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# THE Nigeria Standard



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## FG unveils Civil Registration Vital Statistics portal

**T**he Federal Government will unveil an electronic Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System, as well as a Geospatial Data Repository, today Wednesday.

Chairman of the National Population Commission

(NPC), Nasir Kwarra, disclosed this at a pre-launch briefing on Monday, in Abuja.

Birth registration, stillbirth registration, birth attestation, adoption, marriage notification, divorce notification, migration, and death are all part of the registration

system.

According to the NPC boss, President Bola Tinubu will unveil the portal on Wednesday in Abuja.

"The launch of the e-CRVS by Tinubu marks the commitment of the current government and leadership to strengthen

civil registration data capturing, collation, processing, dissemination and timely access to statistics on vital events in the country.

"It aims to accelerate the improved civil registration and vital statistics systems in Nigeria over 10 years, from 2023 to 2030 in a bid

to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal", he said.

The commission, according to the chairman, worked with UNICEF to develop the e-CRVS Operational Readiness Assessment Report, which demonstrated the potential



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Tinubu



Plateau State Governor, Barr Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang yesterday laying the 2024 Appropriation Budget at the chamber of the Plateau State House of Assembly. Photo: DANLADI DUK

### Some NBC Broadcasting codes violate human rights -ECOWAS Court

**T**he ECOWAS Court of Justice has declared some provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code as infringements on Nigerian citizens' rights, including freedom of expression.

The affected provisions of the law, the sixth edition, are Articles 3 (1) (1), 3(1) (2), 15(2) (1) of the NBC and Article 15 (5) (1) of the Amendments to the code.

The court, according to a statement from its communications unit, delivered the judgement on 23 October, declaring that the codes "contravene Article 9 (1) & (2) of the African Charter on human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)".

The statement reads in part: "The ECOWAS Court of Justice, on Monday, 23rd October 2023 delivered a judgement in the case brought by the

Incorporated Trustees of Expression now Human Rights Initiative before it alleging the violation of various human rights enshrined in fundamental human rights law, particularly the freedom of expression by the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

"The Applicant, The Incorporated Trustees of Expression now Human Rights Initiative, a Non-Governmental Organisation, focused on protecting Nigerian citizens' freedom of expression both offline and online, collaborates with bloggers and journalists. It argues that the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, a federal law, restricts freedom of expression through specific provisions (Articles 3 (1) (1), 3 (1) (2), and Amendment Article 15 (5) (1)). The

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### PLSG disburses First Lady's palliative to 110 beneficiaries

From DUMAH RANDONG, Riyom

**P**lateau state government has disbursed bank drafts to 110 beneficiaries being the cash palliative donated by Nigeria's First Lady, Sen. Oluremi Tinubu, to victims of attacks in Riyom Local Government Area.

It would be recalled that

Sen. Tinubu had donated the sum of N500 million to 500 displaced families affected by violent attacks in some local government areas in the state.

Barr. Caleb Mutfwang who was represented by his Deputy, Mrs Josephine Piyo while handing over bank drafts to the beneficiaries, recently,

appreciated the First Lady for the gesture, stating that the palliative would go a long way in returning the displaced people back to their communities and rebuilding their lives.

"Plateau State is happy with this kind gesture. The wife of the president has done something that has never been done in the

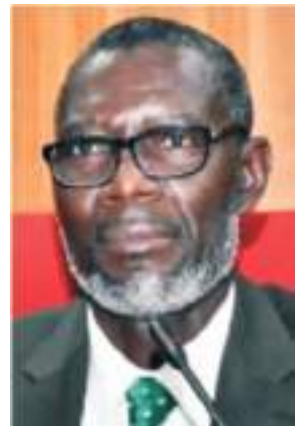
history of Plateau, through her Renewed Hope Initiative. She has truly renewed the hope of 500 households in Plateau," the governor was quoted assaying.

"She has exhibited love and has shown to be a true mother who loves everyone, in spite of political, tribal or religious

affiliations. Our state will continue to extend our profound gratitude to the First Lady and the President," he further stressed.

Mutfwang urged the people of Riyom to remain peaceful and support the state government's efforts towards bringing lasting

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Amoako



## News

## FG unveils Civil Registration Vital Statistics portal

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of digital technologies to provide revolutionary results in CRVS and integrate data from various systems to securely store data at scale, economically, in Nigeria.

"The report ushered in the bold step taken by the Commission for a transformative innovation of the eCRVS (Vital Reg) system by developing a Public Private Partnership arrangement between the Commission and Barnksforte Technologies Limited.

"The PPP arrangement is to promote the Vital Reg System as a completely electronic system that digitalizes all civil registrations such as birth



Tinubu

registration, stillbirth registration, birth attestation, adoption, marriage notification, divorce notification, migration and death", he added.

## PLSG disburses First Lady's palliative to 110 beneficiaries

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peace in the state.

He insisted his administration was working assiduously to end the cycle of killings in all parts of the state.



Mutfwang

## Some NBC Broadcasting codes violate human rights -ECOWAS Court

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Applicant alleges that these provisions infringe upon their freedom of expression rights, as well as those of their agents and collaborators, and seeks court declarations and orders.

"The Respondent, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, denies violating the Applicant's freedom of expression and emphasises its duty to protect citizens' rights. It argues that the Code aims to promote local content, prevent monopolistic practices, and boost advertising revenue for local broadcasters and content producers. The Respondent states that the National Broadcasting Commission can penalise stations for broadcasting content that incites hate or public disorder. It denies using the Code to stifle freedom of expression or harass the Applicant and seek court declarations including dismissing the suit for lack of merit.

"By its judgement of 23

October 2023, after acknowledging its jurisdiction and declaring the application admissible, the Court ruled that Articles 3 (1) (1), 3(1) (2), 15(2) (1) of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (6th Edition) and Article 15 (5) (1) of the Amendments to the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (6th Edition) contravenes Article 9 (1) & (2) of the African Charter on human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).

"Consequently, It ordered the Respondent to align Articles 3 (1) (1), 3(1) (2), 15(2) (1) of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (6th Edition) and Article 15 (5) (1) of the Amendments to the Nigeria Broadcasting Code (6th Edition) with its international obligations.

"The panel of judges who heard the case is composed of Dupe Atoki, presiding, Sengu Mohamed Koroma, judge rapporteur, and Ricardo Cláudio Monteiro Gonçalves, member."

The Federal Government has described a recent security advisory by the United States in Nigeria as unwarranted.

The US had on Friday, November 3, warned its citizens in Nigeria of "elevated threats" to major hotels in the "larger cities" of Nigeria.

Speaking on Monday, during a parley with senior editors and media executives in Abuja, Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris Malagi, said the advisory was likely to create needless panic and undermine efforts by the President Bola Tinubu-led government to attract investments to Nigeria.

Malagi said the federal government is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all Nigerians and visitors across the country.

"We understand the concerns raised by the United States government in their recent travel advisory, but believe that it is imperative that we do not generalise isolated incidents across the entire hospitality industry.

"What we have seen is that such advisories do not achieve anything other than needless panic, and they can have severe adverse economic impact, not to talk of what they do to undermine the government's efforts to attract investment.

"We have consistently prioritised the safety and well-being of all visitors to our country. We have implemented comprehensive security measures, both at the Federal and State levels, to ensure the safety of tourists and international guests.

"These measures include intense intelligence gathering, acquisition and deployment of additional platforms, training and re-training of personnel, cooperation with international law enforcement agencies, among others, to maintain a secure environment", he said, adding that the government would continue to work towards maintaining a secure and hospitable environment for tourists and business travelers and the likes in the country.

The minister also highlighted recent gains made by the military and other security agencies in the fight against terrorism, insurgency and other forms of insecurity in the country.

"Our security agencies have been very busy, doing their best to keep us all safe. In various parts of Kaduna State, seven bandits were neutralised, in various operations between the 1st and 3rd of November.

"In Kano State, on November 3, a joint operation by troops of the Nigerian Army and the Department of State Services carried out a dawn raid operation on terrorists' hideout in Gezawa Local Government Area, successfully averting an imminent attack on Kano by insurgents. The operation recovered AK 47 Rifles, AK 47 Rifle Magazines, a Rocket Propelled Gun (RPG), RPG Bombs, Hand Grenades, Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-making materials, among others.

"In Katsina, two NYSC members abducted by bandits

## FG faults US Security Advisory, says Nigeria safe

were successfully rescued.

"In the North-East and North-West of the country, the Nigerian Air Force has been very busy, with several successful airstrikes on bandits' and terrorists' camps and hideouts in Katsina, Zamfara and Borno States.

"The Air Force has also recently taken delivery of 4 new aircraft, to strengthen the fight against banditry and terrorism.

"In our maritime environment, on October 25, the Eastern and Central Naval Commands flagged off a Joint Sea Exercise, Exercise SEA GUARDIAN 2023", he said.

Malagi urged Nigerians, particularly the media, to support and amplify efforts of security agencies in the fight against insecurity

He said: "Security agencies deserve the full support of all Nigerians, the media included. Please pay attention to what they're doing, and give amplified coverage to their successes and gains.

"The bandits, terrorists, kidnapers, pirates etc are waging not only a physical battle but also a psychological one, trying to undermine our faith and confidence in our security agencies.

"As media leaders, we must be very careful to not play into their hands, through reporting that might be

misleading or sensational or that undermines the morale of our security personnel.

"While government is taking necessary steps to ensure that honest, credible and timely information is being put out there for the benefit of Nigerians, on the flipside, the government is also requesting you to please report government activities in the most transparent and accountable manner.

"While it is imperative for the government to provide a free and favourable environment for the media to operate, it is also incumbent

on the media people to take this role with the highest sense of responsibility. Please report what is accurate and leave what you are in doubt of. It is lesson 001 in journalism that if you are in doubt leave it.

"Don't report what is not factual. This country is for all of us to build and I know that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is a democrat. He is willing and able to provide you with all the information that you so require, let focus on those things that are important for our development as a country and leave out fake news, misinformation and all those that have the tendencies to divide us as a country."



Malagi

## 'We're working with NEITI, to reconcile 2021 report'

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), has said it is collaborating with the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) and other stakeholders, to reconcile alleged indebtedness by the company and Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC).

Chief Corporate Communications Officer, NNPC Ltd, Olufemi Soneye, disclosed this in a statement on Monday.

THEWILL, on Sunday, reported a suit filed by the Socio-economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), against President Bola Tinubu over failure to probe several monies allegedly owed to the federation by the national oil company.

Soneye described the claims by the group as baseless, considering the fact that NEITI itself had dismissed the allegations in its 2021 report, following series of engagements with NNPC Ltd.

He said at the outset of President Bola Tinubu's administration, it was made to sell Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), imported into the country at one third of its value.

This development, he said, gave rise to an average of N400 billion

monthly subsidy bill, which subsequently put a strain on its revenues and finances.

"That subsidy bill accumulated up to N3.736 trillion as of May 31, 2023.

"With respect to gas-to-power debts, the non-payment of NNPC's share of upstream joint venture gas supplied to the government-owned plants had led to the accumulation of indebtedness of N174.07 billion by the federation.

"Similarly, the receivables due from the federation to NNPC Exploration & Production Limited (NEPL) as of May 31, 2023 amount to \$712 million (equivalent to N309.07 billion at N434.08/US\$1) for revenues not remitted to NEPL, but paid into the federation account.

"While the federation owed NNPC the sum of N4.207 trillion as net indebtedness, the Company was only indebted to the federation in the sum of N2.852 trillion, made up mainly of outstanding Good and Valuable Consideration (GVC).

"This is in respect of government upstream investments, royalties and Petroleum Profit taxes (PPT)", he said.

According to Soneye, over the years, the NNPC Ltd's relationship with

NEITI has been very cordial, as seen in August 2020 when it became an EITI supporting company.

He added that it joined a group of over 65 extractives companies, State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), commodity traders, financial institutions and industry partners committed to observing the EITI's supporting company expectations.

"Indeed, aside being a signatory to several EITI's global ethics and standards, NNPC Ltd had on the sidelines of the United Nation's General Assembly (UNGA) in Washington DC, in September 2023, signed up to the United Nations Global Compact on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption.

"Thereby becoming the first state-owned oil company to join the global initiative.

"NNPC Ltd's book remains open to all our stakeholders as we remain committed to delivering value to Nigerians with integrity.

"And as espoused in our principles of Transparency, Accountability and Performance Excellence (TAPE), the bulwark of the Mele Kyari leadership of the company", he said.





# Business & Economy

## Riving culture with business ideals

**There was a time in business history when one would think the importance of developing strategic plans by creating vision, mission, and value statements was overrated. This feeling was so because many corporate bodies didn't fully understand these powerful tools' dynamics and intricacies. It was basically seen as a corporate branding move, hence gulping a lot of funds in putting them together. As if that wasn't bad enough, because end users didn't see its need beyond brand imaging, they hardly tweaked it to suit their business realities as years passed. Looking back now, one would appreciate that nothing is cast in stone when it comes to them. OLAYINKA OPALEYE writes.**

ALTHOUGH I am unsure if categorizing them as strategic planning tools is fair enough, an organization's vision, mission, values, and purpose do much more than strategy. They all drive the three-fold chord - leadership, culture, and master plan, that binds any business together. This article will help illuminate the need to answer the where, how, and why questions that bring about the vision, mission, and great purpose, respectively, as they relate to corporate culture.

Vision, as the name suggests, depicts an organization's aspirations. Therefore, internalizing these ideals drives accountability and performance, traits of high-performance organizational culture. Aside from the fact that a profound vision drives accountability, it's subject to change due to factors such as actualization, diversification, divestment, and other micro and macro-economic factors. The tricky side of vision lies in picking the right words that do not dwell much on time and rivalry. Hence, the recent emergence of a thin line between vision and mission. This blur between the vision and mission makes for mission statements to justify what motivates an organization to serve its customers/clients and why it's passionate about the solution it's providing the market.

Analyzing Nike's mission statement will help briefly explain the recent thin line between vision and mission. Their mission statement says, "Nike exists to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete\* in the world. Our purpose is to move the world forward through the power of sport - breaking barriers and building community to change the game for all. \*If you have a body, you are an athlete." Even though the first sentence in the Nike statement represents the vision that reveals that they aspire to be on everyone's feet, the message is clear and void of rivalry. The second sentence interestingly combines the company's purpose and mission in a way anyone can relate. Every stakeholder, be it an employee, employer, or shareholder, should be proud of moving the world forward through their mastery of sportswear craftsmanship and confident that they are helping people break barriers and build game-changing communities through innovation.



However, tempted we are to shower praise, pride, pay, pomp, and pageantry on the Nike mission statement, it will be lifeless and mere words if it's not driven the way it should. However nice, intelligently worded, and carefully crafted business ideals are, engagement brings them to life.

*Making a company's aspirations, goals, values, and purpose available and accessible is just the tip of the iceberg compared to making them exist*

Organizational goals represent the mission. Mission often answers what and how questions by telling what gets done to actualize the envisioned destination. Companies taking things a notch higher by stating purpose is a welcome development; however, what

seems difficult now is organizations finding their whys. I recently engaged the CEO of a newly acquired bank with the why question. For some good minutes, he couldn't give me a correct answer. At first, his reaction was, "Isn't it obvious?" which indirectly meant to make money, of course. However, an organization's great purpose should be way above and beyond itself or its interest. It must and should depict its role in the grand scheme of things, which is way beyond making money or building a formidable clientele base. The moment the CEO got the hang of this, he cracked the code and charted a strong plan for the organization for the next three hours unaided. Joy often floods my clients' eyes whenever they have the ha-ha moment; this gives me pleasure every time.

When Laura Appleton, an HR Senior Director with Arc'teryx Equipment, and her team traveled the globe to drive the organizational culture using the company's vision, mission, and value statements, little did she know the tremendous impact they would have even on the bottom line. Having personally experienced the shift from survival mode to self-actualization by internalizing and living the core values and ideals of organizations she's worked for; she was fully persuaded it would work for anyone.

Regardless of any employee's entry point, identifying their current location on the inverted engagement pyramid is critical. It is unsafe to

assume that a C-Suite hire is already in the self-actualization mode where they are highly engaged, truly inspired, and completely ready and willing to help the company. Anyone can promise anything at the hiring level; knowledge or experience may not necessarily do the magic, but internalization of great corporate ideals never fails. It is so because continuous engagement on the topic and consistently living the values have a special way of guaranteeing buy-in, especially when the leadership is actively involved in making them the culture.

In the past, many leaders failed to understand the difference between availability and existence regarding these business ideals. Making a company's aspirations, goals, values, and purpose available and accessible is just the tip of the iceberg compared to making them exist. It's the constant involvement, awareness, interaction, and appropriate check-ins that get the job done to ensure employee buy-in.

Conclusively, having all these statements is great, but what is more crucial is getting all stakeholders to internalize them. Internalizing these strategic planning tools is extremely powerful and critical to having a great work culture that invariably supports the business strategy. The advantages span from boosting employee morale, encouraging goal

alignment, increasing engagement, and enhancing creativity and productivity. Organizations should stop touting values that are neither actionable nor internalized. Even though personal values are inherent, workplace values are created to shape both work culture and outsiders' perceptions of the business. Therefore, values need to be reflective of daily activities or every day's work. Although it may be quite optimistic to have a snapshot of one hundred percent of the workforce in a highly engaged mode, having seventy percent there with the remaining thirty hovering between just engaged and disengaged modes would be fantastic. Not because it's the best to achieve but because the continuous work will get others there, too.

### Call to action

Write down your organization's mission statement and identify the vision, mission, values, and purpose. This task should help you pinpoint where your organization is heading, what it plans to do to get there, and how it aims to achieve that. Also, write down the top three values of your company and try to make sense of the reason behind the entire business operation - the big WHY? Should you need help to complete this task or crack the code, please send an email to oopaley@gmail.com







# Business & Economy

## FG eyes extra \$1.5bn revenue from equipment leasing

The federal government has revealed that it is targeting an estimated \$1.5 billion in additional revenue from investments in equipment globally as it set to unveil the Equipment Leasing Registration Authority.

The Chairman of ELRA, Saidu Njidda, who announced the unveiling of the agency said the ceremony would be performed by the Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Wale Edun, tomorrow.

According to report, equipment Leasing serves as an alternative and significant source of finance to loans and has immensely contributed to capital formation in the global economy with its wide usage in many countries for the acquisition of capital assets.

Njidda said the implementation of the Equipment Leasing Act would serve as a viable alternative to loans to herald a new era of enhanced revenue generation given that just 20% of total



Edun

investment in equipment contributes about 1.5% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

He said the inauguration of the agency would enable it to play its role as a key driver and facilitator of two of the Tinubu Administration's eight-point agenda, namely 'Access to Capital and Job Creation.'

The ELRA Board was inaugurated in May 2022 by the immediate past Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Zainab Ahmed, following the

establishment of the authority by the provisions of Section 8 of the Equipment Leasing Act, 2015.

The ELRA Boss further observed that in Nigeria Leasing has contributed over N14.3 trillion to the country's GDP over the last 10 years, adding that it has continued to be more relevant, especially under the prevailing situation where access to finance was difficult, especially for Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprise (MSMES).

## Banks profit rises to N2.1tn in Q3

SIX top banks in Nigeria grew their profits by 214 per cent to N2.06tn in the period ended September 2023 compared to N656.15bn recorded in the same period in 2022, despite the economic headwinds of its operating environment

According to the financial statements submitted to the Nigerian Exchange Limited, the financial institutions' profits jumped by N1.4tn within the period under review when compared year-on-year.

The banks under review include Access Holdings Plc, Zenith Bank International, United Bank for Africa, Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc, FBN Holdings and Stanbic IBTC Holdings.

The report showed that all banks recorded triple-digit growths in their profit led by Zenith Bank whose total comprehensive income for the period increased by 412.55 per cent to N647.74bn from N126.37, UBA followed as it experienced 287.18 per cent increase in profit over the period to N109.25bn.

GTCO experienced a 181.87 per cent increase in its profit to N367.41bn from N130.35bn, FBN Holdings recorded 159 per

cent increase to N236.50bn, Stanbic IBTC saw its profit rise by 97.96 per cent to N109.25. Of the six lenders, Access Holdings had the lowest percentage increase at 82.92 per cent to N250.44bn from N136.91bn as of Q3, 2022.

The financial institutions have been reporting positive results following the harmonisation of the segments of the currency market by the Central Bank of Nigeria in mid-June.

While the real sector suffered from increasing borrowing costs, foreign exchange losses, banks gained leading the apex bank in September to direct commercial banks to refrain from utilising their foreign exchange revaluation gains for dividends and operational expenditures.

The new directive was conveyed in a letter dated September 11, 2023, signed by the Director, Banking Division Department, Haruna Mustafa, where the CBN said it had assessed the consequences of the recent FX rate regime change on the banking system and identified its potential to substantially impact the Naira values of banks' foreign currency assets and liabilities.

Meanwhile, the value of the assets of the banks appreciated by 43.57 per cent

to N83.55tn from N58.19tn as of the end of the 2022 financial year with an increase in their loan books as a major contributor to the rising value of assets over the nine-month period.

Reacting to the increase in the assets of the bank, a former President and Chairman of Council,

## African leaders urges to intervene in ports evacuation

THE President of Nigeria, Bola Tinubu has called for interventions in the aspect of cargo evacuation in African ports.

He said this on Monday, in Lagos, during the 43rd annual council meeting of the Port Management Association of West and Central Africa.

Speaking at the meeting themed, 'The role of ports in the African Continental Free Trade Area', the president said that seamless cargo evacuation is another major challenge ports in the continent are facing.

Tinubu who was represented at the event by the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, Adegboyega Oyetola, added that the theme of the meeting is a testament to the determination of the organisers to collectively seek sustainable solutions to the challenges that port operations face on the continent.

The African Development Bank (AfDB) has stated that Africa's food and agribusiness sector is estimated to hit \$1 trillion by 2030.

This, the AfDB said, would present significant opportunity for businesses to invest in the sector and for smallholder farmers to meet the growing demand for food on the continent recently.

The AfDB President, Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, stated this at the World Food Prize Foundation's Norman E Borlaug dialogue in Des Moines, Iowa, United States of America.

Akinwumi said that the several world leaders are actively bolstering food production and food security in Africa.

The move, according to him, is apt considering the fact that global population is expected to reach nine billion, which he said would create a pressing need for Africa to increase its agricultural productivity to meet the rising demands for food on the continent.

He pointed out that the continent, which is home to 65 per cent of the world's remaining uncultivated arable land, ironically is importing

### - Report

Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, Professor Segun Ajibola, pointed out that banks have a role to play in boosting the economy and that while the effects of their lending may not be felt immediately, it will yield results later.

## Africa's food, agribusiness sector to profit \$1tn by 2030 - AfDB



Adesina

most of its food, adding that African leaders are intent on ensuring that their countries are self-sufficient in food and become food exporters.

Adesina explained how 34 African leaders endorsed country food and agriculture delivery compacts that produced action- and outcome-driven plans to ensure food security and unlock the continent's full agricultural potential within five years, maintaining that this is in line with the core of the Bank's Feed Africa strategy, which it launched in 2016.

Since then, he added, the strategy has supported more than 250 million people, who have benefitted from improved agriculture technologies.

Adesina said that partners had committed over \$70 billion to support the food compacts as the bank is expected to provide \$10 billion over the next five years.

He said that the Dakar 2 reflected the collective resolve of African leaders to ensure the continent feeds itself.

One of the leaders, President Sahle-Work Zewde of Ethiopia, who was at the Borlaug Dialogue, said: "As African leaders, we are all committed to self-sufficiency in food production. Today, Ethiopia, for the first time in its history, is self-sufficient in wheat production and is a wheat exporter to its neighbours."

Zewde acknowledged that this groundbreaking achievement was helped by the African Development Bank's Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) initiative. TAAT has distributed more than 100,000 tons of certified seeds of heat-tolerant wheat varieties, increasing Ethiopia's wheat production by 1.6 million metric tons in 2023.

an area in which port operations in Africa need a lot of intervention," he stated.

The president disclosed that there is an ongoing discussion between Nigeria and other African countries on the need to invest in port infrastructure to support trade facilitation.

"Of course, there are ongoing discussions in Nigeria and other African countries on the need to

urgently invest in infrastructure and equipment to support trade facilitation.

Meetings like this put the issues in proper perspectives and serve as avenues for the generation of ideas that would aid our national governments to formulate effective policies," he stated.

Tinubu said that full automation is the only way to go.

"As a government that believes in the necessity of infusing information technology into public management to aid transparency and ease business processes, we are giving the Nigerian Ports Authority all the backing necessary to fast track the operationalisation of the port community system which is a precursor to the implementation of the National Single Window. Because we are persuaded that full automation is the only way to go if we plan to remain competitive in the global maritime industry."



Tinubu





# Business & Economy

## Rising prices, falling naira: Challenges to affordable living

*If the past offers any reliable data to predict by, then the naira hasn't yet hit rock bottom.*

*...until the Nigerian government begins to implement effective policies that strengthen the naira, Nigerian citizens are in for a hard time for the foreseeable future. Nigerians are already trying their hardest to adapt to these unreasonable costs of living. The government must play its part by providing targeted support for lacking populations and executing responsible fiscal management alongside viable monetary policies to stabilise the weak naira and lay a foundation for long-term economic development. Toyin Falola writes.*

At the time of writing this article, the naira had risen to over N1,230 in exchange for a single US dollar, the highest ever recorded in Nigeria's history. A few years ago, saying that the naira would ever trade at over a thousand to a single dollar would have sounded like a dream. No one could foresee it. Yet here we are. To say that the fast-rising deterioration of the naira has wrought untold hardship on Nigerians is understating the situation. With Nigeria being a state with very few exports outside crude oil and one that is highly dependent on imports, the ever-weakening naira has made trade and importation very difficult. The effect of all this is that an astronomically high cost of living has been forced upon all Nigerians.

The rapidly rising costs of living have begun to force Nigerians to radically adjust the way they live and work. Every day, we are forced to develop innovative ways of cutting costs in this increasingly tough economy. So, for instance, owing to the sky-high prices of fuel, a lot of car owners have stopped driving their cars and now prefer to commute via public transportation or ride-hailing services. A number of companies are increasingly switching to hybrid or completely remote systems of work in order to cut costs. Not everyone is so lucky, as there is a significant number of Nigerians who are not fortunate enough to have the option of going remote, yet transport costs to their current jobs eat too deeply into their salaries. They are left with no option but to resign and begin the gruelling and uncertain process of seeking new employment.

So yes, we see how the ever-rising cost of living in Nigeria is forcing its citizens to develop coping mechanisms every day in order to survive. However, when it comes to the cost of food, the agony touches Nigerians on a different level. Just a month ago, a cup of rice cost about N500. Today, you can't get it for anything less than N800. The same goes for a cup of beans. The reason this matters is that Nigerians already spend the majority of their incomes on food. Data from Picodi, an international e-commerce organisation, has revealed that the average Nigerian household spends 59 per cent of its income on food. According to data from a statistical analysis carried out in 105 countries of the world, aimed at discovering how much people spend on groceries, Nigeria ranked number 105 – the highest – in the world. To put this in better context, the global average for the percentage of household income spent on food is 11 per cent.

This gap between the global average and the local average is alarming. And what makes this fact only more worrying is that this report was from over two months ago. The cost of food has risen since



then. Prices of foodstuff are still rising in a state that has already been eaten so deeply by food insecurity. When a state that is already plagued by record levels of poverty and hunger is threatened by even more poverty and hunger, the ripple effects cannot be anything but deadly.

In the absence of gainful employment for many Nigerian youth, as the suffering becomes unbearable, many will inevitably be pushed into crime. The lowest hanging fruit for many is cybercrime, popularly known as *Yahoo Yahoo*. Cybercrime or fraud is already a widespread phenomenon in Nigeria. In fact, it is practically a staple of Nigerian culture at this point. From several songs celebrating it to the populace idolising those who practice it, cybercrime has sadly become a cancer that has devoured Nigerian society, particularly the demographic of the male youth.

**From N150 to \$1 to N500:\$1 and N800:\$1, Nigerians remained in disbelief as they watched the naira weaken and fall over several years and across different governments. And no matter how many governments have promised to turn the economy around, the downward trend has not stopped. Thus, it would be foolhardy to expect that the naira will suddenly reach a new record low, change its mind, and start climbing upwards. No! Unfortunately, it could still get much worse.**

As inflation worsens and costs of living rise, this disturbing cancer called fraud is only going to eat

deeper into society. It was only last week when Justina Tiffany Otuene, a 300-level Biochemistry student of the University of Calabar, was killed by her boyfriend, who was a student of the same university. It has been alleged that the murder was a ritual killing. Again, on the 20th of October, robbers stormed three banks in Otukpo, Benue State, and killed seven people, two of who were security operatives. The three banks include Zenith Bank, First Bank Plc, and United Bank for Africa.

This ghastly wave of crime and scares is just a symptom of a deeply rooted illness in the Nigerian system. Fraud, ritual killings, kidnappings, robberies, organ trafficking, and child trafficking are the gruesome crimes that epitomise the Nigerian condition – a reflection of the new normal. As more and more people get thrown into poverty, more Nigerians will be forced into crime. And while we can spend all day debating whether poverty justifies people turning to crime or not, the fact remains that poverty makes it increasingly harder for men to survive. When men are forced to choose between harming others in order to survive and starving to death, between their survival and the survival of others, many will be forced to choose themselves.

At this juncture, it is critical to point out that this is not a justification for crime. Cyberfraud, ritual killings, kidnappings, and all other crimes and condemnable and are, in fact, mostly caused by greed. What this argument simply aims to point out is that when a government repeatedly makes poor decisions, it accumulates and creates a harsh

environment that will inevitably enable the worst of human nature. Nothing justifies these wicked acts. People must always strive to earn an honest, crime-free living. But the government must not make this noble pursuit more difficult than it already is.

Sadly, the government has failed to ensure this. So we must now have a conversation about what the people themselves must do. It is often a customary Nigerian reflex to hold out hope. To hope that things will get better. Will the exchange rate rise to N1,300 naira to a single dollar? We all certainly *hope* not. But it is submitted that sitting on our asses and hoping is not the wisest thing to do. It is not even the wisest hope. If the past offers any reliable data to predict by, then the naira hasn't yet hit rock bottom.

From N150 to \$1 to N500:\$1 and N800:\$1, Nigerians remained in disbelief as they watched the naira weaken and fall over several years and across different governments. And no matter how many governments have promised to turn the economy around, the downward trend has not stopped. Thus, it would be foolhardy to expect that the naira will suddenly reach a new record low, change its mind, and start climbing upwards. No! Unfortunately, it could still get much worse.

**For starters, it would seem that the ever-weakening naira has defeated the conventional wisdom of "delayed gratification". If everything gets more expensive, waiting to buy automatically becomes a bad financial decision. For the**

**foreseeable future, it is probably best if you purchase everything you want to buy as early as you can, rather than delaying and paying more for these down the line.**

Thus, Nigerians must steel themselves and shift their minds from conversations about hope to conversations about how to prepare for the worst. And how do we prepare for the worst? Well, Nigerians have already started adopting several cost-saving measures, such as going remote and using alternative modes of transportation.

For starters, it would seem that the ever-weakening naira has defeated the conventional wisdom of "delayed gratification". If everything gets more expensive, waiting to buy automatically becomes a bad financial decision. For the foreseeable future, it is probably best if you purchase everything you want to buy as early as you can, rather than delaying and paying more for these down the line.

Also, since the majority of our incomes are spent on food and non-alcoholic beverages, it is recommended that Nigerians start to make their purchases in bulk. Cutting down on unnecessary expenses, such as eating out, also helps to cut costs. Beyond that, Nigerians must take extra precautions with regard to their security and the security of their finances. Not only are ritual killings, robberies, and kidnappings going to go up, but the rate of fraud attacks as well. We must guard our financial details with utmost care and be careful with our movement.

In conclusion, until the Nigerian government begins to implement effective policies that strengthen the naira, Nigerian citizens are in for a hard time for the foreseeable future. Nigerians are already trying their hardest to adapt to these unreasonable costs of living. The government must play its part by providing targeted support for lacking populations and executing responsible fiscal management alongside viable monetary policies to stabilise the weak naira and lay a foundation for long-term economic development.

**PS:** This piece was written in Gboko, Benue State. I am grateful to Professor Zack Gundu, Vice-Chancellor University of Mkar, who generously provided the space and the inspiration.

**Toyin Falola, a professor of History, University Distinguished Teaching Professor, and Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities at The University of Texas at Austin, is the Bobapitan of Ibadanland.**



**Politics**

**Ajaokuta rally: APC stalwart empowers vulnerable APC faithfuls**

**From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

PRINCE Suleiman Abdulakreem Onyekehi, the Special Adviser to Kogi Governor on Special Projects, has empowered over 500 vulnerable APC faithfuls with cash worth millions of naira.

The programme was captured under the Phase 5 of "Prince Onyekehi Empowerment Programme" in collaboration with Badoko APC Ward Rally which cuts across 14 wards of Ajaokuta LGA.

Addressing newsmen at the event in Ajaokuta, Prince Onyekehi explained that this was not the first time he was embarking on a massive empowerment programme for his constituents. He said, this one in particular would be phase 5 in less than two years.

The first, second and third phases were cash grant disbursements while fourth phase was donation of 10 vehicles, three motorcycles, food stuff and cash to Ajaokuta constituents.

He added that this fifth phase was continuation of cash grant distribution of N5000 to each beneficiary across the area.

Onyekehi, who doubles as the Focal Person, National Social Investment Programme (NSIP) in Kogi State expressed his satisfaction with the success of the Empowerment Programme and the ward rally across Ajaokuta LGA.

"It was a huge success with a mammoth crowd gathered here at my country home in Eganyi.

"We appreciate our people for believing in us and for standing by us in mobilising massive support to vote for APC governorship candidate, Usman Ododo in Saturday's election," Onyekehi said.

He emphasised that many vulnerable women, widows and youths were the core beneficiaries of the empowerment programme. And added that foodstuffs and clothing items had been



**Onyekehi**

distributed in the previous phases.

Some youths and women were also given special financial support to startup small scale businesses to improve their livelihood and wellbeing.

Apart from his personal empowerment programmes, Onyekehi disclosed that the official empowerments from his office, NSIP comprised of NPower, School Feeding Cooks, Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) and the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) Programmes.

According to him, the NSIP has benefited about 7,000 indigent people in Ajaokuta LGA.

He stressed that the NSIP has helped the poor to alleviate poverty as the beneficiaries hope for continuity by the President Tinubu Administration.

The Special Adviser appreciated the Governor for the opportunity given to him to represent his people in serving the State.

Onyekehi commended the

Ajaokuta people for the victories and performances in the last general elections.

He therefore charged the people to come out enmass to vote APC-ODODO/JOEL for sustainability and continuity at the next Saturday governorship election.

He praised the governor for his unprecedented achievements in the areas of security, social justice, unity, healthcare development, education, youth and women development, among others.

Some of the beneficiaries, Mrs Salamatu Muazu from Ajaokuta Village Ward, and Halimat Aino from Badoko Ward, who spoke on behalf of others, commended Prince Onyekehi for the gesture, saying they are proud of him and the APC party.

"We are very grateful to Prince Onyekehi for empowering us with foodstuffs and N5,000. We will reciprocate the gesture by voting massively for APC candidate, Ahmed Usman Ododo in Saturday's election," Muazu said.

**From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

A group under the auspices of Kogi East Neighborhood Watch, (KENW), has demanded the immediate redeployment of Femi Ojo, Commander, Quick Response Unit Kogi State Police Command before the gubernatorial election in the State scheduled for 11th November, 2023.

In a statement signed by the Director, Public Communication, Kogi East Neighborhood Watch, (KENW) Wing Commander Iye Ayefu Akuh rtd, called on the Commissioner of Police in Kogi State to protect the lives and properties of the People of Kogi East Senatorial District against the embattled police officer.

Akuh maintained that intelligence gathered by the group indicated a plan by the police high ranking officer to deploy some fake police/ military men to use military vehicles stationed in Government House, Lokoja to cause mayhem in Kogi East from Sunday 5th November 2023.

According to the statement, "SP Ojo OC Quick Response is mentioned to be the leader of this illegal outfit earmarked to undertake the exercise.

"The illegal outfit is kitted with police / military uniforms who are to dress and work as if they are real Police from the Kogi State Police Command or men from the 12 Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Lokoja.

"SP Ojo Quick Response

**Kogi Polls: Group demands redeployment of Police Commander**



**Egbetokun**

has been alleged to be working with a known notorious thug taking refuge in Government House as a member of this illegal outfit.

"We make this special request so that no such military vehicles are deployed from Kogi Government House to kill innocent citizens anywhere in the state ahead of the gubernatorial election.

"Kogi Government House is an administrative office and not a military operational base for deployment of military vehicles by officers of the Police Force".

The statement used the medium to call on the authority for an investigation into the activities of the embattled Police Commander.

According to him, SP Ojo has been allegedly known in public parlance in Kogi State to be a political policeman since 2019 when he was used to arrest perceived political opponents of the governor.

"To further reaffirm this

position, last week, he rearrested two men released on bail by the Kogi State High Court, Lokoja with an intention to have the boys eliminated as directed. This was busted by deep and accurate intelligence only for him to turn around and say there was a petition against the men whom he is still keeping in his custody without charging them to court" the statement added.

All efforts to speak with the Kogi State Police Public Relations Officer, SP William Ovyey Aya, proved abortive as at the time of filing this report.

He failed to pick his calls or respond to text messages sent to his phone lines.

It could be recalled that, the opposition Social Democratic Party, (SDP) weeks back called on the Inspector General of Police to probe the activities of the Head of Police Quick Response Team, (QRU) Femi Ojo for allegedly aiding the activities of political thugs in Kogi State.

**Pray for your leaders, lawmaker tasks Christians**

**From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi**

THE Senator representing Benue North West (Zone 'B') Senatorial District at the National Assembly, Dr. Titus Zam has tasked Christians in the state to pray for their leaders at all levels.

Senator Zam who spoke at St. Augustine Catholic Parish, Demekpe, Makurdi during a thanksgiving mass organised in his honour by his kinsmen under the aegis of Tyoshin Youth Association (TYA), said his victory at the polls in the last presidential and National Assembly election was purely God's doing through people's prayers.

Zam while imploring Christians to sustain prayers for Secretary to Government of the Federation, (SGF) Senator George Akume, to succeed in his assignment, said he believes in the efficacy of prayers.

He maintained that he didn't know whether there was any other god apart from God, the Father and promised that he will serve his constituents with the fear of God and humility.

He revealed that his victory at the polls was a clear case of David and

Goliath in the Bible and assured that he has and will ever remain respectful to the immediate past governor of the state, Dr. Samuel Ortom who he said contested against him and refused to approach the courts for litigation after his defeat.

He announced that he has forgiven all his political foes and promised to work with people across all political divides.

Earlier, the priest in charge of St. Augustine Catholic Parish, Demekpe, Rev Father Professor Francis Wegh in a sermon which harped on forgiveness and humility, charged political office holders and other lay faithfuls to show humility in their dealings with fellow humans.

The cleric decried the gradual deviation from God's teachings by some men of God as contained in the scriptures and tasked the senator not to look down on anybody irrespective of their societal status.

In a remark, President General of Tyoshin Youth Association, Mr. Godwin

Jande said the thanksgiving mass was organised to thank God for elevating one of their sons to an enviable height.

Mr. Jande said based on

**Don't allow Melaye to tarnish your reputation - Ododo campaign group**

**From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

CHIEF Akerejola Abiodun, Director General of 'Renewed Vision for New Direction Campaigns Office for Ododo/Joel 2023, has advised Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan not to allow Dino Melaye, governorship candidate of PDP in Kogi election to drag her outstanding reputation to the mud.

Chief Akerejola also cautioned Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan against the use of late Ohinoyi of Ebiraland's values, His Royal Majesty Ado Ibrahim to canvass for votes for the People's Democratic Party governorship candidate, Dino Melaye.

Chief Akerejola in a

human permutations, Tyoshin people were the least in the state to have produced a senator but God made it possible through prayers from people of good will.

statement made available to our correspondent recently, maintained that Ebiraland people and

the entire citizens of Kogi State were still in mourning mood of their departed royal majesty

and warned against the use of his name for campaigns by any political party.

The statement reads; "We commend the royal family of the late Ohinoyi for refusing the exploitation of their father's cherished legacies for political campaigns in favour of the PDP governorship candidate, Dino Melaye Melaye.

The royal family adds, "we reject the insult and insensitivity of Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan to use our late Ohinoyi's reputation to score political gains.

"Natasha must re-trace her steps or else will end in shame. It is really very unfortunate and worrisome for this development".



**Abiodun**



Politics

**Police to deploy operational vehicles, security equipment**

From **JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja**

AHEAD of Saturday elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi States, the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kayode Egbetokun has ordered the distribution of additional 220 operational vehicles, water cannons, Armored personnel carriers, helmets, bullet proof vests and tear gas canisters amongst other security enabled equipment.

According to a statement signed by the spokesman of the Force, ACP Olumuyiwa Adejobi, the deployment is to guarantee a violence free exercise in the three states. The statement recalled that the police boss had earlier organized training for the police officers who would be involved in the election security management for the forthcoming elections and sought the approval of the



Egbetokun

federal government for the payment of their allowances during the operations. and IGP other support to boost

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

**42 observers to monitor Kogi election**

A Non-Governmental Organization, Transition Monitoring Group has deployed 42 observers to monitor the November 11 Governorship election in Kogi State.

The Kogi State Coordinator of TMG, Mrs. Racheal Remilekun Akande disclosed this recently during the training of Local Government observers to enhance citizens engagement ahead of the off-cycle election in Kogi State.

Akande, who noted that the training is part of the organization's commitment toward a transparent, hitch free election in Kogi State, added that it was also targeted at complementing government, security agencies and INEC efforts in ensuring credible, free, and

fair elections. According to her, the training would help observers to have in-depth knowledge on the modalities in reporting election issues. She stressed that they must always remain neutral on the field.

A facilitator at the training, Mr. Success Adejoh, noted that the Local Government observers are expected to know their roles and responsibilities in monitoring the election, reporting irregularities, and fostering an environment conducive to citizen participation.

" TMG aims to empower local observers to effectively play their part in ensuring a free and fair election, promoting democracy in the region and strengthening the confidence of citizens in the electoral system," he said.

Also speaking, the Zonal Coordinator of TMG, Reuben Joshua expressed optimism that the electorate will come out in their numbers to cast votes for the candidate of their choice.

He lamented the high level of disinformation and misinformation across Kogi State which have created fears in the minds of electorate before the election.

"We have been on the field observing a lot of things

ahead of this election. Some of the feelers we are getting are hate speeches, disinformation, and misinformation which are going round social media, communities that there will be violence and castigation of candidates.

"These are causing fears in the minds of the people and electorate. TMG has been able to counter this misinformation and disinformation that are being peddled around by enemies of democracy. We have gone as far as fact checking all this information to know whether they are true or false," he stated.

On his part, the Chief Executive Officer, Teens Educational Development and Information Initiative, Titus Adekunle Alonge lamented that despite the series of sensitization across board for a transparent hitch free election, some individuals are overheating the polity.

Sharing his experience in the previous election, Alonge said " I was held hostage in the previous election. The security agencies who always tell us things will go well, have always failed us. If you remember 2019, they promised us heaven and earth, that there would be no crisis.

"There was a meeting that was held here in Lokoja where the then Inspector General of Police, top military officers, other security agencies were in attendance. Right there, innocent citizens were still tear gassed, and hurt.

"I won't blame the Independent National Electoral Commission, (INEC) that much, even though they also have their own challenges. Where I observed, a former Deputy Governor was stopped from casting his vote.

" In front of security agencies, supporters of other parties were driven out of the polling unit, since they are not casting their votes for a party. Some of us have to stand up against such injustice. The security agencies in that area were compromised, including some electoral officials.

"Personally, I have fear. We are on the ground. I don't belong to any political party and am I a card carrying member of one. I am an independent body. It is worthy to note that this is the most scary election that will be conducted in Kogi State and I pray they get it right. If not, when emotion sets in, there will be problems in the state.

He, however, appealed to INEC and security agencies to weed out bad eggs from their system in a bid to have a transparent, free and fair election in Kogi State.

**APC candidate promises all inclusive government**

From **AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja**

CANDIDATE of the All Progressives Congress, APC in the November 11 Kogi State Governorship election, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo has promised to run an all inclusive government and fairness to everyone if elected.

He also promised a more dynamic strategy that would facilitate effective delivery of democracy dividends through implementation of policies that would impact on the lives of the citizens.

The APC governorship candidate made the promise in Lokoja while interfacing with critical stakeholders and the leadership of Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association of Nigeria MACBAN.

While wooing members of the association to vote for him, Ododo said his administration, if given the mandate, would focus on improving the standard of living of the people and the economic prosperity of the state.

Ododo expressed satisfaction with the existing unity amongst the people of Kogi, irrespective of tribe, religious and political affiliations, and promised to continue with the government of inclusiveness that has been the hallmark of Governor Yahaya Bello's administration in the last eight years.

He pointed out that a vote for the APC on November 11, was a vote for consolidation of the laudable achievements of Governor Yahaya Bello, especially infrastructural development in Lokoja.

He restated his commitment to the principles of equity, fairness and justice, and reassured that he would not be disposed to favoritism, nepotism and lopsidedness in situating developmental projects across the three senatorial districts of the state.

He therefore made a passionate appeal to parents and guardians to warn their children and wards against being used by politicians for thuggery and other electoral offenses.

"I want to appeal to you our elders, help us to actualise the mandate".

He assured them of his commitment to deliver good governance.

"I want to assure you that I will not disappoint you. We are coming to serve with the fear of God, as power belongs to God" he said.

Earlier, Speaker of the Kogi State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Yusuf Aliyu Umar, reiterated the commitment of Lokoja Local Government to the Ododo project.

The lawmaker asserted that Ododo would consolidate on the laudable achievements

recorded by Gov. Yahaya Bello. "For the first time since the inception of democracy in 1999, the people of Lokoja are united and ready to speak with one voice.

Our people would definitely come out on Saturday en masse to cast their votes for APC and its flagbearer, Alhaji Ahmed Usman Ododo," he said.

The stakeholders in their separate remarks, assured that the party's candidate has

passion for the sustainable development of the state, promising that he would not disappoint the people of the state.

The event was attended by eminent personalities from the area, including the member representing Lokoja/Kogi Federal Constituency, Hon Suleiman Danladi Aguye; Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs and Deedat Ozigi; Commissioner for Women Affairs, Hajiya Fatima Buba.

**2024 budget: PLHA speaker promises prompt passage**

By **PAULINE DALLONG**

Speaker of the Plateau State House of Assembly (PLHA), Rt. Hon. Moses Thomas Sule has promised to expedite action on the prompt passage of the 2024 budget.

He made the promise during his remarks, shortly after the state Executive Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang laid the appropriation bill before the floor of the House.

According to the speaker, the House had, on Monday 6th October, received two communications from the executive governor seeking to present the 2024 Appropriation Bill before the state assembly.

The second communication was to inform the House of the appointment of Mr. Samuel Dala Umaru as the Transition Committee Chairman (TIC) of Jos North Local Government Council.

He is to replace Mr. Istifanus John, the Interim Administrator who just retired from the state Civil



Sule

'A Budget of New Service while also Beginning' which is aimed at laying a solid foundation for the peace and unity of the state, is sixteen (16) local government TIC of two hundred and ninety-five point four billion naira (N295.4billion).



Ododo



# IMAGES

## GOVERNOR MUTFWANG LAYS 2024 BUDGET

*Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang, yesterday 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 DUK



## Politics

# On Kogi politics: Truth is bitter

**The long-awaited controversy surrounding the Kogi central senatorial election, which was later dragged to the Tribunal and subsequently to the Appeal court, has come to rest, following the latter judgement, declaring Natasha Akpoti, the Senatorial Candidate of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), as the rightful winner of the last election in Kogi Central, STEPHEN OJATE writes.**

THIS wasn't a surprise to me as I long predicted Natasha Akpoti would win should she contest for the senatorial election even before the general elections itself. One could recall that barely two years after the last general election in Nigeria, I visited my home town in Kogi State and used the opportunity to understudy the political events in the State, taking note of how the ruling party and the opposition parties were faring in the State. I am one person who likes to say things the way they are, not minding whose ox is gored. One would agree with me that I was one of the main supporters of the All Progressive Congress (APC), writer then, but getting home and studying political events did not cloud my sense of reasoning and judgement. I came to realise that the ruling party was losing grip of their strongholds in the state, especially where the incumbent Kogi State Governor, Yahaya Bello, hails from.

In one of my accounts, I told Governor Bello point blank he was presently standing alone if we juxtaposed the feeling of the people at home to what his numerous supporters were claiming on social media platforms. I summarised my report with the title of the article "Governor Bello, a Lonely Masquerade". I added that with the situation of things right then, Natasha Akpoti stands the chance of defeating any person that the ruling party might choose to slug it out with Natasha Akpoti, who might likely secure the People Democratic Party's ticket in view of her tremendous humanitarian services in Kogi Central by single-handedly constructing inter-local government roads.

For having the audacity to say the truth the way things were, I was mimicked by All Progressive Congress media supporters who erroneously tagged me as an unrealisable person. Due to that report, one prominent politician in Governor Bello's cabinet whom I regularly exchange phone calls called me, as well as discountenance our relationship. He stopped calling me as well and stopped responding to my messages on Facebook and WhatsApp. I lost the little helping hand he normally gives to me when I called for help on account of this report.

As I could picture then, what preempted that article was not to undermine or ridicule the ruling party, but a call to open their eyes to the reality on the ground with a view to making amends where necessary. I made that report for them to check themselves on where they were presently getting it wrong and re-strategise properly ahead of the general election. I was called all manner of names and some even misinterpreted me as having



Akpoti-Uduaghan

## Climate Change Act and future of Nigeria's environment

**This is as the global community has come to terms with the reality of the impact of the climate change on humanity and the environment, writes UCHE ANUNNE.**

THUS climate change is one of the dominant topics globally among world leaders, environment scholars and activists.

The Antarctica, at the rate of 150 billion tons per annum is melting at a rate never seen in human history. Wild fires are rampant in parts of U.S while the erosions have worsened in southern Nigeria.

In the northern region decertification moving like a whirlwind, the heat wave in Europe and parts of Asia to flooding in India now seem normal.

Lake Chad, said to be the size of El Salvador, Israel, or Massachusetts has shrunk from 25,000km<sup>2</sup> to 2,500km<sup>2</sup>. Grasslands are disappearing. These and many more leave no one in doubt that the climate is fighting back after millions of years of abuse by humans.

Through industrialisation, reckless use of eco-unfriendly energies, felling of trees and bush burning, mankind actions have continued to threaten the environment.

As global populations grow and demands for energy increases, the pressure on environment escalates.

Almost on the brink of global environment disaster, world leaders have decided to push back against actions responsible for climate change.

In some cases these efforts are preventive measures such as sensitisation campaigns, while in others, they are restorative as seen in the reforestation of deforested parts of the world.

World leaders have also entered into agreements, protocols and conventions to demonstrate how serious they are to save the planet earth.

Some of them include 1997 The Kyoto Protocol which seeks to reduce carbondioxide emissions and the presence of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. It is predicated on the fact that industrialised nations needed to lessen the amount of their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In 2015 The Paris Climate Agreement replaced the Kyoto Protocol and includes commitments from all major Green House Gases (GHG)-emitting countries, to reduce their climate-altering pollution.

Others are Bonn Convention, the Vienna Convention, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Until recently, Nigeria has not done enough to domesticate these conventions as several attempts to pass the necessary bills in the National Assembly did not yield dividends.

Even when one of the bills was successfully passed by the lawmakers, the then President, Goodluck Jonathan did not apend the presidential assent.

However, in the 8th National Assembly, Rep. Sam Onuigbo, then the Chairman of House Committee on Climate Change in the House of Representatives reintroduced the bill. Through his resilience, networking and lobbying, the bill was eventually passed by the 9th National Assembly. On Nov. 18 2021 President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Climate Change Bill into Climate Change Act (2021).

Nigeria's Climate Change Bill, which was sponsored by Rep. Sam Onuigbo, chairman of the Climate Change Committee of the House of Representatives and chair of the Climate Parliament group in Nigeria, was signed into law by President Buhari on November 18, 2021.

"It was important that we take action to tackle the impact of climate change in our society. The global

community is moving in that direction and Nigeria cannot afford otherwise.

"Growing up in the village I used to know six springs and as I am talking to you now five of them have dried up. This is an existential problem that if not challenged now will create more complex problems in the future", said Onuigbo on what inspired him to take up the Climate Change Bill challenge.

While expressing hopes that the inter-ministerial nature of the National Climate Change Council will deliver on the mandate given its inter-ministerial nature, Onuigbo called for urgent shift from fossil to renewable energy.

"This battle started in the 6th Assembly till the 8th Assembly when I came into the picture. Fortunately after much intrigues we got the job done and President Muhammadu Buhari finally signed it into law.

"I am positive that the Council, given its composition and leadership will deliver on this important national assignment", he Onuigbo told News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

The Act's primary aim is to develop and implement mechanisms that will foster low carbon emission and develop a sustainable environment in the country.

The Act, which is now referred to in many quarters as 'Sam Onuigbo Climate Change Act' establishes the National Council on Climate Change.

The Council is under the chairmanship of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which is vested with the powers to develop policies and make decisions on all matters concerning climate change in Nigeria.

It outlines the climate change obligations of the MDAs, public entities, and private entities such as adherence to adhere to the annual carbon emission reduction targets, in accordance with the Action Plan

collected some few Naira notes from Natasha and her supporters to make that report. Here we are today; the reality is now starling in our eyes.

Natasha's political sagacity is unique and she is such a big school which every political gladiator in Kogi State should understudy.

Her victory and increasing popularity in Kogi State is nothing other than her genuine love for her teaming supporters. She likes keeping and maintaining her supporters, unlike other politicians who use you and dump after achieving their mission. I wish Governor Bello and his arsenals could make amendments ahead of the November gubernatorial election in the State. Notwithstanding, I will make a report on who may likely win the forthcoming Kogi Gubernatorial election in the State in the next few days.

and carbon budgets.

The 'Sam Onuigbo' Climate Change Act further stipulates that MDAs, among other things, must establish a climate change desk for ensuring integration of climate change activities into their core mandate.

The Act also stipulates that any individual, private or public entity whose actions negatively affects efforts towards mitigation and the adaptation measures commits an offence and is liable to a penalty as will be determined by the Council.

The climate change efforts resonate with other activists and environment experts.

A scholar and environment activist, Prof. Ubom Bassey says effective implementation of the Act is key to the future of Nigeria's environmental resources. Bassey is of the department of Science and Environmental Education, University of Abuja.

He commended the tenacity of Onuigbo in pushing through the Bill and called on the Council to ensure its smooth implementation.

Similarly, delivering the 14th Inaugural Lecture of Osun State University, the institution's Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic, Research, Innovation and Partnerships, Prof. Anthony Kola-Olusanya, said it was time for collective efforts to address climate change.

"Our unsustainable economic production practices and development activities continue to cause global anxiety, particularly regarding how far the planet can absorb its continued abuse.

"Sustainable development is a societal challenge, not simply an environmental one – improvements in education and healthcare are, therefore, required to achieve higher income and better environmental decisions", he said.

**NANFeatures**



News

# Tinubu presents 2.176 trillion supplementary budget to Reps

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Tinubu has presented a N2.176 trillion 2023 Supplementary Budget proposal to the House of Representatives.

In the breakdown of the budget, the Ministry of Defence received the highest allocation of N476.543 billion, Works, N300 billion and the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, N200 billion.

Under the State House section of the budget, N2.9 billion was earmarked for the purchase of SUV vehicles, the purchase of official vehicles for the office of the First Lady, N1.5 billion, renovation of the residential quarters of the president, N4 billion, renovation of Dodan Barracks, the official residence of Mr President, N4 billion, renovation of the official quarters of the vice president in Lagos -N 3 billion, construction of an office complex in Aso Rock - N4 billion.



Tinubu

In the office of the National Security Adviser section, the Presidential Air fleet will receive a budget of N12.7 billion, in the Nigeria Navy section N5 billion was earmarked for a Presidential Yacht. 5 billion

was allocated for renovation of 100 schools, N5.5 billion for education loan fund. Housing got N100 billion, FCT, N100 billion, DSS- N49 billion, police - 50 billion and service wide, N615 billion.

FROM PETER TITLE, Gindiri

THE Executive Governor of Plateau State, Barrister Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang has acknowledged and appreciated the unquantifiable contributions of the Gindiri Old Students Association (GOSA), towards the development of Plateau and Nigeria at large.

Disclosing this during the 37th Reunion Service held at the Church Auditorium of COCIN Gindiri Schools Chaplaincy, Mangu Local Government Area, the Governor explained that many members of the association had contributed and are still offering credible and selfless services in different spheres of human endeavours across

Gov. Mutfwang, who is a member of the old students, cited their Alma mater's legacy of nurturing competent leaders which he noted including the late Joseph Gomwalk, the first Governor of Benue - Plateau State whom significantly contributed to peaceful co-existence and development of Plateau and Nigeria as a whole.

He extended his

# Mutfwang appreciates GOSA's contributions



Mutfwang

appreciation to God for the relative peace that has prevailed in the state and emphasized the collective responsibility of all citizens in upholding the security of lives and property, especially in Mangu Local Government Area which had recently faced challenges relating to insecurity.

The governor therefore reiterated his administration's determination and commitment towards establishing a robust security framework to ensure the safety of students, as well as the community as a whole.

While speaking about the current political landscape and legal challenges, Governor Mutfwang expressed his unwavering faith, stating that as long as God remains enthroned, light would prevail over darkness and assured that victory was certain despite the obstacles being faced.

The Church Of Christ In

Nations (COCIN) v President, Reverend. Dr. Amos Mohzo commended Gov. Mutfwang for his prompt action in addressing the state's security challenges and further praised him for the courage put in place which led to the attraction of federal government presence in the state.

Reflecting on COCIN's history since its establishment in 1904, Rev. Dr. Mohzo highlighted the faithfulness of God towards the Church, emphasizing the positive impact of the schools in raising leaders who have made significant contributions to humanity.

On his part, the General Secretary of COCIN, Associate Prof. Benjamin Pokol, urged the former students to uphold integrity and truth in public service, emphasizing the importance of being agent of social transformation.

The event witnessed an array of dignitaries from all

# Orphanage/ rehabilitation centre craves for governor's blessings

From Abbas Gungura, Bauchi

THE proprietor of Mallam Kawu Youth Rehabilitation and Orphanage Centre (MKYROC) in Bauchi State, has expressed worry over the inability of Governor Bala Mohammed to visit and shower his blessings on the centre with a view to propel its progress and development.

"This rehabilitation centre is operating in Bauchi, the seat of power from which it is getting praises from individuals and bodies within and outside the state, and even from some countries globally. But it is yet to receive the blessing or any prophetic word from the Governor of Bauchi State or his representative".

Speaking to the press in Bauchi recently, Mallam Kawu, as the proprietor is popularly called, said that the long awaited visit by the governor would no doubt

boost the capacity and morale of the centre and its operators, while encouraging more people to patronize it.

"The Mallam Kawu Rehabilitation and Orphanage Centre deserves the blessing, or even worse, the curse of Governor Bala Mohammed", he pointed.

Mallam Abdullahi Tahir therefore, tendered a passionate appeal to the Executive Governor of Bauchi State, to kindly visit or send a representative to see how the centre operates and extend his blessing, as part of the drive to sanitize the society of youths restiveness, drugs addiction or other social vices that portend danger to communities.

He expressed dismay that a significant percentage of the youths are more than ever before engaged in the use of illicit drugs. Kalu pointed out that unless the government, parents, religious and community

leaders, stakeholders and philanthropists intervene, the future would be bleak for the youths who were adjudged as leaders of tomorrow.

Tahir, whose interview primarily centred on his intervention in promoting the course of education, especially school uniforms and other learning materials to the less-privilege pupils and JSS students of Zannuwa Primary School, revealed that after Zannuwa, he would continue with the intervention to pupils in Dawaki, Shekal and Model School Kofar Ran, all in Dawaki Ward of Bauchi metropolis.

The centre proprietor explained that he recently started providing uniforms and learning materials to pupils of Zannuwa Primary School and its JSS students who were in addition being provided caps, shoes, socks and writing books. He disclosed that after Zannuwa, he would continue with Dawaki, Shekal, and Model School at Kofar Ran.

"My intention is to provide uniforms and other schooling learning materials to 60 males and 40 females at Zannuwa Primary School, 60 pupils at Shekal Primary School, Dawaki and Model Primary School at Kofar Ran. I want to provide to at least 600 pupils and JSS students at those schools in Dawaki Ward of Bauchi metropolis".

Mallam Kawu recalled that he started the provision of learning materials to the pupils and students of his rehabilitation centre, whose sponsorship to tertiary institutions in the state have been running smoothly for years without hindrance at

ATBU Bauchi, Sa'ad Zungur State University, Gadau, and Fedpoly Bauchi, among others.

"Presently, the rehabilitation centre has three students at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), five at Sa'ad Zungur State University, Gadau, two at Malikiya College of Health Sciences, as well as in Federal Polytechnic and Abubakar Tatari Ali Polytechnic in Bauchi. The Centre also has two students at the Alkaleri Petroleum Institute", he concluded.

# NLC accuses Gov Uzodinma of assassination attempt

From JIDAUNA YANUNG, Abuja

THE Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has accused the Governor of IMO State, Hope Uzodima of going after the life of its President, Comrade Joe Ajaero.

NLC said the governor had launched an attack on Ajaero's community, Azalla Owalla in Emekuku Owerri \_ IMO State with the intention to assassinate the NLC President whom he thought was in the community recuperating from the injuries inflicted on him in Owerri by thugs and some police men.

In a statement in Abuja, NLC spokesman, Comrade BenUpah said President Bola Tinubu should hold the governor accountable for the bloodshed and delayed no

further in calling him to order.

According to the statement, "This invasion was carried out under the misguided belief that the NLC president was in the community. The use of

excessive forces against citizens who hold different opinions or dare to question the Governor's governance style especially in the area of human treatment of workers in Imo State.



Mohammed

## Change of Name

JOHNA	SHAGAYA
I formerly known and addressed as <b>WANDATE VANDI</b> , now wish to be known and addressed as <b>JOHN PETER</b> . All former documents remain valid. All concerned authority and the general public should pleased take note.	I formerly known and addressed as <b>SHAGAYA FRIDAY LAFAT</b> , now wish to be known and addressed as <b>SHAGAYA GAMPYL NIMTAROK</b> . My correct date of birth is 15/9/1988, not 15/9/1975. All former documents remain valid. All concerned authority and the general public should pleased take note.
PAUL	SPACE FOR SALE
I formerly known and addressed as <b>PAUL OLUWATIMILHEN IBRAHIM</b> , now wish to be known and addressed as <b>PAUL OLUWARIMILEHIN LAVEN</b> . All former documents remain valid. All concerned authority and the general public should pleased take note.	



# News

## 'Investigate threat to life of cleric by monarch'

From MUSLIUDEEN ADEBAYO, Ibadan

A human rights advocacy group, Save the Poor and Needy Charity Initiative (SPANCI) has enjoined the Inspector General of Police, Kayode Egbetokun and the Assistant Inspector General of Police in charge of Zone 11, Paul Ojeka Odama to investigate a case of alleged threat to life of a cleric by a monarch and his chiefs in Osun State.

The group made this declaration in a petition addressed to both the IGP and AIG, a copy of which was made available to journalists recently.

SPANCI President, Comrade Yemi Ezekiel Bello in the petition alleged that the Elerinmo of Erinmo in Osun State, Oba Micheal Odunayo Ajayi Arowotawaya and one of his chiefs, Saba of Erinmo, Chief Taiwo Agbonmagbe are threatening the life of Pastor Samuel Adegoke Bojesomo and members of his family.

Bello in the petition maintained that the monarch and his chiefs have been sending threat messages to the cleric and his family over plans to forcefully take over the land at Orioke Agbara Emimimo Efon Alaye in Ekiti



Egbetokun

State from the family of Baba Aladura Joseph Odeyemi Eyinfafe Bojesomo.

The group in the petition declared that the land in question is located in Ekiti State and belonged to the family of the cleric which they have been using as a prayer mountain/church for many years.

The group said it was surprised that the monarch and his chiefs have concluded

plans to take over the land which falls between the boundary of Osun and Ekiti states.

Bello, while speaking further, alleged that the monarch and his chiefs have been threatening the life of the cleric, his family and workers over the land matter.

Bello, who noted that the monarch intended to cede the land which is in Efon Alaaye in Ekiti State to Erinmo in Osun State, added that the monarch's action is likely to cause breach of peace in the area.

He then appealed to the IGP and the AIG to investigate the matter.

"We have the consent of Prophet Samuel Adegoke Bojesomo and his family members to write this letter so that their rights and obligations may be protected.

"Another thing that our clients said happened same day, later was a threat to life call received by Mr Babalola Raphael, one of our clients worker on the mountain from a man who refused to mention his name but said he is one of Erinmo youths who was also threatening his life.

"We hereby request the IGP and AIG Zone 11 to prevail on Osun State CP, under whose command the police were forcing our clients to come and write undertaking and make affidavit in favor of Elerinmo and his chiefs and call him to order in the interest of justice and fair hearing.

"That the matter be investigated and Elerinmo, his chiefs and any other person planning such evil, be arrested and prosecuted for the above criminal acts before they carry out their evil plans on our clients in the interest of justice and fair hearing".

Efforts made by our correspondent to get a reaction from the monarch proved to be abortive as calls put through his mobile phone were not answered.

But, the Saba of Erinmo, Chief Taiwo Agbonmagbe when contacted said that he cannot comment on the matter because the matter is being handled by the police.

"I am not competent to talk or say anything about the subject matter because the subject matter is with the state Commissioner of Police at the Police Command headquarters".

## Couples enjoined to build lasting relationships

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

AS part of efforts aimed at further improving the state's educational system, Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has approved the immediate disbursement of N497 million for the payment of the 2023 WAEC examination fees for students enrolled in the state public schools.

The disbursement is also in realisation of the administration's recent pledge to provide free education from primary to secondary school level within Kogi State public schools, underscoring the government's unwavering commitment to implementing the "Zero Out-of-School Policy" in the state.

A statement on Saturday signed by the Chief Press Secretary to the Governor, Muhammed Onogwu, said, "This resolute step reflects the administration's dedication to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to access quality education, regardless

of their socioeconomic status. It aims to empower students to undertake crucial examinations without imposing any financial burden on their parents or guardians.

"Furthermore, the Governor recently emphasised that his administration would penalise parents who fail to enroll their children in school under his leadership. This comprehensive approach to education underscores the state's commitment to not only increasing access to education but also ensuring active participation."

Among the schools that will directly benefit from this WAEC fees initiative, Dekina has the highest number of students, with 1,867 beneficiaries, followed by Lokoja Local Government Area, which has 1,569 students and Okene, 1,345 students.

In total, this noble initiative will benefit a substantial 15,033 students, fostering a brighter educational future for the youth of Kogi State.



Bello



## Holding our leaders to account

ONLY recently, the Tinubu administration submitted a supplementary budget to the National Assembly to take care of some of its activities. This budget has generated a lot of furor as it is tailored towards servicing the pleasures of the ruling class rather than mitigating the suffering of the generality of the people caused by the policies of the administration.

This has led critics like Reuben Abati to posit that "When President Tinubu assumed office on May 29, 2023, he declared to Nigerians that fuel subsidy was gone. This has brought great and untold hardship upon the people: increase in the cost of living, with headline inflation now at over 26%, the highest in 18 years, crisis with the Naira which has been yo-yo-ing, against the dollar, further driving up the cost of living and the widespread pandemic of poverty in the country.

The consistent message by the Tinubu administration is that the people should be prepared to make necessary sacrifices: Things may be rough, we have been told, but they will get better surely, so we the people, must be patient.

The sheer common senses of it would be that while the people of Nigeria are facing serious hardship, their leaders who are prescribing austerity would also demonstrate that they are with them, on their side, and ready to suffer along with the people until the country gets out of the woods. More so, they have a President who has been there at the battle front of democracy, at the barricades, and who cannot claim that he does not understand how the people feel. His wife even recently boasted that she and her family do not need Nigeria's money. So, what is the problem? Why do they want new cars and renovated quarters? Why can't they wait?"

Why, for instance, is the presidency renovating the Aso Villa that was worked on by the Buhari administration before it exited? Why would the fleet of cars of the First

Lady be replaced when the ones used by the immediate past First Lady are readily available? Unfortunately, the first and second families seem not to appreciate the enormity of the problem that weigh down on the people.

That is not all, the National Assembly seem to be living in a different space. They are advocating the purchase of SUVs for the use of its members not minding the fact that a huge chunk of the population is living in abject poverty and want. Yet, the people who are supposed to be the eyes of this people see things differently?

The political class cannot claim not to appreciate the hardships occasioned by the lack of the provision of basic infrastructure by the government even though the National Assembly claims they need the SUVs

**“What we need therefore, is to ensure good governance in all that is done. We cannot focus only on the political class as that would be suicidal, but adopt a bottom -up approach so as to cushion some of the effects of the hardships being faced by the citizenry. What is left is for the political class to shed off some of its self- serving policies and realize that the people matter in all they do. Indeed, no economy can grow when it is import dependent rather than export focus. Our local industries must be given the impetus to grow and realize their potentials rather than being left to die from lack of patronage.”**

to navigate the bad roads that spawn the length and breath of the country. But whose responsibility is it to fix these roads? Are the citizens themselves immune from the bad roads? How are they going to manage their own hardships? What is expected of the citizens when they operate in very sorry environment?

In reply to this, Abati posits that, "there is a tendency for people in government to live in the Rose Garden and dismiss the people as ignorant. This would be a wrong approach as it was in the past, as it is now, as it would always be.

The people have both the need and the right to know. At the risk of oversimplification, it is the duty of government to continuously explain to the people and re-build their trust and confidence, even when the matter appears mundane, self-evident, and self-explanatory. One of the major risks of democracy is that those who govern may be dealing with a patently dumb population, but the people must never be treated as dumb, because they may be quick to learn and ask the right questions and their dumbness could become historical wisdom. True sovereignty in that regard belongs to the people. Power belongs to the people as the lesson has been learnt in such places as France in 1789, 1830, and 1848 and in Brazil in 1835, 1964 and 1972."

What we need therefore, is to ensure good governance in all that is done. We cannot focus only on the political class as that would be suicidal, but adopt a bottom -up approach so as to cushion some of the effects of the hardships being faced by the citizenry. What is left is for the political class to shed off some of its self- serving policies and realize that the people matter in all they do.

Indeed, no economy can grow when it is import dependent rather than export focus. Our local industries must be given the impetus to grow and realize their potentials rather than being left to die from lack of patronage.



## News

### Governor appreciates Ningi community with N10.3bn road construction

From **ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi**

GOVERNOR Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State has recently kicked off the construction of the long awaited 11-kilometer dual road project, starting from Government Secondary School Ningi-Gudduba in Ningi town, which is expected to gulp the sum of N10.3 billion.

Senator Bala Mohammed, at the flag off occasion held in Ningi, headquarter of Ningi LGA, said his Government has high regards for road construction which is key to economic development in the state.

According to him, the contract will be done through direct contract award to Mothercat Nigeria Limited and will be jointly supervised by a team of engineers from the State Ministry of Works and Transport and Federal Ministry of Works.

He said that his administration has already received the approval of the federal government for the construction of the road. Mohammed added that his government wanted the federal government to do it, but his government was too anxious and therefore decided to do the job in the interest of the good people of Ningi as dividends of democracy as earlier promised. Governor Mohammed noted that roads are a very important component of economic activities not only in the developed world, but also in developing countries, stressing that they facilitate access to employment, education and opportunities for all other productive activities.

The Governor said that Ningi Emirate and the central zone have been deprived by previous administrations, of good road networks. And pointed out that his administration is righting the wrongs and correcting the anomalies in terms of creating engagements, inclusivity and respect for the yearnings and aspirations of every sector of the state.

"As the Chairman of the local government has said that there is so much neglect of the Ningi Emirate and it is not that easy for



Bala

one administration to address them, but I will definitely try my best as the Turaki Ningi," he promised.

"We therefore hit the ground running on the day one of our first tenure by awarding road projects to a number of reputable road contractors. This particular one that we are doing in Ningi, is in recognition of what the people of Ningi have done to us as PDP, from myself the governor, you voted for me, voted for all those who contested under the PDP. All the elected offices in Ningi Emirate were given to the PDP. The Only way to say thank you is the dualization of Ningi town roads," the governor said.

"The project, like other numerous projects embarked upon by this administration, was conceived as a fulfillment of our campaign promises, to provide essential infrastructure in order to ameliorate the transportation difficulties by our people who face serious challenges in transporting their agricultural produce to the markets.

"It is expected that in the course of the construction, the project will create direct jobs to engineers, labourers, artisans and indirectly to food vendors, suppliers, transporters and many others in the construction value chain," the governor said.

In their separate remarks, the Commissioner, Ministry of Works and Transport, Hon Ibrahim Gambo Galadima and the

Representative of the contracting firm, Mothercat Nigeria Limited, highlighted some components of the project to include 7.3 meters carriage way and 2 meters wide shoulder.

Speaking on behalf of the benefiting communities, the Emir of Ningi, Alhaji Yunusa Muhammadu Danyaya and the Local Government Caretaker Committee Chairmen, Ibrahim Zubairu, commended the Governor for considering the long awaited project in his rural and urban development initiative.

### Vision of this administration is repositioning state

By **PETER TITLE**

THE Plateau State Commissioner for Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs, Hon. Ephraim Usman said the vision of the present administration is to reposition the

state for global impact. Hence, the recent award of scholarships to ten Plateau indigenes to study in one of American universities.

Hon. Usman made this known when he received the officials of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Jos Custodial Centre who paid him a courtesy visit in the

ministry.

The Commissioner commended the Jos Custodial Centre of the Nigerian Correctional Service for creating an enabling environment for the inmates to acquire relevant skills and education that will help them when they are out of the Centre.

He stated that the ministry will assist them where necessary since it is part of their responsibility to make the society a better place to cohabit. He called on them to ensure that the innocent ones are released.

Earlier in his remark, the Deputy Controller of the Nigerian Correctional Service, Jos Custodial Centre, Poyak Nandang said that they came to the ministry to solicit for help and support to enhance the capacity of the Centre to train inmates and make them responsible when they go back into the society.

He stated that they have 1118 inmates (16 females) who need education and training in skills acquisition, noting that NECO has approved their Centre for NECO examinations and the National Open University has given them some conditions to meet in order to open a centre in the Correctional Custodial Centre.

He called on the Ministry and the seventeen (17) Local Government Councils in the state to support

THE preceding week has been marked by significant achievements for the air components of Operation Hadarin Daji (OPHD) in the Northwest and Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) in Northeast Nigeria.

Collaborating with the land components and other security agencies, the air forces under these operational theaters, have successfully neutralized terrorist groups, insurgents, and other criminal elements, ensuring enhanced security for innocent citizens in the regions.

In the Northwest, the Air Component of OPHD conducted a series of precise airstrikes on November 1, 2023, in Kankara Local Government Area (LGA) of Katsina State. The target was the hideout of a notorious terrorist kingpin, Babaru, who has been involved in numerous acts of terrorism and banditry across Kankara and neighboring LGAs.

Notably, Babaru was implicated in the massacre of over 100 residents of Gidan Gari and Yarmai-Yadiya villages in Bakori LGA on February 2, 2023.

The airstrikes successfully destroyed Babaru's hideout and eliminated several terrorists, although confirmation regarding Babaru's status is still pending.

Additionally, airstrikes were carried out on the enclave of

### OPHD, OPHK record victories in fight against insurgents

By **DORCAS PANKYES**

another terrorist kingpin known as Mai Solar in Maru LGA of Zamfara State. The strikes hit the clusters of enclaves used as hideouts by the kingpin and his cohorts, resulting in a successful operation with several survivors observed fleeing the scene. Confirmation regarding Mai Solar's status is also awaited.

In the Northeast, precision air strikes conducted by the air component of OPHK on November 3, 2023, led to the elimination of numerous terrorists at their meeting point near Degbawa, a secluded location within the Mandara Mountains in Goza Local Government Area of Borno State.

The strikes were carried out based on actionable intelligence indicating the presence of key terrorist figures and their foot soldiers gathering for a possible meeting. The large number of terrorists at the location raised concerns and necessitated an air interdiction, which proved highly successful in dealing a devastating blow to the terrorists.

Upon assessment, it was confirmed that several terrorists were eliminated in the operation.

Multiple sources revealed that the location chosen by the terrorists was carefully selected to avoid detection, particularly by Nigerian Air Force (NAF) aircraft. However, the outcome of the strike demonstrated the terrorists' miscalculation as their plans were detected, leading to the success of the air operation.

Their sources also highlighted that this strike dealt a significant setback to the terrorists who have recently faced continuous pressure from both the air and land components of OPHK. There were strong indications that these terrorists were responsible for the recent attack on locals in Geidam on October 31, 2023, and had planned to review the attack and strategize for future attacks on innocent civilians and other vulnerable targets.

The successful airstrikes in both the Northwest and Northeast regions of Nigeria highlight the commitment and effectiveness of the military's efforts in combating terrorism and ensuring the safety of citizens.

These operations serve as a reminder of the continuous efforts being made to rid the country of terrorist activities and maintain security and stability in affected regions.

### Kaduna Electric sacks 39 staff

From **John FWAH, Kaduna**

THE Management of Kaduna Electric has announced that 39 staff were last month dismissed from the company for various offenses which were in breach of the company's employee policy.

It said in a statement

the payment of the NECO fees for some of the inmates.

Also, at the ministry were the Management of the Plateau State Agency for Formal and Non-formal Education led by Mrs. Phoebe John Clark, the Acting Executive Director who said they came to seek collaboration with the ministry and the seventeen (17) Local Government Councils, stressing that they are stakeholders in running the affairs of the agency.

She said that the agency has offices in all the Local Government Areas that need to be revived to play a role in enhancing the educational development of the state. Clark added that each of the seventeen (17) Local Government Councils in the state are supposed to be sponsoring four (4) persons each for a one-year yearly skill acquisition training.

Responding, the Commissioner promised to discuss with the seventeen Local Government Transitional Chairmen to see to the progress and success of the formal and non-formal education in the state.



Sani

issued by the company's Head of Corporate Communication, Abdulazeez Abdullahi, that the offenses range from misappropriation of company funds, fraudulent practices, unauthorised access and abscondment.

The statement said the offenses were in breach of the revised employee conditions of service which was recently endorsed by the national leadership of the two in-house labour unions and the Management led by the Managing Director/CEO, Yusuf Usman Yahaya.

Kaduna Electric said the action of the dismissed staff

had adverse effects on the company's fortunes and needed to be checked. According to the statement, Management seriously frowns at all manner of fraudulent activities perpetrated by staff and would act decisively by punishing all those caught.

While hoping that the dismissal will serve as a deterrent to others, Kaduna Electric advised customers to desist from transacting any business, conniving with fraudulent persons to shortchange the company as this hampers its ability to meet its obligations to the electricity market



Usman



## Foreign Commentary

# Why Israel wants to erase Gaza war, history

*The dehistoricisation of what is happening helps Israel pursue genocidal policies in Gaza. Writes Ilan Pappé.*

On October 24, a statement by United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres caused a sharp reaction by Israel. While addressing the UN Security Council, the UN chief said that while he condemned in the strongest terms the massacre committed by Hamas on October 7, he wished to remind the world that it did not take place in a vacuum. He explained that one cannot dissociate 56 years of occupation from our engagement with the tragedy that unfolded on that day.

The Israeli government was quick to condemn the statement. Israeli officials demanded Guterres's resignation, claiming that he supported Hamas and justified the massacre it carried out. The Israeli media also jumped on the bandwagon, asserting among other things that the UN chief "has demonstrated a stunning degree of moral bankruptcy".

This reaction suggests that a new type of allegation of anti-Semitism may now be on the table. Until October 7, Israel had pushed for the definition of anti-Semitism to be expanded to include criticism of the Israeli state and questioning the moral basis of Zionism. Now, contextualising and historicising what is going on could also trigger an accusation of anti-Semitism.

The dehistoricisation of these events aids Israel and governments in the West in pursuing policies they shunned in the past due to either ethical, tactical, or strategic considerations.

Thus, the October 7 attack is used by Israel as a pretext to pursue genocidal policies in the Gaza Strip. It is also a pretext for the United States to try and reassert its presence in the Middle East. And it is a pretext for some European countries to violate and limit democratic freedoms in the name of a new "war on terror".

But there are several historical contexts for what is going on now in Israel-Palestine that cannot be ignored. The wider historical context goes back to the mid-19th century, when evangelical Christianity in the West turned the idea of the "return of the Jews" into a religious millennial imperative and advocated the



Netanyahu establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as part of the steps that would lead to the resurrection of the dead, the return of the Messiah, and the end of time.

Theology became policy toward the end of the 19th century and in the years leading up to World War I for two reasons.

First, it worked in the interest of those in Britain wishing to dismantle the Ottoman Empire and incorporate parts of it into the British Empire. Second, it resonated with those within the British aristocracy, both Jews and Christians, who became enchanted with the idea of Zionism as a panacea for the problem of anti-Semitism in Central and Eastern Europe, which had produced an unwelcome wave of Jewish immigration to Britain.

When these two interests fused, they propelled the British government to issue the famous – or infamous – Balfour Declaration in 1917.

Jewish thinkers and activists who redefined Judaism as nationalism hoped this definition would protect Jewish communities from existential danger in Europe by homing in on Palestine as the desired space for "rebirth of the Jewish nation".

In the process, the cultural and intellectual Zionist project transformed into a settler colonial one – which aimed at Judaising historical Palestine, disregarding the fact that it was inhabited by an Indigenous population.

In turn, the Palestinian society, quite pastoral at that time and in its early stage of modernisation and construction of a national identity, produced its own anti-colonial movement. Its first significant action against the Zionist colonisation project came with the al-Buraq Uprising of 1929, and it has not ceased since then.

Another historical context relevant to the present crisis is the 1948 ethnic cleansing of Palestine that included the forceful expulsion of Palestinians into the Gaza Strip from villages on whose ruins some of the Israeli settlements attacked on October 7 were built. These uprooted Palestinians were part of the 750,000 Palestinians who lost their homes and became refugees.

This ethnic cleansing was noted by the world but not condemned. As a result, Israel continued to resort to ethnic cleansing as part of its effort to ensure that it had complete control over historical Palestine with as few of the native Palestinians remaining as possible. This included the expulsion of 300,000 Palestinians during and in the aftermath of the 1967 war, and the expulsion of more than 600,000 from the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip ever since.

There is also the context of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Over the past 50 years, the occupational forces have inflicted persistent



Guterres

collective punishment on the Palestinians in these territories, exposing them to constant harassment by Israeli settlers and security forces and imprisoning hundreds of thousands of them.

Since the election of the present fundamentalist messianic Israeli government in November 2022, all these harsh policies reached unprecedented levels. The number of Palestinians killed, wounded and arrested in the occupied West Bank skyrocketed. On top of that, Israeli government policies towards Christian and Muslim holy places in Jerusalem became even more aggressive.

Finally, there is also the historical context of the 16-year-long siege on Gaza, where almost half of the population are children. In 2018, the UN was already warning that the Gaza Strip would become a place unfit for humans by 2020.

It is important to remember that the siege was imposed in response to democratic elections won by Hamas after the unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the territory. Even more important is to go back to the 1990s, when the Gaza Strip was encircled by barbed wire and disconnected from the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords.

The isolation of Gaza, the fence around it, and the increased Judaisation of the West Bank were a clear indication that Oslo in the eyes of the Israelis meant an occupation by other means, not a path to genuine peace.

Israel controlled the exit and entry points to the Gaza ghetto, monitoring even the kind of food that entered – at times limiting it to a certain calorie count. Hamas reacted to this debilitating siege by launching rockets on civilian areas in Israel.

The Israeli government claimed these attacks were motivated by the movement's ideological wish to kill Jews – a new form of Nazim – disregarding the context of both the Nakba and the inhuman and barbaric siege imposed on two million people and the

oppression of their compatriots in other parts of historical Palestine.

Hamas, in many ways, was the only Palestinian group that promised to avenge or respond to these policies. The way it decided to respond, however, may bring its own demise, at least in the Gaza Strip, and may also provide a pretext for further oppression of the Palestinian people.

The savageness of its attack cannot be justified in any way, but that does not mean it cannot be explained and contextualised. As horrific as it was, the bad news is that it is not a game-changing event, despite the huge human cost on both sides. What does this mean for the future?

Israel will remain a state established by a settler-colonial movement, which will continue to influence its political DNA and determine its ideological nature. This means that despite its self-framing as the only democracy in the Middle East, it will remain a democracy only for its Jewish citizens.

The internal struggle inside Israel between what one can call the state of Judea – the settlers' state wishing Israel to be more theocratic and racist – and the state of Israel – wishing to keep the status quo – that preoccupied Israel until October 7 will erupt again. In fact, there are already signs of its return.

Israel will continue to be an apartheid state – as declared by a number of human rights organisations – however the situation in Gaza unfolds. The Palestinians will not disappear and will continue their struggle for liberation, with many civil societies siding with them and their governments backing Israel and providing it with an exceptional immunity.

The way out remains the same: a change of regime in Israel that brings equal rights for everyone from the river to the sea and allows for the return of Palestinian refugees. Otherwise, the cycle of bloodshed will not end.

**The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance.**

***"This ethnic cleansing was noted by the world but not condemned. As a result, Israel continued to resort to ethnic cleansing as part of its effort to ensure that it had complete control over historical Palestine with as few of the native Palestinians remaining as possible. This included the expulsion of 300,000 Palestinians during and in the aftermath of the 1967 war, and the expulsion of more than 600,000 from the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip ever since. Since the election of the present fundamentalist messianic Israeli government in November 2022, all these harsh policies reached unprecedented levels. The number of Palestinians killed, wounded and arrested in the occupied West Bank skyrocketed. On top of that, Israeli government policies towards Christian and Muslim holy places in Jerusalem became even more aggressive."***



## Foreign News

### Israel's nuclear option remark raises 'huge questions'-Russia

RUSSIAN officials have joined other countries in expressing concern over the remarks of an Israeli junior minister who appeared to express openness to the idea of Israel carrying out a nuclear strike on Gaza, saying that it raises a "huge number of questions".

Moscow's reaction came on Tuesday, days after Heritage Minister Amihai Eliyahu, said during a radio interview, that the nuclear option would be "one way" to deal with Gaza, implying that, not only is Israel in possession of nuclear weapons - something the country has never admitted - but that it is also willing to use them.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday suspended the minister from a far-right party in the coalition government and from cabinet meetings "until further notice".

Maria Zakharova, Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman, said that the main issue was that Israel appeared to have admitted that it had nuclear weapons.

"Question number one - it turns out that we are hearing official statements about the presence of nuclear weapons?" Zakharova was



Putin

quoted as saying by state RIA news agency.

If so, she said, then where are the International Atomic Energy Agency and international nuclear inspectors?

The Federation of American Scientists estimates Israel has about 90 nuclear warheads.

On Monday, the United States condemned Eliyahu's comments as "wholly unacceptable".

"We continue to believe that it is important for all sides of this conflict to refrain from hateful rhetoric," deputy State

Department spokesperson Vedant Patel told a briefing.

The remarks also drew condemnation from around the Arab world and Iran called for a swift international response.

"The UN Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency must take immediate and uninterrupted action to disarm this barbaric and apartheid regime," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabollahian said on social media on Monday.

"Tomorrow is late," he posted on X.

A robotic capsule to carry cargo to and from the International Space Station is to be developed under a competition run by the European Space Agency.

It's anticipated the vehicle will make its maiden voyage in 2028.

The initiative marks a big shift in the way Esa has traditionally run its projects.

The competition's winner will receive some funding and technical support from the agency, but it must operate the capsule on a commercial basis.

It will have to part-fund the development and then "sell" the re-supply "service" to Esa, who will become the "anchor customer".

If the endeavour is successful, the company behind the new capsule may be asked to upgrade it so it can also carry Esa astronauts into orbit, again on the basis of a commercially contracted service.

"We will conceive [the capsule] in a way that it's not a dead end, meaning that it's open and can evolve in the future to a crew vehicle, if member states decide to do so," said Esa director-general Josef Aschbacher.

"Eventually, it could also evolve [to go to] other destinations, possibly to the Moon," he told reporters.

A tiger team was being set up inside the agency with an initial budget of €75m (£65m) to get the competition under way, the DG added.

The idea was enthusiastically backed by Esa member states at a summit in Seville, Spain, on Monday.

### Europe to develop commercial space capsule

The competitive procurement model is one that has worked extremely well for the American space agency.

Nasa used to own and operate all its space vehicles. But when the famous space shuttles were retired, it opted instead to start seeding new providers, offering them fixed-price contracts and encouraging progress with milestone payments.

This is how entrepreneur Elon Musk's SpaceX company emerged. His Californian firm has since become the dominant supplier to Nasa of space transportation services. The US agency purchases seats in SpaceX capsules to get its astronauts to and from the ISS, and contracts SpaceX rockets to send science missions far beyond Earth.

The Esa competition will try to replicate this model which, in the arena of transportation, has given Nasa access to faster, more innovative and lower-cost space technologies.

Anna Christmann, a Green politician leading aerospace policy in the German government and chair of the Seville summit, said Esa was going through a paradigm shift.

"Public money is needed to start these kinds of competitions, but then that attracts investors to put money in through private companies," she commented.

"When we compare space budgets, Europe is not so different from others on the public side. The bigger difference is on the private side of investment, and that's what we want to change."

Potential capsule contenders already exist in Europe. Start-ups such as **The Exploration Company** and **Rocket Factory Augsburg** have concepts they may wish to enter.

Esa member states also committed in Seville to use the approach for procuring rockets in the long term.

Today, Europe's launchers are in crisis. The new heavy-lift Ariane-6 vehicle is years behind

schedule and the medium-lift Vega-C rocket is out of action because of recent failures.

Esa member states have taken measures, at considerable cost, to try to put these projects back on track, but there is a recognition that the current malaise must not be repeated in the decades ahead.

To that end, European industry will also be challenged to provide next-generation rockets on the service model, limiting the liability of European taxpayers, who've been asked to dig deep to subsidise current hardware.

Ariane-6, for instance, will be receiving up to €340m (£295m) a year in support payments during the early phase of its exploitation.

"All 22 member states of Esa have agreed that we have to change how we procure the launchers of the future," Dr Aschbacher said.

The Seville meeting also took decisions that will see satellites play a greater role in helping European nations achieve their net-zero goals. A good example is using space data to route planes more efficiently so they contribute fewer greenhouse gases.

In addition, Esa opened its Zero Debris Charter to signatories. This encourages everyone operating in space to leave behind no hardware that might collide with operational missions.

The UK, one of the big four nations in Esa, will be introducing a new regulatory framework early next year that aims to promote good behaviour and foster a market for services that remove trash from orbit.

"We want to reward compliant operators," said UK science minister George Freeman.

"If you're bringing back what you put up, if you're doing in-flight servicing and not contributing to space debris - we're going to give you faster licensing, better insurance and quicker access to finance," he told BBC News.

### Zelenskyy says war complicates plans for 2024 elections

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says discussions about the fate of scheduled 2024 elections are irresponsible as the country is locked in a war with invading Russian forces.

Speaking in a video address on Monday, Zelenskyy said Ukraine must remain focused on its military challenges and stay united.

"We all understand that now, in wartime, when there are many challenges, it is utterly irresponsible to engage in topics related to an election in such a frivolous manner," Zelenskyy said.

"We need to recognise that this is a time for defence, a time for battle, upon which the fate of the state and its people depend. ... I believe that elections are not appropriate at this time."deo Dation 02 minutes 26 seconds02:26

Ukraine war: Civilians living

life underground while war continues

Ukraine is currently under martial law as it battles Russian forces, whom Kyiv hopes to expel from its territory. But as the war drags on, Zelenskyy has considered whether a special provision could be invoked to hold elections.

Over the weekend, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said the president was considering the positives and negatives of holding elections during a time when large swathes of the country remain affected by fighting.

As Ukraine battles to maintain the support of Western allies such as the United States, some, such as US Senator Lindsey Graham, have called for the elections to proceed as planned to demonstrate Ukraine's commitment to democracy.

Zelenskyy also played down concerns recently that the war with Russia has reached a deadlock.deo Duration 02 minutes 40 seconds02:40

Ukraine's counteroffensive: Troops try to retake southern front

"Time has passed, people are tired, ... but this is not a

stalemate," Zelenskyy said at a news conference on Saturday in Kyiv with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

"No one among our partners is pressuring us to sit down with Russia, talk to it and give it something," he added.

### Australian PM Albanese hails progress with China

AUSTRALIAN PM Anthony Albanese says there has been "significant progress" in relations with China after talks with President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

Mr Albanese, who landed in Shanghai on Saturday, is the first Australian leader to visit China since 2016.

The four-day state visit is seen as a key point in thawing relations, after a string of trade and security disputes.

Trade is at the top of the agenda - Mr Albanese is calling for the removal of Chinese tariffs on Australian goods.

Mr Xi was expected to ask for more access to key Australian sectors.

Both men pledged to continue working in the "mutual interests" of their countries, following years of tensions.

Welcoming Mr Albanese to the Great Hall of the People, President Xi said China and Australia stood to become "trusting partners" and were on the "correct path of improving and developing relations", state broadcaster CCTV said.

Mr Xi told Mr Albanese that Beijing hoped to "fully develop the potential of the China-Australia free trade agreement".

Ahead of their talks, Mr Albanese had told reporters: "We need to co-operate with



Australian PM Albanese hails progress with China after Xi talks Albanese (left) - seen with Xi in the Great Hall of the People - is the first Australian leader to visit China since 2016

China where we can, disagree where we must and engage in our national interest.

"I think there are promising signs. We've already seen a number of the impediments to trade between our two nations removed and an uplift already, substantial uplift, in the trade between our two nations."

His trip follows a diplomatic deep freeze prompted by - among other things - Australia's calls for an investigation into the origins of Covid-19, and economic sanctions enacted by Beijing on key Australian exports such as beef, wine and barley.

It also coincides with the 50-year anniversary of Gough Whitlam's iconic visit to China

Hengjun - whose health is said to be rapidly deteriorating - has been imprisoned in China on espionage charges since 2019, and Mr Albanese is facing pressure at home to secure his release.

Canberra's growing military ties with Washington and a recent overhaul of its defence posture - widely seen as aimed at countering China - could make it difficult for the two sides to find common ground apart from economic interests, analysts say.

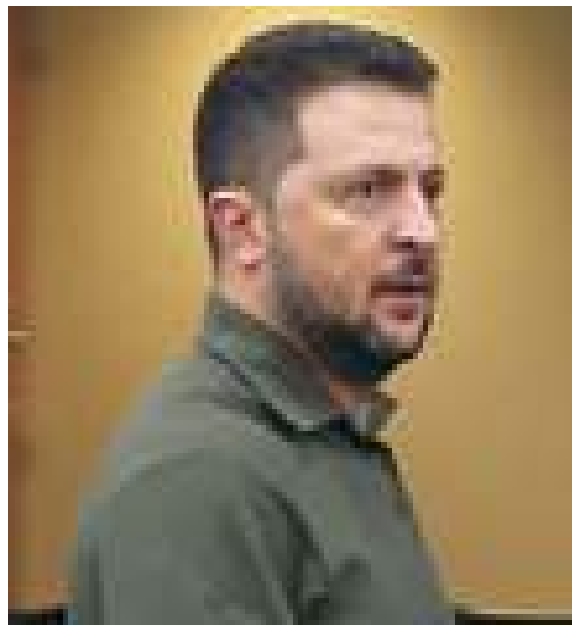
Some experts predict Beijing could push for greater access to Australia's resources and renewable energy sectors, but in recent years, the Australian government has taken measures to inhibit Chinese ownership of critical minerals and mining projects.

"I walk away from the meeting satisfied that we have positive engagement between Australia and China," Mr Albanese told reporters.

He said Russia's invasion of Ukraine and conflict in the Middle East had been raised at the meeting - but the "14 grievances" China held with Australia when diplomatic ties were at their lowest point were not.

"I spoke about guardrails and military-to-military co-operation between the United States and China; that's important," Mr Albanese said.

Australian writer Yang



Zelenskyy



## Feature

# Cultural resources: Shaping the nation's identity

**Cultural resources are the material and non-material, visible and invisible evidences of man's interaction with the environment. They hold cultural, historical, or artistic significance within a community. These resources can include artifacts, monuments, historic buildings, archaeological sites, traditional practices, languages, art, music, literature and more. They play a vital role in preserving a community's identity and heritage, and the often require protection and conservation efforts to ensure they are passed down to future generations. ANYANECHI CHUKWUDI CHRISTIAN writes.**

IN the words of Lipe (1984:1), cultural resources refer to those rich non-material and material attributes acquired within society and transmitted through generations. These include the diverse beliefs, festivals, architecture, dances, drama, folklores, technology like iron-working, wood and stone carving, which are characteristics of a given society. Some of these resources may remain in actual use as some historic and ethnographic materials or they may consist only of partial remains and the traces of past use as with archaeological sites (Lipe 1984:1). As Lipe (1984) points out, because human beings generally modify the landscapes in which they live and because they attach names, myths and effective values to features of the territory they inhabit, the landscapes of past cultures may also qualify as cultural resources. In this case, places like the Olumo Rock in Ogun State and the Ogbunike Cave in Anambra State both in Nigeria, Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and the Ologesaille in Kenya, can be classified as cultural resources. This is owing to their utility to the past inhabitants of the areas and the values attached to them by the present society. These cultural resources are of tremendous political, social and religious importance. They are preserved for symbolic and utilitarian purposes and rarely for aesthetic purpose. We shall return to this later with particular reference to Nigeria.

managing cultural resource can involve the process of planning, organizing, leading/directing and controlling of cultural resources to accomplish stated or laid-down goals or objectives through the coordinated use of human and material resources. It can also be regarded as the application of skill or care in the exploitation, use, treatment or manipulation of cultural resources in order to conserve, protect and rehabilitate them within an environment. simply put as an act of taking good care of cultural properties and making them readily available for sustainable utilization by the general public as our common heritage.

The central importance of the cultural sector through proper exploitation and management of cultural resources in the overall developmental process of Nigeria, Africa and the World as it is the case in most multi-ethnic and heterogeneous countries, is no longer a matter of conjecture. This is especially so with regard to promotion of economic growth and development through a robust tourism sector and foreign exchange earnings, preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of cultural education, identity and awareness and fostering of national integrity.

This is notwithstanding, the existence of amazing cultural and tourism potentials and resources in the country. This poor state of affairs is chiefly attributed to improper harnessing and management of Nigeria's rich and wide array of cultural and tourism resources. As noted previously, these resources, if properly harnessed and managed can bring about rapid and sustainable socio-economic growth and development in the country. This is by serving as an alternative source of sustainable revenue to the



government, especially now that it is becoming evident that the country's almost sole dependence on oil, a non-renewable resource, as a source of revenue appears worrisome and no longer positively impacting her economy. Hence, there is a compelling need for cultural resource experts and planners, especially archaeologists, archivists, anthropologists, sociologists, curators, museologists, economic historians, amongst others, and the various agencies responsible for cultural resource management in Nigeria to rise to the challenge of coming to grips with vexed issue of improper management of her rich, diverse and abundant cultural resources. This is by proffering apt and workable solutions in this regard. Prominent amongst such solutions is adequate sensitization of the government and the public alike on the urgent need for proper tapping and management of Nigeria's rich and enormous cultural resources. This is essential for promotion of a viable, robust and sustainable tourism sector, capable of facilitating the overall socio-economic growth and development of the country via sustainable revenue. This paper, therefore, seeks to emphasize the imperative of proper management of cultural resources in Nigeria's overall developmental scheme. It interrogates why there appears to be a marked disparity between huge and varied cultural potentials and resources in the country and what has really been achieved in the direction. Amongst the key issues the paper seeks to address are: Nigeria cultural resources, agencies responsible for cultural resource management in Nigeria and the need for a define national identity through our cultural properties.

### Nigeria's Cultural Resources and their Importance

As noted earlier, Nigeria is richly and amazingly endowed with a whole range of cultural resources which are yet to be fully, tapped, harnessed and managed. As Ekechukwu (2005:1) aptly pointed out, these resources can form the basis of a flourishing tourist trade if and when

properly harnessed and managed. It therefore, suffices to state here that proper management of cultural resources ought to be accorded adequate attention in the overall developmental process of Nigeria, Africa and the World. For convenience, these resources are discussed under three major categories, namely, archaeological, ethnographic and historical.

Archaeological resources comprise of the cultural materials especially artifacts of extinct societies. In Nigeria, they include the important archaeological sites and their discoveries such as the Nok Culture, Igbo-ukwu, Ife and Benin. Others include Owo, Ugwuete, Daima, Lejja and Opi in Nsukka area of Nigeria. As Okpoko and Okpoko (2002:59) rightly note, apart from the tourist potentials of these centres, their remarkable styles reveal the artistic ability and inventiveness of their makers. To this end, Andah (1988:188) asserts that culture areas like Nok, Ife, Igbo-ukwu and Benin are still fresh in our memory as early famous centres for the development of sophisticated casting traditions in copper, bronze and brass and sometimes silver. Ethnographic resources, on the other hand, consist of the cultural materials of extant (existing or living) societies.

Ethnography, according to Beals et al (1977:78), is the study of the cultures of living peoples through direct and indirect observation of behaviour. Ethnography adopts the exploratory and descriptive approach and tends to emphasize virtually all aspects of the culture of the people being studied. There are innumerable ethnographic resources in Nigeria. They include, essentially, museums, shrines, traditional arts and crafts and myriads of festivals. All these constitute integral and essential components of a vibrant tourism sector. In Nigeria, there are altogether thirty-five National Museums located mostly in State capitals and in few ancient towns. With the exception of nine States, namely, Yobe, Kebbi, Taraba, Jigawa, Bayelsa, Nassarawa, Gombe, Zamfara and Ekiti States in Nigeria, all the others have national

museums. All the National Museums in Nigeria are under the aegis or control of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments (NCMM). Also, there are other museums owned and managed by States and Local Government Councils as well as private individuals. These museums are primarily the repositories of Nigeria's material cultural legacy (Akinade 2005). Shrines are places of traditional worship and they make up very vital cultural resource centres in man's history. An important shrine in Nigeria that has continued to attract many adherents and admirers is the Osun-Oshogbo Shrine, located approximately 112 kilometres northeast of Ibadan. This Shrine is the venue for the celebration of the Osun-Oshogbo Festival, an annual festival that takes place during the month of August. People from far and near usually converge in the town during the celebration to watch the Osun worshippers descend on the banks of River Osun to offer sacrifices to the goddess of the River at the Osun-Oshogbo Shrine (Ekechukwu 2005). Another centre worthy of note in this regard, is the Omo Ukwu Temple in Ohafia, Abia State. In Nigeria, there are perhaps as numerous traditional arts and crafts as there are different peoples and cultures. As Okpoko and Okpoko (2002:63) have rightly noted, these numerous artistic traditions of our past are today being modified for economic reasons. It is no accident, therefore, that the Annang people in Akwa Ibom State produce beautiful and wide variety of cane and raffia crafts such as tables, chairs, beds, baskets, hats, bags, etc. The Awka, Nkwere, Abiriba and Agbaja-Udi in Igboland are famous masters in black smithery, whilst the Akwete and Iseyin in Abia and Oyo States respectively, are noted for their well-designed, well priced and durable textiles. In Kano, Sokoto and Borno States, skilled craftsmen produce impressive quality leather goods that serve the needs of various classes of people, including tourists. Similarly, the Benin people of Edo State are famous for their superior quality brass works, whilst the Nupe people of Niger State are

widely acclaimed makers of glass products, especially glass beads. In the same vein, the Naraguta and Birom people and Gwari of Plateau and Niger States respectively, excel in pottery. These arts and crafts represent Nigeria's legacies of a rich past.

Furthermore, in Nigeria, numerous traditional festivals are usually celebrated in different places at various seasons of the year depending however, on the nature and purpose of such festivals. In Igboland Southeastern part of Nigeria, for instance, the most popular festival is the New Yam Festival. According to Okpoko, (1997), this festival is celebrated in different Igbo communities between the months of August and October each year. Yam occupies a pride of place in Igboland, being incontrovertibly the most valued of all food crops in the area. Accordingly, as Emeghara (1997:21) notes that the Igbo were more devoted to the cultivation of yams than other peoples of West Africa. Hence, prominent wealthy Igbo yam farmers took titles like Ezeji, or Diji, literally meaning master of yam growing. This accounts for the various ritual celebrations associated with the cultivation and harvest of the crop in Igbo society. In the opinion of Njoku (2001:12), this is a reflection of both the prior antiquity and centrality of the crop in Igbo indigenous economy. The significance of the festival cannot be overemphasized. As Ayisi (1979) rightly argues, like other festivals, the New Yam Festival draws spectators from distant lands, thus mirroring and confirming the social solidarity of a wide area that may have common interest in certain things but differ and may be mutually opposed to one another in restricted intergroup and parochial matters. What is more, the local economy of the villages is usually boosted, during such occasions. This is owing to the fact that the occasions are often characterized by spectacular displays, enjoyment of music, food and drinks.

**ANYANECHI is a student of University of Jos, Nigeria.**



# EVER'S WORLD

With PALANG KASMI

## Nutrition

# 10 Nigerian foods for weight loss

DO you want to continue your weight-loss journey while enjoying Nigerian foods? Are you seeking cheap and accessible Nigerian foods that can keep you healthy?

These 10 Nigerian foods, according to Naijafoodie.com will keep you healthy, and they are cheap, natural, and readily available. You can add these foods to your shopping cart or your shopping list as you read.

1. Pepper Soup is fantastic for weight loss. If you want to maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle, our very own pepper soup is a fantastic food. There are several herbs and spices in this dinner, which provide antioxidants and beneficial plant compounds. Additionally, pepper soup has a lot of water in it. Water helps promote feelings of fullness after eating because it fills the stomach. You can prepare pepper soup in several ways, but the pepper soup spice blend is the most crucial. A delicious goat meat pepper soup is a great meal for achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Choose a leaner cut of meat to lower your intake of unhealthy saturated fats.

2. Unripe Plantain has less calories which is great for weight loss

Unripe plantain provides fibre and essential nutrients like potassium and vitamin C. Green plantain is versatile, as you can boil, mash, or grind it. For example, you can use unripe plantain for porridge and boli, and unripe plantain flour to make amala swallow. Green plantains are lower on the glycemic index than ripe plantains. Therefore, they won't spike your blood sugar and insulin levels as much.

3. Nuts are delicious and provide fibre, protein, healthy fats, and other nutrients. You can eat nuts raw or use them in making soups like groundnut soup. You can also use them in smoothies, such as with tiger nuts. Choose unsalted nuts to lower your sodium intake. Nuts can help weight loss.

4. Okro Soup is studied for weight



**Goat pepper soup**

loss. Some may have reservations about this delicious food, but it is very healthy. Okro contains fibre, antioxidants, vitamins C and K, and folate.

Additionally, okro is inexpensive and available all year at the local market. You can also maintain a garden of okro and other veggies to have easy access to nutrient-rich foods. Seafood okro is one of the varieties of okro soup that is great for

weight loss. Okro soup is rich in water and fibre to help promote feelings of fullness. Okro has been shown to promote weight loss in mice, but human research is lacking.

A bowl of okro soup with seafood is great for a weight loss plan

5. Moimoi is a popular street food in Nigeria, which is made by steaming beans with fish, vegetables, and spices. Besides being a great portable snack, it is a good source of protein and fibre. You can use



**Beans**

moimoi as a snack or with meals as a boost to your protein and fibre intake. If the chore of peeling beans prevents you from making moimoi, check out this unpeeled beans version. Moimoi-nigerian foods-street foods should be in your weight loss plan

6. Okpa will manage blood sugar for weight loss. Okpa is a great go-to meal for breakfast to achieve and maintain a healthy body weight.

Okpa is a street food that is made from Bambara beans.

It is rich in soluble fibre, protein, vitamins, and polyphenolic compounds. In general, polyphenols are a group of antioxidants that can reduce inflammation.

Foods that are high in fibre and protein can help promote feelings of fullness and prevent overeating.

Eating foods rich in soluble fibre can help manage blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Bambara nut, bambara bean, great for weight loss

7. Ofada rice is a local variety of rice that is available as street food. Ofada rice is unrefined, meaning that it isn't stripped of its nutrients. Therefore, Ofada rice contains more protein, fibre, minerals, and vitamins than white rice. When we pair Ofada rice with Ofada sauce, we also get the benefits of spices that can help boost metabolism. It is nutritious, spicy, and energizing. Swap out white rice for Ofada rice in dishes to increase your intake of fibre, protein, and other nutrients. Ofada rice next to slow-cooked oxtail sauce

8. Steamed Fish

We love to eat fish because of its great taste. Fish is not only sweet, but it is also rich in omega-3 fatty acids, protein, and iodine. To get the most omega-3 fatty acids, choose fatty fish. For example, mackerel, trout, herring, salmon, and sardines. In addition, high intakes of fish and seafood are associated with weight loss. Not to mention that omega-3

fatty acids are great for reducing inflammation in the body. You can steam fish and eat it with healthy side dishes, for instance, veggies or Nigerian salad. Aim to eat two servings of fatty fish per week to get enough omega-3 fatty acids. Steamed-whole-snapper fish-good health weight loss alternative

9. Beans are one of my favourites. You can eat them with bread, pap, or garri.

Besides, beans are high in fibre, protein, iron, and vitamins. Moreover, eating more beans is associated with having less body fat and a lower waist circumference. Ewa agoyin is a common street food. It is both cheap and helpful for weight loss. The fibre and protein in the beans keep you feeling full for the entire day so you don't snack excessively. Try eating more meatless meals with beans as the protein.

10. Eggs

Eggs are rich in many necessary nutrients. Particularly, it is high in healthy fat, proteins, and vitamins. The combination of protein and healthy fats helps keep you feeling full after eating. Additionally, eating eggs as part of a low-calorie diet helps promote weight loss. Eggs are a versatile food. With this in mind, you can have boiled egg along with tea, vegetable salad, or boiled potatoes. Not to mention omelettes, fried eggs, and moimoi. Add an egg to a breakfast or other meal lacking in protein.

Nigerian foods are some of the healthiest you can eat during your weight loss journey. Furthermore, they are inexpensive, nutritious, available all year, and simple to prepare. Popular Nigerian foods that can help reduce your weight are pepper soup, okro soup, unripe plantains, beans, okpa, moimoi, eggs, ofada rice, steamed fish, and nuts.

You can make a small garden to grow your crops fresh. Gardening is also a great way to lower your cost of groceries and get in some physical activity.



**Unripe plantain**



# EYE'S WORLD

With **PALANG KASMI**

## Inspirational women

### Meet Betta Edu, Nigeria's Minister and social advocate

WHEN you talk of women with inspiring profiles, Betta Edu is one of them. She has not only achieved great feats within Nigeria and abroad, but has made it to the top at a very young age, writes PALANG KASMI with online sources.

Born October 27, 1986), Betta Edu is a Nigerian politician who is currently the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation. She assumed office as Minister in August 2023. She served as national women leader of All Progressive Congress. She was Cross River State Commissioner for Health until her resignation in 2022. She was also National Chairman of the Nigeria Health Commissioners Forum.

**Background and education**

Betta hails from Abi Local government area in Cross River State. She completed her secondary education in 2001 at the Federal Government Girls College, Calabar and obtained her first degree in medicine and surgery from the University of Calabar in 2009.

She has a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Health for Developing Countries from London School Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, a master's degree in Public Health in Developing Countries from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and Doctor of Public Health from Texila American University.

Born in Lagos to the family of Mr Emmanuel Eke (father), a businessman who worked with an engineering firm but later became a missionary when he returned to Nigeria. Her mother was a stay-at-home wife.

Edu, a twin, was in London until she was about eight years when she returned to Cross River with her four other siblings and parents.

Describing her life in London, Betta Edu said; I grew up in an efficient system in London. There was free basic education available and we had milk delivered to our doorstep to help keep us healthy. We had a functional health system we could



**Edu**

rely on. The transport system was also reliable. The only difficult thing as a child was the cold weather, which could be very uncomfortable sometimes. Born on October 27, 1986. She is currently 36 years old and will be 37 years old by October 27, 2023.

**Husband and children**

Betta Edu has done well in shielding her family from the media spotlight. However, she is

married and has two children. Edu's husband was her friend from school days.

**Career**

In 2015, Edu became the youngest person to be appointed Special Adviser to the Executive Governor of Cross River State Benedict Ayade on Community and Primary Healthcare.

In 2020, she became chairman of the Cross River State COVID-19 Taskforce. In August that year, she

was appointed National Chairman of the Nigeria Health Commissioners Forum. Edu is a Fellow of the Royal School of Public Health in and the African Institute of Public Health Professionals. Betta Edu became the youngest national woman leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in March 2022. Betta as APC National women

leader during the 2023 Nigerian general elections campaign assured women of 35 percent affirmative action from President Bola Tinubu. In July 2023, the state Women Leaders of the All Progressives Congress (APC) across all 36 states in Nigeria including that of Federal Capital Territory (FCT) passed a vote of confidence on Betta Edu. They did this during their visit to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Abuja. Also in July 2023, the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Maryam Babangida National Center For Women Development Headed by DG Asabe Vilita Bashir, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development awarded Betta Edu the Award of Excellence in Leadership for gender inclusion and women empowerment. This is in recognition of her commitment to championing the cause of empowering women, children, and other vulnerable groups in Nigeria.

In July 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu nominated Betta Edu for minister as the Nigerian senate unveiled the 28 nominees for ministerial appointment, making her the first female minister from Cross River State and the youngest minister at the Federal Executive Council of Nigeria in the Fourth Nigerian republic.

In August 2023, Betta was sworn in as minister of humanitarian affairs and poverty alleviation and the All progressives congress replaced her as National women leader.

**Awards**

Betta Edu has among others, the following awards to her credit: Nigeria Quintessential Woman Award, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development Award of Excellence, National Youth Council of Nigeria, Medical Expert of the Year, Award of excellence in Gender inclusion, Federal Ministry of Women Affairs.





**Editorial**

**On Presidential retreat outcome**

IT is clear that it wouldn't be business as usual for government functionaries and political office holders in Nigeria. The just concluded presidential retreat has set the bar high for progress and assessment of performances.

THE cabinet retreat at the Presidential Villa was commendable as it was more than just a meeting, but was a call to action, a pledge to deliver results and to reignite hope for millions of Nigerians. This pragmatic drive does not give room for complacency in this administration.

HOWEVER, President Tinubu did not mince words in delivering a stern message to his Ministers, Permanent secretaries, Presidential aides and other top government officials. It's all about transparency, direct citizen's participation in governance which offers opportunity for Nigerians to proffer solutions at any given point in time. Sitting on the sidelines from all indication is unacceptable as it deters positive developments.

IT is therefore on record that the president has made it clear that there would be periodic assessments to keep everyone in check, and those who don't measure up will find themselves shown the way out. It's obvious that Nigerians are not interested in excuses, political games or procrastination. This has necessitated signing of performance bond to form the basis of periodic reviews and evaluations, which will climax with annual scorecard.

THE theme for the retreat which was tagged, "Delivering on the renewed hope agenda" is a comprehensive plan encompassing every aspect of Nigerian life. This is certainly not about economic growth, creating a just and equitable society, but it's about job creation, education, health care and poverty reduction towards ensuring that every Nigerian has an opportunity to succeed. Education and health care are in the spotlight as educated and healthy nation is a cornerstone to any prosperous nation.

INTERESTINGLY, Tinubu has directed the reactivation of presidential delivery tracker. This move will empower Nigerians to track the implementation of projects across the country. Office of the Special Adviser on Policy and Coordination, led by Hadiza Bala Usman will spearhead the Result Delivery Unit which will closely monitor performances of Ministries, Departments and Agencies across the eight priority areas of his administration.

NIGERIANS at this dispensation, expect a lot from our leaders of high repute. Politics has come and gone, unfortunately, the masses are still yearning for good governance. This is the time to put aside our political differences and focus on developmental issues that should unite us. Appointment of ministers should be based on competence so as not to distract performance. In view of this, the president needs to be given the opportunity to make careful selections of his cabinet members.

THE lives of Nigerians must never be toyed with because of undue interference in governance by some selfish individuals. All hands must be on deck to give Nigerians the desired dividends of democracy they deserve. The 48 ministers must also endeavor to live above board to give masses the best in their administrative templates.

IT should be corrected that no position or ministry is the exclusive reserve of any region in the country. The disappointment expressed by some Nigerians over the appointment of Wike as the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory smacks of narrow mindedness. It was mentioned at some quarters that the position belongs to northerners alone. At this point in our political journey, we should embrace what unites us not divide us.

WE join millions of Nigerians to pat the president on the back for starting well. Our prayer is for him to walk the talk.

SIR, I want to use this medium of The Nigeria Standard newspaper to appeal to the federal government to build an overhead bridge to enhance easy pedestrian movement or crossing around old airport roundabout.

As resident of Jos city and always plying the old airport road, the traffic challenges caused by road users is getting worse by the day, people find it difficult to pass the road as a result of heavy vehicular movement which creates regular traffic grid mostly in the morning and evening.

This ugly situation affects people who are either expected to be at their duty posts or those on transit to other parts of the state and beyond.

However, the state government is trying its possible best to see that plateau is well developed and also a comfortable place for citizens to live.

Seeing the infrastructures government is providing in the state and also the success of



**Need for overhead bridge at Old Airport roundabout**

budgets implementation in the state, there is need for the government to also use such reasons towards the provision of an overhead bridge around the roundabout in order to reduce time wastage which in common saying "time is money".

Building an overhead bridge at Old Airport road would enable fast and easy transit of people to their various destinations and also reduce

the risk of falling into the regular traffic holdup which is time consuming and very stressful for motorist and commuter's who ply that route either within Jos or to other areas within the state capital.

Finally, I hope other people making use of old airport road will join in this appeal to the state government to reduce stress and enable fast and easy transit for those traveling to other states.

**By Ngot Bwehmasi Caleb I.T Student Federal Polytechnic Bauchi.**

**A united family breeds healthy relationship**

PERMIT me space in your widely read newspaper **The Nigeria Standard** to express my most profound gratitude to leadership of Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) for raising awareness on unity in the family.

The stories emanating from most families today are nauseating, giving birth to unhealthy and toxic relationships. The homes have turned to battle grounds where children don't learn good morals as there is nothing exemplary for them to emulate.

In the beginning of creation,

God made this union to be enjoyed and not endured. The table has upturned; parents no longer take up responsibilities as expected. Most children are struggling on their own to make ends meet. This has landed some of them in the hands of traffickers and blood thirsty unscrupulous elements that use them particularly for ritual purposes.

Base on this ailing situation, the church has deemed it fit to correct the anomaly by creating awareness that can restore and sustain healthy family relationships.

Spouses have been admonished to close ranks, bury their differences and give peace a chance so as to lay a good foundation for our healthy spiritual growth.

Many young people are becoming scared of going into marriage contracts because of the bond surrounding it. The insecurity that accompanies the marriages nowadays puts one off.

The bottom line is to go back to God. It doesn't matter how bad the situation is, he is faithful and will meet all needs and fix things right.

**Christy Adams**

**Standard Cartoon**





## Opinion

# Establishment of new varsities: Challenges and allied matters

By **SUNNY IDACHABA**

AT a time when the wage bill of the government is very high with poor funding of public educational institutions, the establishment of new universities appears to put more financial burden on the lean purse of the government that is already on a limping mode.

In the opinion of key observers, all is not well with Nigeria's public universities for various reasons ranging from lack of funding to the recent trend of brain drain due to mass exodus of teaching staff from the country in search of greener pastures abroad. In global ranking, Nigeria's universities generally fall below the UNESCO benchmark of standard reckoning as compared to some universities even on the continent.

These, among others, are chiefly the reasons for the protracted industrial disharmony in the nation's ivory towers over the years.

It could be recalled that way back in 1992 when then Dr. Attahiru Jega was the national president of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), the union had since then been at loggerheads with every successive administration in the country over the same matter of poor funding, university autonomy, poor welfare and sundry issues. Till date, those issues are yet to be addressed and that is why some stakeholders in the education sector glowingly describe Nigerian universities as glorified secondary schools.

From less than 20 public universities both at the federal and state levels in the early 90s, they have grown to 91 and are still growing because the government, through the National Universities Commission (NUC) has not relented in granting approvals for the establishment of more public universities even when existing ones are suffering in silence.

Additional varsities  
This is why the recent approval by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu that

some new universities approved by the immediate past administration should take off in the next academic session is a course for concern.

Initially, the minister of education, Prof. Tahir Mamman, while explaining the position of the government on those universities had told State House correspondents that due to the paucity of funds, some of those universities created at the twilight of Muhammadu Buhari's exit from office would not take off. But not long after, a statement from the director of press and public relations in the Ministry of Education, Augustina Okechi, noted that President Bola Tinubu had actually approved a 'staggered' establishment and take off of some of those new institutions.

The statement noted that the approval included the conversion of some existing federal colleges of education into conventional universities.

The statement read in details that, "In line with the present administration's commitment to ensure continuity in governance and policy consistency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has approved the staggered establishment of existing four colleges of education to be converted to federal universities of education, the establishment of two federal universities of agriculture, two federal universities of medical and health sciences and five other colleges of education.

The statement stated further that, "The establishment and conversion of these institutions is a further demonstration of President Tinubu's education for the Renewed Hope Agenda and would help in improving access to tertiary education in the country."

Some of those approved institutions slated for immediate take-off include Federal University of Medical and Health Sciences, Kwale to be located in Delta state and the Federal University of Agriculture to be located in Mubi, Adamawa state.

Also approved for conversion is the

Adeyemi College of Education in Ondo state and Alvan Ikoku College of Education in Owerri, Imo state, into becoming Federal Universities of Education.

According to the statement, other institutions established are the Federal College of Education, Ilawe Ekiti in Ekiti state, Federal College of Education Ididep- Ibiono in Akwa Ibom state and the Federal College of Education (Technical) Yauri in Kebbi state. Presently in Nigeria, there are a total of 170 universities out of which 79 are privately owned. What is however of deep concern is the state of those institutions, especially public universities.

In a reaction to this development, a senior lecturer at Bingham University in Nasarawa state, Prof. Samuel Odoma, noted that there was nothing wrong with what people may call the proliferation of universities as long as they meet the UNESCO standard.

"The more, the merrier for many reasons. Aside from the employment opportunities they can generate, they add to human capital development. My quarrel with the idea, however, is the poor funding especially by the government. It's rare in other countries to hear of industrial disharmony in tertiary institutions because that is where the human resources needed in the society are trained.

"The situation however seems different here where the government seems to have plan B regarding where top government functionaries are to be trained as against the universities. That is why our universities are poorly funded because they are now seen as where children of the poor in society go to acquire higher education, not where the real human resource personnel needed as backbone for the government are trained.

You are aware of Public Service Institute, Institute for Security Studies, Policy and Strategic Studies Institute, ASCON, War College, etc. These are top-rated public institutions that now attract patronage from the government rather than public universities.

"This is the major reason local public universities are starved of funds. The establishment of more varsities without commensurate funding is just a political arrangement that serves no purpose."

In the same vein, an educationist, Dr. Balogun Okikeola, told Blueprint Weekend that the proliferation of universities would have been meaningful if they are well funded. He said, "Emphasis should be on quality/standard rather than the numbers we have. In the 60s, when we went through the university, there were not many of them, but the few existing ones were well funded, with expatriates from overseas coming to teach through exchange programmes.

"That was the golden moment of universities in the country, not now that due to poor funding, many of top government officials no longer send their children to our public universities, but private ones while those who can afford overseas expenses carry their children abroad. That is the bane of our educational system at the moment.

"I really don't support the establishment of many educational institutions as if they are to satisfy federal character principle without considering standard and needs assessment. That is the reason many of them are abandoned and left to source for their own fund for development, but does the economic and business environment support such a move? It's still a matter of giving education a top priority."

According to the NaijaTimes editorial of April 25 2021, universities as centres of knowledge production, learning, research and innovation, are time-tested ideals which underpin their foundation.

"These ideals are largely encapsulated in the need to search for solutions to the challenges confronting society. Even in ancient times, the origin of universities would be traced to the evolution of spaces for learning and for building the human resource base needed to creatively respond to social, economic and cultural issues of the

day. Anything outside this is a waste of resources."

The Kogi example  
For instance, it could be recalled that in Kogi state where there already existed a state-owned university located in Anyigba, the Eastern senatorial district, but poorly funded, the present administration in the state went ahead to establish two additional universities in the other senatorial zones citing balance and equity as reason for establishing them.

While it is still not clear how properly funded those other two institutions established in Okene and Kabba could be, the criteria cited by the state government seems to be at variance with the core ideals of setting up a university in line with UNESCO standard. This is what Prof Pat Utomi of the Lagos Business School, now Pan African University called 'an attempt to derobe a university of its distinction among other institutions of government'.

Therefore, according to Naija Times, "The norm is that university graduates should demonstrate competence, not only in their chosen fields of study, but also in character. The relevance of the university system in the life of the wider society is the basis of the continuous interaction between 'town and gown'.

"For individuals who pass through the university system, therefore, it is expected that the practice and learning have enabled them to acquire knowledge, and that they have nurtured their minds to think critically and contribute to the search for solutions to the monumental issues facing society."

As President Tinubu hinges his development agenda on Renewed Hope, it is hoped that under him, a new lease of life would be injected into the life of the nation's universities such that the sons and daughters of the common man would compete under the same classroom with the children of ministers, lawmakers and business tycoons in years to come.

## A lifeline for military veterans, widows and orphans

THERE is a reason every January 15 is special for many Nigerians. It is the day set aside for commemorating the Armed Forces Remembrance Day. Also called Remembrance Day, the occasion honours Nigerian veterans of World War I and II, as well as the 1967-1970 Civil War.

On the remembrance day, it is expected that citizens will soberly reflect on the significance of the armed forces to the country. But it seems that nothing has been done beyond celebrating the day, to addressing the plight of our retired military personnel, their families and loved ones.

Families, wives and children of our fallen heroes have in, recent years, not gotten a better deal from the nation, which their breadwinners patriotically sacrificed their lives, and every other thing for. For many of them, life has not been the same again since the demise of their beloved husbands, fathers, brothers and sons.

Tales of many of them living in abject squalor and misery are replete. As for the surviving war veterans and many retired soldiers of the Nigerian military, it seems their meritorious service to their fatherland was not appreciated, hence they always battle to receive their pension and gratuities.

Sometime in January last year, some retired soldiers under the Coalition of Concerned Veterans, CCV, protested the nonpayment of their pension arrears, since January 2020. The veterans who (then) gathered at the Ministry of Finance headquarters, Abuja, insisted on getting answers to their demands, vowing to continue protesting and demanding for their rights, according to a report published by Sahara Reporters.

They were seen with placards carrying inscriptions such as "CCV demands immediate payment of security debarment allowance." Another reads, "Military veterans demand 24 months arrears of minimum wage approved."

A banner which contained a comprehensive list

### ABDULSALAM MAHMUD OPINION

of the demands, according to the Sahara Reporters' story, reads, "Immediate payment of 24 months outstanding arrears of minimum wage as approved by the C-IN-C. Immediate payment of security debarment allowance (S.D.A) as approved by MAFA Section V Page 98 without discrimination.

"Inhuman reduction from the medically boarded veterans remuneration to be stopped forth with. N.H.I.S National Health Insurance Scheme should be reviewed to cover essential/serious ailments of the veterans. "Enough of no cash backing slogan on veterans' entitlement."

The leader of the CCV, while lamenting the government's seeming 'indifference' to their travails during the demonstration, said: "We are not here to joke, we are old people who served this country when we were still young, when we had strength, now that we are done with service, the Nigerian government decided to abandon us. All our entitlements, they refused to pay us. We wrote letters, tried doing other things to ensure we got our demands met but they didn't heed.

"During Sallah; we even went to the Minister's house because I am based in Kano; we went to the Minister's house on a visit and he said he didn't want to see us. We began to ask questions, is he not also one of us? He's also a retired soldier, why will he refuse to see us? For three days, we were there, how could he be possibly engaged for three days in his own house?"

"We are his primary responsibility, there's nothing that should make him say he doesn't want to see us. To our demands: the minimum wage President Buhari signed in 2019, they haven't paid us the arrears, there's another thing called debarment allowance, they haven't paid us.

"The debarment allowance is supposed to be

paid to all military men that have served in the past whether in the Army, Air Force or whatsoever, so we can go and settle ourselves, this will not make criminals recruit trained soldiers to build houses and all but they refused to pay us all, they paid some people but not all.

"The past Chief of Defence Staff was the one who caused confusion and when we cried, we were invited, a committee was set up, the committee members did their job and came up with a report but we haven't heard anything since then and you know that this government will soon end; so this is the opportunity we have that one of our own; Muhammadu Buhari, and the minister, National Security Adviser; and some members of the parliament are retirees like us."

Like always, I keep on asking: why must the families, wives and children of our fallen heroes, together with retired military personnel, suffer before getting entitlements that statutorily accrue to them as a result of their loved ones' transition or exit from service?

The Chief of Defence Staff, CDS, Gen. Christopher Musa Musa, within a brief spell as Defence Chief, has already demonstrated premium commitment to improving the welfare of serving officers and men of the Nigerian Armed Forces. The need for him to also look into the welfare of the families of our legioners and fallen troops, at a difficult time like this, cannot be overemphasised.

The prevailing economic hardship has only worsened their living conditions, which hitherto had been terrible. Like several other Nigerians, many of our former military personnel/legioners and families of our slain troops who have been finding it difficult to get their monthly pension and other entitlements, cannot tell where their next meal will come from, even as paying their wards/children's school fees is like climbing Mountain Everest.

This is unacceptable. Something needs to be

done. The General CG Musa-led Defence Headquarters, DHQ, must ensure that all pension, gratuity and death benefits' arrears of our ex-military personnel are cleared forthwith. The military authorities should also ensure prompt payment of the aforementioned welfare package for our senior military citizens and fallen troops.

The DHQ should also do more to financially and educationally empower the wives and children of not only our slain military personnel, but retired soldiers that life has been dealing a knockout punch. If possible, a Trust Fund that will help mobilise resources for their basic upkeep and sustenance can be established by the federal government, through the Ministry of Defence.

Specifically, gifted children of our fallen heroes, scattered across our military barracks nationwide, can be awarded full academic scholarships at the Nigeria Defence Academy, NDA, and various Army, Navy, Air Force primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, while it is expected that the leadership of our Armed Forces, together with groups such as the Defence Police Officers Wives' Association, DEPOWA, and the Nigerian Army Officers Wives' Association, NAOWA, among others, will continue to sponsor vocational training and skills acquisition programs for widows and unemployed relations of departed military personnel, like they have been doing.

Indeed, the death of our soldiers in active service to their fatherland, or quitting the armed forces without having any fortune to fall back on, can be devastating. But if the military authorities can guarantee the implementation of the recommendations highlighted above and others not captured herein, then our armed forces' veterans, widows and children will just be getting another lifeline.

**Mahmud, deputy editor of PRNigeria, writes via babasalam1989@gmail.com.**



## Feature

# Ineffective Legislature and Nigerians' expectations

A legislature that is alive to its roles and responsibilities is a symbol of hope, a shield and a voice for the people. It is marked by robust debates, strict commitment to checks and balances, and deliberate accountability to the people. Also, it confers legitimacy on the government because governance is productive and the citizens are fulfilled.

However, in developing nations, the legislature is defined by weak institutional capacity. It faces the challenges of executive dominance, public trust deficit, poor democratic culture manifesting as a weak electoral system and disrespect to democratic tenets and then disruptions through elections, leading to a high turnover of legislators.

Central to these issues are a weak constitution, a low level of morality in politics as well as poor knowledge of the duties of the parliament.

To begin with, Nigeria's situation validates the assertion that any constitution midwived by the military is as faulty as it is anti-democracy. It does not offer the legislature the necessary support for true independence and effective supervision of the executive.

For example, mere legislative refusal of consent cannot stop the executive from borrowing and or engaging in non-budgeted expenditures. Equally, the much-touted powers to override the presidency on critical issues exist merely on paper in the same manner that executive appointees can hold offices without legislative confirmation. And again, legislative summons and resolutions are brazenly ignored because the legislature does not possess the instruments to effectively enforce compliance.

Evidently, the executive is already empowered by the constitution to dominate the legislature. And as noted earlier, institutional capacity is the missing link between an effective parliament and the rest. It is a product of a trained and motivated workforce supported by a favourable operating environment which in



Ariwoola

turn is a function of adequate funding.

In Nigeria, the legislature is incapacitated and depends on the executive for operational existence. Beyond executive dominance and disrespect, lack of financial autonomy chiefly erodes overall legislative effectiveness. Among others, capacity building is stunted, the work environment is unconducive, representation suffers and legislative committees majorly rely on MDAs for logistics in the discharge of oversight functions. Meanwhile for over two years now, the national assembly chambers are closed down for repairs, restricting the lawmakers to a temporary arrangement for plenary.

Most bills passed by the legislature, especially the ones it originates, are not accented to and the resolutions arising from motions are utterly disregarded. Even the legislative agenda,

despite how fantastic, would always remain a dream except the executive offers the needed impetus. Yes, the executive determines the dimension of budget implementation which explains the perceived lop-sidedness in infrastructural development across the country.

Additionally, there are interferences in the affairs of the legislature by the ruling political party. Either by way of promises of reward or threats of sanction, the legislators are readily blackmailed to influence their actions and conduct.

Buoyed on the weak electoral system, state governors decide the political fates of the legislators using the party structures and deployment of mob rule. Any lawmaker whom the governor does not endorse is as good as gone because the party will not nominate them as candidates for future elections. Re-election tickets, developmental project locations as well as appointment of

relatives and loyalists into positions are employed as baits to keep the legislators in line. Also, despite the popularity of laws made by the national assembly regarding the matters on the concurrent list, the governors railroad the state assemblies into undermining the federal legislature, for political expediency.

Hence, when a legislator is confronted with the grim prospects of political extinction, they helplessly 'play along' to survive. And inferentially, the executive influences the choices of legislative leadership through this strategy. Now with these, why would ineffective parliaments not thrive?

The withholding of public support and cooperation which also undermines the effectiveness of the legislature, is traced to two major factors. While one is the personality of some lawmakers the other is misplaced public expectations sequel to limited understanding of the preserves of the parliament.

Whereas legislators are expected to be morally upright and beyond reproach, the actions and conducts of some account for the huge public trust deficit plaguing the legislature. There are those lacking in character, the ones reputed for underperformance and the others who embody politics with bitterness or bad-loser syndrome. This last category adopts desperation in their quest for power and would always seek to undermine every electoral outcome that does not suit their expectations, despite established credibility. In political contests, they 'must' either have their way or rock the boat.

Unfortunately, the legislature is corporately subjected to collective labelling and the individual liberties of the entire legislators are serially violated, thus deepening the institutional ineffectiveness.

Furthermore, and exploiting the limited public knowledge of the workings of the legislature, the vulnerable are manipulated against the legislators. Driven by a self-seeking agenda including a narrow political mentality, the elites orchestrate subjective narratives aimed at lowering the public esteem of the parliament. The impression roundly created is that the legislature does little or nothing to justify its expenditure.

Also, smear campaigns are sponsored against the legislative leadership of which the executive arm is principally complicit. Because they control the media, they determine what the people know. The media is made to focus mainly on the downsides to generate negative perceptions of the legislature.

In building our expectations, convinced that an effective

parliament is fundamental to the legitimacy of government, we have to recognise the peculiar challenges confronting the fledgling legislatures. In our craving for a democratic institution that truly represents the interests of all citizens, there should be a corresponding clamour for a viable constitution drafted through an all-inclusive process.

There should be a reawakened consciousness for a long-term commitment to building a culture of democracy and political tolerance. We should acknowledge that past mistakes occasioned by bad leadership account for our present socio-economic and political predicaments. The problem of Nigeria is certainly not the legislature alone. Particularly, we should realise that a fair assessment of the overall performance of the legislature is achieved only when one considers the rate at which the executive respects legislative resolution and summons. A legislature that is roundly disparaged cannot be effective or deliver optimally.

Legislators should be seen as truly representing the people and also shunning every unethical conduct, notably traits of politics with bitterness. They should not take the people's mandate for granted. They should purge themselves of mutual suspicions and divisive tendencies. Every lawmaker should think of Nigeria first. Above all, they should realize that one does not need to hold a leadership position or be on a particular committee before one can make an impact in governance. It is not about ego or special recognition but about sacrifice and contributions to national development.

The president of the senate, Godswill Akpabio, by his blueprint and actions so far has made firm statements of covenant about his passion for a regenerated Nigeria that works for all. A diligent review shows his clear understanding of Nigeria's immediate challenge.

Akpabio demonstrates that it takes a united and bipartisan legislature to heal the country and oversight the executive without feeling that the government is being undermined.

Hence, with open minds, may we accept his extended hands of fellowship by giving him the right opportunities to walk the talk. May we champion strong institutional capacity in favour of the parliament and through our representatives, consciously shield it against any form of derailment. Otherwise, it is the height of hypocrisy to expect much from this 10th national assembly.

**Egbo is a parliamentary affairs analyst\***

***"In Nigeria, the legislature is incapacitated and depends on the executive for operational existence. Beyond executive dominance and disrespect, lack of financial autonomy chiefly erodes overall legislative effectiveness. Among others, capacity building is stunted, the work environment is unconducive, representation suffers and legislative committees majorly rely on MDAs for logistics in the discharge of oversight functions. Meanwhile for over two years now, the national assembly chambers are closed down for repairs, restricting the lawmakers to a temporary arrangement for plenary".***



News

# NDIC emerges top in ICPC's EICS

From DORCAS PANKYES, Abuja

THE Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) has once again demonstrated its unwavering commitment to high ethical standards and compliance with anti-corruption laws and regulations, as it proudly secures the top position in the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission's (ICPC) 2023 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard (EICS).

This remarkable achievement marks the second time that NDIC has achieved the prestigious first place, previously having been ranked first in the 2021 EICS.

The ICPC's EICS is an annual assessment tool designed to evaluate Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria for their adherence to institutional ethics and integrity requirements.

The assessment encompasses the measurement and monitoring of key performance indicators in categories such as Management Culture and Structure, Financial Management Systems, and Administrative Systems.

In the 2023 EICS, which took place between March and July 2023 and involved 404 MDAs, the NDIC excelled with a score of 91.30%. This outstanding performance underscores the corporation's commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards and serving as a beacon of integrity within the public service.



Mobolaji

The EICS report emphasizes the ICPC's commitment to mitigating abuse of office and corruption by promoting ethics and integrity benchmarks within government agencies, ultimately contributing to more effective service delivery.

The NDIC's consistent first-place ranking is a testimony to the corporation's zero tolerance policy for corruption and benchmarking its operations with standard best practices.

It would be recalled that the corporation in September this year, earned 3 ISO Certifications having complied with the requirements following a rigorous audit by MSECBA, a leading international provider of Audit and Certification services. These achievements have been possible due to the corporation's effective and ethical operational procedures

aimed at instilling transparency and accountability.

The NDIC's Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU) played a pivotal role in the process, collaborating closely with the ICPC. This collaboration included sensitizing NDIC staff, identifying and enhancing internal controls to prevent fraudulent practices, and ensuring strict compliance with established policies and procedures by the corporation's management.

The NDIC remains dedicated to ensuring the safety of deposits and contributing to the stability of the financial system. Its outstanding performance in the 2023 ICPC Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard, solidifies its position as a trusted institution committed to upholding the highest ethical standards.

From TERESE TUHWA, Makurdi

# BSUTH destroys expired drugs worth over #100m

MEDICALI consumables worth over one hundred million Naira have been destroyed by management of Benue State University Teaching Hospital (BSUTH), Makurdi.

Chief Medical Director of the hospital, Dr. Stephen Hwande who led the destruction exercise at the hospital's annex, the Muhammadu Buhari Mother and Child Hospital said the rationale behind the exercise was to ensure that no expired medical consumable was found within the health facility.

According to BSUTH CMD, the move was to curtail administration of harmful and toxic drugs to patients.

He wondered why drugs that were meant for people who were in dire need of them, especially those at the internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps, would be allowed to waste. But he commended the state Governor, Rev Father Dr Hyacinth Alia, for prioritising health of the people of the

state. The exercise was witnessed by a team from the National Agency for Food, Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) as well as Special Adviser on Special Duties and Intergovernmental Affairs to Governor Hyacinth Alia, Hon. Fidelis Unongo among others.



Hwande

# Challenges in delivery of basic education not insurmountable

From ABBAS GUNGURA, Bauchi

THE Chairman of Bauchi State committee to assess the level of challenges in the delivery of basic education has advised his members to approach their assignment with unwavering commitment, determination and innovation to achieve success.

The state Deputy Governor, Rt. Hon. Mohammed Auwal Jatau, who heads the committee, gave the advice recently during a meeting with members of the committee held at the conference hall of

his office. - Deputy Governor

The Deputy Governor noted that the challenges in the delivery of basic education are not insurmountable, hence the need for members of the committee to bring their expertise, creativity, and passion to the exercise in order to address the perennial problem in the state.

He explained that the committee was borne out of Governor Bala Mohammed's concern, determination and commitment to providing access to quality education for all children at basic level in the state.

He said the present administration has invested immensely in the basic education sub-sector, especially on construction and renovation of schools across the state, and therefore reiterated the government's readiness to lay a foundation for a brighter future, where every child in the state will have access to quality education.

"It is my honour and privilege to welcome you to the meeting of the committee constituted by His Excellency, Sen. Bala Abdulkadir Mohammed, CON (Kauran Bauchi) on the State of Basic Education in our dear Bauchi State. You may recall that the governor set up this committee on the 4th of September, 2023 to assess the level of challenges in the delivery of education particularly at the basic level due to the huge investment

made by this administration in the sector.

"As we gather here today, there is a need for us as key stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of delivery of education at the basic level. A comprehensive assessment of the learning environment, including the condition of facilities is critical in ensuring that learning rises to its highest standard."

Auwal Jatau hoped that the reports presented on the outcome of the assessment exercise so far conducted would provide the committee with a unique opportunity to not only identify the key issues hindering effective learning in schools, but also to develop sustainable solutions that will set the state on a path towards educational excellence.

The Deputy Governor then extended his deepest gratitude to members of the committee for their tireless efforts in the exercise conducted so far and expressed confidence that with the collective support of all stakeholders, the state government will revolutionize the basic education system and give wings to the dreams of countless children in the state.

The Commissioner of Education, Dr. Jamila Mohammed Dahiru, who also serves as secretary of the committee, briefed the committee on the assessment exercise so far conducted by the Ministry of Education which she described as successful.

# Emir of Kano Pays Bello Condolence Visit

From AMEDU JOSEPH, Lokoja

THE Emir of Kano, HRM Aminu Ado Bayero, CFR, was at the Government House, Lokoja recently to commiserate with Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State over the death of the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland.

Alhaji Ado Bayero during the visit, said that he was in Kogi to extend his sympathies to the government, the Governor, and the people of the state

following the passing on of the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland, His Royal Majesty, Ado Ibrahim, CFR, who peacefully departed on October 29, 2023.

His Royal Majesty prayed for the peaceful repose of the late Ado Ibrahim and commended Governor Bello for maintaining strong and cordial relationship with traditional rulers in the state.

Responding, Governor Bello expressed his deep appreciation to the Emir and the Emirate Council for their

heartfelt condolences and the effort of undertaking a considerable journey to offer their support.

He lauded the late Ohinoyi, HRM Ado Ibrahim, for his influential and exemplary life, saying, "I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for deeming it fitting to condole with us and for embarking on such a significant journey from Kano to Kogi State. We truly value this expression of love. The late Ado Ibrahim, the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland, Sa'aki, lived an honorable life and left an indelible impact on the lives of his people during his time."

Governor Bello further discussed his administration's unwavering dedication to the welfare of tradi

Governor Bello emphasised the cordial relationship and cooperation between the

government and the traditional rulers in Kogi State, with a focus on the greater welfare of the people.

He hailed the harmonious relationships established by the late Ohinoyi with the Kano Emirates and traditional rulers across Nigeria.

Born on February 7, 1929, Abdulrahman Ado Ibrahim was the fourth traditional ruler and Ohinoyi of Ebiraland. With a strong foundation in Islamic knowledge, Dr. Ado Ibrahim was an economist with international education, holding a bachelor's degree in Economics from the London School of Economics and a Master's degree from Harvard Business School in 1954 and 1959, respectively.

His Royal Majesty (Dr) Ado Ibrahim passed on at the age of 94 on October 29, 20

# Don't let Nigeria down" – Defence Chief admonishes troops

CHIEF of Defence Staff (CDS), Gen. Christopher Gwabin Musa, has called on army Commanders and troops not to let Nigeria down in the on-going efforts to tackle security challenges.

Musa made the call on Monday in Abuja at the Army Headquarters Operations Centre after receiving briefs on engagements of troops in various theatres of operations.

Director, Army Public Relations, Brig.-Gen. Onyema Nwachukwu, stated that the CDS commended the Chief of

Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Taoreed Lagbaja, Principal Staff Officers, Field Commanders and troops for their dedication and sacrifice.

He added that the military had remained selfless in its service to humanity while providing support to civil authorities as required by law.

Musa admonished commanders at all levels to be focused, committed and professional in steering the affairs of their various commands to expedite the

restoration of peace and stability in the country.

He charged them to lead by example and to provide result-oriented leadership and mentorship to the junior leaders of the Nigerian Army.

The defence chief urged troops to remain resilient and ensure collaboration and inter-agency cooperation in the conduct of their operations to mitigate security challenges.

He assured the troops of the support of President Bola Tinubu and appreciated the president for his interventions

in the Armed Forces of Nigeria, since his assumption of office.

Musa charged troops to support INEC, the lead agency in Saturday's off-cycle governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi and to adhere strictly to the code of conduct guiding troops during elections.

"We have a task ahead and we cannot afford to let our country down. We have the support of Mr President and the nation at large," Nwachukwu quoted Musa as saying.



Bayero



## Feature

# Jos festival of theatre so far so good

**History was made on the calendar of Arts and Culture of Plateau State, Central Nigeria in 2004 with the inauguration of the Jos Festival of Theatre at the Luka Bentu Indoor Theatre and since then it has been an annual event save for some few skips due to uncontrollable factors. The inaugural festival lasted for one month from March 18<sup>th</sup> to April 18<sup>th</sup> 2004, featuring exciting plays, dance drama and workshops. And this has gone down in record as the first public regular stage-drama event in Plateau State, and has placed itself comfortably among the leading artistic events being attended by visitors across Nigeria and from abroad. Godwin Nenpan Goyang writes.**

**J**OS Festival of Theatre was initiated by the Jos Repertory Theatre (JRT), a non-profit company and non-governmental organization, engaged in the promotion of all aspects of the Performing Arts and the media. It organises workshops in playwriting, stagecraft, theatre entrepreneurship, media programs, etc., and of course staging of drama. The management of JRT is headed by Patrick-Jude Oteh PhD, as the Artistic Director who has been living in Jos since 1989. He first came for his post-graduate studies at the University of Jos, and later decided to settle there for a restaurant business and combining it with drama productions and workshops along side with some fellow artists which matured into the formation of the Jos Repertory Theatre in 2000.

The choice of Jos for such a theatre company and the theatre festival can hardly be faulted considering the pedigree of the city in the evolution of very many products and practitioners in the creative industry in Nigeria. Jos, the capital city of Plateau State, popularly referred to as the "Home of Peace and Tourism," is also well noted as the home of Entertainment which the Jos Theatre Festival now fits in as a major player and an item in this profile. The consistency with which this festival is regularly held has really endeared her most to the public and tourists, as well as gaining the confidence of sponsors and patrons alike. Thus, the festival is now featuring prominently in national newspapers and magazines, as well as trending on the social media, creditably and extensively covered by several major publishing houses and journalists. Among whom is Mr. Pelu Awofeso, a winner of the highly competitive and prestigious CNN/MultiChoice African Journalist Awards in Tourism. He is a widely travelled writer and author of several tourism and cultural publications apart from other ventures in tourism, arts and culture. And by collaborating with some foreign theatre companies, the festival is now attracting significant international attention and it is now included in the **International Theatre And Performing Arts Guide**.

As mentioned above, the annual Festival has however witnessed some few postponements. One of which was caused by the well-known historical COVID-19 global pandemic that dealt an unprecedented setback on every aspect of human life. The performing arts and the entertainment industries were among the most hit. But just before the COVID Lock-Down in Nigeria, the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the Jos Festival was held featuring six plays from March, 9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2020. However, with the resilience of JRT the spirit of the festival was kept alive during the lock-down by an innovative virtual streaming of some drama productions via Zoom followed by some interesting and exciting interactions among the online viewers. This was a great initiative which earned JRT a lot of accolades. The 15<sup>th</sup> live edition of the festival however took place in April 2022 immediately after the lock-down was relaxed to some extent, but with a reduced audience in accordance with health protocols.

So far keen followers of the theatre festival and experts in the Creative Industry are now unanimously agreed of the great and remarkable impact of the festival over the development of the performing arts and the packaging of drama as a tourist product per excellence in Jos. In tourism, such entertainments like the drama performances of Jos Festival of Theatre, cultural festivals, film shows, discos, live music and dance, live comedy concerts, and the like, constitute some major components of the tourist product of a tourist destination. Little wonder therefore then, that the Plateau State Government is supportive of Jos



Festival of Theatre and is also consistently encouraging the hosting of ethnic cultural festivals, comedy concerts, traditional dance performances among others across the State. And it is heart warming to observe that the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Hospitality is preparing a State festival calendar that will align such important festivals and other big events into a compact schedule. Hopefully, such a guide publication will go a long way in promoting the very rich and diverse cultural festivals including theatrical performances, film festivals, pageant shows, and several other entertainment shows as major tourism activities of the Plateau State.

Apart from staging a diverse and very interesting plays to watch, the Jos Festival of Theatre has also become a rendezvous for professional and career capacity building, suitable for both practising and up-coming artists through its daily workshops in collaboration with some stakeholders. Interestingly also, the involvement of the Jos Business School in the workshops for example, is building a strong culture of the creative industry entrepreneurship that would help widen business opportunities in the theatre and the entertainment industry in Plateau State.

Having come so far, credible honours and recognition must be given to the Jos Repertory Theatre, the initiators, cast and production crew, the faithful audience, the media and sponsors of the festival who have all this time weathered the storms despite all odds to keep the festival and the theatre alive in Jos. Of particular note is the support of some Foreign Missions in Nigeria which have consistently been part of the festival in one way or another from its

inception. Perhaps this should awaken the Plateau State Government to be more actively involved in the festival. It may not be too much to suggest that the festival be included regularly in the State annual budget to underwrite some overhead costs of the festival.

Another interesting thing to note about Jos Festival of Theatre, is that since inception in 2004 it has used three venues for the performances, starting with the uncompleted Luka Bentu Indoor Theatre at the Jos Cultural Center, before relocating to the Crest Hotel, and is presently having a home at the Alliance Franciase Centre. Admittedly, these three locations have their accommodating peculiarities but are certainly not yet the ideal venue appropriate for a festival that has attained such a higher status with a large audience. However, the Luka Bentu Indoor Theatre in the Jos Cultural Center, a government owned project would have rightly stood out as the most ideal location but it is at present an uncompleted project, and relatively abandoned. It has been the yearning of people of Plateau State in general that when completed, the Cultural Center will stand out as a majestic theatre edifice and a prominent tourist attraction in Jos, centrally located in the city centre, easily accessible from most parts of the metropolises for a wide variety of events and large audience. Therefore, this laudable project must not be left to rot in the murky pool of abandoned projects in Plateau State. May be it is time to think of some other options to complete the project, particularly a private sector initiative which I believe the Jos Repertory Theatre can advise further.

The passionate concerns about the Luka Bentu Theatre and the Cultural Center as a whole goes far beyond the

quest for an appropriate venue for the Jos Festival of Theatre but for the sake of performing arts, visual arts, entertainment and several other public activities in general. For example some notable performing artistes and groups like the Asharuwa Dancers, the Tapshak Entertainment, the Dantala Group, Comedy Artistes, Gospel Musicians etc have just been trying to make do with what is presently available. Similarly, it is the unfortunate lack of facilities that have deprived the city of Jos of hosting an array of major national and international performances as expected of its status. However, Jos was fortunate to host the 2022 National Festival for Arts and Culture as granted Plateau State. But this again exposed the challenges faced for suitable facilities in Jos as already noted. The Cultural Center and the Luka Bentu Theatre in particular would have been very ideal for some events of the festival and a showcase of beauty to the visitors. Furthermore, such a facility can offer large employment to a number of the well-trained graduates of the communication, film production, and performing arts from the various tertiary institutions in the state. Millions of Naira can also be generated as revenues to both Government and the Private Sector. Not forgetting too that the indoor theatre section of the project is so named to immortalise a prominent son of the State the late Prof. Luka Tokan Bentu, reputed to be the first Professor of Fine Arts from the State who had trained hundreds of prominent artists in Nigeria at the famous Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

While thinking about the next edition of the Jos Festival of Theatre recently, I was so thrilled with the news that Dr. Patrick-Jude Oteh, was honoured by the Department of Theatre Arts University Ibadan (UI), Nigeria. The plaque of honour reads, '**Special Recognition Award**' and presented to Dr. Oteh during the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration 2023 of the Department. The University prides itself as the premier university in Nigeria established in 1948 as a College of London University and became full fledged in 1962, after which its Department of Theatre Arts started in 1963, reputed as the cradle of Modern Theatre in Nigeria. Patrick-Jude Oteh is among hundreds of distinguished alumnus of the Department, including this humble writer.

Our paths however crossed each other only in 2004 during the build up to the maiden edition of the Jos Festival of Theatre. It was while scouting for a suitable venue for the festival that brought him to my office, me being then the Director of Tourism in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Hospitality not knowing anything about our common affiliation as both alumni of the prestigious University of Ibadan and products of the high profile Department of Theatre Arts. No wonder, probably it was the hidden confident spirit of the 'Great Uites' that stimulated a spontaneous click of eternal friendship before even realising our shared academic voyage. The subject matter of a proposed theatre festival in Jos also thoroughly excited me with a nostalgic recount of the historical FESTAC 77 (Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture) held in Lagos Nigeria in 1977, with a spill over of a FESTAC On The Fringe in the Arts Theatre of UI when I was just about completing my degree course there. But of more relevance is my recollection of the Pitlochry Festival Theatre in Scotland which I attended in 1979 as part of a study tour from the University of Bradford England UK which was quite an exciting and educative experience very relevant to my course and my job back home in Nigeria. And to see such a similar event happening in Jos would certainly gain my maximum support.

Now with the steady and total recovery from the COVID lock-down, the Jos Repertory Theatre must be looking forward to a big resumption of the full scale Theatre Festival in its 16<sup>th</sup> edition in 2024. However, sometimes last year the theatre family in Jos was faced with the sad news of a prolonged illness of Mrs. Nife Oteh, the strong pillar and devoted wife of Patrick-Jude. She was eventually taken to rest with the Lord in March, 2023. As we mourn this great loss we are also praying fervently to God to grant the family and friends of Dr Oteh the grace to bear her absence and to keep the legacy of the Jos Festival of Theatre flourishing to her memory in perpetuity.

**Godwin Nenpan Goyang**  
Private Tourism and Cultural Consultant.  
Author and Travel/Writer.  
Jos Nigeria, October 2023.



# Is Nigeria the poverty capital of the world?



By FRANCISCA ADIDI

THE Federal Government has admitted Nigeria's status as the poverty capital of the world when it disclosed that 133 millions of its citizens are currently living in poverty. In its latest National Multidimensional Poverty index reports unveiled recently, National Bureau of Statistics revealed that 63 percent of Nigerians are poor due to lack of health, education and living standards alongside unemployment and shocks.

The report said, over half of the population of Nigerians are multidimensionally poor and cook with dung, wood or charcoal, rather than cleaner energy. High deprivations are also apparent nationally in sanitation, time to

healthcare, food insecurity and housing.

This is despite various intervention programmes of government. The Federal Government had, through the National Social Safety-Nets Coordinating Office (NASSCO), claimed to have disbursed about \$700 million from the repatriated Abacha looted funds to over 1.9 million poor and vulnerable households across the country in the last six years.

Sometimes back NASSCO, said the project entails conditional and basic cash transfer to poor and vulnerable households, stressing that beneficiaries of the basic cash transfer receive N5,000 every month, while those under the conditional cash transfer receive additional N5000, making it N10,000 every month.

During the Buhari regime, Nigerians were promised to be lifted out of poverty, insisting that no one will be left behind. Now that Tinubu's administration has come to stay after the last appeal case, Nigerians are hopeful that time has come and it is now that things will be better. Yet the country is faced with the situation of fuel subsidy which has brought untold hardship on its citizens.

Over the past months,

prices of food items have continued to rise as inflation has remained high, even as farmers are not yet totally free to plant and harvest their crops. To make matters worse, the recent flood disrupted the economic potential and means of sustenance of many Nigerians, further pushing them below the poverty line.

To address this drift, government must take deliberate steps to address the fiscal and monetary quagmire that has tended to impoverish many than lift them out of poverty. Pro-business regulations should be deepened to enable business growth in order to generate more employment.

While it is a thing of concern to many Nigerians, we are pondering why the country's poverty narrative has not changed in spite of the huge government funding on school feeding programs and other stipends claimed to be given to Nigerians. The palliative promise by the Federal Government should also reach the various states in the country because it is the same market, same prices they will all encounter.

Should we assumed there is a disconnect between available social welfare opportunities and its

uptake; identify which sector, state, senatorial district and groups of persons with poverty incidences, and then use these data to nudge for behavioural changes that will lead to increase in uptake, influence design and implementation of projects.

Therefore, like many other countries, the report about rising poverty level in Nigeria calls for concern, more so that there have been no convincing measures taken to indicate the template used by NBS and which data base was used to measure the poverty rate.

Should Nigerians believe that the social safety net scheme introduced in 2016 to tackle poverty and hunger has not made any significant impact owing to poor implementation, corruption allegation and politicisation? Only time shall tell.

And these differences are birthed from our struggles to attain higher positions which most times discredit good people for bad ones. That is why things are not just right with us in Nigeria as a people. We often refuse the best leaders, best people and best candidates to lead because of our political differences, ethnic divisions and religious



beliefs, that is why the rich will continue to be rich and the poor getting poorer, starving and hungry at all times.

In Plateau State, the hatred in the polity has so much eaten deep that we forget that governance is continuous. We so much blinded our eyes and have given a damn to what others do, all because of our political differences and ethnic divisions forgetting the part of religion. All of these hinders progress and Unity and only increases poverty and hunger.

In Nigeria, stereotypes and crimes can be found across various aspects of society which is a hindrance to development. Within our context, the first point of stereotypes are ethnic and religious bigotry, then in social concepts. The sad part is that these stereotypes are often perpetuated through social interactions, media representation, and cultural biases, which are hinderance to social cohesion and impede progress.

Stereotyping does not only distort the perception of individuals but also limits opportunities and creates barriers to success, that is why there is hunger and too much poverty in the land. It assumes before you know, and it projects before you actually see and because of that we are blinded and do not see people for who they are or what they have to offer.

What we need today is Unity and peace which is necessary to sustain the essence of every struggle of our existence as well as, sustain democracy and build a greater Nigeria. Therefore if there is peace, Nigerians will be able to go to farm and move freely to get what to eat for existence.

The task before us as a people and as a nation is to strive towards perfecting ourselves and our democracy, especially in critical areas such as transparent and credible elections, accountable governance and citizen participation.

## Wrong diagnosis, prescription kill faster than sickness itself



By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

OVER the years, people have been nursing the belief that whatever is medically reported as a result of diagnosis especially from a hospital, it is considered 100% certified and accurate and can perfectly be accepted for its treatment by any lifesaving agency. This belief has been in practice for decades because before now, Nigeria's Health System was next to world standard with well trained personnel that handled severe health cases without any referral cases to other hospitals abroad.

The system was such that attracts most African Countries like Ghana, Cameroun, South Africa etc and some parts of Asian

countries to Nigeria, as they trooped in to access quality medical help. It was believed to be a life saving ground because people go in and come out free of whatever illnesses that held them down.

Hardly was there any reported cases of failure that led to the death of patient as common as it is today. People had so much confidence in the system and it was medically, the last hope of a common man. All their worries that time was how to pay the bills thereafter.

This, was not far fetched from the fact that, there were sufficient drugs, facilities and adequately trained and committed manpower who had sworn to save lives and ready to serve their fatherland not minding the meager remuneration they received as take home. And there were no strike actions and it was just service, service and service!

However, the story is quite different now in our hospitals today, because they have been neglected and left as death traps. All we have now is the lip service we pay to the system even with the huge

budgetary allocations that fills the air every years without any improvement.

Today, all we talk about is the pay we get from being a medical personnel, keeping aside what was supposedly maintained to be an oath at the detriment of human lives.. This, has in no small measures forced many to their early graves and it appears normal in this part of our world without recourse to what is considered punishable in other countries.

The unfortunate part of it all is how we allowed politics to find its way into essential sector like health.. People are employed into the system with no consideration to whether it is truly their calling or not, but provided they have passed through the four corners of the hall to assuage their political gains.

Worse to note is how gigantic structures are year-in-year-out erected and commissioned with no facilities therein or adequately trained personnel that would man and render services to Nigerians.. Most of these structures are left uncompleted living the

majority of citizens who live in the grassroots at the mercy of another hopeful political four years.

Statistics have it that, over a million new Specialists Hospitals, Hospitals, Cottage Hospitals, Primary Health Cares and Dispensaries are constructed across the 36 states including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, without facilities or manpower or proper take off.

However, the decay in the system has forced majority of our qualified Doctors, Nurses and other medical experts to leave the shores of Africa for a greener pasture in the UK. These same qualified personnel who were genuinely employed and had all it takes to train new breeds of doctors are no longer there and it has left us with a huge deficit of experience.

No report of what we call death goes by without first attaching it to earlier wrong diagnosis by those we so hope to be experts and it takes the understanding of the few experienced professionals who still hold to biddings of their fatherland to dictate such shortfall if at all the patient

is lucky to see one.

Apart from the scourge of inexperience, there are bag-load-filled of quacks who delved into the profession through connections and are busy mark-tapping the lives of innocent Nigerians in the name of diagnosis which most times come out negative report.

There was a report of someone (name withheld) who visited a hospital to check his sugar level and he ended up being diagnosed of meningitis and there and then, he was induced with of some strong injectable and non-injectable drugs for a week not until a second test was carried by a different personal.

By the time this discovery was made, the strong drugs have cause so much harm to his cardiac vascular organs and so, he lost his life without them admitting their fault or compensation to the family.. No legal action was taken to press home this injustice for their brother and father, and so it ended.

No wonder, majority of citizens these days have resorted to self-help medication giving more patronage to herbal

treatments that claimed to have a cure for more than ten (10) illnesses per a dose. Day-in-day-out, you see these herbal vendors roaming the streets advertising their products with others having their shops at strategic points in and around capital cities.

This, to a large extent was not far fetched from the fear of running into wrong diagnosis and medication that may cause their lives or rather, the cost of running a test in a hospital that seemed not certain. In fact, most people go about with flasks in their cars sipping concoctions from these herbs and they so much believed in it.

Therefore, it has become imperative for us and our government to return to our past known glory by prioritising the health sector and stop playing politics with the lives of Nigerians. It is high time we began to set the records straight and prove to other nations that, yes, we can do it! Let us say NO to medical tourism, NO to massive exodus of our Doctors and YES to training of the few medical personnel we now have. God bless Nigeria!



**BY EZEKIEL DONTINNA**

IT was like an age-long exhumed hidden solid brass fittings that brightens the existing dark holes, when the Jos Film Initiative (JOFII) hit the ground with the second edition of Rock International Film Festival (RIFF) tagged: "The Human Rights Film Festival", in Jos, the Plateau State capital.

Although, the First Edition started last year with quite fascinating beginning that most times maiden events experienced as shortfalls but truly this year's edition, the Second Edition, was not just thrilling but a thought provoking film festival that exposes human rights issues that seemed to be a normal life in most communities.

JOFII, really took a positive shift from the past experience and it was wow. In fact, the turn out from day one by participants was quite impressive. Ahead of the Event proper, JOFII, the organisers of this Rock International Film Festival (RIFF), held two sessions of world press conferences amidst continuous radio announcements on PRTVC.

RIFF 2023, line up of activities for the 2nd Edition was the featuring of: Local and International screenings- short feature & documentary Human Rights Films; Discussion and Questions & Answers Sessions; Art and Photo exhibition; Run Way and it climaxed with Rock Awards 2023 respectively.

However, the Human Rights Film Festival was a 4-Day event starting from November 1-4, 2023 where its participants were drawn from selected Secondary Schools and Universities. On day 1, moderated by the Production Designer, Amber Treasure, featured Opening performances, Runway and Festival Speech; 1st Screening- Untold (Nigeria) 10mins short on discrimination and abuse against women.

The second screening was on "Bigger Than Us"(Indonesia/Brazil/Greece/Uganda/Lebanon/Malawi/US)96mins Documentary on Youth Activism, Sustainable development and Freedom of Press from MtM/Activist Film Memo respectively.

Therefore, what followed was the Panel Discussion on the topic: "Protest as a tool for Social Justice and Change", where Mrs. Luri Yawa, Chief Investigative Officer- NHRC; Nigeria Police; Mr. Salahudeen Mohammed and Mrs. Nene Dung, the Plateau State Chairperson of Nigeria Association of Women Journalists (NAWOJ), as Panelists.

Similarly, on day 2, the event screened films like Halima (Nigeria), a 20 minutes short film on "Girl-Child Abuse and Labour by Kongs Shamaki"; "Women of Valor (Israel), 90-mins Documentary on Women's/Girls' Rights, Religion, Democracy and Politics from MtM/Activist Film Memo" and Latifah (Nigeria)14-mins Short Film on Girl Child, Dreams and Education" as it was moderated by Barr. (Mrs.) Kyenpia Mafuyai, the Deputy Director Legal/Head of Legal and Investigation Department NHRC, accordingly.

The topic for the day-2 was,

"Human Rights Issues and Violation in Nigeria" with the following personalities as Panelists: Miss Awashima Atu, the Inclusion, Diversity and Disability Desk Officer of KRP Foundation; Mr. Chia Nor, (Assistant Director Investigation-NHRC); Mr. Kongs Shamaki, Film Director/Producer and CEO Gowell-Films; Assistant Chief State Counsel, Plateau State Ministry of Justice, Andrew Yilnaan ESQ; DSP Alfred Alabo, PPRO NPF and Ms Grace Okpo, in that order.

The final screening exercise

Abe, commended the organisers of this festival for taking their time to improve on last edition.

She said, "the programme is really recording a lot of success in terms of human rights awareness because during the first edition, there were shortcomings here and there and I know what it means to hold a maiden edition. But for this second edition, I really want to commend the organisers of this festival.

"It is well organised and I urge them to make sure they reach out to those that need to be reached out too so that various schools



## RIFF 2023: Human rights awareness film festival



of films and write ups came on day-3, where titles like "My Story (Nigeria), 30mins Short Film on Child Marriage and Murder; "Writing with Free Fire" (India) 93-mins Documentary: Freedom of speech and expression, identity, media and digital culture, discrimination, Women's rights were rated. Also screened was "Jamila (Nigeria), a 10min Film on "Child Labour".

There was also Panel of Discussion on the topic: "Human and Drug Trafficking and Prostitution", and it was moderated by Hudung Gyang (Broadcaster and Girls' Advocate). Again as Panelists were: Juventus Yitnoe, NAPTIP Investigative Officer; Assistant House Mother- MeCAHT Nigeria, Kabadiya Kure; CSN Ene Stepnie Akuh (PSO Sensitization-NDLEA; Madam Manko Lar, Director of Admin, Plateau State Ministry for Women Affairs and Social Development; Mrs. Victoria Pam, Gender Officer, NSCDC and Vivian Abara, Executive Director, PAVAARF respectively.

However, the massive turn out of participants to grace this thought provoking and awareness Festival was an indication of how exceptional and well organised the programme was this year. No wonder, the Plateau State Coordinator of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Veronica



can come and watch these films. It is quite educative and will help the youth to know the violations we have in our society and also encourage them to speak up and advocate for human rights violations for them to tolerate each others'rights", Abe encouraged.

Earlier, the RIFF Festival Director, Henry Samson Mafulul, said, the essence of festival was to raise awareness about human rights and create the consciousness that would inspire actions among people in Jos and subsequently to the 17 LGAs saying, "one of the things that have shocked us from last year to

this year is that, Jos, Plateau State has actually become a very serious hot zone for human trafficking.

"It is actually one of the places that is in the forefront and like a transit point for trafficking. So, on this last day which is day-4, we are trying to honour these people that have been in this fight. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has been here from day one, NAPTIP, NDLEA, Police, NSCDC and many others.

On his part, the Director of Film, Amber Treasure, described the turn out as impressive and noted that, the uniqueness of this

year's edition was not far from the fact that they were able to reach out to Secondary and University Students saying, "so, we are also going down to the grassroots to try to get them to be aware of their human rights and possible violations too".

In fact, the show of interest by participants right from day one was truly a pointer to the fact that people are beginning to know their rights and are conscious of reporting any act of violation to the appropriate authorities. So, it is our prayer that more of this engagements would be organised to educate people on human rights.



# IMAGES

## MUTFWANG RECEIVES HEAD OF SEDIN

**Plateau State Governor, Barr. Caleb Manasseh Mutfwang on Monday 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



## Odd World

### 'Dad abandoned us, demanding a share of my inheritance'

A woman has found herself in a difficult moral dilemma after her grandmother passed away and left her everything in her will.

Although this is not an unusual thing for a grandparent to do, the woman has been left conflicted after her dear grandma left nothing but a single dollar to her dad, who abandoned the family for another woman when she was just 13 years old.

"When I was 13 years old, my mother found out my father was having an affair and he got the other woman pregnant. My dad confessed he was in love with the other woman and wanted to leave my mother," the woman wrote on Reddit's AITA forum.

"She obviously heartbroken and didn't know what to do, as we had moved to a new state with my father for work so she had no family around. My father dropped us like a bad habit, he attempted to keep a relationship with me, but ultimately his new family was 'his priority' as he said.

Her dad said his new family was his priority now.

"Tough to understand for a 13 year old, but whatever. If he didn't want me, I wasn't going to need him so my mother and I moved on. The only way we were able to move on was with the help of my grandmother, my father's mother. She always loved us and was appalled with what her son had done to us. He stopped seeing her as well for the most part."

Over the years, the woman and her mum became increasingly close with her grandmother, often spending special occasions and holidays together, while her dad was "nowhere to be found."

"Unfortunately, the years caught up with her and she developed colon cancer, advanced late stage. Her decline was rapid. Within a few months she was in hospice," the woman continued.

She and her mum developed an amazing relationship with her grandma

"Days before she passed, she asked me to call her son to come see her as she knew her time was coming. He'd only been to see her a couple times since she had gotten sick. When he came by, I was visiting as we did every few days and he acted like I was some random person."

"Grandma asked him to come back tomorrow, but he said he'd be back in a few days. She passed 4 days later without him coming back despite my calls and texts to come. She went peacefully with me and my mom by her side. That was hard. I miss her every day. She was my guardian angel most of my life and I know she continues to watch over me."

After the funeral and everything took place, the woman and her mum were contacted by her grandmother's lawyer, who revealed she had, in fact, left both her home and \$200,000 to her in her will.

"I had no idea she did that, but in the will, there was a note to me from her that said: 'You are worth it. Love Grandma.' She's amazing," the woman added.

"Also in her will, she left my father exactly \$1 as his inheritance. When he found out, he went ballistic, blowing up my phone all the time demanding I give him 'his house and his money.' His new wife and his son were messaging me a lot and his son was writing on social media that I manipulated my grandmother."

Eventually, the woman's father apologised for his behaviour and explained he was under a lot of stress because he's in debt and was expecting a windfall from his mum to help cover his bills and send his son to college, leading her to feel bad and question whether she should share the money after all.

**Source: The Mirror**



### 'Leaders with ideas not in power'

ONE of the most respected erudite scholars of recent times, Prof. Patrice Emery Lumumba was once quoted as saying, "The tragedy with Africa is that those with ideas are not in power, while those in power have no ideas. When the people have a chance, they still vote for those with no ideas." For many who have followed with keen interest the silhouette criticisms offered by this scholar, it is daunting on us that some African states are far off the track of progress and or systematic integration. Therefore, much needs to be done in terms of implementing strategic polices of good governance to salvage our nation states from plummeting into anarchy, chaos and or total collapse.

During several of his lamentations, Prof. Lumumba always apportioned blames on our leaders who due to acts of administrative ingenuity contributed to the socio-economic and political retardation of this continent. Evidently, the continuous clinching to power of these visionless and corrupt leaders in Africa have but only succeeded in turning back the hands of time.

Some of these leaders who got the opportunity of leading their nations on the platter of gold have regrettably not been able to justify such opportunities. Between the early 1960's to late 70's, successive military takeover of governments across the continent saw the growing number of military dictators which led to the emergence of stooges and evil men of thoughts brutally engaging many democratic oppositionists leading to the death of hundreds of thousands. Few lucky ones were however able to escape into exile after knowing too well that their lives were in danger.

Most of these despots including the late Idi Amin of Uganda, Mubutu Sese Seko, Charles Talyor, Muammar Qadhafi including Joseph Kony, the Ugandan warlord, all never gave a thought about the nation's collective wellbeing.

In fact, Kony was one of the tyrannical warlords who disrupted, dehumanized and terrorized the people of the continent through his brutal leadership style. No doubt, his atrocities left a deep-seated hatred and ethnic divide amongst the citizenry.

Interestingly, Nigeria also experienced such acts of brutality when the military held sway. While several innocent citizens of this country were unjustifiably jailed and or killed, others who escaped these despotic regimes went on exile to save their lives.

In most recent years however, the transition of most of these African nations into democratic nation states have further entrenched democratic governance with great expectations. Many scholars had however hoped at initial stage that the democratization of African nation states would create fundamental stability and add value to the people of the continent. Thus, the coming of democracy to most nations of the continent after so much struggle and sacrifice was initially regarded a great relief to pro-autonomy and visionary scholars.

While democratic establishments in some countries have led to the actualization of concrete pillars revamping basic institutional structures for greater prospects, some unfortunate nation states have equally been left aloft at the mercy of their corrupt and visionless leaders. Today, many of such emerging leaders based on greed and acts of personal aggrandizement have looted resources meant for the betterment of their citizens. Consequently, while their citizens continue to wallow in dehumanizing abject poverty, they have only concentrated on buying expensive castles abroad and participating neck-deep into more acts of economic sabotage.

In Nigeria, I have taken more time to scrutinize the long list of our leaders who have governed this nation for decades but not made the desired impact. In the midst of both economic and human resources Nigeria is blessed with; more than half of the nation's population is today living far below poverty line. Aside the biting difficulties of unemployment, insecurity and economic uncertainty, our educational sector is in total muddle. Just within a month, our national grid failed us twice sending strong signals that all is not well with our power sector.

Aside the rampaging activities of terrorists that have refused to allow us have a sound sleep; hardly a day passes-by without any of us being told of one act of kidnapping and or armed robbery in this country. These unpleasant phenomena are completely overwhelming us because of the simple fact that we are yet to put our act together. To say the least, many have attested to the obvious fact that the citizens of this country have not allowed God to bless us with good leaders.

When our founding fathers were struggling to liberate this nation from the claws of colonial subjugation, they dreamed of a nation which after them would navigate itself and become a giant of Africa. Many of these past leaders of ours never anticipated for once that after they had gone, this country would be left fumbling in such a woeful and disgusting manner today.

After Nigeria's independence, the tales of this nation state has frighteningly continued to create an atmosphere of uncertainty as well as bash the hopes and aspirations of many. Today, Nigeria has become a nation state which requires all our prayers for it to overcome these difficult contemporary challenges. Some of these problems bedeviling us as a people were however unfortunately created by us.

Even as many citizens are yet to comprehend where the leaders of the country went wrong for us to deserve these unending calamities, some of them buried under the rubbles of a near failed state do know that only the citizenry can open a new chapter when the needful is done. Therefore, all we need to do to change Nigeria's disgusting narrative is to vote leaders with visions and intellectual capacity. Though it may take a long time to bring the nation back on track, with sincere commitments, sacrifice and total disregard to religious and regional sentiments, we can navigate the nation out of its present predicament for the better.





## View Point

# Phobia of Retirement: Real or imaginary

**A**S one looks forward to retirement, the obvious feeling is that of agitation, apprehension, nervousness, anxiety and unease. A cursory look at those that have retired paints a confusing picture of the whole scenario. Some retired senior citizens look bright, agile, vibrant and happy; while on the other hand, some look worn-out, sad, depressed or in a state of trepidation. Some are in-between or neither here nor there. Looking at retired persons as a predictor of what it will look or feel like is therefore confusing; whether it is a thing to look forward to or a situation to avoid?

But it is clearly a thing of reality just as the book of Proverbs in the Scriptures talks about a time for everything. A time to be born and a time to die; a time to build and a time to tear down; a time to sow and a time to reap, and so on. Similarly, one expects a time to start work and a time to retire. But this appears to be a difficult scenario to come to terms with; or so I feel, or see in some climes.

Retirement is therefore a phenomenon to be afraid of because of the uncertainties. Why should one not be afraid of retirement? Just as one can see, the uncertainties appear to be too many. Just like marriage, whose certificate is dished out before a couple embarks on the marital life, and the process of leaving, cleaving and becoming one body is learnt or actualised along the way; and so, is retirement. You do not have the experience before you actually retire. A retired life is actualized when you are retired from service.

Retirement has been defined as an action or fact of leaving one's job and ceasing to work. It is also said to be that part of a person's life when they choose to leave their work life behind permanently. It is expected that this is embarked upon when people are old, or sick enough to no longer contribute to their workplace. Different countries have different ages for retirement, and in the same country, the age at retirement is different for different professions or duties. One can also retire voluntarily when the person chooses to do so at any age of his or her choosing. There is also the compulsory retirement when an organization decides to retire a person for a reason or the person reaches the age of compulsory retirement. Organizations that need the continuing service of an officer, being 'essential' or no one



available to do the job, re-engage the person but on 'contract' appointment. It is pertinent to say here clearly that retirement appears to be only for the employed or in a structured type of job. I am not sure whether the people in private businesses ever retire.

Because of the seaming uncertainty surrounding retirement, some individuals are so perturbed that they make effort to actually push forward the date of birth and therefore the age at retirement. This is because the birthdate determines the retirement date. Some persons are actually caught in their own craftiness of doctoring birthdates. They do this several times and sometimes forget where they started from. Their retirement benefits have therefore been eaten into, and receive little or just a fraction of their entitlements at retirement. This is unfortunate to say the least.

The greatest fear of retirees is

the loss of regular resources; where and how to get money or funds to afford the costs of living standards. This fear is worsened by the fact that savings from the pension funds from the employers are either not paid early, paid in bits, partly paid or not paid at all. Funds which have been deducted from a person's earnings over the years for this purpose appear to have disappeared into thin air and not accessible to the person who had save the said money. Reasons are many. Deducted monies are not remitted to the Pension Boards, the remitted monies do not get to the pension board, government borrows from the pension board without paying back or the pension board simply 'sits' on the money.

The fear of retirement can be changed or modified by a change in the mind-set. Most workers have fixated their minds on a structured, regularised form of work. In addition, there has been the concept of the cycle of work

and receipt of pay. You work for a month and receive salary or wages at the end of the month. Why and how should this cycle be broken? This is unthinkable and rather imagined. Remember that good health is an immeasurable resource if God blesses you with it.

The fear of Retirement could be the beginning of wisdom. This wisdom can be put into action by many propositions. First, God is in control of this dark side of life of yours particularly being a child of God. Secondly, fall back on plans put on ground during the 'working period'. There are other resources at your disposal if you have adequately invested in them; and include the family; friends, colleagues, co-workers. Building and sustaining your workplace or workplaces that provided you with the opportunity to be a worker may also be a huge asset. Destroying these in the course of your work would do the opposite. Investment in people, materials, assets may douse the apprehension of retirement. Having a positive mindset about retirement may be another wisdom to fall back to, as it is not the end to life or livelihood.

Before my retirement benefits get stalled somewhere along the processing and payment chain, it would not be out of place to passionately appeal to relevant authorities to have a change of heart withholding the payments for whatever reason. Pension and gratuity are not a gift or a form of

favour. They are a right! These are cumulative savings from the salaries of workers. When the need for it arises, God expects it to be given to them. The writer has worked assiduously during the duration of service and therefore deserves his 'wages' in the form of pension and gratuity from his savings. This will go a long way in making retirement something to look forward to. The pension office staff should stop making life difficult to pensioners or retirees by making very unreasonable demands on these already apprehensive individuals, and further compounding their problems. They should remember that however long it takes, they will also be retirees if God carries. What is 'good for the goose is also good for the gander', they say!

All these are theoretical, the writer speaking from the side of a prospective retiree with no experience whatsoever. This article can therefore be taken as a preamble to retirement. The writer hopes to write another article in this regard about 12 months later, after I would have tested and tasted retirement for some time. The content then may be that of actualized hope and satisfaction. But as of now, it is a virtual thing. An imagination or a procrastination!

**Mutihir is Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Jos.**

**Because of the seaming uncertainty surrounding retirement, some individuals are so perturbed that they make effort to actually push forward the date of birth and therefore the age at retirement.**

**“This is because the birthdate determines the retirement date. Some persons are actually caught in their own craftiness of doctoring birthdates.”**



## News

### Former Chairman PSC, visits Commission's headquarters

By DORCAS PANKYES

FORMER Chairman of the Police Service Commission (PSC), Mr. Parry Osayande, made a rare visit to the Commission's Corporate Headquarters recently, marking his first return in over a decade.

Mr. Osayande, a retired Deputy Inspector General of Police, was greeted by the current Chairman, Dr. Solomon Arase, a former Inspector General of Police who succeeded in relocating the Commission to its current premises shortly after assuming office.

During his visit, Mr. Osayande was pleasantly surprised to find that the Commission had named its 500-seat auditorium after him. Expressing his delight, he declared, "You have arrived, you have won, and you will keep winning." He commended the Commission for its progress, stating, "You are obviously doing well."

Mr. Osayande also encouraged the Commission to look towards the future with optimism, as he believed it held great promise.

Addressing the staff in the auditorium named in his honor, Mr. Osayande highlighted the historical significance of the PSC. He explained that the Commission was established as a result of concerns raised during the 1957 Constitutional Conference/Willinck Minorities Commission Report.

#### Another UNIPORT female student found dead inside apartment

THE lifeless body of a female student of the University of Port Harcourt (UNIPORT), identified as Aadaeze, has been found in her apartment at Aluu community in Ikwere local government area of Rivers State.

The deceased, who was a 200-level Accounting student, was living in an off-campus apartment, located behind the University's main campus.

The discovery came about two weeks after the body of a 300-level student of Biochemistry, Justina Otuene, allegedly killed by her boyfriend, Damian, was found in her lover's residence along NTA Road, Ozuoba community in Obio/Akpor local government area of the state.

Speaking on the latest incident, the Dean of Student Affairs, UNIPORT, Professor Chima Wokocha, said the lifeless body of the deceased was found in her residence and brought to a health facility in the school by some of her neighbours.

Wokocha said: "Her body was brought to the Chief Lulu-Briggs Health Centre by people who live around her in her lodge."

"She didn't die in the University hostel. She died in her off-campus residence in Aluu and the scene of crime was visited by the management of the university, including my humble self."

He stated that the school management and the police visited the scene of the



Osayande

Its purpose was to ensure tribal balance and prevent the domination of minority tribes in the maintenance of public order. Mr. Osayande noted that the Commission's establishment paved the way for the creation of the Federal Character Commission.

Reflecting on the Commission's journey, Mr. Osayande acknowledged that it had been neglected and pushed to the background in its early days. However, he expressed his happiness at seeing the Commission back on its feet and thriving.

Dr. Arase, the current Chairman, expressed his

gratitude for Mr. Osayande's visit and the honor bestowed upon the Commission. He acknowledged the significant contributions made by Mr. Osayande, particularly in initiating the construction of the Corporate Headquarters.

Dr. Arase assured the former Chairman that the Commission would continue to uphold its mission and strive to become one of the world's leading oversight bodies for the police. He emphasized that the Commission would never forget Mr. Osayande for planting the seed that has grown into the impressive edifice now serving as its headquarters.

incident and later notified the parents of the late undergraduate.

The Student Affairs Dean added: "The police were there

with us also. We acknowledge the fact that she had taken a substance and passed out because there was a bottle of a substance that was found by

By EZEKIEL DONTINNA

THE National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) said on Monday that it would enhance the capability of the Agulu and Kaduna NAFDAC laboratories for the quality of medicinal products.

Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye, Director General of NAFDAC, said this in Abuja on Monday at a news conference.

Adeyeye said that the laboratories would be used for risk-based approach for ascertaining the quality of medicinal products.

According to her, the mandate of the agency is to safe guard public health by ensuring that food and drug products made available to the public are safe and effective.

"We are proud to announce the significant strides we have made in enhancing the safety and quality of pharmaceutical products in Nigeria."

"This has been through the implementation of pharmaceutical traceability, pharmacovigilance, post marketing on the field, checking for substandard falsified medicines, and other system strengthening interventions," she said.

Adeyeye said that the endeavour had been made possible through vital support from the Global Fund's Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (GF-RSSH) grant, with the National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA) as the principal recipient.

According to her, the Global Fund is an international financing institution dedicated to combating HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

She said that the fund provided

### NAFDAC to enhance capability of Agulu, Kaduna laboratories



Adeyeye

support to countries in their efforts to address global health challenges and strengthen health systems.

"NACA is Nigeria's main organisation for the control of HIV and AIDS and it is responsible for coordinating the country's response to HIV and AIDS and provides strategic guidance for the national response."

"Part of their activities is strengthening NAFDAC's role and capacity in pharmacovigilance and ADR monitoring and reporting," she said.

Adeyeye said that several budget lines were being implemented by NAFDAC during Grant Cycle 6, under the GF-RSSH grant.

The NAFDAC boss said that the agency had successfully built the capacity of 76 staff members across the nation on Pharmacovigilance of AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (ATM) commodities.

She said that in addition, GF (BL 106) supported NAFDAC to

acquire a mobile app for ADR reporting and monitoring Pharmacovigilance activity.

Adeyeye said that the implementation of a mobile app had streamlined the reporting and monitoring of adverse drug reactions ADR and improved the overall responsiveness of the healthcare system.

"To ensure that the medicinal product is the right medicine which the label carries, Global Fund (BL36) supported three NAFDAC state offices with three field devices (Truscan®) for rapid on the spot check for product quality."

"NAFDAC's state offices have been further equipped with some devices for rapid screening of product quality, ensuring that unsafe and substandard products are swiftly identified and removed from circulation."

"In addition to this, we funded the Yaba Central Drug Control Laboratory (CDCL) to conduct comprehensive analysis of ATM and other disease programme medicines," she said. (NAN)(www.nannews.ng)

### Travel Advisory: Nigeria is safe, open to foreign investments

— Information Minister

THE Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji, Mohammed Idris says, Nigeria is safe and open to foreign investments and tourists to explore and benefit. Idris made this know in his address at an interactive session with senior media editors and executives on Monday in Abuja.

News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that on Nov. 3, the US Embassy issued notice of an increase threat to major hotels in Nigeria's larger cities. According to the Minister, all countries in the world have one challenge or the other which could be economy, political, gun violence, social or cultural.

"We understand the concerns raised by the United States Government in their recent travel advisory, but believe that it is imperative that we do not generalise isolated incidents across the entire hospitality industry."

"What we have seen is that, such advisories do not achieve anything other than needless panic, and they can have severe adverse economic impact, not to talk of what they do to undermine the government's efforts to attract investment."

"We have consistently prioritised the safety and well-being of all visitors to our country. We have implemented comprehensive security measures, both at the Federal and State levels, to ensure the safety of tourists and

international guests. "These measures include intense intelligence gathering, acquisition and deployment of additional platforms, training and re-training of personnel, cooperation with international law enforcement agencies, among others, to maintain a secure environment."

"The Nigerian Government is dedicated to ensuring the safety and well-being of all Nigerians and visitors to the country and will continue to work towards maintaining a secure and hospitable environment for tourists and business travelers and the likes. "Our country is relatively safe and open to foreign investment and tourists to come and invest, explore and ripe the benefits," Idris stressed.

He further explained that the Nigerian security agencies have been very busy, doing their best to keep us all safe. The Minister emphasised that in various parts of Kaduna State, seven bandits were neutralised, in various operations between the Nov. 1 and Nov.3.

He explained that on Nov.3 in Kano State, a joint operation by troops of the Nigerian Army and the Department of State Services carried out a dawn raid operation on terrorists' hideout in Gezawa Local Government Area.

He added that the dawn raid operation successfully averted an imminent attack on Kano by



Idris

insurgents.

"The operation recovered AK 47 Rifles, AK 47 Rifle Magazines, a Rocket Propelled Gun (RPG), RPG Bombs, Hand Grenades, Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-making materials, among others."

"In Katsina, two NYSC members abducted by bandits were successfully rescued. "In the North-East and North-West of the country, the Nigerian Air Force has been very busy, with several successful airstrikes on bandits' and terrorists' camps and

hideouts in Katsina, Zamfara and Borno.

"The Air Force has also recently taken delivery of four new aircraft, to strengthen the fight against banditry and terrorism."

"In our maritime environment, on Oct. 25, the Eastern and Central Naval Commands flagged off a Joint Sea Exercise, Exercise SEA GUARDIAN 2023."

"I have taken some time to outline some of these efforts to make the point that our security and intelligence agencies are constantly at work, foiling threats,

and neutralising those who seek to undermine the security of the country," he said.

The Minister said such successes deserve the full support of all Nigerians and the media included.

He urge Nigerians and the media to pay attention to what the armed forces are doing, and give amplified coverage to their successes and gains.

"The bandits, terrorists, kidnapers, pirates, etc are waging not only a physical battle but also a psychological one, trying to undermine our faith and confidence in our security agencies."

"As media leaders, we must be very careful to not play into their hands, through reporting that might be misleading or sensational or that undermines the morale of our security personnel," Idris said.

NAN reports that those present during the interactive session include the Special Adviser on Information and Strategy, Mr Bayo Onanuga, Managing Director and Editor-in-Chief of NAN, Mr Ali M. Ali and Mr Silas Nwoha respectively.

Others were the Director-General of Voice of Nigeria, Mr Jibrin Ndace, the Director-General of National Broadcasting Corporation, Mr Charles Ebuebu and many media gurus and personalities across the the country. (NAN)



## Sports

## Spurs with mountain of unexpected problems

By PHIL MCNULTY

TOTTENHAM Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou recently spent a night in London's West End watching King Lear at the invitation of Spurs-supporting actor Sir Kenneth Branagh.

It is hard to imagine the action in Theatreland matched the dramatic production his side staged alongside Chelsea on an utterly chaotic night in north London.

The fatalistic Tottenham fans who viewed their superb start to the season as too good to be true had their worst fears realised in this crazy, controversial 4-1 defeat.

No-one can accuse Spurs or Postecoglou of doing things by halves. Not after this.

This was the first time things have really gone seriously wrong for Spurs this season - and they went wrong in the most spectacular fashion in one of the most mind-boggling Premier League games of recent memory.

Spurs fans rolled up the High Road buoyed by the optimism and positivity brought by Postecoglou, knowing victory would put them back on top of the Premier League.

Instead, the wreckage of ill-discipline, red cards, injuries to key players and a painful loss with nine men piled around Postecoglou's feet like rubble.

It leaves the Australian, who has made such an outstanding start since moving to Spurs from Celtic, facing the biggest challenge of his short time in north London.

The infamous Battle of the Bridge between these two sides in 2016 was brought to mind, especially in a wild first half lasting nearly an hour, and it is Spurs and Postecoglou who have been left counting the cost.

In that period alone, four goals were disallowed, Spurs defender Cristian Romero was sent off and conceded a penalty, and Micky van de Ven and James Maddison went off injured.



Tottenham had two players sent off in a chaotic game

Chelsea have now won three of their last five Premier League games

It all started so well when Dejan Kulusevski's deflected shot put Spurs ahead after six minutes but it went into reverse at alarming speed from the moment Romero returned to his reckless ways.

The Argentine was fortunate to escape a sending off for kicking out at Levi Colwill but could not resist following through on international team-mate Enzo Fernandez, picking up a red card and allowing Cole Palmer to equalise from the spot.

Spurs' night went rapidly downhill from then on as Van de Ven, one of the Premier League

players of the season after his arrival from Wolfsburg, collapsed clutching his hamstring as he raced back to halt a Chelsea attack, before Maddison also went off after appearing to pick up an ankle injury.

Van de Ven and Maddison are very near the top of the list of players Postecoglou could not afford to lose. The Dutchman's injury looked serious while Spurs will hope Maddison is not sidelined for too long.

Like Romero, Destiny Udogie was lucky to escape a red card for an early lunge on Raheem Sterling

but a rash, late dive into another tackle early in the second half on the same player left referee Oliver no option but to send him off.

This meant that, after just over an hour of play, only three of the outfield players who started the match for Spurs were still out there.

Postecoglou gambled on maintaining a high line even with nine men. It would have been miraculous had it survived intact. Sterling and Nicolas Jackson found a way through with only 15 minutes left, the striker helping himself to a hat-trick as Spurs ran

out of steam.

If there is any good Postecoglou can take from a very bad night, it is the spirit shown by Spurs as they tried to hold on, backed by a vociferous home crowd who appreciated the character shown in difficult circumstances.

Keeper Guglielmo Vicario was heroic, racing from his goal on several occasions to act as an emergency sweeper, but in the end even his resistance was broken.

Spurs left the pitch after the final whistle to rousing applause but this was a chastening experience which leaves Postecoglou with his first real session of problem solving.

He will await medical bulletins on his injured duo while also knowing Romero faces a three-match ban - made more significant by Van de Ven's injury - while Udogie will miss one game.

Spurs have a visit to Wolverhampton Wanderers coming up, followed by a home game against Aston Villa before a trip to face league leaders Manchester City at Etihad Stadium.

Postecoglou's calm demeanour has won him a host of admirers at Spurs and beyond this season, and the time-honoured warning about bumps in the road had been mentioned even before it all went off the rails here.

The ordered, pragmatic - but always positive - approach which has served him so well will be required because a bump in the road is one thing, but being faced with a mountain of unexpected problems is another.

Nobody has ever suggested managing Spurs is as easy as Postecoglou has made it look, and this almost surreal night delivered compelling proof.



Chelsea have now won three of their last five Premier League games



## Sports

# Peseiro reveals why Osimhen is sad at Napoli

SUPER Eagles head coach Jose Peseiro has revealed why Victor Osimhen has been unhappy at Napoli this term, Soccer.net.ng reports.

Newsnow said that, Osimhen achieved the greatest feat in his club career last season when he guided Napoli to their first Scudetto title in over thirty years.

The Nigeria international scored goals for fun in the league and the Champions League, as he eventually finished as the first African to win the Serie A top scorer award.

At the peak of his popularity in the summer, several reports linked him with multimillion-euro moves away from Napoli, with some of Europe's biggest clubs interested in his services.

Osimhen, however, stayed in Naples after Napoli reportedly rejected €100 million and more from PSG and Saudi Arabian giants Al-Hilal.

While the transfer rumours raged on, Napoli were desperate to get Osimhen to sign a new contract extension. Despite reports to the contrary, the former Lille forward is yet to commit to a new deal with the Italian champions.

Osimhen, however, shrugged off the drama in the summer and started the season in blazing form as he netted six goals in his first eight Serie A games.

But the controversies have



Osimhen

been biting hard at his heels, especially when he was the subject of an unprovoked social media attack from his own club, Napoli.

To make matters worse, the 24-year-old striker suffered an injury while on international duty for Nigeria and has not played for Napoli since scoring against Fiorentina on October 8.

Peseiro is convinced that all these factors have contributed to Osimhen's sadness in recent weeks.

"He is not happy, because obviously he had an injury, which is not good news for us, for Napoli, and for the Italian championship," Peseiro told TV Play via Tutto Napoli.

"They have not been simple weeks, the rumours about the signed contract, the transfer market issues, and the issue of the TikTok video, especially for an important player like him.

"Now, however, I know that he has a great desire to return to the pitch as soon as possible."

Osimhen has been away from Napoli over the last few days as he had to address some personal issues in Nigeria.

The Super Eagles striker is expected back in Naples in the next few hours, but he will not be involved in Napoli's Champions League clash with Union Berlin on Wednesday.

FORMER Super Falcons' Coach, Godwin Izilien, has urged the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) to appoint a substantive coach for the Super Falcons, instead of politicking and keeping silent on the issue.

The Guardian said that, Izilien said it is embarrassing that the Super Falcons, who did well at the last Women's World Cup, have been left without a substantive leader when the team is struggling to qualify for next year's Olympic Games.

"I believe the NFF has been speaking with Randy Waldrum and if the contract talk is not heading anywhere, they should appoint another coach immediately.

"One man cannot hold the country to ransom. NFF has been keeping silent on the Falcons' coaching job, but I feel they don't need to be politicking with it.

"Had the Falcons lost to Ethiopia in the Olympics qualifier, people would have said it was because the coach was not around.

"A coach must be highly prepared and confident before being asked to lead a

## Address Falcons vacant coach's job urgently -Izilien

team to a crucial game. Using the assistant coach for the Falcons' games against Ethiopia on short notice was dangerous. The NFF should get a substantive coach for the Falcons before the matches against Cameroon," he said.

Contacted on the issue, Head, NFF's Technical Committee, Augustine

Eguavoen, said the responsibility for hiring coaches for the national team lies with the federation's board.

"I am an NFF employee. My mandate is to work with any coach appointed by the federation. Questions on Waldrum's contract should be directed to the NFF board," he said.



Super Falcons'

## Rooney talks of alcohol struggles in new Rob Burrow

EX-England captain Wayne Rooney has opened up to Rob Burrow about his toxic relationship with alcohol in the early days of his footballing career.

BBC SPORT said that, speaking on the ex-rugby league star and Motor Neurone Disease campaigner's new podcast, Rooney said drinking was a

"release" from the pressures of fame.

Rooney made his Premier League debut at 16 for Everton and rapidly went on to become a household name.

Rooney, now 38, is the first guest on the new series of the BBC's The Total Sport podcast.

Called Seven: Rob Burrow, the podcast sees the Leeds Rhinos rugby league legend and his wife Lindsey interviewing seven sporting greats and asking seven questions.

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) Association patron Burrow, who uses AI technology and a computerised voice with a Yorkshire accent to communicate, was also helped by the charity with eye-gaze technology to make the series.

When asked by Burrow about overcoming challenges in his career, Rooney, who scored 53 times for England and is Manchester United's all-time leading goal-scorer, brought up the issue of alcohol as one of the most difficult.

He told Burrow: "My release was alcohol when I was in my early 20s. I'd drink almost until I'd pass out.

Rooney, now Birmingham City manager, continued: "When you don't take the help and guidance of others, you can be really in a low place, and I was for a few years with that.

Rooney said Burrow's spirit had been an inspiration to him and others.

He said: "I know first-hand the impact this [illness] can have on yourself and people around you.

"Everyone must change the way of living and I had that with my sister-in-law, who suffered not the same illness but something as severe. Upcoming guests on the podcast include England rugby union world cup winner

Jonny Wilkinson, double-Olympic gold medallist Dame Kelly Holmes and seven-time Paralympic gold medallist Hannah Cockcroft.

Other topics Rooney was quizzed about by the Burrows included the footballer's favourite and worst teammates and his life-long love of Rob's rugby league side Leeds Rhinos.

"I remember thinking there was no way I was going to support St Helens, Warrington or Wigan, because they are all fake Scousers," Rooney shared.

"It was a Friday night and I was watching the Rhinos play. I was gripped."

Burrow said he had "loved" working on the podcast, which will see new episodes available each Wednesday and speaking to sporting greats.

Tanya Curry, CEO of the MND Association said: "By using his communication aid to converse with guests, Rob is continuing to push boundaries of what is possible when living with MND and raising awareness that around 80% of people living with MND will experience changes to their speech after being diagnosed with the disease."



Rooney

## 'Arsenal statement about refereeing is 'dangerous'

ARSENAL'S call for urgent action on the standards of refereeing in the Premier League is "dangerous", says pundit Gary Neville.

BBC SPORT said that, the Gunners backed their manager Mikel Arteta's scathing assessment of "unacceptable" officiating during the 1-0 defeat by Newcastle.

Arteta said the decision to allow Anthony Gordon's winner was "embarrassing" and a "disgrace".

"I thought Arsenal's statement was really poor," Neville told Sky Sports.

Three areas around Gordon's goal were checked by Sunday's video assistant referee (VAR) - to see if the

ball went out of play in the build-up, if there was a foul and if there was an offside - with all coming back in Newcastle's favour.

Arsenal said the refereeing was "unacceptable", adding players, coaches and supporters all "deserve better".

The club's statement followed Liverpool's anger towards PGMOL, the governing body for referees, after the VAR failed to overturn an incorrect decision to disallow a Luis Diaz goal in their defeat by Tottenham in September.

Liverpool claimed "sporting integrity has been undermined" by the failure.

Wolves boss Gary O'Neil previously said he has "given up on referees" and claimed "we're in a crazy place" following the latest in a string of controversial decisions against his side after they conceded from a late penalty in injury time to lose at Sheffield United.

Speaking on Sky Sports' Monday Night Football, former Manchester United and England defender Neville added: "Liverpool made a shocking go on PGMOL a couple of weeks ago at Spurs and we knew it was wrong.

"They were hard done by for Luis Diaz's disallowed goal.

The day after Liverpool wrote their statement mentioning 'sporting integrity' and

looking at all options and suggested a replay.

Neville also pointed out that Premier League clubs had signed up to a new 'behavioural chart' at the start of the season.

Last month, the International Football Association Board (Ifab) said there were no plans to broadcast live VAR communication because it would be too "chaotic" to listen to and potentially create "an unsafe environment for referees".

PGMOL has not commented publicly on Arteta and Arsenal's criticism, but Neville says the Premier League must respond and protect its referees.

He added: "Clubs should behave better in these circumstances and I am looking to the Premier League now, and particularly the leadership, because the reality is they've got to start protecting referees.

"This is uncharted territory with the ideas of these letters being written. Arsenal as an institution or a football club with massive history, they should behave better. They will feel disappointed in

"You have to accept the referee's decision, that is how I grew up," said Postecoglou.

"This constant erosion of the referee's authority is where the game is going - they are not going to have any



Neville



## Sports

### Swiatek thrashes Pegula to take number one rankings spot

IGA Swiatek thrashed Jessica Pegula to win the season-ending WTA Finals and move back to the top of the women's rankings.

The Pole needed to beat the American in the final in Cancun to overtake Aryna Sabalenka as world number one and she did so with a dominant 6-1 6-0 win.

The 22-year-old was in clinical mood as Pegula struggled to find her range in a match lasting just 59 minutes.

It is the first time Swiatek has won the WTA Finals tournament.

She is the youngest champion of the tournament since Petra Kvitova's 2011 win at the age of 21.

"I want to thank my team who have been with me for the whole season," said Swiatek.

"We've had many ups and downs but this is for sure an up, and we'll have many more if we keep working like that."

The final took place a day late on Monday following bad weather at the event but was played out in sunshine at the venue in Cancun, Mexico.

Swiatek was quickly out of the blocks and broke in the fourth game to take a 3-1 lead before racing away to claim the first set in 27 minutes.

It was the first set either player had dropped at the event and Pegula, the world number five, lost her serve for a third time in the first game of the second set.

Swiatek was overwhelming her rival and broke to love to go 3-0 up on the way to securing her sixth WTA title of the season.

The victory ensured Swiatek will end the year as world number one for a second consecutive season.

In 2022, she recorded a remarkable 37 straight wins and six successive titles, asserting herself as the top-ranked women's player - where she would remain for 75 weeks until Sabalenka replaced her in September this year.



Swiatek is a three-time French open champion

"2022 was so amazing that I don't know if it's going to be possible for me to repeat a season like that," Swiatek said.

"So I just didn't feel at the end like I'm in the shadow anymore because I knew that I'm having another great

season. "I learned my lesson and this time I didn't want [the number one ranking] to have an impact on me. It did a little bit, it's hard not to think about stuff like that, but I knew that I had to focus on different things.

### 'Semenya not ashamed of being different'

Two-time Olympic champion Caster Semenya says she is "not going to be ashamed" of being "different", and will "fight for what is right" amid her ongoing dispute with athletics authorities.

Semenya, 32, was born with differences of sexual development (DSD) and cannot compete in female track events without taking testosterone-reducing drugs.

The South African wants to hold World Athletics to account for what she says is discrimination against athletes with hyperandrogenism and recently said she is turning her attention to "winning battles against the authorities" rather than collecting medals, with competing at the Paris 2024 Olympics no longer a goal.

In a wide-ranging interview with BBC Breakfast's Sally Nugent, Semenya says:

Hyperandrogenism is a medical condition characterised by higher than



Semenya won Olympic 800m gold in 2012 and 2016

usual levels of testosterone, a hormone that increases muscle mass and strength.

Under regulations introduced in 2018, athletes with DSD were only allowed to compete in female track

NOVAK Djokovic won a record-extending seventh Paris Masters trophy and a 40th Masters title in total on Sunday.

The world number one beat unseeded Grigor Dimitrov 6-4 6-3 in straightforward fashion.

It is the 36-year-old's sixth title of 2023, which includes three Grand Slam crowns and the Masters trophy in Cincinnati.

"It's incredible to be able to win it after quite challenging circumstances this week," said Djokovic.

"I basically came back from the brink of losing three matches in a row so I'm very proud of this one considering what I've been through this week."

Djokovic has been dominant on hard courts this season, winning 33 matches and only losing once.

Playing in his 58th Masters final, the Serb was hardly challenged by Bulgarian Dimitrov, ranked 17th in the world, who was playing in only his second Masters

### Djokovic beats Dimitrov to win 40th Masters title



Djokovic

final.

The 24-time Grand Slam

champion only needed one break to take the first set with Dimitrov, 32, hitting a lame backhand into the net at close range to hand Djokovic the advantage.

Djokovic was met with a wall of cheers and some boos from the Bercy crowd after serving out the first set, and smiled as he made a gesture with his hands towards the crowd asking for more.

Former world number three Dimitrov could not reproduce the strong form he had shown during the week, hitting 19 unforced errors in the first set compared with 10 from Djokovic.

The second set continued in the same fashion as Djokovic serenely made his way to victory with a double break.

Next up for Djokovic will be the season-ending ATP Tour Finals in Turin, where he will be heavy favourite to lift a record-breaking seventh title and be confirmed as the year-end number one player in the world for a record-extending eighth time.

Earlier on Sunday in the doubles final, Mexican Santiago Gonzalez and Frenchman Edouard Roger-Vasselin won their second Masters title of the year with victory over Indian-Australian pairing Rohan Bopanna and Matthew Ebden.

The seventh seeds triumphed 6-2 5-7 10-7 over the third seeds.

Elsewhere, Britain's Jack Draper secured his first title of an injury-hit season by beating David Goffin 1-6 7-6 (6-3) 6-3 to win the Bergamo Challenger in Italy.

The Davis Cup Finals take place in two weeks' time, and with Dan Evans ruled out through injury, 21-year-old Draper is likely to play an important role in the GB team.

### Rashford wants 'malicious rumours' about future to stop

Marcus Rashford has called for gossip about his future at Manchester United to stop after he missed Saturday's win at Fulham through injury.

BBC SPORT said that, Rashford was criticised by boss Erik ten Hag after he went out to celebrate his

birthday hours after the 3-0 loss against Manchester City just over a week ago.

But Ten Hag confirmed the striker's absence on Saturday was due to injury.

"Please STOP spreading malicious rumours," Rashford said.

The 26-year-old posted on X, formerly known as Twitter, in response to The United Stand account, a Manchester United fan channel.

The United Stand teased their latest podcast by asking: "Rashford's future in doubt? WE'RE LIVE!"

The England forward did feature from the bench in the 3-0 Carabao Cup loss against Newcastle three days after the encounter with City.

Rashford was Manchester United's leading scorer last season with 30 goals across all competitions but has struggled to match those figures this campaign - registering just once.

United have lost five of their 11 Premier League fixtures this campaign but Saturday's last-gasp victory over Fulham saw them bounce back from successive defeats in the league and Carabao Cup.



Rashford





**Quest**



**writer**



**FRAGMENT**

**"Since 2000, Africa's trade balance with China has been on a downward trend, meaning that the continent's imports exceed its exports—a trend that is poised to continue in the future. In 2019, Africa's trade deficit with China was well over \$17 billion. The scale of this deficit has shifted African nations' economic dependence from their former colonial partners to Beijing".**

**OLUWATOSIN ADESHOKAN.**

**OLUWATOSIN ADESHOKAN**

**New Free Trade Block: China, biggest Africa's winner**

**A**NGOLAN President Joao Lourenco shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Beijing on Sept. 3, 2018.

Angolan President Joao Lourenco shakes hands with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held in Beijing on Sept. 3, 2018.

When the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was initially proposed at the African Union summit in 2012, it had two goals: First, build a pan-African agenda in trade and cooperation. Second, lift a large percentage of people out of poverty by instituting structural economic changes and cooperative legislation.

The bloc's establishment signified a monumental shift in African trade and development. For years, African trade has been mostly limited to colonial trade routes, a practice that has resulted in the continent's countries trading more internationally than among themselves. With the AfCFTA—a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc that includes 1.3 billion people and is expected to become the world's largest free trade zone—Africa's fortunes were supposed to change.

But now, as the trade bloc enters its first few months, African nations are not the ones who will be reaping the deal's greatest benefits—Beijing is.

China is now sub-Saharan Africa's most visible—and perhaps even biggest—trading partner, a role that has even positioned it to shape policy across the continent. Through its spending sprees, Beijing is shifting African policy in its favor. After a ¥ 4 Billion pledge in Chinese investments to Nigeria, the Nigerian government reduced the diplomatic status of Taiwan and ordered Taipei's trade mission out of Abuja. China's influence can also be seen at the U.N.: In June 2020, 25 African countries backed Beijing during a vote about the Hong Kong national security law.

China's presence in Africa is strategic: In exchange for its no-strings-attached investments and deals, Beijing can develop new allies and expand its global influence in a way that rivals the United States.

Beijing portrays itself as a growing superpower, a narrative that it uses to sell itself as anti-West and a promoter of equal development. As Western



**President Assoumani**

influence in Africa waned, China, Russia, and Turkey expanded their networks across the continent with new loans, trade deals, and military agreements. Unlike the United States and United Kingdom, many of their deals came without strict loan stipulations tied to human rights, making them especially favorable partners.

With these deals, China— not Africa—is positioned to be the biggest winner from the AfCFTA. Chinese companies have dominated the continent's transportation and infrastructural development projects, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2018, Chinese funding made up a quarter of the more than \$100 billion committed towards infrastructure development in Africa; the year before, Chinese firms won an estimated 50 percent of the continent's engineering, procurement, and construction contracts.

China's presence in Africa is strategic: In exchange for its no-strings-attached investments and deals, Beijing can develop new allies and expand its global influence in a way that rivals the United States.

"China is pitching itself as an accelerator for growth through infrastructure, especially in places that have a local capacity problem," Efraim Chalamish, an

international economic law scholar, told Foreign Policy.

This was an especially appealing pitch in Africa, a continent that missed out on an industrial revolution and therefore relies on international trade to acquire the majority of its finished goods. Today, the African market remains a primarily extractive one, abundant in natural resources, raw materials, and primary goods. But with these goods' low production value and the continent's infrastructure gaps, the industry isn't lucrative enough to create local jobs and keep production at home. Instead, these raw materials are shipped off to China for processing and then reimported back as finished products.

Rather than creating the equal economic partnership that Beijing has been proposing, these trade deals tend to favor China. Today, African countries import a diverse range of goods and technology from China, while mostly exporting volatile commodities such as coal, petroleum, gold, and grain.

Since 2000, Africa's trade balance with China has been on a downward trend, meaning that the continent's imports exceed its exports—a trend that is poised to continue in the future. In 2019, Africa's trade deficit with China was well over \$17 billion.

The scale of this deficit has shifted African nations' economic dependence from their former colonial partners to Beijing.

As China's competitive advantage in manufacturing household goods erodes, it is increasingly outsourcing production and deepening its economic engagements in Africa. Attracted to the continent's raw materials and cheaper labor, Beijing has been aggressively building factories and expanding production there.

With Beijing's continued investment in the extractive industry, some of the refining and processing that is typically performed in China will likely return to Africa in future years. Even though these processes will likely remain dominated by Chinese companies, this would be a positive shift for African countries. In the long run, however, there are fears that these gains will not help create the new jobs that they are expected to. For now, Beijing is outsourcing the manufacturing of cheap consumer packaged goods to Africa and passing it off as its own, an act that will only hurt African countries that aspire to compete globally.

When the AfCFTA was first proposed, the African Union argued that the bloc would enable countries to develop greater capacity for local manufacturing, which they could then use to trade globally with bigger—and more favorable—terms. By replacing Chinese imports and businesses with this new generation of local manufacturers, the AfCFTA would, ideally, allow Africa to become self-sufficient.

But this is not what has happened. Beijing offers African countries loans to build infrastructure that will improve connectivity within the continent. Since this infrastructure is often ultimately constructed by Chinese manufacturers, engineers, and laborers, however, these projects actually connect Chinese businesses with burgeoning African markets.

In exchange for Beijing's investment, multiple African countries have offered economic concessions to Chinese companies to establish operations. Zimbabwe, for instance, allowed Chinese companies to mine for coal in Hwange National Park; in 2008,

the Democratic Republic of Congo's national mining company granted similar concessions to Chinese miners. But these deals undercut local capacity and ignore the reality on the ground: Africans are having trouble building businesses in their own countries.

For many African leaders, shiny infrastructure projects are more important than economic growth indicators, especially during election cycles.

With many countries' poor economic conditions, African companies do not actually have the ability to scale up to the point where they will benefit from the new trade bloc. Instead, it's still Chinese-owned manufacturing companies that will continue to dominate the continent's manufacturing sector—and profit from this new trade deal.

Chinese businesses are now key players in Africa's production and manufacturing industries. In 2017, over 10,000 Chinese-owned firms were operating across the continent. China's Transsion Holdings currently has an estimated 40 percent market share in the East African mobile phone market. StarTimes, another Chinese company, has grown into one of Africa's biggest pay-television providers and currently boasts more than 10 million subscribers across 30 African countries.

Some of these business deals have come at a cost: Chinese-owned factories often pay below minimum wage, especially in many African countries that lack strong labor laws. In Nigeria and several other countries, there are also sentiments that Beijing is turning Africa into an annex. Some road signs are now written in Mandarin, a language that is also being taught in schools across the continent.

Despite these red flags, many countries still view Beijing as a desirable partner. China has been providing the critical infrastructure necessary to urbanize and to enable trade. For many African leaders, new roads and shiny infrastructure projects are more important than economic growth indicators, especially during election cycles. Beijing is also willing to make under-the-table deals that Western countries resist, such as constructing multibillion-dollar office buildings for the presidents of Uganda and Mozambique.

*To be continued*