

PLSG raises eyebrows over purported letters by CSO



News: FG launches CNG buses initiative nationwide Page 2

Sports: Criminal case against FIFA President dropped Page 38

Politics: Senate passes Bill to reduce CBN Gov's power Page 6

P 38

Sunday Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 800

SUNDAY, October 29, 2023

N250

EFCC's new vista on anti-corruption war

The Federal Government's anti-graft war spearheaded by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission [EFCC], is one battle that has continued to rage the past decades with so many twists and turns. As it is; even the czars in charge of prosecuting the war on corruption had realized that the job is full of challenges and a no mean Job with some of them slipping on the banana peels that sometimes turned the agency to that of the hunter being hunted.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE, Pages 10, 31



Page 24 **Why we can't sell Bua cement at N3500 - Retailers**



Page 2 **CJN too powerful, judiciary stinks - Datijo**

On FG to pay 500m for release of inmates

RECENTLY, the Minister of Interior, Dr. Olubunmi Tunde-Ojo said that the ministry intends to clear over N500 million fines slammed on inmates at the Correction Centres by judges and magistrates in various custodial centres nationwide.

ACCORDING to the Minister, a committee was setup with the aim of reviewing the situation of correctional centres, vis-à-vis the inmates as they are, and discovered that over 4,000 inmates are still in custody due to their inability to pay fines.

THE decision of the minister to decongest the correctional centres is quite commendable. We call for a review of the plan or alternative decongestion plans or policies are considered.

IT is on record that the federal government had released 7,813 inmates from the Nigeria Correctional Centres across the country during the outbreak of Covid-19 to curb the spread of the virus among the inmates. The convicts and awaiting trial were granted amnesty and released on the orders of former president Muhammadu Buhari as part of the prison decongestion policy of the federal government.

SPECIFICALLY, the minister should request the president and various governors to exercise their prerogative of mercy by granting pardon to the 4,000 convicts on ground of impecuniosities to facilitate their immediate release from custody.

ACCORDINGLY, the minister may also wish to request the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chief Judges of all the states and the Federal Capital Territory to visit the correctional centres and exercise their powers under the criminal Justice Release from custody Special provision act by ordering the release of the inmates whose detention is either manifestly unlawful or who have been in custody, whether on remand or otherwise, for periods longer than the maximum period of imprisonment which they could have served had they been convicted.

ACCORDINGLY, using the N500m on improving the welfare of inmates, improving the structures of the centres, educating or training the inmates is a better way of judiciously spending the money.

HOWEVER, it is pertinent to draw the attention of the minister to the plight of the scores of inmates who are languishing in all Correctional Centres as their case files were burnt during the #EndSARS protest. The immediate release of such inmates since the state can no longer prosecute them as their cases have been burnt.

CONSEQUENTLY the mechanisms for reducing prison congestion should be considered. In order to reducing the number of offenders in prisons, shortening the time of offenders and increasing system capacity.

ALTERNATIVELY, inmates should, as part of punishment, be made to pay through community services instead of spending such amount of money to pay for their crimes.

CJN too powerful, judiciary stinks

- Datijo

A former Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice Muhammad Datijo, has called for the reduction of the powers of the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN)....This, he said, would prevent abuse of office.

Justice Datijo made the call at his valedictory court session held to mark his retirement from the apex court bench, having attained the statutory retirement age of 70 years.

He linked the negative perception of the judiciary to the appointment of judicial officers, claiming that appointments have been polluted by political, selfish and section

He said, "As presently structured, the CJN is Chairman of the National Judicial Commission which oversees both the appointment and discipline of judges. He is equally the chair of the Federal Judicial Service Commission, the National Judicial Institute, and the Legal Practitioners Privileges Committee that appoints Senior Advocates of Nigeria.

"My considered opinion: the oversight functions of these bodies should not rest on an individual alone. A person with absolute powers, it is said, corrupts easily and absolutely.

As chair of the NJC, FJSC, NJI, and LPPC, appointments as council, board, and committed members are at his pleasure. He either confers with fellow justices nor seeks their counsel or input on any matter related to these bodies; he has both the final and the only say.

"The CJN has the power to appoint 80 per cent of members of the council and 60 per cent of members of FJSC. The same applies to NJI and LPPC."

He said such enormous powers "are effortlessly abused".

"This needs to change. Continued denial of the existence of this threatening anomaly weakens effective judicial oversight in the country. Appropriate steps could have been taken earlier to fill outstanding vacancies in the apex court.

"Why have these steps not been timeously taken? It is evident that the decision not to fill the vacancies in the court is deliberate. It is all about the absolute powers vested in the office of the CJN and the responsible exercise of the same," he said.

He claimed that the judiciary he exited is far from the one he voluntarily joined and desired to serve and be identified with.

He said: "A couple of years ago, appointment to the bench was strictly on merit. Sound knowledge of the law, integrity, honour and hard work distinguished those who were elevated. Lobbying was unheard of. I never lobbied, not at any stage of my career, to secure any appointment or elevation. As much as possible, the most qualified men and women were appointed. That can no longer be said about appointments to



Datijo

the bench.

The judiciary must be uniquely above board. Appointments should not be polluted by political, selfish and sectional interests. The place of merit, it must be urged, cannot be overemphasized

The Niger State-born jurist, who spent 43 years in the judiciary, noted that with his retirement, Justices on the bench of the apex court have reduced to 10, with two regions of the country not represented.

FG launches CNG buses initiative nationwide

THE Federal Government, on Friday, launched the Compressed Natural Gas, CNG, Initiative with the handing over of two CNG-fuelled buses to the management of the State House

At the official launch of the initiative at Presidential Villa, Abuja, Chairman of the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (P-CNGI), Mr. Zacch Adedeji, performed the handing over ceremony.

He disclosed that the launch also involved the opening of seven pilot conversion centres nationwide.

Adedeji, who is also the Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS, further stated that the government had waived the Value Added Tax, VAT, on CNG purchases as well as seeking duty waivers for value-chain.

Adedeji was represented by the Chief Executive Officer of the Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, NMDPRA, Mr Farouk Ahmed.

He said that plans were underway for the government to establish multiple conversion centres across the country in the next two weeks.

According to him, "I'm pleased to announce that there are currently seven conversion centres in Nigeria. And the government is actively working to establish more of them. These plans will be rolled out, starting this afternoon, by the initiative.

"This project is not only about conversion of vehicles but also about generating employment opportunities.

"It demonstrates President Bola Tinubu's commitment to both environmental

According to Justice Datijo, the depleted number of Supreme Court Justices has remained so due to deliberate action.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Olukayode Ariwoola on his part, however, assured that efforts are on top gear to elevate a number of Justices to the bench of the Court.

"With Justice Musa Dattijo leaving us today after the retirement of Hon. Justice Adamu Amina Augie a few weeks ago, we are now left with just 10 justices on the Supreme Court bench; being the lowest we have ever had in contemporary history of the court.

However, I can confidently assure all the litigant public that efforts are in top gear to get on board a sizable number of justices to boost our rank and complement the tremendous effort we have been investing in the business of the court," Ariwoola said.

sustainability and economic growth.

Moreover, it is my pleasure as your Chief Tax Officer, a position I hold alongside a chairmanship of this initiative, to announce that we will be waiving the Value Added Tax on CNG purchases as well as seeking duty waivers for value-chain.

The goal is to build a sustainable future, leveraging our own cheap and clean energy source; gas", he said.

Adedeji emphasised that the delivery of the CNG project demonstrates President Bola Tinubu's commitment to both environmental sustainability and economic growth in Nigeria.

He implored Nigerians to consider the buses as a symbol of a new beginning, "a journey towards the future, where the power of tomorrow starts today.

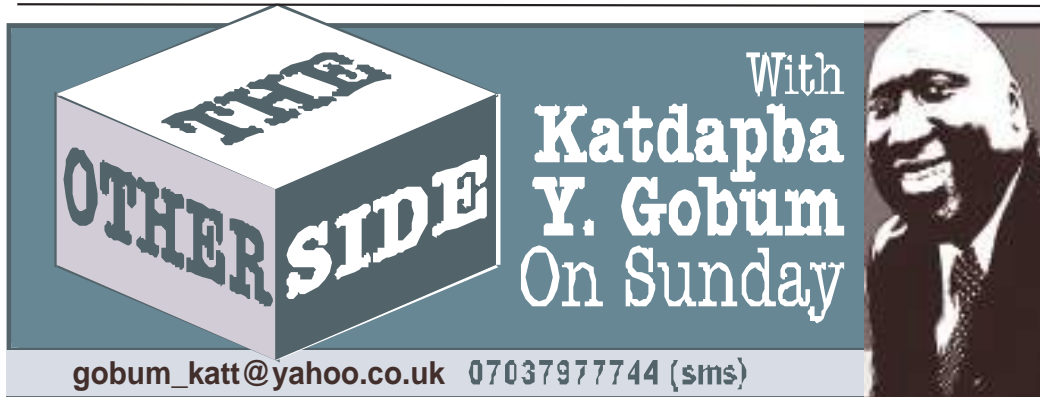
"Let this be a beacon for our country, Nigeria, and an inspiration to the world."

The goal is to build a sustainable future, leveraging our own cheap and clean energy source; gas", he said.

He implored Nigerians to consider the buses as a symbol of a new beginning, "a journey towards the future, where the power of tomorrow starts today.

Let this be a beacon for our country, Nigeria, and an inspiration to the world

The Committee Chairman stressed that the buses running on CNG are not just a technical achievement, but a symbol of President Tinubu's administration's commitment to spearheading an energy revolution



With
Kardapba
Y. Gobum
On Sunday

gobum_katt@yahoo.co.uk 07037977744 (sms)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nigeria and the long queues



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the course of the weeks in which most Nigerians experienced hardships beyond measure, much

was expected from government, such that measures would have been taken to cushion the effects of the sufferings of Nigerians.

Gagdi and the new trajectory

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Conspiracy of silence over men battery

WHO would have believed that the popular American actor, Johnny Depp had allegedly been in an abusive relationship with his wife, Heard. They got married in 2015 but began a legal tussle shortly after, on the issue of physical abuse.

Unfortunately, the rumours making the rounds were that the Pirates of the Caribbean main actor was the one perpetrating the physical abuse against his wife. It was not until the testimony of Dr Shannon Curry portrayed Depp's wife as the perpetrator rather than the victim, which was easier to believe because she is a woman and much younger than Depp.

There is no society in the world that thinks a wife beating her husband is normal. It is something that is frowned at globally because of the general belief that men are stronger than women physically. Or that a woman should be under a man. Our traditions promote that and so do our various religions which give a man the upper arm in all ramifications.

Sometime ago, there was a short video trending on the social media platforms. It was about a man and woman who must have swerved their positions. In the video, the woman who was without doubt in-charge, was instructing her husband who had before him a mortar and held a pestle ready to pound pounded yam, that anywhere he sees yam, he should pound. Everything was okay until she threw yam into her mouth. Her servant husband aimed for her mouth with all his strength with the pestle. Use your imagination to guess what ensued after that.

One has seen men who fear their wives so much that they can't be natural in their company. One in particular can flow in conversations as long as his wife was not present. But the moment his wife was around, he was tongue tied.

A friend said her friend has turned her husband into a stooge. He does the house, cooks, goes to market. She claims that the Bible says he who does not work does not eat. His sin is that he depends on his wife for everything. He was unlucky to be among the few people retrenched from his office for no reason. And since he has no guts to go into business, his business minded wife has switched position with him.

While growing up, we had a neighbour who used to shout at her husband as if he was a fool. In fact, there were a few times she even asked him in our presence if he was a fool. The man was so embarrassed that he walked away silently. The wife became the boss ever since her husband retired. The moment his relations noticed that, they all found their way out of the house. In their place, the wife's relations filled

everywhere. And he became less and less important.

Another man who silently endured torture by his wife said, his undoing was empowering her to do business. The moment the business started moving well, and she was financially buoyant and even independent, her attitude towards her husband changed. His voice in his house became nothing. His wife automatically switched places with him.

His case became so bad because he became a stranger in his home. None of his relatives could come and visit, they got the message and stayed away. He made sure he was relevant as far as their financial needs were concerned. But even with that, they began forgetting to keep his meals for him or feed him anytime he came back home from work.

These and much more pushed him to the arms of another woman who began to do everything his wife was not doing at home. That was the time his wife came down from her high horse and began accusing him of infidelity. He said he didn't deny but told her that she pushed him to the arms of another woman. It took divine intervention to separate him from his girlfriend. It was only possible because his wife changed for the better too.

The cases where men were or are being abused in their relationship or marriage are numerous but not as many as that of women suffering abuse or battery in their marriage. It is not only when the woman is richer than the man. Or when the man depends on his wife for everything. There are isolated cases where the man is the one who pays the piper but the woman dictates the tune. In this case, her husband is a pawn in her hand and does as she says no matter what people say. She controls his wealth and channels it towards her selfish needs. He can do nothing on his own but will often run to her to pat him like a dog.

Cases also abound where women use sex as a weapon to give only when they are happy with their husband. And withhold when unhappy. Many marriages have headed for the rocks because of this attitude. It has also sent faithful men to the arms of strange women whose stock in trade is to destroy homes.

The book of Esther in the Bible is the book every woman should read before getting married. The first chapters tell us how Queen Vashti lost her position as a queen because of insubordination to her king. All that the king asked of her was to come so that he could show off her beauty to his nobles. But she refused him that simple request. As a consequence, she was dethroned.

Nowadays, the attitude of insubordination by wives abounds. The moment a woman thinks she is well rooted, it begins to manifest. The man becomes a rubber stamp except he stamps his feet. The clergy needs to intervene with more spiritual education on this aspect to nip the trend in the bud.

NEWS

Police recruitment : 288,000 youths apply

By Dorcas Pankyes

IN just one week since the start of the six-week application period for recruitment into the Constable cadre of the Nigeria Police Force, an impressive 288,266 Nigerian youths have already submitted their applications online.

A statement issued by Ikechukwu Ani, Head, Press and Public Relations recently stated that As of 7pm on Monday, October 23rd, 2023, the official recruitment portal, www.apply.police.recruitment.gov.ng, had received a total of 288,266 applications. The portal, which opened on Sunday, October 15th, 2023, will remain open until November 26th, 2023, in compliance with the Federal Character Commission's requirement of a six-week application period for government agency vacancies.

Out of the total applications received, 217,105 have met the basic requirements for further consideration in the subsequent stages of the recruitment process. Specifically, 217,300 Nigerian youths have applied for General Duty posts, while 70,676 have applied for

specialist posts.

Unfortunately, 69,426 applications have been rejected due to their inability to meet the required criteria. Among the rejections, 46,868 were due to exceeding the age limit, 51,213 were for General Duty positions, and 18,213 were for specialist positions.

The online application requirements include being of Nigerian origin and birth, possessing the National Identification Number (NIN), having a minimum of 5 credits in no more than 2 sittings in WAEC/NECO or its equivalent, with credit passes in English and Mathematics, and being between the ages of 18 to 25. Additionally, applicants must have a valid email address and phone number. It's important to note that SSCE statements of results or certificates relating to examinations taken before 2015 will not be accepted.

Applicants are advised that there are no monetary implications associated with the application process. Furthermore, Dr. Solomon Arase, the Chairman of the Federal Character Commission and retired



Egbetokun

Inspector General of Police, commended the Nigerian youths for their keen interest in pursuing a career in the Nigeria Police Force.

He reassured them that the ongoing recruitment exercise will be transparent and merit-driven. Dr. Arase urged interested individuals to continue visiting the recruitment portal to apply for consideration.

Overall, the overwhelming response from Nigerian youths demonstrates their increased interest in joining the Nigeria Police Force and contributing to the nation's security.

FG to address humanitarian challenges faced by IDPs

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

THE Federal Government recently reiterated its commitment to address humanitarian challenges bedeviling Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Benue State.

Federal Commissioner, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), Mr. Tijani Ahmed stated this during the flag off of distribution of relief materials at Ichwa IDPs camp in Makurdi.

The items distributed included sewing machines, mattresses, food stuffs and other household items.

Mr. Aliyu said the primary aim of the federal government was to ensure that peace and security were restored in the state and in Nigeria so that IDPs can return to their ancestral homes and rebuild their lives.

"The Commission is working hard to strengthen our collaboration with the State

Government to address humanitarian challenges and provide durable solutions.

The plight of our dear brothers and sisters who have been forced to flee their homes by conflict is a pressing concern.

"My dear brothers and sisters, I have seen you beaten by rain and scorched by the sun because you live in dilapidated makeshift shelters. You have fled your homes and left behind your farm lands and lost your livelihoods. As a Commission, we are not oblivious of the numerous hardships you face," he said.

The federal commissioner further assured that the Commission was fully committed to the plight of IDPs and would continue to support them in every way possible.

"I want to assure you that as Federal Commissioner of The National Commission for

Refugees, Migrants and IDPs, we are fully committed to assisting you with relief materials in the short term and livelihood restoration, housing, education for your children and healthcare for all.

"We are working with the state government to provide you with a durable solution. As a gesture of our commitment, today, we will distribute some food items, non food items and empowerment materials. I assure you that we will come back to provide you with more support and more sustainable interventions," he said.

Mr. Aliyu explained that while efforts at improving the living conditions of IDPs in the camps were ongoing, President Bola Tinubu under the Renewed Hope Agenda was working tirelessly to tackle challenges of insecurity in the state and facilitate the return of IDPs to their ancestral homes.

Earlier, the Executive Secretary, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Mr. James Iorpuu said Ichwa camp has a total population of 14,229 people made up of 2403 households.

Also, the state Commissioner for Humanitarian and Disaster Management, Mr. Aondowase Kunde said the state has 21 IDPs camps with over 2 million population as a result of herders' attacks.

Also speaking, the Chief of Staff to the Governor, Mr. Paul Biam commended the team and federal government for their support to end Insurgency and support victims in the state. He pledged government's support to any organisation willing to support welfare of IDPs and their safe return to their ancestral homes as planned by the current administration.



Tijani

SUNDAY POLITICS

Alia congratulates

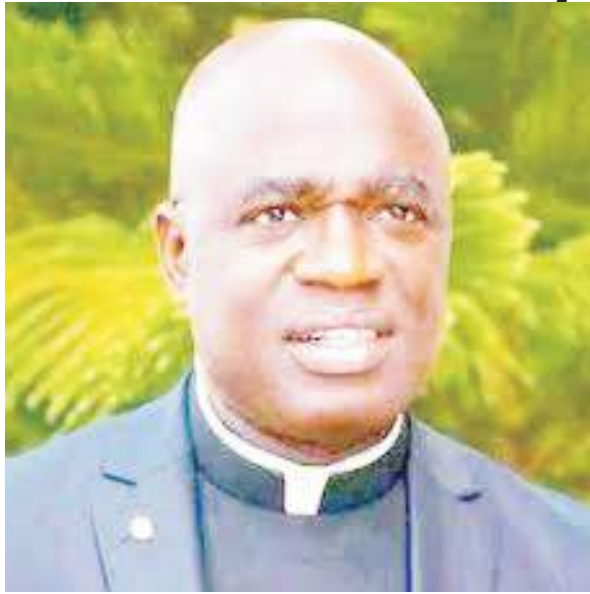
Tinubu, Shettima over victory

From **TERESE TUHWA,**
Makurdi

BENUE State Governor, Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Alia has congratulated President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the Vice President, Kashim Shettima over the reaffirmation of their victory at the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

The governor described the verdict of the Supreme Court as sound and succinct, insisting that the judgment is a revalidation of the sacred mandate freely given to the President and his vice during the February 25th, 2023 presidential polls.

He said as the highest court in the land, the Supreme Court of Nigeria has demonstrated sound legal and jurisprudential reasoning without any doubt that it is the last hope of the common man. It has ensured that the will of the people of the country is not thwarted and power usurped



Alia

through the back door.

Governor Alia in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Sir Tersoo Kula described the judgment as victory for democracy and majority of the Nigerian masses who voted the president into office.

He called on Nigerians

and Benue people to continue to keep faith with the current APC led administration in the country, saying now that the distractions of the court processes are over, the Tinubu led government will concentrate more on delivering the 'Renewed Hope' Agenda to the entire

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG,**
Abuja

CHAIRMAN Inter-Party Advisory Council, IPAC, Engineer Yusuf Yabagi has tasked the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC to put in place measures towards restoring public confidence as it sets to conduct Off-cycle elections in three states of Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi, come eleventh November twenty twenty three.

Engineer Yabagi disclosed this at a quarterly consultative meeting organised by INEC and all registered political parties towards the forthcoming off-cycle elections.

Yabagi stated that, as they prepare for the upcoming off-season elections, all should recommit themselves to the principles of democracy, fairness, and transparency. He added that the challenges faced are not insurmountable, but require a collective effort from all stakeholders involved in the electoral process.

He noted that they must uphold the tenets of democracy and work towards ensuring that the voice of the people is heard and respected through the

INEC, uphold public confidence - IPACI

ballot box. And implored all political parties, civil society organizations and all citizens to play their part in creating an environment that fosters trust and confidence in the electoral processes

He said, together, they can ensure that the people's will prevails and that democracy continues to grow stronger.

Earlier in his welcome remark, Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, Professor Mahmood Yakubu said the subject matter of the meeting is the ongoing preparations for the three off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States scheduled to hold on Saturday, the eleventh November twenty three, with just a little over two weeks to the election, as preparations are at concluding stages.

He said, this is the first time that the Commission

will be conducting three off-cycle governorship elections simultaneously across different geo-political zones, which is made possible by the coincidence of the end of tenure of the current holders of the offices which fall within the constitutional time-frame of not earlier than 150 days or later than 30 days before the expiration of their terms of office as enshrined in Section 178(2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended).

The Chairman noted that the Commission has delivered all non-sensitive materials for the elections to the three states. Training of various categories of ad hoc staff is ongoing and they have made the soft copies of the complete register of voters available to all political parties participating in the



Yabagi

Kogi Poll: Former legislators declare support for APC

From **AMEDU JOSEPH,**
Lokoja

THE Forum of Former Members of the Kogi State House of Assembly has unanimously declared its support for the governorship candidate of the ruling All Progressives Congress, Usman Ododo, ahead of the November 11 election in the state.

The Forum, which comprises the entire past lawmakers in the state from 1999, across political parties, also resolved to go back to their different communities to ensure resounding victory for the APC candidate

The lawmakers, who said their decision to support Ododo followed a painstaking assessment of all the candidates on the field and the need to save the state from being dragged back to the old days of ethnocentric politics and violence, spoke at a press

conference in Lokoja recently.

The Chairman, Forum of Former Members of the Kogi State House of Assembly, Alhassan Salisu Adakeke, who addressed the press, with other members in attendance, pointed out that Kogi was too central to Nigeria to be left in the hands of candidates "who are out to disunite the state" and truncate the widely acknowledged achievements of the current administration.

While calling on the Independent National Electoral Commission to "immediately activate relevant sections of the Electoral Law against candidates fanning ethnic division and stoking atomic politics," the former Assembly members said, "Kogi State has remained very peaceful since the advent of the GYB (Governor Yahaya Bello) administration and cannot afford to lose it

now to desperate politicians dropping names after disrespecting the same names. Their only hope is violence.

"We hereby unanimously declare the support of former legislators to the candidacy of the governorship candidate of the All Progressives Congress, Ahmed Usman Ododo.

"Our members are resolved to work hard throughout the state to deliver him resoundingly on November 11, 2023. We have no doubt that we will celebrate our victory and the future of our dear state will be guaranteed.

"It is our desire that the revolution currently ongoing in education, health, agriculture, youth and women empowerment, as well as infrastructure will continue when we elect the man who understands the development wand of the current administration. We are for consolidation. We are for continuity. We are for Ododo. We are for a united and prosperous Kogi State."

On how they arrived at the choice of Ododo and subsequently threw their weights behind him, the former legislators explained that they took their time to examine the candidates in the contest and took their decision after a series of meetings, consultations and engagements with their members across the state.

"On the forthcoming governorship poll in the state, our forum has resolved to support the candidate of the All Progressives Congress for the fact that he is a product of a system that has put Kogi on the map of development.

"Among the candidates jostling for the number one seat, he is the most qualified, the most experienced, the most prepared and the best man for the job. Apart from his message of consolidation and continuity, Hon. Ahmed

Usman Ododo possesses character traits of a great leader. He is accessible, humble, and brilliant and devoid of the negative drama that has dotted the histories of his competitors," they stated.

According to them, the incumbent administration of Governor Yahaya Bello has built ensuring legacies of development, unity and progress in the state through his equitable distribution of landmark projects and poverty-reduction policies "that have distinguished him

Senate Leader faults stampeding judiciary into partisan politics

THE Majority Leader of the Senate, Sen. Opeyemi Bamidele, has advised opposition political parties and their candidates against stampeding the judiciary into partisan politics through alleged disinformation, mal-information and misinformation.

Bamidele disclosed this on Thursday while reacting to the Supreme Court judgement which reaffirmed the election of President Bola Tinubu, according to a statement by his Directorate of Media and Public Affairs in Abuja.

Bamidele, who chaired the Senate Committee on Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters in the ninth National Assembly, kicked against how the opposition unduly dragged the judiciary into partisan politics in pursuit of its selfish interests against collective interest of Nigerians.

While celebrating the victory of the president, Bamidele condemned what he described as "the undue blackmailing of the judiciary even before the petitions of the opposition parties and their candidates were decided.

He observed that the judiciary "is one of the most consistent, dependable and

reliable democratic institutions that still stand for and with the oppressed.

"It is therefore amoral and immoral for any political actor or party to subject the judiciary to media trial rather than abiding by the rules of law.

"Judiciary has never been vilified in the recent history of this federation by petitioners who at different times benefitted tremendously from the independence and neutrality of the judiciary."

Bamidele noted that the petitioners "claimed to have won the 2023 presidential elections during their separate world press conferences. But when they failed to prove their cases, they selfishly resorted to blackmailing the time-tested institutions, especially the judiciary."

He observed that the decisions of the appellate and apex courts "have clearly shown that the last elections are the most credible since the beginning of the Fourth Republic with the deployment of Bimodal Voter Accreditation System, which the Independent National Electoral Commission used for the conduct of the elections."

He, therefore, commended the apex court for standing for the truth and truth alone amid

the ferocious, needless and relentless intimidation of judicial officers by the petitioners, who has said trampled upon the national interest in pursuit of their self-centric political agenda.

"Now that Judiciary has concluded all the presidential election petitions in favour of President Tinubu, Bamidele warned all political actors, interests and parties "to henceforth stop playing politics with the rule of law and the integrity of the judiciary," he said.

Bamidele also warned "against the perverse culture of stampeding the judiciary into partisan politics.

"As far as Nigeria is concerned, judiciary remains an unbiased arbiter wholly committed to the dispensation of justice without regard to any ethnic, economic, political, religious consideration.

"It is therefore unfair and uncalled to paint the judiciary, the only source of hope for the oppressed, black in the eyes of the whole world. This does not harm the judiciary alone, but also portray all of us, Nigerians at home and in the diaspora, bad before the eyes of the whole world.

"This is completely unacceptable! And it must be best stopped."



Ododo

SUNDAY POLITICS

Senate passes Bill to reduce CBN Gov's power

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

THE Nigerian Senate has passed two bills for an Act to amend the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Act and other related matters thereto, 2023, and an Act to amend the CBN (Establishment) Act 2007 to make the apex bank more transparent and accountable in its operations.

The bills aim to bar the governor and the deputy governor of the central bank from partisan politics; remove the governor as chairman of the CBN board; create an office of the chairman and expand the board members among others.

The bills were sponsored by Nwokocho Darlington, a senator representing Abia Central, and Karimi Sunday Steve, representing Kogi West.

The Senate, during plenary on Wednesday, agreed that the CBN laws have to be amended to reposition the apex bank to perform its role, especially as the country faces economic challenges, including the foreign exchange crisis.

Leading the debate, Steve explained that the bills seek to amend section 62 on the constitution of the board, to expand it to bring in other critical members, including the auditor-general of the federation and chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service and the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria.

He said the bills were also to amend section 9 to bar the CBN governor and deputy governor from participating in politics and Section 7 to stop the CBN governor from giving responsibility to any other staff member to act on his behalf, other than the most senior, the deputy governor.

The bills further propose to mandate the Salaries and



Akpabio

Wages Commission to determine the remuneration of CBN staff, although some lawmakers kicked against this amendment.

Also leading the debate, Nwokocho said his proposed bill seeks to amend Sections 6(1), (2); 8(1) (2) (3) (4) (5), 12 (1) (2) (3), 13 (1) (2) (3) (4) and paragraph 8 of the first schedule to the Act to strengthen the bank and make provision for the appointment of a chairman of the board, provide for responsibility to quicken and deepen execution of the bank's mandate.

"This bill seeks to provide for, among other things, separate the head of management from the head of the governing board in line with national and international good corporate governance practices, enshrine real-time controls and effective accountability in the conduct of central banking in Nigeria.

"It also seeks to establish the position of the chairman of the board of the CBN with cognate qualifications and experience suitable for achieving the renewed objectives of the bank", he said.

Contributing to the debate, Kaka Shehu Lawan, the senator representing Borno

Central, said the bill was timely, and the law needed to be amended. He decried that the CBN has given loans to the government of up to N27 trillion without the approval of the National Assembly.

Also contributing, Lola Ashiru representing Kwara South, decried that the naira was diminishing every day to the extent that respect was being lost. He urged that the amendment should be expanded to ban the use of dollars for trade.

Aminu Tambuwal, representing Sokoto South, said the bills would strengthen the institution of the CBN and address the lapses and lacuna that have been detected in the implementation of the Act, particularly on it being transparent and ensuring that it carries out its responsibility.

"The CBN governor came out unashamedly to campaign as president. More disappointing is that authorities of that time didn't caution him, and that was a bastardisation of the CBN office," he cried.

Barau Jibrin, the deputy Senate president, commanded the bills while emphasising the need to reposition the laws to put the apex bank in the best position to perform its roles.

CHAIRMAN Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Prof. Mahmood Yakubu has expressed the commission's readiness to partner the National Population Commission (NPC) to clean up voter register.

Speaking Thursday in Abuja at a quarterly consultative meeting with media, the INEC chairman said the template for cleaning up of the register was being worked out.

"We are working with the NPC for the purpose of cleaning up the voter register. We are designing a template for that purpose," he said.

The INEC chairman also said there were outstanding bye elections resulting from the 2023 polls.

"Out of the 11 bye elections, the INEC chairman said five elected lawmakers died while the rest were as a result of resignations by those who secured political appointments," he said.

He however expressed the hope that in the next one month, all litigations would have been over to enable them commence the conduct of the bye elections.

"So far, we have 11 bye elections. Five members died and 11 resigned in eleven different states and 11 constituencies," Yakubu said.

He asked media practitioners in the country to form a bulwark against fake news in the country while strictly adhering to the ethics of journalism.

He said: "I wish to remind all media organisations to strictly adhere to the ethics of your profession. We welcome reports on the election. At the same time, you should form a bulwark against fake news.

"For the avoidance of doubt, the Commission does not believe in censorship. We have said repeatedly that the best antidote to fake news is greater openness and regular and consistent engagement with stakeholders. We will continue to work together in this regard."

Professor Yakubu disclosed present administration to bring the country out of the present challenges," the group appealed.

'Nov 11 guber: Form a bulwark against fake news'

that about 94 media organisations deploying 1,255 personnel have been accredited to cover the off-cycle elections in the three states, adding that "in the next few days, the accredited media organisations will be notified of the date for the collection of the identity cards for their officials."

Giving further details on plans for the elections, he said: "About two weeks ago, the commission conducted a mock accreditation involving actual voters in designated polling units in the three states.

"By doing so, we tested the efficacy of the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) for both biometric authentication of voters and the upload of results to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IREV).

"Some of you observed the mock accreditation exercise and viewed the results on the IREV portal. We have received no adverse report so far.

"By this, we are encouraged that the test was successful and we look forward to improved performance of the BVAS in voter accreditation and result upload in the forthcoming Governorship elections and beyond."

He further said: "Election is a multi-stakeholder activity. In discharging our responsibilities, we will continue to engage with all stakeholders. One of such engagements is with the security agencies.

"In previous elections, media organisations have expressed concern about the safety of journalists, technical staff and protection of the equipment you deploy on Election Day.

"Similarly, you have on several occasions urged the Commission to intercede with the security agencies to grant you unimpeded access to polling and collation locations. I want to reassure you that we will continue to do so as we engage with the security agencies both at the national level and in the three states."

The INEC chairman said the commission considered the elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi governorship as critical, even as he disclosed that security and flooding were capable of militating against the governorship elections in some areas, especially in Kajana in the Ajaokuta area of Kogi State.



Mahmood

Group hails apex court's verdict, congratulate Tinubu on victory

THE APC Grassroots Governance Group (APCG3) has congratulated President Bola Tinubu on the affirmation of his victory by the Supreme Court, describing the judgment as victory for the nation's

democracy.

This is contained in a statement by the Chairman, Board of Trustees of APCG3, Dr Jerry Ugokwe, the Chairman, Advisory Board, Prof. Ojo Ademola, and the National Coordinator,

Amechi Oyema, on Friday in Abuja.

According to the group, with the verdict, the president will now face the challenges facing the country without distraction.

They also congratulated the National Chairman of the APC, Alhaji Abdullahi Ganduje, adding that the victory is a reflection of the acceptability of the party.

The group said the APC under the present leadership would lead the party to more victories at all levels and urged members of the opposition to put the election behind them for the country to move forward.

"We heartily congratulate President Bola Tinubu on the affirmation of his mandate by the Supreme Court.

"It is a call to duty and we of the APCG3 are confident that with the removal of this distraction, Nigerians will soon see better days.

"We call on the opposition to put the election behind them and support the

North East to host Trade Fair in Bauchi

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

ARRANGEMENTS have reached an advanced stage by members of the Central Planning Committee for the hosting of the 15th edition of the North East Joint Trade Fair in Bauchi.

The idea to re-kick start the hosting of the Trade Fair in Bauchi State was part of resolutions of the recent Northeast Governors Forum Meeting held in Maiduguri in an effort to improve commercial and business activities within the sub-region which was affected by activities of insurgents.

This was disclosed by the Chairman of the Central Planning Committee, Barrister Ibrahim Kashim, who is Secretary to Bauchi State Government while briefing

journalists on the outcome of the committee's meeting at Government House, Bauchi.

He explained that sub-committees have also been constituted with a view to mobilizing and encouraging business men and women to participate in the trade fair.

Barrister Ibrahim Kashim, revealed that the Trade Fair is expected to commence on the 21st to 31st of January 2024 at Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida (IBB) Square. He assured that adequate security and logistics towards the success of the event is fully guaranteed.

The Bauchi State Commissioner, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Alh. Mahmud Baba Ma'aji, while calling on Bauchi based traders and business operators to take advantage of the gathering to boost their

income, commended Governor Bala Mohammed for his commitment towards economic development of the state.

Baba Ma'aji, stressed the economic importance of the trade fair and said the state will succeed in diversifying its economy through encouraging small and medium businesses and Public Private Partnership (PPP).

Our correspondent in Bauchi reports that the meeting had in attendance Commissioners of Commerce from all the 6 North East states in the zone, members of House Committee of Commerce, Trader and Investment as well Directors General, North East Chambers of Commerce in the region.



Tinubu

SUNDAY POLITICS

Can INEC deliver hitch-free in Kogi, Bayelsa, Imo?

On November 11, residents of Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi will return to the poll to elect new governors that will run the affairs of the states for the next four years in an off election circle exercise. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) is expected to conduct the election in 10, 510 polling units spread across the three states.

IN Bayelsa, the election will take place in 2,244 polling units, while it will hold in 3,508 polling units in Kogi. Imo has 4,758 polling units where the election will hold. INEC has targeted about 5.4 million voters for the election, with Bayelsa having 1.05 million voters; while 2.4 million voters are expected in Imo. Kogi has about two million voters. INEC has been engaged in series of activities in the past few months toward ensuring the successful conduct of the election.

However, some stakeholders have expressed concerns over the ability of the electoral umpire to conduct hitch-free election in these states, going by the experiences of the 2023 general polls.

Although the umpire insists that it did a good job in the polls, many Nigerians, particularly those on the opposition side think otherwise.

They cite the some logistics challenges, especially late arrival of election materials and election officials in polling units as examples of areas that need improvement.

There is also the reoccurring problem of malfunctioning of the Bimodal Voters Accreditation System (BVAS) in polling units, leading to delay in the accreditation of voters and voting.

In some polling units, voting was delayed for many hours, as voters remain on queues to perform their civic rights of electing their leaders.

Although INEC has reassured of its resolve to address the challenges, stakeholders say the commission must buckle up, if it wants to conduct hitch-free, free, fair and credible election.

Mr Yabagi Sani, the National Chairman, Inter-Party Advisory Council (IPAC) tasked INEC to strengthen its capacities to ensure hitch-free election in the three states.

He expressed optimism that INEC would strive to rebuild trust between itself, political parties and the electorate by ensuring hitch-free poll.

"We in IPAC believe that INEC has learned some lessons and they know that there is a huge deficit of trust between the commission and Nigerians.

"This happened because INEC was over ambitious and wanted things to work very well during the presidential elections, but underlined conditions did not allow them to achieve the high standards they set for themselves.

"So INEC will have to go back to its drawing board and take a look at things that went wrong and correct them.

"And this doesn't mean that they should throw away their technological advancements because they served their purpose and there is nothing



Mahmood

wrong with the use of technology," he told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) during a recent interview.

Sani said that the use of technology was not the problem of INEC in the conduct of the 2023 general election but the conducts of its officials, political parties and their agents, as well as the conduct of Nigerians.

He advised the commission to improve on its technology usage in order to set a better standard for Nigeria in the global scene as the largest and strongest democratic country in Africa.

"INEC must show a good example in the Nov.11 off-cycle governorship election, it should show that we have technology and we can use them perfectly," he said.

Sani said that all hands must be on deck to ensure that electoral officers are not pressured by governors to falsify results in the election.

"As we approach the off-cycle election in Imo, Bayelsa and Kogi states in November, all hands must be on deck to ensure the resident electoral commissioners and returning officers are not pressured by some governors and INEC itself to falsify results in their states.

"The Adamawa state 2023 governorship election result declaration saga and the embarrassment caused INEC and

the nation at large is a case in point.

"The prosecution of the Adamawa REC in court by INEC is highly desirable and commendable.

"Equally desirable is action by all relevant security agencies to check the misuse of state resources in violation of the Electoral Act 2022," he said.

Mr Hamzat Lawal, the Chief Executive Officer, Connected Development (CODE), a Civil Society Organisation, corroborated Sani's claim, urging INEC to improve on its logistics management, ahead of the November election.

Lawal, also the founder, follow the money, said that INEC must strive hard to close the logistics gaps observed in the 2023 general election to achieve a successful off-cycle election.

"If we in CODE are saddled with the responsibility of undertaking electoral management, first, we will invest heavily in logistics, which is one impediment.

"The second is human capital development and training of ad hoc staff in time, not a few weeks to elections, this is because these are two major gaps we faced in the last election.

"This is an off circle election so there should be no pressure on the commission," he said.

Mr Emmanuel Njoku, the Director, Democracy and Governance, CODE, said there is a need for INEC to seek for more electoral reforms to tackle some issues in organising elections in

Nigeria.

Also, Mr Bayo Balogun, a member of the Yiaga Africa observer mission at the just concluded Liberia's election, urged INEC to take lessons from the smooth conduct of the election, toward improving on the Nov.11 off-cycle election.

Balogun, is also the Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters.

He said that INEC needs to change the format of its ballot papers to include photographs and names of candidates to improve the quality of electoral preferences and reduce invalidated votes.

"We also noticed that the Liberian National Elections Commission (NEC) displayed high devotion to rules and procedures throughout the elections.

"Polling officials displayed excellent knowledge of the rules and enforced the guidelines at all election level," he said.

Balogun also urged National Assembly to strengthen the electoral laws by making electronic transmission of results mandatory in future elections in Nigeria.

He said this should include the upload of polling unit-level results and results sheets at different levels of results collation.

Balogun urged political stakeholders in Nigeria to demonstrate firm commitment to democracy and nation-building by upholding national values such as patriotism, integrity and public interest in electoral politics.

Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, INEC Chairman, acknowledged some challenges in the conduct of the last election as ass the commission is working hard to ensure that the election is free, fair and credible.

"We are giving our words to Nigerians that we must open polling units at 8.30a.m on the dot on the Election Day.

"Therefore, Registration Area Centres (RACs) must be activated for commencement of voting at 8.30a.m.," Yakubu said at the Kogi Local Government (LGA) office of the commission during INEC mock accreditation for the election in Lokoja on Oct.14.

He said one of the main concerns of the commission is the prevailing security challenge in the country.

Yakubu said that the commission is working with the security agencies to provide secured environment for peaceful and credible election.

"Wherever you go in Nigeria, you are sure to see two government offices. One is INEC. You will see an INEC office in the LGA headed by an electoral officer, an Electoral Officer (EO).

You will also see the police office headed by a Divisional Police Officer (DPO) for the local government.

"So, we are everywhere working together. And I'm happy that we are working together as we prepare for the elections," he said.

Yakubu said that INEC plans to deploy 46,084 officials comprising of both permanent and ad hoc staff for the conduct of the election in the three states.

"While we are leaving no stone unturned in other areas of preparation for the elections governorship elections the commission plans to deploy 46,084 regular and ad hoc staff for exercise.

"We are also finalising arrangements for vehicles and boats for land and maritime movement of personnel and materials," he said.

Yakubu said that such massive deployment requires a secured environment which he said was beyond the commission's immediate responsibility.

"On our part, we will continue to deepen our engagement with the security agencies and more meetings are planned in the next few days.

"Similarly, the commission will hold series of meetings with stakeholders at the national level in addition to ongoing engagements at the state levels," he said.

The INEC Chairman expressed confidence that the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) would perform better in the Nov.11 election.

"Last week, we conducted a mock accreditation involving actual voters in designated polling units in the three states; we had two objectives for the exercise.

"Firstly is to test the efficacy of the BVAS for biometric authentication of voters; secondly, to upload the result to the INEC Result Viewing Portal (IReV). Both tests were successful.

"We look forward to improved performance of the BVAS in voter accreditation and result uploading in the forthcoming elections," he said.

Yakubu said that all non-sensitive materials for the election had been delivered to the three states, so far.

He said that the election would involve 5,409,438 registered voters in 10,510 polling units spread across 649 electoral wards in 56 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

He said that other preparatory activities, including training, were on course, while valuable lessons learnt from the 2023 general election would be used to improve performance of the Nov.11 election.

As preparations for the elections hit top gears it is important that all INEC personnel, stakeholders and politicians in the affected states cooperate with INEC to ensure hitch-free polls. Failure should not be an option. (NANFeatures)

"However, some stakeholders have expressed concerns over the ability of the electoral umpire to conduct hitch-free election in these states, going by the experiences of the 2023 general polls. Although the umpire insists that it did a good job in the polls, many Nigerians, particularly those on the opposition side think otherwise. They cite the some logistics challenges, especially late arrival of election materials and election officials in polling units as examples of areas that need improvement".

SUNDAY PEOPLE

MUTFWANG RECEIVES FIRST FEMALE NUJ CHAIR AND EXCO

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang yesterday received the first female Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists Plateau State Council, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo and her executive council, they were received by the the Deputy Governor, Hon. Josephine Piyo in her office, Government House Rayfield, Jos



NUJ Chairman, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo delivering her courtesy message to the listening of the representative of Governor Mutfwang and other Staff



Cross section of State Government functionaries to receive the NUJ



Cross section of the NUJ state executive council during the visit



Hon. Josephine Piyo (middle) praying for the first female chairman of NUJ, Ayuku Pwaspo and team during the visit



Representative of Governor Mutfwang (left) responding



Deputy Governor, Hon. Josephine Piyo in a handshake with the NUJ Chairman, Ayuku Pwaspo



Cross section of journalists covering the visit by the first female Chairman and team



Hon. Josephine Piyo, Mrs. Ayuku Pwaspo, NUJ executive members and Government officials in a group photograph

PHOTOS: DANLADI DUK

APART from its role of making laws, the legislature is also mandated by law to perform oversight functions. These oversight powers are contained in Sections 83-89 of the Nigerian Constitution with regards to the National Assembly and Sections 120-128 with regards to the state Houses of Assembly.

This enables them supervise the activities of government to ensure that they are acting in accordance with laid down rules and procedures.

With the inauguration of the state tenth assembly came the quest to effectively manage its activities and ensure optimal performances for the good of the people of Plateau State. In line with this, the Rt. Hon Speaker Moses Thomas Sule on assumption of office immediately swung into action by constituting twenty four House Standing Committees who embarked on this functions to oversee ongoing projects in the various MDAs.

For the House Committee on Health, the Chairman Hon. Salome Wanglek who represents Pankshin South constituency led other members of the committee on the visit.

The MDAs visited include the Plateau Aids Control Agency (PLACA), College of Health Technology Zawan, College of Nursing and Midwifery Vom, Plateau State Contributory Health Emergency Management Agency (PLASHEMA), Plateau State Hospital Management Board and the Plateau State Primary Healthcare Development Board.

Heads of the MDAs did not mince words as they laid bare their myriad of challenges ranging from non releases of approved funds, shortage of manpower, facility and equipment decay, lack of operational vehicles, non completion of some medical facilities like the General Hospitals in Mabudi, Langtang South, Kanke and Riyom.

The committee on their part, however assured of the necessary legislative intervention towards helping them deliver on their mandate to serve the citizens.

For the Chairman House Committee on Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs Hon. Timothy Dantong who is the member representing Riyom constituency, said the state legislature is desirous of working to reclaim the lost glory of the local government system. This was brought to the fore, when he led other members of his Committee on a familiarization/oversight to the various establishments under his supervision.

The committee under Dantong undertook its first official assignment with visits to the Ministry of Local

Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, the Local Government Service Commission and the Local Government Staff Pension Board.

At the Local Government Pension Board, it was gathered that over eleven thousand (11,000) local government pensioners in the state are owed backlog of about 31 billion naira pension, gratuity and death benefits. Many of the pensioners wallow in pathetic situations caused by failure of relevant government agencies at all levels to remit their statutory contributions in order



As PLHA committees embark on oversights



to fund payment of retirees entitlements.

On its part, House Committee on Finance through the Chairman Hon. Cornelius Doeyok wants all Ministries, Departments and Agencies under its purview to work towards result delivery in the current dispensation. The committee visited the Ministry of Finance, Plateau State Internal Revenue Service, State Debt Management Office, Plateau State Microfinance Development Agency, (PLASMIDA), the State Pension Board and Bureau of Public Procurement. At the Plateau State Internal Revenue Service, the Chairman Jim Pam Ways expressed displeasure with the negative attitude people have towards payment of taxes. For the State Pension Board, the acting Executive Secretary

Kurnam Gambo said the arrears of unpaid pension, gratuity and death benefits have accumulated to over 20 billion naira. Heads of some of the MDAs also complained about understaffing, non releases of budgetary provisions, mobility, equipment and facility decay etc. The Plateau State House of Assembly Committee on Parastatals and World bank projects during its oversight and familiarization visit admonished the Jos Metropolitan Development Board (JMDB) to work out suitable template that would position it as the major revenue earner for the state. The committee led by its Chairman and member representing Qua'an Pan North constituency, Hon. Paul Datugun was also at the Plateau State Independent

Electoral Commission (PLASIEC), Muslim Welfare Pilgrims Board and the Christian Welfare Pilgrims Board. For the Muslim Welfare Pilgrim Board and that of Christian Welfare Pilgrims, the challenges were somehow similar. Acting Executive Secretaries of the two boards Aisha Ibrahim and Ruth Ngupar said pilgrimage operation in the state are often encumbered by late releases of funds and International passport delay among other things. The Appropriation Committee led by its Chairman Hon. Danjuma Azi, member representing Jos North West constituency were at the Government House Administration, Office of the Deputy Governor, that of the Secretary to Government of

the state and the Office of Head of Service. Other MDAs the committee also paid oversights to are the State Budget Office and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hon. Danjuma Azi encouraged all MDAs under his oversight power to ensure that provisions in their budget reflects 'the time is now mantra'. He also charged the MDAs to brace up for the mandatory budget defence; an event he described as an offshoot for the familiarization visit the committee is out for.

The committee's visit was at its climax in the State Ministry of Budget and Economic Planning where questions about the status of the state economy ranging from budgeting system, world bank intervention programmes, fuel subsidy palliative and others were asked.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Olukoyede



Adeolu

EFCC's new vista on anti-corruption war

The Federal Government's anti-graft war spearheaded by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission [EFCC], is one battle that has continued to rage the past decades with so many twists and turns. As it is; even the czars in charge of prosecuting the war on corruption had realized that the job is full of challenges and a no mean Job with some of them slipping on the banana peels that sometimes turned the agency to that of the hunter being hunted. KENNETH DARENG writes.

THE latest approach redesigning the architecture of the fight against corruption in the country is taking a shift from enforcement to proactive approach as a way of dismantling orts of corruption paving way for national progress.

This new strategy was announced by the new Chairman of the EFCC, Ola Olukoyede, after confirmation sitting by the Senate. According to him, this is a new paradigm shift that will consolidate prevention mechanism in the nation's unyielding battle against corruption.

"Without downplaying prosecution, the EFCC will be primarily concerned with prevention by embracing this wisdom, "Prevention is better than cure" underscores the significance of taking precautionary steps to avert problems before they arise instead of managing the consequences afterwards."

This new approach emphasizes the importance of proactive prevention actions which indicates that it is far more effective and efficient to prevent

an issue or challenge from occurring initially, rather than attempting to resolve it once it has manifested.

SUNDAY STANDARD sources gathered that the vision of the new EFCC boss is to address underlying causes of corrupt practices by implementing preventive measures to save time and resources which would have minimized efforts that expended on handling a particular case.

According to the EFCC Chairman, " emphasis must be placed on crime prevention. For instance, between 2018 and 2020, Nigeria lost approximately N2.9 trillion through contract fraud in 3 years. This was as a result of misappropriation by contractors for personal gain.

"I did a personal survey between 2018 and 2020 on 50 entities in Nigeria, both human and corporate entities. I picked just one scheme, one specie of fraud which is called contract and procurement fraud. I discovered that within 3 years, Nigeria had lost N2.9 trillion." Olukoyede said.

The new EFCC boss further stated that the funds pilfered

during the assessed period could have been allocated to valuable government initiatives had the past leadership of the anti-corruption agency taken measures to prevent its diversion.

"When I put my figures together, I discovered that if the country had prevented the money from being stolen, it would have given us 1,000 kilometres of road. It would have built more than 20 standard tertiary institutions. It would have also educated about 6,000 children from primary to tertiary levels at N16million per child. It would have delivered more than 20,000 units of 3 bedroom houses across the country. It would have given us a World-Class teaching hospital in each of the 36 states of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory. And this is where we are coming from." He stated.

He also canvassed for the review of the criminal Justice system, stressing that the review would not only reduce time spent on investigations and trials of suspects but will save the country money. Besides, he wants the federal , states and

local governments to establish a transactional credit system to discourage corrupt tendencies in the civil service.

Olukoyede, also called for collaborative effort in tackling corruption noting that, an average individual would steal if given the opportunity making reference to civil servants whom he accused of living in luxury homes and buying vehicles that their savings cannot afford.

He said, the time has come for all anti- corruption agencies to focus more on prevention than enforcement. He stated, enforcement is a very strong tool in our hands and we are going to use it very seriously. "The savings of an average civil servant in Nigeria all through his service years cannot build the type of house they are building and the type of cars they are riding.

"The problem we have is just like that of the proverbial monkey that was locked in a cage with a bunch of bananas as the owner stood outside with a cane. The monkey would either eat the banana get beaten and be alive, or allow the bananas to get rotten and die of hunger. Everyone wants to live a luxurious life and the incentives are all over the place. I will do more in the area of blocking leakages. We spent more money fighting corruption when we could have spent less to prevent it without down playing the importance of enforcement.

He pledged to implement a transactional credit system. This system aims to restrict the

purchase of luxurious properties with cash, enabling the monitoring of financial transactions while emphasizing the fact that over relying on enforcement would be insufficient without an effective credit system put in place.

"There is what we call a transactional credit system. If we continue to allow Nigerians to buy houses, cars and other luxurious properties by cash because we don't have an effective credit system, 1,000 anti-corruption agencies will not do us any good and that is the reality.

"We must create an atmosphere to make sure people have choices. If I don't steal money, I can't afford to train my children in school with good standard If I don't steal money, can I afford a car after I have worked for 20 years? An average Nigerian does not own a home. And when given the opportunity he would steal and even when he does not have the opportunity; he would create one."

The anti-graft Czar emphasized the importance of synergy with the Nigerian judiciary particularly in handling technical areas with a view to resolving corruption cases within a time frame from the High Court to the Supreme Court.

"In order to encourage our criminal justice system to work, the substance should be taken above technicalities. We must also ensure that prosecution of corruption cases should not be allowed to for a minimum of 5

According to the EFCC Chairman, " emphasis must be placed on crime prevention. For instance, between 2018 and 2020, Nigeria lost approximately N2.9 trillion through contract fraud in 3 years. This was as a result of misappropriation by contractors for personal gain. "I did a personal survey between 2018 and 2020 on 50 entities in Nigeria, both human and corporate entities. I picked just one scheme, one specie of fraud which is called contract and procurement fraud. I discovered that within 3 years, Nigeria had lost N2.9 trillion." Olukoyede said.

Continued on page 31

NEWS

PLSGI partners American varsity to train Engineering students

By HOSEA NYAMLONG

IN furtherance of the partnership between the Plateau State Government and School of Engineering, Liberty University, Lynchburg, West Virginia, United States of America, 10 outstanding students of Plateau State would be shortlisted for enrolment in 5 Masters and 5 PhD programmes at the School of Engineering, Liberty University, Lynchburg, West Virginia, United States.

This was contained in a press release signed by the Commissioner, Ministry of Higher Education, Plateau State, Hon. Dr. Kachollom Pyam Gang and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD in Jos recently.

The statement added that Plateau state is hereby notifying the general public that all Engineering students who are indigenes of Plateau State and graduated with a First Class or Second Class Upper from any university and desirous to further his/her studies in the same field to kindly contact the Ministry of Higher Education in Plateau State for further information.

The general public are to note that the opportunity runs from Tuesday 24, October, through Tuesday 31st October 2023.

However, the Ministry could

be contacted through the following Phone numbers - Permanent Secretary: 08036495955. and Director, Planning, Research & Statistics: 08035585334



Mutfwang

Climate challenges : Solutions rest on engineers - WFEO

The new President of World Federation of Engineers Organization, (WFEO), Engineer Mustapha Balarabe Shehu, says the solutions to challenges of climate change rest on engineers.

The Nigerian-born Engineer Shehu spoke to the assembly of World Federation of Engineers Organization's (WFEO) Annual General Meeting (AGM) recently as engineers all over the world had converged in Prague, Czech Republic to honour the first African and the 17th President of WFEO.

Speaking on the challenges faced as a result of climate change, such as flood, and that of conflicts resulting in the destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of people, Engr Shehu said, "the solutions rest on the engineers."

"As engineers, we will always be ready to deploy

our knowledge and expertise to rebuild these damages or infrastructure."

Engineer Shehu who was the 28th President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers NSE., further added, "To handle these challenges, there is need to be equipped with the right knowledge."

The former President of the African Federation of Engineering Organizations (AFEO) between 2015-2016, stressed that as part of his agenda during his two years stewardship, he will ensure that engineers get equipped through training in order to have adequate knowledge to be able to handle challenges

The new world leader also disclosed that his administration will look into the issue of having a comprehensive data of engineers, specifying the

total strength of the male and female engineers and their expertise.

A delegate at the colourful event, the Executive Director, Alim and Associates Ltd., Engr. Muhyideen Alim Yusuf FNSE, described Engr. Mustapha as a man of repute. He expressed confidence that the wealth of experience of the new President of WFEO would help in bringing growth and development to the society.

Engr. Mustapha, an active participant in the affairs of WFEO, was accompanied by family and friends and had the support of Nigerian engineers both at home and in the diaspora.

Delegates to the historic event were in high spirits as they looked forward to a successful and a fruitful two years stewardship.

The World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO) is the international organization for the engineering profession. Founded in 1968, under the auspices of UNESCO, WFEO brings together national engineering institutions from some 100 nations and represents more than 30 million engineers.



Mustapha

Man of God declares peace on Plateau The General Evangelist, Christ Apostolic Church, CAC, Nigeria, Worldwide, Prophet Evangelist, Hezekiah Oladeji has invoked the power of God over evil forces against Plateau State.

Oladeji made the declaration when he paid a courtesy call on Governor Caleb Mutfwang at the Old Government House, recently said a team of 65 men of God have been in the state and Bokkos in particular, where the church is said to have a strong base and being one of the places that have suffered attacks, to pray for the will of God to prevail on the security situation in the state.

He urged the people of Plateau State to fear not and return to God, noting that God himself will take mighty steps to end the evil being waged against the state.

While sympathizing with the government and people of Plateau State over the incessant attacks by the Fulani militia and terrorist groups, the General Overseer prayed for the will of God to prevail over the forces against the state. He assured that after his visit and prayers, the state will witness peace.

According to him, they were aware of the efforts the state was

Man of God declares peace on Plateau



Oladeji

contributing to the growth of the church on the Plateau and it was one of the states they recognized as very important in the country.

The man of God added that the power of darkness shall not overturn the government.

Governor Caleb Mutfwang while speaking

through his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, commended the General Overseer for taking the burden of Plateau in his heart by coming to pray for the land.

Governor Mutfwang expressed the hope that the visit will bring to an end the calamity that has befallen the state.

FG launches CNG buses initiative nationwide

The Federal Government, on Friday, launched the Compressed Natural Gas, CNG, Initiative with the handing over of two CNG-fuelled buses to the management of the State House

At the official launch of the initiative at Presidential Villa, Abuja, Chairman of the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (P-CNGi), Mr. Zacch Adedeji, performed the handing over ceremony.

He disclosed that the launch also involved the opening of seven pilot conversion centres nationwide.

Adedeji, who is also the Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service, FIRS, further stated that the government had waived the Value Added Tax, VAT, on CNG purchases as well as seeking duty waivers for value-chain.

Adedeji was represented by the Chief Executive Officer of the Midstream

and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, NMDPPRA, Mr Farouk Ahmed.

Moreover, it is my pleasure as your Chief Tax Officer, a position I hold alongside as chairmanship of this initiative, to announce that we will be waiving the Value Added Tax on CNG purchases as well as seeking duty waivers for value-chain.

The goal is to build a sustainable future, leveraging our own cheap and clean energy source; gas", he said.

Adedeji emphasised that the delivery of the CNG project demonstrates President Bola Tinubu's commitment to both environmental sustainability and economic growth in Nigeria.

He implored Nigerians to consider the buses as a symbol of a new beginning, "a journey towards the future, where the power of tomorrow starts today.

Adedeji emphasised that the delivery of the CNG project demonstrates

President Bola Tinubu's commitment to both environmental sustainability and economic growth in Nigeria.

He implored Nigerians to consider the buses as a symbol of a new beginning, "a journey towards the future, where the power of tomorrow starts today.

Let this be a beacon for our country, Nigeria, and an inspiration to the world

The Committee Chairman stressed that the buses running on CNG are not just a technical achievement, but a symbol of President Tinubu's administration's commitment to spearheading an energy revolution

According to him, "I'm pleased to announce that there are currently seven conversion centres in Nigeria. And the government is actively working to establish more of them. These plans will be rolled out, starting this afternoon, by the initiative.

CHANGE OF NAME

ADAMU	SHEDUL	NIMVEN
I formerly known as ADAMU SAIDU , now wish to be known and addressed as BAYA SAIDU ADAMU . All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.	I formerly known as NANNA MARTINS , now wish to be known and addressed as NANNA SHEDUL . All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.	I formerly known as MANMAK JOY ELIYA , now wish to be known and addressed as ILIYA MANMAK NIMVEN . All former documents remain valid. All concerned authorities and the general public to please take note.

SUNDAY FEATURE

Before Nyesom Wike is sacked as FCT minister

The Minister of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja Ezenwo Nyesom Wike has of recent come under intensed persecution following some Nigerian Islamic clerics' demand against all odds for his head to be chopped off. Wike who stood firm against the intrigues of his political party, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), dared and overwhelmed the party hierarchy's maneuverings was able to survive its intriguing hurdles without any suspension till the end of his mandate as a two tenure Governor only to be dragged into another battle for his life. BULUS GAMBO writes.

THIS time around, the conspiracy is incisively religiously motivated by a group of religious extremists and bigots who care-less about the corporate existence of a nation called Nigeria. By their unrepentant behavioral attitudes, one can vehemently conclude that their desire is to create a borderless Islamic state at all cost, not minding the colossal loss such an agitation could bring. These are a group of clerics' who are based on selfish and devilish agenda ready to pull down and destroy every sense of human civilization in our contemporary nation for no good of anyone but them.

In fact, Wike's thick skin, magnitude of boldness, both during and in the aftermath of the 2023 general elections till now makes one wonder what he has up his shelves. Even before the general elections which saw his party losing out at the presidential elections, the former Governor of Rivers State was able to prove the Ikwerre genetics in him. Through his remarkable sojourn in the precarious jungle of acrimonious political circumstances, as Governor of one of the most delicate states in the country, Wike was able to hold his ground and subdue his antagonists without much pains in Rivers State.

It was in the midst of this brouhaha in the aftermath of the 2023 polls and swearing-in of a new administration that the incumbent President Bola Tinubu appointed him as FTC minister on the 16th August 2023 following his nomination, screening and approval by the Senate. Though many political pundits would say the god of politics has been fear to Ezenwo, cynics will never accept the reality of the fact that his doggedness and boldness contributed to uplifting him to the position he presently occupies in the country. A few days ago, I had the privilege of going into a crucial discussion with a friend of mind. As we went deeper into sharing our thoughts, one thing which brought our thoughts into a definitive consensus was that, only 'mad' people and sick people Nigerians love to have as leaders. For Wike, his outstanding qualities as a "mad" man who is always fond of making trouble where there is none has helped him advanced his political career.

Just recently however, some Muslims clerics seem to have ganged-up in their thoughts and actions that Ezenwo must be removed from office as Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. One of such clerics is none other than Sheik Abubakar Mahmud Gumi who recently asked President Tinubu to sack the minister without any further



Wike

delay.

While submitting reasons behind his agitations, Gumi in a sermon said "the minister of the FCT is a devilish man. When he was appointed, I told you he was devilish and some people were grumbling. He went and brought the Israeli ambassador. Someone sent it to me, but I am yet to see it and confirm."

Gumi continued in his outburst that "But what is confirmed is he (Wike) said he will collaborate with the Israelis to improve Abuja's security. Therefore, Abuja will now be like Tel Aviv where when they see anyone with beard like us, they will say it is Bin Laden and kill us... there is an agenda. All means of making money and economic power have been hijacked by them, they want to keep doing it for the next four or eight years, but they will not Insha Allah."

Another comments attributed to Gumi while delivering his sermon in the mosque was that "If Israelis enter this country, there will be clandestine operation against any outspoken Islamic cleric, we have seen the signs in the past. Why was Sheikh Jaafar killed? Why did they kill Sheikh Albany?"

Sheikh Gumi then demanded that "Tinubu should remove the minister of FCT or we will not be on the same page with him." Many other clerics also claimed that there is no way they will accept an infidel to be appointed as minister of the FCT in the person of Wike when the territory belongs to the core Arewa Muslims.

Interestingly, the Gbagyi people who are the real owners

of Abuja have responded that Abuja was never infiltrated by any jihad during the conquest and no part of the land belongs to the core northern oligarchy. They also warn all clerics touring these lines of thoughts to desist henceforth not to throw this country into an unprecedented crisis.

For the records however, in 1976, it is a known fact that their land was reclaimed from them to form the present seat of power. That year, the military had this idea of no-man's land in the geographical centre of the nation which no group should lay claim to. The purpose was that a place should be found where Nigerians could unite together.

Therefore, an 8,000 square kilometers where the flourishing city is built belongs to the Gbagyi who have for several years complained of deliberate marginalization of the highest order in the country. Interestingly, despite their predicaments, this ethnic group has never went violent while demanding for what is theirs to be actualised.

Come to think of all this however, it is fallacious for these Muslim clerics to lay claim to Abuja just because the military government of Murtala Mohammed initiated the establishment of the FTC. It is also outrageously fallacious for them to think so just because of successive appointments of Muslims as Ministers of the FCT in recent years.

Beyond all this however, I really find significant fault in the way and manner Sheikh Gumi kept on in an overwhelming animosity calling Wike an evil man when in



Gumi

the real sense of it, as a religious leader, he ought to call our leaders to repentance. This intense degree of hate exhibited against Wike by Sheikh Gumi is beyond comprehension and sad in all its ramifications.

Of much concern however is the hatred some of these clerics have also exhibited against the State of Israel and Christians in this country. I cannot imagine that just because Wike hosted an Israeli ambassador in his office, the minister should out-rightly be sacked? The question we must ask ourselves then is, would the Christian population call for a Muslim minister's sack if he decides to host any official from Saudi Arabia and or from any Islamic nation of the world?

In the aftermath of Wike's ministerial appointment, some of these clerics have been unleashing derogatory and inflammatory remarks with impunity. Thus, some of them have forgotten the reality of the fact that Nigeria does not practice a one state religion while its multi-diversity should be reflected in all its administrative framework in the country.

Some of these clerics must be educated that whither this incumbent government was elected under the platform of their perceived Muslim-Muslim ticket, this does not mean that other non-Muslim citizens of this nation should be marginalised and traumatised in such an inhuman and barbaric manner.

Therefore, their call for the sack of the FTC minister is not only myopic, useless and baseless, this move is divisive, unimaginable, retrogressive and uncivilised in our contemporary

society. If Wike should be relieved of his ministerial appointment, these clerics should be able to convince Mr. President and the citizens of this country that as far as this administration's ideological philosophy is concern, Christians are not qualified to be appointed to serve in some specific offices in this country. This same prodigious clerics must also advance a legislative change to specify lucrative positions which only Muslims must occupy and other less significant ones which would be settled for by non-Muslims. But again, it is no longer news that minority ethnic nationalities and Christians who are indigenes of states dominated by Muslims have for decades continued to suffer in silence in this country. Thus, if such clerics will have the guts to lay claim to areas outside their domain and insinuate that only Muslims are qualified to be given appointments there, then only God knows the nature of ill-treatment they are dishing out to non-Muslims in their respective states.

More worrisome however is the incisive nature of this fallacious historical ideology and the implications it would have on their vulnerable and illiterate followers in this country. This definitely tells one that if something concrete is not done to arrest this situation, we will wake up one day and find ourselves in an unending conflict ignited by these few clerics who it seems are less concerned about life values and our quest for national integration.

SUNDAY FEATURE

'Senseless attacks on soft targets'

THERE was complete pandemonium, last Friday, in the ancient town of Otukpo, the South District of Benue State town, nick-named "Texas" by residents. That day, daredevil armed men in a commando fashion stormed five commercial banks in the town in a manner never seen before by residents of the town.

The armed men who were said to have assailed the town on motorbikes, had earlier attacked Otukpo Police Station where they disarmed the personnel on duty and carted away arms and the two operational vehicles at the station.

After effectively taking charge of the police station, the invaders who could be well over 20, moved to the commercial banks which are all located within the heart of the town and a stone's throw from each other.

With the use of explosives and sophisticated weapons, all security barriers in the banks were ripped apart, allowing the armed men easy access to the banks and their vaults. Huge sums of money were reportedly carted away by the marauders who also seized a car from one of the banks.

The bloody attack also claimed the lives of some police personnel and bank customers who were trapped in the bank premises when the armed men struck. Among those who lost their lives in the bloody attack were Otukpo Divisional Police Officer, DPO, who was an indigene of the area, Superintendent John Adikwu and three other police personnel including a female police officer, Emmanuella Ankyov.

Also on the list of those who were felled by the bullets of the armed men were the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, Township Ward 1 Chairman, Mr. George Uloko, a staff of UBA, Emmanuel Uche who recently joined the bank after having completed his Youth Service. After accomplishing their task, the armed men drove confidently through the town, heading towards the Otukpo-Aliade road with their loot.

However, police sources in Otukpo said the attack was not a surprise based on the prevailing security situation in the town before it happened. According to sources, the real cause of the attack was the lingering power play between the police in Otukpo and the Benue State government. "Members of the vigilante group in Otukpo are mainly made up of retired police personnel and retired but active criminals. They have been against each other, drawing bad blood in a supremacy battle.

There's no synergy between the vigilante men and the police. While the vigilante men don't consult the police, the police do not seek the input of the vigilante men in any way.

To worsen the matter, the police force in the state is banking on support from the state government. It has become the normal practice for the police to rely on state governors for operations in the state. This is because of the poor funding they face.

Security usually breaks down in any state where the government doesn't fully back the police. Police sources in



Benue say the new government has not invested in them.

It was, however, gathered that the gang had not gone far when the military and other security agencies gave them a hot chase and intercepted them before neighbouring Tarku in Gwer Local Government Area, LGA, where an exchange of gunfire ensued.

The security person successfully neutralized two members of the gang and recovered one of the snatched vehicles while other members of the gang escaped into the forests.

The State Police Command in a statement confirming how the armed men went berserk in Otukpo stated that "On October 20, 2023, at about 4:15 pm, armed robbers invaded Access bank, First bank, Zenith Bank, UBA and Stanbic Bank in Otukpo simultaneously.

The Divisional Police Officer in charge of Otukpo, CSP. John Adikwu and other Police teams in the area engaged them in a gun duel but were unable to prevent the attack on the banks.

More Police teams, in collaboration with other security agents, were deployed to Otukpo to assist in stabilizing the area and prevent these robbers from escaping.

"The robbers who were intercepted along Otukpo-Tarku road engaged officers in a gun duel and two of the robbers died in the process. Other gang members abandoned their vehicles and escaped into the forest area and are being chased by the police.

The DPO who sustained a gunshot injury on his stomach and three other police officers have been confirmed

dead at the hospital. Other persons who sustained injuries in the bank have been moved to hospital for treatment. Investigation is ongoing at the moment. The command also promised that the fleeing armed men would be apprehended and brought to justice."

While residents of the town are still in shock and are yet to come to terms with how the bandits sneaked into the town and audaciously operated and pulled out seamlessly, not a few have gone into fervent prayers to have them arrested.

One of the witnesses, identified as Ene who said she owned a shop close to Zenith Bank and saw how it happened, said that about 3:30pm "we suddenly started hearing sounds of gunfire and explosion.

"People started running in different directions. Nobody knew what was happening. It was like what we used to see in the movies. Young men numbering about 20, carrying guns marched into the bank and started shooting, ransacking the bank.

At this time, everyone started wailing and running. Even a customer who came to buy some goods in my shop that afternoon had his car badly damaged by the explosives. He ran and left his car in front of my shop.

"From that bank, they moved to another until they visited the five banks. The operation lasted about an hour. The people of Otukpo town were held hostage for an hour. There was no police or vigilante to come to their rescue.

We did not know that before the attack

on the banks, the gang had already demobilized the police. They earlier attacked Otukpo Police Station, disarmed them and locked up the gate of the station.

"Not knowing what happened, we thought that the police ran and locked their gate. We did not know that they were the first to be attacked by the criminals.

In the course of robbing the banks, they killed innocent people who were out trying to eke a living in this difficult time, leaving several families in mourning.

After successfully robbing the bank, we even learned that they threw some of the loot into the street as they confidently drove past and headed towards Tarku-Aliade Road.

"But shortly after, we learned that some military personnel and the police had gone after them and two of the robbers were gunned down while others escaped into the forests. Our prayer is for every one of them to be arrested and punished accordingly."

Traditional ruler of Otukpo reacts
The traditional ruler of Otukpo, Ochi Otukpo Odu, HRH John Eimonye who was also saddened by the attack on his domain, described the incident as highly condemnable and evil.

The royal father assured that security personnel are on the trail of the criminals, so they will certainly not escape.

He appealed to his subjects to be vigilant and security conscious and always report strange movements in their neighborhoods to law enforcement agencies.

My sister told me this story that made me livid. She told me about this woman who has eight children and is being abused by her husband. She told me that the church tried to intervene by reporting the case to the human rights radio. However, the pastor told the woman not to mention that he was the one who took the case to them.

When the woman sat down with the people from the human rights radio to tell her story, she asked them if she was still expected to go back to her husband's house after their intervention. Needless to say that the intervention did not take place.

This is 2023 and a man still beats his wife. He does not only beat her. He bites her as well. When my sister went to her house to see her, she did not only see the bite marks. She also saw one of her daughters who had a wound on her forehead. The child had tried to stop her father from beating her mother and the father hit her on the head with a tool that left a wound on her forehead.

I asked my sister if she was trying to help the woman and my sister hissed. She told me that when the woman had child number eight, she told her how she could empower herself economically and leave the marriage with the children. However, the woman took in again. Having a child and leaving a marriage do not go hand in hand. My sister tells me that the family is extremely poor and as early as 9:00am the husband would be drunk. She said that the man is extremely violent and would hurt anyone who got in the way. He beat her while she was carrying the baby on her back!

This story made me sad and angry at the same for many reasons. Please who goes and gives birth to eight children in this day and age? We have been struggling economically in this country for close to twenty years now. How can one be poor and have eight children in an abusive marriage and then go on to have a ninth child just when someone wanted to help her escape abuse?

How does a husband beat his wife? How does a man beat a woman not to mention one that has given him nine children? How does a man beat and bite his wife? How does that happen when she is carrying a baby. How does he hurt his child in the process of beating his wife? How do we mind our business?

My question is this: Where are the men in the community when a woman is getting beaten by her husband? Why do they go silent? Is this a form of conspiracy? I remember one day when my neighbour was beating his wife. Her sister kept on screaming that he was trying to kill her sister and that she would not let him do that. I was alarmed. In the entire neighbourhood, I did not see anyone come out of their houses and go to that house to stop the husband. Not even my husband. I asked him if we could call security. He told me that it was not our business. I told him that since I could hear her cries, it had become my business. After much pestering, he called the police and the estate security who came promptly on a bike.

The case was reported to the police and when investigations commenced, the police came to ask us some questions in the house and my husband told them that we were not aware of what happened. I wondered why. If abusers went to jail, it would discourage others from abuse. I wanted to talk to the police, but I was stopped.

I have come to a conclusion that I would like to share with our ministries of women affairs. That is, that women cannot stop abuse. We need men to be involved in this fight and take the lead for many reasons. Imagine a man who has daughters. Imagine how protective he can be towards his daughters. I believe that if we start a movement against abuse and we involve these fathers in the push against wife batterer, we will make a lot of progress.

The case of the doctor who raped his niece is still fresh on our minds. He has been sentenced to life in jail. This is a move in the right direction. A deterrent. However, a lot still needs to be done to protect women and girls in the society.

I personally believe that before we put an end to abuse or reduce it to its barest minimum, abuse must become our collective business. It must become a source of worry to every man in every community. I go back to the day that my neighbour was getting a beat down by her husband. I imagine that if all the men on that street had come out to confront the husband, he would have promptly desisted. However, they did not. This was in the night on a weekday and most of the men on that street were home. How is it not their business? If it was their sister or their

daughter. It would be their business.

Women have tried and continue to try. We have raised our voices against abuse for quite a while now and we are getting heard. However, there is a strong challenge. There are men who are die hard abusers and I believe it will take the entire community to stop them. Women can talk and sue but most women who are being abused cannot be saved because the man would often attack those who try to do. Abroad, shelters are built to protect these women and somehow some of them still end up getting killed by their abusive spouses who would stalk them if they ever left the shelters.

If we intend to reduce and eventually erase abuse in our communities, we must start thinking communally. Where are the men in

The domestic abuse response unit



the community? They can meet each month and make it clear to each other that violence against women will not be tolerated. They can also encourage the women in the community to report abuse to them. If any woman is getting beaten, it becomes their responsibility to break the door and go into the house to save the woman who is being abused, and then also take the man to the police station.

It is important for men to see abuse as their business and their responsibility. It is said that evil strives when good men say keep quiet. I have a different definition. A man is he who protects. A good man is he who goes out of his way to protect. A man also has the responsibility of defending his fellow brother from being beaten by any woman. Men who are abused are not less masculine. Any man who sees another beating a woman and minds his business cannot be a man. A man is a protector.

An abuser has a certain type of mentality towards the woman he is abusing, that will require the intervention of other men. Let us look at the mindset of an abuser or wife batterer to understand that unless men get involved in ending domestic violence against women, it is only going to get worse.

<https://murumajob.business.blog/2023/05/27/the-traits-and-mindset-of-a-wife-beater-the-psychological-profile-of-the-abuser/>

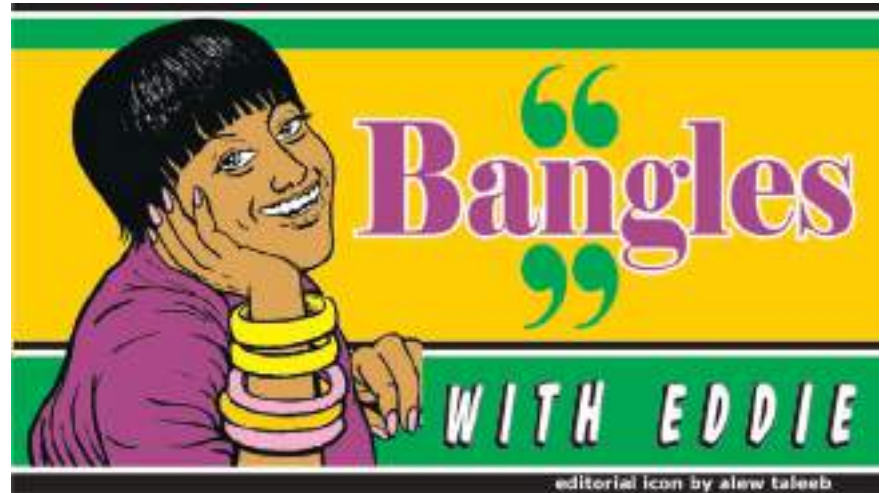
The following are the traits of a wife beater: Rude and verbally abusive during courtship; A guy who is verbally abusive and rude during the process of courtship is likely to carry on with this behaviour into the marriage, further escalating into violence.

Background of violence; One study established that 80% to 85% of men who end up physically assaulting their spouses witnessed their dad abusing their mother early in their lives.

Low self-esteem; their upbringing immensely contributed to their emotional development. That's the reason why the profile of a wife beater revolves around self-esteem.

Poor interpersonal skills play a big role in the abuser's regard for social relations. An abuser is likely to misinterpret his spouse's social interactions as love affairs. This is likely to send the wrong signals to his premeditated mind and violence will follow suit.

A man who comes from a culture that regards women as sexual objects is likely going to physically abuse the spouse when he fails to have his way sexually with her.



whim.

Mental issues in a partner or a husband, is a matter of life and death to the spouse. No, any other red signal needs to be raised. The fact that the husband or partner is mentally unstable, is enough to terminate the marriage or a relationship. Here is where your life and concerns take precedence over the sacred tenets of the marriage vows. Even the law will be on your side on this one.

In conclusion, all you ladies out there, be on the lookout for your potential abusers. Consider the value of your lives and use your heads; no time to be swayed by the heat of the moment and lose your head. What you may be misled to interpret as true love in your partner, may in a real sense be your death sentence. When in the movies, look out for that unmistakable love for either horror movies, or violent confrontations. I have not said that that guy who watches horror movies and violence is the culprit. No, I mean that individual who laughs with glee when someone is mauled or killed on the screen. He never looks disturbed even when you are hurt. That is your guy; avoid him like the plague.

Men with these type of behaviours cannot be managed or stopped by women. It will require a community domestic violence prevention unit to empower men within a community to protect women by standing up to and stopping these types of men from abusing their wives.

It would propose a domestic protection unit in every community. This unit would not only be instituted by social welfare but be linked to the ministry of women affairs. The job is to be watch dogs against domestic violence in their community. They also have a hot line and step in for the police before they arrive at the scent of the abuse.

For men who have daughters, sisters and cousins, the issue of abuse should be important to you because many women die in silence in their marriages due to the lack of effective structures in their immediate community to protect them. When they go to the police, they are told that the issue of abuse is domestic. In essence, they are sent back to the monsters at home. When they go home to their families, few are received and protected. Some families are so concerned with their reputation than they are with their children. Some families turn their daughters away because they say that they do not believe in divorce.

It is also very important for men to empower their daughters with skills and resources. If a woman can fend for herself and contributes her own quota in a marriage, she is in a good position to leave an abusive spouse. Some women cannot leave their abusive spouses because they have no resources of their own and no skills to sell. The idea that a woman should depend completely on her husband is weak thinking. In practical terms, how can a man be the only one fending for his family with no contribution from his wife? Sometimes, men become very burdened and frustrated and if a man has an abusive tendency, this very easily starts to rear its head. He starts to believe that the ornamental wife is actually his property.

In conclusion, men of good conscience should make it their business to fish out all abusive men in their community and be actively involved in their persecution. Knowing that there are domestic violence prevention units in every community and that these work with the police and the social welfare office, is a deterrent to all abusers. It will also be a practical tools for protecting women in every community. These should be considered community development services

In a situation where such a man has nothing to check him, he's likely to turn violent on a

WELCOME back to today's edition of the Covenant Word print messages. We left off sharing some very precious thoughts from the word of God that gives the child of God confidence concerning God's enduring presence, activity and participation in all the affairs of our lives.

We read Isaiah 41:10-14 where the Spirit of God told us clearly, fear thou not for I am with you. Be not dismayed; [do not lose all hope, courage or confidence concerning the future], for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes I will help you; yes I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness.

Behold, all they that were incensed or angry or enraged against you shall be ashamed and confounded. They shall be as nothing. They that strive with you shall perish. You will seek them and you will not find them, even them that contended with you.

They that war against you will be as nothing; and they shall be as a thing of nought. For I the Lord your God will hold your right hand saying unto you, fear not I will help you. Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will help you saith the Lord, and thy redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

So here is one of those places in the word of God where we see a definite commandment not to fear. Now we cannot in the scope of this write-up read all scriptures that are relevant to this topic, but it will serve you well to go through the bible, from the old testament to the new testament and see the places where the Spirit of God instructs us not to be afraid.

Fear not is a commandment; it is not a suggestion, because of how important it is for you to shut off the activity of the Spirit of fear in your life. Remember, Satan can do nothing in your life outside of the operation of the spirit of fear.

Isaiah 8:11 & 12 which says For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to

whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

Here we have a very strong instruction from the word of God. If you are faced with any battle, any crisis in life or any threat to your life or your livelihood; the Spirit of God is instructing here saying do not say a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy

instruction; a commandment if you will, to refuse to be afraid.

Right now, wherever you are, I would like for you to gather yourself, gather your breath and put your right hand on your chest if you can and say, "I refuse to be afraid. Concerning insecurity, I refuse to be afraid. Concerning perceived lack or shortage in my life, I refuse to

Fear not, trust God (12)



neither fear you their fear.

Now another way of describing the word confederacy is do not announce what is happening as though you have no defense against it. Do not say they will consume us, do not say where will the money come from or how will I survive. Do not say this sickness will consume me. Do not say a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy, neither fear their fear.

Do not say that our nation is in turmoil, where will we go? How will we survive? Will our lives ever be safe?

Isaiah 8:13 goes on to say, Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread; do this and He the Lord of Host shall be a sanctuary for you. So you see, the Spirit of God is giving us very strong instruction: this is more than an exhortation. This is not a suggestion; this is an

be afraid".

Maybe it is a sickness or disease in your body that you are battling with; it may even seem to be swallowing you up. It may look like in the physical realm, there is no way out of that situation' but I tell you, the first way to activate God's power in your life is to refuse to be afraid. So say to yourself and say to the circumstance, "in the name of Jesus, I refuse to be afraid. The Lord is with me. God is with me, God is my helper".

Hebrews 13:5-6 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. You can boldly say today, I refuse to be afraid because the Lord is with me. The Lord is my helper, the Lord is helping me today. Glory to the name of the Lord



telling us that you should submit yourself to God and then resist the devil and he will flee from you. In other words, to resist the devil, we are to submit ourselves to God. However, what does the word resist mean? It means to stand against. It means to oppose, to withstand or to set oneself against something. So here, the scripture is saying do not permit or tolerate the spirit of fear; stand against it, oppose it, withstand it, set yourself against it.

You have to understand that the Christian in this life is in a battle at the war front. The 1 Timothy 6:12 that we should fight the good fight of faith. It is called a good fight because we already know we are the winners but we have a responsibility in cooperating with God in this fight against fear.

Now how does the spirit of fear operate? If we are talking about resisting the devil and the spirit of fear we must know how the spirit of fear operates. If we do not know how the spirit of fear operates, we will not be able to understand how to resist it. The spirit of fear operates through thoughts, ideas, suggestions and impressions. These create feelings in our lives which in turn move us to do and act in certain ways.

This means resisting the spirit of fear is resisting thoughts, ideas, suggestions and impressions that seek to stoke fear in the heart. Know that all of these thoughts, ideas, suggestions and impressions come from somewhere: thoughts do not just come from nowhere: they come from somewhere.

They come from what we see and hear. Satan's strategy is to use the things that we see, hear and experience to put thoughts, ideas, suggestions and impressions of fear into our minds.

Hence, if we are going to successfully resist the spirit of fear, we must learn to resist the thoughts, ideas, suggestions and impressions that come to us because of what we are seeing, hearing and experiencing that seek to generate fear.

"Fear not is a commandment; it is not a suggestion, because of how important it is for you to shut off the activity of the Spirit of fear in your life. Remember, Satan can do nothing in your life outside of the operation of the spirit of fear".

Jesus Christ.

No matter what the circumstance may be, remember the Lord is your helper. Insecurity will not consume you or your family because the Lord is your helper. The Lord will provide for you: the Lord will take care of you, he is your helper.

Whatever seems to be looming across the horizon of your life today; no matter what kind of a battle or challenge you are faced with today, no matter what is against you today, remember the reason why you should refuse to be afraid is because the Lord is your helper: Glory to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now let us proceed further. Some other important things for us to understand about how to handle the spirit of fear can be found in James 4:7, which say, submit yourself therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Now we have already taught about the fact that fear is of the devil. Therefore, in this context, resisting the devil, is equal to resisting the spirit of fear. We can say it this way: resisting the spirit of fear is equal to resisting the devil.

Furthermore, James 4:7 is

INTERNATIONAL

Israel conducts second ground raid into Gaza

THE Israeli army, backed by fighter jets and drones, has carried out a second limited ground raid into Gaza in as many days and struck targets on the outskirts of Gaza City, according to its military, as it prepares for a widely expected ground invasion.

The Israeli military said on Friday that ground forces entered Gaza overnight and struck dozens of Hamas targets during its raid in the Shujaiya area.

It said aircraft and artillery bombed targets in the neighbourhood on the outskirts of Gaza City, and that its soldiers exited the territory after several hours without suffering any casualties.

"The raid began yesterday in broad daylight ... it ended successfully in the hours of this morning," the Israeli army's spokesperson said.

Black-and-white footage released by the Israeli army showed a column of armoured vehicles as a thick cloud of dust billowed into the sky after the strikes.

Later on Friday, Hamas's military wing said Israeli forces at dawn attempted to carry out a landing operation on the Rafah beach in southern Gaza Strip.

"The attempt was discovered by our fighters, and they confronted it and clashed with the enemy. This required the intervention of the Zionist [Israeli] Air Force, which saved the force, so it fled towards the sea, leaving behind a quantity of ammunition," the Qassam Brigades said in a Telegram post.

The Israeli army had conducted another ground operation using tanks and infantry overnight on Thursday in the northern part of the Palestinian territory; it said its ground forces battled fighters and struck antitank missile firing positions in an operation that lasted hours.



Netanyahu

Israeli military officials, on several occasions, have confirmed the army's readiness to conduct a large-scale ground operation in Gaza, but are awaiting a green light from the Israeli political leadership.

At the same time, Israel continues its relentless bombardment of Gaza, which has killed more than 7,000 Palestinians in three weeks. The strikes began following a Hamas attack inside Israel on October 7, in which more than 1,400 people were killed.

The air raids have flattened entire neighbourhoods, causing a level of death and destruction unseen in the last four wars between Israel and Hamas.

More than a million people have fled their homes in northern Gaza, with many heeding Israeli orders to evacuate to the south, despite continuing Israeli attacks across the sealed-off territory.

The damage to Gaza was shown in satellite photos of several locations taken before the war and again in recent days.

Entire rows of residential buildings simply disappear in the photos, reduced to smears of dust and rubble.

A complex of 13 high-rises

by the sea was pounded to dust near Gaza City's al-Shati refugee camp, leaving only a few tottering bits of facade.

Just down the street, hardly anything remained in what had been a neighbourhood of low-built homes on winding lanes, according to the photos by Maxar Technologies.

Benny Gantz, a retired general and member of Israel's war cabinet, said on Thursday that any possible ground offensive would be only "one stage in a long-term process that includes security, political and social aspects that will take years".

"The campaign will soon ramp up with greater force," he added.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the war and the Israeli siege, and concern for the fate of Gaza's 2.3 million people, has sparked protests across the region, and more demonstrations were expected later on Friday after weekly Muslim prayers.

The focus of Ukraine's efforts there have been around the village of Robotyne, which is some 56km (35 miles) south-east of the city of Zaporizhzhia, the regional capital.

THE United States has attacked two facilities in Syria used by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Iran-backed groups, the Pentagon has said, following a series of attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria.

The strikes came after President Joe Biden's administration pledged to respond to attacks on US personnel that Washington has blamed on armed groups backed by Iran.

"The United States does not seek conflict and has no intention nor desire to engage in further hostilities, but these Iranian-backed attacks against US forces are unacceptable and must stop," US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said in a statement on Thursday.

"Iran wants to hide its hand and deny its role in these attacks against our forces. We will not let them. If attacks by Iran's proxies against US forces continue, we will not hesitate to take further necessary measures to protect our people."

Austin said the "narrowly-tailored strikes" were in self-defence and were not connected to the Israel-Hamas war.

White House National Security Council spokesman had earlier warned that Washington would respond to the attacks at a "time of our choosing and a manner of our choosing".

Kirby's comments came as the US Department of Defense said on Thursday that US and allied forces in Iraq and Syria had been attacked at least 16 times this month by "Iranian-backed militia groups".

A total of 21 US personnel have been injured in the attacks, most of them suffering traumatic brain injuries, according to US officials.

Reports of attacks on US forces in the region have spiked since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war, which began earlier this month when the Palestinian group launched an unprecedented attack on Israel that Israeli officials say killed more than 1,400 people.

Palestinian authorities say more than 7,000 people have been killed in Israeli air strikes on Gaza carried out in response to Hamas's October 7 attacks.

On Wednesday, Biden said he

US attacks facilities in Syria

had directly warned Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei against targeting US troops in the Middle East.

Washington and Tehran do not have formal diplomatic relations, and Biden did not say how the message was communicated.

Mohammad Jamshidi, an aide to Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi, disputed Biden's account in a comment posted on social media.

US officials are concerned about the possibility of fighting between Israel and Hamas escalating into a broader regional conflict.

Iran backs both Hamas, which governs Gaza, and the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, which Israel has clashed with in skirmishes along the Israel-Lebanon border.

On Thursday, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said at the United Nations that the US would "not be spared from this fire" if Israel's bombardment of Gaza did not end.

Saudi Arabia is a leader of the Arab and Islamic world. It has never formally recognised Israel since the creation of the state in

1948.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu talked up the possibility last month, claiming: "We're about to witness a pivot of history."

Any deal, though, would be deeply controversial.

In return for recognising Israel, Saudi Arabia is said to be demanding US guarantees for advanced American-made weapons and, most contentious of all, a civil nuclear programme including in-country uranium enrichment.

Israel for its part would benefit from trade and defence ties with the Gulf superpower and further historic integration it has always sought in the region, following on from other Arab state normalisation deals brokered in 2020.

For a deal to succeed it would have to be seen to involve significant Israeli concessions to the Palestinians.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, needs to assuage his own public - historically opposed to Israel and deeply sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.



Biden

EU leaders call for 'humanitarian pauses', aid corridors in Israel-Gaza war

EUROPEAN Union leaders have called for humanitarian pauses in the fighting between Israel and the armed Palestinian group Hamas as the Gaza Strip

around Johor to meet the people of the state.

Married with six children, the 64-year-old is trained to fly jets and helicopters, and has "the spirit of a soldier and excel(s) in sea activities and other extreme sports," according to the website for the royal family.

Sultan Ibrahim's father was the country's eighth king, holding the throne between 1984 and 1989.

The Johor royal family dates from the early 16th century and has its own private army.

For many of the country's majority Malays, especially in rural areas, royalty remains a potent symbol of identity. Sultans are the guardians of Islam in their own states, while the king is also the protector of the religion in states where there is no hereditary monarch. Malaysia's Malays are always Muslim.

The head of state lives in a purpose-built palace with 22 yellow domes in Kuala Lumpur's inner western suburbs. They also act as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and have the power to grant pardons to convicts.

reels under an Israeli bombardment and siege.

Leaders at an EU summit in Brussels on Thursday issued a declaration calling for a halt to the fighting to establish humanitarian corridors and get much-needed aid into Gaza.

The declaration was made as criticism grows from around the Middle East about Israel's campaign of air raids and a "complete siege", which has cut off access to food, water, electricity and fuel for the strip's 2.3 million inhabitants. Video Duration 07 minutes 03 seconds07:03

Israeli army is bombarding southern Gaza where it told 1.1M Palestinians to move for their safety

The summit on Thursday is the first in-person meeting since Hamas carried out attacks on October 7 on southern Israel, which killed more than 1,400 people, most of them civilians.

The assault by Hamas has been widely condemned with grim scenes emerging from towns in southern Israel where Palestinian gunmen massacred families and kidnapped more than 200 people.

The EU leaders reiterated previous calls for the immediate release of those held captive "without any precondition" and emphasised Israel's right to

defend itself "in line with international law".

But such statements, similar to others made by the United States, have rung hollow to some as Israel carries out devastating air strikes that have levelled entire neighbourhoods and killed more than 7,000 people in Gaza, some in zones where Israel had told Palestinians to move to seek safety.

In the Middle East, protesters have criticised Israel's allies as hypocritical.

In the US, Palestinian groups expressed outrage when President Joe Biden reacted to the death toll in Gaza by casting doubt on the reliability of the figures provided by the Ministry of Health in Gaza, which is governed by Hamas. Video Duration 03 minutes 23 seconds03:23

European leaders are expected to call for 'humanitarian corridors and pauses' in Gaza. However, the supply of aid has been neither consistent nor adequate to address the scope of civilian suffering with United Nations chief Antonio Guterres calling the efforts a "drop of aid in an ocean of need".

Biden and Australia's Albanese meet in DC to strengthen alliance months ago.

Malaysian sultans choose new king way

MALAYSIA has announced that its next and 17th king will be Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar from the southern state

of Johor.

Sultan Ibrahim was chosen by the country's nine sultans at a session of the Conference of Rulers on Friday and will be

installed on January 31 next year.

"I hereby inform that the Conference of Rulers, during its 263rd (Special) Meeting, held at the National Palace on Friday, October 27, 2023, has agreed to declare that His Royal Highness Sultan Ibrahim, Sultan of Johor Darul Ta'zim, has been chosen as His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong XVII for a period of five years commencing from Jan 31, 2024," the keeper of the Royal Seal said in a statement.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong or "King of Kings" is a constitutional monarch, but since the historic elections of 2018 and the revolving door of ruling coalitions that followed, the king has taken a more active role in politics.

King Al-Sultan Abdullah has used the monarch's discretionary powers to choose the country's last three prime ministers, including after the election in 2022 when no single party won a parliamentary majority.

Sultan Ibrahim, who is said to have a passion for fast cars and motorbikes and has extensive business interests, is also known for taking an annual road trip



Malaysia's King Al-Sultan Abdullah (left) and Johor's Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar walk together after the election for the next Malaysian king

INTERNATIONAL



India and Israel have inched closer in the past few years under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Shifting politics make India hotbed for Israel-Hamas

Social media accounts spread pro-Israel content as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks closer ties with Israel. MEGHA BAHREE writes.

ON October 7, within hours of the armed group Hamas launching a surprise attack on Israel, social media platforms were rife with support for Israel – and also fake news.

What stood out in the clamour was the fact that a fair amount of it was produced and distributed by accounts from India.

In the days after Israel declared war on Hamas, a blue-tick-verified handle posted a video on the social media platform X of a Pakistani parliamentarian threatening to obliterate Israel with an “atom bomb” if it did not end its atrocities against Muslims. That video received more than 840,000 views. But it was from 2021 and is not related to the current war.

Similarly, Suresh Chavhanke, editor-in-chief of Sudarshan News, a right-wing channel, shared a clip on X of an Israeli representative tearing up a 20-page United Nations report documenting human rights violations. That too was from 2021.

Experts say the Israel-Hamas war has given a massive reach to social media accounts in India – both large and small – that have managed to ride a wave of anti-Muslim and pro-Israel fervour.

Apoorvanand, a Delhi University professor who goes by one name, perceives a link between current “anti-Muslim sentiment” and the rise of Hindu nationalist ideologies like Hindutva, particularly under the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Hindutva supporters, he said, “hold Muslims across countries responsible for all the ills and everything bad. They’ve started looking at Israel as an ideal, as a model to be followed because Israel does what it wants to do to Muslims”.

A “generational shift” has taken place in India, said Nicolas Blarel, an associate professor of international

relations at Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Over the last decade, Blarel has observed that the country has grown more fascinated with Israel, including how it defends itself against attacks from its neighbours.

That situation has particular resonance in India, according to Blarel. In addition to border incursions from China in the east, India has also been subject to attacks on its western flank by what it says are state-supported armed groups in Pakistan. The two nuclear-armed nations have been locked in an ongoing conflict for control of the disputed territory of Kashmir.

Those tense international relations have, in part, led Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to seek warmer relations with Israel.

“Terrorism is the thing that’s brought the BJP closer to Israel over the last few years – how to better deal with counterterrorism,” said Blarel.

As a result, India’s political sphere has transformed from “an exclusive pro-Palestine ecosystem to the complete opposite and to one that is completely empathetic with [the] Israeli position” today, he explained.

Indeed, India had supported Palestine’s right to statehood since 1947, when it gained independence from the United Kingdom.

At the time, the United Nations had proposed a “partition plan” to create separate Israeli and Palestinian states, something India objected to.

The plan never took effect, though. The very next year, Israel declared independence, sparking a conflict that would see the mass displacement of Palestinians.

Still, in 1974, India became the first non-Arab country to recognise the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

as the “sole and legitimate representative” of the Palestinian people, continuing its pattern of support.

And while New Delhi formally recognised Israel in 1950, it only normalised diplomatic relations in the early 1990s. Even then, it remained committed to the Palestinian cause and continued nurturing its relations with the Muslim-majority nations in the Middle East.

However, in the past few years, India and Israel have started inching closer. The attacks in India’s financial capital Mumbai on November 26, 2008, helped spur the shift.

More than 160 people were killed and over 300 injured. A Jewish centre, the Nariman House, was among the targets: An Israeli American rabbi and his wife were among the six gunned down there. India blamed the attacks on a Pakistan-based armed group.

Trade and innovation have also drawn the two countries together. When Modi was chief minister of Gujarat, he displayed his fascination for Israeli technologies including drip irrigation and water desalination, both useful for his state.

Israel has also been a supplier of arms to India, including during its 1999 skirmish with Pakistan in the Kashmiri region of Kargil. Israeli surveillance drones and mortar shells helped India emerge victorious in that conflict.

More recently, India was one of the countries accused of having bought Pegasus spyware from the Israeli cyber-intelligence firm NSO Group. Critics accuse the Modi government of deploying the spyware against judges, journalists, activists and political leaders, among others.

Experts agree that the biggest shift in India’s foreign policy towards Israel has happened since Modi came to power in

2014. He became the first Indian prime minister to visit Israel in 2017.

In the wake of the Hamas attack on October 7, Modi has issued strong declarations in support of Israel. He initially tweeted, “Our thoughts and prayers are with the innocent victims and their families. We stand in solidarity with Israel.”

In a follow-up statement later that day, Modi added that “India strongly and unequivocally condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations”.

But neither statement made any reference to the lives or plight of Palestinians. Only five days later did his government address the question of Palestinian relations: In response to a question during a routine media briefing, a spokesperson for the foreign minister said India’s stance on Palestine had not changed.

“I was struck by Modi’s response to express solidarity with Israel and say nothing about Palestine at all,” said Michael Kugelman, director of the South Asia Institute at the Wilson Center think tank in Washington, DC. “Because India’s policy has been balanced so far.”

The statements showed “total support for Israel to defend itself”, according to Ashok Swain, head of the department of peace and conflict research at Uppsala University in Sweden.

While New Delhi is now trying to maintain a more balanced position, those early statements showed that Modi is more interested in getting votes and appealing to his right-wing constituency, Swain added.

They send the message that Muslims are “the perpetrators of all sorts of crimes and less than human beings. They don’t talk about the Gaza situation or even who created Hamas”.

Swain also sees the statements as a demonstration of the common ground Modi shares with far-right politicians in

Israel.

“Hindu nationalists and Zionists have an ideological similarity: They want a strong state and a strong leader,” he explained. “They also have a common factor – Islamophobia – which also binds them together.”

Those tensions played out on social media in the immediate aftermath of the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

At Al Jazeera’s request, the Narrative Research Lab in New Delhi scanned through trending hashtags and phrases in India on the social media platform X, to better understand how political narratives about the war were being shaped.

The phrase “We Indians” stood out partially because of the ongoing Cricket World Cup but also because of the conflict, said Sarabjot Singh, the lab’s co-founder.

“We Indians” is an expression often invoked to stir nationalist pride. Using it as a keyword, Singh’s co-founder Sundeep Narwani used artificial intelligence to analyse a total of 4,316 tweets, of which 2,200 included words about the Israel-Hamas war.

More than 1,250 were pro-Israel, and approximately 250 were pro-Palestine, indicating a five-to-one ratio in favour of Israel.

In an attempt to gauge social media chatter, the lab also analysed two hashtags: “#IstandwithIsrael” and “#IsraelPalestineWar”. The former was used globally, but the lab found a “substantial” number of Indian accounts using it.

“Issues that bring Modi and Netanyahu together are the same issues that make the Hindutva constituency in India gravitate towards Israel – admiring how Netanyahu has negotiated the neighbourhood with a strong stance,” said Kugelman.

SOURCE: AL JAZEERA



Court restrains Do2dtun from defaming D'banj.



A Chief District Court of the Federal Capital Territory at Wuse Zone 2, Abuja, has restrained on-air-personality, Kayode Oladotun, popularly known as Do2dtun, from posting defamatory posts against singer Oladapo Oyebanjo, aka D'banj, on social media or any other platform

The Judge, His Honour, Emmanuel Iyanna, gave the injunction on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, in the case with Motion No: MN/218/2023.

D'banj, through one of his lawyers, Toheeb Lawal from Abuja-based law firm, Law

Corridor, had filed an application at the court for an injunction restraining Do2dtun from making malicious and defamatory posts against him on social media.

In granting the application, which has D'banj as the complainant and Do2dtun as the respondent, Iyanna granted "an order restraining the defendant (Do2dtun) either by himself, servants, privies, cohorts, representatives, or any person deriving authority from him from further making any malicious, intimidating or defamatory post directing at the complainant (D'banj) on any social media platform (X, Instagram, etc) or news media pending the hearing and determination of the substantive case".

Also, the court ordered the Deputy Inspector of Police, Force Intelligence Bureau, to investigate a criminal complaint brought by D'banj against Do2dtun within two weeks and report back to court.

Do2dtun had for weeks embarked upon a social media onslaught against D'banj. The OAP was married to D'banj's sister, Taiwo, in 2013, and the union



Continued on page 26

'I'll never be desperate again' – Jim Iyke vows



POPULAR Nollywood actor, Jim Iyke, has vowed never to be desperate again in his life.

Jim Iyke stated this in a viral video on the internet, while narrating his encounter with the late founder of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Prophet TB Joshua.

It was reported that the actor was captured in a widely spread video in 2013 undergoing deliverance at SCOAN.

'I'll never be desperate again' – Jim Iyke vows after experience with TB Joshua, others Published on October 18, 2023 By Racheal Ayodele

Popular Nollywood actor, Jim Iyke, has vowed never to be desperate again in his life.

Jim Iyke stated this in a viral video on the internet, while narrating his encounter with the late founder of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Prophet TB Joshua.

It was reported that the actor was captured in a widely spread video in 2013 undergoing deliverance at SCOAN.

Speaking in his latest interview with Teju Babyface, the actor insisted that he was forced to take his sick mother to the prophet for healing out of desperation.

Regretting taking such a step out of desperation, he said, "I will never be desperate again in my life. Desperation was what took me there—to take my mother there, hoping that a man of God would heal her. If she were to live, twenty TB Joshuas would not stop her.

"It was her time, nobody would have made me enter that space; he was not the only one I went to; I have been to five or six men of God; is it because I do not want to mention names? How they drove me the money they took from me."

'DNA test must be done in my presence' –Mohbad's father.

Mr Joseph Aloba, father of late Nigerian rapper, Ilerioluwa Olademeji Aloba, aka Mohbad, has said a DNA test on his grandson must be conducted in his presence.

It was recalled that Nigerians have been torn apart over calls for a DNA test on the late singer's son, Liam, to ascertain his true paternity.

Speaking in a recent interview with Stams TV, elder Aloba said a DNA test on his grandson is a must, stressing that it has become a national concern

On the rumours that a DNA test has been done, he said a DNA test can't be conducted without his consent.

He insisted that he has to be present or send a representative before the DNA test can be done.

Aloba said even at that, it would be conducted at two different hospitals to be sure of the result.

He said, "Concerning the DNA test, it's a must they do it. Nigerians are demanding for it. I heard rumours that they did it but no matter what, I'm Mohbad's father so I'll give consent on the DNA test or send anyone who can represent me during the test if I'm not there to know how they'll do it. And even when they want to do it, it should be done in two different places so we can be very sure and know the truth.

Also, where I am from in Ikere Ekiti, even Olu Ikere just left my side now after paying me a visit. We don't accept bastards where I'm from, but it will be a thing of joy for me if this child is Mohbad's because this is the only child he said he left for me. Three days before his death, I was with him, he even served me food and he put Liam on my hands and he was taking pictures.

So I'll be very happy if Liam is Mohbad's son because I love the child. But if it turns out that Liam is not his son, it won't be good if we don't find out now because of the future so that even late Mohbad shouldn't be blaming me that I accepted something like this in. So the DNA is very necessary."



Continued on page 26

THE WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Health

BY POONAM SACHDEV

Guide to Uterine Cancer

CANCER is a cancerous tumor in your uterus, the pear-shaped organ also known as your womb. Most cases happen in the lining of the uterus (endometrium), but you can get tumors in the muscles there, too. Over 60,000 women in the U.S. get this type of cancer each year. If you're past menopause, your chances are higher.

Your Genes Uterine can play a role in how likely you are to have uterine cancer. For example, Lynch syndrome is a genetic disorder that makes you more likely to get certain cancers. Women with it have much higher odds of getting uterine cancer. But having a problem gene doesn't mean you'll get it. It means you and your doctor should watch for signs so you can treat it early if you do. Most women who get uterine cancer don't have a known genetic cause.

There are early signs, if you haven't been through menopause and you have bleeding or spotting -- a red, pink, or white discharge -- between periods, see your doctor. The same is true if you've had menopause and have these symptoms any time. Bleeding can be a sign of uterine cancer, but it's also a symptom of other medical problems. Bleeding after menopause isn't normal, so it definitely needs to be checked out. Your doctor can help you find out what's going on. Other Symptoms, let your doctor know if you have: Pain in your pelvis (the area between your hips)

Lost weight without trying, pain during sex, a hard time peeing or it hurts to pee. It's best if you find uterine cancer before it grows or spreads, so don't put off your checkups or ignore symptoms.

How is it diagnosed? You may have an ultrasound so your doctor can see inside your



uterus. Your doctor may send a thin, lighted tube in through your vagina to get a closer look. But a biopsy is the best way to know if it's cancer. Your doctor will take a small amount of tissue from the endometrium and look for cancer

cells under a microscope.

If you have uterine cancer, your doctor will start with one of the following to see if it has spread to nearby areas, like your cervix, or to your lymph nodes (tiny glands in your neck, armpits, groin, and other parts of your body):

Ultrasound: MRI scan, which uses magnets and radio waves to make detailed images of parts of your body

CT scan, which takes X-rays from different angles and puts them together to make a complete picture. Your doctor probably will recommend that your uterus be taken out. They may surgically remove your fallopian tubes. The procedure is called a hysterectomy. Your ovaries and fallopian tubes will probably be removed, too. If your cancer has spread, your doctor also may take out nearby lymph nodes.

Radiation: Your doctor may recommend this after surgery, kill any cancer cells that may still be there. It may also be an option if surgery isn't a good idea for you. Your doctor may insert a cylinder containing radioactive material into your vagina, or use a machine to aim high-energy rays at harmful cells. New radiation treatment make a 3-dimensional beam that's the shape of the tumor, or

Therapy. Here, Estrogen and other hormones in your body can make uterine cancer grow or spread faster. Drugs like progestins, tamoxifen, LHRH agonists, and aromatase inhibitors are used to block these hormones to slow the tumor's growth. This can cause side effects that feel like menopause, including hot flashes, weight gain, or dryness in your vagina.

Immunotherapy too, These drugs help your own immune system find and attack cancer cells. To keep itself from fighting the body's normal cells, your immune system uses "checkpoints." These are parts of cells that need to be turned on or off to start the disease-fighting process. Drugs that target these checkpoints, called checkpoint inhibitors, may help treat some more serious types of endometrial cancer.

He may recommend Targeted Therapy, some newer drugs target changes that are seen in cancer cells. Several of them work by stopping new blood vessels from forming in tumors. This helps slow the spread of cancer. Clinical Trials could be done. You may be able to be part of a test for new and better drugs to treat uterine cancer. Ask your doctor if there are trials in your area and if one might be right

for you.

Your sex life: Side effects of uterine cancer treatment can change your sex life. Vaginal dryness or mood changes from hormone therapy may make sex painful or reduce your desire. If you've had surgery to remove both your ovaries and uterus, you may have the same issues. But lubricants can help with dryness, and some women say their sex lives actually get better after surgery because they have less pain and other symptoms.

While most women who get uterine cancer are past menopause, younger women can get it, too. If you hope to have children, talk to your doctor about your options, such as storing eggs, before you begin treatment -- surgery, radiation, and hormones can affect your fertility. Get regular women's health checkups so your doctor can spot any signs of cancer early. Your age, genes, and family history may raise your risk of uterine cancer. So can obesity. You can do some things to help prevent it, though, like staying at a healthy weight and getting plenty of exercise. Work closely with your doctor, who can help you control the risk factors that can be controlled.



THE EYE'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Health

Symptoms of peptic ulcers

PEPTIC ulcers are open sores that develop on the inside lining of your stomach and the upper portion of your small intestine. The most common symptom of a peptic ulcer is stomach pain.

They include:

Gastric ulcers that occur on the inside of the stomach, duodenal ulcers that occur on the inside of the upper portion of your small intestine (duodenum).

The most common causes of peptic ulcers are infection with the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) and long-term use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) and naproxen sodium (Aleve). Stress and spicy foods do not cause peptic ulcers. However, they can make your symptoms worse.

Symptoms of peptic ulcers include burning stomach pain, feeling of fullness, bloating or belching, intolerance to fatty foods, heartburn, nausea.

The most common peptic ulcer symptom is burning stomach pain. Stomach acid makes the pain worse, as does having an empty stomach. The pain can often be relieved by eating certain foods that buffer stomach acid or by taking an acid-reducing medication, but then it may come back. The pain may be worse between meals and at night.

Many people with peptic ulcers don't even have symptoms. Less often, ulcers may cause severe signs or symptoms such as:

Vomiting or vomiting blood — which may appear red or black, dark blood in stools, or stools that are black or tarry, trouble breathing, feeling faint, nausea or vomiting, unexplained weight loss, appetite changes.

See your doctor if you have returns.

the severe signs or symptoms listed above. Also see your doctor if over-the-counter antacids and acid blockers relieve your pain but the pain

Peptic ulcers occur when acid in the digestive tract eats away at the inner surface of the stomach or small intestine. The acid can create a painful open sore that may bleed.

Your digestive tract is coated with a mucous layer that normally protects against acid. But if the amount of acid is increased or the amount of mucus is decreased, you could develop an ulcer. Common causes include: A bacterium. *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria commonly live in the mucous layer that covers and protects tissues that line the stomach and small intestine. Often, the *H. pylori* bacterium causes no problems, but it can cause inflammation of the stomach's inner layer, producing an ulcer.

It's not clear how *H. pylori* infection spreads. It may be transmitted from person to person by close contact, such as kissing. People may also contract *H. pylori* through food and water. Regular use of

certain pain relievers. Taking aspirin, as well as certain over-the-counter and prescription pain medications called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), can irritate or inflame the lining of your stomach and small intestine. These medications include ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others), naproxen sodium (Aleve, Anaprox DS, others), ketoprofen and others. They do not include acetaminophen (Tylenol, others).

Other medications. Taking certain other medications along with NSAIDs, such as steroids, anticoagulants, low-dose aspirin, selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), alendronate (Fosamax) and risedronate (Actonel), can greatly increase the chance of developing ulcers.

Risk factors. In addition to having risks related to taking NSAIDs, you may have an increased risk of peptic ulcers if you:

Smoking may increase the risk of peptic ulcers in people who are infected with *H. pylori*. Alcohol can irritate and erode the mucous lining of your stomach, and it increases the amount of stomach acid that's produced. Have untreated stress.

Eating spicy foods,

alone, these factors do not cause ulcers, but they can make ulcers worse and more difficult to heal.

Left untreated, peptic ulcers can result in: Internal bleeding. Bleeding can occur as slow blood loss that leads to anemia or as severe blood loss that may require hospitalization or a blood transfusion. Severe blood loss may cause black or bloody vomit or black or bloody stools.

A hole (perforation) in your stomach wall. Peptic ulcers can eat a hole through (perforate) the wall of your stomach or small intestine, putting you at risk of serious infection of your abdominal cavity (peritonitis). Peptic ulcers can block passage of food through the digestive tract, causing you to become full easily, to vomit and to lose weight either through swelling from inflammation or through scarring.

Studies have shown that people infected with *H. pylori* have an increased risk of gastric cancer. You may reduce your risk of peptic ulcer if you follow the same strategies recommended as home remedies to treat ulcers. It also may be helpful to:

Protect yourself from infections. It's not clear just how *H. pylori* spreads, but there's some evidence that it could be transmitted from person to person or through food and water.

You can take steps to protect yourself from infections, such as *H. pylori*, by frequently washing your hands with soap and water and by eating foods that have been cooked completely.

Use caution with pain relievers. If you regularly use pain relievers that increase your risk of peptic ulcer, take steps to reduce your risk of stomach problems. For instance, take your medication with meals. Work with your doctor to find the lowest dose possible that still gives you pain relief. Avoid drinking alcohol when taking your medication, since the two can combine to increase your risk of stomach upset.





Reality Bites

with Palang Kasmi
peekembo@yahoo.com
08036417305, 08095322786

How to recognize an Online Scammer



THE great thing about the internet is that there's room for everyone. The not-so-great part? There's plenty of room for cybercriminals who are hungry to get their hands on our personal information.

Fortunately, internet scams don't have to be a part of your online experience. In this article, we'll tell you about some of the most common internet schemes and how you can recognize them to keep your identity safe.

Scams are scary, but you can prevent yourself from falling for one by knowing what to look for. Here are a few tell-tale signs that you're dealing with a scammer.

They say you've won a huge prize

If you get a message that you've won a big sum of cash in a sweepstakes you don't remember entering, it's a scam. Scammers may tell you that all you need to do to claim your prize is send them a small fee or give them your banking information. When you enter a real sweepstakes or lottery, it's generally up to you to contact the organizer to claim your prize. Sweepstakes aren't likely to chase you down to give you money. They want you to pay in a certain way.

Scammers will often ask you to pay them using gift cards, money orders, cryptocurrency (like Bitcoin), or through a particular money transfer service. Scammers need payments in forms that don't give consumers protection.

Gift card payments, for example, are typically not reversible and hard to trace. Legitimate organizations will rarely, if ever, ask you to pay using a specific method, especially gift cards. When you have to make online payments, it's a good idea to use a secure service like PayPal. Secure payment systems can have features to keep you safe, like end-to-end encryption.

They say it's an emergency

Scammers may try to make you panic by saying you owe money to a government agency and you need to pay them immediately to avoid being arrested. Or the criminal might try to tug at your heartstrings by

pretending to be a family member in danger who needs money. Criminals want you to pay them or give them your information quickly — before you have a chance to think about it. If someone tries to tell you to pay them immediately in a text message, phone call, or email, they're likely a scammer.

They say they're from a government organization or company

Many scammers pretend to be part of government organizations like the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). They'll claim you owe them money. Criminals can even use technology to make their phone numbers appear legitimate on your caller ID. If someone claiming to be part of a government organization contacts you, go to that organization's official site and find an official support number or email. Contact them to verify the information in the initial message. Scammers may also pretend to be businesses, like your utility company. They'll likely say something to scare you, like your gas will be turned off if you don't pay them right away.

The email is littered with grammatical errors

Most legitimate organizations will thoroughly proofread any copy or information they send to consumers. Professional emails are well-written, clear, and error-free. On the other hand, scam emails will likely be full of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

It might surprise you to know that scammers write sloppy emails on purpose. The idea is that if the reader is attentive enough to spot the grammatical mistakes, they likely won't fall for the scam.

There are certain scams that criminals try repeatedly because they've worked on so many people. Here are a few of the most common scams you should watch out for. Phishing scams:

A phishing scam can be a phone or email scam.

The criminal sends a message in which they pretend to represent an organization you know. It directs you to a fraud website that collects your sensitive information, like your passwords, Social Security

number (SSN), and bank account data. Once the scammer has your personal information, they can use it for personal gain. Phishing emails may try anything to get you to click on their fake link. They might claim to be your bank and ask you to log into your account to verify some suspicious activity. Or they could pretend to be a sweepstakes and say you need to fill out a form to claim a large reward. During the coronavirus pandemic, new phishing scams have emerged, with scammers claiming to be part of various charities and nonprofits. Sites like Charity Navigator can help you discern real groups from fake ones.

Travel insurance scams: These scams also became much more prominent during the pandemic. Let's say you're preparing to fly to Paris with your family. A scammer sends you a message offering you an insurance policy on any travel plans you might be making. They'll claim the policy will compensate you if your travel plans fall through for any reason without any extra charges. You think it might be a good idea to purchase this type of insurance. Right before leaving for your trip, you have to cancel your plans. You go to collect your insurance money only to realize the insurance company doesn't exist. Real travel insurance from a licensed business generally won't cover foreseeable events (like travel advisories, government turmoil, or pandemics) unless you buy a Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) addendum for your policy.

Grandparent scams,

Prey on your instinct to protect your family. The scammer will call or send an email pretending to be a family member in some sort of emergency who needs you to wire them money. The scammer may beg you to act right away and avoid sharing their situation with any other family members. For example, the scammer might call and say they're your grandchild who's been arrested in Mexico and needs money to pay bail. They'll say they're in danger and need you to send funds now to save them. If you get a call or an email from an alleged family member requesting money, take the time to make sure

they're actually who they say they are. Never wire transfer money right away or over the phone. Ask them a question that only the family member would know and verify their story with the rest of your family.

Advance fee scam:

You get an email from a prince. They've recently inherited a huge fortune from a member of their royal family. Now, the prince needs to keep their money in an American bank account to keep it safe. If you let them store their money in your bank account, you'll be handsomely rewarded. You just need to send them a small fee to get the money. There are several versions of this scam, but the prince iteration is a pretty common one. If you get these types of emails, don't respond or give out your financial information.

Tech support scams:

Your online experience is rudely interrupted when a pop-up appears telling you there's a huge virus on your computer. You need to "act fast" and contact the support phone number on the screen. If you don't, all of your important data will be erased. When you call the number, a fake tech support worker asks you for remote access to your device to "fix" the problem. If you give the scammer access to your device, they may steal your personal and financial information or install malware. Worse yet, they'll probably charge you for it. These scams can be pretty elaborate. A scam pop-up may even appear to be from a reputable software company. If you see this type of pop-up, don't respond to it. Instead, try restarting or turning off your device. If the device doesn't start back up, search for the support number for the device manufacturer and contact them directly.

Formjacking and retail scams:

Scammers will often pose as popular e-commerce companies by creating fake websites. The fake webpages might offer huge deals on social media. They'll also likely have a URL close to the real business's URL but slightly different. Sometimes, a criminal is skilled enough to hack the website of a large online retailer. When a scammer infiltrates a retailer's website, they can redirect where the links on that site lead. This is called formjacking. For example, you might go to an e-commerce store to buy a jacket. You find the jacket and put it in your online shopping cart. You click "check out," and you're taken to a form that collects your credit card information. What you don't know is that the checkout form is fake. Your credit card number is going directly to the scammers.

Whenever you're redirected from a website to make a payment or enter in information, always check the URL. If the form is legitimate, it will have the same URL as the site you were on. A fake form will have a URL that's close to but not exactly the same as the original site.

Scareware scams (fake antivirus):

These scams are similar to tech support scams. However, instead of urging you to speak directly with a fake tech support person, their goal is to get you to download a fake antivirus software product (scareware). You'll see a pop-up that says your computer has a virus, malware, or some other problem. The only way to get rid of the problem is to install the security software the pop-up links to. You think you're downloading antivirus software that will save your computer. What you're actually downloading is malicious software. There are several types of malware. The program might be ransomware that locks up your information until you pay the scammers or spyware that tracks your online activity.

To avoid this scam, never download antivirus software from a pop-up. You'll be much better off visiting the website of a reputable company, like McAfee, to download antivirus software.

Credit repair scams:

Dealing with credit card debt can be extremely stressful. Scammers know this and try to capitalize off it. They'll send emails posing as credit experts and tell you they can help you fix your credit or relieve some of your debt. They might even claim they can hide harmful details on your credit report. All you have to do is pay a small fee. Of course, after you pay the fee, the "credit expert" disappears without helping you out with your credit at all. Generally, legitimate debt settlement firms won't charge you upfront. If a credit relief company charges you a fee upfront, that's a red flag. Before you enter into an agreement with any credit service, check out their reputation. Do an online search on the company to see what you can find. If there's nothing about the credit repair company online, it's probably fake.

What can you do if you get scammed online? Admitting that you've fallen for an online scam can be embarrassing. But reporting a scammer can help stop them from taking advantage of anyone else. If you've been the victim of an online scam, try contacting your local police department and other relevant authorities.

Source: McAfee.com



THEY'RE SOW WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

Living

Physical symptoms of depression

BY POONAM SACHDEV

DEPRESSION can affect your body as well as your mind. Trouble falling or staying asleep is common in people who are depressed. But some may find that they get too much shut-eye.

It can be a sign of heart, lung, or stomach problems, so see your doctor to rule out those causes. Sometimes, though, it's a symptom of depression. Depression can also raise your risk of heart disease. Plus, people who've had heart attacks are more likely to be depressed.

If you feel so tired that you don't have energy for everyday tasks -- even when you sleep or rest a lot -- it may be a sign that you're depressed. Depression and fatigue together tend to make both conditions seem worse. Aching muscles and joints too, when you live with ongoing pain it can raise your risk of depression. Depression may also lead to pain because the two conditions share chemical messengers in the brain. People who are depressed are three times as likely to get regular pain.

Depression can cause digestive problems, our brains and digestive systems are strongly connected, which is why many of us get stomachaches or nausea when we're stressed or worried.

It can get you in your gut too -- causing nausea, indigestion, diarrhea, or constipation or headaches. One study shows that people with major depression are three times more likely to have migraines, and people with migraines are five times more likely to get depressed.

Changes in appetite or weight loss is also a sign of depression,

some people feel less hungry when they get depressed. Others can't stop eating. The result can be weight gain or loss, along with lack of energy.

Depression has been linked to eating disorders like bulimia, anorexia, or binge eating. When you have back ache and it hurts you there on a regular basis, it may contribute to depression. And people who are depressed may be four times more likely to get intense, disabling neck or back pain. Agitation and restlessness, sleep problems or other depression symptoms can make you feel this way. Men are more likely than women to be irritable when they're depressed.

Sexual Problems:

If you're depressed, you might lose



Social support can ease depression

your interest in sex. Some prescription drugs that treat depression can also take away your drive and affect performance. Talk to your doctor about your medicine options.

Find out what may be causing your symptoms. Exercise.

Research suggests that if you do it regularly, it releases chemicals in your brain that make you feel good, improve your mood, and reduce your sensitivity to pain. Although physical activity alone won't cure depression, it can help ease it over the long term.

If you're depressed, it can sometimes be hard to get the energy to exercise. But try to remember that it can ease fatigue and help you sleep better. Midlife can make you miserable. A 2008 study of data from 2 million people found that midlife depression spans the globe. In the U.S., it peaks at around age 40 for women and 50 for men, and usually starts to lift in the 50s. Why? People may learn to adapt to their strengths and weaknesses and value life more, the researchers say.

Squeezed between the demands of children, aging parents, marriage, and your job? Feeling sad, worthless, and guilty? Women tend to shoulder more of the "sandwich generation" burdens -- and up to half become depressed as a result.

Therefore, make sure you're caring for yourself, too. Exercise, get enough rest, eat healthy, see friends, and get help -- for caregiving demands and depression -- if you need it.

As men age, their bodies produce less of the important sex hormone testosterone. Low testosterone levels can cause depression, as well as erectile dysfunction (ED) -- trouble getting or keeping an erection -- and a decreased interest in sex. Ask your doctor to test the levels of testosterone in your blood. If it is low, ask your doctor about replacement therapy and other treatment options.

Hormone fluctuations, hot flashes, and life changes related to perimenopause and menopause can make your mood plummet. If you have trouble sleeping, a history of depression, or PMS, mood swings or depression may worsen during this transitional period. For mild depression, try self-calming skills such as yoga or deep breathing. Do things that make you feel better, such as exercise or going out with friends, or find a creative outlet. For more serious, long-lasting symptoms of depression, prescription medication or talk therapy can help.

If your child has left home, an "empty nest" can make you feel

empty. Going through menopause or retirement at the same time may make it harder. Try to see it as an opportunity. Reconnect with your spouse, other family members, and friends. Pursue hobbies and interests you didn't have time for before. Give yourself time to adjust. If your mood doesn't lift in a few months, talk to your doctor. Do you feel too listless to check your blood sugar regularly? Are unpredictable blood sugar levels making you feel out of control? Depression is a common and dangerous complication of many chronic conditions, including diabetes. Depression also may keep you from taking good care of your diabetes. Talk to your doctor if you've been depressed for more than two weeks. Talk therapy, medication, and better diabetes control can help you manage both conditions. Depression is serious and if left untreated can be life threatening.

About 1 in 4 older people who drink heavily has major depression. Some older people start drinking more because of stressful events, such as retirement or a spouse's death. Yet alcohol problems are often mistaken for other age-related issues. A combination of medications can treat both alcohol dependence and depression. Individual or group therapy can also help deal with issues that may trigger drinking.

Insomnia and other sleep disruptions, which are common as we age, are closely related to depression. Insomnia can be a sign that you are depressed, and if you have insomnia but aren't depressed, you're at higher risk of developing mood changes. Obstructive sleep apnea and restless legs syndrome also have been linked to depression. Talk to your doctor about possible reasons for your sleep problems and get treatment for them. Learn good sleep hygiene habits, such as regular bedtime hours. Exercise early regularly and avoid caffeine, alcohol, or nicotine, which interfere with sleep. Prescription medication may also help.

If you were forced into retirement -- because of poor health or other reasons -- you might very well be depressed. Factors such as financial insecurity or lack of social support can also make retirement a downer. Busy retirees tend to be happier retirees. Learn new skills, take classes, get exercise. Be

flexible: For example, if your health makes activities like travel difficult, take in museums and foreign films. It's common to feel depressed after a diagnosis of heart disease or having a heart attack or cardiac surgery. But many people with heart disease go on to experience severe, long-term depression. And that can worsen heart health. A healthy diet and sleep, mild exercise, relaxation techniques, and joining a support group can help you get through the blues. If depression lasts, antidepressants or talk therapy can help.

Social support can help prevent or ease depression. But some kinds of social support may be better than others. A study of people in a retirement community found that those who stayed connected with friends living elsewhere had less depression. Support from within the community didn't affect mood. Maintain ties with close friends and family members. Explore Internet technology that can give you virtual face-time with distant friends. Any chronic or serious condition -- such as Parkinson's disease or a stroke -- can lead to depression. A stroke can also affect the areas of the brain that control mood. Be realistic but positive. Learn how to cope with physical effects of your illness. Don't let them get in the way of taking care of yourself and having fun. If you have symptoms of depression, don't wait -- get help right away.

Feeling foggy and forgetful? It could be depression or dementia, a condition marked by memory loss. The signs and symptoms can be similar. Or it could be both -- depression is more common in older people who have dementia, especially Alzheimer's. If you don't know what's causing your symptoms, see your doctor so you can get the right treatment, if necessary. It's normal to grieve after losing a spouse or other loved one. But grief can grow into depression. Memory problems, confusion, and social withdrawal can be symptoms of depression in older people. Both grief and depression raise the risk for heart-related deaths. Let yourself grieve. Express your feelings to friends, in a support group, or to a grief counselor. For depression, medication and talk therapy can help.

To keep your mood up, it helps to have good emotional and social support. But who says social support needs to be human? Studies show that pets can help people have less depression and loneliness and more self-esteem and happiness. Pets are friends with other benefits, too. Walking a dog, for example, is good exercise and a great way to meet people. A good laugh can relax muscles, reduce stress, and relieve pain. And research suggests that a good sense of humor can take the bite out of depression. For humor on demand, create a laugh library of funny books, cartoons, and DVDs. Or try laughter yoga, which uses playful activities and breathing exercises to provoke giggles.

Helping others can help you forget your own problems. Volunteering feels good at any age, but it may hold special benefits for older people. If retirement has you adrift, for example, it can give your life a new sense of purpose and satisfaction. Recent research suggests that it may even prevent frailty in older people. Find a cause that has special importance to you and get involved.



BUSINESS WORLD

Agric: Steady approach towards sustainable food security

***It is a known mantra that organisations are charged to think outside the box. We, at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, have decided to think without the box if we are to achieve our mandate.* – Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari opines. IBRAHIM TAHIR Writes.**

THE Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, is set to launch the renewed hope wheat revolution initiative in November, through, of course, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security; which is aimed at enhancing food security and achieving self-sufficiency in Nigeria.

This is to be kick-started in November with over 70,000 hectares to be cultivated across wheat production zones, with an aggressive expected yield of 875,000 metric tonnes. Presidential approval was sought by the Agric. Minister, for the blending of important fertilisers to support this year's dry season farming, while already making provisions for next year's farming season.

This approval has been expeditiously granted by President Tinubu, which includes the Train the Trainer program for extension agents involved in dry season farming in collaboration with wheat producing states and other partners. This was unveiled at a press conference on the 7th of October, 2023; by The Federal Ministry of Agric., under the leadership of the Hon.

Minister of Agric. Sen. Abu Kyari, and his counterpart, the Hon. Minister of State, Senator Aliyu Abdullahi.

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has well over 43 agencies, with a huge number of development partners both foreign and domestic. This has necessitated the prudent approach of the new Leadership of the ministry, in taking it's time to receive briefings from all of these agencies and partners, to be able to properly assess what they have met on ground: before embarking on a new drive to implement Mr. President's Food Security initiative, with workable plans that can harness the structures and existing policies and plans on ground.

To this end, the ministry is in the process of carrying out a robust stakeholder analysis that will provide a working stakeholder map showing who



Kyari

does what, where, when and how, while identifying mutually beneficial areas for Small Holder Farmers, Large Scale Farmers, Processors, Marketers and the Organised Private Sector.

This will largely enhance resource utility, thereby reducing duplication and wastage. The National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy, NATIP, 2022-2027, shall be a guide with lessons learnt from its implementation processes.

These were impressed upon in the Minister's presser on Friday, 7th October, 2023 at the Agric Ministry's Headquarters.

It was resolved that all the National Agricultural and Food Security Summit will be held in November 2023; to produce an Action Plan with an implementation and sustainability Strategy. The National Council for Agriculture and Food Security meeting in Cross River State to be held in November of 2023, would produce a strategic operational plan for Federal-State-Local Government joint implementation strategies.

There will be a new transparent regime for the mechanisms and processes for the distribution of fertiliser and Agro Pesticides along with other inputs to farmers across the country. Significant investments are to be made in Animal-Feed crops, fodder and pasture production as an antidote to the farmers/herders clashes by focusing on the development of paddocks, foliage and fodder estates equipped for all year round production.

Of utmost priority is the take-off of the National Agricultural Development Fund. Another is to have a collaboration with the Water Resources Ministry, to unlock the huge irrigation potentials of the River Basins Development Authorities and other flood plains in the country

to ensure all year round food production.

Most of these are contained in the short term plans and goals of the ministry. These include the establishment of Agricultural Marketing Incubation Centres (Agribusiness Development Centres) for youth and women in the six geo-political zones of the country.

Other midterm actions to be pursued by the food security ministry include: The development of Digital/ ICT Mobile-based agro industry system and E extension platforms to support farmers through the establishment of the national centres in the 6 agro-ecological zones of Nigeria with a command and control Office in Abuja.

There's also, meat, dairy eggs, fish and other protein from animal sources that would receive special Intervention to increase productivity and target a 10% year on year annual growth rate. Interesting long term plans detailed by the ministry include but not limited to: the repositioning of the Universities of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicines to play key roles in the nation's Agricultural Transformation processes by developing practical approaches to mechanisation and production.

Perhaps a second instalment of this piece would be necessary to fully capture the very diligent work that the Federal Government's Food Security initiatives team is putting together. The thirst for immediate or magical results towards ensuring Food Security is hardly a month or two's job. Not even a quarter of a year can detail a visible or tangible result dashboard.

The wet season is almost done and so therefore; the Minister and his counterpart have to concentrate on a dry season approach which in the long run, would be the main buffer to the traditional wet season farming which is usually dependent on very precarious and uncertain factors for its success.

Dry season and mechanised farming, alongside animal farming, are the most vital components of the agro-allied industries that thrive on the successes of a nation's agriculture and food security system.

I am optimistic that Mr. President's pick of Senator Kyari and Senator Aliyu, to head the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry is one desirous of assured results not just for political points or optics. It is a decision borne out of a desire to have them deliver real-time, long term results whereby self-sufficiency in food production in Nigeria will not only be achieved; but also be sustained.

“To this end, the ministry is in the process of carrying out a robust stakeholder analysis that will provide a working stakeholder map showing who does what, where, when and how, while identifying mutually beneficial areas for Small Holder Farmers, Large Scale Farmers, Processors, Marketers and the Organised Private Sector. This will largely enhance resource utility, thereby reducing duplication and wastage. The National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy, NATIP, 2022-2027, shall be a guide with lessons learnt from its implementation processes. It was resolved that all the programs and policies of the ministry will be aligned to attaining Mr. President's priorities of: Food Security, Job Creation, Poverty Eradication, and Women and Youth's inclusivity and an enabling environment for Private Sector participation in governance and economic activities.”

BUSINESS WORLD

FG to securitise NLNG dividends

THE Federal government has concluded plans to securitise about \$7 billion of the country's dividends from the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG). This is part of the government's efforts to boost foreign currency liquidity in the economy and strengthen the embattled naira.

According to the Nigerian government, it expects to get \$7 billion from a consortium led by Standard Chartered Bank from next week.

This arrangement is being organised by the Federal Ministry of Finance Incorporated, which is the shareholder of the NLNG. The move aligns with the recent disclosure by Wale Edun, the minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy that the country was expecting about \$10 billion in inflows in the nearest term, which would help to clear the FX backlog and stabilise the naira.

The naira closed at N1,300 to a dollar on the parallel market yesterday, higher than the N1,310 to a dollar which it closed with the previous day while on the official I&E FX



Tinubu

Window, it closed at N837.49 to a dollar, weaker than the N801.10 to a dollar it closed the previous day.

President Bola Tinubu, while speaking at the Nigerian Economic Summit which was held in Abuja on Monday, assured Nigerians and investors that there was an

ongoing plan to boost the country's foreign exchange liquidity.

Tinubu acknowledged the challenges faced by the business community in the financial markets and assured them of additional FX liquidity to restore market confidence.

THE British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Richard Montgomery has said Nigeria has the world's largest electricity deficit that affects 90 million of its population.

He spoke recently in Abuja, at the opening session of a two-day roundtable on the Electricity Act 2023 with the theme, "Implications and Opportunities for State Electricity Markets."

The two-day event organised by the Nigeria Governors' Forum (NGF) is funded by the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO) and implemented by United Kingdom Nigeria Infrastructural Advisory Facility (UK-NIAF).

Montgomery who was represented by the Deputy British High Commissioner to Nigeria, Gill Atkinson said, "We have a new government here. It has embarked on important microeconomic reforms.

"The exchange rates and fuel subsidy are bringing short-term pain to the country and the people. But there are positive changes in the medium and long term that will help Nigeria fulfill its potential for the future.

"Part of this particularly

'Nigeria has world's largest electricity deficit' -Montgomery

important moment is Nigeria's power sector. Unfortunately, the country has the world's largest electricity deficit. This affects 90 million people. Even those Nigerians who are connected to the grid, face frequent outages and hence don't get a reliable supply."

Montgomery who described the Electricity Act as an important component of the

current reforms noted that the most important feature of the Act is the provision to allow states to pass laws to govern the generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity.

In his remarks, the Chairman of NGF and Kwara State Governor, AbdulRahman AbdulRazaq said the forum believes in partnership and getting divergent views to boost electricity supply.



Adebayo

Why we can't sell BUA cement at N3,500

SOME cement retailers in Lagos and Ogun state have given reasons BUA Cement products are still sold above N5,000 per bag despite the company announcing a 36.4 percent cut in price on October 1.

BUA Cement had disclosed that the ex-factory price of its product will be reduced to N3,500 per bag from N5,500 – starting from October 2. The company made the decision after Abdul Samad Rabi, BUA Cement founder, met with President Bola Tinubu on September 16.

BUA Cement said its ongoing effort to increase production capacity to 17 million metric tonnes per annum (MTPA) before the end of 2023 made it possible for the company to reduce its ex-factory price for licenced dealers and end users.

However, three weeks later, the price of BUA's cement has remained above N5,000 in some retail stores in Lagos and Ogun state.

Speaking to Olubukola Oluwadare, a cement retailer in an area in Ikorodu, Lagos, she said BUA sells the cement at N3,500 at its factory in Benin, however, retailers will have to visit the production site to buy the product at that price.

According to Oluwadare, BUA Cement representative said the company does not have enough trucks to distribute its products, so retailers have to hire trucks to load the cement.

Oluwadare said that she partnered with another retailer to hire a truck, but the cost – N1,000 per bag – discouraged them, so she sells only the Dangote brand.

She said BUA does not have

enough lorries, "what they do is within their vicinity there. He even said if I have Dangote vehicle, that some of them are using it to bring their own down to here (Ikorodu)".

According to Oluwadare, engaging a truck that belongs to Dangote Cement to load BUA's products could create an issue.

Oluwadare, who was not comfortable with the suggestion, said hiring a truck meant she would bear the cost of the driver and the offloaders but "when we calculated all the money from that place to here, it is almost N5,050". Another retailer in Ikorodu, who spoke on condition of anonymity, corroborated Oluwadare's statement on purchasing the product directly from BUA's factory to get it at N3,500.

He said: "Transportation alone has covered the whole (discount), you will have to increase your money (price) to like N5,000 or so."

The retailer said Elephant brands cost N5,300 and Dangote is N5,400 – yet both brands are distributed to them – but they have to hire a truck, do the work of a distributor to stock BUA's products and eventually sell them above N5,000.

Abdullateef Abayomi, another cement retailer and block maker, in Alagbole, Ogun State, said the new price can't take effect immediately because many still have BUA's cement bought at the previous price.

"If you say it should take effect, people that have already buy their market, they will lose lot of money (sic). Imagine from N5,300 to N3,700," Abayomi said.

"That's about N2,000 of shortage. That is why it has not taken effect."

– Retailers

He said the new price would most likely take effect by December.

BUA Cement didn't respond to enquiries sent to the company.

Nigerians groan under weight of tomato prices

TOMATOES have become more expensive in Lagos in recent weeks, putting many Nigerian households under increasing pressure amid mounting economic headwinds.

"I used N6,500 worth of tomatoes to cook a pot of soup – the same quantity I used to get for N2,000," Temitayo Fadahunsi, a public servant in Lagos, said. "In March, I bought a medium-sized basket of tomatoes for N4,000; last weekend the same quantity was sold for N19,000-N24,000 at Ile-Epo market," the mother of one added.

BusinessDay findings show

that a big basket of tomatoes is sold for between N36,000 and N38,000 in Mile 12 Market, Lagos, as against N10,000 in April this year.

The price of a medium-sized basket of tomatoes has risen to N19,000-N23,000 from around N4,500 in April.

The surge in the prices of fresh fruits this year started much earlier in May after Tuta Absoluta invaded farms in major tomato-growing areas in the country.

Tomatoes in Nigeria are grown in the dry season (December-April). The rainy season, May to September,

is not conducive for growing tomatoes, as rainwater destroys the tomato crop, according to experts.

A tomato trader in Ajah market who buys from Mile 12 also confirmed that the price of this staple has been on an increase since May.

It was gathered that the high cost of transportation is also a major factor responsible for the surge in tomato prices.

"Some food sellers buy esha (almost rotten tomatoes) because they are cheaper and mix it with dry pepper and tomato paste since they can't afford the fresh ones," a tomato trader at Obalende market said.

In September, the headline inflation rate increased to 26.72 percent, with the food inflation rate at 30.64 percent, according to the National Bureau of Statistics.

"Unsurprisingly, food prices increased on the underlying factors such as the pass-through effect of elevated Premium Motor Spirit prices on food prices, higher input costs, and conflicts in the Northern region of the country remain intact," analysts at Cordros Securities said.



Rabi



Kyari

ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

Navigating the entrepreneurial rollercoaster: VFD Group ways

This week, the headlines in the entrepreneurship circle have been a study in contrasts—stories of soaring success and the sobering reality of failure. On one hand, we have the remarkable tale of VFD Group, a side hustle that defied the odds and blossomed into a conglomerate with investments in various sectors. On the other hand, there's a string of startups, both at home and across Africa, that managed to secure substantial capital but eventually faltered. OFOLABI ABIODUN writes.

THESE two divergent narratives offer a compelling juxtaposition, shedding light on the unpredictable nature of entrepreneurship and the critical factors that distinguish winners from those who stumble along the way.

The genesis of VFD Group: a Leap of faith

In 2008, a group of friends with 9-5 jobs embarked on a remarkable entrepreneurial journey by pooling together 2.5 million naira from their savings. Their goal was simple yet audacious: to start a side hustle that would eventually allow them to bid farewell to their conventional employment. Among the visionary individuals in this group was Nonso Okpala, the Chief Financial Officer at Tony Elumelu's Heir Holdings. Little did they know that their initial venture, a microlending business targeting the underserved population, would evolve into the VFD Group—a conglomerate with diverse interests spanning finance, real estate, hospitality, energy, and more.

Entrepreneurship as a gamble

Reflecting on missed opportunities, one of the friends who did not invest observed that starting a business and becoming an entrepreneur can be likened to a gamble. Many individuals, at different junctures in their lives, wager their savings and hopes on their belief in an idea, hoping to strike gold. Yet, for every success story like VFD Group, there are countless others with equally compelling ideas, resources, and education that do not achieve the same level of success. This reality underscores the elements of luck and timing in entrepreneurship.

The reality of success

It's crucial to recognise that not everyone is cut out to be an entrepreneur, and not everyone will achieve success in that realm. Instead of succumbing to the pressure of starting a business or being labelled a CEO, individuals should take the time to identify their true calling and focus on honing the necessary skills and experiences. The entrepreneurial journey is not one-size-fits-all, and not everyone is meant to embark on it.

Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page, and others celebrated as titans of industry are the fortunate few who won the jackpot in their respective fields. Many equally talented

individuals made similar attempts but did not achieve comparable success because success, in many instances, is a confluence of factors beyond one's control. Thus, embracing one's uniqueness and strengths is paramount to personal and professional growth.

The perils of bandwagon entrepreneurship

In the same week that the VFD Group celebrated its success, the world also witnessed the downfall of several startups that once appeared promising. Startups such as Dash in Ghana, 54gene, Sendy, Lazer pay, Zumi, and Kune, despite raising substantial funding rounds, eventually faltered and faded away. These instances serve as cautionary tales of entrepreneurs who fail to recognise their strengths and build on them.

Some individuals are inherently better suited to be managers, followers, or career professionals, and that is perfectly acceptable. Instead of blindly following the trend of quitting paid employment and diving into entrepreneurship, aspiring entrepreneurs should conduct a thorough self-assessment and align their pursuits with their true calling.

VFD Group: An inspirational success story

The VFD Group's transformation from a humble side hustle to a flourishing conglomerate is a testament to

the power of vision, perseverance, and adaptability. This homegrown Nigerian conglomerate has achieved remarkable milestones, holding a 12% stake in Piggyvest and other fintech companies, being listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange with a market worth of N55 billion, and having investments in over 40 companies.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the VFD Group's journey is its consistent dividend payouts over the past five years. In 2022, the company reported a remarkable 125% increase in profit before tax, reaching N8.8 billion. This impressive growth was driven by an 87% surge in gross earnings to N33.8 billion. These financial achievements are a testament to the dedication, innovation, and business acumen of the founders and their team.

Key lessons from VFD Group's Success

The story of VFD Group offers several valuable lessons for aspiring entrepreneurs and business enthusiasts:

- 1. Believe in Your Vision:** VFD Group's founders had a clear vision from the beginning and believed in it passionately. Their unwavering commitment to their goals helped them overcome early setbacks.
- 2. Adapt and evolve:** The group started with a microlending business but

expanded into various sectors, demonstrating the importance of adaptability and diversification in business.

3. Embrace diversity: VFD Group's diverse portfolio of investments highlights the benefits of exploring multiple avenues within the business world.

Dash in Ghana was once hailed as a unicorn, having raised an impressive \$86 million in funding. With grand ambitions to revolutionize ride-sharing in Africa, Dash garnered attention for its aggressive expansion and innovative approach. However, despite its promising start, Dash faced insurmountable challenges and ultimately had to cease operations, leaving investors and employees in the lurch.

The genetics startup that lost its way

54gene, a genetic research startup based in Nigeria, managed to secure \$45 million in funding, making headlines as a frontrunner in African biotech innovation. The company aimed to tackle critical health challenges through genomic research but struggled to translate its lofty ambitions into tangible results. Internal issues and external challenges led to its downfall, serving as a stark reminder that funding alone cannot guarantee success in the startup world.

Sendy, lazer pay, zumi, and

Kune: The fading stars

The role of innovation and execution: While a groundbreaking idea can set the stage for success, it is consistent innovation and effective execution that sustain a company over the long term.

Many startups, like VFD Group, initially started with a unique concept but continued to evolve and adapt to changing market dynamics.

Resilience and learning from failure:

Startup failures are not the end of the road; they can be valuable learning experiences. Entrepreneurs who bounce back from setbacks often emerge stronger and more resilient. The ability to analyse what went wrong and make adjustments is a crucial skill.

The importance of market research:

Dash in Ghana, 54gene, Sendy, Lazer Pay, Zumi, and Kune may have raised significant capital, but they also serve as cautionary tales of the importance of thorough market research. Understanding customer needs, preferences, and market trends is essential for long-term success.

Strategic partnerships and team dynamics:

Building the right team and forming strategic partnerships can be the difference between success and failure. VFD Group's ability to assemble a talented and motivated team contributed to its remarkable journey.





Court restrains Do2dtun from defaming D'banj.

Continued from page 18



produced two girls

A Chief District Court of the Federal Capital Territory at Wuse Zone 2, Abuja, has restrained on-air-personality, Kayode Oladotun, popularly known as Do2dtun, from posting defamatory posts against singer Oladapo



Oyebanjo, aka D'banj, on social media or any other platform.

The Judge, His Honour, Emmanuel Iyanna, gave the injunction on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, in the case with Motion No: MN/218/2023.

D'banj, through one of his lawyers, Toheeb Lawal from Abuja-based law firm, Law Corridor, had filed an application at the court for an injunction restraining Do2dtun from making malicious and defamatory posts against him on social media.

In granting the application, which has D'banj as the complainant and Do2dtun as the respondent, Iyanna granted "an order restraining the defendant (Do2dtun) either by himself, servants, privies, cohorts, representatives, or any person deriving authority from him from further making any malicious, intimidating or defamatory post directing at the complainant (D'banj) on any social media platform (X, Instagram, etc) or news media pending the hearing and determination of the substantive case".

Also, the court ordered the Deputy Inspector of Police, Force Intelligence Bureau, to investigate a criminal complaint brought by D'banj against Do2dtun within two weeks and report back to court.

Do2dtun had for weeks embarked upon a social media onslaught against D'banj. The OAP was married to D'banj's sister, Taiwo, in 2013, and the union produced two girls.

However, in November, 2021, Taiwo instituted a divorce proceeding before Justice A.I Akobi of Court 23, High Court of the Federal Capital Territory, in Suit Number: GWD/PET/25/2021, over alleged "unending reckless emotional abuse, forced abortion and vicious domestic violence," by Do2dtun, which she claimed has adversely affected her health and general well-being.

Of late, Do2dtun made allegations that he was not allowed to see his daughter, but Taiwo said the claim by her ex-husband was false.

She said contrary to the allegations by her ex-husband over the custody of their children, the entertainer has access to their kids.

Taiwo recounted her ordeal in the marriage, such as domestic violence and emotional abuse, narrating how Do2dtun drove her to a hospital to have a forced abortion of a five-month pregnancy.

If you want to stay relevant, emulate Wizkid – Shallipopi

Continued from page 18



CROWN Uzama, professionally known as Shallipopi, a popular Nigerian musician, has offered some helpful career advice with fellow entertainers.

The Elon Musk crooner stated that if his colleagues want to stay relevant in the industry, they must mimic Afrobeats superstar Wizkid's social media decorum.

Shallipopi expressed this in a recent interview with 78 Factory, explaining that overworked musicians frequently forget their ideals.

He said: "To stay relevant, you stay silent. When you talk too much, you lose value. Let your music and your success speak for you like Wizkid."

The Edo-born singer also disclosed during the interview that his genre of music isn't afrobeats but afro-pluto.

Meanwhile....

Zlatan gave my career life – Shallipopi

Crown Uzama, also known as Shallipopi, a rising Nigerian artist, has underlined the importance of rapper Zlatan Ibile in his success.

According to the "Elon Musk" singer, Zlatan gave his music career "life" without receiving any monetary compensation.

The TikTok sensation, 23, revealed this via his Instagram story while giving a tribute to the Lagos Anthem hitmaker.

Shallipopi wrote; "Big shoutout to Zlatan Ibile. Bro literally gave my career life. He didn't ask for anything in return."

He became an internet sensation after his song 'Elon Musk' went viral. He later remixed the song with Zlatan Ibile and Fireboy DML which solidified his stardom.

Lupita Nyong'o and Boyfriend Selema Masekela Break up

LUPITA Nyong'o and boyfriend Selema Masekela have ended their romance less than a year after going Instagram official. Read her powerful message on her "heartbreak" and "pain"

There is no more "us" for Lupita Nyong'o and Selema Masekela.

The Oscar winner and her boyfriend have broken up after about one year together, she shared on Instagram Oct. 19 without naming her ex.

"It is necessary for me to share a personal truth and publicly dissociate myself from someone I can no longer trust," Lupita wrote. "I find myself in a season of heartbreak because of a love suddenly and devastatingly extinguished by deception."

The Black Panther star shared why she decided to reveal the news publicly in spite of the heartache she's currently feeling.

"I am tempted to run into the shadows and hide, only to return to the light when I have regained my strength enough for me to say, 'Whatever, my life is better this way,'" she continued. "But I am reminded that the magnitude of the pain I am feeling is equal to the measure of my capacity for love. And so, I am choosing to face the pain, cultivating the courage to meet my life exactly as it is, and trusting that this too shall pass."



SUNDAY FEATURE

Nigerians expecting much from an ineffective legislature

A legislature that is alive to its roles and responsibilities is a symbol of hope, a shield and a voice for the people. It is marked by robust debates, strict commitment to checks and balances, and deliberate accountability to the people. Also, it confers legitimacy on the government because governance is productive and the citizens are fulfilled. EGBO Writes.

HOWEVER, in developing nations, the legislature is defined by weak institutional capacity. It faces the challenges of executive dominance, public trust deficit, poor democratic culture manifesting as a weak electoral system and disrespect to democratic tenets and then disruptions through elections, leading to a high turnover of legislators.

And, central to all these issues are a weak constitution, a low level of morality in politics as well as poor knowledge of the duties of the parliament.

To begin with, Nigeria's situation validates the assertion that any constitution midwife by the military is as faulty as it is anti-democracy. It does not offer the legislature the necessary support for true independence and effective supervision of the executive.

For example, mere legislative refusal of consent cannot stop the executive from borrowing and or engaging in non-budgeted expenditures. Equally, the much-touted powers to override the Presidency on critical issues exist merely on paper in the same manner that executive appointees can hold offices without legislative confirmation. And again, legislative summons and resolutions are brazenly ignored because the legislature does not possess the instruments to effectively enforce compliance.

So, evidently, the executive is already empowered by the constitution to dominate the legislature. And as noted earlier, institutional capacity is the missing link between an effective parliament and the rest. It is a product of a trained and motivated workforce supported by a favourable operating environment, which in turn is a function of adequate funding.

But in Nigeria, the legislature is incapacitated and depends on the executive for operational existence. Beyond executive dominance and disrespect, lack of financial autonomy chiefly erodes overall legislative effectiveness. Among others, capacity building is stunted, the work environment is uncondusive, representation suffers and legislative committees majorly rely on MDAs for logistics in the discharge of oversight functions. Meanwhile, for over two years now, the National Assembly chambers are closed down for repairs, restricting the lawmakers to a temporary arrangement for plenary.

Similarly, most bills passed by the legislature, especially the ones it originates, are not accented to and the resolutions arising from motions are utterly disregarded. Even the legislative agenda, despite how fantastic, would always remain a dream except the executive offers the needed impetus. Yes, the executive determines the dimension of budget



implementation, which explains the perceived lop-sidedness in infrastructural development across the country.

Additionally, there are interferences in the affairs of the legislature by the political party. Either by way of promises of reward or threats of sanction, the legislators are readily blackmailed to influence their actions and conduct.

Buoyed by the weak electoral system, the State Governors decide the political fates of the legislators using the party structures and deployment of mob rule. Any lawmaker whom the Governor does not endorse is as good as gone because the party will not nominate them as candidates for future elections. Re-election tickets, developmental project locations as well as appointment of relatives and loyalists into positions are employed as bait to keep the legislators in line. Also, despite the popularity of laws made by the National Assembly regarding the matters on the concurrent list, the Governors railroad the State Assemblies into undermining the federal legislature, for political expediency.

Hence, when a legislator is confronted with the grim prospects of political extinction, they helplessly 'play along' to survive. And inferentially, the executive influences the choices of legislative leadership through this strategy. Now with these, why would ineffective parliaments not thrive?

Then again, the withholding of public support and cooperation, which also undermines the effectiveness of the legislature, is traced to two major factors. While one is the personality of some lawmakers, the other is misplaced public expectations sequel to limited understanding of the preserves of the parliament.

Whereas legislators are expected to be morally upright

and beyond reproach, the actions and conducts of some account for the huge public trust deficit plaguing the legislature. There are those lacking in character, the ones reputed for underperformance and the others who embody politics with bitterness or bad-loser syndrome. This last category adopts desperation in their quest for power and would always seek to undermine every electoral outcome that does not suit their expectations, despite established credibility. In political contests, they 'must' either have their way or rock the boat.

Yet, unfortunately, the legislature is corporately subjected to collective labelling and the individual liberties of the entire legislators are serially violated, thus deepening the institutional ineffectiveness.

Furthermore, and exploiting the limited public knowledge of the workings of the legislature, the vulnerable are manipulated against the legislators. Driven by a self-seeking agenda, including a narrow political mentality, the elites orchestrate subjective narratives aimed at lowering the public esteem of the parliament. The impression roundly created is that the legislature does little or nothing to justify its expenditure. Also, smear campaigns are sponsored against the legislative leadership of which the executive arm is principally complicit. Because they control the media, they determine what the people know. The media is made to focus mainly on the downsides to generate negative perceptions of the legislature. Again, the parliamentarians are visited with varied demands that are motivated by the sense of entitlement wherein the constituents assume that their personal needs must be met by the representatives irrespective of the magnitude. And instructively, this is sustained because the less informed masses rate the legislators based on projects or contracts attracted

and the amount of money doled out among other direct socio-economic benefits.

Equally, there are assessments informed by the quantity of legislation rather than the quality, but factually, the advent of the internet has had a diminishing effect on legislative outputs. It has drastically affected policy formulation processes such that the core legislative duties are now shaped by external dynamics. Global trends, rather than the legislature, now determine governance policies. What happens in one country affects other countries. Borrowing and international trade agreements today dictate the pace of development. Consequently, there is a prevailing dearth of home-grown socio-economic legislation, especially for a country like Nigeria that 'must' borrow to fund its budget. And by this again, the legislature is unarguably anything but effective.

Therefore, in building our expectations, convinced that an effective parliament is fundamental to the legitimacy of government, we have to recognise the peculiar challenges confronting the fledgling legislatures. In our craving for a democratic institution that truly represents the interests of all citizens, there should be a corresponding clamour for a viable constitution drafted through an all-inclusive process. Again, there should be a reawakened consciousness for a long-term commitment to building a culture of democracy and political tolerance. We should acknowledge that past mistakes occasioned by bad leadership account for our present socio-economic and political predicaments. The problem of Nigeria is certainly not the legislature alone. Particularly, we should realise that a fair assessment of the overall performance of the legislature is achieved only when one considers the rate at which the

executive respects legislative resolution and summons. A legislature that is roundly disparaged cannot be effective or deliver optimally.

Then importantly, if we cannot resist the temptation to compare, we should be objective by always acknowledging that the human and financial resources available to the executive far exceed those of the legislature. We should also admit that for each arm of government, there are statutory allowances, including vehicles, yet there is always an orchestrated public outcry trailing that of the legislature. We should be persuaded that de-marketing the legislature hurts the country and again that sensational reportage is a threat to democracy the world over. Rather, we should cultivate good relationships with our representatives to truly guide them towards serving the national interest.

And now specifically, the legislators should be seen to be above board by truly representing the people and also shunning every unethical conduct notably traits of politics with bitterness. They should not take the people's mandate for granted. They should purge themselves of mutual suspicions and divisive tendencies. Every lawmaker should think of Nigeria first. Above all, they should realise that one does not need to hold a leadership position or be on a particular committee before one can make an impact in governance. It is not about ego or special recognition but about sacrifice and contributions to national development.

Thankfully and verifiably, the President of the Senate, Godswill Akpabio, by his blueprint and actions so far, has made firm statements of covenant about his passion for a regenerated Nigeria that works for all. A diligent review shows his clear understanding of Nigeria's immediate challenge. By his agenda, the arms of government should collaborate in the overall interest of the citizenry. Beyond his age-long sense of humour and friendly disposition, Akpabio demonstrates that it takes a united and bipartisan legislature to heal the country and oversight the executive without feeling that the government is being undermined.

Hence, with open minds, may we accept his extended hands of fellowship by giving him the right opportunities to walk the talk. May we champion strong institutional capacity in favour of the parliament and through our representatives, consciously shield it against any form of derailment. Otherwise, it is the height of hypocrisy to expect much from this 10th National Assembly.

Egbo is a parliamentary affairs analyst

NEWS

Good governance without protection of citizens' rights, deceptive

From
MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO,
Ibadan

- Makinde

GOVERNOR Seyi Makinde of Oyo State has declared that the true test of good governance lies in the ability of the government to deliver policies that protect the rights of the citizens.

Makinde made this declaration while speaking during the human rights day organised by Save The Poor And Needy Charity Initiative (SPANCI).

The event which took place at the House of Chiefs, Secretariat, Ibadan, was attended by Olubadan of Ibadan land, Oba Olalekan Balogun who was represented by Chief Ademola Odunade and the Chief Judge of Oyo State, Justice Iyabo Yerima who was represented by Justice Muftau Adegbola.

Makinde, who was represented at the event by his Executive Assistant on Administration, Reverend Idowu Ogedengbe, noted that good governance without protection of citizens' rights is deceptive.

The governor who was awarded as the best governor of the year by SPANCI, added that any government talking about good governance without protecting the rights of its citizens is only being deceptive.



Makinde

He maintained that his administration has embarked on various policies aimed to make life more convenient for workers and the less privileged citizens in the state.

"The true test of good governance lies in the ability of the government to deliver policies that protect the rights of its citizens."

"Any government talking about good governance without protecting the rights of its citizens is only being deceptive".

Yerima, who recognised the good work of the

organization, maintained that the appointments of eight more judges in the state is now at an advanced stage.

SPANCI President, Comrade Ezekiel Bello maintained that the reason for the gathering was to sensitize the less privileged about their rights and the role of the government in protecting and defending their fundamental human rights.

Other awardees are: Oyo State Sexual and Gender Based Violence Response Team Coordinator, Bar. Modupe Awosemusi, Mrs Oluwatoyin Adaramodu and Justice Kareem Adedokun.

From **AMEDU JOSEPH,**
Lokoja

A High Court in Lokoja recently discharged and acquitted two suspected kidnappers over contradictory evidence provided by the prosecution counsel.

The trial Judge, Justice I.A. Jamil, while delivering judgment on the suit of alleged kidnapping labelled against Harrison Orubabe and Justice Yakubu, blamed the prosecution counsels for creating doubt in the mind of the court hence the discharge and acquittal of the suspects.

Our correspondent reports that the prosecution counsels led by P.B. Daudu had arraigned Orubabe and Yakubu on Jan 19 before Justice Jamil on three count charges of conspiracy, kidnapping and robbery contrary to sections 97(1), 48(a)(b) and 298(a) of Kogi Penal Code Law 2019 respectively.

Daudu had presented confessional statements made by the accused through the Police IPO (PW2), who told the court that investigation revealed that the suspects kidnapped their victim, Prosper Obanla, on February 28, 2022 at Obajana in Kogi and took him to Warri in Delta State.

He claimed that the suspects also asked for a ransom of one million Naira

Alleged kidnapping: Court discharges, acquits 2 suspects

from the victim's father, Chief Olusegun Obanla (PW1), who must pay or have his son killed.

But through the objection and cross examinations of the prosecution witnesses including the victim ((PW3) by the Defense Counsels, Barrister Martin Otojoko and Philip Idiok, the victim claimed he had never been to Warri as claimed by the police IPO (PW2)

Otojoko had also pointed out to the court another contradiction, where the confessional statements of the two accused clearly showed that the alleged victim sought the assistance of the accused to stage his kidnap into getting some money from his rich father to buy a good phone.

The police claimed that in their confessional statements, Yakubu claimed that he and the victim went to Itope Train Station in Kogi, where he (Victim) boarded a train to Warri, Delta.

He said that the victim gave him N1,000 to return to Obajana.

The planned kidnap, he said, indeed paid off as they got N200,000 ransom paid by the supposed kidnap victims (Prosper's) father, Chief Olusegun Obanla.

Justice Jamil held that there was a conflict or contradiction of evidence in relation to the consent or otherwise of the victim (PW3) in relation to the kidnap.

"The absence and consent of the victim is a material ingredient in proving an offense of kidnap, when properly defined.

"This court is in serious doubt as to whether PW3

(victim) was taken away into confinement by the accused persons without his consent or with his consent.

"Where a court is in doubt of a material fact necessary to establish a commission of a crime by the defendant, the court can't convict or same.

"Similarly, where PW1 (victim) refused to agree to have gone to Warri just as the IPO PW2) in his witness statement said Investigations revealed that the two defendants took him to Warri, it's difficult for this court to accept one version of the evidence.

"Again, the victim himself said that it wasn't a kidnapping case as it was staged in order for him to get some money from his father. This set of evidence came from the prosecution.

"You, the prosecution, have put this court in doubt of what you are claiming, such that I can't accept one version and refuse the other.

"The implementation is that the prosecution has succeeded in creating doubt in the minds of the court therefore found that there's contradiction in their evidence and have caused the court to determine the case in favour of the accused

"This is so because the prosecution could not prove what actually happened or Feb. 28, 2022 beyond reasonable doubt.

"On the whole, the prosecution has failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt any or all of the count charges labeled against the two suspects.

"Consequently, the two defendants are hereby discharged and acquitted," the judge declared.

Army graduates over 6,000 recruits

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

THE Nigerian Army has celebrated the passing out of over 6,000 recruits from the 85 Regular Recruit Intake (RRI) in a vibrant Passing Out Parade (POP) held recently, October, at the Parade Ground of the Depot Nigerian Army.

The journey to becoming soldiers for the 6,315 passing out recruits began with a rigorous selection process, followed by training at the Depot Nigerian Army starting on June 3, 2023, which culminated in the POP ceremony.

Addressing the passing out recruits, Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja, the Chief of Army Staff, congratulated the young soldiers on successfully completing their training. He described the training as qualitative, realistic, and aligned with the contemporary security needs of the country.

Lieutenant General Lagbaja emphasized that the training

and welfare of troops are the top priorities under his command, in line with his command philosophy of transforming the Nigerian Army into a well-trained, equipped, and highly motivated force to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities within a joint environment.

He reaffirmed the Nigerian Army's commitment to prioritize the training and welfare of troops, stating that efforts are being made to renovate accommodation facilities that are currently in deplorable conditions.

The Chief of Army Staff highlighted the importance of providing the best accommodation for soldiers when they are not on the frontline as an incentive for their sacrifices. He also mentioned ongoing efforts to improve medical facilities to handle battle casualties resulting from operational engagements.

Lieutenant General Lagbaja

reminded the young soldiers that soldiering is a life of sacrifice for their country and defending it, even if it means paying the ultimate price. He declared that by passing out, they have accepted the highest call of duty any Nigerian can undertake.

During the awards presentation, the Indian Training Company emerged as the Champion Company and received the Depot Nigerian Army Champion Banner. Recruit Abdullahi Abubakar received the Chief of Army Staff Award for being the top performer among his peers. Recruit Ugwu Clifford received the Commandant Depot Nigerian Army Award. Recruit Ideba Love won the Chief of Administration (Army) Award, and Recruit Edet Samuel received the Chief of Training (Army) Award.

Distinguished guests in attendance at the Passing Out Parade include Senator Uba Sani, the Governor of Kaduna State, Senator Abdullaziz Yar'adau, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Army, Maj Gen Alwali Kazir, former Chief of Army Staff, Maj Gen John Ochai, Commandant of the Nigerian Defence Academy, and a representative of the Emir of Zazzau. Several Principal Staff Officers from the Army Headquarters and the General Officer Commanding 1 Division were also present.

In another development, Lieutenant General Taoreed Lagbaja, the Chief of Army Staff, visited the palace of His Royal Highness, Ambassador Ahmed Nuhu Bamali in Zaria.

During the visit, he sought the support of the royal father in ensuring enduring peace and harmony in the domain. The COAS expressed his condolences

to the Emir and the people of Zazzau Emirate on the passing of Nigeria's Ambassador to Morocco, Alhaji Mansur Nuhu Bamali, and prayed for strength in dealing with the irreplaceable loss.

The royal father, in response, blessed the COAS and assured him of his support, as well as the support of the Emirate, to the Nigerian Army.

Kaduna, Adamawa, and Borno lead Police recruitment

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

AS the ongoing recruitment exercise for General Duty Constables into the Nigeria Police Force progresses, Kaduna State has emerged as the frontrunner in terms of the number of applications received.

Within the first nine days, a total of 20,259 youths from Kaduna State have successfully completed their online applications, placing the state at the top of the list. On the other hand, Anambra State currently has the lowest number of applications, with only 541 received so far.

Following closely behind Kaduna State are Adamawa State with 18,933 applications, Borno State with 18,305, Bauchi State with 16,554, Katsina State with 16,232, and Kano State with 15,888.

Conversely, after Anambra State, the states with the fewest applications are Ebonyi with 737, Abia with 966, and Imo with 999. Bayelsa has 1,020 applications, Enugu has 1,036, Lagos has 1,259,



Arase

Delta has 1,338, and Edo has 1,526.

Out of the total applicants, 242,391 are male, while only 35,405 are female.

Dr. Solomon Arase, the

Chairman of the Commission and retired Inspector General of Police, expressed concern over the lack of interest among South East youths in pursuing a career in the Nigeria Police Force. He emphasized that the South East, currently facing challenges with non-state

actors' rebellion, should actively participate in the recruitment process to contribute indigenous solutions to these issues.

Dr. Arase called on the leadership of the zone to encourage and convince its youths to seize the opportunity provided by the ongoing recruitment.

Dr. Arase also highlighted that if the South East leaders choose to remain indifferent to the government's generous decision to offer employment opportunities to Nigerian youths in the Police Force, it would be difficult for them to raise concerns about marginalization. He urged the zone to utilize the remaining five weeks of the recruitment period to encourage their youths to join the force.

The Police Service Commission (PSC) Chairman's remarks underscore the importance of active participation and collaboration among all regions in addressing security challenges and ensuring a well-represented police force in Nigeria.



Lagbaja

NEWS

Governor Mutfwang pledges equity, fairness in appointments

By DUMAH RANDONG

In a deliberate move to build confidence in the Plateau State Civil Service being the engine room of government, the state governor, Barrister Caleb Mutfwang said his administration will sustain the principle of seniority, equity and fairness in appointment in the state civil service.

Governor Mutfwang started this while swearing-in eight newly appointed Permanent Secretaries into the state civil service at the Banquet Hall, Government House, Little Rayfield, recently.

Represented by his deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo, he said the occasion marks another phase in the life of his administration in its efforts to improve service delivery in the state civil service.

While congratulating the newly sworn-in Permanent Secretaries for their well-deserved appointment to the pinnacle of the civil service, who have gone through due checks and consultations, the governor said their appointment was predicated on commitment, hard work and dedication after due diligence.

Governor Mutfwang, however warned that his administration will not tolerate disloyalty, indiscipline and flagrant abuse of office and indolence. He emphasized that diligent service to the government and people of the state should be their watchword. Adding that failure in this regard, they should consider themselves unfit and would be shown the way out.

"You must therefore remain focused to join hands with my administration on the implementation of our programmes, policies and projects to deliver the 'Time is now' mandate. This will justify the overwhelming support we got from the good people and citizens of Plateau State", the governor said.



Mutfwang

"I further challenge you to bring your wealth of experience and sense of industry to bear on the civil service being a structured bureaucracy which is based on a long tradition of rules, regulations and guidelines. Ensure that you remain apolitical to work within the scheme and schedule of service by upholding the sanctity of accountability, honesty, probity, justice and fairness," he stressed.

He reiterated his earlier resolve in June at the swearing-in of the first set of appointed Permanent Secretaries by his administration, to restore the glory of the state by overhauling the state civil service to give the credence it deserves. He noted that no amount of sentiments would stop him from doing what is right for the interest of all Plateau people.

While expressing confidence in their capacity as seasoned civil servants and bureaucrats to perform in the respective MDAs they will be assigned to, the governor reminded them to see their appointment as public trust which must be protected.

Our correspondent reports that the newly sworn-in Permanent Secretaries include: Aliyu Samuel Soho, Mary Fom, Kevin Panshak, Esther Pwaspo, Tamba Nuhu Garba, Alexander Nyelong, Jummai Adamu and Lydia Bonkat.

Responding on behalf of the newly sworn-in Permanent Secretaries, Mr Alexander Nyelong, assured of their unflinching loyalty and support to the administration to succeed. He added that they will not betray the trust bestowed on them by serving the state civil service according to the oath they have taken.

PLSG raises eyebrows over purported letter by CSO

THE attention of the Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, has been drawn to a baseless statement purported to have been issued by an unidentified group, suspected to be aligned with

the opposition in the state, masquerading as a Civil Society Organization.

According to a statement issued by the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Executive Governor of Plateau State, Gyang Bere recently,

In the write-up captioned, "Plateau PDP election appeal tribunal judgement, civil society organisation calls for the arrest of court of appeal president, justice monica dongbam over 2.8 billion naira bribe from Rotimi Ameachi, Yari, El-Rufai,

all matters relating to protection of human rights as guaranteed by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as well as other national, regional and International instruments in which Nigeria is signatory. She added that the commission also assist victims of human rights violation to seek appropriate redress and remedies on their behalf.

She pointed out NARC is passionate about the issues of violence on women and children, adding that the commission has received several complaints on violations of human rights which 70 percent of the complaints were in respect of women and children in the state.

Mrs. Abe further explained that the cases of child trafficking are seriously on the increase in the state which need to be curtail.

She told the first lady that part of their visit was to seek for collaboration with her office so that together they can champion the course of combating the menace of human rights violations in the state.

the management of NHRC during courtesy visit at the Governor's Resident Rayfield Jos, recently.

Barrister Mrs. Mutfwang appreciated the NHRC management for the visit and assured them of her office readiness to work with the commission so as to reduce all forms of abuse in the state.

She described the activities of the commission as a purely humanitarian service since they are saddle with the responsibility of protecting the rights of the people in the state.

The first lady also assured the management team of the commission that all the issues raised would be extended to the governor who is also a lawyer, so that he will response to them accordingly as far as violation of human rights is concerned amongst the citizens.

Earlier in her remarks, Coordinator NHRC, Plateau State, Mrs. Veronica Abe expressed delight and thanked the first lady for the warm reception accorded them during the visit.

Mrs. Abe said that the commission's mandate deal with

Nigerian First Lady launched HPV vaccine

By JIDAUNA DARING

NIGERIA First Lady Senator Oluremi Tinubu has officially launched the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccine for the prevention of cervical cancer among girls from the aged of 9 to 14 years.

The event took place at the Banquet Hall, State House Abuja recently.

Senator Tinubu called on parents to allow their daughters to avail themselves for vaccination and encouraged stakeholders to support the initiative. She added that this action no doubt marks a significant milestone in Nigeria's Health care system.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the Press Secretary, Plateau State First Lady, Mrs. Narin Gofwen and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos.

Sen. Tinubu also disclosed that the introduction of the HPV vaccine into the routine immunization schedule was in line with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Tinubu of safeguarding the well-being of its citizens.

In his remarks, Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Mohammed Ali Pate said that the present administration would continue to place its priority on the wellbeing of all and sundry in the country at all times.

Pro. Pate remarked that health can be a basis for unifying and haling the nation. He challenged parents on the need to ensure that their daughters to get vaccinated against cervical cancer.

The Minister assured them that the HPV vaccine is safe as it has been tested in other parts of the world with tremendous result.

His Eminence, the Sultan of Sokoto, Abubakar Sa'ad III and the President, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN),

Arch. Bishop Daniel Okoh both pledged to help achieve the objective of introducing the HPV vaccine, by sensitizing their follower on the need to embrace the vaccine.

They commended the Nigerian government for introducing the vaccine, which they said will safe the future generations of Nigerian girls and women.

In his remarks, World Helath Organisation's country representative, Dr. Walter Mulombo, noted that cervical cancer is the most common form of cancer that affects women thus, must be tackled.

Dr. Mulombo congratulated and also commended Nigeria for attaining the feat of launching the HPV vaccine.

According to experts at the

event, the vaccine has 90 percent guarantee of protecting girls from cervical cancer.

The statement explained that in the first phase of the introduction of the vaccine, 15 states of Nigeria including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) will partake while others are expected to follow suit later.

According to the statement, dignitaries who graced the occasion were some state Governors and First Ladies of various states including Plateau State First Lady, Barrister Mrs. Helen M. Mutfwang.

The event featured administering of HPV vaccine on some Nigerian girls that graced the occasion and also goodwill messages from UNICEF, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation among others.



Oluremi

First Lady applauds NHRC on humanitarian services

By JIDAUNA DARING

MANAGEMENT and staff of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Plateau State have been encouraged not to

relent in the good humanitarian service that they are doing to the citizens in the state.

Plateau State First Lady, Barrister Mrs. Helen M. Mutfwang stated this while playing host to



Mutfwang

Lalong and house of representatives Member. This group recklessly calls for the arrest of the President of the Court of Appeal, Hon. Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem.

Their claims was hinged on the judgment of the Appeal Court that nullified two PDP National Assembly seats from Plateau.

Governor Mutfwang unequivocally states that neither he nor any authorized representative has issued statements regarding the recent Appeal Court judgment. The PDP has not engaged any Civil Society Organization to comment on this matter.

The spurious allegations against Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem, accusing the Governor of supporting President Bola Tinubu's administration and former Governor Nyesome Wike, are not only mere fabrications but also an attempt to tarnish the Governor's image and consistent with the antics of mischief makers who had issued fake press statements to create confusion and enmity between the Mutfwang administration and the citizens of Plateau State in the first two months of his administration.

It is imperative to clarify that

PDP at any level, particularly the Plateau State Chapter and Governor Mutfwang uphold the rule of law.

As a renowned lawyer with over three decades of practice, the Governor knows too well the workings of the courts, upholds the industry of their Lordships, will never contemplate or support the subversion of justice or malign the integrity, character and honor of the daughter of Plateau State and the President, Court of Appeal, Justice Monica Dongban-Mensem.

It is against this background that Governor Mutfwang urges the Department of State Security, DSS, and other security agencies to diligently investigate and apprehend the authors of this malicious article. As a staunch believer in the rule of law, the Governor affirms his commitment to upholding the dignity of constituted authorities responsible for the dispensation of justice and leadership in the country and elsewhere.

Hence, Governor Mutfwang calls upon all respected authorities and the public to dismiss this misleading article, meticulously crafted by mischief-makers aiming to besmirch the Governor and the Plateau PDP.

NEWS

Lower Benue to partner government school

From
TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

The Lower Benue River Basin Development Authority (LBRBDA) has pledged to partner Government Day Secondary school, Makurdi in the area of infrastructure development.

The Managing Director, Engr. Mohammed Adra who made the pledge recently in an interview with news men at the school premises during the 33rd graduation, speech and prize giving day and the school's fortieth (40) anniversary celebration said the authority has established a robust working relationship with the school.

Engr. Adra who was chairman of the occasion said already he has sunk a borehole in the school as part of efforts to ensure quality water supply for the school community. He promised that he would procure an alternative power source to ensure steady power supply to address epileptic power supply from the public source to ensure 24 hours functionality of the borehole.

Earlier in a speech, the state Commissioner for Education and Knowledge Management, Dr. Frederick Ikyaan, urged the graduates to be good ambassadors of the school in their chosen field of endeavours.

Represented by the Permanent Secretary of the ministry, Mr. Agbo Ochekepe, Dr. Ikyaan tasked the graduating students to strive for higher education in order to be relevant in the ever evolving and competing world.

Principal of the school, Mr. Robert Apir, in a welcome address, commended the graduating students for their good conduct while in the school and charged them to be good ambassadors of the school wherever they find themselves.

Mr. Apir who described education as a weapon for liberation of any society, lamented shortage of staff, decayed infrastructure, especially the school assembly hall, appealed to the old students to come to the aid of the school.

While advising the graduating students to strive for higher education, as according to him, the level they have attained was no longer marketable in the job market, the principal added that those



who will not be able to gain admission into higher institutions of learning at the moment, should engage themselves into meaningful ventures such as shoe making, hairdressing/cutting and other legitimate sources of livelihood instead of idling away.

One of the overall best graduating students in Mathematics, Miss Mimidoo Angeleke, thanked her

teachers for molding her to be a useful individual in the society and promised that she would not relent in her pursuit for higher education.

The event featured match passed by both old and graduating students, official induction of the graduating students into old students association as well as presentation of awards to deserving staff and students.

LASUED prays: VC urges love, unity among staff

By **FWENJI GOAR**

LASUED prays: VC urges love, unity among staff
By FWENJI GOAR

The Lagos State University of Education (LASUED) Vice Chancellor, Professor Bidemi Bilkis Lafiaji-Okuneye has called upon members of staff to foster unity and love within the institution as they work together to elevate the university to greater heights.

The Vice Chancellor made this plea recently during a prayer session organized by the university's management at the Senator Oluremi Tinubu Hall on the main campus, in Oto-Ijanikin.

During the prayer session, Christian and Muslim staff members came together to seek divine guidance and offer gratitude for the institution's accomplishments. There were Christian leaders, which include Dr. Egbetokun Samuel, Asikhia Olubusayo, Deacon Okebukola Alexander Olufemi, and Pastor Asaju Stephen, who led a Christian prayer session.

On the other hand, the

Muslim prayer session was overseen by Alhaji Muhideen, the Grand Imam of the Oto-Ijanikin campus, Dr. Ishola, Chief Imam of Odo-Noforija, Epe Campus, Dr. Salahudeen Arriyady, Dr. Quozeem Ajagbe, Khalifa Otuniyi, Dr. Salako, Mr. Asamu Rasheed, Mr. Abdul Rauf and Mr. Salami Idris.

In attendance were prominent members of the university's management, whom include the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Dr. Adeniyi Daodu, Librarian, Dr. Abayomi Imam,



From
Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

Governor Mohammed reiterates commitment to health sector

Governor Bala Mohammed, has emphasized that the delivery leads to the administration's priority for continuous physical and mental development of the good people of Bauchi State.

The state governor made the remarks when the Project Coordinator of the Immunisation Plus and Malaria Progress by Accelerating Coverage and Performing Services, Impact Project, A World Bank Assisted Programme, paid him a courtesy visit at the Government House, Bauchi recently.

Governor Bala Mohammed who was represented at the occasion by the Secretary to the State Government, Barrister Ibrahim Kashim, said since assumption of office in the state, his administration has been meeting the Abuja declaration of fifteen percent budgetary allocation for the health

sector. While thanking the Project Coordinator and her team for the visit, the governor said interventions of this nature would assist greatly in addressing the challenges in the health sector. Earlier in her opening remarks, the National Project Coordinator of the Impact Project, Dr. Amina Abdul One Mohammed, commended Governor Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, for investing so hugely in the health sector and assured that the Impact Project would assist in strengthening Immunization Plus activities and other health services for continuous result oriented development in Bauchi State and Nigeria as a whole.



Bala

Bala

achievements.

While addressing the congregation, Professor Lafiaji-Okuneye reiterated that the University management has been making efforts to strengthen the bonds between the institution and the local communities and government agencies.

The University management paid courtesy visits to traditional rulers of host communities, including the Oloto of Oto, Onijanikin of Ijanikin, Aladeshoyin of Odo-Noforija, and Oluepe of Epe, and to government agencies, such as the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), the Nigeria University Commission (NUC), and the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund).

The LASUED Community Relations Committee which was inaugurated for both Oto-Ijanikin and Odo Noforija, Epe in August 2023, with the goal of fostering positive relationships between the university community and the surrounding communities and government agencies was said to be doing a good job.

Professor Bidemi Bilkis Lafiaji-Okuneye, who was appointed as the substantive Vice Chancellor in February 2023, highlighted the university's achievements under her leadership. The Nigeria University Commission (NUC) granted resource verification for sixty-six out of sixty-seven programmes offered at the university, with only Civic Education lacking verification due to the absence of the BMAS.

The academic year 2022/2023 ended successfully with the completion of the second-semester examinations in September 2023, and the admission process for 2023/2024 is currently underway, with the release of the merit list and other lists in due course.

The university congregation, a vital statutory organ of the university, plays a key role in important discussions and decision-making processes at LASUED, following the Council and Senate, bringing together a diverse group of university staff to shape the institution's future.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE

EFCC's new vista on anti-corruption war



Continued from page 10

years from the court of first instance to the Supreme Court. The Senate can work out modalities as well."

However, analyzing and evaluating Nigeria's anti-corruption campaign indicates that it is still, work in progress considering the endemic nature of the problems which had eaten deep into every fabric of its society with severe and negative consequences.

The Nigerian political class, its law enforcement agencies and the civil service are common ground for corrupt players where recent reports have shown the level of moral decay in all the nation's Institutions. It is now at an alarming stage as alluded in the 2 previous reports published by Transparency International's Anti-Corruption Index where Nigeria has continued to maintain a top spot as one of the most corrupt nations on the planet.

Lack of political will to tackle the problem by successive administrations coupled with selective prosecution of both perceived and known critics of government have often been hunted or used by the EFCC to hunt down their enemies.

As one of the nation's institutions, the EFCC as the signature of the Federal Government's crusade on corruption had found itself in the recent past in a messy situation

with those at its helm of affairs also bitten by this bug of corruption. At a certain period, they were allegedly accused of re-looting loots seized from some corrupt Nigerians which had to a large extent eroded public confidence on the anti-graft agency and the government's war on corruption in its entirety.

However, with the appointment of a new Chairman of the agency, SUNDAY STANDARD gathered based on Senate's confirmation hearing of Ola Olukoyede plans for the organization, suggests that a new paradigm shift in fighting corruption could yield fruitful results this time around.

And to achieve these set goals, Olukoyede has emphasized the need for a change in policy direction and ability to enhance efficiency with reasonable cost within a time frame. This means that Nigeria's anti-corruption campaign now is aiming to a large extent at making headway with the support of the nation's leadership and that of the citizens to implement those plans.

Regrettably, research focusing on anti-corruption in Africa has revealed persistent challenges often referred to as, "The seven sins." These includes economic limitations, political reluctance, legal inefficiency, organizational weakness, government gaps,

performance issues and public skepticism.

Therefore, public commentators have agreed with the notion that, the effectiveness or success of an anti-corruption agency like the EFCC, requires substantial long term resources, a skilled and motivated workforce, robust legal and administrative authority, solid backing, possibly even from the President, adequate accountability and transparency, a supportive institutional environment especially within related sectors such as the Police and Judiciary including access to financial records.

The anti-graft war had over the last 15 years lost its steam either due to insufficient administrative capacity including limited powers as well as lack of human and material resources coupled with an inefficient legal system.

In Nigeria, there is a pressing demand to establish

internationally recognized legislation to tackle possession of unexplained wealth and assets. Yet, lack of widespread support and commitment from major political figures have always been a frustration for the agency.

Similarly, the larger society is complicit in the failure of the agency to make significant gains due to factors arising from the "Get-rich syndrome" among some communities which promotes the culture of affluence with so much premium placed on the wealthy irrespective of whether it is ill gotten or not, is pushing corruption to a precipice. While lack of love for the country and lack of moral latitude among many people across the country has further confined laudable effort of the agency to a mere lip service.

Although these narratives can be changed, expert opinions also prescribed the need for a holistic approach of tackling issues

relating to corruption by implementing a comprehensive ant-corruption education programme from the primary education to the tertiary levels that would nurture both present and future generations with ethical values by also providing our society with a strong moral compass. And to succeed in this direction, there is need for Nigerians to overcome cultural acceptance of corrupt practices which also requires a gradual shift through awareness campaign, by highlighting societal benefits of integrity and ethical behaviour.

The new strategy of corruption prevention will in the coming weeks or months provide Nigerians with a clue as to whether the road map being ascribed by Ola Olukoyede, the new Czar of the anti-corruption war would raise the bar of hope for millions of the citizens watching with high expectations.

The anti-graft war had over the last 15 years lost its steam either due to insufficient administrative capacity including limited powers as well as lack of human and material resources coupled with an inefficient legal system. In Nigeria, there is a pressing demand to establish internationally recognized legislation to tackle the possession of unexplained wealth and assets. Yet the lack of widespread support and commitment from major political figures have always been a frustration for the agency.

METRO-FOCUS

Curbing indiscriminate parking of trucks in Jos metropolis

By JIDAUNA DARING, NANDI I. DATIT, JAN. D. MANDIK & JOHN EVELYN

THE increasing numbers of erected warehouses by some business people within residential areas in some suburbs of Jos and Bukuru metropolis have become too rampant. It does not consider the problems that it causes residents, when it comes to the issue of movements of heavy duty trucks that convey goods to such locations for off-loading.

What seems to be difficult for those residents where warehouses have been erected is no other thing but the way such long-vehicles maneuver their way into the residential areas, especially when they are searching for a place to park so as to enable them off-load whatever types of goods they have with ease.

It is true that accidents sometimes occur when some of these long-vehicles are trying to find a place to park before off-loading the goods.

Other negative sides of this menace of trucks when coming into the residential areas with goods to off-load, is the issue that affects residents, who are either coming in or going out of the area. It causes serious inconvenience to the people. In fact, the worse things in this regard is the fact that the long-vehicles sometimes close-up the main road that leads into the residential areas for hours before it is opened for the residents.

What has equally been observed with the rampant case of erections of warehouses in the residential areas is that even those with small cars that come to the warehouses to buy whatever type of goods are not left out when it comes to the issue of creating unnecessary



congestion for the residents who ordinarily are not supposed to have been part of such unbearable experience.

However, other issue that are very disturbing and cannot be forgotten is that some of the roads that connect with the warehouses within the residential areas have either become an eye-sore or are dead-traps. These types of bad roads have become dilapidated as a result of the movements of heavy duty

trucks that convey goods to such locations.

It therefore, behooves on government to as a matter of urgent public importance, come up with laws that would put a stop to erection of warehouses within residential areas in order to avoid any form of challenges that may cause problems to residents.

Speaking with METRO FOCUS in Jos, some residents who barred their minds on the issue of erecting warehouses

in the residential areas described such buildings as illegal structures, looking at the inconveniences that they cause to the residents when it comes to the movements of the heavy duty trucks. They stressed the need for the Plateau State House of Assembly to enact laws that would stop people from erecting warehouses in residential areas.

They expressed concern about indiscriminate parking of long-vehicles, both on the main roads side and also within the residential places, viewing it as very unpleasant as far as the issue of blocking roads into residential areas is concerned.

The residents were also of the opinions that government on its part, should find a place in the outskirts of the town, and build it for big trucks saying that doing so would go a long way in addressing or reducing the rate of accidents caused by the long-vehicles within the town.

They also called on the Plateau State government to

as a matter of ensuring safety of lives of the people living in the heart of Jos and Bukuru metropolis make a law that would ban the movements of all long-vehicles that convey goods during the day.

The residents advised government not to allow petroleum marketers to build fuel stations close to residential areas because of the danger it may pose on the residents once there is any incident of fire outbreak.

They maintained that some fuel stations have gutted fire in the course of off-loading fuel, saying that such unfortunate incidents have resulted to loss of lives and properties in some parts of the country.

They also called on Plateau State government to enact a law that would ban tankers from moving with the said products during day time into Jos and Bukuru metropolis, saying that doing so would help in saving the lives of citizens.



SUNDAY PEOPLE

COURTESY VISIT

The Management of National Human Rights Commission paid a courtesy call to the First Lady of Plateau State, Barr. Helen Mutfwang at Government House Rayfield.



Mrs. Veronica Abe, State Co-ordinator (right) presenting some of their material to the wife of the Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Helen Mutfwang.



Mrs. Kiyenpia Mafuyai, (left) with Mrs. Ronke Moody



Wife of the Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Helen Mutfwang (middle) in a group photograph with the wife of the top government functionary

PHOTOS: JOHN LAR



Mr. Taddy Chollom (right) with Mr. Katlong Danbaba

PLATEAU STATE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION VISIT PPC

The Plateau State House of Committee on Information, paid in a courtesy visit to the Plateau Publishing Corporation (PPC) recently



Mr. Paul Jatau, Ag. General Manager (PPC) (left) welcoming the Chairman of Plateau State House of Assembly Committee on Information, Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak, Representing Rukuba/Irigwe Constituency



Mr. Paul Jatau, General Manager, Plateau Publishing Corporation delivering his speech



Cross section of Management Staff

PHOTOS: JOHN LAR



L - R: Hon. Ibrahim Agbalak, House Member, Representing Rukuba/Irigwe Constituency Hon. Cornelius Doeyok, member, Representing Qua'an Pan South and Hon. Gabriel Dewan Kudenbenna, Member Representing Pankshin North Constituency

SUNDAY FEATURE

Imbibing effective maintenance culture

Both the public and private sectors of the economy in any country have machinery and infrastructural facilities that require effective maintenance to enable them to function properly. Some maintenance actions have to be executed periodically to prevent failures, malfunction and damage. When equipment and machinery are not maintained, there is frequent breakdown and the cost of maintenance or replacement as the case may be is high due to neglect.

NOTHING, tangible or intangible, is to serve humanity for infinite life. The railway system, dams, buildings, bridges and road networks we have built today will serve us as long as we keep maintaining them. We want to have functional refineries. Then, we must be able, willing and ready to maintain them. We want good roads. We must maintain existing roads.

Policy decision makers at all levels of government should always ask: What is the cost of maintaining an infrastructure before it fails and the cost of maintaining the same after it has failed?

Our inability to maintain critical infrastructure across the length and breadth of the country is reflected in the words of a prominent politician:

"I cannot believe what I saw here. This is simply unacceptable. I was here when this complex served as a Governor's Lodge. I am shocked at what it has become even with a specialized agency mandated to manage the place. The committee I set up had briefed me on the poor state of most of the property. For this Lagos housing estate, something urgent has to be done. Let me assure residents here that there will soon be a new lease of life" – Osun State Governor, Ademola Adeleke, expressing dissatisfaction at the sorry state of the state Governor's Lodge in Lagos. (Punch March 26, 2023)

Read also: Group renovates school building, calls for maintenance culture in Nigeria

There is no way words alone can describe a society where maintenance culture is given priority. We must as a people inculcate a strong maintenance culture by adopting strategies of predictive maintenance to avoid the breakdown of our assets. We need to inculcate a maintenance culture in Nigerians because effective maintenance is the platform on which strong technological development can take off.

BRT operator assures passengers of buses' maintenance, The Nation, February 7, 2020

The Managing Director, Primero Transport Services, operator of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Mr. Fola Tinubu, has assured passengers of adequate maintenance of the buses.

He spoke yesterday in a phone interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Lagos.



"We have been fixing the ACs and our people should have automatically withdrawn such buses from services immediately after they were notified."

"If I know those passengers, I will personally apologise to them," he told NAN.

NAN correspondents, who were on board alongside some passengers on the BRT bus with registration number EPE 368 XR, on Wednesday observed that seven seats were drenched from the AC, forcing people to abandon the affected seats.

Passengers of the buses had appealed to the Lagos State Government to pay attention to the maintenance of the buses.

Athletes, officials panic as National Stadium Lagos floodlight collapses, The Guardian April 20, 2023

Tragedy was averted, yesterday morning, in Lagos, when one of the giant floodlights at the National Stadium collapsed.

"Also, note for clarity and proper guidance that the ongoing repairs do not cover flood lights and 16 other parts of the stadium that need urgent renovations. What do you expect when a stadium that is 51 years old is left unmaintained for 19 years?"

"When the Ministry said the stadium was old and needed money to fix it after 19 years, Nigerians reacted without considering the facts about the stadium. What do you expect

when you leave a specialised structure for 19 years without maintenance?"

"It is a 51-year-old structure for crying out loud. 19 years of neglect. That is what we are trying to correct, but people think other sectors and buildings need money but sports facilities do not need money. Every building suffers wear and tear and so also a stadium," he said.

Third Mainland Bridge now a death trap, motorists lament, Punch, October 17, 2023

Motorists have again raised concerns over what they described as the deplorable state of the Third Mainland Bridge. They have called on the government to immediately fix the bridge which is the longest among the three bridges that connect Lagos Island with Mainland.

The about 11.8km bridge starts from the Oworonshoki end of the Mainland and ends at the Adeniji Adele Interchange on Lagos Island.

The bridge has witnessed different rehabilitation works since it was completed in 1990 with the last one carried out on April 2, 2023, by the Lagos State Government.

Despite these interventions, however, PUNCH Metro reports that potholes are spreading on the bridge, raising fear of accidents among the users of the bridge. From the beginning of the bridge to its end, potholes are noticed with more noticeable ones around the

Obalende to Adekunle stretch. They are also noticeable while approaching the bridge from Ebute Meta.

Policy decision-makers at all levels of government should always ask: What is the cost of maintaining an infrastructure before it fails and the cost of maintaining the same after it has failed? There is a huge difference between the two. If an infrastructure is not maintained properly and at the right time, it will become an economic burden to the owner. Or the ministries, departments and agencies whose duty it is to maintain the defective infrastructure. One of the many ways of wasting scarce resources is to neglect the timely maintenance of infrastructural facilities in the country.

Before experts were talking about Preventive maintenance but let's start considering Predictive maintenance in order to have economic benefits and ultimately to avert total breakdown of infrastructural facilities.

But you need data to enable you to switch from preventive to predictive maintenance. I am talking about operational and maintenance-related data. When was the infrastructure built, for how long has it been used and when will it be due for the first, second and third maintenance activities, and so on? When is the infrastructure

to undergo life-extended maintenance or replacement? For how long are we expected to use the facility before replacing it? We should not think that once an infrastructure is installed, it will serve us for eternity. We should ask our friends from nations where critical infrastructure doesn't break down before maintenance.

We need regular maintenance of infrastructure with data to back it up. There must be data. You need this data for analysing the overall performance and identifying areas for improvement as well as ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements and optimizing operational and maintenance costs.

When it comes to the overall assessment, it is crucial to show appreciation and respect towards a few individuals burdened with the crucial task of keeping our vital infrastructure. Without their diligent efforts, the maintenance of roads, bridges, and other national assets would have undoubtedly turned into a nightmarish ordeal. While we may sometimes overlook the significance of our policymakers and politicians, life continues to move forward. However, if we disregard the maintenance of our infrastructure, the entire system is bound to crumble and collapse. Thank you.

SUNDAY SPORTS



The Washington Generals pose for a rare team shot, with journalist Trisha Blackmar, in 2009

One win, 17,000 defeats - life as Washington General

ON 5 January 1971, Louis Herman Klotz did something that no basketballer has dared repeat. In front of a disbelieving audience in the city of Martin, Tennessee, the man known as Red broke one of the most sacred unwritten rules in sport. As player-coach for the Washington Generals, Klotz shot the winning basket against the Harlem Globetrotters. Everybody knows the Generals aren't supposed to beat the Globetrotters. "They looked at us like we'd just killed Santa," Klotz would claim, as jeers rang around the university gymnasium. Over more than 50 years since, the Globetrotters have been ruthless in meting out their revenge. To the unmistakable melody of Sweet Georgia Brown, they've showboated their way to victory at the expense of hapless Generals who've never again beaten their illustrious

opponents. In contrast to the universal adulation enjoyed by the Globetrotters, those wearing the Generals' infamously unsuccessful green jerseys are booed, ridiculed, and dunked on during defeat, after defeat, after defeat. They are the rarest of sporting commodities: the underdogs you're not supposed to root for. So why would anyone want to play for the Washington Generals? "I had the time of my life playing with this team," recalls Antoine Maddox, a Generals shooting guard between 2007 and 2010. "You're travelling with one of the most famous teams in the world. That's pretty awesome." Maddox's first memory of the Washington Generals was on a career placement day at his high school in LaGrange, Georgia. Having told his teachers he wanted to be a basketballer, Maddox was

given the opportunity to shadow 'Sweet' Lou Dunbar, the legendary Harlem Globetrotter. Before long, chasing Globetrotters shadows would be the eager schoolboy's day job. "I went to a game and I remember looking at the Washington Generals and thinking: 'Man, I wonder how those guys got that job,'" Maddox says. He'd find out soon enough when he was recruited at a post-college combine. The next NBA stars are often discovered at these open trials, though many players attend with more modest hopes of a professional career overseas. Those left behind are prime targets for Generals scouts. "I still had some aspirations of going to play pro somewhere," says Maddox, who now works for a Californian tech company. "I figured at least I would be travelling and maybe there'd be some opportunity to get seen in front of some other teams."

Chelsea FC stung by Bees as Stamford Bridge woes continue

CHELSEA FC were stung 0-2 by Brentford FC Bee's to extend their Stamford Bridge woes in the English Premier League. SportsRation reports. Second half goals from Ethan Pinnock and Bryan Mbuemo ensured the visiting Bee's took maximum points at Stamford Bridge for a second straight fixture. This means, Chelsea FC have won only one of their last 13 English Premier League games at Stamford Bridge. In Saturday's English Premier League early kick-off, Mauricio Pochettino's men started the west London derby on the front foot and winger Noni Madueke almost broke the deadlock in the first half when his curling shot hit the crossbar with 10 minutes on the clock. But Brentford soaked up everything Chelsea could throw at them with centre forward Nicolas Jackson, back in the starting 11 after an injury, unable to provide much of a threat as it finished 0-0 at the break. In the second half, Brentford snatched a 2-0 win thanks to a header by defender Ethan Pinnock and a last-minute breakaway goal by Bryan

Mbeumo as the expensively assembled Blues failed to turn possession into goals once again. Pinnock, undetected by Chelsea's defence, connected powerfully with an Mbeumo cross in the 58th minute, stunning the hosts who had

spent much of the game buzzing around the Bees' penalty area but without creating many clear chances. As the Blues poured forward in the 96th minute in search of a late equalizer, goalkeeper Robert Sanchez ventured up for a corner only to be caught out when the visitors broke



NFF rally support for Super Falcons ahead of Ethiopia clash

THE Nigeria Football Federation – NFF has rallied support for the Super Falcons ahead of their Paris Olympics qualification 2nd-leg clash vs Ethiopia in Abuja. Nigeria's Women's National team will take on the Lucy' of Ethiopia at the Moshood Abiola Stadium, Abuja on Tuesday, October, 31 with aggregate scores at 1-1 from the 1st-leg in Addis Ababa. Justin Madugu and Ann Chiejine will take charge of the Falcons in the absence of Randy Waldrum who is deadlocked in negotiation with the Nigeria Football Federation for a new contract. Qualifying for the 2024 Paris Olympics after their impressive showing at the last FIFA

Women's World Cup will be high in the minds of the Super Falcons players, and so the NFF is urging Nigerians to step forward in support. NFF President Ibrahim Gusau says his board is determined to build on the success of the World cup and qualifying for the games will be another major boost for the team. According to the Federation boss, the NFF and the team cannot do it alone and Nigerians must show their support by coming out to the stadium to cheer the girls. "These girls need the support of everybody and one of the

ways Nigerians must show they support the team is by coming out to watch team and cheer them". "This kind of support cannot be quantified and it helps the team to give their all in front of their home crowd", Gusau stated. The Nigeria Women team last qualified for the Olympic Games fifteen years ago in 2008 and the Ibrahim Gusau led board is keen to break the jinx this time around. A win for the Falcons in Abuja against the Ethiopians will see them take on either Cameroon or Uganda in the next round of the qualifying series.



Nasarawa United: Danladi hands-over to new Chairman after 12-years

BARRISTER Isaac Danladi has officially handed over to Dr. Othman Ahmed who succeeds him as Nasarawa United FC Chairman after 12-years in charge. This is according to a press release issued and signed by Public Relations Officer of the Nasarawa State Ministry of Youths and Sports Development, Mr Eche Amos on Friday, October 27, 2023. Amos wrote: "Former Chairman of Nasarawa United FC, and now Permanent Secretary, Nasarawa State Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, Chief. Barr. Isaac Danladi, has officially handed over the affairs of the Club to Dr. Othman Ahmed Ibrahim, the newly appointed Chairman. Speaking at a brief handing over ceremony on Friday in his office in Lafia, Danladi explained that he had been in charge of the Club for nearly twelve years, during which period he made tremendous progress with the Solid Miners, including emerging twice as Football Association (FA) Cup Runners-Up, in 2016 in Lagos, and 2021, in Benin City, Edo State, as well as participating in Confederation of Africa Football (CAF) Inter-Club Competitions. He added that his leadership helped to reposition the team and made it a formidable force to reckon with in Nigeria's inter-club competitions, notably the Nigeria Premier Football League and FA knockout Competition while producing some of the best talents and coaches in the round leather game.

He expressed gratitude to the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Engr. Abdullahi Sule, and the good people of the State as well as the Club's stakeholders for reposing confidence in him throughout his leadership. He opined that his new endeavour as Permanent Secretary still provides him the avenue to lend his onerous support to his successor and club, including rallying the needed support to return it back to the elite domestic football league in the shortest possible period. Making his remarks after receiving the handing over note, the new Club Supremo, Dr. Othman, commended the outgoing Chairman for the feats he achieved with the Club during his leadership. He assured that he would study the document carefully and learn from the vast experience of the former Chairman to take the Club to where it should be. While wishing the former Chairman well in his new office, Othman appealed for the maximum support from him and Staff of the Ministry to succeed. Recall that the Nasarawa State Government, on Tuesday, 17th October, 2023, announced the re composition of the Management of Nasarawa United FC, with Dr. Othman appointed to chair a Five-man Committee.

He expressed gratitude to the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, Engr. Abdullahi Sule, and the good people of the State as well as the Club's stakeholders for reposing confidence in him throughout his leadership. He opined that his new endeavour as Permanent Secretary still provides him the avenue to lend his onerous support to his successor and club, including rallying the needed support to return it back to the elite domestic football league in the shortest possible period. Making his remarks after receiving the handing over note, the new Club Supremo, Dr. Othman, commended the outgoing Chairman for the feats he achieved with the Club during his leadership. He assured that he would study the document carefully and learn from the vast experience of the former Chairman to take the Club to where it should be. While wishing the former Chairman well in his new office, Othman appealed for the maximum support from him and Staff of the Ministry to succeed. Recall that the Nasarawa State Government, on Tuesday, 17th October, 2023, announced the re composition of the Management of Nasarawa United FC, with Dr. Othman appointed to chair a Five-man Committee.

SUNDAY SPORTS

AFCON 2023: Eagles drawn against two-time Champions

By ANDRE BISYIT

In order to the to fulfill campaign promises of carrying everybody alone, the new Plateau State Football Association chairman, Hon. Suleiman Kwande has set up reconciliation committee in order to reach out to the aggrieved members.

He disclosed this to Sports Journalists immediately after handed over the mantle of leadership of the association by the normalization committee, held at the PFA office, recently.

Hon Kwande who was a former Nigeria Football Federation Board member said that, " We have just set-up a reconciliation committee that will reach out to the aggrieved party so that we can reconcile with each other, that's my first periority because a divided house cannot move forward," he said.

" The second part is we are going to go round to see all the teams on ground and have a chat with them. We'll equally meet the commissioner of Sports and Education, because we want to revive the school sports. We'll also see the Local Government Chairmen and finally the Governor," he opined.

He further stressed that a retreat will be organized for the new board members and FA Chairmen in order draw a template to achieve.

" We'll initiate programs that will be of benefit to the local clubs. You can't be expecting them to be paying affiliation fees with getting anything in return, we also intend to see if we can have programs where balls, bips will be distributed to them and we will visit their training fields regularly in order to encourage them and we'll also provide the avenue for them to showcase themselves." He said.

Kwande assured of transparency in their conducts.

" As I said earlier, as done in the NFF and FIFA, there will be a Calendar where for instance, January to February, Governor's Cup, April to May, Senator's Cup and so on, so that through out the year we'll engaged these young lads and we'll make sure in every tournament NFF Director of Technical, Coaches are invited in order to pick players at the grassroot," he ended.

Also, Hon. Yakal Audu Buba, the Chairman, Normalization Committee, while handing over to the new elected chairman of PFA, described the event as a historic one.

"You can agree with me that we are witnessing a handing over that I can't remember the last time it happened on Plateau. We want to thank the NFF President, Ibrahim Gusau for giving us this responsibility, we were chosen among many and we



thank God it was a success."

"As I mentioned during our inauguration, that we are determined to focus on what that'll make Plateau people happy and we have fulfill our promise."

" It is one thing to be given

a responsibility and another thing to be responsible over the responsibility. We believe accountability is key to success," he said.

He appeal to those who contest and lost the

Nigeria Judo Federation invites 16 Judokas for Olympic qualifiers

MR. Iliya said that the 16 Judokas comprise eight men and eight women, adding that five coaches will handle the national camp.

The Nigeria Judo Federation (NJF) says it has invited 16 athletes to camp ahead of the forthcoming Paris 2024 Olympics qualifiers in Cameroon and Senegal next November.

The first Olympic Qualifiers will take place from 9 to 12 November 2023 in Senegal while the second qualifier is billed for 18 to 19 November in Cameroon.

In an exclusive interview the Technical Director of NJF, Amos Iliya told PREMIUM TIMES that camp would open in Bauchi on 28 October.

Mr Iliya said that the 16 Judokas comprise eight men and eight women, adding that five coaches will handle the national camp.

The former National Champion said, "The national camp in Bauchi is to enable the Nigeria Judo Federation to train and select Judokas that will represent Nigeria in the forthcoming Olympics qualifiers in Senegal on 9th to 12th of November and in Cameroon from 18th to 19th November.

"For Nigeria to qualify and be on the podium by his grace, the Nigerian Judo Federation has decided to invite 18 judokas and five coaches to handle the training camp."

MONTEPELLIER forward

Jerome Akor Adams has revealed his desire to be a part of the Super Eagles squad to the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations, Soccernet.ng reports. The AFCON, which kicks off in January in the Ivory Coast and runs through to February, has Nigeria well-placed among the favourites to lift the title.

One of the factors for Nigeria's high ratings is the number of in-form top strikers the country can boast of in Europe.

Head coach Jose Peseiro has to pick for the tournament not more than six strikers from a list that has Victor Osimhen, Victor Boniface, Taiwo Awoniyi, Terem Moffi, Paul Onuachu, Gift Orban, and Kelechi Iheanacho.

In the absence of a major injury, Napoli's Osimhen and Leicester City's Iheanacho are

Nigerian sprinter receives six-year ban

expected to join Wilfred Ndidi, Moses Simon, and Samuel Chukwueze on the first names on Nigeria's roster for the AFCON.

It would take something special for Adams to make the team, ahead of more illustrious attackers who have already made their mark with the national team.

Despite not having earned a Super Eagles call-up yet, Adams is confident he can force his way into coach Peseiro's plans with more Ligue 1 goals.

The 23-year-old is the top-scoring Nigeria forward in the French top division with five goals, and he says he knows how to make it to Ivory Coast 2023.

"The target is simple - score more goals with my club before the end of the year that it will be impossible for the Super Eagles to

continue to overlook me going into the AFCON," Adams told Score Nigeria.

Adams only joined Montpellier in the summer from Norwegian side Lillestrøm.

The French side paid €4.50 million for Adams, who only signed for Lillestrøm on a free transfer in January 2022 after leaving Sogndal.

It has been revealed that Montpellier were not the only club interested in Adams.

According to L'Equipe, Nantes and FC Lorient also targeted Adams, but Montpellier won the race for his signature.

The Jamba Football Academy product has hit the ground running in France, scoring five Ligue 1 goals. He is the highest-scoring Nigerian in the French top flight.



Eagles steady at 40th in FIFA rankings

THE latest FIFA World Ranking, released on Thursday, has seen the Super Eagles of Nigeria maintain their position at 40th place, Soccernet.ng reports. Jose Peseiro's team witnessed a significant drop in the ranking in April, falling to 40th, following their December ranking of 35th in Africa.

The major reason for this drop was suggested to be their non-participation in the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Nigeria held the 39th position in the ranking in June and July but slipped back to 40th in September. The most recent ranking still places them in the same position.

In the African rankings, they remain in sixth place, with the top five teams being Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt.

In their most recent matches, the Super Eagles secured a 2-2 draw against Saudi Arabia and a 3-2 victory over Mozambique, which didn't improve their ranking significantly.

However, as the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations



champions prepare to face Lesotho Crocodiles in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying fixture at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo in November, they aim for better results to move up in the rankings. Additionally, the Eagles will face the Zimbabwean Warriors three days later at the Amahoro

4 takeaways from Falcons' unimpressive draw

NIGERIA'S Super Falcons battled to a 1-1 draw with Ethiopia's Lucy in the first leg of their Paris 2024 Olympic Games qualifier.

Here are Soccernet.ng's four takeaways from the encounter: Waldrum missed the game due to personal commitments in the United States. The American gaffer led Nigeria to the knockout rounds of the World Cup, with the team playing some fantastic football.

In his absence, the Falcons looked flat and ordinary from defence to attack and needed a moment of brilliance from Rasheedat Ajibade to rescue a draw.

Nigeria have scored only four goals in their last five matches now, with three of them coming in a single game against Australia at the World Cup.

The Falcons failed to score

against Canada, Ireland, and England at the Mundial and managed just one against Ethiopia.

Oshoala missed a couple of chances at the World Cup and against Ethiopia. Ify Onumonu is not prolific, while Uchenna Kanu has seemingly forgotten her scoring boots in Mexico.

The Super Falcons need a new, consistent goalscorer. Gift Monday looks like she has it in her, but she may need more time. Opeyemi Ajakaye and Esther Onyenezide are young goal-scorers whose time will surely come.

For the here and now, hopefully, Babajide Rinsola will bring goals aplenty with her to the Falcons from Spain.

In Addis Ababa, Ajibade stepped up when others around her looked lost in the absence of coach Waldrum.

The Atletico Madrid forward scored the equaliser to help the

Falcons avoid an embarrassing defeat against the Ethiopians.

While Oshoala has been Nigeria's biggest star over the past decade, it is clear that Ajibade will be the team's main girl over the coming few years.

The second leg of this qualifier between Nigeria and Ethiopia will be played at the MKO Abiola

Stadium, Abeokuta, today.

The Super Falcons must win that match to advance to the next round of the Olympic Games qualifiers.

Coach Waldrum is expected to rejoin the team ahead of that encounter, and that could be the advantage the Falcons need to soar.





Criminal case against Fifa president dropped

PROSECUTORS have closed a criminal case against Gianni Infantino - a decision the Fifa president called a "victory" for him and the organisation.

BBC SPORT said that, proceedings were opened against Infantino in July 2020 over an alleged secret meeting with Swiss attorney general Michael Lauber.

Swiss prosecutors confirmed on Thursday their investigations "invalidated" suspicions against Infantino.

Infantino said the allegations were made to "attack his reputation".

"This is a full and clear victory for me, for the new Fifa and for justice," Infantino added in a Fifa statement.

"It is now clear that the accusations against me were mere attempts by poor, envious and corrupt people to attack my reputation. If these people have some dignity left, they should at least have the decency and apologise for their actions and the damage caused.

"Indeed and with no surprise, the investigation fully and clearly confirms that I have always acted in a lawful and correct way, always defending exclusively the interests of Fifa and football."

Proceedings against Infantino were opened on suspicions of secrecy violations, abuse of office and aiding and abetting related to meetings he held with Lauber.

Prosecutors said their investigations had found no evidence that Infantino had "instrumentalised" the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland "into unusual, inexplicable, erroneous or even criminal acts or omissions".

Fifa said: "Now it is official: Fifa President Gianni Infantino has always acted absolutely correctly and lawfully in his relations with the Swiss public prosecutors who were investigating the 'old Fifa'."

"The new Fifa is today a clean, well run and robust organisation which operates in accordance with the highest ethical and governance standards."

Prosecutor Stefan Keller, who was appointed in June 2020 to review criminal complaints against Infantino and Lauber, was removed from the case in May 2021 following a successful

complaint from Fifa, which said he demonstrated "extreme bias".

Federal prosecutors Hans Maurer and Ulrich Weder took the case on and Fifa said on Thursday it took note of their decision to "dismiss and definitively" close proceedings against Infantino.

"The outcome of this investigation is obviously entirely unsurprising. The only surprising element is only the long time taken to reach such an obvious conclusion," Fifa's statement

Murray loses in Basel, as Norrie beaten by Zverev

ANDY Murray was unable to reach his first ATP Tour quarter-final since February after Argentina's Tomas Martin Etcheverry fought back to win a gruelling contest in Basel.

Murray, 36, recovered from a slow start to win the first set in 76 minutes.

But the Briton ended up losing 6-7 (5-7) 6-3 6-2 to the world number 32, who secured victory in over three hours.

Meanwhile, Cameron Norrie lost 6-2 6-4 against fifth seed Alexander Zverev in his second-round match in Vienna.

Former world number one Murray has made a habit this season of being involved in some marathon matches - and the scrap against Etcheverry was another example.

Having stopped Etcheverry going 3-0 ahead, the Scot showed all of his trademark tenacity and endurance to keep his opponent locked in long rallies during a tight opening set which could have swung either way.

Murray trailed in the tie-break before creating a set point with a superb crosscourt forehand winner and converting his chance with a deft volley.

After falling a break down early in the second set, Murray was unable to take three break points as Etcheverry held on in a 16-minute seventh game - which proved key in taking the match to a decider.

Almost two and a half hours were already on the clock and

added.

Infantino was cleared of violating Fifa's regulations after a preliminary investigation by the world governing body's ethics committee in August 2020.

In 2015, US prosecutors charged several top Fifa executives with corruption following a major inquiry by the FBI.

Former Fifa president Sepp Blatter and vice-president Michel Platini were later found guilty of ethics breaches over a 2m Swiss franc (£1.3m) "disloyal payment".

both players needed time to catch their breath before Murray succumbed to a fourth break point in another long opening game.

Murray continued to pressure the 24-year-old Argentine but became

KYLIAN Mbappe was on target as Paris St-Germain went top of Group F with a clinical win over AC Milan in the Champions League.

BBC SPORT said that, the hosts are now two points above Borussia Dortmund, who beat Newcastle 1-0 on Wednesday, in second.

Mbappe opened the scoring against Milan in the 32nd minute with a driven shot into the bottom corner.

And second-half goals from Randal Kolo Muani and Lee Kang-in secured all three points for the French champions.

Mbappe, who has now scored 13 goals in 13 matches for PSG and France this season, profited from a great run from 17-year-old Warren Zaire-Emery, wrong-footing Milan keeper Mike Maignan with his strike from the edge of the box.

Luis Enrique's side dominated and thought they had doubled their lead in the 48th minute, but Ousmane Dembele's fine curling finish was ruled out by the video assistant referee for a foul in the build up.

Torres stars in Champions League victory

BARCELONA'S Ferran Torres scored one goal and assisted another as his side held off Shakhtar Donetsk to maintain their perfect Group H record in the Champions League.

BBC SPORT said that, Torres opened the scoring in the 28th minute with a rebounded effort after Fermin Lopez hit the post.

The ex-Manchester City forward then set up Lopez for

Mbappe on target in Champions League



Five minutes later and PSG got their second after Dembele's strike was saved by Maignan but tapped in by Kolo Muani on the rebound.

Maignan tipped a late Mbappe strike on to the post as the 2020 finalists finished strongly.

And substitute Lee rounded off the victory with a side-footed strike after more good work from teenager Zaire-Emery.

Milan remain winless in Europe this season and are bottom of Group F, with two points from their opening

Barca's second eight minutes later.

Heorhii Sudakov scored a second-half consolation goal but the hosts held on.

The five-time winners, who last lifted the trophy in 2015, are top of their group with nine points, while Shakhtar stay third, six points behind the La Liga champions.

In Group H's other fixture,

Porto thrashed Royal Antwerp 4-1 with forward Evanilson scoring a hat-trick for the visitors.

Torres impresses before El Clasico

Barcelona are short on strikers with usual centre forward Robert Lewandowski already out with an ankle injury, and Joao Felix limping off with an apparent knock in the 74th minute.

Torres, though, made the perfect case to start up front in Saturday's El Clasico league match against rivals Real Madrid.

The 23-year-old found the net in his second consecutive Champions League game smashing a bouncing loose ball home.

He then received the ball on the turn and set up Lopez who brilliantly doubled Barca's advantage with a fine strike which went in off the post.

Lopez also hit the woodwork in the second half and had a header ruled out for offside which would have restored his side's two-goal lead in the 70th minute.

Shakhtar stunned their hosts, scoring on a rare break upfield, but never looked like adding a second to take a point from Estadi Olimpic Lluis Companys.

Barcelona started 16-year-old Lamine Yamal for the second time in the Champions League, while 17-year-old Marc Guiu, who scored the winner on his debut against Athletic Bilbao on Sunday



Dan Evans injured against Frances Tiafoe

DAN Evans limped off

court after retiring from his Erste Bank Open match against Frances Tiafoe with a serious-looking calf injury - four weeks before the Davis Cup Finals.

BBC SPORT said that, the British number two was leading 4-1 in the first round when he pulled up sharply at the baseline.

Evans, 33, looked forlorn as he received treatment and it soon became clear he

would be unable to continue.

On Monday, Evans was named in Britain's team for next month's Davis Cup Finals.

Evans was instrumental in helping his nation qualify for the knockout stage of the men's team event and will be hoping the injury is not serious enough to rule him out.

Britain take on Serbia in the last eight on 23 November, with the semi-finals and final taking place later that week in Malaga.

Evans was in total command

against American world number 14 Tiafoe in Vienna when he appeared to pop his right calf muscle attempting to sprint forward from the baseline.

The world number 35 had dominated on serve and troubled the out-of-sorts Tiafoe with his clean returning, taking one of four break points before looking to further close in on the opening set.

But early in the sixth game,

Evans let out an anguished cry as he spun around in pain and shock.

Immediately hopping towards his chair, Evans signalled for treatment and the gravity of the injury left him visibly frustrated.

The Briton appeared to tell the physio he could not walk and within moments it was obvious he would not be able to continue.

SUNDAY SPORTS



Williams' total of 23 Grand Slam singles titles is more than any woman in the Open era

Williams loses to Bencic in first match

AN emotional Serena Williams has admitted she is "terrible at goodbyes" following defeat by Belinda Bencic in the second round of the Canadian Open.

BBC SPORT revealed that, the 23-time Grand Slam champion lost 6-2 6-4 in Toronto in her first match since announcing she will be "evolving away" from tennis.

The American, 40, received a standing ovation on court and had the full backing of the crowd throughout.

"It was a lot of emotions obviously," said Williams.

"I love playing here, I've always loved playing here. I wish I could have played better but Belinda played so well today. It's been an interesting 24 hours.

"As I said in the article, I'm terrible at goodbyes. But,

goodbye Toronto." Williams said she was moving towards "other things that are important to me", adding she did not like the word "retirement".

she wrote that "the countdown has begun".

Following the match, a tearful Williams was presented with jerseys of basketball team the Toronto Raptors and ice hockey team the Toronto Maple Leafs for her and daughter Olympia.

"I was really happy to be out here today and play in front of you guys," she said. "Thanks for the support. Thank you."

Williams won her first Grand Slam title at the 1999 US Open, aged 17. Her last Grand Slam title was at the 2017 Australian Open when she was eight weeks pregnant with Olympia. She has confirmed she will

play at the Western and Southern Open in Cincinnati, Ohio next week as well as at the US Open later this month.

World number one Iga Swiatek will join Switzerland's Bencic in the third round after comfortably beating Ajla Tomljanovic 6-1 6-2.

The two-time Grand Slam-winner, 21, will face Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia next. The victory was the Pole's 19th successive hard-court win.

American Coco Gauff beat Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina 6-4 6-7 (8-10) 7-6 (7-3) to set up a meeting with Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, but Estonia's second seed Anett Kontaveit is out after losing 6-4 6-4 to Switzerland's Jil Teichmann.

BRTAIN'S Jack Draper and Dan Evans are through to the Canadian Open quarter-finals but Cameron Norrie was knocked out.

BBC SPORT said that, Draper, 20, led Gael Monfils 6-0 0-2 in their last-16 match when the Frenchman had to withdraw with a suspected ankle injury in Montreal.

Evans defeated American 10th seed Taylor Fritz 7-6 (9-7) 1-6 7-5.

British number one Norrie lost 6-3 6-4 to home favourite and sixth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Wimbledon finalist Nick Kyrgios is also through to the last eight after defeating fellow Australian Alex de Minaur 6-2 6-3.

"Today was really hard mentally for me to go out here and play Alex," Kyrgios said.

"We're such good friends and he's been having such a good career so far and carrying the Australian flag for so long. It was just tough mentally. It's never easy to play a player like that, especially if they're Australian.

"I just got out here and got the job done. I played the way I had to play."

It is the first time that Draper has reached the quarter-finals of a Masters 1,000 tournament.

"I know what it's like to do an ankle," Draper said post-

Draper, Evans through to quarter-finals

match. "I did one last year and rebounded. I hope Gael is all right. I wish him all the best for the rest of the season. I guess to be in the quarter-finals is nice for myself, but it's never how you want it to happen."

Draper, who upset third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the previous round, will face Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta next.

Evans, who also beat Fritz in Washington last week, will play another American, Tommy Paul, in the last eight.

In the women's tournament taking place in Toronto, world number one Iga Swiatek was beaten 6-4 3-6 7-5 by Brazilian Beatriz Haddad

Maia. Swiatek, who had a run of 37 straight wins halted in the third round at Wimbledon last month, said: "Next time maybe I'm going to be able to find, even though the conditions are going to be bad, more solutions and just play more solid. Because I did a lot of mistakes that I kind of don't accept."

American 10th seed Coco Gauff is also into the last eight after beating Belarusian world number six Aryna Sabalenka 7-5 4-6 7-6 (7-4).

Gauff will now play former world number one Simona Halep, who defeated Switzerland's Jil Teichmann 6-2 7-5.



Jack Draper, left, and Dan Evans reached the quarter-finals for the first time

FedEx Cup Play-offs: McIlroy eight behind leader

RORY McIlroy carded a level-par opening round of 70 at the FedEx St Jude Championship to sit eight behind leaders Kim Si-Woo and JJ Spaun.

BBC SPORT said that, McIlroy had an inconsistent day with four bogeys, including two in the first six holes, and four birdies.

England's Tyrrell Hatton is three shots back following a bogey-free opening round of five under in Memphis.

South Korea's Kim landed an eagle on the final hole to go into the lead alongside bogey-free American Spaun.

Northern Ireland's McIlroy, who had earlier welcomed the decision to ban three

players from the Saudi-backed LIV Golf Series from competing in the play-offs following a court bid, struggled from the off and bogeyed the first.

A second bogey followed on the sixth and, despite a birdie on the following hole, the 33-year-old dropped another shot on the 11th.

Three birdies and another bogey in the final six holes completed the world number three's up and down opening round.

It is McIlroy's first tournament since he finished third at The Open, having led going into the final round - his fourth top-10 major finish this year.

World number one Scottie Scheffler struggled to a 71, while Australia's Cameron Smith, who won The Open last month, is at three under.

American Tony Finau, who won twice on the PGA Tour last month, is with a group of players on six under.

Scotland's Martin Laird is on four under, with compatriot Russell Knox at level par.

PGA Championship winner Justin Thomas sits at three under alongside Spain's Jon Rahm, with England's US Open champion Matt Fitzpatrick and Ireland's Shane Lowry a shot back.

This week's event at TPC Southwind is the first of three tournaments to decide the Tour champion, with the winner picking up \$18m (£14.8m).

Fraser-Pryce runs fourth-fastest women's 100m ever

SHELLY-ANN Fraser-Pryce ran the fourth-fastest ever women's 100m, 10.62 seconds, to win at the Diamond League in Monaco.

BBC SPORT said that, the five-time world 100m champion, 35, bettered her

own mark for the fastest 100m of the year, having clocked 10.66 seconds in Poland on Saturday.

She has now run the third and fourth-fastest women's 100m times ever.

Fellow world champion Jake Wightman of Britain won the 1,000m with the fastest time this year.

Fraser-Pryce's fellow Jamaican Shericka Jackson came second in Monaco with

a personal best of 10.71 seconds, while Marie-Josée Ta Lou of Ivory Coast set an African record in third and Britain's Daryll Neita finished sixth.

"I did what I needed to and we had fun and let the clock do the talking. To be able to run 10.60 consistently means a lot. It's remarkable. It's hard to keep up the speed at this high level," said Fraser-Pryce.

"I'm in my late thirties and I feel I have more to give. I look forward to doing my personal best [10.60 run in August 2021] during the rest of the season."

It was a third sub-10.70 run within a week for Fraser-Pryce, who missed the Commonwealth Games, as all seven starters went below 11 seconds.

She becomes the first woman in history to break 10.70 six times in the same season, having also won a record fifth women's 100m world title [last month in Oregon](#).

Wightman bounced back from disappointment at the Commonwealth Games, where he was unable to back up his 1500m world title in Oregon.

The 28-year-old took 1500m bronze in Birmingham on Saturday but posted a time of two minutes 13.88 seconds in Monaco, the ninth fastest 1,000m of all time, ahead of



Fraser-Pryce



"I'm ready to solve Super Eagles goalkeeping crisis"



Jonathan Rasheed

Nigeria-eligible goalkeeper, Jonathan Rasheed, has declared his readiness to solve Nigeria's goalkeeping crisis that have been rocking the Super Eagles, BSNSports.com.ng reports.

IFK Varnamos's goaltender was born to a Nigerian father and Norwegian mother, Rasheed is eligible to play for the national teams of Sweden, Norway and Nigeria, but he has yet to win a senior cap for any of the aforementioned countries.

"It started a week ago. I was tagged in several posts on Twitter (now X) and Instagram, and yes. It was friends who wrote that it had started to be talked about and so on," Rasheed said to Fotbollskanalen.

"I don't know what it is or where it comes from, but there have been people who have written to me about it. It is fun. It probably means that you have done something good.

"I personally have had no contact with anyone. But I hope it might come."

"It would have been awesome. My father is from there and I have always been aware of Nigeria, Norway and Sweden.

"I would have been proud if given the chance. It's basically the biggest thing you can do as a player", he stated.

However, barely three months after the conclusion of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, the World Soccer ruling body has confirmed release of player's monetary incentive to the federations of the participating

countries, BSNSports.com.ng reports. This report was revealed by an online journalist SHE Score Banger, who is purely a women's football reporter. The journalist revealed its discussion with FIFA and the response it received from the football body.

"When I asked FIFA about the World Cup money, this is what the spokesperson said:

"Following the conclusion of the Women's World Cup, FIFA is in contact with the participating member associations (PMAs) regarding the distribution

of payments for the tournament, including the record prize money that will be provided by FIFA"

As part of this, FIFA is providing tailored support to PMAs regarding the distribution of payments that are being made, including to the member association and subsequently to players", the statement read.

Nigeria's Super Falcons, Atlas Lioness of Morocco, Bayana Bayana of South Africa and Shepolopolo of Zambia represented Africa at the global competition.

Meanwhile, in Serie A, Chukwubuike Ikwemesi was on the losing as Salernitana lost by the slimmest of margins to Genoa.

In the 2 Bundesliga, David Abiama shone like a million stars in Greuther Fürth's commanding 4-0 victory against Osnabrück.

Abiama scored one and assisted another as Greuther Fürth made it four wins in their first 11 league games.

OGC Nice provisionally returned to the top of the French Ligue 1 table after their hard-fought 0-1 away win at Clermont Foot.

Terem Moffi came off the bench for the winners in the 58th minute before Algerian midfielder Hicham Boudaoui netted the game's

sole goal in the 74th minute.

In the Czech Republic FNL, Emmanuel Anih netted a stoppage-time consolation goal for Příbram in their 2-1 defeat away to Viktoria Žižkov.

Ahmed Adebayo was the only shining light for Tammeka as he scored both of their goals in their 2-7 home loss to Tallinna Kalev in the Estonian Meistriliiga.

In the Russian First League, 20-year-old Jonathan Okoronkwo netted his tenth goal of the season to open the scoring for Arsenal Tula in their 1-1 draw at Alaniya Vladikavkaz.

Super Eagles defender Olisa Ndah's contribution could not power Orlando Pirates to a clean sheet as the Bucs played out a thrilling 1-1 home draw with Polokwane City in their PSL fixture.

In Turkey, new Super Eagles star Fisayo Dele-Bashiru did his bit, but it was not enough for Hatayspor as they stumbled to a 1-2 defeat at home to Kayserispor.

2013 Africa Cup of Nations winner Kenneth Omeruo had a better story to tell as he stood strong in defence for Kasımpaşa during their 3-1 triumph over İstanbulspor.

'Falcons need Nigerians' support to beat Ethiopia'

SENSING danger ahead of Tuesday's make or mar Paris 2014 Olympic Games qualifier against Ethiopia, President of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), Ibrahim Gusau, has pleaded with Nigerians to come out in large number to support the Super Falcons.

The match will at the MKO Abiola Stadium, Abuja. The Super Falcons forced the Ethiopian to a 1-1 draw in Addis Ababa on Wednesday, and will now have to defeat the East Africans in the return leg on Tuesday to move a step closer to the Olympics Games.

The Falcons will hope to carry their fine form from the FIFA Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand to the Olympic Games by qualifying for the sports fiesta.

Gusau stated that his board is determined to build on the success of the World Cup, adding that qualifying for Paris 2024 Olympics will be another major boost for the team.

He, however, said NFF and the team cannot do it alone, and Nigerians must show their support by coming to the stadium to cheer the girls.

"These girls need the support of everybody, and one of the ways Nigerians must show they support to the team is by coming out to watch and cheer them. This kind of support cannot be quantified, and it helps the team to give their all in front of their home crowd," Gusau stated.

The Nigeria women team last qualified for the Olympic Games 15 years ago in 2008, and the Gusau-led board is keen to break the jinx this time around. A win for the Falcons in Abuja against the Ethiopians will see them take on either Cameroun or Uganda in the next stage of the qualifiers.

Meanwhile, Nigeria's prospects at the 2023 CAF Africa Cup of Nations have been highlighted by former Super Eagles captain John Obi Mikel, who anticipates a challenging journey for the

team, Soccernet.ng reports.

For the AFCON, the Super Eagles have been drawn in Group A together with hosts Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau.

There are five AFCON titles between Nigeria and Ivory Coast, and Mikel has tipped both nations to make it past the group

stage.

The former Chelsea midfielder, however, remains wary of the other Group A teams.

Equatorial Guinea, who have only made four appearances at the AFCON but finished fourth in 2015, are capable of causing a major upset.

While Guinea-Bissau have never made it past

the group phase of the continental championship since making their debut in 2017, the Djurtus stunned Nigeria in March, defeating the Eagles 0-1 at the Abuja National Stadium.

Mikel expects the Eagles to possess enough quality to advance past the first round of the competition.



Players of Nigeria's Super Falcons pose for a team photo prior to the FIFA Women's World Cup match against Australia. Photo: AFP