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# Sunday Standard



TRUTH EXALTS A NATION

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1972

VOL. 13 NO. 807

SUNDAY, November 19, 2023

N250

# Is labour movement endangered?



*In recent times, the labour movement under the Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC and Trade Union Congress, TUC have been enmeshed in one controversy after another. From the struggle to cushion effects of removal of fuel subsidy as announced by the incumbent government to the face-off between TUC and Lagos State government and; most recently, assault on the President of NLC Comrade Joe Ajaero allegedly carried out by security operatives in Imo State; are these healthy signs for the labour movement in Nigeria? KENNETH DAKOP asks...*



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File foto of Emefiele for court

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### Ending the sale, consumption of illicit adulterated drinks

Illicit adulterated drinks have emerged as a perilous concern in Nigeria, posing grave threats to public health and safety. The increasing production and distribution of counterfeit alcoholic beverages, often laced with toxic substances such as methanol, have reached alarming levels. Consuming these adulterated drinks can lead to severe health consequences, ranging from nausea and blurred vision to organ failure and death. The lack of stringent regulations and enforcement has allowed this illicit trade to thrive, jeopardizing the well-being of unsuspecting consumers.

The production and sale of illicit, adulterated drinks has become so rampant even as it is on the increase in Nigeria. It has become a stock in trade so much so that the unsuspecting public is not even able to differentiate between the original and counterfeit in the markets as they use original labels to deceive buyers though the drinks are adulterated.

Perpetrators of this dastardly act in the name of doing business have caused so much havoc especially on the consumers as adulterated drinks are not good for the health of humans and has been medically identified as a major cause of ailments such as cancer, kidney failure and some other terminal diseases and conditions.

As we approach the yuletide season where there is an expected increase in the purchase and consumption of drinks for the celebration, people are advised to watch out for the kind of drinks they purchase.

It is sad and worrisome that reports have it that people are now producing and selling these illicit and adulterated drinks right in their backyards in the comfort of their homes without checks by relevant authorities and it is being churned out to the markets in droves.

Meanwhile unsuspecting public are buying and consuming the products because they are being lured by the prices as they come cheaper than the original.

Reports have it that there are allegations that some security personnel look the other way and encourage the act by compromising, as well as some traditional, community and youth leaders also who abate the illicit production and supply of the drugs and adulterated drinks which is happening right in their domain. In some cases even parents are sometimes found wanting.

Security agencies and other relevant agencies such as Nigeria Agency for Food Drug Control, NAFDAC, Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Standard Organization of Nigeria, SON, should sit up and monitor the activities of these merchants and ensure what is in the market is genuine and fit for consumption by the public. They need to step up their game and ensure that culprits are brought to book to serve as a deterrent to others.

It is worthy to note that addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach, strengthening regulatory frameworks, increasing law enforcement efforts, and implementing stringent penalties for offenders are essential steps.

Also, community leaders, traditional rulers, youth, women and religious groups, government agencies and other stakeholders have a very key role to play in the fight against illicit adulterated drinks.

Simultaneously, public awareness campaigns must be intensified to educate consumers about the risks associated with consuming unregulated alcoholic beverages.

By tackling the danger of illicit adulterated drinks head-on, Nigeria can safeguard the health of its citizens, enhance its global standing, and foster a more resilient and prosperous society.

### Governor Mutfwang condemns accusations of bribing judges

By PETER TITLE

**G**overnor Caleb Mutfwang of Plateau State has condemned in strong terms, the allegations being circulated by certain individuals, accusing judges of receiving \$5 million US Dollars bribe for the nullification of his victory. He described it as baseless and defamatory in nature.

In an official statement signed and made available to SUNDAY STANDARD by the Director of Press and Public Affairs to the Governor, Gyang Bere, the Governor vehemently condemned the said publication. He attributed it to the handiwork of his detractors which he added, was aimed at sowing a seed of discord between him and the esteemed judges as well as the constituted authorities.

Expressing his deep concern over the matter, according to the statement, the Executive Governor demanded for thorough investigations by the security agencies, in order to identify and apprehend those responsible for the libelous publication.

He therefore emphasized the need to ensure that the faceless individuals were fished out to face the full wrath of the law with the view to setting a precedent that discourages similar misconduct.

Governor Mutfwang, in the release unequivocally distanced himself from the false narrative, dismissing it as mere fabrications crafted by individuals who were being manipulated as pawns by the opposition party in Plateau State.

He posited that the latest move was an attempt to tarnish the image of the People's Democratic Party



Mutfwang

(PDP) Government in the state, pointing out that such malicious actions would not deter his commitment and confidence in the judiciary.

### FG assures on universal health coverage by 2030

**T**he Federal Government has assured that Nigeria is on track towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2030. Ensuring UHC by 2030 is one of the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, yesterday, at the 64th session of the National Council on Health (NCH) in Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, said the health of Nigerians was not just a matter of wellbeing but also a fundamental human right.

"It is a measure of our commitment to equity, justice and the dignity of every individual. Achieving UHC is not a choice; it is an obligation, a promise to provide quality healthcare to all regardless of their socio-economic status," Pate said.

Pate said that UHC was the embodiment of the vision for a healthier and more prosperous

nation and a strategic advantage for Nigeria as a nation, adding that though great progress had been made over the years, the pace has not been commensurate with the investments and the complexities of the country's health system. Pate said the government has realised that a lot of the determinants of health are outside the direct control of the health sector.

According to him, that is why President Bola Ahmed Tinubu decided to have a coordinating Minister of Health and Social Welfare to put in place the necessary structure and framework to effectively and efficiently coordinate efforts to address the wider determinants of health. Pate said effective governance was the bedrock upon which UHC stands.

"Our government must be transparent, accountable and responsive to the healthcare needs of its citizens. We need to create and enforce policies that prioritise health and well being supportive of

public/private sectors. However, governance doesn't stop at policies. We must also establish a regulatory framework that ensures the highest quality standards in healthcare and safeguards against corruption. An accountable healthcare system responsive to our citizens is the only way we can ensure that everyone, regardless of their background, receives the care they deserve.

"Achieving UHC requires us to ensure that our healthcare resources are allocated effectively. We need to invest in preventative care, primary healthcare and essential services that reach the most vulnerable among us. Efficiency also means reducing waste, improving resource management and embracing modern technology to streamline healthcare delivery. Our healthcare system should be robust and responsive, meeting the unique needs of each community it serves," Pate said.

### Emefiele to spend four days in correctional centre



Emefiele

**A** federal Capital Territory (FCT) High Court sitting in Maitama, Abuja, yesterday, ordered the remand of former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Godwin Emefiele, in Kuje Correctional Centre pending ruling on his bail application.

Justice Hamza Muazu gave the order following Emefiele's arraignment and his not guilty plea to a six-count amended charge brought against him by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

Justice Muazu, who took arguments on Emefiele's bail application, adjourned till November 22 for ruling on the bail application and November 28 for the commencement of trial.

The original 20-count charge against the ex-CBN governor bordered on procurement fraud to the tune of N6.5 billion. He was then charged alongside one Mrs. Sa'adatu Yaro and a company, April 1616 Investment Limited,

purported to belong to Mrs. Yaro. The fresh six-count charge is also bordering on procurement fraud to the tune of N1.6 billion but he is the only defendant this time around.

The former CBN governor appeared in court yesterday for an application for bail, pleading not guilty to the six-count charge after it was read to him.

The Federal Government alleged that Emefiele illegally bought 43 vehicles between 2018 and 2020 worth N1.2 billion. He was also accused of awarding a contract for the procurement of 37 Toyota Hilux Vehicles valued at N854 million.

Count one read: "That you, Godwin Ifeanyi Emefiele, male, adult, sometime in 2018 within the jurisdiction of this Honourable Court did use your position as Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria to confer a corrupt advantage on Sa'adatu Ramallan Yaro, a staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria by awarding a contract for the supply of 37 Toyota Hilux Vehicles at the cost of N854,700,000 only to April 1616 Investment Ltd, a company in which the said Sa'adatu Ramallan Yaro is a director and thereby committed an offence."

In the second count, Emefiele was accused of using his position to corruptly confer an advantage on Yaro, "a staff of the Central Bank of Nigeria by awarding a contract for the supply of one Toyota Avalon at the cost of N99,900,000 only to April 1616 Investment Ltd, a company in which the said Sa'adatu

Ramallan Yaro Director and thereby committed an offence.

He was also accused of conferring corrupt advantage contrary to Section 19 of the Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Act 2000 by awarding a contract for the supply of one Toyota Landcruiser V8 to April 1616 Investment Ltd, in 2019 at the cost of N73 million.

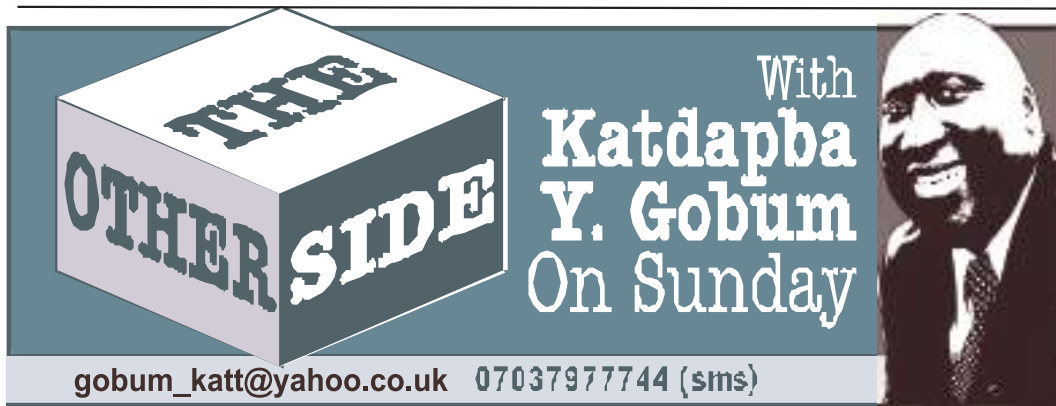
The fourth count accused him of illegally awarding a contract for the purchase of a Toyota Landcruiser V8 valued N73,800,000 to April 1616 Investment Ltd.

The Federal Government further accused the former CBN governor of also awarding a contract to Yaro for the supply of two Toyota Hilux Shell Specification Vehicles at the cost of N44,200,000 in 2020.

Emefiele was, after his initial arraignment, released on November 8 after spending 151 days in custody, following the order of Justice Olukayode Adeniyi of the same High Court of the FCT on his enforcement of right.

In another development, Justice Adeniyi of an FCT High Court, Maitama, adjourned till December 11, 2023, to hear the originating motion on Emefiele's application for enforcement of right.

Justice Adeniyi fixed the date after Emefiele's counsel, J. Usman (SAN) told the court that they needed to go through the counter affidavits served by the respondents. Usman earlier told the court that he just discovered that they had been served with the counter affidavit and apologised to the court and the respondents.



**"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."**

**W**HAT 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 summons, 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!



## Don't judge a book by its cover

SOMETIME ago, something happened in neighboring Abuja that was an eye opener. In one of the busiest areas of Wuse Market, a young lady was employed to sell recharge cards, assorted drinks and snacks. Ijay's goods were selling like hot cakes. She was a smart lady who had always been referred to as multitasking. Alone she had been carrying on for months successfully, with no problems.

On one of the days, at the hour when Ijay's business was at its peak (that is around 11:00 am to 1:00pm), Ijay had an unexpected visitor. It was a young girl of about 12 years, in the midst of "please give me N100 recharge card"; "let me have one Malta, cold one with meat pie". "I want N1000,00 MTN and N500 Etisalat, and others asking for their change, Ijay heard a small girl's voice calling her attention. "Auntie!!! She called out gently, almost afraid to come very close.

"Yes?" Ijay spared the innocent voice a look. "Can I help you?" Ijay asked politely.

"Please auntie, the little girl curtsied in respect, "my auntie over there," she pointed at a woman busy buying thing, "is busy buying a lot of things. I just want a place where I can sit and wait for her until she finishes."

"It is okay," Ijay assented then went back to business. Ijay had a waist purse where she kept all the money for her transaction and the recharge cards, this is usually securely strapped around her waist. However, in the heat of business when she needed to sell a certain recharge card, she removed her waist purse to locate it easily.

Business was very good that day and Ijay was in high spirits poking fun at her regular customers. She had even forgotten the little girl in her stall until she heard her childish voice saying: "Thank you ma. My auntie just motioned to me to come," the little girl curtsied and hurriedly left.

Shortly after that, a customer wanted a recharge card. Ijay's hands automatically went to where she had kept it. But it wasn't there. She looked under tables, it was not there. She overturned the shop. It was not there.

By this time, Ijay was sweating. The last person on her mind was that little girl. Volunteers ran around the market looking for the girl but she had disappeared into thin air.

It was at this point that other traders that were once bitten, shared similar stories. But it was too late for Ijay to remedy the situation. She has been robbed by the cradle. It amounted to N79,000 in cash and over N25,000 recharge cards. Ijay lost her job but had to pay her madam (nicknamed Shylock) for every dime.

Well-wishers in the market and some passers-by raised over N50,000,00 which Shylock collected grumbling. It was only

after Ijay wrote an undertaking that she would pay the balance in 3 months that she was released by the police. Today, Ijay is wary of innocents.

In a similar situation on one full day when business appeared to be slow running for more than a week, a car seller learned not to judge a book by its cover, an expensive Mercedes Benz drove to this car stand in Jos and 2 of the occupants went for the most expensive car on display. It was a jeep.

Overjoyed, the owners proudly marketed their goods. The prospective buyers asked if they could test run it and see how it worked. The sellers were enthusiastic about it. Why not, they thought; since Oga (the one the two men obviously worked for) was in their car and their car was expensive too.

However, about ten minutes after they left, Oga, who had been busy eating a mountain of suya with massa (roasted meat seasoned with groundnut cake with rice snack) started exhibiting some kind of attitude. First, he ate even the paper the suya was wrapped in; then started behaving as if he was dancing Michael Jackson's Thriller dance steps- the one that entailed dancing with the shoulder. The car sellers were laughing until his cap fell off.

What they saw almost gave them a heart attack. Oga's hair was dreadlocks, thick with filth. There was no question that it was home of lice because from every indication, the last time it enjoyed the luxury of being washed must have been several years back.

Oga started making animal sounds, tore the well designed babanriga he was wearing, the caftan, then trousers, exposing very filthy tattered clothes. Next, he damaged the door of the car and made to run. The car sellers used all their might to hold him down until security men were called.

In the end, they could not hold on to him- Oga- he was a mad man who was ignorantly used in committing crime. And of course, their jeep never came back and they could not hold on to the Mercedes Benz the thieves came in because the police discovered it was also a stolen car.

So many people are in unhappy marriages because they judged a book by its cover. Nigerians are suffering because they reposed their confidence in the wrong politicians. They come looking for you with a smile pasted on their faces when campaigning for positions. But after using you as ladder to climb up there; they start looking at you with their noses; they become inaccessible. They go to the extent of changing their numbers and their circle of friends. They forget that without people, they are nothing; In fact, they are as good as dead.

The electorate know more than ever, the power in their votes. To sell our votes is to mortgage our future. It is high treason. And to be influenced by sentiments is to remain under bondage with no hope.

**"In a similar situation on one full day when business appeared to be slow running for more than a week, a car seller learned not to judge a book by its cover, an expensive Mercedes Benz drove to this car stand in Jos and 2 of the occupants went for the most expensive car on display. It was a jeep. Overjoyed, the owners proudly marketed their goods. The prospective buyers asked if they could test run it and see how it worked. The sellers were enthusiastic about it. Why not, they thought; since Oga (the one the two men obviously worked for) was in their car and their car was expensive too. However, about ten minutes after they left, Oga, who had been busy eating a mountain of suya with massa (roasted meat seasoned with groundnut cake with rice snack) started exhibiting some kind of attitude. First, he ate even the paper the suya was wrapped in; then started behaving as if he was dancing Michael Jackson's Thriller dance steps- the one that entailed dancing with the shoulder. The car sellers were laughing until his cap fell off. What they saw almost gave them a heart attack. Oga's hair was dreadlocks, thick with filth. There was no question that it was home of lice because from every indication, the last time it enjoyed the luxury of being washed must have been several years back."**

## NEWS

### KDSG to provide solar energy for civil servants

By JOHN FWAH, Kaduna

THE Kaduna State Government has signed Memorandum of Understanding, MOU, with Basscomm Nigeria Limited and Eneriv Power Limited to provide solar power to KDSG civil servants as a clean and affordable alternative source of electric power under its Solar-For-All programme.

This was contained in a press release signed by Muhammad Lawal Shehu, Chief Press Secretary to the Governor and made available to our correspondent.

The release said, the Honourable Commissioner of Finance, Shizzer Nasara Bada who represented His Excellency, Senator Uba Sani, the Governor of Kaduna State at the signing, stated that the initiative was in line with Governor Sani's pro-people style of governance and commitment to seeking climate friendly sources of energy in the face of environmental challenges.

"In the SDG goal, the provision of clean energy is a key factor to development. The Solar for All Programme is a brilliant initiative of the Kaduna Power Supply Company to make life easier for our dedicated civil



Sani

servants . It is our hope that we can expand this initiative to other residents as well, as it is all about accessibility to affordable energy," the Commissioner stated.

"Nigeria is blessed with excess solar power that we have not tapped into. It is time that we look at renewable energy due to climate change, " she added.

The Solar-For-All Programme aims to cater to over 70,000 public servants in the Kaduna

State Civil Service. Through the programme, eligible workers can purchase high quality solar systems for their homes, small businesses or farms at stipulated rates with a payment plan of 3 years.

Additionally, these solar systems will be installed safely by certified solar energy providers to ensure compliance with international best practices and standards.

### CBN extends legal tender status of old Naira

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

IN a recent announcement, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has decided to extend the legal tender status of the old design N200, N500, and N1,000 banknotes indefinitely.

The CBN introduced a redesign of these denominations in October 2022, setting specific deadlines for the old design notes to cease as legal tender.

In a statement signed by Isa AbdulMumin, Director, Corporate Communications recently, it stated that this

decision comes in line with international best practices and aims to prevent a repeat of previous experiences.

The CBN, in compliance with Section 20(5) of the CBN Act 2007, has declared that all banknotes issued by the CBN will continue to remain legal tender, even beyond the initial deadline of December 31, 2023.

To facilitate this extension, the CBN is working with relevant authorities to vacate a subsisting court ruling on the same subject. As a result, all CBN branches across the country will continue to issue and

accept all denominations of Nigerian banknotes, both old and redesigned, from deposit money banks (DMBs).

The general public is encouraged to accept and utilize all Naira banknotes, whether old or redesigned, for their day-to-day transactions. It is essential to handle these banknotes with utmost care to safeguard and protect their lifecycle. Additionally, individuals are encouraged to embrace alternative modes of payment and e-channels for their day-to-day transactions.

This announcement has been made by Isa AbdulMumin PhD, Director of Corporate Communications at the CBN. The CBN aims to ensure a smooth transition and ensure that the public is well-informed about the extended legal tender status of the old design Naira banknotes.

The CBN's decision to allow the continued circulation of the old design Naira banknotes, provides convenience and flexibility for the public, while also emphasizing the importance of embracing digital payment solutions.



Cordoso

## SUNDAY POLITICS

# Godfatherism and dearth of political mentorship in Nigeria

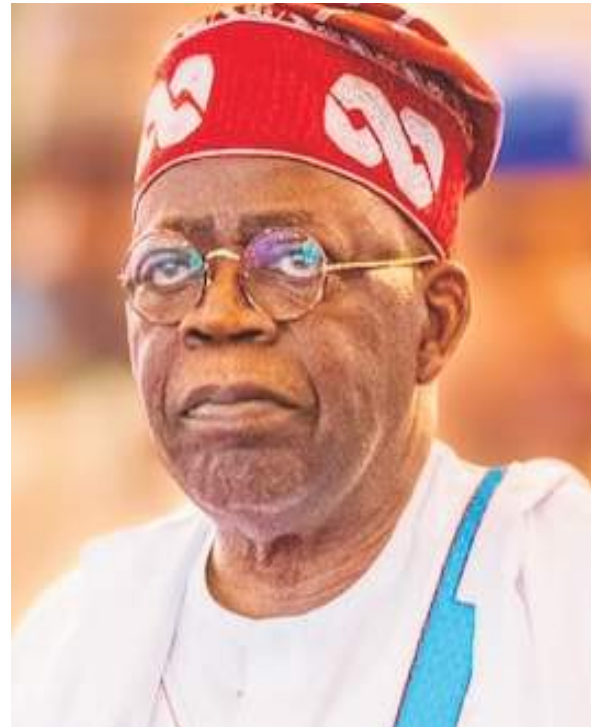
*As a leader, your greatest leadership obligation is succession planning. However, recent happenings in the Nigerian political scenario points to the contrary with an unfolding disquieting narrative: a breed of leaders who prioritize manipulation over genuine leadership, resulting in declining tradition of political mentorship. KALU OKORONKWO writes.*



Obasanjo



Buhari



Tinubu

**T**HE return of democracy in Nigeria in 1999 starting with President Olusegun Obasanjo era till the present government worsened the situation as nurturing of political leaders in Nigeria is no longer based on merit but on imposition with political godfathers in various states, especially outgoing Governors picking their cronies to succeed them.

Historically, political mentorship has been the basis of leadership development, a conduit through which the wisdom of seasoned statesmen is passed down to the next generation. Such could not be said in the Nigerian situation, a nation grappling with the complexities of governance, yet this once important tradition is fading into obscurity, leaving aspiring leaders to navigate treacherous waters without the compass of experience to guide them.

While this article dwells on political mentorship, it is satirical to mention here that this ugly trend is also found in all facets of leadership in Nigeria, be it religious, traditional, private and public organisations, non-governmental bodies, etc.

The dearth of role models who embody integrity, accountability, and a genuine commitment to democratic tenets is very evident in our political landscape. This has created a lacuna which opportunistic figures are quick to exploit to manipulate public opinion, consolidate power, and advance personal agenda as recently witnessed in the fiasco that engulfed leadership transition in Rivers State and such other states with similar leadership alignment.

The emergence of this disconcerting trend: the dearth of political mentorship and the simultaneous rise of manipulative leadership has paved the way for a breed of politicians who manipulate rather than inspire.

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, the country's political landscape was marked by a sense of optimism and the challenge of establishing a united Nigeria. The leaders of that era, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa and Ahmadu Bello, played dual roles as both statesmen and mentors. Their wisdom and guidance were crucial in piloting the nascent nation through the complexities of nation-building, fostering unity, and instilling a sense of purpose in the political heirs they nurtured.

Though the advent of military rule in Nigeria cast a long shadow over the nation's political mentorship journey by stifling democratic institutions, political mentors like Chief Anthony Enahoro and Chief Ayo Adebajo persevered in nurturing political consciousness and advocating for a return to democratic governance. The struggle against military rule became a rallying point for mentorship, as leaders imparted lessons of resilience and enduring value of democratic ideals.

However, the return to democracy in 1999 marked a watershed for political mentorship in Nigeria. Beneath the surface of Obasanjo's presidency, shadows of manipulation began to emerge.

While his administration made strides in economic reforms, allegations of political interference and strong-arm twisting opposition figures tarnished the democratic veneer. Critics argued that the once lofty ideals of transparency and accountability were being compromised, as political maneuvering took precedence over principled governance.

During Obasanjo's tenure, the paradox of mentorship and manipulation became increasingly apparent. On one hand, Obasanjo himself had been mentored by political stalwarts such as Chief Obafemi Awolowo and had played a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's post-military political landscape. On the other hand, the political climate of his era saw a decline in mentorship, as leaders became more focused on consolidating power than nurturing the next generation.

The erosion of ethical standards and the subversion of checks and balances created a breeding ground for leaders who prioritized personal interests over the common good.

Nigeria has since been grappling with the repercussions of Obasanjo's era of leadership dynamics as the nation has been striving to strike a new balance, with leaders cognizant of the pitfalls of manipulation and the importance of revitalizing mentorship as a cornerstone of political development.

Also, during Obasanjo's presidency, godfatherism became a prominent feature in Nigerian politics as these godfathers strategically

positioned themselves as kingmakers, backing candidates who pledged allegiance to them. In return for support, these candidates often found themselves indebted to their godfathers, leading to a cycle of corruption that further eroded public trust in government institutions.

The era witnessed the emergence of powerful political figures, often with deep pockets and extensive networks, playing a decisive role in determining who ascended to political offices. These godfathers, having nurtured political alliances, expected unwavering loyalty and influence over policies and appointments in return.

The story of Dr. Chris Ngige and Chris Ubah of Anambra state is a story of great box office movies. It echoes the broader quest for political autonomy, transparency, and a redefined narrative where the voice of the people reign supreme over the whisperings of a political godfather with personal agenda.

Godfatherism manifested in a subtle but pervasive erosion of governance structures. Elected officials, owing their political success to godfathers, found themselves entangled in a constant tug-of-war between serving the public interest and appeasing their benefactors. The result was a compromise of policy decisions, the allocation of resources, and the appointment of key officials—all done with the implicit approval of the godfather.

The nexus between godfatherism and corruption became increasingly evident during this era till date, eroding the leadership principles of

political patronage, elected officials succumb to the pressure of their godfathers, leading to the diversion of public funds for personal gain. This intertwining of interests fueled a cycle of corruption that further eroded public trust in government institutions.

Years after Obasanjo's presidency, the specter of godfatherism has persisted in Nigerian politics. The phenomenon transcended party lines, infiltrating both the ruling and opposition camps. Godfathers continued to play pivotal roles in determining the political fate of candidates, perpetuating a system where allegiance to powerful individuals held more weight than commitment to democratic ideals.

The erosion of political mentorship has broader implications for the health of democratic institutions. Without the steady hand of experienced mentors, leaders may become autocratic, side-stepping accountability and undermining the foundations of a thriving democracy. This erosion poses a severe threat to the democratic ideals that Nigeria aspires to uphold.

A cursory look into the nation's political landscape reveals that manipulative leadership is stark and the consequences are felt at every level of society, as public discourse becomes polarized, and the pursuit of the common good takes a back seat to personal ambition.

*Okoronkwo, a leadership and good governance advocate writes from Lagos and can be reached via kalu.okoronkwo@gmail.com*

## SUNDAY POLITICS

## Kogi youths storm INEC headquarters expressing happiness

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

**Y**OUTHS of Kogi State, recently, marched, in their numbers, to the headquarters of the Independent National Electoral Commission in Abuja, to declare their utmost confidence in the umpire and also affirm their support for the Governor-elect of the state, Usman Ododo.

The indigenes, who warned mischief makers in the state, under the guise of opposition parties, to desist from blackmailing the INEC, said the good people of Kogi State "stand by the mandate given to the duly elected governor, Usman Ododo".

They stressed that ethnic agenda had been nailed in the state and would not have a place again in its polity, and commended the good people of Kogi East who refused to be misled by those pursuing their own selfish interests at the expense of the collective good of the entire people of Kogi State.

The protesters who carried placards with inscriptions such as "Ododo is Kogi Agenda", "The people of Kogi have spoken on November 11", "INEC, Kogi youths are saying thank you", and "Kogi has decided", among others, said they would continue to gather at the INEC headquarters for as long as those they described as "dubious politicians" continued their "evil misinformation".

One of the protesters who spoke at the rally, Abdulrahman Umar, said they were at the INEC headquarters to commend the authorities, including the security agencies for making the last election in the state the most peaceful and fairest in the history of Kogi State.

"We will never allow criminals and election robbers to go away with misinformation. We all have a voice in Kogi State and the



**Ododo**

voice of truth is always louder no matter how hard they try. We have spoken loudly on November 11, and we will continue to speak until we stamp out ethnicity in our dear state," he said.

Another lady protester, Asmau Idris, said Kogi indigenes were surprised when some people came out to say they were protesting against the INEC on Saturday's election and decided to all come en masse to Abuja to truncate "the evil agenda".

"They told us to come out and vote. We voted en masse for our choice. It was free and fair. What else do they want? We will tell them that we all own Kogi State. The Okuns are with us in this struggle; the Central are with us; and the Igalas are with us. Our mandate must be protected," she said.

Other youths and stakeholders of the state who spoke at the rally vowed to remain at the headquarters everyday for as long as the action was needed, stressing that Kogi State was united and not divided.

INEC, last Sunday, declared Ododo Ahmed Usman of the All

Progressives Congress as the Governor-elect of Kogi State, having won the governorship election with a wide margin and satisfied all requirements. He polled a total of 446,237 votes to defeat other candidates.

Addressing the protesters, National Commissioner and Chairman, Security Committee of INEC, Maj. Gen. Modibbo Alkali (rtd), appreciated their cooperation with the Commission and reiterated that the off-cycle elections conducted in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi states were conducted fairly and credibly, in line with laid down guidelines.

## Kogi election: We're not afraid of litigation

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

**K**OGI Commissioner of Information and spokesperson/Director of Media and Publicity, Kogi State APC Governorship Campaign Council, Kingsley Femi Fanwo has said that they are not afraid of any litigations coming from the opposition parties in the state.

Services, KADIRS.

Mr Adams, prior to his appointment as Acting Chairman of the Service in July 2023, was the Executive Director, Corporate Services and will now be replaced by Dr. Lawal.

Jerry Adams is a seasoned Tax Administrator, Chartered Accountant, Business Development Expert and marketer with over 23 years professional experience.

Umar Sani, the new Executive Director, Revenue Operations hails from Zaria LGA and is a graduate of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, North Central Nigeria and the Harvard Center for International Development, USA. A portfolio Management and

Development Finance expert, he joins KADIRS with over 17 years professional experience in treasury management, credit management, revenue and tax management amongst other valuable skills to move the service forward.

The appointments and redeployment are based on the proven track records of the appointees, their commitment to the service of Kaduna State and the SUSTAIN Agenda of the administration.

While congratulating the appointees, Governor Uba Sani urged them to be diligent and create strategies and operational plans to move KADIRS to even greater heights.

The appointments are to commence with immediate

From **JOHN FWAH, Kaduna**

**T**HE Legislative Council of the Kagarko LG in Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria, has instituted a suit against the State Ministry of Local Government, State House of Assembly, State Attorney General and the impeached LG Chairman, Nasara Auza Rabo, claiming meddling in its functions.

In the suit instituted at the State High Court recently, the plaintiffs, eight (8) of the Ten (10) legislative council, claimed that the recall of Auza Rabo by the state House of Assembly from the suspension, does not affect the legislative exercise of impeachment conducted by them.

They said that the exercise of the House of Assembly was distinct from that of the legislative council.

The plaintiffs also want the court to declare among others: that the Ministry of Local Government is an appendage of the Executive Arm of Kaduna State Govt and does not have the right to alter the decision of the plaintiffs being elected legislators or determine the legality or otherwise of the impeachment of Rabo, except by the pronouncement of a court of competent jurisdiction in line with the principle of separation of powers obtainable in the Nigerian constitution.

"A declaration that the impeachment of Auza Rabo by the plaintiffs pressured by the constituents of the respective eight political wards out of the ten, was an exercise legally allowed by the extant laws governing the operations of the plaintiffs and as such, remains valid and subsisting.

"That the invitation of the plaintiffs by the Commissioner for LGs to attend a meeting over the recall of Rabo, the flashing of a

## LG Legislators drag KDSG, others to court



**Sani**

suspension letter in a conference hall, threat of suspension of the duly elected plaintiffs by the Commissioner over the legislative exercise of impeachment of Rabo referring to the plaintiffs as illiterate villagers and walking out the duly elected Speaker of the plaintiffs from uttering a word (sic), and denying any of the plaintiffs from uttering a word or directing the plaintiffs to reverse the impeachment, was an abuse of power, illegal, crude, unwarranted, uncivilized, unconstitutional, null and void and of no effect whatsoever.

"That the impeachment exercise conducted by the plaintiffs, being constitutional and legal function of the plaintiffs, superseded the suspension and subsequent recall of Rabo by the Kaduna

House of Assembly which suspension and recall is not within the bonds of the Commissioner and the House of Assembly.

"An order directing the Ministry and Rabo's Principal, Gov. Uba Sani to swear-in the Acting Chairman, Hon. Mustapha Gidado as the substantive Chairman, Kagarko Local Government Area within 24 hrs.

"An order of perpetual injunction restraining the defendants inclusive of their assigned privies, agents and whosoever acting on their behalf from further threatening the plaintiffs over the impeachment exercise conducted, parading Rabo as Chairman of Kagarko LGA of Kaduna State.

Motion to that effect comes up on 22nd November 2023 at the State High court.



**Fanwo**

favour of the Social Democratic Party where the original results were rewritten by those who are now coming to equity with unclean hands. Their ethnocentric Senior Advocate of Nigeria is already writing essays to convince them to hire him for tribunal cases.

"Their immediate past experience where the Supreme Court questioned his knowledge of law will be child's play as we have enough evidence to prove that the ethnic-centered candidate of the Social Democratic Party actually didn't score as much as was recorded for him at gunpoint. We will be ready for any litigation.

"To our people in Kogi Central, we thank you for turning out in your thousands to concretise the dominance of

**-Fanwo**

the All Progressives Congress in Kogi State. The massive turnout is no surprise as we witnessed a mammoth turnout during our Kogi Central rally. The numbers that came out to vote showed the rally crowd wasn't a ruse. We will be eternally grateful to you.

"Kogi West Senatorial District also delivered six of the seven Local Government Areas in the District to the All Progressives Congress, despite the fact that three parties fielded candidates from the zone. Your turnout and massive support for the All Progressives Congress showed your faith in a united and prosperous state where leaders are elected based on competence rather than ethnic bigotry. Your voices are clear and loud", he stated.

He therefore thanked Mr President for creating a level playing ground for all the candidates as he also thanked the leadership of the party and other APC Governors and leaders for rallying behind them to retain one of the most important states in Nigeria in the progressive fold.

"The Governor-Elect, Alhaji. Ahmed Usman Ododo will not disappoint you all. Governor Yahaya Bello has made it easy for the All Progressives Congress to continue to win elections in Kogi with his heroics in all the sectors of the economy," he said.

# Nigeria is sliding into one party system -PDP

From JIDAUNA YANUNG,  
Abuja

**T**HE People's Democratic Party (PDP) has again said Nigeria is sliding into one party dictatorship with the emasculation of institution of democracy by the APC led federal government.

PDP in a statement in Abuja by its National Publicity Secretary, Debo Ologunagba, said this is evident in the manipulation of elections and conflicting judgments by electoral courts.

According to the main opposition party, some election Appeal Court panels' judgements were in conflict with the express provisions of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act 2022 as well as guidelines and regulations of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for elections.

"What is more worrisome is that these obnoxiously contradictory judgments are targeted at the PDP to the effect that



Ologunagba

elections that were clearly won by PDP candidates are snatched away at the courts and awarded to defeated candidates of the APC, contrary to the provisions of the law". PDP further stated that apart from Plateau State, the conduct and outcome of certain elections petitions in Zamfara, Sokoto, Kebbi, Nasarawa and other states where PDP was robbed of victory through the courts, are pointer to a systemic emasculation of

the opposition in a bid to impose a one party state and pave way for totalitarianism in the country.

The party demanded that democracy should be allowed to thrive as the government of the people as expressed by their will at elections.

PDP then called on President Bola Tinubu as the custodian of government to speak out and denounce any attempt or action that is capable of stifling democracy.

**T**HE Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon Tajudeen Abbas has disclosed that the 10th Assembly would ensure the domestication of critical international treaties, protocols and agreement signed by Nigeria towards addressing the humanitarian crisis in the country.

He promised to reach out to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation and the Ministry of Justice to ensure domestication of international conventions that would aid humanitarian activities in Nigeria.

Hon. Abbas stated this when he received in his office, a delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Nigeria led by Yann Bonzon.

## 10th Assembly will ensure domestication of humanitarian treaties

From JIDAUNA YANUNG,  
Abuja

The lawmaker commended the International Committee on Red Cross for its interventions in the humanitarian crisis across Nigeria. He also thanked the ICRC for its contributions on humanity and interventions in Nigeria, especially in the North East and North West.

Meanwhile, the Senate has set a machinery in motion for the establishment of Federal Data Bank by passing for the first reading a bill to that effect sponsored by Senator Jimoh Ibrahim (APC) Ondo



Tajudeen South.

## Fintiri to bag Best Governor of the year

**G**OVERNOR Ahmadu Umaru Fintiri of Adamawa State has broken all feats based on the online nomination and voting by the public to emerge the Best Governor of the Year, 2023 Award as monitored and confirmed by the Nigeria Service Award Panel of Jury held from September 14-24, 2023.

The award which would be presented by the COA Media Group, the organizers of the Nigeria Service Awards, November 30, 2023 at the National Press Centre, Radio House, Abuja is set to have Rt. Hon. Fintiri as the outstanding recipient who



Fintiri

has impacted positively in the lives of Nigerians.

Findings revealed that the prestigious Nigeria Service Awards; third in a row, is held annually and it recognizes, honours and promotes outstanding individuals and institutions across both public and private sectors who score excellently with outstanding performances in the political, social and economic spheres of the country.

However, Rt. Hon Ahmadu Fintiri, who has been voted as Governor of the Year Recipient by Nigerians both at home and diaspora, is a Nigerian politician who has served as Governor of Adamawa State since 2019 and still serving, having been re-elected to serve for the second term.

Before his emergence as Governor of Adamawa State in 2019, he was Honorable member of the Adamawa State House of Assembly representing Magadali Constituency from 2007 to 2011 and was re-elected, where he later emerged as the Speaker of the House and endeavoured to have largely impacted the state positively in the year under review.

Among some of the great impacts he has made in Adamawa State since he

assumed power in 2019 as governor, included: interventions in payment of WAEC/NECO fees to the entire public school candidates in the state; revamping of the security facilities of the state by purchasing and distributing security Hilux Vans, drones and motorcycles, as well as great improvements in the area of health, infrastructure, agriculture, water supply, electrification and the economy, just to mention a few.

Born on October 27, 1967 in Gulak of Madagali Local Government Area, Adamawa State, Fintiri, grew up with the consciousness of western education and religious knowledge primacy, both of which he struggled to acquire at an early age, where he had his early primary school in Central Primary School Gulak from 1975-1981.

In pursuit of further education, he then enrolled into Government Day Secondary School, Gulak and Government Secondary School Michika from 1981-1986 and later obtained his first degree in History from the University of Maiduguri in 1992 and subsequently, a Post Graduate Diploma in Policy and Strategic Studies from the same university in 2004 respectively.

No wonder, most of his teachers, mentors and contemporaries rated him as an outstanding student athlete throughout his early years and that truly proved itself as he held several leadership positions in the House of Assembly before being elected as Speaker, which was a position he held up until 2015.

Fintiri, also served as Acting Governor twice in Adamawa State, though all so brief but were greatly memorable. He became the Acting Governor of Adamawa State following the impeachment of Governor Murtala Nyako in July 2014, until October 1, 2014.

Fintiri is married to Lami Ahmadu Fintiri and they have three children.

## NAWOJ Delegates Conference 2023: Contestants visit Plateau

By PALANG KASMI

**A**head of National Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ) delegates conference 2023, two contestants vying for positions in the elections have visited Plateau State to campaign.

The 2022 delegates conference is billed to take place in Nigeria's capital, Abuja next week on November 25, 2023.

The two contestants, Mrs. Irene Iveren Onehi, and Mrs Chizoba Ogbeche, who came to the state are vying for the post of Vice President (VP) Zone D, which comprises 6 states from the North Central Zone (Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger and Plateau) and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

The first to visit was Irene Oheni who came with her team on Thursday November 16, 2023 to seek support of the delegates from Plateau.

She promised to embark on trainings and skills acquisition programmes for the female journalists to uplift their lives professionally.

She stressed that her project for the women is to

ensure that aside practicing journalism, the female journalists also acquire various skills to help them survive economically in the society, so that they have a business to rely on.

Describing the state as her home, she recalled with nostalgia how she started and advanced her career in Plateau as a green horn, and how she has climbed the ladder to grow in the Journalism profession.

Chizoba Ogbeche also vying for the same post came to NUJ Press Center with her campaign team on Friday, November 17, 2023 where she urged Plateau delegates to vote for her.

She cited experience, competence and commitment to turn around the lives of the female journalists through mentoring, capacity building and networking as topmost on her manifesto.

Ogbeche also promised to use her bulk of experience in unionism to create synergy and professionalism among female journalists across the zone.

She however used the

forum to praise the state for setting the pace in the Zone by producing key officials that have represented NAWOJ and NUJ at the National level, including having females presently leading the Plateau state Council of the NUJ as Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

In her remarks during the visits, Plateau State Chairperson of NAWOJ, Mrs. Nene Dung wished the contestants success in the upcoming elections.

She praised them for coming to Plateau and putting on the front burner an agenda that involves training of women journalists from the zone, in order to make them up to date with digital and professional skills.

The Chairperson wished them success in the elections and tasked any one of them that emerges to keep to their promise and carry everyone along.

"It is the progress of NAWOJ we are after, we want the association to grow to enviable heights", said the NAWOJ Chairperson.

Also speaking, Chairman of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Plateau

# SUNDAY PEOPLE

## GOVERNOR MUTFWANG LAYS 2024 BUDGET

Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, recently presented the 2024 appropriation budget at the PLHA Chambers



Governor Mutfwang reading the 2024 proposed budget, the Clerk and Speaker taking notes



Hon. Timothy Dantong (left) with Hon. Bala Fwangje arriving the chambers



Cross section of former Speakers, PLHA and the PDP State Chairman, Hon. Chris Hassan (middle)



Cross section of members of the State Assembly



DOPPA, Gyang Bere, Nathan Bwai and Victor Abdulrahman



Former Speaker PLHA Rt. Hon. Istifanus Mwansat with the Commissioner of Information, Hon. Musa Ibrahim Ashoms



Hon. Sani Shillak and Hon. Gabriel K. Dewan at the premises of the state Assembly



Plateau State Deputy Governor, Hon. Josephine Piyo, the Grand Khadi, Justice Umar Ibrahim Abdullahi and President, CCA Justice Lyop Blessing Dalyop

Photos: DANLADI DUJIK



**T**HE Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA) has relocated its plenary sessions to the Old Government House, Rayfield. This according to the Speaker Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule, is to allow it carry out renovation work at the assembly complex. Another reason for the relocation is to avoid all forms of distractions and disruptions, due to the ongoing strike by the Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN).

During the first plenary held at the temporary venue, a notice of motion was moved by Hon. Danjuma Azi who is the member representing Jos North West constituency, calling on the Jos Electricity Distribution Company (JED) to as a matter of necessity resolve all issues leading to power surge and explosion of transformers.

You would recall that a couple of weeks ago, Kabong community around Gada Biu area of Jos North West witnessed a power surge and explosion which led to the loss of many lives. The explosion which happened at the early hours of the morning, caught the residents unaware as nothing could be done to stop the inferno.

The lawmaker who is also the House Committee Chairman on Appropriation is also not resting on his oars towards ensuring that members of his constituency enjoyed uninterrupted power supply. For the past seven months, residents of Angwan Lagos, Tudun Wada have been thrown into total darkness following the theft of a part of the transformer.

In an effort to see that the problem is addressed and power supply restored to the area, Azi has been on the forefront as he has even visited the Chief Operations Officer of JED Jos, Engr. Mammanlafia Umar. In connection to the visit, the lingering issue of fixing the 500KVA transformer behind Tudun Wada Police post was also resolved, with the promise that work will commence on it immediately.

Also at plenary, the bill for a law to provide for the creation and administration of the Plateau electricity market, establish a commercial and technical regulatory framework for the Plateau electricity market; to ensure reliable and universal access to electricity for all residents of Plateau State, to establish the Plateau State Electrification Agency and

the Plateau State Electrification Fund for the delivery of reliable electricity supply to the unserved and underserved areas of the state; and for connected purposes scaled through second reading.

The bill is being sponsored by Hon. Ishaku Maren who is also the House Majority Leader and member representing Bokkos constituency. Scaling through second reading is 'A Bill for a Law to Repeal and Re-enact the Plateau State

## On PLHA's plenary proceedings and activities

Energy Corporation Law, 2019 still under Hon. Maren.

Last but not the least for second reading was 'A Bill for a Law to Establish the Plateau State House of Assembly Service Commission and for Related Matters, 2023. The bill is sponsored by Hon. Ishaku Maren, representing Bokkos constituency, Rt. Hon. Gwottson Fom Dalyop, Jos South constituency, Hon. Bala J. Fwangje Mangu South constituency, Hon. Adamu Aliyu Jos North North constituency, Hon. Joseph Bukar Shendam constituency, Hon. Gabriel Dewan Kudengbena Pankshin North constituency and Hon. Ibrahim A. Agbalak representing Rukuba/Irigwe constituency.

Meanwhile, the Plateau State House of Assembly has approved and passed the appropriation bill of N314.8bn for the 2024 fiscal year. This followed the presentation of a proposed budget estimate of the sum of N295,434,568,464.00bn by the state Executive Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang before the floor of the House for consideration on Tuesday, 7th October.

The 2024 budget ragged 'A Budget of New Beginning' is aimed at laying a solid foundation for the peace and prosperity of the state, with emphasis on security, agriculture, human capital development, public health, and industrialization and aggressive revenue generation. The state assembly also approved the sum of N27,000,000,000.00bn only as supplementary budget for the 2023 fiscal year. This according to the state Governor Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang was in consideration of the fact that the budget already adopted, was inherited by his administration upon assumption of office in May, 2023 and not a reflection of his administration's agenda.



## SUNDAY MAGAZINE



## Is labour movement endangered?

***In recent times, the labour movement under the Nigerian Labour Congress, NLC and Trade Union Congress, TUC have been enmeshed in one controversy after another. From the struggle to cushion effects of removal of fuel subsidy as announced by the incumbent government to the face-off between TUC and Lagos State government and; most recently, assault on the President of NLC Comrade Joe Ajaero allegedly carried out by security operatives in Imo State; are these healthy signs for the labour movement in Nigeria? KENNETH DAKOP asks...***

**A**T the turn of the year 2000, the labour movement as championed by Comrade like Adams Oshiomhole and others was revered by the citizenry because of its fierce stance on government policies and programmes perceived to have had no "human face". The movement courted the sympathy of Nigerians when it became obvious that the NLC and TUC had the interest of the generality of Nigerians and not the powers that held sway during their days. Naturally, the movement became the bride of the Nigerian people as the diminutive Oshiomhole never missed an opportunity to assert himself nor the ideals of the movement as voice of the populace.

Fast forward to present day, the movement under Oshiomhole's successor, Ayuba Wabba seemed to have taken a downward slide as Wabba and his comrades "failed" to sustain the tempo and fervor by his predecessor. Even though some may be quick to argue that the two leaders may

have served under different circumstances or had different approaches to handling issues, the two scenarios in the movement under these two labour leaders were at variant. While the latter presented a scenario of a diplomat in tackling issues; the former was militant and more aggressive in his approach. Both however should be commended for their forthrightness in leading the movement during their tenures.

Under the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's government, which course is barely six months, the labour movement had cause to test its mettle against some policies and decisions of this government that are viewed as harsh. First was the removal of subsidy on Premium Motor Spirit, PMS otherwise known as petrol on May 29. The president made it categorically clear that the subsidy regime was gone with the wind. As a direct consequence of that government pronouncement, the price of petrol was pegged at

615 per liter by regulating authorities, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, NNPC. This pronouncement that resulted in consequential hike on the cost of other goods and services in the country did not sit well with a lot of Nigerians especially labour unions who argued that the biting inflation in the country was excruciating and the removal of fuel subsidy would be tantamount to further tightening the noose around the jugular of the already "multi-dimensionally poor" Nigerians.

Armed with this position, the labour unions spoilt for war between her and the Federal Government insisting that some palliative measures be deliberately put in place to cushion the effects of the new regime before any consideration. Ultimatum was issued to the government, notices of industrial actions were served, affiliate unions across the country were asked to down tools as part of efforts to get the Federal Government to agree to the terms of the Nigerian

workers, and by extension, the Nigerian people.

Expectedly, the Federal Government in its characteristics succumbed to the demands of the labour unions and workers and Nigerians were asked to go back to their duty posts with the promise that the government would meet these demands. Well, like they said: a better part of those demands are yet to be met by the Federal Government months after the suspension of the industrial impasse. Is the labour movement still monitoring the implementation of such demands?

While that was in the offing, the Lagos State government decided to be in the bad books of the union, particularly the Trade Union Congress, TUC when it proscribed the activities of the Road Transport Employers' Association of Nigeria, RTEAN from its motor parks across the state. Again, TUC mobilized its arsenal and matched out its army against Lagos State government last September.

The TUC/RTEAN planned

protest in Lagos was fixed for September 24.

However, some few days to the picketing of the Lagos State government by the union, the government quickly sought respite from the National Industrial Court sitting in the state. According to the Commissioner of Information and Strategy of Lagos State, Gbenga Omotoso, Trade Union Congresses (TUC) plan to protest the September 2022 suspension of the activities of the Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria (RTEAN), Lagos Chapter, in motor parks and garages in Lagos State due to violence and internal strife would be a breach of the law since the state had already filed an appeal against the planned action.

Omotoso said, a 35-man Ad-hoc Caretaker Committee was constituted by the State Government to manage the State's Parks and Garages under the control of RTEAN pending the resolution of the internal dispute and stop

*continues of page 31*

NEWS

# ACreSAL awards #3.7b gully erosion contract

By EZEKIEL DONTINA

PLATEAU State Agro-Climatic Resilience in Semi-Arid Landscapes (ACreSAL), has awarded contract worth over three billion, seven hundred and thirty-nine million, eight hundred and thirteen thousand, eight hundred and eighty-nine naira, and ninety kobo (#3,739,813,889.90) for the rehabilitation/reconstruction of Plateau Club-Bingham University Teaching Hospital's gully erosion site.

Signing and presenting the contract agreement to Bay Royal International Construction Company on behalf of the Plateau State Government at the ACreSAL Conference Hall in Jos, the Plateau State Project Coordinator, Mr. Garba Gowon Gonkol, thanked Governor Caleb Mutfwang, Task Team Coordinator and the World Bank for making this a reality.

He said, the work started in 2021 and the World Bank granted it on January 27, 2023. He further disclosed that after thorough assessment and scrutiny of over twenty-five (25) contractors that applied for the contract, Bay Royal International met the ACreSAL contract specification and was chosen for the contract.

Gonkol, however, urged the contracting firm not to see itself as the best among other companies that applied, but

should see it as a rare privilege to serve the people of Plateau State, because due diligences was Plateau people's expectations from them, hence the need for them to ensure that they meet the specifications.

Responding, the Executive Director of Bay Royal International, Kyauta Nathan Bawa, thanked God for seeing them through to emerge victorious out of the 25 contractors who applied and promised to deliver before the 30 months period specified for them to complete the contract.

He said, "As a company, the footprints of our work are all over Plateau State. We have worked in Riyom Local Government Area, Shendam Local Government Area and so many others. So, Plateau people should expect nothing less, but quality work".

Meanwhile, the Plateau State Commissioner for Environment, Climate Change and Mineral Development, Hon. Peter Kanang-Gwom, who doubles as Chairman, State Steering Committee (SSC) said, Plateau State has been affected by numerous climate change challenges occasioned by several mining activities and charged the contractor to ensure he follows the required contract specifications.

He, therefore, thanked the World Bank for considering Plateau State and urged the management of ACreSAL in



Mutfwang

the state to monitor the work religiously so that the expected specification should be achieved because the present administration of Governor Caleb Mutfwang, believes in quality.

Earlier, the Procurement Officer of ACreSAL, Michael D. Adiwu, highlighted the terms of contract and also disclosed that the contract sum was over #3,739,813,889.90 only and that the contract timeframe would be for a duration of 30

months which would be equivalent to two and a half years.

Also highlighting the quality and length of work to be carried out, the contract Project Site Engineer, Engr. Steve Machak, assured the benefiting community of quality job, urging them to report any shortfall or what they want while work was ongoing so that the contractor would be able to give them quality job.

# El-Rufai's demolition of markets displaced masses - NBTE boss

THE Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), Kaduna, Dr. Idris Bugaje, has decried how former Governor Nasir el-Rufai displaced ordinary traders in the markets he demolished and reconstructed.

Speaking at the graduation of Panteka Artisans under the National Skills Qualification (NSQ) Certification, Bugaje said that he had no hand in the demolition of the Panteka Market in Kaduna.

Bugaje said the NBTE presented a proposal on Panteka and El-Rufai promised that the people of Panteka would not be displaced.

He added that he did not support the former governor on many issues including the demolition of Panteka.

He alleged that the newly constructed shops, especially in Kasuwan Barchi Market, were being sold to people who have nothing to do with the market.

He said he was delighted that Uba Sani who succeeded El-Rufai as Governor, has shown interest in promoting skills acquisition and will not tow the path of his predecessor.

Buhaji said, "I am happy the new governor of Kaduna State has shown interest (in skills acquisition).

"Senator Uba Sani as governor is going to be different from the last one. I am very sure of that.

"I am not condemning el-Rufai, but Uba Sani has human feelings, he has a human heart.

"I did not support the former governor on many issues, including the demolition of Panteka.

"Before he (el-Rufai) was elected, we met at one of the functions where the Ulama were gathered.

"When he finished his speech, we greeted and he said to me, 'after my election, your issue on skills, we have to work with you

to ensure that we upskill the people of Kaduna State.'

"Alhamdulillah, he won that election and he called me over the phone and invited me to come to the Government House.

"I couldn't go because I was not feeling well. It was Engineer Ejike who went to see he and he presented to him our proposals on how to upgrade technical colleges in Kaduna State, how

to upgrade the basic apprenticeship centres so that they will be issuing NSQ certificates.

"We also presented to him a proposal on Panteka and he promised that the people of Panteka would not be displaced.

"In the last government, we saw how ordinary traders were displaced in markets, such as Kasuwan Barchi where modern buildings were erected and people who had nothing to do with the market were buying the shops. In sha Allah, this will not happen in Panteka."

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broken on a social media church platform on Wednesday morning. The short message reads:

"It is with a heavy heart but in total submission to the will of God, I write to inform you that the abductors of our brother, Pastor Musa David, killed him after collecting ransom of one million naira last night. Let our prayers be with the family, the Church, and the DCC in this trying moment."

News of the abduction of the victim broke on Saturday, 11 November, in the heat of the Kogi State governorship election. He was said to have been abducted around the Obajana area.

Pastor David was formerly in charge of ECWA Bishara, Ajaokuta. His gruesome murder has heightened panic among his congregation and the state in general.

It would be recalled that the Lokoja/ Obajana/ Kabba Road has become unsafe in recent times. Gunmen have been operating regularly on the road, abducting and sending people to their early graves.

In September, an army Major was among 26 people that were led to the bush at Aiyegunle Igun, a few kilometers to Kabba town. Some of them secured their freedom after one week in captivity. The fate of others is still unknown

In a related development, some people narrowly escaped abduction when the gunmen seized the road on Sunday.



Musa

# Events of last WEEK

## INEC declares Usman Odo as winner of Kogi election

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday night declared the All Progressives Congress (APC) candidate, Usman Ododo, as the winner of the Kogi State governorship election

### SERAP urges INEC to arrest sponsors of electoral violence in Bayelsa, Kogi, Imo States

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), on Sunday, implored Professor Mahmood Yakubu, the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) "to promptly establish a joint, credible, transparent, effective, and broad-based investigation into allegations of electoral bribery and violence in the off-cycle governorship elections in Kogi, Imo and Bayelsa states.

### INEC declares Uzodinma winner of Imo governorship contest

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on Sunday morning declared incumbent governor, Hope Uzodinma as winner of the Imo State governorship election held on Saturday

### Chaos as party agents exchange blows at Imo collation centre

There was complete chaos on Sunday morning at a Collation Centre in Owerri, Imo State, as two agents of different parties threw caution to the wind and engaged each other in an open fight.

### Bayelsa Update: INEC shifts collation of results to Monday noon

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has shifted the collation of results of the Bayelsa State governorship election to 12:00 p.m., on Monday.

### Plane crash lands at Abuja airport, runway shut

A Boeing 737 aircraft operated by Aero Contractors crash-landed at the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport, Abuja, on Sunday morning.

### 275,000bpd restored as NNPC brokers peace between TotalEnergies and PENGASSAN

A total of 275, 000 barrels of oil per day production at TotalEnergies, after the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) brokered a peace deal between the company and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association, (PENGASSAN) and the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) on Sunday.

### Two Immigration officers die in Kano auto crash

Two officers of the Nigeria Immigration Service died in an auto crash along the Kano-Zaria Expressway on Sunday.

### NAF kills suspected terrorists in Borno air raids

Troops air component of Operation Hadin Kai have killed suspected Boko Haram terrorists in air raids in Borno State.

### Chelsea snatch Man City draw with late penalty

Chelsea and Manchester City played a 4-4 draw in an amazing Premier League encounter at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

### Organised labour suspends strike after meeting with Ribadu

The organized labour on Wednesday night suspended the ongoing nationwide strike.

### Court affirms Sanwo-Olu's election, dismisses LP, PDP candidates' appeals in Lagos

The Court of Appeal, Lagos, on Wednesday, dismissed the appeal filed by the Labour Party governorship candidate, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, challenging Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's victory in the March 18 election in the state.

### Oshiomhole says NLC, TUC strike is misplaced priority

Senator Adams Oshiomhole has slammed the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), for its ongoing strike, describing it as a misplaced priority.

### Reps adjourn sitting over labour strike

The nationwide strike declared by the Nigeria Labour Council (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC), took its toll on the National Assembly as the House of Representatives was forced to adjourn its plenary on Wednesday.

### Tinubu to attend Guinea-Bissau's 50th independence anniversary Thursday

President Bola Tinubu will join other African and world leaders to grace Guinea-Bissau 50th Independence Anniversary and Armed Forces Day scheduled to hold on Thursday in Bissau, the country's capital.

### Lagos PDP to review Appeal Court verdict on Sanwo-Olu's election

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) will review the Appeal Court's ruling which affirmed Governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu's victory in the March 18 governorship election in the state

### Again, Nigeria's inflation rate goes up, now 27.33%

Nigeria's inflation rate continued its upward journey as the latest report from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) showed that it surged to 27.33 per cent in October.

### Moghalu predicts AfCFTA will lift 30m Nigerians, Africans out of poverty by 2035

Former presidential aspirant, Prof. Kingsley Moghalu, has predicted that the African Continental Free Trade Area, (AfCFTA), would lift 30 million Africans, including Nigerians, out of poverty by 2035

### Navy arrests another four stowaways aboard container ship in Lagos

The Nigerian Navy on Monday arrested four stowaways aboard a Dubai-bound container vessel, TEMA EXPRESS, in Lagos

### Two dead, 1,000 houses destroyed as fire razes IDP camp in Borno

At least two persons were confirmed dead and more than 1,000 houses were destroyed when fire razed the Muna Alamdari Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp in Maiduguri, Borno State, on Wednesday.

SUNDAY FEATURE

# Wusal Berom 2023: Seeking God face

*November 12, 2023 would remain indelible in the life of the Berom nation for a long time to come. It was a Sunday that the Berom sons and daughters from all over the country and in diaspora came out to seek the countenance of God Almighty for His many blessings upon the people. KENNETH DAKOP was there and captured some of the moments of that historic event. Read on...*

**T**HE sea of human heads spread as far as the eyes can see. It was a carnival of some sort as people gaily dressed in both native and traditional attires. With smile on their faces, they all filed out to be part of the historic event- **WUSAL BEROM.**

The WUSAL BEROM is an annual gathering of the Berom nation found predominantly in Riyom, Barkin Ladi (Gwol), Jos South, Jos North, and some parts of Bassa and Mangu Local Government Areas of Plateau State. The annual ritual has one objective: to seek the countenance of the Lord Most High for His numerous blessings on the people and, for even the challenges that they face. It is a day that an entire nation brings its heart together in unity to cry out with one voice for divine intervention and blessings upon the land and its people.

Organized under the auspices of the Berom Language and Translation Board, BLTB, the WUSAL BEROM is fast becoming an international gathering of not just the sons and daughters of the Berom nation but, other ethnic nationalities who are desirous of God's intervention in the prevailing situation in Nigeria and the world at large.

What makes this year's ceremony unique was the fact that despite the harsh economic situation the entire citizenry was going through,



**L-R: Dep. Gov., Plateau State, Hon. Josephine Piyo and Senator Simon Mwadkon at the WUSAL BEROM 2023.**



**R-L: Is the Commissioner of Transport, Jatau Davou Gyang and others worshippers at the WUSAL BEROM 2023.**



**Some of the clergy at WUSAL BEROM 2023**

they defied the indices and came out in their numbers to praise and worship God in the Christian way. The atmosphere was charged and even the harsh harmattan dust and haze was not enough to daunt a people whose desire that fateful morning was to return all glory to God for a

bountiful harvest and prospective year ahead.

Dignitaries from various walks of life were not left behind as they thronged the solemn assembly. The Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang led other top government functionaries to the venue of

the event located at the popular Mararaban Jamaá round about, a major gateway into the serene capital of Plateau State.

Represented by the Deputy Governor, Ngo Josephine Piyo, the governor used the forum to solicit for prayers of all citizens over the contradictory judgements being delivered on the outcome of the last general elections in the state by the judiciary. He charged the Berom nation in particular to pray for peace to continue to reign in the land despite the judicial pronouncements and other acts of attacks against the people.

Governor Mutfwang appreciated the Gbong Gwom Jos, His Majesty, Da Gyang Buba for leading the Berom nation well and solicited continuous prayers for the monarch and the state even as he also solicited for prayers for President Bola Tinubu for wisdom in the discharge of his responsibilities to the country at such trying economic challenges.

On his part, the Gbong Gwom who spoke through the Gwom Rwei, Riyom, Da Samuel Jok stressed the need for parents to take their responsibility more seriously in order to raise godly children that would build a stronger Berom nation and Plateau State. The monarch urged them to remain security conscious to safeguard their communities as they draw closer to God.

Earlier in a sermon, the

BLTB Chairman, Retired Reverend Davou Gyang who took his text from Colossians 3:1 encouraged the people to continually trust in God despite the current challenges they are faced with. Rev. Gyang said it was at such critical moments that believers in Christ Jesus must further strengthen their faith in God for His guidance and deliverance.

In an address of welcome, representative of the BLTB, Da Habila Dachollom expressed gratitude to God for the opportunity to worship in His presence and praised the sons and daughters of the Berom nation for their support towards the success of the programme.

In the same vein, the Chairman, Organising Committee of the 2023 edition of Wusal Berom, Reverend Dawuda Jakawa said the programme was geared towards thanking God for how far He has brought them and to also seek His face in the coming years.

In his goodwill message, the Chairman Berom Elders Council, Da Chollom Jumbol while highlighting the importance of the occasion to the continuous survival of the nation and state at large, called for a special prayer for all the Berom districts and other communities across the state for divine protection.

The occasion which drew a large crowd saw vendors making brisk business as they display wares such as traditional ornaments, cuisines and delicacies and other memorabilia.



**Cross section of worshippers at the event.**

## SUNDAY FEATURE

## Wasteful consumption-driven pattern of governance in Nigeria

OBIOTIKA WILFRED  
TOOCHUKWU

**DRUNK** with power, having quality authority, and staying in the corridors of power; the old-fashioned and handkerchief-headed leaders in Nigeria display notoriety, court worship and embrace praise-singing from loyalists, masses and political-jobbers. It has been the same from 1960 till today with little adjustments and foreboding overalls. Nigeria has witnessed the same crop of leaders from the military era to the return of democracy in 1999. The primary goal of most political leaders in Nigeria as soon as they are sworn in is to amass wealth prior to the next election by buying votes, bribing electoral officers, paying lawyers and getting the judges over to their demands. That system has championed and encouraged only waste and consumption. The little progress made by any previous leader is always sabotaged and trampled upon due to the fact that they do not offer sincere governance rather they loot and amass wealth.

Besides, the dwindling Nigerian economic fortunes were caused purely by wasteful governance. The GDP and income per capita in Nigeria keep decreasing continuously showing that there is a wasteful pattern of governance. Waste and consumption significantly impact the stability, competitiveness and growth of any economy. Do we need statistics or call names to show that governance in Nigeria is wasteful and consumption-driven either as budget padding, supplementary budget, undue contract approval, policies and decisions? Nigeria at the moment is on a spending spree and wisdom does not condemn us if we would compare Nigeria with progressive sister nations.

However, the wish of Nigerians has the intimation of something unique that would address various challenges facing the social life and national economy. The UN in her Sustainable Development Goals addressed responsible consumption and production patterns to achieve sustainable development. Political leaders do not only operate a consuming economy but equally waste the scarce resources that will make the land liveable and prosperous. The oil boom that would have led to massive infrastructural development inspired and instigated looting, nepotism and favouritism. In the past,



Tinubu

there were strides in Agriculture like the Green Revolution, Go Back To Land etc. which the pattern of governance could not sustain.

Recently, what could have happened to the 84 million hectares of arable land in Nigeria? Why have terrorists and bandits taken over the expanse of land for farming in the North? What has become the fate of the basket food of the nation? Why is there hunger and food insecurity in Nigeria? Why do many manufacturing industries, and factories fold up and close operations? The facetious remarks and comments on poverty, economy and politics reveal the nature of leaders and their mission while in office. Nigerians do not have leaders but they have a set of people that gather, agree and share the commonwealth of all. This is not just consumption; it is waste. Having a bloated cabinet, floating the naira, practising fiscal activism, and running a deficit budget while there is an increase in the price of fuel, gas, electricity, education, internet services etc. is not just a waste but a high level of leadership abuse and indiscipline.

Seriously, visionary leadership or governance will take the citizenry out of poverty and hardship. The vision of governance in Nigeria is to selfishly grow rich from the public fund and continuously live a life of luxury through the public fund by making sure that the transitory nature of power does not affect or influence their lifestyle. Our political leaders feel ensconced and increase entropy in the system which rarely affects them. This wasteful lifestyle and body language produces decay and disorder making the government less functional in



Akpabio

addressing the needs of the masses. There can never be success without suffering and there cannot be hard work without discipline. The wealth of the nation is being lavished and spent like evil money, or blood money and not according to the tenets of public finance and management. The central bank, which is the banker's bank, has put pressure and stress on the commercial banks due to high inflation, depleting the foreign reserve, and making the masses lose hard-earned money from multiple charges. Economic fluctuations, inflation, interest rate changes, and the global economic environment affected the performance of commercial banks.

Furthermore, wasteful is using or expending something of value carelessly or for no purpose. Political leaders in Nigeria do not just waste money but the time and energy of the populace. They are not going anywhere and they do

not intend to take the citizens to any desired horizon. Wasteful spending on unnecessary projects or excessive bureaucracy can strain government budgets, leading to higher taxes or government debts. Presently, the executive flaunts dollars on targeted dignitaries, and officers in a bid to achieve a purpose or score cheap points thereby devaluing the naira. Wasteful governance creates opportunities for corruption. When people perceive their government as wasteful, it erodes trust in public institutions and can lead to disillusionment among citizens. Wasteful policies can harm the environment, as they may not prioritize sustainability or conservation efforts. The effects of wasteful governance can be felt for years, as it may hinder economic growth and social development.

In addition, a focus on consumption without

sustainable practices can deplete finite resources, leading to shortages and increased competition for essential commodities. Consumption-driven governance can benefit the wealthier segments of society more than the less privileged, exacerbating income inequality. Policies geared toward consumption can prioritize immediate gains over long-term stability, inhibiting sustainable development and planning. Ministries, Departments and Agencies have budgetary allocations that are never supervised nor monitored making governance ineffective. If borrowing should be a crime, then, borrowing for luxury, consumption and pleasure should be first-degree murder in criminal justice.

Finally, Nigeria can never get better unless there is a New Nigeria. What is old, outdated, counterproductive and inefficient must be done away with to make room for development and growth. The economy of any nation or wealth of nations does not translate to an ocean of wealth which remains unchanged despite variables and miscalculations. Nigerians want to take back their country but the forces of waste and debauchery have held the country bound. The efforts to reduce wasteful governance include transparency, accountability measures, and responsible budgeting to mitigate these negative outcomes. Efficient resource management involves adopting sustainable development goals, regulations that encourage responsible consumption and production, and policies that prioritize social and environmental well-being alongside economic growth.

**“Seriously, visionary leadership or governance will take the citizenry out of poverty and hardship. The vision of governance in Nigeria is to selfishly grow rich from the public fund and continuously live a life of luxury through the public fund by making sure that the transitory nature of power does not affect or influence their lifestyle. Our political leaders feel ensconced and increase entropy in the system which rarely affects them. This wasteful lifestyle and body language produces decay and disorder making the government less functional in addressing the needs of the masses. There can never be success without suffering and there cannot be hard work without discipline. The wealth of the nation is being lavished and spent like evil money, or blood money and not according to the tenets of public finance and management. The central bank, which is the banker's bank, has put pressure and stress on the commercial banks due to high inflation, depleting the foreign reserve, and making the masses lose hard-earned money from multiple charges. Economic fluctuations, inflation, interest rate changes, and the global economic environment affected the performance of commercial banks.”**

**A**S a representative of the people, how often will you make time to communicate with your people? How much of an effective listener and doer will be determined by your communication skills as a leader.

Leadership is the oil that lubricates the wheel of leadership. It is the cord between the led and the leader. As such, any political or organizational leader who wishes to be successful would do well to understand the fine art of communication. The art of speaking or oratory, the art of listening. These are important in encoding and decoding the messages between the leader and the led. No wonder communication is taught in school as a course. No wonder it is a profession. The leader who can encode his message in a language that will be easy for his followers to understand is a wise leader. He is even wiser if he can cultivate the art of decoding and understanding what his followers are trying to communicate. It is in doing this that the leader can understand the needs of the led and provide solutions to his communal or constituency problems. The following excerpt from the Centre for Creative Leadership from an article titled "15 Tips for Effective Communication in Leadership", explains the good relationship between leadership and communication, the benefits and tips on how to communicate.

Good communication is a core leadership function and a key characteristic of a good leader. Effective communication and effective leadership are closely intertwined. As a leader, you need to be a skilled communicator in countless relationships at the organizational level, in communities and groups, and sometimes on a global scale in order to achieve results through others. Leaders must be able to think with clarity, express ideas, and share information with a multitude of audiences. They must also handle the rapid flows of information within the organization and among customers, partners, vendors, and other stakeholders and influencers.

**Why Is Communication Important in Leadership?**

Communication is more complicated than the simple mechanics of sending and receiving information — when leaders harness the ability to communicate well, they translate important data quickly and accurately. Communication is one of the most important skills a leader can have. It takes purpose and intention to implement effective communication. You must know how and when to communicate and select the appropriate mode for your audience. Whether writing, conversing, presenting, or facilitating, leaders must excel at communication in all of these modes. It's the only way to meet people's individual needs and enable important human connections.

**Important Facts About Communication for Leaders**

1. Authenticity counts — a lot.

Be honest and sincere. Find your own voice; avoid using corporate-speak or sounding like someone you're not. Let who you are, where you come from, and what you value come through in your communication. People want, respect, and will follow authentic

leadership. Forget about eloquence — worry about being real. Don't disguise who you are. People will never willingly follow someone they feel is inauthentic.

2. Visibility is a form of communication.

If you want to communicate well, be accessible. Emails and official missives aren't enough. Be present, visible, and available. Getting "out there" — consistently and predictably — lets others know what kind of leader you are. People need to see and feel who you are to feel connected to the work you want them to do. Find ways to

4. Illustrate through stories: When you tell a good story, you give life to a vision, goal, or objective. Telling good stories creates trust, captures hearts and minds, and serves as a reminder of the vision. Plus, people find it easier to repeat a story or refer to an image or quote than to talk about a mission statement, strategy document, or project plan. This is key when communicating the vision. Your ability to create and communicate a compelling, authentic, and bold story will also help you bolster your leadership brand.

## Leadership: When communication counts



interact with all of your stakeholder groups, even (and especially!) if communicating in a crisis.

3. Listening is a powerful skill.

Good communicators are also good listeners. When you listen well, you gain a clear understanding of another's perspective and knowledge. Listening fosters trust, respect, openness, and alignment. Active listening is a key part of coaching others. Allow people to air their concerns. Ask powerful questions that open the door to what people really think and feel. Pay close, respectful attention to what is said — and what's left unsaid

15 Critical Tips for Leaders to Communicate More Effectively

Our Top Communication Tips for Leaders

1. Communicate relentlessly: Communicate information, thoughts, and ideas clearly — and frequently — in different media. Keep processes open and transparent and find ways to help smooth the path of communication for your team, employees, or organization. Shed all traces of detachment and arrogance and take the time to talk to your people.

2. Set clear expectations: In every relationship, our behavior is guided by a set of rules or social norms — and in a professional setting, these norms tend to go unspoken. Be intentional about establishing clear expectations and team norms at your organization, whether you're sending an email to your entire team, leading a group discussion, or having a one-on-one conversation with a direct report.

3. Simplify and be direct: Say what you mean. Be direct. Don't hide behind complexity or pile on a ton of information. Direct communication can be the most important type of communication. This is even more important when communicating in a virtual setting.

5. Be prepared: Poor communication in the past might mean your audience resists what you have to say today. Do your homework. Start familiarizing yourself with the context around an issue, and any alternative viewpoints and perspectives about it, before you initiate communication. If you're met with resistance or presented with a different position, you'll feel more prepared to address and overcome objections and communicate more effectively.

6. Know your audience: Different stakeholders may have different concerns. The tactics you use to influence one group might not be the best approach for the next. Tailor your influencing strategy for the particular person and consider their personality, goals, and objectives, as well as their roles and responsibilities. For example, someone who is highly rational may be more easily swayed by a logical appeal than an emotional one.

7. Reinforce intent with body language: showing positive body language like eye contact, nodding, and other relaxed gestures can inspire team members and make them feel more comfortable communicating with you. A simple head nod or smile can go a long way to show you're paying attention and that you care, and little gestures like this can add up, slowly helping you to build rapport and collaboration and transform your organizational culture, too.

8. Read the room: watch your audience closely for nonverbal signs of engagement or disengagement, confusion or understanding, etc. and adjust your message and style accordingly. You can do this literally during in-person meetings, and you can even "read the room" in virtual settings by looking closely at others' faces on



editorial icon by alow taleeb

offer ideas and solutions before you give yours. Do 80% of the listening and 20% of the talking. Demonstrate an interest in, and respect for, your colleagues — this builds trust and makes the emotional connection that's so important for effective leadership.

11. Take feedback seriously: Asking for honest feedback from your team or employees can foster a positive stream of communication, and it helps build trust overall. This tactic can also make your team feel more respected, giving them a chance to have their voices heard. If you take their feedback seriously, you will grow as a leader and enhance your skillset. However, if you ask for and then don't incorporate their feedback, the opposite is true — it could lead to a loss of trust and alignment. Following through with action steps will reinforce the message and show that you truly heard and understood the other person's concerns.

12. Affirm with actions.

While effective leaders master the art and craft of language, speak clearly, and present logical and compelling arguments, skilled leaders also know that communication goes beyond words. If people hear one thing from you but see another, your credibility is shot. People need to trust you. Your behavior and actions communicate a world of information — so focus on alignment and be clear on the messages you send even when you aren't saying anything.

13. Initiate the tough, but needed, conversations: difficult conversations, whether with a client or direct report, are an inevitable part of any workplace. It's tempting to ignore conflicts, but effective leaders must be able to address concerns as they arise. Be sure to approach any difficult conversation from a neutral perspective and explore both sides before coming to a conclusion. Work to problem-solve by inventing options that meet each side's important concerns, and do your best to resolve conflicts through open communication.

14. Involve others before developing a plan of action: The work doesn't stop when the communication ends. Take whatever you've learned in the exchange, synthesize it, and present your plan to the appropriate stakeholders. Generating buy-in and making sure that everyone is on the same page before executing on strategy will be key to achieving organizational goals.

15. Remember your reputation: Never compromise your reputation for the sake of communication. At times, you may walk a fine line.

the screen and by soliciting feedback.

If people are understanding your communication and aligned with your message, you may get lots of eye contact, see nodding heads, observe audience members leaning forward or demonstrating other body language that suggests alignment with your message. If you see listeners leaning back, with arms crossed, and bored or confused expressions on their faces, then you may need to adjust your message or delivery style.

It's helpful to pause occasionally to let people ask questions and check for understanding, giving your listeners a chance to respond or seek clarification, etc. Stay flexible so you can continually notice how your communications are landing with your audience, and adjust based on the signals they send.

9. Ask good questions: If good leaders listen more than they speak, the right conversation prompts are crucial. The best leadership questions get right to the heart of things, cut through complicated situations, and identify levers that will really make a difference. Asking non-directive inquiries can also unlock insights — which is why asking powerful questions is key to coaching your people.

10. Listen and encourage input: Seek out, and then listen to, individuals from all levels of the organization — from the key stakeholders who have a lot of opinions you need to consider, to the new employees who may be reluctant to voice concerns. Let team members know they are valuable, show empathy toward them, and create psychological safety so people feel comfortable speaking up. It will show those you lead that you care about both them and the organization.

Also, be okay with silence. Encourage the other person to

**T**here is a sound of the abundance of rain

I consider it always a privilege for me to share God's Word with His precious people. We have been sharing on the topic, 'I Shall Not Want'. I will be continuing from where we stopped last week, and to flow well, I will pick up from the last part we left off discussing...

I told you that God's strength is linked to His understanding, and so is your strength in life-linked to your understanding, especially of how you see things. If you allow the doubt of fear and confusion to get into your mind, and you stop thinking like God, or like people who are part of the Kingdom of God, and you stop factoring in the anointing and the blessing in your life, and the supernatural, what you start doing is that you step out of your course in life and you start running in the strength of men. And I am telling you the truth, when you begin to compromise on one thing, your entire value systems will crash. That is because what keeps us on course in life is our understanding. That is why we must run to the light.

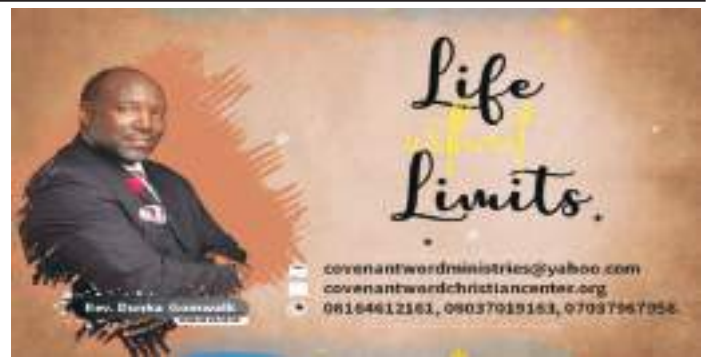
Let me relate this to a personal story. I started out quite young in ministry, and unfortunately, I didn't have the kind of mentorship that would guide me in making some crucial decisions. I made decisions that I probably wouldn't make if someone was there to guide me. Mentorship is important, and I advise you to have one good mentor who you listen to.

So, I came out of a season of several years which cost me my university education, cost me so many other things. And I remember, I came back home at a certain season, and I looked it felt like so many years of my life had just been wasted. And I was sitting there, weeping before the Lord and saying, "My goodness, I did this out of sincerity of heart... how on earth did I do this? I did this to my family? I mean, I brought so much hurt to my family! How on Earth did all this happen".

Then God spoke to me about two things. The first thing He spoke to me, in that place where I was at the bottom of the bottom, God said to me, "My purpose and my plan will still be fulfilled in your life. And the day will come, when you will be the mighty tree that your family will hide under". The second thing He told me was that, "For the man that is following my plan for their life, time is not an enemy; time is a friend. Time is not an

adversary; time is an ally". Well, I did not understand, so I was trying to make sense of the words while in tears. Not long afterwards, I caught the revelation, understanding came. Oh, thank God for the Holy Ghost! And I saw it in a flash. And God told me, "I am the one that redeems time; I am the one that redeems

draught upon Samaria, then God had also used him to prophesy the rain coming back. After he prayed seven times, and saw, a cloud like the handle of man, he looked at the King, Ahab. And he said, King, get on your chariot. Go back to the state capital, I mean, run quickly because I hear **a sound of**



# I shall not want (7)



time, and restores lost years; I can make something happen in your life in a few weeks, that people who have spent 20 years overtaking, will match. Just a few weeks will cancel out 20 years of errors". He said, "Follow me, and follow my divine plan for your life."

I tell you, that was just a few years ago. I've not even scratched the surface. But a lot of what He has told me is already becoming true, I have not even scratched the surface. So I understand just a little bit about the restoration process of the Anointing.

Now I am not saying that you should be careless with your life. I am not saying you shouldn't work hard in school or your career or anything. But I am trying to tell you that the first thing you need in your life is the anointing.

As if to make it easier for me to believe Him, God showed me, again, the story of Elijah and He made it real in my heart. How I remember the story of Elijah, we know it very well- how that after Elijah had been used to prophesy

**the abundance of rain** (1 Kings 18:41). And the king got on his chariot- and you know that the king's chariot would have obviously been the fastest vehicle around, you know that the best vehicles are usually left for the people in charge. Isn't that right? You see it everywhere in the world.

David's men told him one time, "David, you will no longer go to battle again, because you are the light of Israel. So you can't go to battle. We will hide you so you can't go to battle" even though he wanted to. God uses leaders, for oversight and for direction. What I am trying to say is that there is no way in the natural that what happened could have happened. The Bible said, "...**the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah, and he tucked his mantle into his belt...**" (1 Kings 18:46, ISV) all symbolic of pursuing God's plan.

Listen, following God in these last days must be your option one, option two, option

three, option four, and your option to infinity. We belong to a kingdom. And that kingdom has restorative ability in it. Forget that we are seeing each other flesh and blood. We are spirit beings; we are born again. We are in a literal, spiritual kingdom. And this kingdom has no regard for the natural realm. You walk with God, walk on your path, follow your heart, commit yourself to God. Don't be tempted to leave your course in life because all your heart desires will be met on your course. The restorative process is in the anointing.

Many times, I meet with people, friends, who are supposed to be my mates, when I stand next to them, it is as if nothing has been lost. And I have not even started yet. I say this with all sense of humility- God is my witness. Indeed, God has redeemed the time for me!

What am I trying to say? There are restorative powers in the anointing. And dear friends, no matter where you are today, just take it easy. You face your walk with God.

That is the source of the anointing. You talk about money, you talk about health, you talk about family restoration and any other thing in life, the key is that anointing. And for you that anointing is connected to your walk with God. So when they say **The Lord is my shepherd**, always remember that the pronoun **'MY'** is a personal thing.

I am charging us, under God today, to come into a more personal contact with God and with this anointing. When I'm confessing Psalm 23 for myself, when I speak it over my life and my family and this church, I say the Lord is MY Shepard, therefore, **'WE'** do not want. I put it in present tense- we do not want. Why? Because there are two operators there- the first operator is the word **LORD**, and the second operator is **Shepherd**. So you can say it this way, He is the 'Lord Shepherd' or He is the 'Shepherd Lord'. In other words, He is a Shepherd. But what gives you access to His shepherding ministry is, His Lordship.

INTERNATIONAL

Israel 'not successful' in minimising Gaza civilian casualties: Netanyahu

THE Israeli military is doing all it can to get civilians out of harm's way amid its war in Gaza, but its attempts to minimise casualties are "not successful," said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Israeli leader's comments came after he was asked by US television channel CBS News on Thursday whether the killing of thousands of Palestinians in retaliation for the October 7 attack by Hamas would fuel hatred in a new generation.

"Any civilian death is a tragedy. And we shouldn't have any because we're doing everything we can to get the civilians out of harm's way, while Hamas is doing everything to keep them in harm's way," Netanyahu said.

"So, we send leaflets, [we] call them on their cell phones, and we say: 'leave'. And many have left," Netanyahu said.

The same day, Israel's air force dropped leaflets in parts of south Gaza telling people to evacuate for their own safety.

It was not clear where they were supposed to evacuate to as Israel continues to wage war across the besieged territory.

Weeks earlier, Israel also used leaflet drops in northern Gaza to warn civilians to move to the south.

Hundreds of thousands have done so, in a mass displacement that many Palestinians fear could become permanent.

What is Israel's endgame in Gaza?

Israel has said the goal of its military campaign is to destroy Hamas.

"The other thing that I can say is that we'll try to finish that job with minimal civilian casualties. That's what we're trying to do: minimal civilian casualties. But unfortunately, we're not successful," the Israeli prime minister said.

Netanyahu then said he wanted to draw a parallel with something related to Germany, but he was interrupted by the CBS interviewer, who asked him a question about Gaza's post-war security.

Palestinian civilians have borne the brunt of Israel's weeks-long military campaign, which has come in response to the attack by Hamas that Israel says killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians.

Hamas also took about 240 people of different nationalities as captives, according to Israel.

On Friday, the Israeli military said it had retrieved the body of one of the captives, a female soldier, from a building near Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital which has become the main focus of the Israeli assault this week.



Netanyahu

The soldier's death was confirmed on Tuesday after Hamas issued a video of her alive, followed by images of what the group said was her body after she was killed in an Israeli air strike.

Critics reject Israeli claim Al Shifa hospital used as Hamas command centre

The Israeli military claimed to have found a tunnel shaft used by Hamas at al-Shifa Hospital. A video, which could not immediately be verified, showed a deep hole in the ground, surrounded by rubble, wood, and sand.

It appeared the area had been excavated; a bulldozer appeared in the background.

The army said its troops also found a vehicle in the hospital containing a large number of weapons.

Hamas said in a statement on Thursday evening that claims by the Pentagon and US State Department that the group uses al-Shifa for military purposes "is a repetition of a blatantly false narrative, demonstrated by the weak and ridiculous performances of the occupation army spokesman".

The United States is confident in an assessment from its own intelligence agencies on Hamas activities in al-Shifa Hospital and will neither share nor elaborate on it, White House spokesperson John Kirby said on Thursday.

Human Rights Watch said hospitals have special protections under international humanitarian law.

"Hospitals only lose those protections if it can be shown that harmful acts have been carried out from the premises," the watchdog's UN Director Louis Charbonneau said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, on his first visit to Israel since the October 7 Hamas attack, called on Israel to do more to protect civilians in Gaza.

"I understand your rage but let me ask you not to be consumed by rage," Borrell said.

Gaza health authorities deemed reliable by the United Nations say at least 11,500 people have been confirmed killed in an Israeli bombardment and ground invasion - more than 4,700 of them children.

Two-thirds of the Gaza Strip's population of 2.3 million has been made homeless by the war.

MALAWI's President Lazarus Chakwera has suspended all foreign trips by government officials, including himself.

The move, announced in a nationally televised address on Wednesday night, was part of what he called tough measures to heal the Southern African nation's economy.

He also directed all ministers who are currently outside the country to return home and said the suspension will be in place until March next year.

"Any travel deemed absolutely necessary by anyone during that period must be submitted to my office for my personal authorisation," Chakwera said.

The president unveiled a range of austerity measures, including cutting by 50 percent fuel entitlements for cabinet ministers and senior government officials.

Chakwera has faced criticism over his frequent foreign travel, local media reported. He said he would lead by example by curtailing his travel plans, including cancelling his

Malawi's president suspends foreign travel

attendance at the COP28 climate change conference in Dubai later this month.

As part of the measures, he also directed the minister of finance to include provisions for a reasonable wage increase for all civil servants in the midyear budget review.

And he ordered a lowering of income tax on individuals, so that workers whose incomes have lost

value are helped with a "lower tax burden".

Malawi is battling an economic crisis that has led to fuel shortages, inflated food prices, and a shortage of foreign exchange. Last week, the country's central bank announced that it was devaluing the local currency against the United States dollar by nearly 30 percent.



Chakwera

US' Blinken urges Israel to stop settler violence

UNITED STATES Secretary of State Antony Blinken has asked Israel to take "urgent" steps to stop violence being carried out by Israeli settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank.

The top US diplomat made the call in a telephone call with Benny Gantz, a centrist opposition leader who joined Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's wartime cabinet after Hamas's October 7 attacks on Israel.

Blinken "stressed the urgent need for affirmative steps to de-escalate tensions in the West Bank, including by confronting rising levels of settler extremist violence," the State Department said in a statement on Thursday.

Blinken also discussed efforts to "augment and accelerate" the delivery of humanitarian assistance into Gaza, secure the release of captives held by Hamas, and prevent the war from widening into a broader conflict, the State Department said.

Israeli settler violence has increased significantly since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, rising from an average of three incidents to seven per day, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

(OHCA).

Blinken's comments came as Israeli forces carried out fresh raids in the occupied West Bank and continued military operations in and around several of Gaza's major hospitals, forcing them to suspend operations.

Palestinian news agency Wafa reported on Thursday that Israeli forces stormed the northern city of Jenin, deploying snipers and more than 80 military vehicles and bulldozers in the vicinity of its refugee camp.

In a post on Telegram, the Qassam Brigades, Hamas's military wing, said it was fighting "alongside all the other

resistance groups in the camp" and targeting the Israeli army "with heavy fire and explosive devices".

Several villages surrounding Jenin, including Jalboun, Beit Qad, Faqqua, and Deir Abu Da'if, were also raided, according to Wafa.

In Gaza, Al Jazeera's Tareq Abu Azzoum said Israel's military had resumed attacks on the Jabalia refugee camp in the north of the enclave, hitting multiple residential houses.

"It's important to mention that Jabalia refugee camp has seen multiple attacks by Israeli occupation forces and hundreds of civilians have

been killed in this camp, which is considered to be the most densely populated inside the Gaza Strip," Abu Azzoum said.

Residents in Jabalia have sought refuge at a United Nations shelter that is close to the Indonesian Hospital, where services have ground to a halt amid Israeli attacks, and staff and patients are running extremely low on food and water.

Israeli forces also continued to occupy the al-Shifa Hospital, the enclave's biggest medical facility, where Israeli officials have claimed to have located weapons and other evidence proving the existence of a Hamas command centre. Hamas and doctors at the hospital have denied Israeli claims that the complex has been used to stage military operations.

"Patients are receiving medical treatment on the ground inside hospitals, and they don't have enough food and water to survive. As well as the severe wounds they have, they also face hunger," Abu Azzoum said.

"No humanitarian aid has been delivered to hospitals in the north of the Gaza Strip, including at al-Shifa Hospital, which is occupied by Israeli soldiers," he said.



Blinken



## INTERNATIONAL

# African refugees relieved by UK court decision

*Somali and Sudanese refugees say they are elated by the British court's decision to block the government's Rwanda asylum deal.*

MONICA MONTERO writes.

**CALAIS, France** – On Wednesday, the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom [unanimously ruled](#) that the government's plan to send more than 24,000 refugees to Rwanda in a controversial 140 million pounds (\$174m) deal is unlawful.

In blocking the deal, the apex court upheld a ruling by [lower court](#) over the last year that asylum claimants sent there were also at risk of being returned to their home countries, contrary to an international law principle known as non-refoulement.

"There are substantial grounds for believing that asylum seekers would face a real risk of ill-treatment by reason of refoulement to their country of origin if they were removed to Rwanda," part of the judgment read on Wednesday.

The ruling has dealt a blow to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's much-touted migration policy and could potentially fracture the ruling Conservative party ahead of next year's general election. But those at the centre of the controversial policy say they are relieved by the outcome.

"I am very happy to not go to Rwanda! Maybe my dreams will come true to stay in the UK to work hard, to continue my business studies which I began in Sudan, and to hopefully see my family someday soon," says Mahmoud Altigani, 26, one of those who was to be sent to Rwanda.

Until April 15, he ran a cafe and a retail business in Khartoum. Just before noon that day, he heard the deep roaring of military helicopters in the sky, followed by combat jeeps thundering through the streets.

Sudan's civil war had caught up with his family: The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) were bombarding residential areas in Altigani's hometown of el-Fasher in the country's northwest because the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had taken cover amongst civilians. His three sisters and mother scrambled under a bed, while he and his two brothers took shelter in the middle of their red mud-brick house.

During a short respite, Altigani led his family into the back of his pickup truck and sped off to stay with a friend in the south of the city. Two days later, his phone screen lit with a text message from his neighbour: "Call me. Your house has been bombed."

When the attacks ended, Altigani returned to see the damage and collect some belongings. In the partially destroyed house, he saw guns laid out everywhere and a soldier sleeping in his bed. "This is our house now," the soldier said. "You can't come in."

This time, Altigani and his family fled to a refugee reception centre in Tina, close to the border with Chad. Because he was the eldest of his siblings, his family decided he should seek asylum in the UK. In Tripoli, working briefly at a small supermarket while awaiting the Mediterranean crossing to Lampedusa, he first heard about the Rwanda asylum plan.

He was shocked but continued on his journey.

After travelling northwards through Europe, he finally arrived in the small French city of Calais, the closest point in mainland Europe to the UK, through which thousands of migrants pass before risking their lives to cross the English Channel and request asylum on the other side.

The Rwanda asylum plan is an immigration policy conceived by former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and championed by the incumbent Sunak, to send people seeking asylum to Rwanda. It was a promise made to garner votes for the 2024 election and to deter people crossing the Channel in small boats, to get to the UK – a journey thousands make yearly.

According to the deal signed in April 2022, the UK was to send undocumented migrants in chartered flights to Rwanda, a country roughly the same size as Wales, for a five-year period. The African nation would then be responsible for processing their asylum claims and either granting them refugee status or deporting them to their country of origin.

Two months after the agreement was signed, a Boeing 767 plane was on the tarmac at Boscombe Down military base in southwest England, engines whirring and ready for takeoff to Rwanda. Onboard were 37 refugees, harnessed and flanked by security guards. Minutes before it was to take off, the European Court of Human Rights issued last-minute injunctions that halted the deportation and ultimately grounded the plane.

Since then, the deal has been contested in the British court system.

While the UK claims the scheme will help curb human trafficking, activists have said the plan violates the core principle of the 1951 Geneva Convention, which states that no refugee be returned to a country where their safety and freedom cannot be ensured. The British government insists Rwanda is a safe destination for refugees, but many experts disagree.

Indeed, Rwanda currently harbours 135,000 refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi. "It is a huge refugee population for a country such as Rwanda," said Steve Valdez-Symonds, refugee and migrant rights director at Amnesty International. "There are serious questions about the conditions for the current refugees there. They're not getting a system that's designed to address their immediate needs."

The majority of these refugees fled to Rwanda as a result of the Second Congo War, which ended in 2003 and led hundreds of thousands to seek safety in neighbouring countries.

Victoire Ingabire, a Rwandan opposition figure and human rights activist who served eight years in prison on charges of "terrorism" and allegedly threatening national security, believes her country cannot take in more refugees.

"Twenty years later, [these] refugees are still in the refugee camps. A very small number of



Kagame

them have been able to integrate into society and leave the camps," she told Al Jazeera. "In Rwanda, we have refugee camps all over the place and what have we provided them in all this time?"

In February 2018, hundreds of Congolese refugees walked out of the Kiziba refugee camp in Rwanda to protest a cut in food rations. After three days of refusing to return to the camp, police encircled the crowd and fired on them. At least 12 refugees were killed and 66 were imprisoned.

When asked about possibly moving to Rwanda to build a new life, Altigani who is currently staying near Birmingham, in one of the hundreds of hotels that the British government pays to house migrants while their asylum cases are sorted, searches on his cellphone. In a few flicks of a finger, he brings up pictures. "These are refugee camps right now in Rwanda. It is much worse than Calais," he said. "It is better for me to die than to be sent there."

Experts also express concern about Rwanda's [human rights record](#), citing incidents involving arbitrary imprisonment, acts of torture, and the restriction of free speech.

Sarah Bireete, executive director of the Centre for Constitutional Governance in neighbouring Uganda explains why this matters. "The standard that should be used is the way the country treats its nationals," she said. "Otherwise, what guarantees are there that they will respect refugees and asylum seekers?"

A recent Human Rights Watch report says not only critics in Rwanda are in danger, as

"killings, kidnappings, beatings, and enforced disappearances" trail those who have escaped.

Steve Valdez-Symonds of Amnesty International raises another point. "Even if Rwanda was a rosy and safe place, it simply is not proper for one country to think that because it is financially and politically powerful, that it can use its advantages to simply cast off its responsibilities onto another country," he said. "Every country in the world is required to provide protection for people fleeing persecution."

Still, the UK was determined to go ahead with the deal until Wednesday's ruling. The deal was to include an additional payment of 105,000 pounds (\$130,500) per migrant. "Sure, this money would cover the costs for the first five years," said Ingabire. "But after those five years, who will pay the bill to look after these asylum seekers, when the reality is that our current refugees have not yet been able to find work and integrate into society?"

Rwanda is also one of Africa's smallest nations and the world's fifth most densely populated country. President Paul Kagame, who has been in office since 2000, has introduced significant social reforms such as universal healthcare and education. More than half of its lawmakers are women.

According to World Bank figures, economic growth averaged 7.2 percent annually between 2009 and 2019, while GDP grew at 5 percent. The country has also branded itself as a business and tourism hub and has inked sponsorship deals with major football clubs.

Despite this progress, Rwanda remains the world's 24th poorest country according to

nation open to receiving foreigners. President Kagame grew up as a refugee when his parents fled to Uganda in the late 1950s. Supporters say his upbringing allows him to value refugees.

"President Kagame is keen to make Rwanda a cosmopolitan society where you have various cultures," said Gatete Nyiringabo, a Kigali-based lawyer who says criticism of Rwanda is down to Western bias. "Diversity is also a bet of the president and his party to dilute the question of division between the historically divided ethnic groups."

Some experts believe migration is also a way for Kagame to forge a strong, international image and distract critics for his alleged support of the M23 rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo's volatile east.

"Kagame accepted the Rwanda asylum plan for two main reasons. First, it creates a positive image of him", said Ingabire. "Second, by accepting these asylum seekers, he ensures that the UK refrains from condemning Rwanda on certain matters. Notably, in the ongoing conflict with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, while other nations have criticized Rwanda for backing the M23, the UK has not done so."

For months, Altigani, Osman and other migrants were waiting in the UK, afraid that forced asylum in Rwanda would be a crushing setback in their search for safety. But the latest judgment has given them hope, they say.

"I haven't slept for three nights waiting for today's announcement," said Osman. "This decision is good for me and for the other asylum seekers. We are all so relieved! We were terrified of being sent to Rwanda, which has so many problems."

Kigali's supporters say the Supreme Court's decision focused on Rwanda and failed to address another issue. "Why is the UK willing to expel Black and Arab people, and not white?" Nyiringabo said. "The UK is grappling with its racist demons and Rwanda gets thrown in the mix for exposing it for what it is." It is unclear what future awaits the refugees.

Prime Minister Sunak has said his government is currently working on a new treaty with Rwanda and will take into account the Supreme Court ruling while finalising the deal. He added he is prepared to "revisit domestic legal frameworks" and "international conventions" if they continue to frustrate immigration policy plans.

However, analysts say the UK and other European countries like Denmark hoping to copy the Rwanda scheme should note the court's decision and abide by international laws on asylum.

"They should respect the choice of the victims of conflict and mistreatment. Their choices are expressed in their applications," Bireete said. "So, when you subject them to countries that are not of their choice, such as Rwanda, what happens to their choices and wishes?"

SOURCE: ALJAZEERA

the most recent World Economic Outlook report and 21 percent of its youths are unemployed according to the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda.

Mohammed Osman has also been disappointed about the deportation plan to Rwanda. "How can I go to Rwanda? Rwanda is also a poor country," said the Somali national who fled to the UK after his mother sold a piece of land to help him pay for his journey through Kenya, Turkey and Europe, which took four months to complete. "There are no jobs and everything is very difficult there."

While he was in Calais, deciding how to cross the English Channel to reach the UK, he never veered far from the tent he shared with a handful of other Somali migrants in a wooded area near the train station. The 32-year-old fled Baidoa leaving behind his wife and three children after repeated threats from the al-Qaeda-linked armed group al-Shabab, which disapproves of his job as a healthcare worker.

Rwanda has taken in asylum seekers from a third country before. Between 2013 and 2018, Israel offered around 4,000 Sudanese and Eritrean asylum seekers the choice between indefinite detention or signing transfer papers to a third country and a \$3,500 payment. Those who agreed to take the second option were sent to Rwanda.

And while the Israeli government claimed migrants would be guaranteed regular status and employment opportunities, they found it tough to gain asylum or rebuild their lives, so many fled.

Yet Rwanda is proud of being a



With **BULUS GAMBO**



**Temi Otedola : Exploring new creative frontiers**



**T**emi Otedola is an early riser. The 26-year-old Nigerian style plate, fashion influencer, YouTuber, and, most recently, actor, typically begins her day at 6 AM. If she's in London, she'll take a walk around her neighborhood. When in Lagos, her second home, she goes for a spin class at Victoria Island, an upper-class area in the city, to boost her energy. Her days often unfold by following this kind of established pattern. "I'm super, super, super routined," she admits during a recent Zoom interview from her home in London. There's breakfast, then meetings with her team; lunch also happens at a very specific time. Afternoons are typically devoted to content creation and reviewing brand contracts. Since her latest venture into acting—starring in the Netflix Original *Citation* and 2022 crime-drama, *The Man For The Job*—there are now scripts to consider, auditions, and Zoom meetings with directors to attend.

"I feel calm when I'm on top of everything," says Otedola, her voice chirpy and bright, accented with the cosmopolitan nature of someone who calls different parts of the world home. Otedola has just returned from a holiday trip with her fiancé, Afrobeats artist Mr Eazi, in Spain. She landed in the UK over a week ago, where she intends to spend the rest of the year before flying back to Nigeria in early 2023. After logging off from work completely during her vacation, it's safe to say Otedola's got more than a few things to juggle at the moment.

In the landscape of Nigerian influencers, Otedola has managed to fashion an individualistic and tightly curated but, ultimately, wholesome brand for herself. While her celebrity DJ sister, DJ Cuppy, is more outgoing and experimental with her sense of style, Otedola assumes a more private front, revealing only details of her life she feels contribute to her effortlessly glam and curated image.

The daughter of billionaire businessman Femi Otedola, Temi began her foray into the fashion industry as a fashion blogger—when blogs were still very much a thing and Instagram was just taking off. At the time, Otedola—who has always loved fashion and cites her mother as her biggest style inspiration, particularly for her ability to consistently purchase the most perfect garment, no matter where she

went—couldn't find African fashion bloggers to follow. It only made sense for her to fill those shoes. "I was seeing all these fashion weeks around the world. And I was like, Why is there no African representation at these fashion weeks? So I [thought] it'd be amazing to take up that space," she says.

When blogs began to die down and fans flocked to Instagram—where a short caption alongside a carousel of pictures would do just fine, and reached even more people—Otedola found the transition seamless. Still, her goal remained the same: to continue to take up space as one of Africa's foremost fashion voices. Over the years, Otedola has fostered and maintained a deep connection with indigenous fashion brands, from designers Lisa Folawiyo and Andrea Iyamah to the gender-bending Orange Culture, with whom she developed a capsule collection back in 2019.

Otedola's soft-glam, clean-girl aesthetic that values minimalism and an individualistic approach to fashion, has also set her apart in the wider Nigerian fashion influencer community.

"I don't really feel like I have a specific style, [but] I think I gravitate toward looks that are quite pared-down," she says. "I like to think it's timeless. I'm not trying to jump on every trend. I just like to feel comfortable, take a couple of risks, but keep it clean and fun." With acting, Otedola is trying to lean into a more spontaneous side of herself that will allow her the flexibility to explore a new creative frontier. Even the way she got into acting, a job she'd never considered before, was, to some extent, unplanned.

"I've been a really big fan of films since I was nine or 10," she says, "Whether it was old Nollywood or black-and-white or classics. I'm [also] really big on directors and films as an art form. But I felt like I hadn't done it from when I was young, like doing school plays, so I figured I would never go into it.

"But at some point, I was just thinking about my future," she continues. "And I don't necessarily want to be a social media influencer



Continued on page 20

**Where do the richest Americans live?**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Bill Gates**Worth: \$81 billion **Home:** Medina, Washington

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



**Jeff Bezos**Worth: \$67 billion **Home:** Medina, Washington

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

Continued on page 26

# EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

## Relationships

# Importance of kissing in relationships

By **SYLVIA SMITH**

**K**ISSING is one of the most exciting things about starting a new relationship. That first kiss with someone new is electric. It sets off emotional fireworks and stimulates feel-good sensations throughout your brain. But is kissing important in the grand scheme of your relationship?

A kiss can mean so many different things. It can be a greeting, a sign of passion, an apology, or a sweet and innocent gesture. Kissing is how you connect with your partner, reduce stress, and boost trust in a romantic relationship. No matter which kind of kiss you're used to giving, a simple peck can do so much for you.

Read this article to learn more about the importance of kissing in a relationship and ways that you can utilize this learning. Why is a kiss so important in a relationship? A kiss is important in a relationship for several reasons. Firstly, it serves as a powerful form of non-verbal communication, conveying affection, love, and passion.

Kissing fosters intimacy, helping couples bond emotionally and physically, and strengthening the emotional connection between partners. It releases feel-good hormones like oxytocin, promoting a sense of trust and security. Moreover, kissing is a way to express desire and attraction, keeping the romantic spark alive. It adds excitement and novelty to the relationship, making couples feel desired and wanted. The importance of kissing in a relationship is further emphasized when you take into consideration that it also plays a role in sexual arousal and foreplay, enhancing overall physical intimacy.

Beyond the physical aspects, kissing helps partners gauge compatibility and chemistry. A good kiss can be a sign of emotional and physical compatibility, building anticipation for deeper connections and shared experiences. Overall, a kiss in a relationship acts as a foundational pillar, contributing to the happiness, satisfaction, and longevity of the partnership.

9 reasons why kissing is important in a relationship Is kissing important? Absolutely! Whether you're using a kiss as a way to connect with someone you're romantically interested in or as a greeting to a friend or family member, kissing has a host of benefits to your health. Here are some more reasons why kissing is important to your relationship.

**Builds emotional intimacy** One of the ways to understand the importance of kissing in a relationship is that it's one way that couples develop a deep sense of emotional intimacy with one another. Emotional intimacy occurs when couples are able to be

**It's responsible for bonding.** Having a strong connection with your spouse is how you keep your relationship happy and healthy. This is just one more reason to add an extra kiss to your daily routine. Studies show that kissing and other forms of physical affection triggers the release of the hormone oxytocin, which promotes bonding in couples. This bonding agent acts as a glue that strengthens your relationship and keeps you both feeling satisfied in the relationship. Plays a part in attraction



vulnerable, comfortable, and deeply connected to one another in a relationship. When you're emotionally intimate with your spouse, you're able to trust them, share secrets without fear, and feel completely accepted by your partner. Of course, kissing is a form of physical intimacy as well, but the oxytocin hormone released while kissing helps lower emotional barriers and connects a couple on a deeper level.

### Banishes stress

As already mentioned, kissing promotes the release of dopamine and oxytocin. These powerful hormones have been proven to reduce stress and make you feel happy. Stress can be detrimental to your emotional and mental health, causing your blood pressure to spike and increasing the risk of heart attack. When you're living stress-free, not only will you feel better in your relationship, but you'll also be taking care of your mental and physical health.

### It's fun

Do you want to boost the love in your relationship? Then get ready to pucker up because kissing is a great way to show somebody that you care. It's an intimate expression of desire and affection. And studies show that partner satisfaction is strongly related to displays of physical affection, such as cuddling, kissing, and hugging.

**It's fun** Back in your very first romantic relationship, or even the beginning weeks of your current relationship, odds are you couldn't get enough of kissing each other. What is the purpose of kissing in a relationship? Kissing can be an

emotional and physical escape from the rest of the world. It's a way to lose yourself in the intimate connection you share with someone else. This is one of the significant importance of kissing in a relationship.

**Communication and compatibility** Kissing can offer insights into a couple's compatibility and connection. A well-matched kissing style indicates shared preferences, desires, and a level of comfort with each other. When partners naturally synchronize their kissing patterns, it suggests they understand and respond to each other's cues, leading to enhanced emotional and physical bonding. Conversely, if there's a significant disparity in kissing styles, it may signal potential challenges in understanding each other's needs and desires. By paying attention to this aspect of intimacy, couples can gain valuable clues about their compatibility, helping them navigate the relationship with greater understanding and harmony.

### Boosts trust

Trust is essential for healthy relationships. Trusting your spouse lets you know that you can count on them. It is a reassurance of love, a sign of true partnership, and boosts romantic friendships. Nature – The International Journal of Science found that oxytocin boosts trust between humans. Not only does this make partners feel more trusting of each other, but it also increases their willingness to participate in emotionally risky behavior. After all, what is riskier than falling in love?

### It's an expression of love

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### It's fun

Back in your very first romantic relationship, or even the beginning weeks of your current relationship, odds are you couldn't get enough of kissing each other. What is the purpose of kissing in a relationship? Kissing can be an

through frequent kissing, it can enhance their overall perception of the relationship's quality and contribute to a deeper sense of love and contentment. Regular physical affection, like kissing, serves as a reminder of the emotional bond they share, fostering a more satisfying and enjoyable partnership.

Kissing doesn't have to lead to sex in order to feel amazing. For the reasons listed above, it's no wonder some people can kiss for hours on end and still want more.

Kissing is a universal expression of love, intimacy, and desire. It holds a unique power in human interactions, influencing emotions and relationships. Here are brief answers to some common questions that explain the importance of kissing in a relationship. Girls, like anyone else, enjoy kissing for various reasons. It allows them to feel emotionally connected, loved, and desired. Kissing often represents a display of affection, which contributes to the overall sense of intimacy and happiness in a relationship. What is the main purpose of kissing? The primary purpose of kissing is to create a deeper emotional and physical connection between individuals. It fosters intimacy, communicates affection, and builds trust, serving as a fundamental expression of love and desire.

Does kissing increase love? Yes, kissing can increase feelings of love. It triggers the release of oxytocin and dopamine, the "love hormones," which promote bonding and pleasure. Regular kissing can strengthen emotional attachments and deepen the love between partners.

Why is a kiss so powerful? A kiss is powerful because it taps into our most primal instincts and emotions. It engages multiple senses, such as touch and taste, while stimulating the release of neurochemicals that create intense feelings of pleasure, connection, and attraction.

What happens during a kiss? During a kiss, a complex series of physiological and neurological responses occur. The brain releases oxytocin and dopamine, intensifying feelings of affection and pleasure. Heart rate and blood flow increase, and nerve endings in the lips and mouth heighten sensitivity, enhancing the overall sensory experience of the kiss.

Is there a reason to study the importance of kissing in a relationship? You bet it is! Kissing is one of the most intimate things you can do with a partner. It reduces stress, boosts trust, and releases the bonding hormone oxytocin that brings you and your spouse closer together than ever. By learning more about the importance of kissing in a relationship, you can stop yourself from taking it for granted. You can invest more time and effort in promoting this aspect of the relationship.

# EVERYBODY'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

## Delightful weekend recipes

By **UZO ORIMALADE**

### Meat pie recipe

**M**EAT pies are one of the first things I learned how to make in Home Economics class in secondary school—shortcrust pastry, filled with a minced meat mixture that had potatoes and carrots too. I remember this being a big deal because at the time, meat pies were some of the quintessential fast food treats offered at quick service restaurants, and my parents did not give us fast food often. The ability to make them at home was a very big deal to me. With the holidays around the corner, homemade meat pies with buttery crusts and lush meat filling are the perfect snack.

Prep Time: 35 mins

Cook Time: 25 mins

Refrigerate Time: 1 hr

Total Time: 2 hrs

Servings: 6

Ingredients

Pastry: 3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour

1 cup cold salted butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes

1/4 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons water, or more as needed

Filling:

1 tablespoon vegetable oil, or as needed

1 1/4 pounds ground meat

1 onion, diced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 carrot, peeled and diced

1 teaspoon white pepper

1 teaspoon curry powder

1/2 teaspoon dried thyme

1/2 teaspoon dried mixed herbs

Salt to taste

1 large egg, beaten

Directions

Sift flour into a bowl. Add chunks of cold butter. Use fingers to rub butter into flour until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add water, a tablespoon at a time, until a non-sticky dough forms. Wrap dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate at least 1 hour or up to 3 days.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F



(175 degrees C). Line a baking sheet with parchment.

Heat vegetable oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add meat, onions, garlic, and carrots, and cook, stirring constantly, until meat is browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes.

Add white pepper, curry powder, thyme, and mixed herbs, and mix well; cook and stir until vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Season to taste with salt. Remove from heat; set aside to cool.

On a well-floured surface, roll out about 1/4-inch thick, and cut out circles using a cookie cutter, cup, or bowl in a size you are happy with. Place some filling in the center of the pastry circle and fold over carefully. Press the edges of the pastry firmly together with a fork to seal. Re-roll dough scraps, and repeat until pastry and meat filling are used up.

Place pies on the prepared baking sheet. Using a pastry brush, brush the formed pies with beaten egg.

Bake in the preheated oven until pastry is golden brown and filling is hot, about 15 minutes. Enjoy!

**Cook's Note:** You can cut butter into flour with two knives or a pastry blender, or you can perform this step in a food processor: pulse flour and salt with cold butter until it's the size of small peas. Then proceed with the recipe.

**Nutrition Facts**  
(per serving)

861 Calories

51g fat

63g Carbs

35g Protein

Nigerian Meat Pie by by Ozoz Sokoh

**Ingredients**

Minced beef, onions, carrots, and potatoes in a curry-spiced sauce. Grating cold butter into the flour makes it easier to quickly combine them without overworking the dough. Refrigerating the dough after shaping and again after forming the meat pies ensures it's

fully chilled and relaxed prior to baking.

Whole wheat flour adds flavor and tenderness to the dough, while all-purpose flour provides strength.

Docking the tops of the pies before baking allows steam to escape. Meat pies, or beef hand pies—flaky pastries filled with a curry-spiced mixture of ground beef, onions, potatoes, and carrots—are common at home and as street snacks in Nigeria.

Growing up in Warri, located on the southern coast of Nigeria, my family would buy them from quick-service restaurants rather than make them at home. They were tasty enough, but it wasn't until I went to Lagos on holiday that I fell in love with the meat pies at Mr. Biggs, the most popular quick-service restaurant chain in Nigeria. At Mr. Biggs, you could get the most delicious meat pies, chicken pies, sausage rolls, and the best jelly doughnuts ever (I have not had a single doughnut that comes close, but I digress), all of which were childhood favorites of mine. Their meat pies consist of a crumbly, flaky crust that's stuffed with an aromatic filling of meat, carrots, potatoes and curry powder, and they're always served hot.

Introduced to Nigeria during British colonial rule, meat pies resemble Cornish pasties and Jamaican beef patties in appearance but actually differ in many ways. The pastry for meat pies, same as with Jamaican beef patties, is a shortcrust made with cold water, not hot water, which is

traditional for Cornish pasties. Butter or margarine are the fats of choice in meat pies, unlike suet in Jamaican patties and lard or white shortening in Cornish pasties. Lastly, the filling for Cornish pasties is uncooked prior to stuffing, while the filling for Nigerian meat pies is cooked beforehand.

When it comes to making meat pies at home, there are two main elements to prepare: the meat filling and the shortcrust pastry. Both of these can be made ahead of time to help shorten the process. For the shortcrust pastry, I use a mix of all-purpose and whole wheat flour, which contributes to the tenderness of the dough. In addition, a ratio of two parts flour to one part butter by weight ensures a crumbly, flaky texture. If you aren't able to make the pastry from scratch, you can substitute with store-bought puff pastry. For the filling, it's traditional to use ground beef, however it's equally delicious with chopped, shredded, or ground chicken or finely-chopped mushrooms. The inclusion of green bell pepper adds a fresh, vegetal flavor and aroma, and seasoning the mixture with Nigerian-style curry powder delivers warm and slightly spicy notes. While this recipe yields individual hand pies that are perfect for snacking, you can quite easily convert it to make one large pot pie that can be served family style by spooning the filling into a medium ovenproof dish and topping it with a single piece of rolled-out dough. Whatever form you decide on, enjoy your meat pie with a salad alongside.





# Reality Bites

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## Why celebrate International Men's Day 2023?



celebrate IMD in different ways by mainly discussing issues that concern the community the most. For example, in the UK, male suicide is an important topic of discussion on International Men's Day because men are 3 times more likely to commit suicide than women in the country (as reported by Samaritans, an emotional support charity).

In India, the celebrations were started in 2007 by Indian Men's Advocate Uma Chulla. The motto behind this was to expose the shocking abuse that men face in the anti-male legal system of the country. Other topics that are discussed include fatty changes in liver, and belly fat, which are rising concerns for Indian men. Many celebrate this day by making donations to causes pertaining men's health, making and sharing posters about men's mental health, and so on.

In Nigeria, health talks and other forums are organised by individuals, government and Non-Governmental bodies to draw attention to issues affecting men and their relationship with their families, society, careers among others, with a view to making it better.

Although International Men's Day was founded after International Women's Day which was conceived in 1910, it is a great way to help end gender stereotyping and discrimination based on gender. This can help create a safer and better world that allows all people to grow to their best potential and make positive contributions to society.

Why is International Men's Day celebrated? International Men's Day honours the contributions that men make to society, their families, and their communities. The day is a yearly observance to highlight the issues that men face, both personally and in society.

How to International Men's Day? Individuals as well as teams can discuss the men in their lives and what they mean to them in the workplace. Spend some quality time as a family at home talking about what you all mean to one another. Likewise, you can check in with the men in your life with whom you haven't spoken recently to see how they have been doing.

According to founder of IMD, Jerome Teelucksingh, the theme for 2023 is Zero Male Suicide is apt.

Teelucksingh who is a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of the West Indies, specialising in the history of Afro-Caribbean intellectuals and activists, and author of several papers and books said "Inaugurated on 19 November 1999, International Men's Day has facilitated a global dialogue on creating a nurturing and empowering world for men and boys, especially the less fortunate and disadvantaged".

"International Men's Day has also created and supported initiatives which improve the manner in which the world addresses and resolves their unique mental and physical health issues, and improves their access to essential tools needed to access real life-options and empower and strengthen their communities. On 19 November 2023, we want to encourage institutions, organizations, and individuals to identify the causes for male suicide and try to find solutions to create a protective environment for men in all nations. In this regard, International Men's Day will be observed under the theme: Zero Male Suicide"



**E**VERY year, 19 November is observed as International Men's Day (IMD). It was first observed in 1999 and is now celebrated in more than 90 countries globally. It is observed to honour and celebrate the lives, accomplishments, and contributions of boys and men, especially those who have made significant contributions to the family, marriage, community, country, and union.

The bigger picture and ultimate goal of IMD is to spread fundamental knowledge of men's issues. The purpose of this day is to focus on men's health and well-being. In light of this, 'Zero Male Suicide' serves as the theme for International Men's Day 2023.

Why is International Men's Day Celebrated? Across the world, IMD primarily celebrates the positive value that men bring to their communities, their families, and the world.

Being in November brings special significance because it is also the month of "Movember", an annual event where men grow their moustaches during the entire month to raise awareness of health issues concerning men such as testicular cancer, prostate cancer, etc. It is also the month which celebrates Children's Day.

Objectives of IMD are enormous. One of the IMD's goals is to promote positive male role models. It includes supporting not only sportsmen and film stars but also regular working-class men who lead morally upright lives. To prioritise the social, spiritual, physical, and emotional health and wellbeing of men. To promote gender equality and improve gender relations. To honour the positive contributions men have made to the environment, marriage, community, family, and society. To bring attention to the discrimination against men in the legal system, social attitudes, and social expectations. To build a better and safer world where everyone can live in security while growing to their full potential.

Why is International Men's Day Important? There are several important topics that are discussed on International Men's Day which is celebrated in over 80 countries across the world. Here are some topics: Discuss men's as well as boys' health - emotional, physical, social, and spiritual

Importance of gender equality, improvements in gender relations across different societies, Positive male role models for younger generations

Making a difference for the boys and men in the community. There are plenty of reasons to celebrate International Men's Day. Some men are positive male role models in your community and need to be celebrated.

International Men's Day encourages men to teach the boys in their lives the values, character and responsibilities of being a man. Mahatma Gandhi said, "We must become the change we seek." It is only when we all, both men and women, led by example that we will create a fair and safe society that allows everyone the opportunity to prosper. International Men's Day is an opportunity for people everywhere of goodwill to appreciate and celebrate the men in their lives and the contribution they make to society for the greater good of all.

How did it start? IMD was founded in Trinidad and Tobago at the University of the West Indies by history lecturer Dr Jerome Teelucksingh in 1999. He promoted this day to reflect on issues that were affecting boys and men. It received immense support in the Caribbean region and later spread to many countries including Singapore, India, Australia, the UK, the USA, and more.

This day is not about competing with International Women's Day, but a way for men to encourage boys to live a life of values, character, and responsibilities.

How is it celebrated in Different Countries? Different countries



# EYE'S WORLD

With **Henrietta Gonzuk**

## Health

### Ways to limit asthma attacks caused by colds

**A**CCORDING to Yvette Brazier, Asthma is a chronic condition that affects the airways. It causes wheezing and breathing difficulties. There are different types, such as childhood, adult-onset, seasonal, and workplace-related asthma.

"Asthma causes the inside walls of the airways, or the bronchial tubes, to become swollen and inflamed. During an asthma attack, the airways swell, the muscles around them tighten, and it becomes difficult for air to move in and out of the lungs"

A cold or the flu can trigger an asthma attack. Here's why — and how to keep your sneeze from turning into a wheeze.

If you have asthma, even a mild cold can lead to wheezing and tightness in your chest. Colds and the flu are among the most common causes of asthma flare-ups, especially in young children.

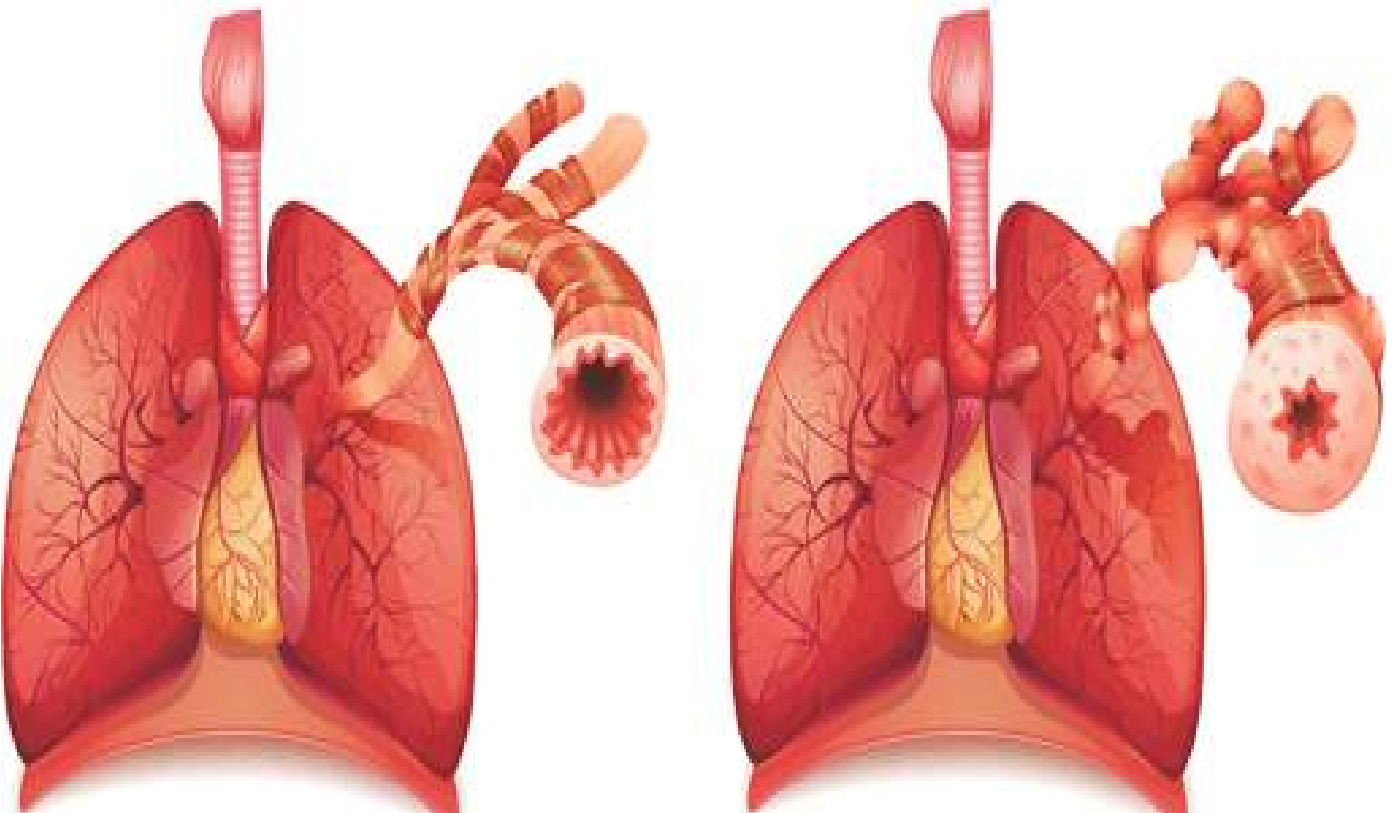
Regular asthma medications may fail to relieve asthma symptoms associated with a cold or the flu. Also, asthma symptoms caused by a respiratory infection may last for several days to weeks.

There's no sure way to keep yourself or your child from getting a cold or the flu. But taking steps to avoid getting sick, and taking the right steps when you do, can help.

#### Preventing colds and the flu

Take these steps to help avoid getting sick: Get an annual flu vaccine unless your health care provider recommends against it. Most adults and children older than 6 months of age should get a flu vaccination every year.

Ask your health care provider if you need a pneumonia vaccination. Having asthma increases your risk of developing pneumonia after getting the flu.



Stay away from anyone who's cold or the flu? Despite your best intentions to stay healthy, an occasional cold or case of the flu is inevitable, especially in children. Germs that cause respiratory infections are easily passed from person to person. Wash your hands often. These steps may help:

**Call your health care provider** This kills the germs that can cause respiratory infections. Carry a bottle of hand sanitizer to kill germs while you're on the go.

**Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth.** These are the points where germs enter your body. Don't share your inhaler or other breathing equipment with others. Germs can spread on surfaces.

What to do when you do get a sick. Despite your best intentions to stay healthy, an occasional cold or case of the flu is inevitable, especially in children. Germs that cause respiratory infections are easily passed from person to person. Wash your hands often. These steps may help:

**Rest and take care of yourself.** Rest and drink plenty of fluids. With your provider's OK, use nonprescription cold or flu remedies to relieve your symptoms. These medicines won't help you get over the cold or flu faster, but they can help you feel better in the meantime.

**Monitor your airflow.** Use a peak flow meter to monitor how well your lungs are working from day to day. Take your readings at the same time every day. If you notice a drop in your peak flow rate, adjust your medicine as directed by your provider. Seek help right away for severe symptoms. Seek treatment if you have severe breathing trouble or if your throat is extremely sore. Also

get medical attention if you have any symptoms of pneumonia, afterward. Work with your health care provider to develop a plan of care such as a high fever, chills, sweats, sharp pain when taking action to prevent getting a cold or deep breaths or a cough that brings up colored phlegm.

**Stay home.** If you get sick, stay home from school or work to prevent a mild asthma flare-up from progressing to a severe asthma attack.

Generally, you can infect others a day before your symptoms



# BUSINESS WORLD

## Sustaining the entrepreneurial spirit: Strategies for family businesses

**Family businesses often start with a distinct entrepreneurial spirit, driven by the vision and dedication of their founders. However, as generations pass and the company expands, maintaining this spirit becomes a daunting challenge. AISHA ADEJUMO writes**

MANY times we have heard the saying that the first generation creates the business, the second generation develops it and the third reduces it to dust which is also illustrated by the old adage "shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves in three generations".

The transition from an entrepreneurial start-up to a well-established family enterprise necessitates a careful balancing act between tradition, innovation, and adaptability. In this article, we will explore key strategies that family businesses can employ to sustain their entrepreneurial spirit and ensure continued success.

### Encourage a growth mindset

Instilling a growth mindset from an early age is crucial. Teach the next generation that abilities and talents can be developed through dedication, effort, and learning from mistakes. This mindset will foster a sense of resilience, adaptability, and willingness to take risks which are essential traits for an entrepreneur.

### Nurturing a culture of innovation

To maintain the entrepreneurial spirit, family businesses must foster a culture that encourages and rewards innovation. Encouraging the next generation to generate new ideas, embrace change, and challenge the status quo promotes a forward-thinking mindset within the family business.

By allocating resources to research and development, implementing idea-generation platforms, and promoting cross-functional collaboration, family businesses can create an environment conducive to nurturing innovation.

### Lead by example

As the patriarch or matriarch of the family business, your actions speak louder than words. Lead by example and demonstrate your passion, work ethic, and entrepreneurial drive on a daily basis. Let the next generation observe you taking smart risks,



making decisions, and persevering through challenges. Seeing your dedication will motivate and inspire them to continue the legacy.

### Providing opportunities

Providing opportunities for the next generation to engage in entrepreneurial activities can foster the development of their entrepreneurial capabilities and contribute to the long-term success of the family business.

These opportunities can include internships, mentorship programmes, and participation in strategic decision-making processes. Internships allow the next generation to gain hands-on experience in various aspects of the business, while mentorship programmes provide guidance and support from experienced family members or industry professionals.

### Involve the next generation in decision-making

Give the younger members of the family an opportunity to contribute to the decision-

making process. Provide them with relevant information, ask for their input, and value their opinions. Involving the next generation in strategic decision-making processes enables them to contribute their unique perspectives and innovative ideas.

This involvement will not only make them feel important but also help them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Encourage entrepreneurship outside the family business.

Although the ultimate goal may be the continuation of the family business, it is equally important to encourage the next generation to explore entrepreneurial ventures and industries outside of the family business realm. This exposure will broaden their horizons, enable them to gain new skills, and bring fresh perspectives back to the family business.

### Promote continuous learning and development

Entrepreneurship is a journey of constant learning and growth. Encourage the younger generation to pursue higher education, attend professional development programmes, and engage in networking opportunities. Provide them with tools, resources, and mentorship to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

### Celebrate achievements and learn from failures

Recognise and celebrate the accomplishments of the younger generation, no matter how big or small. Positive reinforcement will boost their confidence, encourage them to take on more responsibilities, and fuel their entrepreneurial spirit. Also, teach them to embrace failures as stepping stones to success. Support them in learning from mistakes and turning setbacks into valuable lessons.

### Maintain a balance between tradition and innovation

Striking a balance between preserving family traditions and fostering innovation is vital for the sustenance of the entrepreneurial spirit within the next generation. Respect and cherish the family heritage while encouraging and embracing new ideas, technologies, and business practices. This equilibrium will foster a culture of adaptability and continuous growth.

### Develop a succession plan

A well-structured succession plan is essential to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. Involve the next generation in the development of this plan. Discuss their aspirations, strengths, and areas of interest. Strengthening their sense of ownership and involvement in shaping the family business's

future will help sustain their entrepreneurial spirit.

### Encourage mentorship and networking

Encourage the younger generation to seek guidance from experienced mentors both within and outside the family business. Mentorship provides an opportunity to gain valuable insights, widen networks, and develop crucial entrepreneurial skills. It also allows them to learn from others' experiences and avoid unnecessary mistakes.

### Emphasising transparency and effective communication:

Promoting transparency and effective communication is vital to maintaining the entrepreneurial spirit within a family business. Sharing information, goals, and progress reports with employees and family members fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility. Family businesses must encourage open dialogue, actively listen to different perspectives, and address concerns promptly.

By fostering a culture of trust, transparency, and collaboration, companies can empower their employees to contribute their entrepreneurial ideas, facilitating further growth and innovation.

In Conclusion, sustaining the entrepreneurial spirit in the next generation of a family business is an ongoing process that requires dedication, adaptability, and open communication. By implementing these strategies, you can ensure the continued success and growth of your family business for generations to come.

**"This involvement will not only make them feel important but also help them develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Encourage entrepreneurship outside the family business. Although the ultimate goal may be the continuation of the family business, it is equally important to encourage the next generation to explore entrepreneurial ventures and industries outside of the family business realm. This exposure will broaden their horizons, enable them to gain new skills, and bring fresh perspectives back to the family business. Promote continuous learning and development. Entrepreneurship is a journey of constant learning and growth. Encourage the younger generation to pursue higher education, attend professional development programmes, and engage in networking opportunities. Provide them with tools, resources, and mentorship to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities."**

# BUSINESS WORLD

## Tinubu's policies could usher new consumer class -Int'l bank

**G**LOBAL investment bank, Morgan Stanley has said the economic reforms made by the current president of Nigeria, Bola Tinubu, may lead to a strong increase in annual income despite the challenge they pose for economic growth.

The bank's analyst, Steven Quattri, noted that Tinubu's reforms could lead to a new consumer class and attract investment opportunities.

This is according to a post titled 'Market Outlook: Nigeria's New Dawn' published on the bank's website.

"Prior to the May 2023 election of new president Bola Tinubu, two sets of policies had inhibited the country's growth. The first was fuel subsidies, which cost a whopping \$10 billion in 2022 and primarily benefited middle- and high-income members of the population: Only three per cent of all subsidized fuel was consumed by the poorest 40 per cent of Nigerians.

"The second was a complex currency regime, which led to an overvalued currency and curbed much-needed foreign investment, as foreign direct investment fell by 60 per cent under former president Buhari.

"In response to the economic challenges, Tinubu has acted quickly to



revive growth. During his inaugural address, he declared an end to fuel subsidies. Days later, he put an end to the overvalued currency by unifying the exchange rates. The incoming administration intends to grow the economy primarily via private investment and is aiming for 6% real GDP growth per year.

"This could lead to a strong rise in incomes, which, combined with a young and fast-growing population, could usher in a new consumer class and a number of investment opportunities."

The analyst added that the interventionist policies of former president of Nigeria Muhammadu Buhari triggered economic bottlenecks and hindered the private sector's ability to grow.

He identified two major policies: foreign exchange rates and fuel subsidies. The Morgan Stanley analyst noted that the average Nigerian has experienced an incredibly difficult time in the last eight years, with annual income shrinking by 32 per cent from \$3,222 to \$2,200 under Buhari's administration.

**L**ONG queues for petrol resurfaced in Abuja and environs yesterday, amidst speculations about a possible pump price increase.

Reports revealed that many independent marketers' stations have already raised the price of premium motor spirit (PMS) popularly called petrol, to as much as N650 per litre, thereby heightening the price difference between the and major marketers including the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited which are still selling petrol at N617 and N613 per litre respectively.

With the huge price difference, motorists thronged the filling stations still selling petrol at the old prices, especially NNPC retail stations, thereby resulting in long queues.

The NNPC has however, allayed fears of a possible scarcity of petrol in the country.

Responding to Economic Confidential enquiry, chief corporate communications officer of the company, Olufemi Soneye said the current situation is due the price difference in the filling stations.

"The recent tightness in Abuja is essentially a price war which is typical of any competitive market. Motorists would rather queue at filling stations that offer lower prices than others. Whilst NNPC Retail is selling at N613 in Abuja, other marketers' prices range from N625-N650,"

## Fuel queues return to Abuja as price increases

Soneye explained in details.

Recall that the NNPC is once again a major importer of petrol after scarcity of foreign exchange and naira depreciation forced many independent marketers off petrol importation. The national oil company is also a major retailer.

Meanwhile, the queue led to traffic gridlock along Olusegun Obasanjo Way at Wuse as the two NNPC stations along the route had long queues of cars waiting to fill their tanks.

The Mobil Filling Station at Utako also had vehicles waiting to purchase fuel even though it was sold at N640 per litre while ETERNA fuel station in Jabi was closed.

The situation was the same on Airport Road with long queues in stations like BOVAS, SALBAS OIL, AA Rano and SHEMA.

At AA Rano located at Jabi, only one fuel pump was dispensing the product from the 30 fuel pumps in the station.

Few cars were allowed into the station with the main gate to the station locked to prevent other cars from coming in.

It was gathered that the

queues started on Friday when some filling stations started selling petrol at N630 and others at N640.

"Since Friday, some of the stations have closed up and the rumour we are hearing is that they want to increase the pump price to N700 per litre."

The chief executive officer of NMDPRA, Farouk Ahmed, had last month said they received the assurance of the NNPC that there is available stock of petrol in the country.

Speaking after a meeting with all relevant stakeholders in the oil industry to ensure availability of fuel in the country, Ahmed however said independent marketers with licence to import the product complained of lack of access to the official price of dollars, thus, costing them more to import the product.

He added that they complained that the current pump price is not profitable for them and they can't compete with the NNPC, which is importing the product at the official price of the dollar.

## Monetary reforms yielding positive results -CBN

**T**HE Central Bank of Nigeria said that its monetary policy reforms are beginning to have positive effects on the country's economy.

Reacting to the just-released inflation rate for October in a statement issued by the Director of the Corporate Communications

Department, CBN Isa AbdulMumin, the apex bank vowed to return to evidence-based monetary policy status to restore stakeholders' confidence in Nigeria's financial system.

In October the CBN Governor, Dr Yemi Cardoso, said there was an urgent need for "discontinuation of

unorthodox monetary policies and foreign currency management and unorthodox use of ways and means spending".

Cardoso added: "The economic policy proposals of the administration identify a set of fiscal reforms and growth targets that will achieve \$1trn GDP within eight years."

The apex bank emphasised that the current inflation rate underscored the gradual influence of the CBN's money market reforms on the

economy.

He pointed out that the marginal rise in the average price level for October indicated the effectiveness of the CBN's monetary policy stance and money market reforms in achieving the desired results.

Highlighting the commitment of the apex bank's leadership, AbdulMumin stated that efforts are underway to fulfil its core mandate of stabilizing the naira and reducing inflation.



Kyari

## Chinese envoy assures country won't create debt crisis

**Y**AN Yuqing, the Chinese Consul-General, shared this during the 18th China-African lecture, which took place on recently at the University of Lagos.

Yuqing talked about how China and African nations are teaming up to reduce poverty in Africa.

She said, "China has never been a creator of the debt crisis of African countries. China partners to help African countries to help them deal with their poverty problems. Under the framework of the G20, there is a plan to delay debt repayment, and China has contributed more than 60 percent and done more than other G-20 members. China

will never threaten to sanction any African country with recourse to contracts between the two countries.

"The people of Nigeria and China are wonderful, hard-working, and friendly. We have very good results in several fields, such as infrastructure, trade and investment, education, and culture. These are very important parts of our bilateral relationship."

The ambassador further mentioned that the lecture's theme, "Chinese Modernization and Development of Africa," was intended to foster stronger Nigeria-China bilateral

relations.

"This is also to allow young students from the University of Lagos to know more about Chinese development. I am so glad that most students are learning Chinese. They will have the opportunity to go to China, learn more about Chinese history, and make friends with Chinese people," she added.

The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Prof. Akanbi Ilupeju, said the meeting was for the benefit and possibilities of having a cross-fertilisation of ideas in relevant areas of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities in general.

"It is also to benefit our students through exchange

and the possibility of having the students pursue their programmes in China," he added.

He said, "I call that Chinese essentialism. This means they don't forget their roots, and they are very passionate about who they are. Whether you like socialism or not, it is a different thing. If there is any social organisation that takes people from wealth into a superpower, it is society that practices socialism. We have an example from China. Go back to 1949; where was China then, and where is it today? Go back to 1917; where was Russia, and where is it today? Capitalist society has done nothing for us in Nigeria."



Cordoso



# ENTREPRENEUR WATCH

WITH CELESTINE D. ATTSAR

## How government can create jobs in agric sector

*The agricultural sector in Nigeria currently employs over 23 million people and has the potential to employ over four million more in the next couple of years. However if you live in Nigeria, you know there is a stark difference between being "employed" and being "gainfully employed". OLASUNKANMI OWOYEMI writes.*



**T**AKE a cursory look at any list of well-paying jobs in Nigeria, and you will hardly find anything related to agriculture. In fact, there is a popular conception that being a farmer is equivalent to being poor. Thus, despite the numerous contributions of the smallholders farmers, who constitute a reasonable percentage of these "23 million employed people", more than 70 per cent of them live below the poverty line of \$1.9 per day. This does not have to be the case. If properly harnessed, the agricultural sector is one that has a huge potential to not only employ millions of Nigerians, but to also ensure that every single one of them is well rewarded. The sector can also contribute more significantly to the country's foreign exchange.

However, one of the most notorious reasons why the agricultural sector continues to perform below its potential is the fact that the country's heavy dependence on oil exports has caused laxity on the part of successive governments to implement policies that support the agricultural sector. The need to diversify the Nigerian economy has been repeatedly written and spoken about by several experts across different fields. Most of these tend to primarily answer the "why" and "where"- why should we diversify? Where should we diversify? A common answer to this latter question is the agricultural sector. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Nigeria is blessed with a good climate that makes it a fertile ground for cultivating different crops such as cocoa, cashew, sesame and soybeans in commercial quantities. However, our discussion needs to start shifting to "how"- how do we diversify into this sector? This article addresses this question and proposes that one way to do this through deliberate pro-poor government initiatives.

An example of such pro-poor initiatives was introduced in Malaysia. Known as the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) scheme, the state-led settlement scheme was established in 1956 by the government of Malaysia to support the development of plantation land for landless families as a strategy to alleviate poverty in rural areas and address the unemployment problems in the country. Under this scheme, FELDA developed land into plantations for crops such as oil palm and allocated 10 acres per household to poor settlers. Beyond that, FELDA also managed these plantations and the Malaysian government provided all associated costs in advance. All costs were then subsequently recovered in instalments from these settlers when their allocated plots began to yield income. The participants in this scheme were primarily those from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The scheme gave them an opportunity to own something since the ownership of the land was transferred to them after they settled all their debts. With the scheme, several settlers who were earning between 200-400 MYR (\$42-85) were able to increase their earning to as much as 1000-3000 MYR (\$212-638) monthly.

There is no contention that the FELDA scheme also marked a major turn around in the palm oil industry in Malaysia, a country which is the second largest producer and exporter of palm oil in the world. Malaysia now has 5.9 million hectares of land under oil palm cultivation producing 19.86 million tonnes of palm oil and 2.32 tonnes of palm kernel oil. The industry also employs over half a million workers which includes not only farmers but also farm support workers, and factory and milling experts that work in factories. All

these benefits both for the people and the country as a whole flow directly from the enabling FELDA initiative.

### **Can Nigeria borrow a leaf from the success of FELDA?**

Yes we can. Of course, the FELDA model is not without its downsides which is why the model has continued to evolve in Malaysia. Thus, if we adopt this initiative in Nigeria, we have to make necessary adjustments to make it fit our local context. However, I have no doubt that this type of scheme can go a long way to drastically reduce the unemployment rate in Nigeria, give people a decent source of income and contribute significantly to the country's foreign exchange.

From studying the FELDA model, I have observed some interesting factors that contributed to its success, and some important lessons from its weaknesses.

### **The need to have defined Priorities**

If there is one thing that is clear from the establishment and operation of the FELDA initiative, it is the fact that the Malaysian government was very clear about its core priorities—diversify the economy from dependence on rubber and alleviate poverty while still maintaining traditional values. This clarity made it possible to determine those who qualified to be settlers (people within a certain age bracket and from various parts of the country), and even the choice of crop for these plantations. Bringing this home to Nigeria, beyond diversifying the economy and alleviating poverty, our government can prioritise issues such as designing the scheme to be attractive to young people, and focusing on crops such as cocoa, cashew, sesame, and soybeans which are vital export crops.

### **The need to focus on consistent growth**

FELDA has evolved over the years, but it has prioritised consistent growth. From only 55,000 hectares in 1960 under oil palm cultivation, Malaysia now has about 5.9 million hectares of land under oil palm cultivation. Rome was not built in a day, and the success of the FELDA initiative is clearly a result of several years of growth. If such a scheme is implemented in Nigeria, Nigerians should not expect to see all the changes at once, but rather focus on the consistent improvement and indications that steps are being taken in the right direction.

### **The non-Negotiable importance of engaging competent professionals and experts**

The pioneering professionals that ran the FELDA scheme did such a good job that the World Bank loan used to finance it was settled way ahead of time. However, when they left, they were reportedly replaced with less-competent hands which impacted the pace and overall success of the project. This shows how essential it is that for such a scheme to work, the best hands have to be on ground to lead it free from political influence. If the scheme is adopted in Nigeria, the selection of professionals to run it should be strictly based on merit and competence and with continuity in mind. They must be professionals who would prioritise important practices such as transparency and accountability while also ensuring that internal controls and regular audits are put in place to consistently deliver high-quality results.

### **The importance of government commitment**

Malaysia has been able to reduce its poverty rate from 49.3% in 1970 to only 1.7% as of 2012. This is largely because of the government's commitment to this goal evidenced through various Malaysian policies.

The FELDA initiative was born out of one of such policies. The commitment of the government makes a lot of difference. It was why this scheme was introduced in Malaysia in the first place. It was also why certain measures were put in place to address some of the downsides of the initiative such as the competency issue. The Nigerian government needs to fully buy-in and support this initiative since the allocation of land will be done by the government. Their evident support also gives legitimacy to the initiative thereby making entities like the World Bank more willing to provide funding. The role of government equipped with the right political will is therefore highly essential because this initiative is a national agenda.

### **A focus on promoting investment in research and development**

The success of the Malaysian strategy of estate management system and smallholder scheme relied heavily on investment in research and development to see what works and make improvements when necessary. Thus, investments in research and development to drive innovation and technological advancements must be a key part of the initiative, if implemented in Nigeria. It is particularly important in this century to enhance efficiency, product quality, and global competitiveness.

In conclusion, I have no doubt that a similar initiative can work in Nigeria, yielding benefits such as employment creation and increase in foreign exchange. However, it needs to be properly structured and the right people must be on board at all times. The best time for the government to start actively working towards diversification of our economy was several years ago, the next best time is now.



*With* **BULUS GAMBO**

## Temi Otedola : Exploring new creative frontiers

Continued from page 18



when I'm in my 30s or 40s. Moving forward, what do I really want to do? And I was like, 'You know, Temi, you could actually try this acting thing.' Especially with all the new amazing directors we have coming from Nollywood, I feel like there's a new era happening. I really



wanted to be a part of that."

So when she met the legendary Nigerian director Kunle Afolayan at a premiere for one of his films, Otedola walked right up to him and asked for a meeting. "He was like, 'Well, I've been writing this film for a few years. And actually, the main character is a girl in her early 20s. But you're not an actor.' I was like, 'Okay, well, let me audition,'" she recalls. "And it took months and months of auditioning, but that is really how it started."

That chance encounter would land her the role of Moremi in *Citation*, Afolayan's gripping story about a young university student who is groomed and eventually assaulted by her lecturer—and who has to face a school tribunal in a bid to clear her name and hold the lecturer accountable.

The film, which came out in 2020, is one of the few Nollywood stories with a progressive and hopeful outlook on women finding justice after being sexually assaulted. *Citation* highlighted the gravity and undue power dynamics between professors and students at a time when Nigerian universities were reckoning with their long-held history of lecturers coercing young pupils into having affairs with them for



good grades. The timeliness of the story shot the actress even further into stardom. "Even to this day, people still walk to me to tell me that the film gave them hope," Otedola says.

At the moment, Otedola has even more work on deck, being featured in another blockbuster Nollywood project and other projects—the details of which she can't divulge. As far as career goals go, the actress hopes to ultimately produce and feature in Nigerian stories that elevate the perspective of women.

"We have so many women in Nigeria's history who haven't had their stories told," she says. "There are [numerous] documentaries about Fela, but if you think about his mother, Funmilayo Ransom-Kuti, she hasn't had a biopic. Just to be involved in producing that and getting that made would be incredible."

Although Otedola didn't always have a defined idea of what she wanted to do when she grew up, she is, without a doubt, willing to gravitate toward the things that challenge her the most. "I don't think there are any rules in the creative world—you can try different things. Maybe I'll go into singing," she says with a laugh. "At the end of the day, you may as well try and fail than not try at all. I'm open to anything—as long as the passion is there."

## Where do the richest Americans live?

Continued from page 18

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

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



**Warren Buffett**Worth: \$65.5 billion Home: Omaha, Nebraska

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

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



**Mark Zuckerberg**Worth: \$55.5 billion Home: Palo Alto, California

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

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



**Larry Ellison**Worth: \$49.3 billion Home: Woodside, California

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

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

Source: Mansion Global

## SUNDAY FEATURE

# Bad roads as death trap

**A depressing and embarrassing phenomenon of our national development is poor and deplorable road network across the country. This has endangered many lives and properties in addition to dwindling our economic fortunes. As the world is moving rapidly with technology, we are living terribly with bad roads as a chronic disease sending many to their early and mass graves. Abdu Abdullahi writes.**

**T**HIS piece was motivated by my journey to Akure, the Ondo state capital, on November 6, 2023, for a conference on quality assurance. Incidentally, the adventure also exposed me to more horrible experiences of undergoing low quality living in Nigeria where the masses have no option but to suffer in silence. Where there is no quality in leadership, of course, there must be no quality of provision of good roads and other social amenities to make life worth living and promising. Scarcity of resources is never responsible for this lingering predicament but lack of political will, corruption, misplaced priorities, among others.

With the bad roads I came across, I lamented. How could a nation of vast richness like Nigeria be reduced to a laughing stock that our governments would not provide good roads even for the sake of rescuing human lives, a moral duty incumbent upon every government? Nevertheless, we are dwelling in a country of two distinct nations by transportation barometer.

Is it a calculated ploy deployed that only the political elite, the business elite and the bureaucratic elite will travel by air for comfort and safety while the rest of us perish in the hands of the monstrous disaster roads? The bad roads are now exclusively meant for the poor, who die as a result of ghastly accidents and the survivors with fatal injuries. After all, we were told many years back by certain government functionaries that air traveling was not for the poor. That discriminating sermon is now resonating conspicuously as both the federal and state governments are committing more colossal funds to airports financing, construction and maintenance to attract 'foreign investments'. Perhaps, with neglected roads for conveying the goods and services of the investments, Nigeria will be more attractive to such investments!

Take a trip through different parts of the country by road, which is the largest means of transportation in Nigeria, the result is very pathetic. Out of the estimated 195,000 kilometer road network, only 60,000 kilometer network is believed to be worthy of providing effective service. Our roads are characterised by potholes and cracks, depression road surface, failed shoulders, among others. The Lagos- Abeokuta road, Jalingo- Numan road, Enugu-Onitsha expressway, Aba- Port Harcourt expressway, Warri-Bayelsa- Port Harcourt link, and Maiduguri- Kano road are few examples and are all in shambles.

For Maiduguri-Kano road in particular, the construction work started 20 years back but is still uncompleted and has been claiming hundreds of lives. A special report on the project



published by the Daily Trust of Saturday, 21 October 2023 described the road as a death trap considering the heavy casualties it has produced. A Trunk Road A linking Kano with various states like Jigawa, Bauchi, Yobe, Borno, among others, it is particularly more prone to danger from Gaya town to Wudil town where only one side of the dualization is completed, thereby preventing drivers from commuting easily because of the use of only one lane

Our despicable reality of having more dilapidated roads is as a result of many factors. These include inadequate maintenance of existing roads, poor design and construction, lack of drainage system to curb over flowing of water, the use of inferior or low quality materials amongst others. This bad situation once triggered the members of the Nigerian Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas workers, NUPENG, threatening to embark on an industrial action over poor roads in Nigeria which constantly causes tanker accidents and the resultant life and economic loss.

Nigeria's roads are of different classes. We have Trunk Road A, Trunk Road B and Trunk Road C. Trunk A encompasses national grid and cuts across regional boundaries and the federal government is responsible for financing, constructing and maintaining this category of roads. Trunk Road B simply connects major cities within states. They are therefore financed, constructed and maintained by the states. Trunk Road C falls under the jurisdiction of the local government authorities and are largely and usually untarred.

Above half of the total number of Nigeria's roads are infact a

death trap as research has shown that more than 5,000 deaths are recorded yearly as a consequence of bad roads. In February, 2018, a tragedy occurred in which 22 students of Government Secondary School, Misau in Bauchi state were crushed to death at a village near Gaya town of Kano state. They were going for an excursion to Kano when their bus collided with a DAF truck. The tragedy occurred when both drivers were trying to circumvent falling into a pothole. Unfortunately, the money to be used for putting into order the potholes was not deemed appropriate to be used by FERMA. But it was in the aftermath of that human disaster that it was found very imperative to save further loss of lives when the agency swung into belated response and action to fix the bad portion of the road.

It is there on record that most Nigerians roads were constructed between the 1980s and the 1990s. It was a period of military

despotism. But it is argued that democracy is the best form of government in which we are expected to have the best roads. Ironically, in some states under democracy, most of the roads constructed were of inferior quality and had since degenerated into a potential death zone because they are now deplorable and have become a typical case of resource plundering by some of our uncared and self-serving leaders.

Apart from the human loss that devastates the nation, the poor condition of our roads will never serve as a powerful tool in bolstering productivity and effective distribution of goods and services, which will ultimately boost economic growth. Poor roads also deprive Nigeria of increasing its GDP. Though there are many cases of reckless driving, culminating in accidents and deaths, the greater percentage goes to bad roads. The existence of bad roads will continue to remind us of

Namibia, a country that has some of the best roads in Africa.

When the Abuja- Kaduna highway was awarded at the whopping amount of N797 billion in 2017, it is surprising that only 20% is completed according to the works Minister. Even for the sake of averting the prevalent insecurity, the speedy completion of the road will facilitate security in which kidnapping will be cumbersome. The slow pace of the work on this project defines the collapse of our national consciousness.

Whatever the case may be, bad roads should never continue to be our national stigma. So much resources have been injected into roads construction but the trend remains deteriorating. This is one of the greatest challenges of our leaders to do the needful and ensure quality leadership. Abdullahi writes from Ringim, Jigawa state via [aaringim68@gmail.com](mailto:aaringim68@gmail.com) 07036207998.

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# NEWS

## GUDO condemns allegations against Appeal Court President

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE apex body of Gamai Unity and Development Organisation (GUDO), has raised an alarm over the cruel and unkind post on Facebook by one King Jdeen dated 26/10/2023 on the personality of Her Lordship, Justice Monica Mensem-Dongba'an,

President of the Court of Appeal, describing it as irresponsible, insensitive, inhumane and evil.

This was contained in a press statement signed by the National President of GUDO, Dr Albert Kelong Alkali, FPSN, and made available to **SUNDAY STANDARD** in Jos, the Plateau State capital recently, following the unkind post on her person and family.

The statement said, "Our attention as GUDO has been drawn to an irresponsible and insensitive post on Facebook by one King Jdeen on the 26th October 2023, bordering on the integrity of her Lordship, Justice Monica Mensem-Dongba'an.

"GUDO as a socio-cultural group, is apolitical in nature and represents the entire Gãmai, both at home and in the diaspora and will not stand by and watch while the good name of our daughter is being tarnished and her highly earned reputation dragged



Kelong

into the muddy waters of politics.

"Her Lordship has not presided over any of the political matters or cases involving Plateau State and we wonder why tagging her. If as the President of the Court of Appeal, she assigns judges and the matter does not end in your favour, how does that make her responsible?", GUDO asked.

However, the President expressed shock at how in the post, reference was made to the loss of her children. "How low can you descend in your desperation to attract

attention by dehumanizing someone? he asked.

"Ordinarily we would have ignored the post but because of your reference to the loss of her children, it has become necessary to make this response for the records. Death is an inevitable reality that confronts every home, as such the inhuman reference to her loss is unbecoming of the writer.

"As responsible PLATEAU STATE citizens, we all have a responsibility to protect our common heritage against forces of division, confusion and hate. Let us unite for a better and prosperous Plateau", he advised.

## Benue revenue boss hosts set 88.

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

The Acting Executive Chairman, Benue State Internal Revenue Service, Mr. Emmanuel Agema has hosted members of Set 88 of Government Technical

College, Makurdi who paid him a felicitation visit at the Revenue House.

The tax boss, who was overwhelmed and delighted to receive his school mates, expressed excitement seeing them after a very

long time.

Mr. Agema who extolled the leadership quality of the association for organising the visit, pledged his support to the association and urged the group to always remain united in developing the association.

Speaking during the courtesy call, the interim chairman, Set 88, Mr. Orshi Tyover Charles, appreciated the chairman for his capacity to grant them audience and congratulated the chairman on his appointment, noting that the elevation was not only a testament of his hard work and dedication to service but a reflection of the values instilled in him during their school days.

Orshi while commending the

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has charged the Governor-elect of Kogi State, Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo to address challenges bedeviling workers in the state on assumption of office come January next year.

The Kogi State NLC Chairman, Comrade Gabriel Amari gave the charge in a statement where he was felicitating with the governor-elect on his victory at the just concluded Kogi State Governorship election.

Amari, who noted that the union is looking forward to a robust relationship with the incoming administration, said the Governor-elect should address the area of workers' welfare vis a-vis salaries and emoluments.

The NLC chairman said the support received from workers during last Saturday's Gubernatorial election was with the hope of addressing their pains down to the local government areas.

"The emergence of Ododo signals the dawn of a new development in the history of Kogi State. As a Labour

## Nigeria's inflation rate hits record high

By DORCAS PANKYES

NIGERIA'S inflation rate climbed to a record high of 27.33% in October 2023, signaling a worrisome trend for the economy. This represents a

significant increase of 0.61% points compared to the previous month's rate and a staggering 6.24% points higher than the rate recorded in October 2022. The rise in inflation was primarily driven by increases in various sectors, including food and non-alcoholic beverages, housing, clothing, transportation, and healthcare. These price hikes have put a strain on the average Nigerian's ability to afford basic goods and services. On a month-to-month basis, the inflation rate slowed down slightly to 1.73% in October 2023, indicating a marginal decrease compared to the preceding month. However, the overall upward trajectory of inflation remains a concern for policymakers and citizens alike. The food inflation rate also surged to 31.52% on a year-on-year basis in October 2023, driven by increases in prices of bread, cereals, oil, fat, potatoes, yam, fish, fruit, meat, vegetables, and dairy products. Although there was a slight decrease in food inflation on a month-on-month basis, the overall trend remains worrisome. Furthermore, the core

inflation rate, which excludes volatile farm produce and energy prices, stood at 22.58% in October 2023 on a year-on-year basis. This marks a substantial increase compared to the same period in the previous year. Both urban and rural areas experienced significant inflationary pressures. Urban inflation reached 29.29% on a year-on-year basis, while rural inflation stood at 25.58%. These high inflation rates pose challenges for Nigerians across all regions. The Nigerian government and monetary authorities have been grappling with the issue of rising inflation and its impact on the economy. Efforts to address the situation may involve implementing policies to stabilize prices, improve agricultural productivity, and enhance overall economic resilience. The current inflationary pressures are likely to have far-reaching consequences, affecting the cost of living, business operations, and investment decisions. It remains crucial for stakeholders to monitor the situation closely and take appropriate measures to mitigate the impact of inflation on the Nigerian population.

chairman for improving the revenue profile of the state, increasing tax net and supporting the governor in prompt payment of salaries in the state, advised him to remain steadfast, committed and focused to the responsibilities bestowed on him through his appointment. He noted that the challenges may be tough and enormous but the set has high optimism in his capacity to take reasonable and right decisions that would impact Benue people positively. A statement by media assistant to the BIRS chairman, Mrs. Jacintha Benard, said there was presentation of a gift to the acting chairman as a symbol of appreciation for his achievements and a prayer session to dedicate the chairman and his office to God.

## NLC tasks Kogi Governor - elect on workers' challenges



Amri

movement representing the interest of workers, we are assuring the incoming administration of our 100 percent support to achieve Kogi State of our dream.

"It is on this note that we are appealing to the Governor-elect, Alhaji Usman Ahmed Ododo to address the challenges workers are facing in Kogi State, ranging from welfare, vis a-vis salaries and emoluments. " Workers are having a

renewed hope that these challenges NLC mentioned earlier, will be nipped in the bud. NLC will keep praying for wisdom from God for the incoming administration in Kogi State to succeed", the statement added.

While extending the felicitation to the Deputy Governor-Elect, Comrade Joel Oyibo on their victory at the poll, Amari urged him to work genuinely with his boss for a new Kogi State for civil servants and for all.



Agema

## SUNDAY FEATURE

## AFL: Best thing' for continent or 'super silly'?

By  
PIERS EDWARDS

**T**HE African Football League (AFL), which concluded on Sunday when Mamelodi Sundowns won the title, has received mixed reviews after its inaugural edition.

The South African club **clinched the trophy** on home soil when beating Morocco's Wydad Casablanca 2-0 to seal a 3-2 aggregate win in front of a packed crowd in Pretoria.

The new tournament, created by world governing body Fifa and the Confederation of African Football (Caf), featured eight teams, with 24 expected in 2024 for the tournament's second outing.

After Sundowns celebrated, Fifa president Gianni Infantino - who attended the final at Loftus Versfeld Stadium - was effusive in his praise for a tournament he has long championed.

"This is what African football needs - the best playing together more often in a top professional environment," Infantino said.

"I'm very proud of this collaboration between Fifa and Caf. We're seeing on the field of play as well [that] it brings a lot of quality for Africa and for the world."

Sundowns and Wydad aside, the other contestants included Egyptians Al Ahly, Tunisia's Esperance, TP Mazembe of DR Congo, Angolans Petro de Atletico, Tanzania's Simba and Enyimba of Nigeria.

While Infantino may have understandably waxed lyrical after seeing his brainchild come to fruition nearly **four years after first proposing it**, others accentuated both pluses and minuses in assessing the initial tournament.

"My main concern is the amount of games that players have to play from a health aspect," former South Africa international Matthew Booth, who played for Sundowns in two separate spells, told BBC Sport Africa.

"In South Africa, we have concluded the MTN 8 competition and League Cup, we are well into our league and clubs have started to play Caf Champions League and Confederations Cup matches.

"Sundowns have just played an additional six games in the AFL so from a game overload point of view, we've got to be very careful. I think only Sundowns in South Africa has got a big enough squad to cope with that load."

In future, the winners will not play six games but more than double that given this year's inaugural event was vastly slimmed down - reduced from the initially proposed 24 teams - just three months before kick-off.

This meant only 14 matches were played in total, in contrast to the 197 initially earmarked by Caf and Fifa for a 24-team event - a tally that could yet re-emerge, even as many AFL teams also contest the concurrent Champions League.

**Prize money v prestige?**

The AFL kicked off amidst great fanfare on 20 October when Simba of Tanzania hosted Egyptian giants Al Ahly in front of a bumper crowd

One of the AFL's stated aims is to "bring much-needed new streams of



The AFL was a joint creation by Fifa and Caf, whose respective presidents Gianni Infantino and Patrice Motsepe both attended Sunday's final in Pretoria



South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns received the African Football League trophy from the presidents of both Fifa and Caf.

financial investment into African football", with the prize money on offer greater than that handed out in the continent's Champions League.

Both the AFL and Champions League winners receive \$4m, albeit with the latter event taking months not weeks, while the AFL runners-up take home \$2.8m, which is \$800,000 more than the beaten Champions League finalists receive.

Eliminated at the quarter-final stage, Simba received \$900,000 for their two matches, which the club's media manager described as a "financial windfall".

"When you look at the number of games versus the income, it's very different and will help us in running the club from administration, salaries and bonuses, so the money is very useful," Ahmed Ally told the BBC.

"The tournament has good financial muscle and has come to save African clubs who've been struggling to make

money."

Booth, who made over 150 appearances for Sundowns between 1998 and 2011, is not so sure.

"We have to be very careful about this competition being elitist and a case of wealthy clubs getting even wealthier. If the AFL money went to the Champions League, there would be more trickledown to the smaller clubs," the 46-year-old said.

"There are advantages and disadvantages either way and these have just got to be weighed up properly by the powers that be.

"On the positive side, the fact that Sundowns established themselves as the number one club in Africa is a massive point of pride for us South Africans, and a lot of people are talking about the amount of money they've just won.

"The continent's top clubs seem to win their local leagues every year, so to be able to play against tough opponents at certain stages is a good thing for player development and thus national teams."

In many pundits' eyes, an existing tournament already provides such opportunities to players - the Champions League, which launched as the African Cup of Champions Clubs nearly 60 years ago.

Given last season's Champions League featured 58 teams from 46 different countries and required nine months of competition, the tournament is seen as a tougher nut to crack by some fans.

"I don't think the AFL could ever be more prestigious than the Champions League where you need to work harder, face tougher competition and play in places where

conditions might not favour you," said Sudanese football scout Abdul Musa.

"The Champions League qualifies you for the Club World Cup and is - historically - a bigger prize. If they put similar attention, money and marketing into the Champions League, it could benefit more clubs because you have 50-60 teams in the Champions League, not just eight."

One fan of Nigeria's Enyimba does not share such concerns, even if her favourites disappointed when losing 4-0 on aggregate to Wydad in the AFL quarter-finals, the stage where all teams began.

"This is the best thing that has happened to Africans over the years, because it gives us the leverage to unite together and showcase our rich heritage and culture," Jennifer Ezinne Uduma told the BBC.

It is a viewpoint with which Uduma's compatriot Oluwashina Okeleji, a Nigerian sports journalist, disagrees.

"All of the investment in the AFL should have gone to the Champions League - revamp it, pump in a lot of money and make it more popular," he told BBC Sport Africa.

"The whole 'Super League' idea is super silly in my opinion, and I don't think a lot of fans are talking about it because it doesn't look like a pan-African tournament but one for a select few competing for money over three weeks.

Al Ahly fans came out in force for their two home games in this year's African Football League

"That it's happening side-by-side with the Caf Champions League is a bit shocking - as in, which one should we take more seriously?"

Both Caf and Fifa say there are no plans to scrap the Champions League, which brings with it the honour of becoming Africa's Fifa Club World Cup representative - an incentive the AFL cannot currently boast.

"The AFL will not cannibalise and compete with the Caf Champions League; the two competitions will each have their own strong unique qualities," AFL organisers recently stated.

At present, their aim is to distribute AFL-generated funds "to all 54 Caf members and local leagues to improve football development", which does not happen with the Champions League.

It is unclear, however, if the sums generated by this year's inaugural AFL, sponsored by Visit Saudi and Visit Rwanda, will be enough to be spread around the continent after first covering the \$12m in prize

money to the teams.

Enjoyment of the inaugural AFL appeared to vary considerably across Africa, with the levels of interest seemingly dictated by whether a country had a tournament representative or not.

"There was next to no interest in Zimbabwe, with many considering it an unnecessary competition when we already have the Champions League," said Harare-based reporter Steve Vickers.

The same opinion was repeated by journalists in several other non-represented countries, whereas the AFL made much more of an impact among football fans in the eight (out of a possible 54) partaking nations.

"Angolan fans loved being in the maiden edition, but champions Petro de Atletico were accused of lacking fitness and competitiveness given that the local championship had only started five days earlier," said Angolan reporter Arlindo Macedo.

"Regarding the prize money, it is more credible than ever that the club will invest more in the AFL to generate greater gains and expand its ambitions, such as raising the squad level via future signings.

The AFL was a joint creation by Fifa and Caf, whose respective presidents Gianni Infantino and Patrice Motsepe both attended Sunday's final in Pretoria

Fans in Morocco followed further than most after Wydad, who **won their third African club crown** last year, reached the final.

"It was widely watched here in Morocco, with the existence of the biggest African teams another reason for the interest," football expert Jalal Bounouar explained.

"However, the fans were not satisfied as the games were not that entertaining or competitive, save for those involving Sundowns as they were great and played high-level football."

Local interest in Egypt ended as soon as Al Ahly, the record 11-time continental champions, exited in the semi-finals at the hands of Sundowns, one reporter told the BBC.

Viewing figures have yet to be announced by broadcasters but the number of subscribers to the **AFL's YouTube page** rose from under 1,000 to just over 9,000 during the course of the 24-day competition, while its streams of Sunday's match has attracted 38,000 views at time of publication.

Many games were well attended, and the firm expectation - and hope - from organisers is that crowds, viewing figures and interest will only grow as the embryonic AFL continues its development.

"This is here to stay, here to grow, here to have an impact, here to give hopes and dreams to the entire African population in Africa and to the population around the world," Infantino rallied in Pretoria.



Al Ahly fans came out in force for their two home games in this year's African Football League

## NEWS

## COWAN seeks support on establishment of Gender Commission

By DUMAH RANDONG

**P**LATEAU State Coordinator, Country Women Association of Nigeria, COWAN, Jessica Vonkat has called on stakeholders and relevant organizations to lend their voice to the establishment of Gender and Equal Opportunity Commission for the advancement of the cause of women and the less privileged in the society.

Vonkat stated this when she led some officials of the organization to a courtesy call at Government House, Rayfield, Jos.

Country Women Association of Nigeria is a Non-Governmental Organization, non-political and non religious volunteer women organization established with the aim of uplifting the living standard of rural and urban poor women in Nigeria.

The state coordinator said the organization, established in 1990 in the state, has been working in the 17 local government areas in collaboration with state and non-state actors in providing developmental support to women, youths and people with disabilities and has reached out to over 70,000 beneficiaries.

Plateau State Deputy



Piyo

Governor, Mrs Josephine Piyo, appreciated the the women group for coming to identify with the 'Time is Now' administration led by Governor Caleb Mutwang and promised to give them the maximum support to succeed.

Meantime, Christian Youth in Politics Initiative, Plateau State Northern Senatorial Zone, were also at Government House, Rayfield to identify with the 'Time is Now' administration.

Leader of the group,

Ephraim Davou said the youth organization has been engaging the youth in awareness to participate in politics, skills acquisition training and sensitization against drug abuse.

Plateau State Deputy Governor, Josephine Piyo, commended the contributions and prayer of the youths for the success and development of Plateau State government.

Piyo assured them of government's collaboration to provide empowerment and order useful engagement that will uplift their standard of

communities.

He said the release of the funds by the governor followed the successful implementation of projects executed by the CSDA under the GO-CARES Programme.

The GM therefore commended the governor for supporting the CSDA projects. He said Gombe State is performing greatly among the participating states.

Malam Haruna Ahmed explained that the training was meant to enlighten the benefitting communities on the concepts of the project cycles, roles and responsibilities, sustainability and maintenance, community procurement, financial management and bookkeeping.

He congratulated the participants of the training who were drawn from the eleven local government areas of the state on the inclusion of their various communities as beneficiaries of the intervention which cuts across health, education, nutrition and water sectors.

The GM also urged the committees to maintain standards and ensure that they monitor the execution of the projects from the beginning to completion and also ensure the sustainability.

The CSDA's Manager of Basic Services, Mr. Labilwa Ismaila, and that of Finance and Administration, Alhaji Ibrahim Abubakar Gwani and that of Monitoring and Evaluation, Mallam Sani Adamu, all explained the expectations of their various departments from the participants.

Some of the participants, such as the former Clerk to the Gombe State House of Assembly, Shehu Mohammed Atiku who is also the District Head of Gadawo, the Secretary of Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI), Village Head of Daban Fulani and Mrs Josephine Malang from Yamgana Women Group in Shongom Local Government Area, appreciated the state governor and the CSDA for the intervention.

They all stated that the projects have direct bearing on the masses especially those living at the grassroots.

They particularly appreciated Governor Inuwa Yahaya for using the programme to reach communities that lacked basic

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

**T**HE Benue State Commissioner for Finance, Mr. Michael Oglegba has said that prudent management and creative application of resources adopted by Governor Hyacinth Iormem Alia is aimed at bringing back stability into the state economy.

Mr. Oglegba who was fielding questions from journalists in his office recently in Makurdi gave insight into the workings of the ministry under his watch in trying to reposition the financial status of the state.

Oglegba said "the present government at inception took drastic measures to reduce cost of governance by blocking the hitherto established conduit pipes to stop leakages of meagre resources accruing to the state".

The action, the Commissioner said, "had rescued over 1.2 million Naira in the initial months of the administration. The continuation of those efforts has increased much more funds saved to the coffers of the state and is ongoing as we speak".

"The renewed hope means the proper usage of any meagre resources for the people for which the resources are meant. The Internally Generated Revenue, IGR, of the state has played a crucial and strategic role in our strategy to run the state. What is gotten is being ploughed back into the coffers of the state to bring about what we are doing; the construction of the road so far and other capital projects will follow as the financial position of the state improves", the Commissioner said.

Mr Oglegba frowned at a situation where the state under the past administration had to borrow to augment the federal allocations to enable payment of

amenities.

They therefore promised to ensure that the projects will be completed within the specified time and according to specification.

Before the training, CSDA had conducted Needs Assessment, Participatory Rural Appraisal and Field Appraisal in the communities, while Community Project Launch will follow suit.

It would be recalled that the CSDA has just completed similar projects in about 35 communities spread across the state in the first and second phases of the

## Prudent resources management is to ensure economic stability Oglegba



Oglegba

staff salaries, pensions and areas.

He disclosed that states in our income bracket paid salaries at the time, half of what their state got, pointing out that, "a state that pays out 95% of what accrues to it as recurrent expenditure and is left with only 5% for capital projects cannot develop".

The commissioner revealed that "When we came in, there were people on the state wage bill that had retired since 1976. We wanted to find out if these people were still alive. People that have retired since 2002 were yet to be captured for pension both at the local government and state level and we wondered what was the problem".

"Salaries, pensions and payments to contractors had also accumulated to hundreds of billions of naira. You will agree with me that there is no money the state can pay all at once. We are taking it into two categories; first, whoever retires now gets his gratuity at the end of the first month or at most, the second. This, we are doing to phase off the problem of accumulation. And then, the payment of salaries on the 25th of every month.

"Gov. Hyacinth Alia is bent on restoring the dignity of the Benue worker, retired or working. The situation where a

retired civil servant died from lack of money to buy drugs, a situation that could have been prevented, is unacceptable. Death benefits to those who die on the job are now also paid to the family of the deceased in the first month", the commissioner said.

Mr Oglegba disclosed that "the state government was partnering with agencies to revamp vegetation and moribund companies to create jobs and take youths off the streets into productive lives.

To this end, the state government was in discussions with the federal government, drawing her attention to possible intervention. When that is procured, you can be sure it will be judiciously utilized for the good of Benue people".

"The Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Iormem Alia's administration wishes to move Benue State from the obscurity foisted on the state in the past years to the notoriety of industrialised states on the Nigerian map. This, we hope to achieve by industrialising the agricultural sector of the Benue economy and adding value to farmers' efforts, creating jobs, payment of salaries as well as providing businesses with the enabling environment to thrive", Mr Oglegba said.

## Gov Yahaya releases N693m for GO-CARE projects

From WILLIE ATTAH, Gombe

**G**OMBE State Governor, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya, has approved the release of six hundred and ninety three million Naira (N693,000,000.00) to the Gombe State agency for Community And Social Development (CSDA) for the third batch of intervention of the GO-CARES Projects.

General Manager of the CSDA, Malam Haruna Ahmed Imam, disclosed this at the end of a training for community groups and project management committees and sub committee heads on micro projects implementation across seventy seven (77) additional



## AMDF condemns arrest, detention of journalist

From JOHN FWAH Kaduna

**A**FRICA Media Development Foundation (AMDF) has condemned the arrest and detention of a Kaduna based Nigerian journalist, Achadu Gabriel Idibia.

AMDF Founder for the Press Freedom Surveillance Team, recently said the Foundation had closely followed the events leading to the arrest and detention of Achadu Gabriel Idibia, a staff of Daybreak Newspapers stationed in Kaduna, Nigeria.

Idibia was detained over a report published on September 24th titled "Kaduna Hajj camp, a national shame, men, women sleep together in overcrowded hall - investigation."

The report, which has video evidence and quoted sources supporting it, exposed the deteriorated and poor state of the camp and the plight of Muslim pilgrims at the Mando

Hajj Camp, Kaduna.

Earlier, on September 26th, 2023, Mr. Idibia was arrested and detained at a facility run by Special Police Unit "Operation Yaki" over the news report - he was released on bail signed by a colleague bearing Amos Mathew of the New Nigeria Newspapers, reports revealed.

AMDF noted that the reason behind the arrest was alleged "intimidation of the Executive Secretary" of the Pilgrims Agency.

The Emir of Zazzau was recently heard clearly on Voice of America, Hausa Service radio, condemning the handling of the last Hajj exercise by Kaduna State officials.

It is also on record that the National Hajj Commission (NAHCON) has listed Kaduna among states sabotaging Hajj exercise. So, the Executive Secretary should not vent his anger on Idibia.

The arrest and harassment of Gabriel Idibia is a grave violation

of human rights and a deliberate attempt to gag the press.

AMDF insists that all charges against Idibia be dropped. Authorities must desist from all forms of harassment and intimidation of journalists.

We condemn every form of abuse of office and the obvious attempt to subjugate journalists by any group or individual. We believe that there can be no meaningful development without the watchful eye of the press that seeks to hold power to account and ensure that every sector and component of human development receives the needed attention by the government and its agencies.

We call on the Nigeria Police to align with journalists as the voice of the voiceless to ensure without compromise, the safety of Nigerians, especially journalists without fear or favor.

SUNDAY MAGAZINE



Tinubu



Lalong



Ajaero

# Is labour movement endangered?

immediately the violence in some parts of the state – in line with the recommendations of the 2004 White Paper on Transport Union Matters in the state.

Both parties were advised to embrace dialogue for the socio-economic benefit of the state and country. The situation between RTEAN/TUC versus the Lagos State government is still work in progress to finally find an amicable solution to the industrial dispute, between the Lagos State government and RTEAN/TUC, who is going to blink first?

As if that was not enough,

under Hope Uzodinma also murdered sleep in his state when he decided to introduce some obnoxious labour policies that caught the attention of the labour movement. Media reports had it that Ajaero, who stormed Owerri to lead a protest over unpaid salaries to government employees in Imo State was beaten by hoodlums and allegedly detained for hours by the police in the state.

Consequently, the labour movement gave the Federal Government an ultimatum to arrest the perpetrators among other demands, to avoid a strike.

To prevent this labour action, the Federal Government secured a restraining order against the unions at the National Industrial Court but the labour leadership mobilised workers for the strike which commenced last Tuesday.

Yet again, the Nigerian economy was grounded as workers were called out to down tools in protest over the manhandling of Ajaero in Owerri. But in a swift reaction, the National Security Adviser, NSA Nuhu Ribadu held a meeting with labour leaders over the industrial impasse and pleaded with them to shelve or suspend the action in the

interest of the economy. Ribadu, as at Wednesday informed the labour leaders that two of the hoodlums who attacked Ajaero were under detention and their other demands would be looked into subsequently.

The National Deputy President of the TUC, Tommy Etim, explained that the strike was suspended based on the trust the unions had in Ribadu.

He stated, "The NECs of the NLC and the TUC have suspended the strike. We did this based on our trust on the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu who gave us his word. We also saw that he wasn't playing politics with our demands and he was ready and promised to follow up with everything."

Asked whether the suspension of the strike was indefinite, Etim said, "It is a temporary suspension. We are going to give them some time after which we will meet and if they fail to meet up, the strike resumes".

"We listened to the NSA and he listened to us. He noted that Ajaero didn't do anything wrong by going to Imo State. We must commend NSA and it is because of him that there is a suspension of the strike."

Ribadu noted that the

Federal Government regretted the incident which happened in Imo and condemned it in its entirety, adding that it was against the rule of law and the principles of freedom of association and expression subscribed to by President Bola Tinubu and his administration.

In a different reaction however, the organised Private Sector and the maritime operators carpeted the NLC and TUC over the industrial action, stating that it was ill-timed and misconceived. The OPS comprising critical players in the economy noted that the strike would affect the Federal Government's ability to meet its yearly revenue target.

From the foregoing it is obvious that even the labour movement in Nigeria may be singing discordant tunes on mutual issues. Add the many allegations of compromise by leaders of the movement, this development may spell a bleak future to the continuous survival and respect the unions command amongst Nigerians. It is time to clean the Augean stables and restore the fading glory of the movement if it must not be seen as an endangered specie in Nigeria.

“  
**The National Deputy President of the TUC, Tommy Etim, explained that the strike was suspended based on the trust the unions had in Ribadu. He stated, "The NECs of the NLC and the TUC have suspended the strike. We did this based on our trust on the National Security Adviser, Nuhu Ribadu who gave us his word. We also saw that he wasn't playing politics with our demands and he was ready and promised to follow up with everything."**  
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## METRO-FOCUS

# Poverty mentality, Nigerians' bane

By YVONNE ISHOLA

**O**NE of the worst and unkind types of bondage is the poverty mentality. It cages one, magnifying fears and limits to a level so out of this world. You become a dreamer where you should be a pilot of affairs. Your mindset keeps you on the sidelines where you should be on the driver's seat.

A lady shared her own story which captures what one is trying to say. She said when she was growing up, her family had only one towel which they all shared, her parents inclusive. Anytime, anyone of them was going to the bathroom, they looked for it from the last person that used it. It was usually the cause of fights and quarrels among the children. And the cause for receiving lashes of cane from their parents, it could earn one beatings if not left on the bathroom door.

The above lady said, at some point, the towel became worn out and tore to several pieces, but they continued using the old pieces like that. The parents grabbed a piece, and so did the children.

This continued until one of the sisters went for her National Youth Service Corps. She was posted out of their state, so she was forced to shop for some personal things, including a towel. To her surprise, it was very cheap. At that time, a very big towel was less than one thousand Naira (N1000).

When the younger sister that narrated the story above visited her older sister, she was shocked to discover that her sister had several towels, each kept at one point in her house to serve a purpose. For example, she kept one outside for dusting off her leg before entering her apartment.

She explained to her younger sister that she had to breakthrough that bondage by making towel a common thing



in her house after the demeaning experience they suffered at home. She concluded by telling her sister that their parents fed them well, paid their school fees but made them live like paupers as far as towel was concerned when it is very cheap.

Another young woman shared her experience where their toilet broke and they were forced to continue using it like that until they packed out of the rented house. She said it was so disgraceful that she always lied to her friends anytime they came around and wanted to use their toilet, that someone was using it.

Years later, when she was building her house, she discovered that it was not beyond their reach to replace the toilet but for some reasons, her parents who were both civil servants, refused to replace it.

A colleague in the office told one how she was forced to always choose between Christmas clothes or school uniform. She used to choose school uniform and would wear it on Christmas day with pride. It wasn't that her parents couldn't afford to give her both but they had no regards for school but she had high regard for school. Today, they are

eating of the fruit of her resilience and determination.

One is also guilty of allowing poverty mentality to rule one. Several times, one had patronised second hand socks sellers and even second hand towels for car and dusting surfaces. It was not until recently that one discovered that one could get the new ones at wholesale shop at the same price.

One had listened to the marketers who claim that the second hand products are top quality. But one should be able to make a distinction. There are things that Nigerians produce that are top quality. There little things like socks, towels, handkerchiefs, etc that we produce in Nigeria that are good enough. You may pay the same amount for a second hand which is not wise.

There are also personal items like underwear that is not advisable to buy the second hand. Unfortunately, so many people patronise second hand panties, boxers, braziers, and even body towels. We often forget that the last person that wore the clothes may have had an infection that was contagious.

One has heard the case of a baby who ended up with a terrible skin disorder after its

mother used a second hand towel on the baby when it was born. The parents spent so much in JUTH not to talk of weeks spent before the disease was addressed. The disease took its toll on the baby and mother.

A cousin of mind went for second hand blanket which she believed to be cheaper only for her to discover that the new one cost the same in the whole sale shop in Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos. She lives to regret her choice because the material used for the second hand blanket in of very low quality and the wool comes off and sticks to her hair and dark clothes. The colour too is fast, as such, it is steadily fading.

The problem with us is poverty mentality. We believe something is out of our reach without asking about the price and comparing the two. We prefer to go for the lesser alternative, telling ourselves that it is the best just as the marketers want us to believe.

Our manufacturers have been pushed to the background as second hand items take the place of their products. When will we ever give 'Made in Nigeria' items a chance? The time is now. Remember, the change begins with you!

**"Another young woman shared her experience where their toilet broke and they were forced to continue using it like that until they packed out of the rented house. She said it was so disgraceful that she always lied to her friends anytime they came around and wanted to use their toilet, that someone was using it. Years later, when she was building her house, she discovered that it was not beyond their reach to replace the toilet but for some reasons, her parents who were both civil servants, refused to replace it. A colleague in the office told one how she was forced to always choose between Christmas clothes or school uniform. She used to choose school uniform and would wear it on Christmas day with pride. It wasn't that her parents couldn't afford to give her both but they had no regards for school but she had high regard for school. Today, they are eating of the fruit of her resilience and determination."**



# SUNDAY PEOPLE

## MUTFWANG RECEIVES HEAD OF SEDIN

**Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang recently received on a courtesy call Head of SEDIN Programme and Cluster Coordinator SEDEC GIZ Nigeria and ECOWAS, Mr. Marcus Wauschkuhn at the new Government House Rayfield, Jos**



**Governor Mutfwang welcoming Mr. Marcus Wauschkuhn and team**



**Deputy Governor, Hon. Josephine Piyo (right) with the Secretary to Government of the State, Arc Samuel Nanchang Jatau**



**Cross section of members of the delegation**



**Plateau State Governor, Barr. Mutfwang, (left) presenting souvenir to the leader of delegation**



**HoS, Barr Rauta Dakok (left) and the CoS, Engr. Jeremiah Satmak**



**ALGON Chairman and Wase TIC, Hon. Hamisu Anani with other state government appointees**



**From left are, Commissioners of Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Ephraim Usman, Finance, Hon. Grace Shwarta Dongkum and Budget**



**Governor Mutfwang, Deputy, Hon. Piyo, Government officials in a photograph with Mr. Marcus Wauschkuhn and team**

Photos: DANLADI DUK

**Road Runner**  
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**Anticipation: Questions/answers**

1. What should you do when there is a sharp dip in the road ahead?  
**Reduce your speed, keep to the right and watch out for parked vehicles**
2. when you see a red warning triangle (c-caution) on the road ahead of you, you should...?  
**Slow down and watch for hazard ahead**
3. You are approaching traffic lights that you know have been green for some time. What should you do?  
**Prepare to stop in case they may change before you reach them**
4. You are approaching a junction that is controlled by traffic lights. They are temporarily off. What should you do?  
**Drive carefully while watching out for other traffic.**
5. You are driving along and see cattle on the road ahead. What should you do?  
**Reduce speed and overtake with care.**
6. You see horse riders on the road ahead, you should...?  
**Reduce your speed and allow extra clearance.**
7. If you meet horses with riders on the road, you should be aware that ...?  
**Loud noise from your vehicle may frighten the horses and the horses may bolt.**
8. What should you do when you approach a hump-back hill?  
**Reduce speed, keep to the right and watch out for any parked vehicle which may be hidden from your view.**
9. you notice a large oil-spill on the road as you drive along, you should...?  
**Reduce speed by gently applying the brakes and putting your hazard lights.**
10. When meeting an oncoming vehicle with flashing amber lights, the vehicle may be...?  
**Extra wide, extra high or moving slowly.**
11. what are the three things to bear in mind when approaching rail lines?  
**The rails may be lower than the road surface**  
**The rails may be higher than the road surface**  
**Frictions (tyre grips) may be reduced while crossing the rail**
12. When crossing road markings such as lines and directional arrows, you should be aware that...?  
**Stopping distance is increased due to reduced tyre grip (friction).**  
**Consideration for other road users. Q/A**
13. You are driving along the road filled with pools of water/pedestrians ahead of you, what precautions should you take?  
**Reduce speed and try to avoid the pools of water so as not to splash the pedestrians.**
14. you are about to stop and notice that the vehicle behind you is towing a trailer. What should you do?  
**Indicate in good time and pull up gradually to allow the vehicle behind you extra stopping distance.**
15. A bus ahead is moving away from a bus stop. What are you expected to do?  
**Slow down and allow it to move out.**
16. what would you do on a narrow road with another vehicle coming in the opposite direction?  
**Reduce speed and allow reasonable clearance between your vehicle and the approaching one before proceeding.**
17. You are driving along and wish to stop over a shopping mall for shopping. What would you do?  
**Drive on until you find a parking space before stopping.**
18. you are driving behind another vehicle that you do not intend to overtake. What should you do?  
**Keep well back to allow following traffic to overtake you.**
19. If you fail to stay well back from a vehicle you do not intend to overtake, what may happen?  
**Other vehicles may attempt to overtake both vehicles thereby reducing the clearance for oncoming vehicles.**  
**Air turbulence from a large vehicle ahead could blow off your vehicle off course.**  
**It may be more difficult to overtake you.**
20. Why is tailgating (driving too close behind a vehicle in front) dangerous?  
**There is not sufficient space for you to stop in an emergency without colliding with the vehicle ahead of you.**
21. Tailgating on highway or expressway is unsafe because...?  
**Possibility of the vehicle in front stopping suddenly.**



**NEWS**

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

**NMDPRA: Staff accuse management of maladministration**



**Farouk**

**I**N the face of escalating economic challenges propelled by the removal of subsidy on petrol, there is a growing concern among staff of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, NMDPRA, over alleged administrative lapses, hindering optimal performance of the agency.

Credible sources in the agency alleged that the rate at which its head, Engnr Ahmed Farouk, throttles the globe, leaves him with no time to attend to crucial issues affecting the sector at home.

It was gathered that he travels out of the country, on average, three times in a month, aside from other local journeys.

Staff of the apex industry regulator have also been grumbling over delayed and skewed promotion exercises.

The situation has led to an aberration where some junior staff are placed above their seniors, who have been rendered redundant by poor labour practices.

An anonymous source claimed that the affected workers were encouraged to submit their grievances to a review committee.

He added that many months after submitting their petitions however, the matter remained intractable as nothing has been heard from the panel.

NMDPRA is a product of the Petroleum Industry Act, PIA, 2021. Worried by the sordid state of things, the immediate past president, Muhammodu Buhari signed the Reformatory Act to reduce replication of duty, wastage and enhance efficiency by streamlining the functions of sister agencies in the sector.

The legacy agencies brought under its umbrella are the Department of Petroleum Resources, DPR, Petroleum Equilization Fund, PEF, and Petroleum Products Price Regulatory Agency, PPPRA.

Among other things NMDPRA

functions include to regulate and monitor midstream and downstream operations in Nigeria; determine appropriate tariff methodology; set cost benchmarks for midstream and downstream operations and advise the government and stakeholders on commercial matters relating to tariff and pricing.

Since the Act came into being, there have been reported clashes between NMDPRA and another sister agency, Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, NUPRC. In July, President Bola Tinubu took steps to streamline their activities.

The new president stressed that the NUPRC shall be the exclusive technical and commercial regulator in respect of upstream petroleum operations and facilities, while the NMDPRA shall be the exclusive technical and commercial regulator in respect of petroleum operations and

facilities from the exit of the crude export terminals and the entry gate of the natural gas processing plants.

In August there were media reports of disquiet among staff over an internal reform that altered the nomenclature of some of the workers. For instance, someone on grade level 17 who ought to be a director, according to civil service rules, was still being addressed as a deputy director.

The management was also accused of maladministration and acting with impunity as though it is a personal fiefdom, to the disadvantage of staff, marketers, and the public interest.

Efforts to get the authority's reaction did not yield fruit. Messages sent to the email address [authority@nmdpra.gov.ng](mailto:authority@nmdpra.gov.ng) on its website did not deliver. Similarly, the telephone line on the website did not connect.

**BIRS boss warns staff against sharp practices**

From **TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

**T**HE Acting Executive Chairman, Benue Internal Revenue Service (BIRS), Mr. Emmanuel Agema has warned staff of the board to desist from all forms of corrupt practices to encourage taxpayers to contribute to the development of the state through payment of taxes.

The chairman who bared his mind while interacting with journalists in his office recently in Makurdi, said taxpayers will have

more confidence in the system when revenue generated are properly channeled to developmental projects. He insisted that his administration has zero tolerance for corruption and said staff would benefit more by doing things right.

He noted that when "people pay taxes to government officials but only see improvement in terms of flamboyant lifestyles in the number of cars, good houses, improved living conditions of revenue collectors rather than committing the

resources generated to infrastructure development such as building of hospitals, renovation of schools and provision of water and electricity, they get discouraged".

He added that his administration will go after any staff of the board with the intent to sabotage government's efforts in bringing dividends of democracy to Benue people.

According to the tax expert, what government of Reverend Father Hyacinth Alia has done within six months in the areas of payment of salaries, pensions and construction of roads across the state despite challenges, made Benue people believe that his administration means well for them. He pointed out that the people are equally happy that their taxes are being properly utilised.

He assured that BIRS under his leadership will continue to contribute its quota to the development of the state by ensuring that revenue sources were properly harnessed to support the present administration to bring the needed development in the state.

Agema who commended Governor Hyacinth Alia for giving him the opportunity to contribute his quota to the development of the new Benue, advised staff of the board to give him maximum cooperation and do things right at all times, shun all corrupt tendencies to assist government deliver on its campaign promises.



**Agema**

## SUNDAY FEATURE

# Nigeria's endless search for foreign investments

**Senator Adams Oshiomhole practically shocked the entire world the other day, during the screening of the new helmsman at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Dr Olayemi Cardoso and his deputies at the Chambers of the Nigerian Senate, writes MARCEL OKEKE.**

**O**SHIOMHOLE had told his colleagues, the soon-to-be bosses of the CBN and their teeming well-wishers that the fact that "Western institutions are clapping for Nigeria" regarding its economic policies means that "we are not getting it right." For emphasis, Oshiomhole who is also a former President of the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC) said each time "the West" is clapping for us as regards our economic policies, it means we are not getting it right. "We want Nigerians to be the ones clapping for us," he emphasised.

Truly, economic policies of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu Administration have been (perhaps unwittingly) plunging the Nigerian economy into the woods. Apparently being goaded and prodded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (agents of "the West"), the Tinubu administration has removed fuel subsidy and unified the exchange rates of the Naira (in the forex market).

These policies and their adjunct initiatives have so far unleashed untold hardship and pains on Nigerians. Rather than counting any gains of its policies, the Federal Government has been battling with cobbling together some packages of mere "palliatives" to assuage the suffering and impoverishment of the citizenry.

In this milieu and wild 'applause' from the IMF and the World Bank, the government has practically been trotting the globe to woo foreign investors to invest in Nigeria. Thus, at the recent 2023 United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in the US, President Tinubu and his brand new cabinet spent all their time scouting for investors (Nigerians and foreigners).

For close to one week, the entire Nigerian contingent was involved in 'town hall meetings' with Diasporan Nigerians and parleys with other top business persons attending the confab from wherever.

Unsurprisingly, a few days after the UNGA jamboree, the United States issued a strongly worded travel advisory to its citizens against making trips to Nigeria. Specifically, on September 20, the US Department of State warned US citizens "to reconsider travelling to Nigeria due to increased risk of crime, terrorism, civil unrest, kidnapping and armed gangs in the country."

The "do not travel" warning specifically mentioned Borno, Yobe, Kogi and Adamawa States due to terrorism and kidnapping; Bauchi, Gombe, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara states due to kidnapping.

A similar warning was issued for Abia, Anambra, Bayelsa, Delta, Enugu, Imo and Rivers (with the



exception of Port Harcourt) due to crime, kidnapping and armed gangs. While placing these states on Level 4—the highest risk category—the US warned that the security situation in those states was fluid and unpredictable due to widespread terrorist activity, inter-communal violence and kidnapping.

"Violent crime—such as armed robbery, assault, carjacking, kidnapping, hostage taking, roadside banditry and rape—is common throughout the country. Kidnapping for ransom occurs frequently, often targeting dual national citizens who have returned to Nigeria for a visit, as well as US citizens with perceived wealth. Kidnapping gangs have also stopped victims on interstate roads," the advisory stated.

A few days before the UNGA outing, President Tinubu made a similar trip to India at the invitation of that country's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, just to be one of some African Heads of Government to participate in the G-20 meeting being hosted by the 'Land of Nehru'.

Ahead of the days for the meeting, Tinubu practically 'couriered' almost all members of his cabinet from their inauguration venue to India, again, to scout for foreign investors. And for a couple of days before the G-20 meeting proper, the Nigerian contingent was deluding itself with 'marketing Nigeria' to Indian investors and Diaspora Nigerians in that country. The Tinubu team was so engrossed in the 'marketing Nigeria' business that

it began flaunting a huge sum of US\$14 billion as "already booked" and sealed business deal during the outing.

Alas, where are these much-flaunted foreign direct investments (FDIs)? Rather than any such investments coming into Nigeria, many multinationals that have been doing business in Nigeria for decades are closing down and leaving the country.

The policies of the Tinubu Administration in its almost five months have made them asphyxiated and they are moving to more business-friendly environments. The British pharmaceutical giant, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), which has operated in Nigeria for over half a century, closed shop recently. Similarly, PZ Cussons Nigeria—a household name in Nigeria, also left the country recently.

Other such big corporate names are almost being rendered bankrupt by the import and impact of the Naira floatation/devaluation policy. The two leading breweries—Nigerian Breweries Plc and Guinness Nigeria Plc—each reported huge losses in their audited first-half 2023 financial statements.

The same with Unilever Nigeria Plc, Cadbury's Nigeria Plc, Nestle Nigeria Plc, MTN (Telecom) Nigeria and a host of others. Each one of them reported losses owing to "foreign exchange exposure" during the first-half 2023.

Although some, like Nigerian Breweries, have attempted to whittle their losses through

upward adjustments of prices of their products, they are being confronted by consumer resistance due to largely weakened purchasing power. All things being equal, it is not unlikely that the second half of 2023 would even be worse than the first-half in the finances of these companies.

This is because the losses in their financial statements are policy-induced: the sharp and sudden weakening of the Naira exchange rate vis-à-vis the dollar remains unforeseen and unplanned for. Similarly, the quantum jump in the cost of doing business which is traceable to fuel subsidy removal took businesses by surprise—against their budgets and forecasts for the year.

Prices of petrol, diesel and other production inputs and machineries have practically gone through the roof since end-May 2023; and businesses have been hard hit.

It is therefore not an irony that while Tinubu and his cabinet are junketing all over the place looking for foreign investors, reports from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) show that Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) inflow into Nigeria is on a sharp decline.

Specifically, of the US\$1 billion foreign capital that came into Nigeria (capital importation) in the second quarter 2023, FDI accounted for the least: only 8.35 per cent or US\$86.03 million. Portfolio investment ('hot money') accounted for 10.37 per cent or US\$106.85 million while 'Other investments' (trade

credits, loans, currency deposits and other claims) accounted for the lion's share: 81.28 per cent or US\$837.34 million.

While total capital importation stood at US\$1.53 billion in the second quarter of 2022, by end-June 2023, it has dropped by 33 per cent to stand at about only US\$1.0 billion. This remarkable decline between the two corresponding quarters goes to underscore the mounting challenges in the way of foreign investment inflow into Nigeria. These challenges include the very high cost of doing business in Nigeria, the unstable political and security environment (as itemised in the US travel advisory), and the widespread corruption especially among government agencies.

Ironically, the United States which is warning its citizens against travelling to Nigeria, occupied the topmost position (by country of origin) as source of capital importation into Nigeria, according to the NBS data. During the second quarter 2023, US\$271.92 million investment or 26.39 per cent of total capital importation into Nigeria came from the US. Therefore, the US stance (travel advisory) vividly shows that the proverbial fish has started 'rotting' from the head: what becomes of the rest of the body? Others would most likely queue behind the US!

**\*\*\* Okeke is a practicing Economist, Business Strategist, Sustainability expert and ex-Chief Economist of Zenith Bank Plc\***

## SUNDAY SPORTS

# Is Hayes ready for the challenge ahead?

**Managing the United States national team is widely regarded as the biggest job in women's football - so is Emma Hayes ready for the challenge ahead? Hayes, 47, has led Chelsea to 13 major trophies in her 11 years managing the Women's Super League side but says the "time is right" to move on, EMMA SANDERS writes.**

**H**ER widely anticipated move to the USA was confirmed recently and she will join up with the four-time world champions at the end of the season, just in time for the 2024 Olympic Games.

With a new squad to manage, a major tournament on the horizon and huge levels of expectation to fulfil, it is not an easy task for Hayes - but it is one she is more than prepared for.

"This is my club and it will always be my club," Hayes said she addressed the media for the first time since announcing her departure from Chelsea.

It was a moment she "hoped would never come" but personal circumstances ultimately led to Hayes' decision to call time on a successful WSL career.

As a mum to five-year-old son Harry, Hayes craves family time - particularly following the passing of her father in October - and that was the deciding factor, with international management providing more flexibility than the daily demands of club football.

"This is not a selfish decision, it's a selfless decision. It's about putting first other things in my life and I'm ready for that," said Hayes.

She also wanted to "leave at the top" and having wrapped up a fourth successive WSL title last season, Hayes has certainly done that.

The USA job is one many coaches dream of taking on - they have a rich history of success, have global superstars representing the badge and countless resources at their disposal.

Hayes spoke previously about her desire to lead a country on the biggest stage and at major tournaments.

She has a history working in the US as head coach at Chicago Red Stars and once admitted that although she was born in England, she was "definitely made in America".

"As a little girl I always thought maybe one day [managing a national team] would come," Hayes said last week. "For most of us, we don't necessarily fulfil every dream we have."

Another significant factor is that Hayes is highly valued by US Soccer. The federation will make her the highest-paid female manager in the world and she is expected to be paid an equal wage to USA men's boss Gregg Berhalter.

Former England striker Ellen White said: "What she's done for the game has been phenomenal. What she's done for Chelsea, what she's done for women in sport, for mothers in sport as well, advocating for



Hayes

players, it's been incredible.

"Being on the opposition, we always had so much respect for what she's done, and players just spoke so highly of her. It's going to be a real shame for the WSL, but you want to wish her well and hope that she has an amazing next job.

"It's definitely going to be hard to replace her. But we're obviously thankful that she achieved what she did over here. Maybe not against some of the teams that I was playing for, but it's phenomenal what she's done for the game."

Jill Scott, another former Lioness, said: "She's completed WSL, hasn't she? Whoever comes into Chelsea now, it's going to be difficult. It's kind of like Alex Ferguson when he left Manchester United."

With every managerial role in football comes pressure. But nothing can compare to the expectation placed on the shoulders of the person leading the USA.

They are the most decorated nation in women's football history having won the Women's World Cup on four occasions, including back-to-back crowns in 2015 and 2019.

They are also four-time Olympic gold medallists and since Fifa rankings were established in 2003, the USA have been ranked number one for a total of 13 years.

But this is a USA team in transition.

It is only three months since their shock last-16 exit from the Women's World Cup - their worst ever finish at the tournament, which led to them falling as low as third in the world rankings for the first time.

each season.

She has managed to do this successfully for four seasons in a row, as well as winning five Women's FA Cups, two Women's League Cups and taking Chelsea to the Women's Champions League final for the first time in 2021.

She did this while continuing to challenge federations on things such as equal prize money and competition scheduling.

"I know my personality and I'm not afraid to do the tough things even though sometimes I'm the one who takes the battering from it," said Hayes.

US Soccer said: "Her experience in the USA, her understanding of our soccer landscape and her appreciation of what it means to coach this team makes her a natural fit for this role.

"Candidates underwent an intense and thorough interview process which included psychometrics and abstract reasoning tests, in-depth discussions of strategy, coaching philosophy and the current player pool, as well as evaluation on the reactions to pressure, culture-building and interactions with players and staff."

Hayes has also seen big players leave during her time at Chelsea but has managed to recruit suitable replacements in the transfer window - demonstrating her ability to continually rebuild.

The additions of Serb Jelena Cankovic and five-time Champions League winner Kadeisha Buchanan softened the departure of playmaker Ji So-yun in 2022, while Canadian Ashley Lawrence, and USA

internationals Mia Fishel and Catarina Macario made up for this summer's exits by captain Magdalena Eriksson and striker Pernille Harder - who Chelsea once paid a world record fee for.

Another strength of Hayes is her ability to find innovative ways to stay at the top.

She has sought advice from US basketball coaches, written a book on leadership, has recruited sleep experts, and frequently invited scientists and doctors into Chelsea to share their knowledge on menstrual cycles and training loads.

Scott said: "Every single player that I talk to who has played under Emma just says that her emotional intelligence and how she gets the best out of the players is on another level."

Anita Asante, who played under Hayes at Chelsea, said: "Throughout my career, whether she's been my coach or not, she's always been there for me. She's that one stable force I knew I could rely on in my time of need or when I was having a low in my football career.

"I never doubted for one second that I could pick up the phone and she would be there to support me through it.

"She would give me advice or help me figure out the next direction I needed to go. I think that speaks to how she treats every player as a person first. I think that's super important and that's why our relationship as friends has existed all this time."

All of these skills make Hayes a perfect candidate but what the USA craves most is a manager who knows how to win - and Hayes has done that in abundance.



# SUNDAY SPORTS



Ajayi

## Ajayi denies underestimating Lesotho after draw

**S**UPER Eagles defender, Semi Ajayi, has refuted claims of underestimating Lesotho following their 1-1 draw in the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifier, Soccer.net.ng reports. Despite creating multiple chances, the Super Eagles struggled to capitalise until Semi Ajayi equalised for the home side. Key opportunities included Kelechi Iheanacho's free-kick, saved in the first half, and a near-miss as he struck the woodwork in the second.

Speaking to the press post-match, the West Bromwich Albion defender adamantly denied any underestimation. "Absolutely not. We took this game very seriously; we gave our best; we didn't take them lightly," Ajayi asserted. Reaffirming their preparation and dedication, he stressed the team's seriousness in facing Lesotho and their commitment to learning and improving from the experience. "We prepared for the game

as we prepare for every game. I think we're just unfortunate not to take a few chances, but we'll learn from this and we'll definitely come back stronger in the next game," he added. Jose Peseiro's squad now shifts focus to their upcoming clash against Zimbabwe's Warriors at Huye Stadium in Butare on Sunday. The Super Eagles are determined to regroup and secure a decisive victory in their next encounter.

## Nigerian Navy partner TFN, LASG on Int'l Triathlon

**T**O boost the sport, the Nigerian Navy (NN) has partnered Triathlon Federation of Nigeria (TFN), Nigerian Aquatic Federation (NAqF) and the Lagos State government to organise the inaugural International Triathlon. Thisday said that, the Flag Officer Commanding (FOC), Naval Training Command, Rear Admiral Patrick Nwatu, who recently met with the president of Triathlon Federation of Nigeria, Prince Wale Oladunjoye at Naval Dockyard Limited, Victoria Island, Lagos, described the partnership as a good move. He said the meeting was geared towards the actualisation of a proposal by the Nigerian Navy to organise an inaugural international Triathlon in

Nigeria in partnership with Nigeria Triathlon Federation and Lagos State government. A consultant and Lagos based entrepreneur and triathlon enthusiast, (NN) Captain Shehu Noibi rtd also joined the meeting virtually. Rear Admiral Nwatu, the chairman of the Nigerian Navy swimming, stated that triathlon is one of the best athletic contests to showcase optimum fitness and endurance which he described as some of the qualities possessed by Nigerians, especially those residing in the various coastal communities and maritime organisations, including personnel of the Nigerian Navy.

He maintained that the triathlon which is intended to hold in the first quarter of 2024, would commence with offshore open water swimming, 10km race within Eko-Atlantic city and about 15-20km bicycle race within Victoria Island while the competitors would return to Eko-Atlantic city for the 1km finishing race. According to him, in the past 20 years, the Annual Chief of Naval staff National swimming competition offered a veritable platform for the Nigerian Navy to showcase swimming and other aquatic sports in Nigeria, while the last

**M**OHAMED Salah hit four goals as Egypt cruised to victory in their first qualifier for the 2026 FIFA World Cup but Nigeria were held to a 1-1 draw at home by minnows Lesotho.

## Salah hits four for Egypt



Salah

BBC SPORT said that, Motlomelo Mkwanazi gave Lesotho, ranked 153rd in the world - 113 places below Nigeria - a shock lead with a 56th-minute goal from a corner. West Brom centre-back Semi Ajayi powerfully headed in Kelechi Iheanacho's corner to level 11 minutes later but the Super Eagles could not find a winner in their Group C opener in a rainy Uyo.

Jose Peseiro's side had dominated the first half but paid for their profligacy as Iheanacho saw a free-kick saved, Nottingham Forest striker Taiwo Awoniyi failed to capitalise on a promising cut-back and Ademola Lookman had a low shot across goal turned away. Liverpool forward Salah starred as Egypt thrashed Djibouti 6-0 in Cairo while elsewhere there were wins for Algeria, Mozambique, Burundi and Gabon. Africa has a guaranteed nine qualifiers for the 2026 finals in Canada, Mexico and the United States, with all group winners booking a spot at the tournament. In a Group A match totally dominated by the hosts,

Salah's first for Egypt came in the 17th minute after Mostafa Mohamed whipped in a cross from the left. Five minutes later, Salah made it 2-0 from the penalty spot and he completed his hat-trick shortly after the break, pouncing on a ball from Ahmed El Fatouh. With 20 minutes to go Salah bagged his fourth, with El Fatouh again the provider, and Mohamed added a fifth four minutes later. Trezeguet completed the rout for the Pharaohs with a strike in the 89th minute inside the Cairo International Stadium. In Group G, Algeria beat Somalia 3-1 at home after Mozambique won 3-2 away against Botswana earlier on Thursday. A first-minute own goal set Algeria on their way in Baraki before Baghdad Bounedjah doubled the lead on the half-hour mark. Issa Abatari pulled one back for Somalia with 25 minutes left but Islam Slimani made sure of the points for the North Africans in the 80th minute. Gabon came from behind to beat Kenya 2-1 in Group F thanks to an 88th-minute winner, with Burundi sealing a 3-2 'home' win over The Gambia in a Group F match played in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. And Sudan drew 1-1 against

Togo in Benina, Libya, in Group B, which contains continental champions Senegal. MK Dons forward Mo Eisa opened the scoring for the 'hosts' with a 17th-minute penalty before Kevin Denkey equalised for Togo just before the break. In Thursday's late match, Cape Verde and Angola drew 0-0 in their Group D opener in Praia. Meanwhile, Ethiopia have filed a complaint with world governing body Fifa after their Group A opener against Sierra Leone on Wednesday evening was disrupted by dense fog. The game was played in the Moroccan coastal city of El Jadida because Ethiopia do not have an international-standard venue. The half-time break was extended and the referee stopped the game twice in the second half, with the match ending 0-0 after 15 minutes of stoppage time. The qualifier "should have been postponed" a statement from the Ethiopia Football Federation (EFF) said. Ethiopia are set to host Burkina Faso back at the Stade El Abdi on Tuesday evening, and the EFF have asked Fifa to bring forward the kick-off from 20:00 local time (19:00 GMT) to avoid a repeat of foggy conditions.

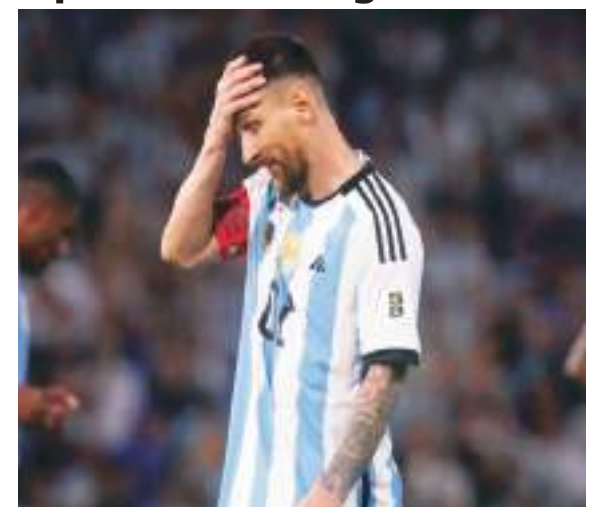
## Nunez scores as world champions' winning run ends



Nwatu

**D**ARWIN Nunez scored as Uruguay ended Argentina's 14-match winning run going back to the 2022 World Cup. BBC SPORT said that, the Liverpool forward slotted home in the 87th minute after Ronald Araujo had opened the scoring in the 2026 World Cup qualifier in Buenos Aires. World Cup winners Argentina had not lost since their 2-1 defeat by Saudi Arabia in their first match at the Qatar tournament last year. "We never felt comfortable," said Argentina captain Lionel Messi. "The loss is a good test for us. They are an intense team and it was difficult for us to play our game."

"They have physical and fast players in the midfield. We didn't find a way to possess the ball for a long period of time." It was the first time Messi had failed to score for his country, when playing, since their World Cup group-stage win over Poland. Araujo's opener for Uruguay was the first goal Argentina have conceded since the World Cup final against France - a run of eight matches. Uruguay appointed former Leeds boss Marcelo Bielsa as head coach in May and Messi said the Argentine's influence is already clear. "You can see Bielsa's hand on the way Uruguay is playing," Messi said. "In all the national teams or clubs, including Argentina, his style was very recognisable. And he has a good generation of players."



Messi

Argentina, who had won all four of their opening qualifiers, remain top of the

standings with 12 points from five matches while Uruguay are second with 10 points.

## SUNDAY SPORTS

## Sinner beats Rune to help Djokovic reach semi-finals

**J**ANNIK Sinner beat Holger Rune to maintain his perfect start at the ATP Finals - and help send Novak Djokovic into the last four in Turin.

BBC SPORT said that, the World number one Djokovic, who beat Hubert Hurkacz 7-6 (7-1) 4-6 6-1 earlier on Thursday, needed a Sinner victory to advance to the semi-finals.

The Italian, who won 6-2 5-7 6-4, tops the group with three wins from three.

Djokovic, who is chasing a record seventh ATP Finals title, finished second in the round-robin group stage.

Fourth seed Sinner, 22, took on Rune knowing he was guaranteed at least a second-place finish in the Green Group and a spot in the semi-finals.

Cheered on by a home crowd, he raced through the opening set before Rune fought back to take the second.

Sinner, despite appearing to struggle with an injury in his lower back, managed to break for a 5-4 lead in the third, before serving out for a first career win over Rune.

He became the first Italian in the tournament's 54-year history to reach the last four.

After Sinner ended his 19-match winning streak on Tuesday, Djokovic bounced back with a hard-fought victory over Poland's Hurkacz - a replacement for the injured Stefanos Tsitsipas.

Unable to progress regardless of the result, Hurkacz came into the match against Djokovic with nothing to lose and held firm on his serve throughout the first set.

The world number nine crumbled in the tie-break and Djokovic needed just the



Jannik Sinner is ranked fourth in the world

second of six set points to secure the opener.

However, in a 14-minute period where the Serb failed to win a single point, Hurkacz broke and consolidated to go 4-2 up before saving two break points and serving out for the set.

Djokovic regained control to secure the match and set up a semi-final encounter with the winner of the Red Group, while Sinner will face the

runner-up.

Russia's Daniil Medvedev is guaranteed of a place in the last four, while Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz and Germany's Alexander Zverev can both still qualify from the Red Group.

The ATP Finals features eight of the year's best men's players split into two groups of four, with the top two in each qualifying for the semi-finals.

## Alcaraz beats Rublev, Medvedev into semis

**D**ANIL Medvedev reached the semi-finals at the ATP Finals and Carlos Alcaraz kept alive his own hopes on his debut by beating an anguished Andrey Rublev.

Wimbledon champion Alcaraz had lost to Alexander Zverev in his Red Group opener but the Spaniard returned to beat Rublev 7-5 6-2 in Turin, Italy.

Rublev hit himself so hard with his racquet that he

draw blood in a loss that ended his last-four chances.

But fellow Russian Medvedev beat Zverev 7-6 (9-7) 6-4 to reach the semi-finals.

In the doubles, Britain's Joe Salisbury and American Rajeev Ram - the defending champions at the prestigious season-ending event - advanced with a match to spare.

They were 6-3 3-6 10-7 winners against Britain's Neal Skupski and

**F**IVE-time Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah has split with her coach eight months before she will attempt to defend her sprint titles at Paris 2024.

BBC SPORT said that, according to her management team, the 31-year-old parted with Shanikie Osbourne because of the "extremely excessive" terms sought by the coach.

The Jamaican won 100m, 200m and 4x100m gold at Tokyo 2020 after winning 100m and 200m gold at Rio 2016.

She is the second-fastest woman in history over 100m.

"Collectively, we had no choice but to seek the services of another coach," Thompson-Herah's management team said in a statement.

"With the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris fast approaching, Thompson-Herah is fully focused on her preparations for the season and the defence of her Olympic titles."

While Thompson-Herah has dominated women's sprinting

## Thompson-Herah splits with coach

at the previous two Olympic Games, she failed to qualify for this year's World Championships in Budapest following an injury-hampered season.

American Florence Griffith-Joyner, who clocked 10.49 seconds in 1988, is the only woman to have run faster than Thompson-Herah's 100m personal best of 10.54



Elaine Thompson-Herah will aim to win third successive Olympic golds over 100m and 200m in Paris

missed a straightforward backhand volley at the net, which set the tone. A missed lob and a forehand into the net helped Medvedev to get back on level terms before Zverev delivered an ace to bring up set point.

But the world number seven could only hit long and then wide to give Medvedev his own set point and then sent another backhand volley into the net to hand the Russian the set.

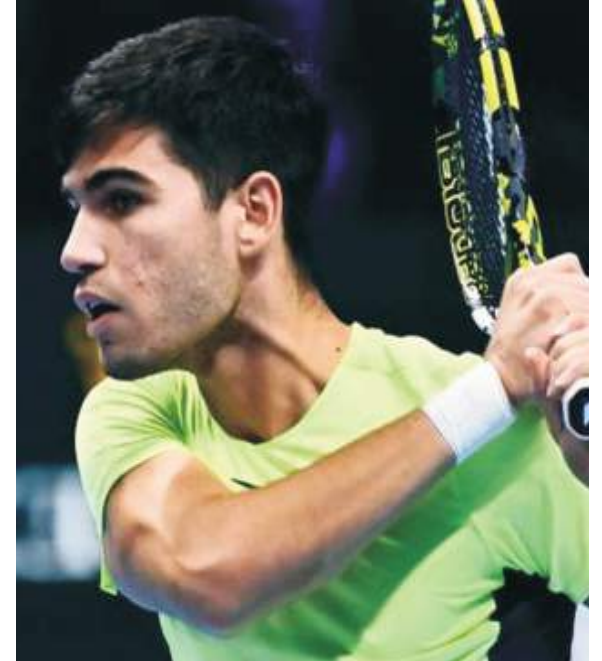
Zverev had a chance to break for a 5-4 lead in the second set but again his shots - and especially his forehand - deserted him in the big moments, first going wide and then sending a forehand into the net, allowing Medvedev to hold with a beautiful backhand down the line.

Another backhand down the line in the next game on Zverev's serve set up match point for Medvedev, who sealed the win when the German went long.

Zverev failed to win any of his three group matches last year but has made an excellent start in Turin this time, following up his opening victory over Rublev with another straight-set win that made him the first player to book his spot in the semis.

But the third seed was tested by Zverev, who held set point in a first-set tie-break that was full of errors by both players.

The German had led 4-1 in the tie-break when he



Alcaraz



Tiger Woods caddied for his son, Charlie Woods, in Louisiana earlier in November

## Woods' son wins high school state team championship

**T**IGER Woods' teenage son Charlie Woods has won a high school state team championship - achieving something his father never managed to.

BBC SPORT said that, Charlie, 14, shot rounds of 78 and 76 to help his team earn its fourth state golf title as his father, a 15-time major winner, watched in Florida.

He finished fourth out of five players on his Benjamin team and 26th overall.

Tiger did not caddie for his son as he did at the Notah Begay III Junior Golf Championship last

week.

While Charlie is a Florida High School Athletic Association Class A state champion, Tiger, 47, never had the opportunity to win a high school state title during his time at Western High School because the California Interscholastic Federation at that time did not hold state championships.

His father did, however, become the then-youngest US Junior Amateur at the age of 15 in 1991.

Speaking in September about his relationship with his

father, Charlie said: "We just stay in our own little world."

"I'll talk about the next tee shot, and he's like, 'No. This is the shot we're going to focus on. Focus up. This is what we're gonna do.'"

Tiger's own competitive future remains uncertain. He is yet to commit to returning to the PGA Tour following his latest ankle surgery but plans to play in the new TGL simulator league he has co-founded with Rory McIlroy, due to start in January.

## SUNDAY FEATURE

## AFL: Best thing 'for continent or 'super silly'?

**T**HE African Football League (AFL), which concluded on Sunday when Mamelodi Sundowns won the title, has received mixed reviews after its inaugural edition.

The South African club **clinched the trophy** on home soil when beating Morocco's Wydad Casablanca 2-0 to seal a 3-2 aggregate win in front of a packed crowd in Pretoria.

The new tournament, created by world governing body Fifa and the Confederation of African Football (Caf), featured eight teams, with 24 expected in 2024 for the tournament's second outing.

After Sundowns celebrated, Fifa president Gianni Infantino - who attended the final at Loftus Versfeld Stadium - was effusive in his praise for a tournament he has long championed.

"This is what African football needs - the best playing together more often in a top professional environment," Infantino said.

"I'm very proud of this collaboration between Fifa and Caf. We're seeing on the field of play as well [that] it brings a lot of quality for Africa and for the world."

Sundowns and Wydad aside, the other contestants included Egyptians Al Ahly, Tunisia's Esperance, TP Mazembe of DR Congo, Angolans Petro de Atletico, Tanzania's Simba and Enyimba of Nigeria.

While Infantino may have understandably waxed lyrical after seeing his brainchild come to fruition nearly **four years after first proposing it**, others accentuated both pluses and minuses in assessing the initial tournament.

"My main concern is the amount of games that players have to play from a health aspect," former South Africa international Matthew Booth, who played for Sundowns in two separate spells, told BBC Sport Africa.

"In South Africa, we have concluded the MTN 8 competition and League Cup, we are well into our league and clubs have started to play Caf Champions League and Confederations Cup matches.

"Sundowns have just played an additional six games in the AFL so from a game overload point of view, we've got to be very careful. I think only Sundowns in South Africa has got a big enough squad to cope with that load."

In future, the winners will not play six games but more than double that given this year's inaugural event was vastly slimmed down - reduced from the initially proposed 24 teams - just three months before kick-off.

This meant only 14 matches were played in total, in contrast to the 197 initially earmarked by Caf and Fifa for a 24-team event - a tally that could yet re-emerge, even as many AFL teams also contest the concurrent Champions League.

#### Prize money v prestige?

The AFL kicked off amidst great fanfare on 20 October when Simba of Tanzania hosted Egyptian giants Al Ahly in front of a bumper crowd

One of the AFL's stated aims is to "bring much-needed new streams of financial investment into African football", with the prize money on offer greater than that handed out in



The AFL was a joint creation by Fifa and Caf, whose respective presidents Gianni Infantino and Patrice Motsepe both attended Sunday's final in Pretoria



South Africa's Mamelodi Sundowns received the African Football League trophy from the presidents of both Fifa and Caf.

the continent's Champions League.

Both the AFL and Champions League winners receive \$4m, albeit with the latter event taking months not weeks, while the AFL runners-up take home \$2.8m, which is \$800,000 more than the beaten Champions League finalists receive.

Eliminated at the quarter-final stage, Simba received \$900,000 for their two matches, which the club's media manager described as a "financial windfall".

"When you look at the number of games versus the income, it's very different and will help us in running the club from administration, salaries and bonuses, so the money is very useful," Ahmed Ally told the BBC.

"The tournament has good financial muscle and has come to save African clubs who've been struggling to make money."

Booth, who made over 150 appearances for Sundowns between

1998 and 2011, is not so sure.

"We have to be very careful about this competition being elitist and a case of wealthy clubs getting even wealthier. If the AFL money went to the Champions League, there would be more trickledown to the smaller clubs," the 46-year-old said.

"There are advantages and disadvantages either way and these have just got to be weighed up properly by the powers that be.

"On the positive side, the fact that Sundowns established themselves as the number one club in Africa is a massive point of pride for us South Africans, and a lot of people are talking about the amount of money they've just won.

"The continent's top clubs seem to win their local leagues every year, so to be able to play against tough opponents at certain stages is a good thing for player development and thus national teams."

In many pundits' eyes, an existing tournament already provides such opportunities to players - the Champions League, which launched as the African Cup of Champions Clubs nearly 60 years ago.

Given last season's Champions League featured 58 teams from 46 different countries and required nine months of competition, the tournament is seen as a tougher nut to crack by some fans.

"I don't think the AFL could ever be more prestigious than the Champions League where you need to work harder, face tougher competition and play in places where conditions might not favour you," said Sudanese football scout Abdul Musa.

"The Champions League qualifies you for the Club World Cup and is - historically - a bigger prize. If they put similar attention, money and marketing into the Champions League, it could benefit more clubs because you have 50-60 teams in the Champions League, not just eight."

One fan of Nigeria's Enyimba does not share such concerns, even if her favourites disappointed when losing 4-0 on aggregate to Wydad in the AFL quarter-finals, the stage where all teams began.

"This is the best thing that has happened to Africans over the years, because it gives us the leverage to unite together and showcase our rich heritage and culture," Jennifer Ezinne Uduma told the BBC.

It is a viewpoint with which Uduma's compatriot Oluwashina Okeleji, a Nigerian sports journalist, disagrees.

"All of the investment in the AFL should have gone to the Champions League - revamp it, pump in a lot of money and make it more popular," he told BBC Sport Africa.

"The whole 'Super League' idea is super silly in my opinion, and I don't think a lot of fans are talking about it because it doesn't look like a pan-African tournament but one for a select few competing for money over three weeks.

Al Ahly fans came out in force for their two home games in this year's African Football League

"That it's happening side-by-side with the Caf Champions League is a bit shocking - as in, which one should we take more seriously?"

Both Caf and Fifa say there are no plans to scrap the Champions League, which brings with it the honour of becoming Africa's Fifa Club World Cup representative - an incentive the AFL cannot currently boast.

"The AFL will not cannibalise and compete with the Caf Champions League; the two competitions will each have their own strong unique qualities," AFL organisers recently stated.

At present, their aim is to distribute AFL-generated funds "to all 54 Caf members and local leagues to improve football development", which does not happen with the Champions League.

It is unclear, however, if the sums generated by this year's inaugural AFL, sponsored by Visit Saudi and Visit Rwanda, will be enough to be spread around the continent after first covering the \$12m in prize money to the teams.

Enjoyment of the inaugural AFL

appeared to vary considerably across Africa, with the levels of interest seemingly dictated by whether a country had a tournament representative or not.

"There was next to no interest in Zimbabwe, with many considering it an unnecessary competition when we already have the Champions League," said Harare-based reporter Steve Vickers.

The same opinion was repeated by journalists in several other non-represented countries, whereas the AFL made much more of an impact among football fans in the eight (out of a possible 54) partaking nations.

"Angolan fans loved being in the maiden edition, but champions Petro de Atletico were accused of lacking fitness and competitiveness given that the local championship had only started five days earlier," said Angolan reporter Arlindo Macedo.

"Regarding the prize money, it is more credible than ever that the club will invest more in the AFL to generate greater gains and expand its ambitions, such as raising the squad level via future signings."

The AFL was a joint creation by Fifa and Caf, whose respective presidents Gianni Infantino and Patrice Motsepe both attended Sunday's final in Pretoria

Fans in Morocco followed further than most after Wydad, who **won their third African club crown** last year, reached the final.

"It was widely watched here in Morocco, with the existence of the biggest African teams another reason for the interest," football expert Jalal Bounouar explained.

"However, the fans were not satisfied as the games were not that entertaining or competitive, save for those involving Sundowns as they were great and played high-level football."

Local interest in Egypt ended as soon as Al Ahly, the record 11-time continental champions, exited in the semi-finals at the hands of Sundowns, one reporter told the BBC.

Viewing figures have yet to be announced by broadcasters but the number of subscribers to the **AFL's YouTube page** rose from under 1,000 to just over 9,000 during the course of the 24-day competition, while its streams of Sunday's match has attracted 38,000 views at time of publication.

Many games were well attended, and the firm expectation - and hope - from organisers is that crowds, viewing figures and interest will only grow as the embryonic AFL continues its development.

"This is here to stay, here to grow, here to have an impact, here to give hopes and dreams to the entire African population in Africa and to the population around the world," Infantino rallied in Pretoria.



Al Ahly fans came out in force for their two home games in this year's African Football League



# "2026 World Cup ticket is not negotiable"

**S**ENATOR John Owan-Enoh, the Minister of Sports Development, has voiced his concern following the Super Eagles' 1-1 draw against the Crocodiles of Lesotho in Thursday's 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifying match held at the Godswill Akpabio International Stadium in Uyo.

In a statement released on Friday in Abuja, the minister, who witnessed the match along with other sports enthusiasts, expressed disappointment with the outcome, stating that it fell short of expectations.

Warning the Eagles against complacency, Senator Owan-Enoh emphasised the significance of Nigeria's qualification for the 2026 World Cup, considering the team's absence from the 2022 tournament in Qatar.

"The Government and football-loving people of Nigeria take the qualification for the 2026 World Cup very seriously and want the Super Eagles to qualify. Having missed out on the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, qualifying for the 2026 World Cup is not negotiable," he remarked.

Senator Owan-Enoh directed the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) and the technical crew to promptly address the identified shortcomings from the Thursday match in preparation for the upcoming clash against Zimbabwe on Sunday.

"I urge the Nigeria Football Federation to look into and correct all the lapses observed in Thursday's match with the aim of putting in a much better performance in Rwanda on Sunday, Nov. 19, against Zimbabwe," he stressed.

Concerns were also raised regarding broadcasting limitations that hindered some Nigerians from watching the national team in action.

The minister urged the NFF to register Nigeria's dissatisfaction with the appropriate authorities, acknowledging that the qualifiers are FIFA-organized, and thus, television broadcasting rights fall within the purview of the world football governing body.

"It is not good enough that many Nigerians could not watch their national team play in their country. A repeat of the same should be avoided, and NFF will be expected to register Nigeria's displeasure with the appropriate authority in FIFA," he asserted.

Senator Owan-Enoh concluded his statement by calling on all Nigerians to support the team and encouraged them to demand sharper game play throughout the remaining qualifying series.

Super Eagles talisman



The three-time African champions were an ugly shadow of their excellent best against the Crocodiles on matchday one of the qualifying campaign for the next edition of the Mundial

Victor Osimhen has been listed in the top 10 nominees for the CAF Player of the Year Award, reports BSNSports.com.ng.

The 24-year-old who had a super campaign at Napoli last

## African players have to pay extra tax

**J**OHAN Obi Mikel says African footballers are effectively subject to an extra tax as they often support extended family and hangers-on back home.

The former Chelsea and Nigeria midfielder has claimed some players are even "threatened by their own blood" if they do not offer financial assistance.

"When you come from Africa - and this is something I don't think we speak a lot about - when you make money, it is not your money," said Mikel, speaking on Rio Ferdinand's Vibe with FIVE.

"You have all these relatives, cousins, whatever. Your sisters, they go off



Mikel

and get married to some guy. He just wants to get married into John Obi Mikel's family because then [he thinks] 'my life is sorted'.

Osimhen will battle reigning Player of the Year winner Sadio Mane and former winner

## African players have to pay extra tax

phone calls. They are used to calling you - not to check up on you but to ask 'What are you giving me?'.

"You have to be strong enough. I was giving so much to the family.

"All you do is keep giving and they are so comfortable that they expect you to do that for the rest of your life."

Mikel says players could even be emotionally blackmailed.

"They give you this thing whereby 'If you don't do it [pay], we are going to go to the press'.

The Colombia international's father was freed on 9 November after 12 days in captivity.

Diaz missed two club games during that period but was reunited with Luis Manuel Diaz on Tuesday and scored twice for his country against Brazil on Thursday, with his father watching on from the stands.

Even with a positive outcome, Mikel believes such kidnappings can leave enduring and profound marks on a player's mental and emotional well-being.

"This type of experience doesn't leave you, even after your loved ones are back home," Mikel told BBC Sport Africa.

In 2011 Mikel's father, Pa Michael Obi, endured a ten-day period in captivity before

the list.

The list which has been prone to 10, has Anguissa Anguissa, Riyad Mahrez, Vincent Aboubakar, Achraf Hakimi, Yacine, Sofyan Amrabat,

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## African players have to pay extra tax

- Mikel

being released. He was then abducted again in 2018, and Mikel found out while preparing to play for Nigeria against Argentina at the World Cup in Russia.

"My father was kidnapped minutes before one of the biggest games of my career.

"He was threatened and I was emotionally unsettled while playing on the pitch. It was a very horrific experience for me.

"It's a situation where you feel utterly helpless."

Mikel has emphasised the need for football clubs, organisations and governing bodies to prioritise the mental health and overall well-being of players grappling with such traumatic circumstances, and encouraged footballers and their families to seek professional support and assistance in times of distress.

Napoli and Nigeria striker Victor Osimhen was a recent guest, revealing he turned down a potential move to Saudi Arabia earlier this year for the "good of his career".

Mikel says "it would have been a dream" to play with the 24-year-old, a front runner for the African Footballer of the Year award who was top scorer in Italy's Serie A last year as Napoli won a first title in 33 years.

Achraf Hakimi, Yassine Bounou and Yousef en-Neusiri.

The ultimate winner for the award will be decided after votes from a voting panel consisting of CAF Technical Committee, media professionals, Head Coaches and Captains of Member Associations.

The Awards Gala will take place on Monday, 11 December 2023, at the Palais des Congrès, Movenpick, Marrakech, Morocco.

The final nominees for the African Player of the Year award: Victor Osimhen (Nigeria), Sadio Mané (Senegal), Riyad Mahrez (Cameroun), Zoumana Ouji (Cameroun), Mohamed Salah (Egypt), Achraf Hakimi (Morocco), Sofyan Amrabat (Mali), Yassine Bounou, Youssef En-Nesyri

Nigerian striker Taiwo Awoniyi has been compelled to withdraw from international duty due to a recurring groin issue, SoccerNet.ng reports.

The Super Eagles featured for Jose Peseiro's men against Lesotho, and was trusted to fill the void left by Victor Osimhen who is also recovering from an injury he picked against Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, Awoniyi, as confirmed on the Super Eagles page, has been forced to withdraw from the squad which would hand the Portuguese tactician more selection choice ahead of their clash against the Warriors.

However, the injury setback faced by Awoniyi is becoming a big concern for Nottingham Forest, given the forward's recent return from a similar injury.

The striker, who has contributed four goals and two assists for Steve Cooper's side this season, faces the prospect of another spell on the sidelines following his departure from the Nigeria squad.

In a statement released on the Super Eagles' official page on X (formerly known as Twitter), it was revealed that Awoniyi will return to England for proper medical care.

The statement reads: "Taiwo Awoniyi has departed for his base due to discomfort in the groin and will return to England tonight following consultations between his club's medical staff and the Super Eagles' medical team."

The striker's absence poses a potential setback for Nigeria and Forest, casting doubt on his availability for the upcoming crucial Zimbabwe encounter for Nigeria and English Premier League matches for Steve Cooper's men.

Nottingham will await further updates on Awoniyi's condition, hoping for a swift recovery to bolster their attacking options for the upcoming fixtures.