" in trail running.

Trail running is essentially running anywhere off-road, but typically involves hills (UTMB's hills tend to be bigger than most). It is one of the fastest growing sports in the world and Chamonix, which hosted the Winter Olympics in 1924, is widely acknowledged as its summer home - at least in Europe.

There is no better example of that than the UTMB start line. All the runners cram into the Place de l'Eglise in front of the town hall, not an inch of road visible amid a swarm of bright running kit and twitching muscles.

Shops shut before the Friday 6pm start, timed so the leading runners finish during the busiest part of Saturday afternoon. Spectators and photographers reserve their spots hours in advance. Some clamber on statues for a better view. If you can see beyond a mass of outstretched arms and mobile phones, you're one of the lucky ones.

Vangelis' Conquest of Paradise, the operatic soundtrack to a Ridley Scott movie, bounces off the walls in the narrow street, ratcheting the tension to fever pitch before the starting gun fires.

"The atmosphere is like nothing I've ever experienced - in any sporting

event," says Bragg. "It's a unique hype, excitement and anxiety - extremes of emotions - even before you've left Chamonix. The crowd are trying to transfer their energy to the runners, and the runners are living in fear of what lies ahead."

The elites, who share the same start line as the amateurs but are allowed a spot at the front, sprint off at a speed more suitable for a 10km race than 170km, to avoid being stuck in a bottleneck as the road narrows.

"You hear stories of people falling," says Schide. "So the first 800m you're not thinking of pacing - you're thinking 'get out and find space'. You're just trying not to trip up on anything."

Schide is not racing UTMB this year - she finished second in a 34-mile race in Chamonix earlier in the week - and fellow American Dauwalter is the clear favourite in the women's field.

UTMB champion in 2019 and 2021, Dauwalter is chasing the unprecedented Triple Crown of 100-milers in 2023, having won Western States and Hardrock, in Colorado, this summer. Only a handful of top runners have even attempted three of the most brutal ultra-marathons in the running calendar in the space of 10 weeks. Completing them is almost unbelievable, winning them borderline ludicrous.

"It would be one of the biggest achievements in the history of the sport, and something that will never be repeated," says Bowman. "Courtney is a once-in-a-generation athlete."

Dauwalter, 38, has transcended the

niche world of ultra-running, her carefree attitude, perma-smile - especially when racing - and baggy shorts as much a part of her appeal as her phenomenal athletic accomplishments.

She holds the female record at Western States, Hardrock and UTMB; she has not been beaten by a woman in any race since 2019; she routinely finishes in the top 10 regardless of gender; and she once won a 240-mile race outright. As a guest on Joe Rogan's podcast and a cover star in the New York Times sports section, she is on the verge of household-name status in the US.

Schide is candid enough to admit Dauwalter is in a league of her own. "We're not even close to competing," she says. "Courtney doesn't race anyone - she just runs and kills us all."

Evans says: "In order for me to win, I need to be at 100%. Courtney needs to be at 75%. The other girls are amazing, but she is an absolute specimen."

The phenomenon that UTMB has become is a far cry from the low-key affair that was organised from a living room in 2003. Repeatedly pestered by a friend into creating a race around Mont Blanc, husband and wife Michel and Catherine Poletti eventually gave in.

Their daughter Isabelle built a website. Teenage son David was among the volunteers. Michel's sisters and Isabelle's father-in-law served as the medical team.

The Polettis expected 300 runners.

In the end, 722 signed up. "That was emotional, the first start," says Michel, who also ran the race. "At 4am in the morning, there was no crowd."

Armed with a mobile phone, two radios and a laptop under a gazebo, Catherine and a handful of volunteers were race HQ. A mere 67 runners completed the circuit, less than a 10% finish rate in miserable conditions.

Michel ran part of the race with American Krissy Moehl, who was on her honeymoon - a wedding present from the sports shoe company she worked for. At the same time her new husband, Brandon Sybrowsky, was being welcomed over the finish line by Catherine as the joint second-place finisher.

"This was their honeymoon - me with Brandon and Michel with Krissy," remembers Catherine. "It could be a movie," chuckles Michel. Moehl, who was the first female finisher, says: "The French loved it. They went to town on the romantic couple." Thanks to Michel's organising prowess and Catherine's business savvy, UTMB grew exponentially. In 2006, when the race sold out in three weeks, the Polettis began adding events of varying distances to cope with demand. UTMB tickets were snapped up in nine minutes in 2008, a qualification process was introduced in 2009 and a lottery system the following year.

Catherine says as many as 9,000 people apply for a UTMB race bib each year. Michel reckons that, without the current system whereby hopefuls must collect 'running stones' by completing qualifying events, "it could be 100,000".

"It has changed so much," says Dawa Sherpa, winner of the men's race in 2003 despite never having run more than 70 miles. "But that first race is like yesterday in my mind."

Moehl, now 45 and a running coach, triumphed again in 2009. "UTMB has a special place in my running career. But it's only in hindsight. I didn't know it then," she says.

The winner's prize in 2003 was no more than a wooden trophy. Bragg, now 42, remembers scooping some sports vouchers in 2010 before returning to his job as a chartered surveyor.

Did life change in any way? "Not at all. You're back in the lift on Tuesday morning, making small talk on the way into the office. I could never be bothered trying to explain to people because 90% just wouldn't get it."

Although this year's winners will each collect 10,000 euros (£8,600), victory is worth much more in terms of sponsorship and profile.

"It makes it easier to explain to a sponsor that's not totally inside the sport," says 31-year-old Schide. "You can just say, 'Hi, I'm Katie, I won UTMB', and not, 'Hi, I'm Katie, I was second at this race in Italy'."

"I live in a tiny village in France and it doesn't change my life at all. It's not like people are stopping us in the street."



Francois d'Haene, four-time winner of UTMB, says the organisers "made something very special" by creating a loop around Mont Blanc

# SUNDAY SPORTS

## Two Tottenham pundits reveal key players to watch



**A**RSENAL are set to host Ange Postecoglou's Tottenham Hotspur at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday with some of the top stars set to take to the pitch in the biggest game in the Premier League this weekend.

As it stands, both teams have accumulated 13 points after five rounds of matches in the Premier League but Spurs, in second place, are ahead of the Gunners in the table due to their superior goal difference.

Tottenham Hotspur pundits Rob Daly and Ben Haines, writing on the official website of the Lilywhites, believe that the key battle that will decide the north London derby will be on the flank between Arsenal's inverted winger Bukayo Saka and Tottenham's left-back Destiny Udogie.

Saka and Udogie have started the season well with the winger directly participating in seven goals (3 goals, 4 assists) from seven games in all competitions and the defender notching back-to-back assists in his last two away games.

On a tactical level, Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur have a chance of hurting each other when they break quickly with Saka and Udogie both offering speed on the counter.

Focusing on individual players, Rob Daly and Haines agree that Saka and Udogie are the two key players to watch in the north London derby.

Rob Daly said: "On the other side, Bukayo Saka vs Destiny Udogie is going to be, possibly, the key match up in the game. That will be absolutely brilliant."

Ben Haines added: "Players to watch this weekend, for Spurs, I'm going with Destiny Udogie. He will have an absolute ding-dong against

Bukayo Saka, who I'm going to pick as well, and who looked fantastic in Arsenal's win against PSV in the Champions League and, if truth be told, is just a phenomenal player.

"The nicest way I can put this is that I love watching him play for England. At weekends, it's a different story! He's wonderfully gifted, seems like an incredibly rounded player in terms of goals, assists, the works.

"So, Saka for them, Destiny for us. What a battle that could be with Destiny bombing forward and trying to do everything he can from

an attacking point of view, but we also saw last weekend how crucial he is in terms of winning possession - he was the player who won the ball back in the 100th minute, bursting forward, pressing high, and that leads to DekiKulusevski's winner."

Sunday's north London derby between Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur begins at the Emirates Stadium in London at 1400 hours Nigerian time.

Victor Osimhen, with four goals in five Champions League games, is expected to be fit for the second leg of the Milan fixture at the Stadio Diego Maradona next week.

## EPL: Iheanacho Predicts Good Finish For Leicester City

**A**DEDEJI, Nigeria's Super Eagles and Leicester City forward, Kelechi Iheanacho has set his eyes on the team getting a good run of games towards the end of the season, BSNSports.com.ng can report.

The former Manchester City striker played an active role on

Saturday as Leicester City defeated Leeds United by a lone goal at the King Power Stadium. While reacting to the game, he said it was a good goal for the team and hope they gather momentum towards the tail end of the season so they can move up

**N**ASARAWA State Governor, Abdullahi Sule, has revealed that Nasarawa United were relegated from the Nigeria Premier Football League (NPFL) last season due to the team playing its home matches at a neutral venue, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

The Lafia City Stadium is currently undergoing renovation.

Sule disclosed this during a courtesy visit to the Nigeria Football Federation House in Abuja.

He assured that the Solid Miners will secure promotion back to the Nigeria Premier Football League.

"The stadium is one of the reasons Nasarawa United got relegated last season when it was undergoing renovation," he stated during his visit.

"I am on my feet to make sure the relegation does not

## Governor Sule regrets Nasarawa United's relegation



Governor Abdullahi Sule

proceed beyond one season.

"We don't belong in the

Nigeria National League, we belong up there in the Nigeria Premier Football League."

## Osimhen risks suspension for Napoli

**N**IGERIAN lethal 'goal-machine' Victor Osimhen risks been suspended for Napoli in the group stage of the UEFA Champions League, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

Osimhen was in good form for Partenopei, which picked up their first three points of the European campaign with a 2-1 win away at Braga on Wednesday.

The Nigerian who capped his performance with a Man of the Match award for his assist, got a yellow card on the night.

According to La Gazzettadello Sport, what may come as a concern for Napoli in Europe, however, is the risk of suspension to key players, as six yellow cards



Osimhen

were dished out on Wednesday.

Those who now run the

risk of suspension include Victor Osimhen, Matteo Politano, Giacomo Raspadori, Frank Zamboanguissa, Mathias Olivera and Juan Jesus.

Next up for Napoli in the Champions League is the visit of Carlo Ancelotti's Real Madrid at the beginning of October.

Meanwhile, Napoli boss Rudi Garcia has charged Khvicha Kvaratskhelia to be a fighter like Osimhen.

After the 2-1 win over Braga, Garcia spoke about the winger in the press conference and stated: "He needs to play and find the rhythm, he also participated in the first goal with the cross for Di Lorenzo's goal."

Osimhen was also sparkling last season and while he future was in doubt, he ended up staying. Garcia also spoke about the Nigerian's situation and his form.

"Then there is Osimhen who has fought and ran: that's what I expect from all my players, when we defend we all defend together."

Osimhen, unlike Kvaratskhelia, has been amongst the goals more often. The 24-year-old has three Serie A goals in four games.



## SUNDAY FEATURE

## Up close and personal at the trail race

**B**Y the time Dauwalter is dodging chainsaws at Notre Dame de la Gorge she is at the head of the women's field by a few seconds. She stretches that lead to 18 minutes in Courmayeur in Italy, the midway point of the race after 53 miles and one of the crucial aid stations.

For many runners this will be a first opportunity to get help from their support crew - only one person is allowed to help at a handful of checkpoints throughout the race.

Tactics vary. The majority of competitors refuel and rest, but Dauwalter, arriving at 3:40am after almost 10 hours on the go, is in and out within two minutes - and that includes **brushing her teeth**.

Jim Walmsley, the leader of the men's race, passed through this aid station - essentially a sports hall with picnic tables - more than an hour ago, only seconds ahead of fellow American Zach Miller.

Quietly spoken and somewhat awkward in front of the camera, Walmsley has been described as an alpha male on the trail, dominating races from the front.

Already an ultra-running legend at the age of 33, his CV is bursting with major victories, including three - and a course record - at Western States. He also holds the 50-mile world record of four hours 50 minutes.

Before any of those achievements, Walmsley was perhaps best known as the man who led the 2016 Western States for 93 miles before taking a wrong turn, ending up on a highway and finishing 20th. His faux pas was immortalised in the film 'Found on 49'.

Jim Walmsley, a track and road runner in his youth, has a fastest marathon time of 2hrs 15mins

UTMB continues to elude him, though. He was fifth in 2017, did not finish in 2018 and 2021, and last year led for two-thirds of the race before fading to fifth.

This year, with Spaniard Kilian Jornet - widely acknowledged as the greatest trail runner of all time and a four-time UTMB champion - absent through injury, could be Walmsley's best chance.

Such is his obsession with winning UTMB that last summer he and his wife Jess moved from Arizona to Arches, a small village close to the race route. He lives down the road from close friend and training partner D'Haene, who won the most recent of his four titles in 2021.

"I really hope Jim can win it. For him it would be so nice," says D'Haene. "But maybe he will never win UTMB. It's not the most important thing. Maybe in 10 years it's more important what he has experienced here in the mountains."

No-one seems to know before the race what shape Walmsley is in. He tore ankle ligaments in May, missed the Mountain and Trail Running World Championships in June and has been suspiciously silent on Strava in the weeks leading up to UTMB.

Chamonix and trail running are as inextricably linked as cheese and wine in France.

Every other shop in the town centre sells sports gear. The streets are full of bulging quads and granite calves that would make England footballer Jack Grealish jealous. And there can't be many places in the world where the hotel chef wears running kit while on duty, all the quicker to get on the trails once the breakfast shift finishes.

"The people are genuine enthusiasts - they get it. There's an



**A camera biker to the front, a camera runner to the rear and countless mobiles locked on her, a smiling Courtney Dauwalter is the centre of attention**

Alpine spirit and so much respect for the competitors," says Bragg, who won UTMB despite the altitude limitations of living in Warwick at the time.

This comes at a price. Runners who are anonymous at home will be mobbed in Chamonix. "For 10 days in the calendar year you become an A-list celebrity," says 31-year-old Evans, who left triathlete wife Sophie Coldwell in charge of their four chickens, two dogs and tortoise during his pre-race training camp in the Alps.

As a Frenchman living in the area, even the affable D'Haene says: "You can get tired if you have 200 selfies a day and cannot walk one metre."

Schide agrees. "We are all people who spend a lot of time alone, then we're suddenly in these really intense situations with a ton of people around."

"It can be exhausting. The first time I did UTMB in 2019, I didn't do a good job of managing my energy, and when I got to the start line I was thinking, 'I just want this to be over'. You don't want to feel like that at the start of a 100-miler."

Coping with the extra attention and pressure is one part of a UTMB puzzle that can take many of the top runners years to solve, if at all.

Winners require a "way bigger toolbox" than at most races, according to Evans, who spent eight years in the Army and ran his first ultra in 2017 after a drunken bet with friends in the pub.

"It's very important that you have everything," says D'Haene. "You have to cope with the mountains, the night, hiking. You have to run fast on the flat, you have to be OK on technical terrain, in steep descents, runnable descents."

Completing a 100-mile race of any nature requires a rather special relationship with pain - physical and mental.

Dauwalter, a science teacher before turning professional in 2017, uses races as an opportunity to chisel at her "pain cave".

"For me it's normal," says 37-year-old D'Haene, who has done so many UTMB loops in training that he has lost count. "Of course it's difficult. Of course you get tired. You are

destroyed. But even if it's horrible pain, I love it. People pay to do that. People wait for three years to do that. They choose it. Why complain?"

Evans' race ends amid some pain in Courmayeur. Part of a lead pack with Walmsley and Miller for much of the first 50 miles, he drifts off the pace and ends up spending 10 hours in an Italian hospital. "UTMB... see you next year," he writes on Instagram a few days later.

Miller makes his move in the next phase of the race, overtaking a struggling Walmsley as they head for Switzerland.

Like Walmsley, UTMB is the itch Miller wants to scratch: he has three top-10s since 2016 without finishing higher than fifth.

Sporting his trademark moustache and a trucker's cap on back to front, even when racing, the 29-year-old is one of the most distinctive and popular figures in the sport.

He spent five years as a caretaker in a hiking cabin in the Colorado mountains and now travels around the US in a converted Breaking Bad-style bus, turning up at races to give out free doughnuts and ice lollies.

There are reports that Miller was picking up litter during this year's UTMB, and only a few hours after the race he is walking round Chamonix buying cheese with his girlfriend.

His tactics are endearingly gung-ho, running hard from the off and hoping to cling on. "The fans really love the aggressive style, but all the coaches and sponsors are like, 'maybe you should start conservatively'. I'm kind of stuck with it now," he grins.

When Miller reaches Champex-Lac, 79 miles into the race, he has a 12-minute buffer over Walmsley, who is even briefly passed by Frenchman Germain Grangier, the eventual third-place finisher.

Dauwalter, stopping briefly to embrace her husband and parents by the roadside, is on course to break her own UTMB record and is so far in front of the women's field that only a seismic collapse can stop her.

All these precious moments are captured on camera. Indeed, coverage of the race is almost as astounding as the athletic

performances.

UTMB is streamed live in a choice of seven languages thanks to a mixture of drones, helicopters and, most impressively, runners and e-bikers who somehow manage to film the leading protagonists while keeping pace with them.

A camera biker to the front, a camera runner to the rear and countless mobiles locked on her, a smiling Courtney Dauwalter is the centre of attention

Runners will often come into view at aid stations surrounded by a moving gaggle of videographers. Body language is scrutinised by eagle-eyed commentators. Dozens of zoom lens are trained on athletes as they do something as exciting as eat a banana or change a T-shirt. In 2019, viewers got a close-up view of Dauwalter vomiting live on TV.

There's definitely a market for it. UTMB had 52 million video views on its official website and social media channels during the week of racing this year. Some 436 journalists were accredited and almost 2,000 articles published, double the 2022 figure.

Lizzy Hawker's mother had no such luxury in 2005. She rang the tourist information office in Chamonix the day after UTMB to discover her daughter had won the race - the first of a record five victories for one of Britain's all-time great runners.

Yet the growth of UTMB is not to everyone's taste.

At its heart, trail running is a simple sport rooted in community. The top runners, largely untouched by layers of management, remain approachable and willing to share their love of the trails. In how many other sports can you high-five the best in the world as they go about the business?

The Polettis have dedicated their lives to UTMB and genuinely love what they do. Michel, who was born in Chamonix and convinced Catherine to move there after they met at university in Grenoble, has completed the race seven times, most recently last year at the age of 67. He will make it 25 miles into this year's loop before being timed out.

Isabelle has taken over from Catherine as race director, while David runs an app which provides live

updates from all corners of the course. Catherine is on the finish line to welcome the winner of every race.

However, UTMB is now part-owned by the behemoth that is Ironman Group and has been criticised for decisions such as introducing a qualifying process that incentivises people to sign up for - and spend money on - more races.

A UTMB entry alone costs 355 euros (£300), and that's before you consider travelling to and staying in one of the most expensive resorts in Europe. "It's too big now. It smells of money," says 53-year-old Dawa, who was born in Nepal but has worked as a bricklayer in Geneva for 25 years.

"A lot of people are protective about the grassroots," says 37-year-old Bowman, who started racing ultras in 2009. "UTMB in Chamonix is unapologetically about the spectacle, the brands and the commerce around it. There's a tension, for sure."

Schide, one of the minority of runners who is fully professional, says: "We're asking for more prize money, more support, more doping control. At the same time we don't want money in the sport. It's a huge point of contention."

UTMB's green credentials have also been criticised. Damian Hall, one of Britain's leading trail runners, fifth-place finisher in 2018 and vocal climate activist, is among those who have boycotted the race while it is sponsored by a car manufacturer.

Michel Poletti acknowledges that UTMB has a "huge responsibility" to limit the impact on the environment and is "fighting to find a solution", but says: "Our carbon footprint all week is the same as one day of the Tour de France."

Dauwalter has just stopped to hug an inflatable pizza. Moments later she will be pursued by a topless man riding a blow-up dinosaur and carrying a loudspeaker. Fancy dress appears to be mandatory at **Col de la Forclaz**, where at times Dauwalter has to force her way through a crowd of delirious supporters blocking the path.

**Concluded**

## SUNDAY SPORTS

## How Asher-Smith started medal-winning era in Moscow

By BEN BLOOM

NEVER one to mince his words, Charles van Commenee - then UK Athletics head coach - let rip in the straight-talking manner so characteristic of his tenure.

"This was an accident waiting to happen," said the Dutchman in June 2012.

"I'm not really surprised; it's the reason why I stopped funding the programme two years ago."

The target of his ire was the much-derided British women's 4x100m team, who had just been disqualified for a lane infringement in the 2012 European Championships heats. The misstep meant they slipped to 17th in the world rankings.

With only the top 16 awarded a place at the upcoming London Olympics, the host nation would have the ignominy of no women's sprint relay squad to cheer at their home Games.

"Obviously women's sprints, the sprints in general, and in particular the 100m, needs serious review," continued Van Commenee.

"Most of the time you have to go to the lowest point in order to create an environment to improve. Sometimes it is necessary to get to the bottom before you raise the game again."

A year later, with Van Commenee gone - having resigned after failing to hit his own medal target at those London Games - the British women's 4x100m team won a remarkable bronze at the Moscow 2013 World Championships.

Twenty-nine years since last making a global podium and with the memory of that humiliating Olympic absence still fresh, they were suddenly one of the world's quickest teams. The result was also the improbable start of the most successful period in their history.

So routine have medals become over the past decade that Britain's fastest women not making a global podium is now deemed failure.

Through Dina Asher-Smith, the country has found its headline star, claiming Britain's first individual global medal over one of the short sprints for 36 years at Doha 2019. She now has eight Olympic and world medals during her career.

So what has changed?

As Britain's female sprinters set their sights on more podiums at this month's Budapest World Championships, how did they go from figures of ridicule to medal favourites?

Never known as a women's sprinting powerhouse, Britain has instead enjoyed flickers of prosperity over the years: two individual silvers from Dorothy Manley and Audrey Williamson at the 1948 Olympics, Dorothy Hyman's brilliant 100m and 200m double at the 1960 Olympics, and a brief period of four British Olympic and world medals in the early 1980s.

But by the time London 2012 came around, those days were distant memories.

A failure to win any sort of global women's sprint medal - relay or individual - for decades had prompted Van Commenee to take drastic action two years earlier.

Furious at watching Britain's 4x100m women crash out in the first round of the 2010 European Championships, the head coach had eviscerated the team in the lobby of the team's Barcelona hotel, within earshot of a nearby group of journalists interviewing Jessica Ennis-Hill.

"The women - those changeovers were diabolical," he later told the media. "It's unacceptable - schoolgirls' mistakes. It will have consequences."

Sure enough, he swiftly removed funding for the women's relay programme, casting them aside.

It was a controversial decision. Two years later, after Hayley Mills' lane infringement in Helsinki cost Britain their home Olympics place, she hit out at Van Commenee and UK Athletics for not giving the team sufficient race opportunities during the preceding qualification period.

"Qualification should have been done and dusted way before this weekend,"



The quartet of (left to right) Ashleigh Nelson, Hayley Mills, Dina Asher-Smith and Annabelle Lewis initially believed they had finished fourth, before a successful appeal against the second-placed French team put them on the podium

Mills said after that fateful race. "I know today was my fault but not going to the Olympics is the result of people not doing their jobs."

"I will take all the blame in the world for us not reaching the European final, but I won't take any for two years of missed opportunities."

In truth, with the hierarchy refusing to believe in the athletes, the athletes had stopped believing in themselves.

Upon taking charge of Britain's sprints and relay setup in early 2013, American coach Rana Reider was shocked by the lack of enthusiasm among some of the country's best female sprinters.

"We had a relay meeting in Loughborough with all the ladies," he said that year. "We invited some 40 people but only 20 showed up. It surprised me a lot."

Annabelle Lewis, who would form part of the 2013 World Championships bronze medal-winning relay team, remembers the discord among the squad at that time.

"Before I joined the squad, I perceived a mentality of people just choosing what they wanted to do within the relay and when they wanted to do it," she said.

"When Rana took over, he created a mentality where it was a privilege to be part of the relay team and you had to act accordingly."

"He created weekends where everyone came together as part of the relay and everyone had to prove themselves to be part of the team."

Fellow 2013 relay bronze medallist Ashleigh Nelson says the newly created sense of unity was crucial.

"When we didn't qualify for the Olympics it was heartbreaking," she said.

"When Rana Reider came in, he just said if you don't show up to relay practice, no matter how fast you are, you won't get in the team. That changed everyone's attitude."

"The previous year, when Charles van Commenee was the head, he was so uncomplimentary about the women's sprints, especially the relay."

"After that, I think the feeling was that we just wanted to go out, run well and not be slated. We wanted to show that we deserved a chance to run without someone telling us we weren't good enough."

Understandably, given the turmoil of the preceding years, expectation was not particularly high for the hotchpotch group of Britain's unfunded female sprinters at the 2013 World Championships in Moscow.

Asher-Smith, then only 17, had been thrust into the British relay set-up just weeks after winning two gold medals at the European Junior Championships. Lewis had only just broken through to the international ranks after going below 11.50 seconds over 100m for the

first time that summer.

With Anyika Onuora's withdrawal after picking up an injury while competing individually in Moscow, Nelson was the sole member of the remaining quartet with senior international experience of note.

Squad member Mills was drafted into the team to replace Onuora.

"When Anyika got injured it was like: 'What the hell do we do now?'" said Lewis. "Dina was very young at the time. We were all fairly amateur, but we were confident in how we could work together."

"I think when you are young and inexperienced in this championship set-up, it made us just go out there and see what we could do rather than having any expectations."

Having qualified sixth fastest from the heats, Britain unexpectedly found themselves in silver-medal position at the last changeover in the final, only for Mills to be passed by the American and French anchor-leg runners with the finish line approaching.

They would have to be content with fourth.

Any sense of disappointment at such a narrow podium miss swiftly dissolved in the context of what had come before. "I couldn't believe we actually managed to get that place with such a young, inexperienced team," said Lewis.

Yet there was more unexpected drama to come. After the medal ceremony had taken place, British team staff filed a protest against silver-medal winners France. More than two hours after the race, the French team were then disqualified for handing over the baton outside the permitted zone.

Despite a counter-appeal and the French athletics federation president describing the disqualification as "an outrage", the decision remained and

Britain were upgraded to the most unlikely of bronze medals.

"We were already back in our weird, massive hotel," said Nelson. "It was late in the evening when Rana came and told us. He was a joker so we thought he was just joking. Obviously when we realised he wasn't, we were ecstatic."

"The only disappointing thing is that we didn't get to go on the podium. We didn't get our medals until the following year at the Indoor Grand Prix in Birmingham [in February 2014]."

Their bronze was sufficient for the new UK Athletics hierarchy to change tack and restore women's 4x100m funding for the following year. It also sparked a notable upturn in fortunes.

Despite the departure of Reider - currently serving a one-year probation after misconduct allegations - from British Athletics in 2014, the team's rise continued unchecked.

Britain's female sprint relay quartets won Olympic bronze behind the mighty Americans and Jamaicans in 2016 and 2020, while they have also won two silvers from the past four World Championships, narrowly missing out on the podium on the other two occasions.

While much of the success is a result of hard work at relay camps and a renewed focus on the programme, athletes are quick to stress the importance of collective buy-in, including the impact of UK Athletics lead performance psychologist Jennifer Savage, who started working with the relay programme in 2014.

"Maybe beforehand people weren't getting on, but the current group of girls has a common goal and goes after it," said Nelson.

"It doesn't matter what you want to do in your individual event - despite everybody's individual aspirations, we also realise the benefit of coming

together as a team."

Bianca Williams, an unused reserve in that Moscow 2013 relay squad, said: "There didn't used to be much belief in relays. After that Moscow medal people realised what we could do."

"The chemistry we all have is fantastic and each year it keeps improving. We have relay bonding camps where we really understand each other and what we want from the year."

Through Asher-Smith, the collective success has been replicated in the individual sprints, with Britain's fastest-ever woman collecting one 100m and two 200m world medals. But even beyond her, the strength in depth is greater than ever, with Daryll Neita leading a clutch of British contenders in her wake.

Four of the top five British women's 100m times and four of the top six 200m times have been recorded since 2016.

Beyond reaping the benefits of technological advancements on and off the track, Lewis - who is now an athletics coach - believes there has been a fundamental mindset shift since the sustained relay success.

"Once you have success in the collective it gives you confidence," she said. "It's given everyone a platform to understand how to perform under pressure around the best people in the world."

"Then it gives you more confidence to say: 'I don't just want to go for the relay, I want to go for the individual as well.'"

Nelson, who has missed the 2023 season through injury, points to the importance of Asher-Smith's joy on the global stage and the pack mentality in chasing her heels.

"In the American collegiate system, everybody is fast and they are coming up against fast people every week," she said. "Within the UK, maybe there was a lack of belief or people thought there was a ceiling because no-one from Britain had done it."

"It just took one or two people to break through for everyone to have that belief. We all want to beat each other so maybe it's having someone that bit closer to home that you can compete with."

Perhaps it was all part of Van Commenee's masterplan.

Asked 11 years ago why he had culled the women's sprint relay funding, the Dutchman insisted it was not a punishment but that he was "always interested to see how people respond".

Whatever Van Commenee's reason, Lewis - who, like Mills, would never represent her country again after Moscow 2013 - is just thankful she was part of something that changed the course of athletics in Britain.

"Thank God we did that so UK Athletics decided to put more into the women's sprint programme," she said.

"Having people like Dina and Daryll putting their faces out there means there are more and more young athletes wanting to follow them."

"The more success they have, the more chance we have to keep the legacy going. If it was the pivotal moment 10 years ago then I'm just proud to be part of that."



Van Commenee was the straight-talking head coach appointed to lead Great Britain's athletes into the London 2012 Olympics before the glory came the shame.



# Who can save Amusan's career?

THESE are not the best of times for renowned world 100-meter women's hurdles record holder, Tobi Amusan, over her failure to participate in the mandatory three-out-of-competition dope test which in itself is a grave infraction on the rules on such a matter. How Amusan escaped a ban remains a mystery which has perhaps compelled the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) to test the judgment. AIU had filed an appeal against World Athletics'

Disciplinary Tribunal last month overturned the provisional suspension imposed on Nigeria's hurdler, Tobi Amusan.

The AIU on its X (formerly Twitter) handle, announced that it filed the appeal with the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) penultimate Friday - the eve of the expiration of the 30-day window for appeal.

The World Athletics Disciplinary Tribunal had on 17 August lifted the ban on Amusan, claiming the athlete did not commit an anti-doping rule violation for Whereabouts Failures. The AIU in its post claimed it would not make further comment on the matter until the conclusion of the appeal.

Indeed, Duro Ikhazuagbe, Thisday newspapers' Group Sports Editor, himself an athletics guru told this writer that: "You are suspended. If your appeal succeeds you are reinstated. AIU also has the right to appeal and take the matter to CAS. A top athlete like Tobi cannot claim ignorance of Whereabouts tests unless she has something to hide. I still feel it must be carelessness. Tobi has done enough to get to where she is now."

What is clear is that AIU wants to test the veracity of the decisions to clear Amusan as provided by their rules books. It is also an opportunity for athletes who may fall into the trap set in the whereabouts rule which Amusan ran afoul of in the future. Indeed, in clearing Amusan, the body provided answers for two grounds out of three.

It really doesn't matter how

many grounds. It could have been one. But, one just hoped that the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN) members would not stand aloof in Amusan's quest for justice by following through all the processes available to AIU in their appeal. The AFN should be prepared to foot Amusan's bill for justice at the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

These "Whereabouts" flaws would have been avoided had the AFN's medical committee been functional. After all, Amusan won laurels running for Nigeria at the Commonwealth Games held in London, last year.

Amusan passed previous platforms to get justice over her innocence when the news first broke that she failed to observe the mandatory three out-of-competition dope tests.

Divergent views abound in this Amusan saga! While some view it as the athletics regulatory body trying to apply the rules strictly, yet, some pundits see it as the usual dilemma that has become an albatross for a high-flying Black sportsman/woman.

This latter position held by this school of thought is dotted with a litany of examples to buttress their argument. For instance, on March 6, 1993, Canadian sprinter, Ben Johnson, was banned for life by the world governing body for track and field after its doping commission affirmed that Johnson failed a second drug test that revealed abnormally high levels of testosterone, thus terminating the once blistering career of the Jamaican-born sprinter who once laid claim to the title of world's fastest human.

He suffered the humiliation of being stripped of a gold medal and world record in the 100-meter dash after he tested positive for steroids at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

In January 2001, former world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson was suspended for three months and fined \$5,000 by Michigan state officials for refusing to submit to a pre-fight doping test.

It isn't enough for our sports



authorities to litter the media with a litany of congratulatory messages to Amusan. They need to face the brass task of getting the female hurdler to be cleared by the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS), with less than ten months to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. Amusan is Nigeria's surest gold medal potential if the country's sports administrators know their onions. It would amount to a crass failure of leadership if Amusan is left alone to face the politics of clearance from previous verification agencies to date.

It is instructive to remind AFN and NOC that AIU has won similar cases which they sent to CAS to adjudicate. What this translates to is that Amusan stands the chance of being banned by CAS if left to face the

music alone. Indeed, AIU appealed Salwa Eid Nader (400m) from Bahrain and Christian Coleman of the USA's clearance at CAS and won.

Amusan's innocence isn't in doubt having participated in major athletic meets and cleared by the races' organisers to have scaled the competition's several dope tests. But AIU's appeal smacks of not allowing Amusan to win at CAS to serve as an avenue for future athletes to exploit to escape the sanctions associated with the whereabouts rule. So what if Amusan scales the CAS hurdle if truly she is innocent of any kind of accusations of flouting the whereabouts rule on competitions' dope tests?

Honourable sports minister sir, this should be your first

charge to show that you understand the dynamics associated with this kind of matter. The minister should get athletics experts to recruit lawyers whose forte rests with such matters for proper and informed representation at CAS before the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

A gold medal for Nigeria at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games from Amusan could catapult the country to an enviable position in the polity of sporting nations especially as we haven't done too well at the global multi-sports competition in the past. The other likely sure bet for a medal is Ese Brume in the female long jump and the question remains, what have we done as a nation to supervise her preparations for the Olympics in Paris next year?

Amusan and Brume are the two Nigerians with a top five ranking in the world for the women's 100-meter hurdles and the women's female long jump. Others such as in wrestling are potential medallists with former Commonwealth champion, Odunayo Adekuoroye qualifying for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games when she clinched a bronze medal in the women's 57kg category at the 2023 World Wrestling Pre-Olympic Qualifiers in Belgrade, Serbia on Wednesday. The three-time former champion beat Turkey's Elvira Kamaloglu 9 to 5 points in the third-place match.

This writer had a good laugh whilst reading the story that three Nigerian boxers had qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games. I felt pity for the boxers because they would be fighting for honours only to be taught the new rules hours

before their bouts. I couldn't believe my eyes that we could ask coaches whose knowledge of the fistic trade was outdated. Other boxers at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games were punching non-scoring parts of their opponents who knew where to jab the Nigerians to get huge points haul. One only hopes that these set of boxers are abreast with the modern-day rules of the fistic trade.

A few years ago, I wrote here that our athletes shouldn't be made to rely on philanthropists and sports-loving governors when they require funds to prepare themselves for national assignments. Other countries have several avenues to source funds, such as Sports Lottery Schemes and fund-raisers where the President sits at dinner with the corporate world to show the level of commitment towards such an exercise. Blue-chip firms are given tax incentives for what they pay into the projects' coffers. The president's speech will spur others not at the ceremony to join the queue.

Civilised countries develop their sports through the neighbourhood system where facilities are built to engage the youth and push them away from social vices. Nurseries serve as the bases for storing the data of those discovered. Such information helps to nurture and monitor the good ones to stardom. Besides, nurseries lay the foundation where the athletes are taught the rudiments of the game. It is at such factories that playing styles and patterns unique to such countries are evolved.

## Bad news for Peseiro

Speaking at Friday's pre-match press conference before his side's meeting with Gil Vicente, Conceição confirmed that Sanusi will not be available for selection for tomorrow's game at the Estádio Do Dragão.



Sanusi

The Portuguese football tactician added that Sanusi will be out of action in the next few weeks, which makes him a huge doubt to be summoned for the friendly against Saudi Arabia.

Nigeria manager Jose Peseiro certainly had plans to include Sanusi on his roster for the friendly, given that the game is scheduled to hold in Portugal where the player is based and it would be the national team's last match before the start of the 2026 World Cup qualifiers.

The 26-year-old was not called up for Nigeria's 2023 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying match against São Tomé and Príncipe earlier this month.

Meanwhile, sports

analytics company Pro Football Focus, Italy U21 international of Nigerian descent Destiny Udogie holds the distinction of being the fastest player at Tottenham Hotspur ahead of the eagerly anticipated heavyweight clash against Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium on Sunday.

For players who have played a minimum of 400 minutes in the 2023-2024 Premier League season, only three players rank higher than Udogie in terms of the highest maximum speed in the division.

Fulham left-back Antonee Robinson, Burnley centre-back Ameen Al Dakhil and West Ham United defender Emerson are the only players in the Premier League faster than Udogie.